

The LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

Encyclical of
His Holiness Pope Pius XII
Issued on the Centenary of the
Apparitions of the
Blessed Virgin at Lourdes

July 2, 1957



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ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF HIS HOLINESS

PIUS XII

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

POPE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST CENTENARY
OF THE APPARITIONS OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN AT LOURDES

TO Our beloved sons, Achille Cardinal Lienart, Bishop of Lille; Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, Clement Cardinal Reques, Archbishop of Rennes; Maurice Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris; Georges Cardinal Grente, Archbishop-Bishop of Le Mans, and to all Our venerable brothers, the Archbishops and Bishops of France in peace and communion with the Apostolic See. Most beloved sons and venerable brethren, greetings and apostolic benediction:

1. The Lourdes pilgrimage, which We had the pleasure of making when We went to preside in the name of Our predecessor Pius XI at the Eucharistic and Marian celebrations closing the Jubilee of the Redemption, left in Our soul deep and sweet memories.

2. It is therefore particularly agreeable to Us to learn that, on the initiative of the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, the Marian city is getting ready to celebrate with fitting splendor the centenary of the apparitions of the Immaculate Virgin at the Massabielle grotto, and that an international committee has even been constituted for this purpose under the presidency of the Most Eminent Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College.

3. We wish to join you, beloved sons and venerable brethren, in thanking God for the signal favor granted to your country, and for so many graces lavished on the multitude of pilgrims during the past century.

4. We wish also to invite all Our sons to renew, in this jubilee year, their confident and generous piety toward her who, according to the words of St. Pius X, deigned to establish at Lourdes "the seat of her immense kindness" (Letter, July 12, 1914, A.A.S. VI, 1914, I.p. 376).

5. Every Christian land is a Marian land, and there is no people who have been redeemed in the blood of Christ who do not like to proclaim Mary as their Mother and their Patron.

6. This truth stands out in bold relief when one recalls the history of France. The cult of the Mother of God dates back to the origins of that country's evangelization. Among the most ancient of Marian shrines, Chartres still attracts a great number of pilgrims and thousands of young people.

7. The Middle Ages which sang the glory of Mary and her mysteries, especially with St. Bernard, saw the marvelous flowering of your cathedrals dedicated to Our Lady: Le Puy, Rheims, Amiens, Paris and so many others.

8. They announce from afar with their slender spires this glory of the Immaculate. They make it shine in the pure light of their stained glass windows and the harmonious beauty of their statues.

9. They bear witness especially to the faith of a people who raised themselves in one magnificent impulse to erect in the sky of France the permanent homage of their Marian piety.

10. In cities and in the country, on the tops of hills or dominating the sea, sanctuaries consecrated to Mary—humble chapels or magnificent basilicas—covered the country little by little with their protective shadow.

11. Princes and shepherds, numberless faithful have come to these shrines throughout the centuries to the holy Virgin, whom they have saluted with the most expressive titles of their confidence or of their gratitude. Here Notre Dame de Misericorde (Our Lady of Mercy), Toute Aide (All Help), Bon Secours (Good Help) is invoked; there, the pilgrim seeks refuge near Notre Dame de la Garde (Our Lady of Care), de Pitie (of Pity), and de Consolation (of Consolation). Elsewhere, the pilgrim's prayer rises to Notre Dame de Lumiere (Our Lady of Light), de Paix (of Peace), de Joie (of Joy) or d'Esperance (of Hope); or again to implore

the intercession of Notre Dame des Vertues (Our Lady of Virtues), des Miracles (of Miracles), or des Victoires (of Victories). It is an admirable litany of invocations, the never-ending enumeration of which tells, from province to province, the benefits which the Mother of God lavished on the land of France throughout the ages.

12. The nineteenth century was to become, after the storm of the Revolution, in many ways the century of Marian favors.

13. To mention only one fact, who has not today heard of the Miraculous Medal? Revealed in the very heart of the French capital to a humble daughter of St. Vincent de Paul whom We had the joy to inscribe in the catalogue of saints, this medal which bears the effigy of "Mary conceived without sin" has spread its spiritual and material wonders everywhere.

