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Pope Benedict XVI

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September 2007



Pope's Address at Prayer Vigil in Loreto – September 1, 2007

Lord Jesus, this evening I would like to speak to you, making my own the inner attitude and trusting abandonment of that young woman who, two-thousand years ago, said her "yes" to the Father who chose her to be your Mother. The Father chose her because she was docile and obedient to his will. Like her, like little Mary, each one of you, dear young friends, should say to God with faith: "Here I am; let it be done to me according to your word."

... Look at the young Mary; the Angel proposed something truly inconceivable to her: participation, in the most involving way possible, in the greatest of God's plans, the salvation of humanity. Facing this proposal, Mary, as we heard in the Gospel, was distressed for she realized the smallness of her being before the omnipotence of God; and she asked herself: "How is it possible? Why should it be me?". Yet, ready to do the divine will, she promptly said her "yes" which changed her life and the history of all humanity. It is also thanks to her "yes" that we are meeting here this evening.

I ask myself and I ask you: can God's requests to us, however demanding they may seem, ever compare with what God asked the young Mary? Dear young men and women, since Mary truly knows what it means to respond generously to the Lord's requests, let us learn from her to say our own "yes."

Mary, dear young people, knows your noblest and deepest aspirations. Above all, she well knows your great desire for love, with your need to love and to be loved. By looking at her, by following her docilely, you will discover the beauty of love; not a "disposable" love that is transient and deceptive, imprisoned in a selfish and materialistic mindset, but true, deep love. ...

I would like to say to those in such sensitive and complex situations: the Mother of God, the Community of believers and the Pope are beside you and are praying that the crisis that marks today's families may not become an irreversible failure. ... In front of her Holy House, Mary will repeat to each one of you, dear young friends, the words that she herself heard the Angel say to her: Do not be afraid, do not fear! The Holy Spirit is with you and will never leave you. Nothing is impossible to those who trust in God. ...

This is one of our many dreams which tonight, as we pray together, we entrust to Mary. Amen.

Homily at the Mass celebrated with youth in Loreto, Italy – September 2, 2007

... In a certain sense, our gathering at the Virgin's Shrine fulfils the words of the Letter to the Hebrews: "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God". Celebrating the Eucharist in the shadow of the Holy House, we too come to the "festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven". Thus, we can experience the joy of having come "to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect". With Mary, Mother of the Redeemer and our Mother, let us above all go to meet "the Mediator of a New Covenant", Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Heb 12:22-24). ... Jesus Christ, God made man, took on our own flesh in Mary, participated in our life and chose to share in our history. To realize his Covenant God sought a young heart and he found it in Mary, "a young woman."

... Our Meeting, which is taking place in the shadow of a Marian Shrine, invites us to look to Our Lady. Let us therefore ask ourselves: How did Mary spend her youth? Why was it that in her the impossible became possible? She herself reveals it to us in the Cantic of the *Magnificat*. God "regarded the low estate of his handmaiden" (Lk 1:48a). It was Mary's humility that God appreciated more than anything else in her. And it is precisely of humility that the other two Readings of today's liturgy speak to us. Is it not a happy coincidence that this message is addressed to us exactly here in Loreto? Here, we think spontaneously of the Holy House of Nazareth, which is the Shrine of humility: the humility of God who took flesh, who made himself small, and the humility of Mary who welcomed him into her womb; the humility of the Creator and the humility of the creature. Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, was born from this encounter of humility. "The greater you are, the more you humble yourself, so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord. For great is the might of the Lord" (3:18-20) says the passage in Sirach; and in the Gospel, after the Parable of the Wedding Feast, Jesus concludes: "Every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 14:11). Today, this perspective mentioned in the Scriptures appears especially provocative to the culture and sensitivity of contemporary man. The humble person is perceived as someone who gives up, someone defeated, someone who has nothing to say to the world. Instead, this is the principal way, and

not only because humility is a great human virtue but because, in the first place, it represents God's own way of acting. It was the way chosen by Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, who "being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).

