

**Homily – September 12th, 2025**  
**“With Mary, taking Christ to the heart of the world” (Lk 1, 26 – 38)**  
**Jubilee of 75 years of the João Pozzobon’s Mission**  
**Fr. Arkadiusz Sosna**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Today the Gospel conducts us to a small and simple house in Nazareth. There, in the silence of ordinary life, something happens that will change forever the history of the world. The angel Gabriel comes in – a messenger coming from eternity – and brings words that unite heaven and earth:

*“Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.”*

Mary is disturbed, fights against the incomprehensible. However, in the middle of this interior combat, among questions (and perhaps even fear), her heart opens itself to God. She answers:

*“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”*

This “Fiat” is more than a personal yes: it is the door in which God made himself man. It is the moment in which the Word became flesh because a young lady was willing to give herself entirely to the plans of God.

And here begins the mission of Mary: to take Christ in her womb, not to keep him for herself, but to share him. That is why she runs to Elizabeth’s house – the first missionary of history.

### **The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary**

It is not by chance that we hear this Gospel today, September 12<sup>th</sup>. We celebrate the holiday of The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary – a holiday that reminds us the closeness, the protection and the strength this name beholds.

Its origin dates to the year 1683: Vienna was surrounded by a great threat. The Christian cried out for help and the king John Sobieski from Poland, deeply religious and consecrated to the Virgin Mary, marched with his army to battle. With the cry “Mary!” the soldiers advanced – and the situation changed. The victory was understood not just only as a military success, but as a spiritual triumph.

As a token of gratitude, the pope Innocent XI instituted the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary for the whole Church.

The name of Mary is not just a word: it is a haven. It represents her intercession, her proximity, her maternal fortress. In the Annunciation we hear as God himself pronounces her name when calls her. In Vienna we see as this name converts the standard of victory. And in our daily life it can convert itself into prayer in our lips, in an anchor in hard times.

Mary – the first missionary

Mary said her “yes” and became the first to take Christ to the world. She does not stay in Nazareth but goes out to share what she received.

As well it also happened with João Luiz Pozzobon. When, in 1950, he welcomed in his life the Pilgrim Mother of Schoenstatt, he started his own “visitation”: visits to the families, sick, students, prisoners. He did not look for fame neither recognition, only, with Mary, to fulfill God’s will. There was something more important: a heart full of faith and love to the Mother of God.

"Do not be afraid to entrust yourselves to Mary! She will lead you to Christ." – St. John Paul II

The family – first place of evangelization

João was husband, father of seven children, farmer. His mission started in his own home – his “Nazareth” – in front of the Pilgrim’s Mother.

Along with his wife Vitória, he made his home a meeting place with God. His house converted itself in the first “Shrine-Home”.

Nowadays, when we think about the new evangelization, often we imagine programs and strategies. João reminds us:

“If I neglect my family, it is no use that I make big things.”

Everything starts at home – with the common prayer, the rosary, the simple “Hail-Mary” in the middle of the ordinary.

Nowadays, when a family suffers major difficulties – divisions, superficial relationships, secularization – we need testimonies that, as Pozzobon, reminds us: the family is the first school of faith and love, the domestic Church. There we learn the prayer, the forgiveness, the spirit of sacrifice and trust.

Saint John Paul II wrote:

"The family is the first and most important way of the Church, because it is the way of man" (Gratissimam sane, 1994)

The mission of the lay – the relevance of Pozzobon today

Seventy-five years ago João began his mission that nowadays arrives to thousands of families around the world. He was not a theologian but a simple Christian with a big heart.

Pope Francis affirmed:

“All of us are missionary disciples.” (Evangelii Gaudium, 120)

As Mary, he was in his own place of history, willing to do his part – and God did the rest. The union with the Schoenstatt spirituality and, at the same time, the deep rooting in the parish life and sacramental made his mission a bridge between spirituality and daily life, between theology and existence.

He was a living example of what Saint John Paul called “the holiness of everyday life” – so needed in a world that loses itself in the accelerated rhythm and in the relativism.

Mary – the star of evangelization and mother of the everyday life

João used to say frequently:

"I did not take the image – it was the Mother that took me."

He did not just take an image of the Virgin, but he took her presence. Wherever the Mother enters, things happened: the families started to pray together, the sick recovered the hope, the children experienced the love of God.

He was not a pastoral strategist: he was a tool in His hands.

Nowadays, when the Church faces the religious indifference and moral confusion, we must rediscover the strength on simple gestures and the presence of Mary in daily life. Because wherever Mary comes in, Christ comes in – as in Elizabeth's house, as like that today.

We can also let ourselves be guided by her. The Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary invites us to give her this place in our life: as a counselor, intercessor and mother that guides us to Christ.

### Conclusion

Today, in her feast day and in the jubilee of the mission, we may ask ourselves:

Do we say our daily "Fiat" – as Mary?

Do we face our faith combat – as Sobieski?

Do we take Christ to the world – as João Pozzobon?

Let us be protected and guided by the Most Holy Name of Mary, that way we may take Christ to the heart of the world.

Dear brothers and sisters, nowadays the Church needs "Pozzobons" among the lay – mothers and fathers, teachers, grandparents, young people – people that do not wait for the perfect conditions but start now: in their homes, with their neighbors, in their parishes.

The Church needs men that are bridges of love. Needs families that are oasis of prayer and communion. Needs Mary in the center of the evangelization – as the one who leads us to Christ.

Today God asks us, as he asked to Moses in front of the burning bush:

"Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." (Ex 3, 5)

The life of João Luiz Pozzobon is this holy ground – marked with love, fidelity and service. His example is an invitation to a personal commitment.

May each one of our families be a Home-Shrine. May each one of us be a pilgrim of Mary – with the rosary in hand and fire in the heart.

"Man can only find himself through a sincere gift of himself." – Saint John Paul II (Gaudium et Spes, 24)

May allow ourselves to be led by Mary – as she was led to John. And we will be this fire that sets the world ablaze.

Amen.

