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Pope Benedict XVI

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February 2009



On the Messiah – Angelus Address, February 1, 2009

The Virgin Mary carried in her mother's heart the Son's secret, she shared in the painful moments of the passion and crucifixion, sustained by the hope of the resurrection. To her we entrust those who suffer and those who dedicate themselves to supporting them each day, serving life in all its phases: parents, health care workers, priests, religious, researchers, volunteers, and many others. We pray for all of them.

[After the Angelus the Pope greeted the pilgrims in various languages. In Italian he said:]

Tomorrow we celebrate the liturgical feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Forty days after Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph brought him to Jerusalem, following the prescriptions of the Law of Moses. Every first born, in fact, according to the Scriptures, belonged to the Lord, and so had to be ransomed by a sacrifice. In this event Jesus' consecration to God the Father is manifested and, linked to it, that of the Virgin Mary. For this reason my beloved predecessor, John Paul II, desired that this feast, in which many consecrated persons take or renew their vows, be the Day of Consecrated Life. So, tomorrow afternoon, at the end of Holy Mass, at which the prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life will preside, I will meet with the consecrated men and women who are present in Rome in St. Peter's Basilica. I invite everyone to thank the Lord for the precious gift of these brothers and sisters, and to ask him, through the intercession of the Madonna, for many new vocations, in the variety of charisms with which the Church is rich.

Papal Address on Day for Consecrated Life, February 2, 2009 - the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

I greet with affection the men and women Superiors General present here and all of you, brothers and sisters who, with your witness as consecrated persons modeled on the Virgin Mary, carry Christ's light in the Church and in the world.

Dear brothers and sisters, today's liturgy urges us to look at the Virgin Mary, the "consecrated one" par excellence. Paul speaks of her with concise but effective words that describe her greatness and her task: she is the "woman"

from whom, in the fullness of time, the Son of God was born (cf. Gal 4: 4). Mary is the Mother who today presents her Son to the Father at the Temple, also continuing in this action the "yes" she spoke at the moment of the Annunciation. May she once again be the mother who accompanies and sustains us, God's children and her children, in carrying out a generous service to God and to the brethren. To this end, I invoke her heavenly intercession as I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing to all of you and to your respective religious families.

Message for 2009 World Day of the Sick – From the Vatican, February 2, 2009

The World Day of the Sick, which will be celebrated next 11 February, the liturgical Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, will see the diocesan communities gathering with their Bishops at prayer meetings in order to reflect and decide on initiatives of sensitization concerning the reality of suffering.

To conclude, ... here is a special greeting for you, dear sick and suffering children: the Pope embraces you with fatherly affection together with your parents and relatives, and assures you of his special remembrance in prayer, as he asks you to trust in the maternal help of the Immaculate Virgin Mary who last Christmas we once again contemplated joyfully holding in her arms the Son of God who became a Child.

Pope's Lenten Message for 2009 - dated December 11, 2008 and released on February 3, 2008

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, "*Causa nostrae laetitiae*," accompany and support us in the effort to free our heart from slavery to sin, making it evermore a "living tabernacle of God." With these wishes, while assuring every believer and ecclesial community of my prayer for a fruitful Lenten journey, I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

On Sickness and God's Healing Love – Angelus Address of February 8, 2009

The experience of the healing of the sick occupies a good portion of the public mission of Christ and it invites us once again to reflect on the meaning and value of illness in every situation in which the human being can find himself. This opportunity comes also because of the World Day of the Sick, which we will celebrate next Wednesday, February 11, liturgical memorial of the Virgin Mary of Lourdes.

Let us pray for all the ill, especially for those who are most grave, and who can in no way take care of themselves, but depend entirely on the care of others; may every one of them be able to experience, in the solicitude of those who are near to them, the power of the love of God and the richness of his grace that saves us. Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.

[After praying the Angelus, he said:]

Intensely concerned by the particularly critical moment that the country is going through, I invite you to unite yourselves to the Catholics of Madagascar to entrust to the Lord those who have died in the manifestations and to invoke from him, through the intercession of Most Holy Mary, the return of harmony of thought, social tranquility and civil co-existence. As I said just a moment ago, next February 11, memorial of the Virgin Mary of Lourdes, the World Day of the Sick is celebrated.

Benedict XVI entrusts Sick to Mary of Lourdes – February 11, 2009

Benedict XVI invited youth, ill people and newlyweds to entrust their lives to Mary as the Church celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. At the end of the general audience in Paul VI Hall, the Pope invited the boys and girls among the eight thousand pilgrims to entrust themselves "**always to the maternal protection of Mary so that she helps you to conserve a generous heart, available and full of apostolic enthusiasm.**" On February 11 the Church also celebrates the World Day of the Sick, and the Holy Father addressed the ill to express his hope that "**the Virgin of Lourdes, to whose**

intercession many ill people of body and spirit entrust themselves with trust, may place her gaze of consolation and hope on all of you." Finally, with a word to the newlyweds at the audience, the Bishop of Rome said: **"May Mary accompany you [...] in your path, so that your families become communities of intense spiritual life and concrete Christian testimony."**

On Transgressions and Forgiveness – Angelus Address on February 15, 2009

Dear brothers and sisters, let us invoke the Virgin Mary, whom God preserved from every stain of sin, that she help us to avoid sin and to have frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Confession, the Sacrament of Forgiveness, whose value and importance for our Christian life needs to be rediscovered today.

