

DAY TWO: Friday 8 May: The Shrine of Kalwaria in Poland

Read: The Briefing Notes for Day Two on Kalwaria; and if you can look at Youtube WYD2016
Blog 6 - A Pilgrim's Guide to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska

1. Our Lady of the Cross: we bring to Her our sorrows, failures and the tears of life.
2. Our Lady of the Angels: we bring to Her our petitions for healing of body, mind and spirit.
3. We read and place ourselves beside Mary at the Cross, perhaps mentally travelling the Via Dolorosa, which is represented in all the little chapels within the grounds of the Shrine. Alone among the evangelists, it is St John who informs us that: [St John 19. 25-27] "standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, 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 to his own home"

Reflection: Over the centuries this scene of immense tenderness immediately preceding the death of Jesus has inspired a wealth of art, icons and hymns. The imagery in all of these share the common purpose of bringing the Christian imagination into a vivid awareness of the pain and dereliction of Jesus' mother standing by his cross, as he entrusts her to the care of "the disciple whom he loved."



Painted probably as an altarpiece by Francisco de Zurbarán in 17th Century Seville this representation draws us into the harrowing scene. At the foot of the cross the forlorn figure of the Virgin is comforted in her grief by Mary Magdalene, who stares out to the viewer, drawing us in further. On the right Saint John the Evangelist looks up to the dying Christ with an intense look of devotion and belief, his clasped hands inviting the onlooker to a life of devotion and prayer and thereby ultimately leading us to our salvation. The unusual inclusion of the Virgin, Mary Magdalene and Saint John the Evangelist, Christ's favoured apostle, supports the work's original function as an altarpiece.

We consider the scene itself and recall the words: ***He said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!'***

Mary goes with John and is with the Apostles throughout Eastertide, and after the Ascension the Apostles returned to the Upper Room to await the coming of the Paraclete, as we read in Acts 1:13-14:

When they entered the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Mary joins the Apostles in the Cenacle and with them wait and pray for the Holy Spirit.

We pray today with Mary, Queen of the Apostles making our pleas for a world set free from disease, fear, violence and warfare

Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection,
implored your help, or sought your intercession,
was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence,

I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.

To you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate,

despise not my petitions,

but in your mercy, hear and answer me.

Amen.



Pray for Peace with the Holy Father!

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and the Regina Coeli:

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia;

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,

The Son you merited to bear, alleluia,

Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia:

Has risen as he said, alleluia.

Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

Pray to God for us, alleluia