14. A few years later, from February 11 to July 16, 1858, it pleased the Blessed Virgin Mary, as a new favor, to manifest herself in the land of the Pyrenees to a pious and pure child born of a poor, hard-working, Christian family.

15. "She came to Bernadette," We once said, "she made her her confidante, the collaboratrix, the instrument of her maternal tenderness and of the merciful power of her Son, to restore the world in Christ through a new and incomparable effusion of the redemption." (Discourse, April 28, 1935, at Lourdes: Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, *Discourses and Panegyrics*, 2d ed. Vatican, 1956, p. 435).

16. The events which then took place at Lourdes, the spiritual proportions of which one measures better today, are well known to you.

17. You know, beloved sons and venerable brethren, under what astonishing conditions the voice of that child, the messenger of the Immaculate, imposed itself on the world in spite of ridicule, doubt and opposition.

18. You know the steadfastness and purity of the testimony, which the episcopal authority judged with wisdom and passed upon as early as 1862.

19. Even then crowds flocked to the sanctuary, and they have not ceased to surge into the grotto of the apparitions

toward the miraculous spring and the shrine erected at Mary's request.

20. It is the moving cortege of the humble, the sick and the afflicted.

21. It is the impressive pilgrimage of thousands of faithful from one diocese or one nation. It is the discreet supplication of a troubled soul seeking truth.

22. "Never," We once said, "has one seen such a procession of suffering in one spot on earth, never such a radiance of peace, serenity and joy!" (ibid. p. 437).

23. Never, We might add, will one know fuller the total of the benefits which the world owes to the helping Virgin! "O specus felix, decorate divae Matris aspectu! Veneranda rupes, unde vitales scatuere pleno gurgite lymphae!" (O honored cave, by Mary's smile adorned! O hallowed rock, whence spring the living waters of a gushing stream! Office of the feast of the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes, hymn of II vespers.)

24. These one hundred years of Marian cult, furthermore, have in some manner woven close bonds between the See of Peter and the Shrine of the Pyrenees, which it pleases Us to recognize.

25. Did the Virgin Mary herself desire this bond? "That which in Rome through his infallible magisterium the Sovereign Pontiff defined, the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, blessed among all women, wanted to confirm by her own lips, it seems, when shortly afterward she manifested herself by a famous apparition at the grotto of Massabielle. . . ." (Decree *De Tuto* for the canonization of St. Bernadette, July 2, 1933. A.A.S. XXV, 1933, p. 377).

26. Certainly the infallible word of the Roman Pontiff, the authentic interpreter of revealed truth, needed no heavenly confirmation to impose itself upon the belief of the faithful. But with what emotion and gratitude did the Christian people and its pastors receive from the lips of Bernadette this answer which came from heaven: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

27. It is therefore not surprising that it should have pleased Our predecessors to multiply their favor toward this sanctuary.

28. As early as 1869, Pius IX of holy memory, rejoiced that the obstacles created against Lourdes by the malice of men "rendered the more strong and evident the clarity of the fact" (Letter, Sept. 4, 1869, to Henri Lasserre: Vatican Secret Archives, *Latin Letters*, 1869, no. 388, p. 695).

29. And, strengthened by this assurance, he lavished spiritual benefits upon the newly erected church and crowned the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes.

30. Leo XIII in 1892 granted Proper Office and the Mass of the feast "The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate" which his successor was a short time later to extend to the universal Church.

31. The ancient appeal of the Scriptures was from that time on to have new application: "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come: O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff. . . ." (Cant. 2:13-14; Gradual of the Mass of the feast of the Apparitions).

32. Toward the end of his life, the great pontiff wanted to inaugurate and bless the reproduction of the grotto of Massabielle in the Vatican gardens, and in those same days his voice rose to the Virgin of Lourdes in an ardent and trusting prayer:

33. "May it be that in her power the Virgin Mother, who once cooperated through her love with the birth of the faithful in the Church, may she now return the tranquillity of peace to troubled souls; may she hasten, finally, the return of Jesus Christ in private and public life" (Brief, Sept. 8, 1901: *Acts of Leo XIII*, vol. XXI, p. 159-160).

