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Pope Benedict XVI

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November 2007



Angelus Address on All Saints' Day – November 1, 2007

... In the center of the assembly of saints shines the Virgin Mary, "humble and more exalted than any creature" (Dante, Paradise, XXXIII, 2). Placing our hand in hers, we feel ready to walk with more energy along the way of sainthood. To her we entrust our daily tasks, and we pray to her today for our dearly departed with the profound hope of one day finding ourselves together again with them in the glorious community of saints.

On Zacchaeus the Tax Collector – Angelus Address on November 4, 2007

... Remembering my venerable predecessor John Paul II, who with devotion bore St. Charles' name, let us entrust to the intercession of St. Charles all the bishops of the world, for whom we invoke as always the celestial protection of Mary Most Holy, mother of the Church.

Papal Address to University Federation – November 9, 2007

... The university years are therefore a training ground for convinced and courageous Gospel witness. To accomplish your mission, seek to cultivate an intimate friendship with the divine Teacher, placing yourself at the school of Mary, Seat of Wisdom. I entrust you to her maternal intercession and, while I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, I warmly impart to all with affection a special Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to your families and loved ones.

St. Martin of Tours – Angelus Address on November 11, 2007

We turn now to the Virgin Mary to implore that she help all Christians to be, like St. Martin, generous witnesses of the Gospel of charity and tireless builders of solidary [sic] sharing.

Papal Address to Superiors General of Missionary Societies – November 16, 2007

With great affection, I commend you, together with the members and associates of your various Societies, to the loving protection of Mary, Mother of the Church. To all of you I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of wisdom, strength and peace in the Lord.

On Trust in God – Angelus Address November 18, 2007

Consecrated persons, who have placed their life without reserve at the service of the kingdom of God invite us with singular effectiveness to keep this perspective alive. Among these persons I would like especially to draw attention to those who are called to contemplation in cloistered monasteries. The Church dedicates a particular day to them on Wednesday, Nov. 21, the memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the temple. We owe much to these persons who live by what providence procures for them through the generosity of the faithful.

... May Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, accompany us on the earthly pilgrimage. We ask her to support the witness of all Christians, that it always rest on a solid and persevering faith.

Papal Homily at the Consistory – November 23, 2007

To Mary, Queen of the Apostles, we turn our confidence. May her spiritual presence today in this singular cenacle be a pledge for the new cardinals and for all of us a constant effusion of the Holy Spirit that guides the Church on her way in history. Amen!

Pope's Address for Consistory of Cardinals – November 25 in St. Peter's Basilica, the feast of Christ the King

... I place, or rather, let us all place your mission under the vigilant protection of the Mother of the Church, Mary Most Holy. To her, united to her Son on Calvary and assumed as Queen at his right hand in glory, we entrust the new Cardinals, the College of Cardinals and the entire Catholic community, committed to sowing in the furrows of history Christ's Kingdom, the Lord of Life and Prince of Peace.

On St. Ephrem the Syrian – General Audience November 28, 2007

...As Advent is almost here, I would like to show you some wonderful images taken from the hymn "On Christ's Nativity." In an inspired tone Ephrem expressed his wonder of the figure of the Virgin Mary:

"The Lord came to her
to make himself a servant.
The Word came to her
to keep silence in her womb.
The lightning came to her
to not make any noise.

"The shepherd came to her
and the Lamb is born, who humbly cries.
Because Mary's womb
has reversed the roles:
The one who created all things
wasn't born rich, but poor.

"The Almighty came to her (Mary),
but he came humbly.
Splendor came to her,
but dressed in humble clothes.
The One who gives us all things
met hunger.

"The One who gives water to
everyone met thirst.
Naked and unclothed he came from
her, he who dresses all things (with
beauty)." (Hymn "De Nativitate" 11,
6-8).

.... To Ephrem the role of the woman is a relevant one. The way he wrote about women was always prompted by sensibility and respect: The fact that Jesus dwelt in the womb of Mary has enormously raised woman's dignity. For Ephrem there is no redemption without Jesus, just as there could be no incarnation without Mary.

