

2-2008

February 2008

Pope Benedict XVI

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**eCommons Citation**

Benedict XVI, Pope, "February 2008" (2008). *Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI*. Paper 35.  
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*February 2, 2008 to February 17, 2008*



**Address on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord – 12. World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2008**

... In his account of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, at least three times the Evangelist Luke emphasizes that Mary and Joseph acted in accordance with "the Law of the Lord" (cf. Lk 2: 22, 23, 39), moreover they always appear to be listening attentively to the Word of God. ...

In entrusting these reflections to you, I thank you for the precious service you render to the Church and, as I invoke the protection of Mary and of the Saints and Blesseds, Founders of your Institutes, I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you and to your respective religious families, with a special thought for the young men and women in formation and for your brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly or in difficulty.

**For Vocations, Life, Lent – Angelus Address February 3, 2008**

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today I would like to entrust various intentions to your prayers. Firstly, recalling that yesterday, the liturgical feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we celebrated the Day for Consecrated Life, I invite you to pray for those whom Christ calls to follow him more closely with a special consecration. .... May the Holy Virgin obtain many and holy vocations to the consecrated life, which constitutes inestimable riches for the Church and for the world.

... Let us pray also that the season of Lent, which will begin Wednesday with the Rite of the Ashes -- which I celebrate, as every year, at the Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine -- will be a time of authentic conversion for all Christians, called to an ever more authentic and courageous witness of their faith. We entrust these prayer intentions to the Madonna.

Beginning yesterday and continuing through Feb. 11, the memorial of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes and the 150th anniversary of the apparitions, it is possible to receive a plenary indulgence, applicable to the dead, with the usual

conditions -- confession, Communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions -- by praying before a blessed image of Our Lady of Lourdes exposed for public veneration. For the elderly and the sick this is possible through the desire of the heart. Mary, Mother and Star of Hope, illuminate our path and make us always more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

### **On the Lenten Journey - General Audience on Wednesday February 6, 2008**

... Dear brothers and sisters, we ask Mary, Mother of God and the Church, to walk with us on the Lenten journey, to make it a journey of true conversion. Let us be led by her and we will arrive -- profoundly renewed -- at the celebration of the great mystery of the Easter of Christ, the supreme revelation of God's merciful love. A blessed Lent to all of you! ...

*In English, he said*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our annual Lenten journey of prayer and penance. ... As we set out once again on this journey of spiritual renewal, may Mary, Mother of the Church, guide us to a fruitful celebration of Easter. A Blessed Lent to all of you!

### **Papal Address to the participants in the National Assembly of the Italian Federation of Spiritual Exercises – February 9, 2008**

... A good course of Spiritual Exercises contributes to renewing in those who participate in it a joy of and taste for the Liturgy, in particular of the dignified celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours and above all, the Eucharist. It helps one rediscover the importance of the Sacrament of Penance, it opens the way to conversion and the gift of reconciliation, as well as to the value and meaning of Eucharistic Adoration. The full and authentic sense of the Holy Rosary and of the pious practice of the Way of the Cross can also be beneficially recovered during the Exercises. Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for the precious service that you render to the Church and for the commitment you extend so that in Italy the "network" of Spiritual Exercises is always more widespread and qualified. On my part I assure you of a remembrance to the Lord, while, invoking the intercession of Mary Most Holy, I impart the Apostolic Blessing to all of you and to your collaborators.

### **On Entering Into Lent – Angelus Address February 10, 2008**

... This year the beginning of Lent providentially coincides with the 150th anniversary of the apparitions at Lourdes. Four years after the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Blessed Pius IX, Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in the grotto of Massabielle for the first time on Feb. 11, 1858. Other appearances followed, accompanied by extraordinary events, and at the end the Holy Virgin, bidding farewell to the young visionary, told her in the local dialect, "I am the Immaculate Conception." The message that the Madonna continues to spread at Lourdes recalls the words Jesus pronounced at the beginning of his public mission and that we hear again often during these days of Lent: "Convert and believe in the Gospel," pray and do penance. Let us accept Mary's invitation, which echoes Christ's, and let us ask her to help us to "enter" with faith into Lent, to live this time of grace with interior joy and generous commitment.

We entrust to the Virgin as well the sick and those who care lovingly for them. Tomorrow, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, we celebrate, in fact, the World Day of the Sick. I greet with all my heart the pilgrims who are gathering in St. Peter's Basilica led by Cardinal Barragán, president of the Pontifical Council of Health. Unfortunately I cannot meet them because this evening I will begin spiritual exercises, but in silence and in recollection I will pray for them and for all the necessities of the Church and the world. To all those who will remember me to the Lord I offer my sincere thanks in advance.

### **Papal Address to Participants in Congress on Women – February 9, 2008**

... Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you once more for your visit and, while I wish you complete success in the work of the conference, I assure you of a remembrance in prayer, invoking the maternal intercession of Mary, that she help the women of our time to realize their vocation and their mission in the ecclesial and civil community.

## **On Being Transfigured – Angelus Address February 17, 2008**

... Turning now in prayer to Mary, we recognize in her the human creature interiorly transfigured by the grace of Christ, and we entrust ourselves to her guidance to continue in the journey of Lent with faith.