

12-2005

December 2005

Pope Benedict XVI

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi

eCommons Citation

Benedict XVI, Pope, "December 2005" (2005). *Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI*. Paper 9.
http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi/9

This Letter to the Editor is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Thoughts of the Popes at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu.

The Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI

December 4, 2005 to December 25, 2005



December 4, 2005: Address before the Angelus on the Second Advent Sunday

Turning to Mary we learn from her "how to become attentive and docile disciples of the Lord. With her maternal help, we wish to commit ourselves to quickly work in the "task" for peace, following Christ, the Prince of Peace."

... In these days, the liturgy presents the Virgin Mary -- whom we will contemplate next Thursday, Dec. 8, in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception -- as the perfect model of this response. The Virgin listens, ready at all times to fulfill the will of the Lord, and is an example for the believer who lives searching for God. ...

May Mary help us to recognize in the face of the child of Bethlehem, conceived in her virginal womb, the divine Redeemer, who came into the world to reveal to us the authentic face of God.

December 8, 2005: Address before praying the midday Angelus with people gathered in St. Peter's Square.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. It is a day of intense spiritual joy, in which we contemplate the Virgin Mary, "in lowliness/ Surpassing, as in height, above them all,/ Term by the eternal counsel pre-ordained," as the supreme poet Dante sings ("Paradise," XXXIII, 3). In her shines the eternal goodness of the Creator who, in his plan of salvation, chose her to be mother of his Only-begotten Son, and, in anticipation of his death, preserved her from all stain of sin (cf. Collect Prayer). Thus, in the Mother of Christ and our Mother, the vocation of the human being has been perfectly realized.

All people, the Apostle Paul reminds us, are called to be immaculate saints in the presence of God in love (cf. Ephesians 1:4). When contemplating the Virgin, how is it possible not to reawaken in us, her children, the aspiration to beauty, to goodness, to purity of heart? Her heavenly innocence attracts us to God, helping us to overcome the temptation of a mediocre life, made up of compromises with evil, to direct us decisively to the authentic good, which is the source of joy.

On this day, my thought goes back to December 8, 1965, when the Servant of God Paul VI solemnly closed the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, the greatest ecclesial event of the 20th century, which Blessed John XXIII had begun three years earlier. Amid the exultation of numerous faithful in St. Peter's Square, Paul VI entrusted the application of the conciliar documents to the Virgin Mary, invoking her with the gentle title Mother of the Church.

When presiding this morning at a solemn Eucharistic celebration in the Vatican basilica, I wished to thank God for the gift of the Second Vatican Council. Moreover, I wished to praise Mary Most Holy for having accompanied these 40 years of ecclesial life, rich in so many events.

In a special way, Mary has watched with maternal care over the pontificates of my venerated predecessors, each of whom guided Peter's bark on the route of authentic conciliar renewal, working incessantly for the faithful interpretation and execution of the Second Vatican Council.

Dear brothers and sisters, as the crowning of this day, dedicated entirely to the Holy Virgin, following an ancient tradition, during the afternoon I shall go to Piazza di Spagna, to the foot of the statue of the Immaculate Conception. I ask you to join me spiritually on this pilgrimage, which endeavors to be an act of filial devotion to Mary, to commend to her the beloved city of Rome, the Church and the whole of humanity.

Pope's Homage on Solemnity of Immaculate Conception

"We Want to Thank You, Virgin Mother of God"

Prayer of His Holiness Benedict XVI - Thursday, December 8 2005

On this day dedicated to Mary I have come, for the first time as Successor of Peter, to the feet of the statue of the Immaculate here in Piazza di Spagna, ideally continuing the Pilgrimage made many times by my Predecessors. I feel that I am accompanied by the devotion and affection of the Church living in this city of Rome and in the entire world. I bring with me the concerns and hopes of present-day humanity and come to lay them at the feet of the heavenly Mother of the Redeemer.

On this remarkable day, the 40th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, my thought goes to 8 December 1965 when, exactly at the end of the Homily during the Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's Square, the Servant of God Paul VI addressed his thought to Mary, "the Mother of God and our spiritual Mother ..., the creature in whom the image of God is reflected with absolute clarity, without any disturbance as happens in every other human creature."

The Pope then asked: "Is it not perhaps in directing our gaze on this woman who is our humble sister and at the same time our heavenly Mother and Queen, the spotless and sacred mirror of infinite beauty, that we can ... [begin] our post-conciliar work? Does not the beauty of Mary Immaculate become for us an inspiring model, a comforting hope?"

He then concluded: "... we think it is so for us and for you. And this is our most exalted and, God willing, our most valuable parting wish" (cf. "The Teachings of Pope Paul VI," III, 1965).

Recalling the many events that have marked the last 40 years, how can we not relive today the various moments that have highlighted the Church's journey in this period?

Mary sustained the Pastors, and in the first place the Successors of Peter, in their demanding ministry at the service of the Gospel during these 40 years; she guided the Church toward the faithful understanding and application of the conciliar documents.

For this reason, serving as spokesperson for the entire Ecclesial Community, I wish to thank the Most Holy Virgin and I turn to her with the same sentiments that animated the Council Fathers, who dedicated to Mary the last chapter of the dogmatic constitution "Lumen Gentium," underlining the inseparable relationship that unites the Virgin to the Church.

Yes, we want to thank you, Virgin Mother of God and our most beloved Mother, for your intercession for the good of the Church. You, who in embracing the divine will without reserve were consecrated with all of your energies to the person and work of your Son, teach us to keep in our heart and to meditate in silence, as you did, upon the mysteries of Christ's life.

May you who reached Calvary, ever-deeply united to your Son who from the Cross gave you as mother to the disciple John, also make us feel you are always close in each moment of our lives, especially in times of darkness and trial.