34. The fiftieth anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin gave St. Pius X occasion to bear witness in a solemn document to the historic connection between this act of the teaching authority of the Church and the apparitions of Lourdes:

35. "Pius IX had hardly defined it to be of Catholic Faith that Mary was from her very origin exempt from sin, when the Virgin herself began operating wonders at Lourdes" (Ency. Letter *Ad diem illum*, Jubilee of the Immaculate Conception, Feb. 2, 1904: *Acts of Pius X*, vol. I, p. 149).

36. Soon afterward he created the episcopal title of Lourdes, attached it to that of Tarbes, and signed the introduction of the cause for the beatification of Bernadette.

37. It was especially reserved to this great Pope of the Eucharist to underline and favor the admirable conjunction which exists in Lourdes between the Eucharistic cult and Marian intercession.

38. "Piety toward the Mother of God," he noted, "was the source of the flowering there of a remarkable and ardent piety toward Christ Our Lord" (Letter, July 12, 1914: *A.A.S.*, VI, 1914, p. 377).

39. Could it have been otherwise? Everything in Mary carries us to her Son, our only Savior, in anticipation of Whose merits she was immaculate and full of grace. Everything in Mary raises us to the praise of the adorable Trinity.

40. And so it was that Bernadette, praying her rosary before the grotto, learned from the lips and expression of the Holy Virgin how she should give glory to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

41. We are happy in this centenary to associate Ourselves with this homage rendered by St. Pius X :

42. "The unique glory of the sanctuary of Lourdes resides in this fact, that peoples are attracted there from everywhere by Mary for the adoration of Jesus Christ in the august sacrament, so that this sanctuary—at the same time the center of Marian cult and the throne of the Eucharistic mystery—surpasses in glory all others in the Catholic world, it seems" (Brief, Apr. 25, 1911: *Arch. Brev. Ap. Pius X, an 1911*, Div. Lib. IX, part 1, p. 337).

43. Benedict XV wanted to enrich this sanctuary, already heaped with favors, with new and precious indulgence and, if the tragic circumstances of his pontificate did not allow him to multiply the public acts of his devotion, he nevertheless wanted to honor the Marian city by granting to its bishop the privilege of the pallium at the place of the apparitions.

44. Pius XI, who had been to Lourdes himself as a pilgrim, continued the work of Benedict XV. He had the joy of raising to the altars the girl favored by the Virgin and who,

in the habit of the Congregation of Charity and Christian Instruction, had become Sister Marie Bernard.

45. Did he not in turn verify, in a way, the promise made by the Immaculate to young Bernadette that she would "be happy not in this world, but in the next?"

46. From that time on, Nevers, which takes pride in keeping the precious relics of Bernadette, has attracted a great number of the Lourdes pilgrims who have wanted to learn from her now to receive in the proper manner the message of our day.

47. Soon the illustrious Pontiff, like his predecessors who had honored the anniversary celebrations of the apparitions by sending a legate, decided to close the Jubilee of the Redemption at the Grotto of Massabielle where, in his own words, "the Immaculate Virgin Mary showed herself several times to Blessed Bernadette Soubirous, and where with kindness she exhorted all men to do penance in this very place of the wondrous apparitions upon which she heaped graces and wonders" (Brief, Jan. 11, 1933: Arch. Brev. Ap. *Pius XI, Ind. Perpet.* p. 128).

48. In truth, Pius XI concluded, this sanctuary "is now justly considered one of the principal Marian sanctuaries of the world" (*ibid.*).

49. How could We have refrained from adding Our voice to this unanimous concert of praise?

50. We did so notably in Our Encyclical *Fulgens Corona* (Marian Year) by recalling, after Our predecessors, that "the Blessed Virgin Mary herself wanted to confirm through a prodigy, it seems, the pronouncement which the Vicar on earth of her Divine Son had just proclaimed with the applause of the entire Church" (Ency. Letter *Fulgens Corona*, Sept. 8, 1953; A.A.S. XLV, 1953, p. 578).

51. May priests, attentive to her appeal, dare to preach the great truths of salvation without fear.

52. There can be no lasting renewal, in fact, unless based on the unbreakable principles of faith, and it is up to the priests to form the consciences of Christian peoples.