... In following Christ and imitating Mary, we must have the courage of humility; we must entrust ourselves humbly to the Lord, because only in this way will we be able to become docile instruments in his hands and allow him to do great things in us. The Lord worked great miracles in Mary and in the Saints! I am thinking, for example, of Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, Patrons of Italy. I am thinking also of splendid young people like St Gemma Galgani, St Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin, St Louis Gonzaga, St Dominic Savio, St Maria Goretti, born not far from here, and the Blesseds, Piergiorgio Frassati and Alberto Marvelli. And I am also thinking of numerous young men and women who belong to the ranks of the "anonymous" Saints, but who are not anonymous to God. For him, every individual person is unique, with his or her own name and face. All, and you know it, are called to be Saints!

... Let us look above all at Mary. At her school, we too, like her, can experience that "yes" of God to humanity from which flow all the "yesses" of our life. ...

Lastly, let us turn our gaze, our eyes, once again to Mary, model of humility and courage. Virgin of Nazareth, help us to be docile to the work of the Holy Spirit, as you were; help us to become ever more holy, disciples in love with your Son Jesus; sustain and guide these young people so that they may be joyful and tireless missionaries of the Gospel among their peers in every corner of Italy. Amen!

Angelus Address in Loreto, Italy – September 2, 2007

At the close of this solemn Eucharistic celebration, let us recite, my dear young people, the Angelus, in spiritual communion with all those who are joined to us via radio and television. Loreto, after Nazareth, is the ideal place to pray meditating on the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God.

So, in this moment, my invitation is for us all to enter with our minds and hearts into the sanctuary of the Holy House, within those walls which according to tradition come from Nazareth, the place where the Virgin said "yes" to God and conceived in her own womb the Eternal Word incarnate.

... To bring God into the public square, we must have received him interiorly at home, like Mary in the annunciation. And vice versa, the house is opened onto the square: This is also suggested by the fact that the Holy House has three walls, not four. It is an open home, opened onto the world, life, and also onto this agora of young Italians.

Dear friends, it is a great privilege for Italy, in this wonderful corner of the Marche, to give hospitality to the shrine of the Holy House. Be rightly proud about this and profit from it!

In the most important moments of your life come here, at least in your heart, to spiritually recollect yourselves between the walls of the Holy House. Pray to the Virgin Mary that you might obtain the light and strength of the Holy Spirit, to respond

fully and generously to the voice of God. Thereby you will become true witnesses in the public square, in society, bearers of a Gospel that is not abstract but incarnate in your life.

Benedict XVI's Greeting at Vienna's Airport – September 7, 2007

... The reason for my coming to Austria is the 850th anniversary of the shrine of Mariazell. This Marian sanctuary in some way represents the maternal heart of Austria, and has always had a particular importance also for Hungarians and the Slavic peoples. It symbolizes an openness which not only transcends physical and national frontiers, but, in the person of Mary, reminds us of an essential dimension of human beings: their capacity for openness to God and his word of truth.

In this way, I would like, during these three days here in Austria, to go as a pilgrim to Mariazell. ... Mariazell does not only represent 850 years of history, but shows us on the basis of that history--as reflected in the statue of the Blessed Mother pointing to Christ her Son--the way to the future. ... Tomorrow, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, the patronal feast of Mariazell, will bring me to that holy place. In the Eucharistic celebration in front of the Basilica we will gather, as Mary has shown us, around Christ who comes into our midst. We will ask him to help us better to contemplate him, to see him in our brothers and sisters, to serve him in them, and to walk with him on the way that leads to the Father. ... Guided and encouraged by Mary, we wish to sharpen our gaze as Christians, in order to see the challenges which need to be met in the spirit of the Gospel and, full of gratitude and hope, to walk from a past which has been at times difficult, yet always filled with grace, towards a future of promise. ...