You, who at Pentecost, together with the Apostles in prayer, called upon the gift of the Holy Spirit for the newborn Church, help us to persevere in the faithful following of Christ. To you, a "sign of certain hope

and comfort," we trustfully turn our gaze "until the day of the Lord shall come" ("Lumen Gentium," No. 68).

You, Mary, are invoked with the insistent prayer of the faithful throughout the world so that you, exalted above all the angels and saints, will intercede before your Son for us, "until all families of peoples, whether they are honored with the title of Christian or whether they still do not know the Savior, may be happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one People of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity" (ibid., n. 69). Amen.

Homage Benedict XVI paid to the Blessed Virgin Mary on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, when he visited the statue of the Blessed Virgin in Rome's Piazza di Spagna. December 8, 2005

With confidence and filial abandonment let us lift up our eyes to Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace. At the beginning of this New Year, let us ask her to help all God's People, wherever they may be, to work for peace and to be guided by the light of the truth that sets man free (cf. John 8:32). Through Mary's intercession, may all mankind grow in esteem for this fundamental good and strive to make it ever more present in our world, and, in this way, to offer a safer and more serene future to generations yet to come.

December 11, 2005: "On the Real Spirit of Christmas"

After celebrating the solemnity of Mary's Immaculate Conception, we enter these days in the evocative atmosphere of preparations for this coming holy Christmas. ...

Therefore, it is providential that, as a door of entrance to Christmas, the feast exists of the Mother of Jesus, who better than any one, can guide us to know, love and worship the Son of God made man. Therefore, let us allow her to accompany us; may her sentiments encourage us to predispose ourselves with sincerity of heart and openness of spirit to recognize the Son of God in the Child of Bethlehem, come to earth for our redemption. Let us walk with her in prayer and accept the reiterated invitation addressed to us by the Advent liturgy to remain in expectation, in a vigilant and joyful expectation, as the Lord will not delay: He comes to deliver his people from sin.

Continuing a beautiful and consolidated tradition, in many families the crib begins to be prepared, as if to relive with Mary these days full of trepidation that preceded Jesus' birth. To set up the crib at home can be a simple but effective way of presenting the faith and transmitting it to one's children. The manger helps us to contemplate the mystery of God's love who revealed himself in the poverty and simplicity of the Bethlehem cave. ... May Mary help us to enter into the genuine spirit of Christmas.

December 19, 2005: Angelus Address

... the silence of St. Joseph does not demonstrate an empty interior, but rather the fullness of faith that he carries in his heart, and that guides each of his thoughts and actions. A silence through which Joseph, together with Mary, guard the Word of God, known through sacred Scripture, comparing it continually to the events of the life of Jesus; a silence interwoven with constant prayer, a prayer of blessing of the Lord, of adoration of his holy will and of boundless confidence in his providence. It is not exaggerated to say that Jesus will learn -- on a human level -- precisely from "father" Joseph this intense interior life, which is the condition of authentic righteousness, the "interior righteousness," which one day he will teach to his disciples (cf. Matthew 5:20). ... As the celebration of Our Lord's birth draws near let us join with Mary in prayerful trust, ready to embrace God's will as a sign of hope for our world. During these last days of the holy season of Advent, I invoke upon you and your families God's abundant blessings of joy and peace.

December 19, 2005: Pope's Address to International Theological Commission

... As I express the hope that your days of study will be enlivened by fraternal communion in the search for the Truth that the Church wants to proclaim to all men and women, I implore Mary Most Holy, Seat of Wisdom, to guide your steps in Christian joy and hope. With these sentiments, as I renew to you all the expression of my esteem and trust, I warmly impart to you the apostolic blessing.

December 21, 2005: Pre-Christmas Reflection

... Let us live intensely these days that precede Christmas together with Mary, the Virgin of silence and listening. May she, who was totally enveloped by the light of the Holy Spirit, help us to understand and to live fully the mystery of Christ's Christmas. ... Let the lights of our streets and the candles of our churches remind us that God is with us, born in Bethlehem to the Virgin Mary; he is the light of our lives and of the world! With Mary let us, in awe, await his coming!

December 22, 2005: Address to Members of the Roman Curia

In these days of Christmas, let us go to meet him full of trust, like the shepherds, like the Wise Men of the East. Let us ask Mary to lead us to the Lord. Let us ask him himself to make his face shine upon us. Let us ask him also to defeat the violence in the world and to make us experience the power of his goodness. With these sentiments, I warmly impart to you all my apostolic blessing.

December 25, 2005: Pope's Homily at Midnight Mass

The Gospel answers these questions by pointing to some particular people whom God loves. There are individuals, like Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon and Anna. But there are also two groups of people: the shepherds and the wise men from the East, the "Magi." Tonight let us look at the shepherds. What kind of people were they? In the world of their time, shepherds were looked down upon; they were considered untrustworthy and not admitted as witnesses in court. But really, who were they? To be sure, they were not great saints, if by that word we mean people of heroic virtue. They were simple souls. The Gospel sheds light on one feature which later on, in the words of Jesus, would take on particular importance: They were people who were watchful. This was chiefly true in a superficial way: They kept watch over their flocks by night. But it was also true in a deeper way: They were ready to receive God's word. Their life was not closed in on itself; their hearts were open. In some way, deep down, they were waiting for him.

December 25, 2005: Benedict XVI's Christmas Message

With the shepherds let us enter the stable of Bethlehem beneath the loving gaze of Mary, the silent witness of his miraculous birth. May she help us to experience the happiness of Christmas, may she teach us how to treasure in our hearts the mystery of God who for our sake became man; and may she help us to bear witness in our world to his truth, his love and his peace.

Benedict XVI's Christmas Message on December 25, 2005