

Jesus gives us his mother  
By Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, of Parma

The Theotokos is a great gift from God. The last will of Jesus Christ was to give his mother to all of humanity. He did this, on the cross, when he gave his mother to the Apostle John the Theologian.

“Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:25-27).

This is the rich message that Jesus proclaimed from the cross: You have a mother, my mother. You will never be alone. You will never be abandoned. I give my mother to you, so that you will have a mother forever

Just as everybody is invited to be a disciple of Jesus — not just bishops, priests and religious — Jesus, in his great love for humanity and in giving his mother to John, gave everyone the Theotokos as our mother.

In this way, John also became the first model for all of us in our devotion to the Mother of God: he brought her into the heart of his home, learned from her, cherished her and kept her close.

The Mother of God, this woman who said yes to the Archangel Gabriel and to the will of God, is a witness who invites all of us every day to say yes to Jesus Christ, in times of blessing and even in times of sickness, in terrible situations, in joy, in sadness, in hope, in the moment of our death, because this moment will arrive, too.

Even in difficult moments, perhaps at the moment of the death of your parents, your husband, or your wife, I invite you to stay close to God and to his mother and say, “Yes, I will fulfill your will.” And, at that moment, you will feel peace in your heart.

Only God can give you peace. Nothing else in this life can give you peace, because peace is a gift of God. The Mother of God had this peace, both during her life and at the end of her life. It was this peace that allowed her to say yes to God; it was this peace that allowed her to walk with Jesus all the way to the cross; and it was this peace that allowed her to stand at the foot of the cross and not despair as she watched him suffer and take his last breath.

The world today, dear brothers and sisters, needs to see this peace in our hearts, nothing else. This world has everything, or at least it thinks it has everything, but it does not have this peace that only God gives.

Let us ask God, through the intercession of his mother, for the gift of his peace, not only for our sake but for the sake of the whole world.

*This column was based on an excerpt from the homily Bishop Lach gave at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mariapoch in Hungary last fall.*