

## The Extended Hands of Our Mother



Have you ever reflected upon the shape of St. Peter's Square in Rome? From the immense grandeur of the Basilica, two colonnades extend outward, curving into a circular, openended enclosure. It is reminiscent of two loving arms extended outward, ready to embrace and take in all the peoples of the world. The architecture expresses in bricks and mortar the great mystery of the Church's motherhood. For the Church is indeed our Mother: at her heart, represented by the Basilica itself, resides her chief treasure, the love of Christ poured out for us in the Eucharist. From this inner sanctuary proceeds the maternal desire to reach out and draw the world into this saving mystery, that which she knows is the greatest good of mankind. In the person of Mary, whom we celebrate this month, this mystery of the Church finds its perfection and ground. For it is she who through her immaculate conception

bore the Son of God in her womb and gave him to the world through her total surrender to the Father's will. In this mystery, we also see the Church's great vocation to evangelization revealed. For at the heart of the Church's mission to evangelize lies this deep Marian solicitude for the world, the impulse to gather the human race into the heart of the Christ who alone can satisfy all of man's desiring and searching. We see this mystery very much in St. Paul, the great evangelizer, who expressed a Marian "anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor 11:28). During this month of May, when the Church turns her gaze to Mary, let us ask her to give us her own evangelizing heart. Let us enter her school through increased prayer of the Rosary and other Marian devotions to learn from Mary how to approach those who are most in need of Christ's love. Through our contact with her, may the beauty of her love transform us, so that this same love may radiate from us, melting the barriers that so many put up before the question of God. It may be that the motherly sweetness of Mary will open the doors of hearts in a way that nothing else can!