

Pope announces pilgrimage to Marian shrine of Pompeii

John Paul II has announced that he will go to Pompeii next October to seek Mary's intercession to bring about peace and justice in the world. The shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, in the outskirts of Naples, is one of most-visited Marian shrines in Italy.

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Following a general audience catechesis on March 26, 2003, Pope John Paul addressed the pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square in various languages, asking first and foremost for prayers for peace in the world, most especially in Iraq. He also announced that on October 7 he will go to the Marian shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, near Naples, Italy.

"Dear friends," the Pope addressed Italian pilgrims, "yesterday we celebrated the solemnity of the Annunciation, the first of the Joyful Mysteries that recalls the Incarnation of the Son of God, Prince of Peace. Reciting the holy Rosary we meditated on this mystery with our heart oppressed by the news coming from Iraq which is in war, without forgetting the other conflicts that rage on earth."

"How important it is," he continued, "that during this Year of the Rosary we persevere in praying the rosary to implore peace! I ask that you continue to do so, especially in Marian shrines. To Mary, Queen of the Rosary, I now entrust my intention to go to her shrine in Pompeii next October 7 on the occasion of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. May Mary's maternal intercession obtain justice and peace for the entire world."

Speaking Dutch, the Holy Father told pilgrims from the Netherlands and Belgium: "Let us raise our prayers to God that love may conquer hatred, that peace, justice and solidarity may grow in every corner of the earth, in the spirit of the Gospel."

John Paul II then addressed his fellow Poles, including the cardinal primate of Poland, the minister for Fine Arts, and the ambassadors of

Poland and France to the Holy See. "At the end of this audience," he told them, "I will bless a copy of the famous fresco of 'Mater admirabilis' from the church of the Most Holy Trinity (on Rome's Trinita dei Monti). Tradition links this in a singular way with Cyprian Norwid. He prayed before this image for the gift for himself of conversion and faith. I express my joy that this fact is being commemorated through this copy of the fresco to be placed in the church of St. Catherine in Warsaw."

Born near Warsaw, Poland in 1821, Cyprian Norwid was a poet, painter, playwright and philosopher, whose works have been cited on many occasions by Pope John Paul in his speeches. Norwid's travels to Europe brought him frequently to Rome and to the church of Trinita dei Monti.

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