53. Just like the Immaculate who, compassionate for our miseries but foreseeing our real needs, came to men to

remind them of the essential and austere steps of religious conversion, so ought the ministers of the Word of God, with supernatural assurance, trace for souls the narrow road which leads to life (Matt. 7,14).

54. They will do this without forgetting to exercise the spirit of kindness and patience which they profess (Luke 9,55) but without concealing anything of the demands of the Gospel.

55. At the school of Mary they will learn how to live only to give Christ to the world, but also, if need be, to await with faith the hour of Jesus and remain at the foot of the cross.

56. Assembled around their priests, the faithful must work together in this effort for renewal.

57. Wherever God has placed a man, is there not always more to be done for the cause of God? Our thoughts turn first of all toward the consecrated souls who, within the framework of the Church, devote themselves to innumerable good works. Their religious vows urge them more than others to fight victoriously under the aegis of Mary against the unleashing upon the world of the unreasonable greed for independence, for riches and pleasure.

58. Also, in appeal to the Immaculate, they will oppose the onslaught of evil with the weapons of prayer and penance, and with victories of charity.

59. Our thoughts also turn to the Christian families, to ask them to remain faithful to their irreplaceable mission in society. May they consecrate themselves in this jubilee year to the Immaculate Heart of Mary!

60. This act of piety will constitute a precious spiritual aid for married couples in the practice of the duties of chastity and conjugal faithfulness.

61. It will preserve purity in the atmosphere in which the children grow up.

62. Far more, it will make of the family, inspired by its devotion to Mary, a living cell of social regeneration and apostolic penetration.

63. In addition to the family circle, professional and civic relations offer a vast field of action to Christians desirous of working for the renewal of society.

64. Gathered round the feet of the Virgin, docile to her exhortations, they will first of all turn a searching look upon themselves and they will seek to uproot from their conscience false judgments and selfish impulses, fearing the falsehood of a love of God which does not translate itself into effective love of their brothers (I John 4, 20).

65. On that occasion We recalled how the Roman Pontiffs, conscious of the importance of this pilgrimage, had never ceased to “enrich it with spiritual favors and with the benefits of their benevolence.”

66. Is not the history of the past hundred years, which We have recalled rather broadly, a constant illustration of this pontifical benevolence, the last act of which was the closing at Lourdes of the centenary year of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception?

67. But we would like especially to recall to you, beloved sons and venerable brethren, a recent document with which We favored the growth of a missionary apostolate in your beloved country.

68. In it We had in mind to evoke the “singular merits which France has acquired throughout the centuries in the progress of the Catholic faith” and for this reason “We turned Our mind and Our heart toward Lourdes where, four years after the definition of the dogma, the Immaculate Virgin herself gave supernatural confirmation to the declaration of the Supreme Teacher through apparitions, conversations and miracles” (Apostolic Constitution *Omnium Ecclesiarum*, the Mission of France, Aug. 15, 1954: A.A.S. XLVI, 1954, p. 567).

69. Today again We turn toward the famous sanctuary which is now preparing to receive the crowds of centenary pilgrims on the banks of the river Gave.

70. If in the past century ardent public and private supplications have obtained there so many graces of healing and conversion from God through the intercession of Mary, We are firmly confident that in this jubilee year Our Lady will want to respond again with liberality to the expectations of her children.

71. But We are especially convinced that she urges Us to recall the spiritual lessons of the apparitions and set them upon the path which she so clearly traced for us.

II.

72. These lessons, the faithful echo of the teachings of the Gospel message, throw particular light on the contrasts which oppose the judgment of God to the vain wisdom of this world.

73. In a society, barely conscious of the ills which assail it, which conceals its miseries and injustices under an outward appearance of bright and carefree prosperity, the Immaculate Virgin, never touched by sin, showed herself to an innocent child.

74. With maternal compassion she looks upon this world which has been redeemed by the blood of her Divine Son, but in which sin sows so much ruin. And on three occasions she made her urgent appeal: "Penance, penance, penance!"

75. She even appealed for outward manifestations: "Go and kiss the earth in penance for sinners."

76. And to this gesture must be added a prayer: "You must pray to God for sinners."

77. This same injunction was made in the time of John the Baptist, and at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, showing men the way to return to God: "Repent!" (Matt. 3, 2; 4, 17). And who would dare say that this appeal for the conversion of hearts is not applicable to our times?

