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Pope Benedict XVI

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The Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI

January 1 to January 29, 2006



2006

January 1, 2006: Eucharistic celebration on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, for the XXXIX World Peace Day

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."

January 1, 2006: World Day of Peace - "Courage and Trust in God and Man is Necessary"

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
In today's liturgy our gaze continues to be turned to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, while with particular emphasis we contemplate the Motherhood of the Virgin Mary.

In the Pauline passage we have heard (cf. Galatians 4:4), the Apostle very discreetly points to the One through whom the Son of God enters the world:

Mary of Nazareth, Mother of God, "Theotokos."

At the beginning of a new year, we are invited, as it were, to attend her school, the school of the faithful disciple of the Lord, in order to learn from her to accept in faith and prayer the salvation God desires to pour out upon those who trust in his merciful love.

...And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart"

(Luke 2:19). The first day of the year is placed under the sign of a

woman, Mary. The

Evangelist Luke describes her as the silent Virgin who listens constantly to the eternal Word, who lives in the Word of God. Mary treasures in her heart the words that come from God and, piecing them together as in a mosaic, learns to understand them.

Let us too, at her school, learn to become attentive and docile disciples of the Lord. With her motherly help, let us commit ourselves to working enthusiastically in the "workshop" of peace, following Christ, the Prince of Peace.

After the example of the Blessed Virgin, may we let ourselves be guided always and only by Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever! (Hebrews 13:8). Amen.

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The Holy Father called upon the Most Holy Mary, "who today blesses the whole world showing her Divine Son, the "Prince of Peace", so that the human family may, in opening themselves to the Evangelical message, live this coming year that begins today in brotherhood and peace". ... "On this first day of the year, the Church contemplates the heavenly Mother of God, who holds in her arms the Child Jesus, source of all blessings. "Hail, holy Mother, you have given birth to the King who rules heaven and earth for ever and ever." ... "The announcement of the angels in Bethlehem echoed in Mary's maternal heart, filling it with wonder: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14). And the Gospel adds that Mary "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). Like her, the Church also keeps and meditates on the Word of God, applying it with the different and changing situations she finds on her way."

January 1, 2006: Angelus Address

[In English, he said:]

I greet all the English-speaking visitors present at today's Angelus, and in particular the many Pueri Cantores, whom I thank for their beautiful singing at this morning's Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. I wish all of you a New Year full of joy and consolation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Through the intercession of his Blessed Mother, Mary, may Christians everywhere have the courage to be promoters of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace!

January 5, 2006: Address to the Pontifical Household

Recalling that tomorrow is the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Pope dwelt on the figure of Mary: "Just as she presented Jesus to the Magi, so the Virgin continues to offer Him to all humanity. Let us accept Him from her hands: Christ fulfils the most profound expectations of our hearts and gives meaning to all our plans and actions. May He be present in families and reign everywhere with the power of His love."

January 8, 2006: On Baptism

... Dear Brothers and Sisters, may today's solemnity be a propitious opportunity for all Christians to discover the joy and beauty of their baptism that, lived with faith, is an ever present reality: It continually renews us in the image of the new man, in holiness of thoughts and deeds. Baptism, moreover, unites Christians of all creeds. Insofar as baptized, we are all children of God in Christ Jesus, our master and Lord. May the virgin Mary obtain for us the grace to understand ever more the value of our baptism and to witness to it with a worthy conduct of life. ... Contemplating the divine Child in Mary's arms and looking to the example of St Stephen, let us ask God for the grace to live our faith consistently, ever ready to answer those who ask us to account for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

From the Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for Lent 2006

To Mary, "the living fount of hope" (Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 12), we entrust our Lenten journey, so that she may lead us to her Son. I commend to her in particular the multitudes who suffer poverty and cry out for help, support, and understanding. With these sentiments, I cordially impart to all of you a special Apostolic Blessing.

January 22, 2006: "We Must Not Doubt That One Day We Will Be 'One.'"

Following is the Marian conclusion of Benedict XVI's encyclical *Deus*

Caritas Est.