Pope's Prayer at the Mariensäule a bronze column dedicated to the Virgin Mary -- located in the Am Hauf Plaza in Vienna – September 7, 2007

As the first stop of my pilgrimage to Mariazell I have chosen the Mariensäule, to reflect briefly with all of you on the significance of the Mother of God for Austria, past and present, and her significance for each one of us. I offer a cordial greeting to all those gathered here to pray beneath the Mariensäule. ... In this way, they will very concretely accomplish what all of us wish to do in these days: with Mary, to look to Christ.

From earliest times, faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, has been linked to a particular veneration for his mother, for the woman in whose womb he took on our human nature, sharing even in the beating of her heart. Mary is the Woman who accompanied Jesus with sensitivity and deference throughout his life, even to his death on the Cross. At the end, he commended to her maternal love the beloved disciple and, with him, all humanity. In her maternal love, Mary continues to take under her protection people of all languages and cultures, and to lead them together, within a multiform unity, to Christ. In our problems and needs we can turn to Mary. Yet we must also learn from her to accept one another lovingly in the same way that she has accepted all of us: each as an individual willed as such and loved by God. In God's universal family, in which there is a place for everyone, each person must develop his gifts for the good of all.

The Mariensäule, built by the Emperor Ferdinand III in thanksgiving for the liberation of Vienna from great danger and inaugurated by him exactly 360 years ago, must

also be a sign of hope for us today. How many persons, over the years, have stood before this column and lifted their gaze to Mary in prayer! How many have experienced in times of trouble the power of her intercession! Our Christian hope includes much more than the mere fulfillment of our wishes and desires, great or small. We turn our gaze to Mary, because she points out to us the great hope to which we have been called (cf. Eph 1:18), because she personifies our true humanity!

This is what we have just heard in the reading from the Letter to the Ephesians: even before the creation of the world, God chose us in Christ. From eternity he has known and loved each one of us! And why did he choose us? To be holy and immaculate before him in love! This is no impossible task: in Christ he has already brought it to fulfillment. We have been redeemed! By virtue of our communion with the Risen Christ, God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Let us open our hearts; let us accept this precious legacy! Then we will be able to sing, together with Mary, the praises of his glorious grace. And if we continue to bring our everyday concerns to the immaculate Mother of Christ, she will help us to open our little hopes ever more fully toward that great and true hope which gives meaning to our lives and is able to fill us with a deep and imperishable joy.

With these sentiments I would now like to join you in looking to Mary Immaculate, entrusting to her intercession the prayers which you have just now presented, and imploring her maternal protection upon this country and its people:

Holy Mary, immaculate mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, in you God has given us the model of the Church and of genuine humanity. To you I entrust the country of Austria and its people. Help all of us to follow your example and to direct our lives completely to God! Grant that, by looking to Christ, we may become ever more like him: true children of God! Then we too, filled with every spiritual blessing, will be able to conform ourselves more fully to his will and to become instruments of his peace for Austria, Europe and the world. Amen.

Papal Homily on the occasion of the 850th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Shrine at Mariazell; - Square in front of the Basilica of Mariazell on September 8, 2007

With our great pilgrimage to Mariazell, we are celebrating the patronal feast of this shrine, the feast of Our Lady's birthday. For 850 years pilgrims have been traveling here from different peoples and nations; they come to pray for the intentions of their hearts and their homelands, bringing their deepest hopes and concerns. In this way Mariazell has become a place of peace and reconciled unity, not only for Austria, but far beyond her borders. Here we experience the consoling kindness of the Madonna. ... Today we join in the great centuries-old pilgrimage. We rest awhile with the Mother of the Lord, and we pray to her: Show us Jesus. Show to us pilgrims the one who is both the way and the destination: the truth and the life.