78. But how could the Mother of God come to her children except as the messenger of forgiveness and hope?

79. The water already flows from beneath her feet: "Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas, et haurietis salutem a Domino (All ye who thirst, come to the waters and ye shall draw health from the Lord." Office of the feast of the Apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes, III Nocturn).

80. At this spring, where gentle Bernadette was the first to go and drink and wash, there will flow away all the miseries of the soul and body. "And I went and washed and I see" (John 9, 1), the blind of the Gospel and the grateful pilgrim will be able to respond.

81. But, as it was with the crowds which pressed around Jesus, the healing of physical wounds remains as a gesture

of mercy and a sign of that power which the Son of Man has to remit sins (Cfr. Mark 2:10).

82. The Virgin invites us to the blessed grotto on behalf of her Divine Son, for the conversion of the heart and in hope of pardon.

83. Will we heed her?

84. In this humble response of man who admits himself to be a sinner there resides the true greatness of this jubilee year.

85. The Church would have a right to expect great good, if each pilgrim to Lourdes—and even all Christians united in heart with the centenary celebrations—realized in the first place this action of sanctification within himself “not in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth” (I John 3, 18).

86. There is everything to invite the Christian to this action of sanctification, for nowhere except, perhaps, at Lourdes does one feel so moved to prayer, to the forgetting of oneself and to charity.

87. For instance, the sight of the stretcher-bearers and the serene peace of the invalids; of the fraternity which assembles faithful of all origins in one single invocation; the sight of the spontaneity of helping each other and the fervor with which without affectation the pilgrims kneel in front of the grotto.

88. At seeing all these things, the best persons are compelled by the attraction of a life more completely dedicated to the service of God and to their brothers; the less fervent become conscious of their lukewarmness and once again return to the road of prayer; the more hardened and incredulous sinners themselves are often touched by grace, or at least if they are honest, do not remain unmoved by the testimony of this “multitude of believers with only one heart and one soul” (Acts 4, 32).

89. But this experience of a few brief days of pilgrimage does not in itself generally suffice to engrave in indelible letters the appeal of Mary for a genuine spiritual conversion.

90. And We exhort you, the pastors of dioceses and all the priests, to a rivalry of zeal so that the pilgrims of the centenary may benefit by a preparation, for a realization and above all for a future as conducive as possible to a profound and lasting action of grace.

91. A return to a diligent frequenting of the sacraments, to the respect of Christian morals in everyday life, and the rallying to the ranks of Catholic Action and to the various institutions recommended by the Church: only on these conditions, is it not true that the important affluence of crowds expected at Lourdes in 1958 can yield, according to the expectations of the Immaculate Virgin herself, the fruits of salvation so necessary to mankind today.

92. But, whatever preeminent importance may be given to the conversion of the individual pilgrim, it would not suffice.

93. We exhort you in this jubilee year, beloved sons and venerable brethren, to inspire the faithful committed to your care to make a collective effort of Christian renewal of society in answer to the appeal of Mary: "May blind spirits . . . be illumined by the light of truth and justice," Pius XI asked at the time of the Marian feasts of the Jubilee of the Redemption, "so that those who have gone astray in error might be brought back to the right path, that a just liberty be granted everywhere to the Church, and that an era of accord and true prosperity might rise over all nations" (Letter, Jan. 10, 1935: A.A.S. XXVII, p. 7).

94. The world, which in our days offers so many legitimate motives for pride and security, knows also nowadays a terrible temptation to materialism, often denounced by Our predecessors and Ourselves.

95. This materialism is not to be found only in the condemned philosophy which rules the politics and economic life of a segment of humanity.

96. It rages also in the love of money, the ruin of which increases according to the dimensions of modern enterprises, and which unfortunately determines so many decisions which weigh on the life of the people.

97. It expresses itself in the cult of the body, in the excessive search for comforts and the flight from all the austerities of life.

98. It prompts one to despise human life, the life itself which is destroyed before it is able to see the light of day.

99. It resides in the unrestrained search for pleasure which exhibits itself without modesty and even attempts to seduce souls which are still pure with reading matter and entertainments.