In English, he said:

... Through his mastery of poetic symbolism, Ephrem sought to communicate, especially in his hymns, the mystery of the trinitarian God, the incarnation of the eternal Son born of the Virgin Mary, and the spiritual

treasures contained in the Eucharist. His poetry and hymns not only enriched the liturgy; they also proved an important means of catechesis for the Christian community in the fourth century.

Conclusion of Pope Benedict's Second Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi* – November 30, 2007

Mary, Star of Hope

49. With a hymn composed in the eighth or ninth century, thus for over a thousand years, the Church has greeted Mary, the Mother of God, as “Star of the Sea”: *Ave maris stella*. Human life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her “yes” she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (cf. *Jn* 1:14).

50. So we cry to her: Holy Mary, you belonged to the humble and great souls of Israel who, like Simeon, were “looking for the consolation of Israel” (*Lk* 2:25) and hoping, like Anna, “for the redemption of Jerusalem” (*Lk* 2:38).

Your life was thoroughly imbued with the sacred scriptures of Israel which spoke of hope, of the promise made to Abraham and his descendants (cf. *Lk* 1:55). In this way we can appreciate the holy fear that overcame you when the angel of the Lord appeared to you and told you that you would give birth to the One who was the hope of Israel, the One awaited by the world. Through you, through your “yes”, the hope of the ages became reality, entering this world and its history. You bowed low before the greatness of this task and gave your consent: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1:38).

When you hastened with holy joy across the mountains of Judea to see your cousin Elizabeth, you became the image of the Church to come, which carries the hope of the world in her womb across the mountains of history. But alongside the joy which, with your *Magnificat*, you proclaimed in word and song for all the centuries to hear, you also knew the dark sayings of the prophets about the suffering of the servant of God in this world. Shining over his birth in the stable at Bethlehem, there were angels in splendor who brought the good news to the shepherds, but at the same time the lowliness of God in this world was all too palpable. The old man Simeon spoke to you of the sword which would pierce your soul (cf. *Lk* 2:35), of the sign of contradiction that your Son would be in this world. Then, when Jesus began his public ministry, you had to step aside, so that a new family could grow, the family which it was his mission to establish and which would be made up of those who heard his word and kept it (cf. *Lk* 11:27f).

Notwithstanding the great joy that marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry, in the synagogue of Nazareth you must already have experienced the truth of the saying about the “sign of contradiction” (cf. *Lk* 4:28ff).

In this way you saw the growing power of hostility and rejection which built up around Jesus until the hour of the Cross, when you had to look upon the Savior of the world, the heir of David, the Son of God dying like a failure, exposed to mockery, between criminals. Then you received the word of Jesus: “Woman, behold, your Son!” (*Jn* 19:26).

From the Cross you received a new mission. From the Cross you became a mother in a new way: the mother of all those who believe in your Son Jesus and wish to follow him. The sword of sorrow pierced your heart. Did hope die? Did the world remain definitively without light, and life without purpose? At that moment, deep down, you probably listened again to the word spoken by the angel in answer to your fear at the time of the Annunciation: “Do not be afraid, Mary!”

(*Lk* 1:30). How many times had the Lord, your Son, said the same thing to his disciples: do not be afraid! In your heart, you heard this word again during the night of Golgotha. Before the hour of his betrayal he had said to his disciples: “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (*Jn* 16:33). “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (*Jn* 14:27).

“Do not be afraid, Mary!” In that hour at Nazareth the angel had also said to you: “Of his kingdom there will be no end” (*Lk* 1:33). Could it have ended before it began? No, at the foot of the Cross, on the strength of Jesus's own word, you became the mother of believers. In this faith, which even in the darkness of Holy Saturday bore the certitude of hope, you made your way towards Easter morning. The joy of the

Resurrection touched your heart and united you in a new way to the disciples, destined to become the family of Jesus through faith. In this way you were in the midst of the community of believers, who in the days following the Ascension prayed with one voice for the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Acts 1:14*) and then received that gift on the day of Pentecost. The "Kingdom" of Jesus was not as might have been imagined. It began in that hour, and of this "Kingdom" there will be no end. Thus you remain in the midst of the disciples as their Mother, as the Mother of hope. Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother, teach us to believe, to hope, to love with you. Show us the way to his Kingdom! Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way!