... The awakening of the Christian faith, the dawning of the Church of Jesus Christ was made possible, because there were people in Israel whose hearts were searching--people who did not rest content with custom, but who looked further ahead, in search of something greater: Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Mary and Joseph, the Twelve and many others. ... It is time to look towards Jesus as we see him in the shrine at Mariazell. We see him here in two images: as the child in

his Mother's arms, and above the high altar of the Basilica as the Crucified. These two images in the Basilica tell us this: truth prevails not through external force, but it is humble and it yields itself to man only via the inner force of its veracity. ...

"To gaze upon Christ" is the motto of this day. For one who is searching, this summons repeatedly turns into a spontaneous plea, a plea addressed especially to Mary, who has given us Christ as her Son: "Show us Jesus!" Let us make this prayer today with our whole heart; let us make this prayer above and beyond the present moment, as we inwardly seek the Face of the Redeemer. "Show us Jesus!" Mary responds, showing him to us in the first instance as a child. God has made himself small for us. ...

"Show us Jesus!" It was with this plea to the Mother of the Lord that we set off on our journey here. This same plea will accompany us as we return to our daily lives. And we know that Mary hears our prayer: yes, whenever we look towards Mary, she shows us Jesus. Thus we can find the right path, we can follow it step by step, filled with joyful confidence that the path leads into the light -- into the joy of eternal Love. Amen.

Papal Address at Vespers at the Shrine of Mariazell – September 8, 2007

... We have come together in the venerable Basilica of our *Magna Mater Austriae* in Mariazell. For many generations people have come to pray here to obtain the help of the Mother of God. We too are doing the same today. We want to join Mary in praising God's immense goodness and in expressing our gratitude to the Lord for all the blessings we have received, especially the great gift of the faith. We also wish to commend to Mary our heartfelt concerns: to beg her protection for the Church, to invoke her intercession for the gift of worthy vocations for dioceses and religious communities, to implore her assistance for families and her merciful prayers for all those longing for freedom from sin and for the grace of conversion, and, finally, to entrust to Mary's maternal care our sick and our elderly. May the great Mother of Austria and of Europe bring all of us to a profound renewal of faith and life!

... we all need His grace, just as Mary received it in its fullness. We learn to look always, like Mary, to Christ, and to make him our criterion and measure. ...

May Mary, our great Advocate and Mother, watch over and protect you and your work. May she intercede for you with her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Angelus Address at the Cathedral of St. Stephen, Austria – September 9, 2007

In my homily I wished to say something about the meaning of Sunday and about today's Gospel, and I think that this led us to discover that the love of God, who surrendered himself into our hands for our salvation, gives us the inner freedom to let go of our own lives, in order to find true life. Mary's participation in this love gave her the strength to say "yes" unconditionally. In her encounter with the gentle, respectful love of God, who awaits the free cooperation of his creature in order to bring about his saving plan, the Blessed Virgin was able to overcome all hesitation and, in view of this great and unprecedented plan, to entrust herself into his hands. With complete availability, interior openness and freedom, she allowed God to fill her with love, with his Holy

Spirit. Mary, the simple woman, could thus receive within herself the Son of God, and give to the world the Savior who had first given himself to her.

In today's celebration of the Eucharist, the Son of God has also been given to us. Those who have received Holy Communion, in a special way, carry the Risen Lord within themselves. Just as Mary bore him in her womb--a defenseless little child, totally dependent on the love of his Mother--so Jesus Christ, under the species of bread, has entrusted himself to us, dear brothers and sisters. Let us love this Jesus who gives himself so completely into our hands! Let us love him as Mary loved him! And let us bring him to others, just as Mary brought him to Elizabeth as the source of joyful exultation! The Virgin gave the Word of God a human body, and thus enabled him to come into the world as a man. Let us give our own bodies to the Lord, and let them become ever more fully instruments of God's love, temples of the Holy Spirit! Let us bring Sunday, and its immense gift, into the world! Let us ask Mary to teach us how to become, like her, inwardly free, so that in openness to God we may find true freedom, true life, genuine and lasting joy.