100. It shows itself in the lack of interest of one's brother, in the selfishness which crushes man with injustice and deprives him of his rights, in a word, in that concept of life which regulates all things only in terms of material prosperity and earthly satisfactions.

101. "And I will say to my soul," the rich man said, "Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, 'Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee.'" (Luke 12, 19-20)

102. To a society which in its public life often contests the supreme rights of God, which would conquer the universe at the expense of its soul (cfr. Mark 8, 36) and has hastened to its own ruin, the motherly Virgin sent out a cry of alarm.

103. Christians of every class and every nation will seek to meet one another in truth and in charity, and to banish misunderstanding and suspicion. The weight of social structures and economic pressures burdening the good will of men is undoubtedly enormous and often paralyzes it.

104. But if it is true as Our predecessors and We Ourselves have insistently stressed, that the question of man's social and political peace is above all a moral question, no reform can be fruitful, no agreement can be stable without a change and purification of hearts.

105. The Virgin of Lourdes, in this jubilee year, recalls this to all men!

106. And if in this solicitude Mary looks upon certain of her children with special predilection, is it not, beloved sons and venerable brethren, toward the small, the poor and the afflicted whom Jesus loved so much?

107. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" she seems to say together with her Divine Son (Matt. 11, 28).

108. Go to her, you who are crushed by material misery, defenseless against the hardships of life and the indifference of men. Go to her, you who are in mourning and assailed by moral trials.

109. Go to her, beloved invalids and infirm, you who are truly welcomed and honored at Lourdes as the suffering members of Our Lord. Go to her and receive peace of heart, strength for your daily duty, the joy of sacrifice offered.

110. The Immaculate Virgin, who knows the secret ways of grace in souls and the silent work of the supernatural leaven in this world, knows the great price which God attaches to your sufferings united to those of the Savior.

111. They can greatly contribute, We have no doubt, to this Christian renewal of society which We implore of God through the powerful intercession of His Mother.

112. May there be added to the prayers of the sick, of the humble, of all the pilgrims to Lourdes, that prayer to Mary that she may also turn her maternal look toward those who are still outside the limits of the only fold, the Church, so that they may come together in unity. May she look upon those who seek and are thirsty for truth, and lead them to the source of living waters.

113. May she cast her glance upon the immense continents and their vast human areas where Christ is unfortunately so little known, so little loved; and may she obtain for the Church the freedom and joy to be able to respond everywhere, always youthful, holy and apostolic, to the expectations of men.

114. "Kindly come . . .", said the Virgin to Bernadette. This discreet invitation which does not compel, which is addressed to the heart, and requests with delicacy a free and generous response, the Mother of God puts forward again to her sons of France and of the world. Christians will not remain deaf to this appeal; they will go to Mary.

115. And in conclusion of this letter it is to them that We wish to say together with St. Bernard: "In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis, Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca. . . . Ipsam sequens, non devias; ipsam rogans, non desperas; ipsam cogitans, non erras; ipsa tenente, non corruis; ipsa

protegente, non metuis; ipsa duce, non fatigaris; ipsa propitia, pervenis. . . . (In dangers, difficulties and in doubt, think of Mary, call on Mary. . . . Follow her without swerving; call upon her with hope; think of her with confidence; with her support, you will not fall; under her protection, you may be fearless; under her leadership, be untiring; with her aid, you will persevere.)” (Hom. II on *Missus est*; *Patrologia Latina*, CLXXXIII, 70-71).

116. We are confident, dear sons and venerable brethren, that Mary will hear your prayer and Ours. We ask her this on this feast of the Visitation, which fittingly celebrates her who a century ago visited the land of France.

117. And, in inviting you to sing to God together with the Immaculate Virgin the Magnificat of your gratitude, We invoke upon you and your faithful, on the shrine of Lourdes and its pilgrims, on all those who bear the responsibilities of the centenary celebrations, the most bounteous effusion of grace. In token of which We impart with all Our heart and with Our constant and paternal benevolence, the apostolic benediction.

118. Given at Rome at St. Peter's on the feast of the Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin, July 2, 1957, the nineteenth of Our pontificate.

POPE PIUS XII

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