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Pope Benedict XVI

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The Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI

April 9, 2006 to April 30, 2006



2006

April 9, 2006: Palm Sunday

Our Lady was present in the cenacle with the Apostles as they waited for Pentecost. May she be your mother and guide. May she teach you to receive the word of God, to treasure it and to ponder on it in your heart (cf. Luke 2:19) as she did throughout her life. May she encourage you to declare your "yes" to the Lord as you live "the obedience of faith." May she help you to remain strong in the faith, constant in hope, persevering in charity, always attentive to the word of God. I am together with you in prayer, and I bless each one of you with all my heart.

On the World Youth Day Cross - "A Journey of Conversion in Jesus' Steps"

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

... The handover of the cross, after each of the world meetings, has become a "tradition," in the proper sense of a "traditio": a highly symbolic handover, which must be lived with great faith, committing oneself to a journey of conversion in Jesus' steps. We are taught this faith by Mary Most Holy, who

was the first to believe and to bear her own cross together with the Son, experiencing with him afterwards the joy of the resurrection. This is why the WYD Cross is accompanied by the icon of the Virgin, which reproduces that of Mary "Salvation of the Roman People" [*"Salus Populi Romani"*], venerated in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the oldest basilica in the West dedicated to the Virgin. After visiting several countries in Africa, to manifest the closeness of Christ and of his Mother to the peoples of that continent affected by so many sufferings, the cross and the Marian icon will be received next February in different regions of Oceania, and eventually travel to dioceses of Australia, until it reaches Sydney in July 2008. It is a spiritual pilgrimage that involves the whole Christian community, particularly young people.

[After the handover of the cross and icon, the Pope added:]

In this setting of olives, offered by the region of Puglia, we pray to the Lord with faith that this cross and icon be instruments of peace and reconciliation between people and nations, and invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary on the new pilgrimage, which begins today, so that it will be fruitful.

April 10, 2006: Papal Homily for Anniversary of John Paul II's Death

... With the Marian Vigil yesterday evening, we relived the precise moment of his devout passing one year ago, whereas today we are here in this same St. Peter's Square to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice in suffrage for his chosen soul.

... The Gospel passage that has just been proclaimed helps us to understand another aspect of his human and religious personality. We might say that among the apostles, he, the Successor of Peter, supremely imitated John the "beloved disciple," who stood under the Cross with Mary at the moment of the Redeemer's abandonment and death. The evangelist relates that Jesus, when he saw them standing near, entrusted the one to the other: "Woman, behold, your son!"... "Behold, your mother!" (John 19:26-27).

The dying Lord's words were particularly dear to John Paul II. Like the apostle and evangelist, he too wanted to take Mary into his home: "*et ex illa hora accepit eam discipulus in sua*" (John 19:27). The expression "*accepit eam in sua*" is singularly compact. It indicates John's decision to make Mary share in his own life, so as to experience that whoever opens his heart to Mary is actually accepted by her and becomes her own. The motto that stands out in the coat of arms of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, "*Totus tuus*," sums up this spiritual and mystical experience well, in a life completely oriented to Christ through Mary: "*ad Iesum per Mariam*."

... And may the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, help us to be in all circumstances, as he was, tireless apostles of his divine Son and prophets of his merciful love. Amen!

April 15, 2006: Good Friday in Rome's Colosseum

... We have also seen stations of consolation. We have seen the Mother, whose goodness remains faithful unto death and after death. We have seen the courageous woman who appeared before the Lord, and who was not afraid to show solidarity for this suffering person. We have seen Simon of Cyrene, an African, who carries the cross with Jesus. And finally we have seen in these stations of consolation that, just as suffering does not end, so consolations do not end either. ... Let us pray to Jesus' holy Mother, the Mother of mercy, so that we too will be able to be men and women of mercy and thus contribute to the salvation of the world, to the salvation of the creature-man of God. Amen.

April 17, 2006: Regina Coeli Address Easter Monday Caseti Gandolfo

The typical Marian character of our meeting leads us to live the spiritual joy of Easter in communion with Mary Most Holy, thinking of what her joy must have been at Jesus' Resurrection.

In the prayer of the Regina Caeli that we recite in place of the Angelus in this Easter Season, we address the Virgin, asking her to rejoice because the One whom she bore in her womb is risen: *"Quia quem meruisti portare, resurrexit, sicut dixit"*.

Mary treasured in her heart the "Good News" of the Resurrection, the source and secret of the true joy and genuine peace that Christ who died and rose again won for us with his sacrifice on the Cross.

Let us ask Mary to continue to guide our steps in this period of spiritual joy, just as she accompanied us during the days of the Passion, so that we may grow more and more in the knowledge and love of the Lord and become witnesses and apostles of his peace.

May the Virgin Mary, whom the Litany of Loreto makes us invoke as *"Causa nostrae laetitiae - Cause of our joy"*, obtain for us that we always experience the joy of being part of the spiritual edifice of the Church, a "community of love", born from the Heart of Christ.

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking visitors present here today. Commending ourselves to the intercession of Our Blessed Lady, the Queen of Heaven, let us rejoice in the new and holy life that the Risen Christ has given to us.

April 19, 2006: First Anniversary of Benedict XVI's Pontificate

Dear brothers and sisters, in the Pasch of his Only-begotten Son, God fully revealed himself, his victorious power over the forces of death, the power of Trinitarian Love. May the Virgin Mary, who was closely

associated with the Passion, death and Resurrection of the Son and at the foot of the cross became the Mother of all believers, help us to understand this mystery of love that changes hearts and makes us experience fully the joy of Easter, so that we in turn may be able to communicate it to the men and women of the third millennium.

April 22, 2006: Pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter

Dear Fathers and Brothers of the Society, today you look with special devotion at the Blessed Virgin Mary, remembering that on April 22, 1541, St. Ignatius and his first companions made their solemn vows before the image of Mary in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

May Mary continue to watch over the Society of Jesus so that every member may carry in his person the "image" of the crucified Christ, in order to share in his resurrection. I assure you of my remembrance in prayer for this, as I willingly impart my blessing to each of you present here and to your entire spiritual family, which I also extend to all the other religious and consecrated persons who are present at this audience.

April 28, 2006: 60th anniversary of the Communist persecution against the Greek-Catholic Church

I invoke Mary, Theotokos, and the many martyrs that adorn the face of your communities, and I cordially impart to you, to the bishops, priests, consecrated persons and the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, as a sign of my constant affection and thoughts, a special apostolic blessing.

April 30, 2006: Regina Caeli

In the days that followed the Lord's resurrection, the apostles remained gathered together, comforted by the presence of Mary and, after the Ascension, persevered with her in prayer, awaiting Pentecost. The Virgin was for them mother and teacher, a role she continues to carry out for Christians of all times. Every year, during Eastertide, we live this experience more intensely and, perhaps, precisely for this reason, popular tradition has consecrated the month of May, which normally falls between Easter and Pentecost, to Mary.



Therefore, the month that begins tomorrow helps us to rediscover the maternal role that she carries out in our lives so that we may always be docile disciples and courageous witnesses of the risen Lord.

Let us entrust the
needs of the
Church

and of the world to Mary, especially at this moment marked by not a few shadows. Invoking also the intercession of St. Joseph, who we remember particularly tomorrow, thinking of the labor world, we address her with the Regina Caeli prayer, which enables us to relish the comforting joy of the presence of the risen Christ.