Benedict XVI's Address at Heiligenkreuz Abbey, Austria – September 9, 2007

On my pilgrimage to the *Magna Mater Austriae*, I am pleased to visit this Abbey of *Heiligenkreuz*, which is not only an important stop on the *Via Sacra* leading to Mariazell, but the oldest continuously active Cistercian monastery in the world. ...

At the advice of his son, Blessed Otto of Freising, who was my predecessor in the episcopal see of Freising, Saint Leopold of Austria founded your abbey in 1133, and called it *Unsere Liebe Frau zum Heiligen Kreuz*--Our Lady of Holy Cross. This monastery is dedicated to Our Lady not simply by tradition--like every Cistercian monastery--, but among you there burns the Marian flame of a Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard, who entered the monastery along with thirty of his companions, is a kind of patron saint of vocations. Perhaps it was because of his particular devotion to Our Lady that he exercised such a compelling and infectious influence on his many young contemporaries called by God. Where Mary is, there is the archetype of total self-giving and Christian discipleship. Where Mary is, there is the pentecostal breath of the Holy Spirit; there is new beginning and authentic renewal.

From this Marian sanctuary on the *Via Sacra*, I pray that all Austria's shrines will experience fruitfulness and further growth. Here, as at Mariazell, I would like, before leaving, to ask the Mother of God once more to intercede for all of Austria. In the words of Saint Bernard, I invite everyone to become a trusting child before Mary, even as the Son of God did: "Look to the star of the sea, call upon Mary ... in danger, in distress, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary. May her name never be far from your lips, or far from your heart ... If you follow her, you will not stray; if you pray to her, you will not despair; if you turn your thoughts to her, you will not err. If she holds you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you need not fear; if she is your guide, you will not tire; if she is gracious to you, you will surely reach your destination". (BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, In *Laudibus Virginis Matris*, Homilia 2, 17.)

Papal Farewell to Austria – September 9, 2007 at the Vienna Airport

... As I prepare to leave Austria at the conclusion of my pilgrimage for the 850th anniversary of the National Shrine of Mariazell, I recall with gratitude these days filled with memorable experiences. I feel that I have come to know even better this

beautiful country and its people. ... Once again I was able to experience Mariazell as a particularly grace-filled place, a place which in these days welcomed all of us and gave us inner strength for the road ahead. The throngs of people who joined in our celebration in the Basilica, in Mariazell itself and throughout Austria should inspire us, with Mary, to look to Christ and, as persons whom God looks upon with love, and to face with confidence the path to the future. It was nice that the wind and the bad weather could not stop us, but, in the end, added even more to our joy.

General Audience in St. Peter's Square – September 12, 2007

Today I intend to focus on the pastoral visit that I had the joy of making a few days ago to Austria, a country that is especially familiar to me, because it borders my native land and because of the numerous contacts that I have always had with it. The specific motive for this visit was the 850th anniversary of the Shrine of Mariazell, the most important in Austria, favored also by the faithful in Hungary and visited by pilgrims of other neighboring nations.

Above all it was a pilgrimage, which had as its theme "To Look to Christ": to meet Mary who shows Jesus to us...

The first stop was Mariensaule, the historic column upon which stands the statue of the Immaculate Virgin. There I met with thousands of young people and I began my pilgrimage.

...

I carried out the actual pilgrimage on Saturday, Sept. 8, feast of the Nativity of Mary, from whom Mariazell takes its name. Its origins go back to 1157, when a Benedictine monk from the nearby Abbey of St. Lambrecht, sent to preach there, experienced the special help of Mary. The monk carried a small wooden statue of Mary. The cell ("zell") where the monk placed the statue later became a place of pilgrimage and upon which, over the last two centuries, an important shrine was built, where Our Lady of Grace, so-called *Magna Mater Austriae*, is venerated still today.