[41] Outstanding among the saints is Mary, Mother of the Lord and mirror of all holiness. In the [Gospel of Luke](#) we find her engaged in a service of charity to her cousin Elizabeth, with whom she remained for “about three months” (1:56) so as to assist her in the final phase of her pregnancy. “*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*”, she says on the occasion of that visit, “My soul magnifies the Lord” (*Lk* 1:46). In these words she expresses her whole programme of life: not setting herself at the centre, but leaving space for God, who is encountered both in prayer and in service of neighbour—only then does goodness enter the world. Mary's greatness consists in the fact that she wants to magnify God, not herself. She is lowly: her only desire is to be the handmaid of the Lord (cf. *Lk* 1:38, 48). She knows that she will only contribute to the salvation of the world if, rather than carrying out her own projects, she places herself completely at the disposal of God's initiatives. Mary is a woman of hope: only because she believes in God's promises and awaits the salvation of Israel, can the angel visit her and call her to the decisive service of these promises. Mary is a woman of faith: “Blessed are you who believed”, Elizabeth says to her (cf. *Lk* 1:45). The *Magnificat*—a portrait, so to speak, of her soul—is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the Word of God. Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the Word of God, with ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the Word of God; the Word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the Word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God. Since Mary is completely imbued with the Word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate. Finally, Mary is a woman who loves. How could it be otherwise? As a believer who in faith thinks with God's thoughts and wills with God's will, she cannot fail to be a woman who loves. We sense this in her quiet gestures, as recounted by the infancy narratives in the Gospel. We see it in the delicacy with which she recognizes the need of the spouses at Cana and makes it known to Jesus. We see it in the humility with which she recedes into the background during Jesus' public life, knowing that the Son must establish a new family and that the Mother's hour will come only with the Cross, which will be Jesus' true hour (cf. *Jn* 2:4; 13:1). When the disciples flee, Mary will remain beneath the Cross (cf. *Jn* 19:25-27); later, at the hour of Pentecost, it will be they who gather around her as they wait for the Holy Spirit (cf. *Acts* 1:14).

[42] The lives of the saints are not limited to their earthly biographies but also include their being and working in God after death. In the saints one thing becomes clear: those who draw near to God do not withdraw from men, but rather become truly close to them. In no one do we see this more clearly than in Mary. The words addressed by the crucified Lord to his disciple—to John and through him to all disciples of Jesus: “Behold, your mother!” (*Jn* 19:27)—are fulfilled anew in every generation. Mary has truly become the Mother of all believers. Men and women of every time and place have recourse to

her motherly kindness and her virginal purity and grace, in all their needs and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their moments of loneliness and their common endeavors. They constantly experience the gift of her goodness and the unfailing love which she pours out from the depths of her heart. The testimonials of gratitude, offered to her from every continent and culture, are a recognition of that pure love which is not self-seeking but simply benevolent. At the same time, the devotion of the faithful shows an infallible intuition of how such love is possible: it becomes so as a result of the most intimate union with God, through which the soul is totally pervaded by him—a condition which enables those who have drunk from the fountain of God's love to become in their turn a fountain from which “flow rivers of living water” (Jn 7:38). Mary, Virgin and Mother, shows us what love is and whence it draws its origin and its constantly renewed power. To her we entrust the Church and her mission in the service of love:

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
you have given the world its true
light,
Jesus, your Son – the Son of
God. You abandoned yourself
completely to God's call
and thus became a
wellspring of the goodness
which flows forth from him.
Show us Jesus. Lead us to
him. Teach us to know and
love him, so that we too can
become capable of true love
and be fountains of living
water in the midst of a thirsting
world

... The expression, "God is love," in Latin "*Deus Caritas Est*," is the title of my first encyclical, which will be published next Wednesday, Jan. 25, feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. I am happy it coincides with the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On that day, I will go to St. Paul's Basilica to preside at Vespers, in which representatives of other churches and ecclesial communities will take part. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for us.

Among the many concerns for the international situation, my thoughts go today again to Africa and, in particular, to Ivory Coast where grave tensions persist among the country's different social and political components. I invite all to continue with the constructive dialogue to attain reconciliation and peace. I entrust these intentions to the intercession of the Holy Virgin, so loved by the Ivorian people.

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January 29, 2006: [On Witnesses of Love - "The Whole History of the Church Is a History of Holiness"](#)

From the Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for Lent 2006

We now turn to Mary Most Holy, mirror of charity: With her maternal help, may she help Christians, and the consecrated in particular, to walk rapidly and joyfully on the path of holiness.