



VATICAN - AVE MARIA - "The embrace of Mary" by Rev Luciano Alimandi -

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - At the heart of Advent we find Mary! Two thousand years ago, at the fullness of time, the Word of God became a Child in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who "ab eterno" was known and loved by the Most Holy Trinity chosen for the fulfilment of the fathomless plan for the Redemption of mankind.

It should never be forgotten that this mystery of salvation, the mystery of the Incarnation and God's Coming into the world, appeared to us and is given to us from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary who with the "inexhaustible" maternity wishes to guide every human person to the Saviour.

Like the shepherds on the Holy Night of Christmas all men and women of the countless Christmases of history are called to Bethlehem by the Angels, gathered together by the Church, to encounter the Holy Infant, in the maternal embrace of a Mother who awaits them, precisely in order to celebrate!

To help us contemplate this truth of ineffable consolation, we should read again what the Servant of God, John Paul II wrote in the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* the first and ultra programmatic of his pontificate.

The Supreme Pontiff of venerable memory writes about the mystery of the Redemption: "We can say that the mystery of the Redemption took shape beneath the heart of the Virgin of Nazareth when she pronounced her "fiat". From then on, under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, this heart, the heart of both a virgin and a mother, has always followed the work of her Son and has gone out to all those whom Christ has embraced and continues to embrace with inexhaustible love. For that reason her heart must also have the inexhaustibility of a mother. The special characteristic of the motherly love that the Mother of God inserts in the mystery of the Redemption and the life of the Church finds expression in its exceptional closeness to man and all that happens to him. It is in this that the mystery of the Mother consists."

"The Father's eternal love - the Pope wrote - comes close to each of us through this Mother and thus takes on tokens that are of more easy understanding and access by each person. Consequently, Mary must be on all the ways for the Church's daily life" (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 22).

This "must be on all the ways for the Church's daily life" is an evident call to re-encounter the inexhaustible maternity of Mary, not forgetting that Advent is a good time for this re-discovery.

May these thoughts fill our minds in this Christmas novena so that, through Mary, Jesus may once again be born in our hearts! (Agenzia Fides 20/12/2006, righe 30, parole 407)