... It was only when we reached the shrine that we fully understood the full sense of that theme: to look to Christ. Before us was the statue of Our Lady that with one hand pointed to the Baby Jesus, and above her, above the basilica's altar, the Crucified One. There our pilgrimage reached its goal: We contemplated the face of God in that Child in the arms of his Mother and in that Man with the outstretched arms. To look at Jesus with the eyes of Mary means to meet God who is Love, who was made man and died on a cross for us.

At the end of the Mass in Mariazell, I conferred a "mandate" to members of the parish pastoral councils, which have recently been renewed in all of Austria -- an eloquent ecclesiastical gesture with which I placed under Mary's protection the great network of parishes that are at the service of communion and mission.

At the shrine I experienced joyous moments of fraternity with the bishops of the country and the Benedictine community. I met with priests, religious, deacons and seminarians and celebrated vespers with them. Spiritually united to Mary, we magnified the Lord for the humble devotion of many men and women who trust in his mercy and consecrate

themselves to God's service. ...

Not far from Vienna is the Abbey of "Heiligenkreuz," of the Holy Cross, and it was a joy for me to visit that flowering community of Cistercian monks, that have existed for 874 years without interruption! ...

In conclusion, I renew my thanksgiving to the Lord for this visit-pilgrimage to Austria. The focal point was yet again a Marian shrine, in which I was able to live a strong ecclesial experience, as I did the week before in Loreto with the Italian youth. Moreover, in Vienna and Mariazell, it has been possible to see the living, faithful and varied reality of the Catholic Church, so numerously present in the scheduled events.

It was a joyful and radiant presence of a Church that, like Mary, is called to always "look to Christ" in order to show and offer him to everyone; a Church that is teacher and witness of a generous "yes" to life in each of its dimensions; a Church that carries out its two-thousand-year tradition at the service of a future of peace and true social progress for the entire human family.

Angelus Address at Castel Gandolfo – September 16, 2007

... In our time, humanity needs the mercy of God to be vigorously proclaimed and witnessed to. The beloved John Paul II, who was a great apostle of divine mercy, intuited this pastoral urgency. He dedicated his second encyclical to the merciful Father and throughout his pontificate he was a missionary of mercy to all nations. After the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, which obscured the dawn of the third millennium, he invited Christians and men of good will to believe that God's mercy is stronger than every evil and that in the cross of Christ there is found the salvation of the world. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, whom we contemplated yesterday as the sorrowful one at the foot of the cross, obtain for us the gift of always trusting in the love of God, and may she help us to be merciful as our Father in heaven. ...

This morning in Poland, at the shrine of Lichen, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, my secretary of state, in my name proclaimed as blessed Father Stanislaw Papczynski, founder of the Congregation of Marian Clerics. I address a cordial greeting to the faithful gathered together for this happy occasion and to the many people who are devoted to this newly beatified son of the Church in whom they venerate a priest who was exemplary in preaching, in the formation of the laity, a father of the poor and an apostle of intercessory prayer for the dead.

And also this morning in Bordeaux, Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, in my name proclaimed as blessed Sister Marie Celine of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a professed nun of the Second Order of St. Francis. She wanted her life, which was marked by the cross, to be a sign of Christ's love, as she herself said: "I thirst to be a rose of charity."

Message to tenth Inter-Christian Symposium – Castel Gandolfo, September 17, 2007

... The Holy Father invoked the aid of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Mary, under her title of "Theotokos," asking her mother intercession "so that our shared intentions will be crowned by the much wished-for spiritual successes."

Benedict XVI's Address to recently ordained Bishops – September 22, 2007

Like Mary may you know how to praise God for the salvation he is carrying out in the Church and in the world, convinced that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).

On Lazarus and World Hunger – *Angelus* Address on September 30, 2007

May the Virgin Mary help us to take advantage of the present time to listen and to put into practice this word of God. May she make us attentive to our brothers in need, to share with them the abundance or the little that we have, and to contribute, beginning with ourselves, to the spreading of the logic and style of authentic solidarity.