

Dear people, brothers and sisters,

Many wonderful things have already been said. I will be brief at the end of this beautiful celebration. I thank the speakers: Bishop Hendriks, Professor Miravalle, for their inspiring words and I thank you all for being here this afternoon. Surely, on a lovely summer day, you have given priority to prayer, prayer for the Holy Spirit over our wounded world, our wounded Church, over ourselves, through the intercession of the Lady, Mary, Mother of All Nations. You are aware of why that is so necessary, why we so desperately need the Holy Spirit in these times and in this world. Without Him, everything goes to ruin. But many people, unfortunately, do not see that. Many people do see the drama of our time. I notice in conversations with people, believers and unbelievers alike, how much that everyone is aware of, as John Paul II called it, the historical upheaval that is going on. All these dramatic happenings that we see around us: political, economic, social; natural disasters, the whole world is arming itself, the threat of a third world war, technological developments, transhumanism, genetic engineering. We see it all around us and people are suffering and thinking how will this all end. We as believers may see all this in a larger, religious spiritual perspective. It is not just a negative development. The Lord has already predicted it to His apostles. He says: as the end times will draw near, the struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness will increase in the hearts of men. Behind everything that happens also hides the Evil One, who sets people against each other, nations against each other, who sows hatred and division. Pope Francis speaks of it more often, of Satan making his way in our world, and it is remarkable how very aware popes are of it. John Paul II, once in a speech, when he was still a cardinal, said: we are now experiencing the finale, the final battle between Church and anti-church between faith and anti-faith. And Pope Benedict XVI, in his book on Jesus, in his last book, he warns of the spirit of the antichrist, which he sees rising and he says that this spirit has two characteristics: one is a false humanism and the other is the exclusion of all people who refuse to submit to it and actually we are already beginning to see that a little bit around us. The attempt we see to build a new world order. People talk about it all the time. We hear it from the mouths of all kinds of politicians and pundits, but a world without God, built on man-made values and norms, about society, about marriage and sexuality, about unborn life, about gender, one makes one's own values and norms, and all those who don't play along, they are increasingly pushed into the corner. What should we do as a Church in such a time? I think: a few things. First of all, and Pope Francis often points this out: of course in a time of so much suffering we must be on the side of the poor and oppressed, but I think we must also be more prophetic and dare to speak prophetically, like Jonah in Nineveh. We must dare to say: this dominant world culture has departed too far from God and His righteousness and cannot and will not last. We must call for conversion, not only conversion of the world and others but also of ourselves, of ourselves as a Church and each of us personally, and I certainly do not exclude myself. We must get on our knees as the people of God and pray for God's grace and for the coming of the Holy Spirit into our world. And it has already been said in the readings: God is planning all this and I am convinced, He wants to send His Spirit in our time, not because we deserve it but because we need it so much. He wants to send His Spirit but He also wants, and Professor Miravalle already said this, He wants to do it through Mary. That is also a requirement of our time, that we rally around the mantle of Mary; she is, as John saw in a vision on Patmos, the woman clothed with the sun who stands facing that dragon. That is her task: to finally crush his head. The task of our time is to make Mary great because God, because the Father and the Son want us to make Mary great. And how do we do that? We do it through these kinds of prayer days and that's why I thank you for being here. There are prayer days in Poland and I heard in the Philippines and other places where people give honour to Mary. We also do it by proclaiming who she is. Too often she has been kept in the shadows. Bishop Hendriks said it: her cooperation in salvation is incredibly intense and far-reaching. We can hardly imagine it, but imagine:

Mary is indeed the new Eve, she has to undo the sins of the old Eve, she is the Immaculate Conception as Eve was also without sin. Only in this way could she make amends. And she did so with her yes to the angel Gabriel. Not only to Gabriel, because then you could say, as I have said more than once: why would she say no? No, she said yes with her whole life until under the cross, for 33 years she had to sustain that yes to God. Also throughout His public life and way of the cross. With all that she saw what was happening to her Son, she had to not rebel, but to fulfil it with Him. And sometimes people think: she didn't know exactly what was happening. But she knew everything exactly and she sacrificed herself with her Son to the end, totally consciously, totally voluntarily until under the cross. How many times they will have talked to each other, Jesus and Mary, meditated together on His divine mission to redeem humanity and on her human absolutely necessary cooperation! Consciously she also sacrificed herself until under the cross, until a spiritual sword, prophesied by Simeon, pierced her heart. And therefore the tradition of the Church calls her Coredemptrix. You have to understand such a word well, of course. We have one Redeemer: Christ is our divine Redeemer, the Bible calls Him the divine Redeemer, Mediator and Advocate: He is the new Adam. But Mary, as the new Eve, shares in that mission of her Son, but in a human way. Therefore, she takes nothing away from her divine Son. He is the only Redeemer, Mediator and Advocate, but Mary shares in it in a human way. Redemption has two sides: it must be given and it must be received. Christ, the Son of God, who earns it for us, and Mary on behalf of humanity receives it and that too is part of Redemption. And that is why Irenaeus says already in the second century: Mary is the cause of our Redemption, of herself and of the whole human race. We continue to proclaim that. And, of course, finally we can make Mary great through a final Marian dogma that already for a hundred years has been called for. It is a movement that started already more than a hundred years ago by Cardinal Mercier in Belgium. That is what we continue to ask for. That is not disobedience from our part, not a lack of loyalty, that is an absolute right of all the faithful and all bishops. We will continue to harass the pope and say: we hope and want you to do this in the future under the inspiration of the Spirit.

Again, thank you for being here. I personally think that heaven has a plan and still has something in store for us, and let us at the end of this day go home in the hope that God is greater than all evil and all the ideas of men, and that He is preparing a special gift of His Spirit. Amen.