Benedict XVI's Address to Nigerian Bishops during their ad limina visit – February 14, 2009

Commending you and those entrusted to your pastoral care to the prayers of Blessed Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi and to the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Papal Words on Vatican City State 80th Anniversary – February 14, 2009

May Vatican City be increasingly a genuine "city on the hill," luminous, thanks to the conviction and generous dedication of those who work in it at the service of the ecclesial mission of the successor of Peter. With this hope, I invoke the maternal protection of Mary, the intercession of Sts. Peter and Paul and the other martyrs who have made this soil sacred, and impart my heartfelt blessing to all of you gathered here, extending it with affection to the great family of Vatican City State.

On the Life of St. Bede – General Audience, February 18, 2009

Following the "realism" of the catecheses of Cyril, Ambrose and Augustine, Bede teaches that the sacraments of Christian initiation make every faithful person "not only a Christian but Christ." In fact, every time that a faithful soul receives and guards the Word of God with love, in imitation of Mary, he conceives and generates Christ again. And every time that a group of neophytes receives the Easter sacraments, the Church is "self-generated," or to use a still more daring expression, the Church becomes "Mother of God," participating in the generation of her children, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

"Forge Your Heart as True Apostles" - Address to the community of the Pius Pontifical Latin American College in Rome, February 19, 2009

I place in the hands of Mary Most Holy, Our Lady of Guadalupe, each and every one of you, as well as your families and communities of origin, so that her maternal protection will lovingly assist you in your tasks and help you to be rooted very deeply in her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed fruit of her womb.

Address to the members of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America on the occasion of their plenary assembly on February 20, 2009

For all of us, the seminary was a decisive time of discernment and preparation. There, in profound dialogue with Christ, our desire to be deeply rooted in him was strengthened. In those years, we learned to see the Church as our own home, accompanied by Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our most loving Mother, always obedient to the will of God.

I entrust to the maternal care of the Most Holy Virgin Mary the initiatives of this plenary assembly, praying that she will accompany those who are preparing for the priestly ministry following in the footsteps of her Divine Son, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. With these sentiments, I impart to you with

affection the apostolic blessing.

Pope's "*Lectio Divina*" on Paul's Letter to Galatians during a visit to Rome's Major Seminary on the eve of the feast of the seminary's patroness, Our Lady of Confidence – February 20, 2009

For me it is always a great joy to be in my seminary, to see the future priests of my diocese, to be with you under the sign of Our Lady of Confidence. We go forward with her, who helps and accompanies us, and who really gives us the certainty of always being helped by divine grace.

After this word -- the law has been fulfilled -- after this unique word that becomes reality in communion with Christ, all the figures of the saints who have entered into this communion with Christ appear behind the Lord, in this unity of being, in this unity with his will. Above all, the Virgin appears, in her humility, her goodness, her love. The Virgin gives us this confidence, she takes us by the hand, guides us and helps us on the path of uniting ourselves with the will of God, as she was from the first moment, expressing this union in her "Fiat."

Finally, we want to thank God because He has shown us his face in Christ, because he has given us the Virgin, the saints, because He has called us to be only one body, one spirit with him. And let us pray that He will help us to insert ourselves ever more in this communion with his will, so as to find love and joy in freedom.

On the Primacy of the Chair of Peter –Angelus Address on February 22, 2009

We invoke the Virgin Mary, whom we celebrated yesterday, here in Rome, under the title of Our Lady of Confidence. We ask her to help us to enter into the Lenten season -- which will begin on Wednesday with the evocative Rite of Ashes -- with devout dispositions of soul. May Mary open our hearts to conversion and to a docile listening to the Word of God.

"Mary is Really the Woman Who Listens" - Q-and-A Session With Parish Priests, February 26, 2009

[Father William M. Cassone:] Holy Father, I am Father William M. Cassone, of the Community of Schoenstatt Fathers in Rome, parish vicar in the parish of Italy's patron saints, St. Francis and St. Catherine, in Trastevere. Following the synod on the Word of God, reflecting on Proposition 55, "Maria Mater Dei et Mater Fidei," I wonder how we could improve the relationship between the Word of God and Marian devotion, be it in the priestly spiritual life or in pastoral action. Two images are helpful to me: the Annunciation for listening and the Visitation for the proclamation. I would like to ask you, Your Holiness, to enlighten us with your teaching on this subject. Thank you for this gift.

[Benedict XVI:] I think that you yourself have answered your question. Mary is really the woman who listens: We see it in the meeting with the angel, and we see it again in all the scenes of her life, from the wedding at Cana to the cross and to the day of Pentecost, when she was in the midst of the Apostles precisely to receive the Spirit. She is the symbol of openness, of the Church that awaits the coming of the Holy Spirit.

At the moment of the proclamation we can already have an attitude of listening -- a true listening, a listening that is internalized, which does not simply say yes, but which assimilates the Word, takes the Word, and then follows with true obedience, as if it were an internalized Word, that is, converted into a Word in me and for me, almost the form of my life. This seems very beautiful to me: to see this active listening, a listening that attracts the Word so that it enters and becomes Word in me, reflecting on it and accepting it in the depth of my heart. Thus the Word becomes incarnate. We see the same in the Magnificat. We know that it is a fabric made up of words of the Old Testament. We see that Mary is really a woman who listens, who knew the Scriptures in her heart. She did not just know some texts, but was so identified with the Word that the words of the Old Testament became synthesized, a song in her heart and on her lips. We see that her life was really penetrated by the Word, she had entered the Word, had assimilated it and it had become life in her, transforming itself again in a Word of praise and proclamation of the greatness of God.

Referring to Mary, I think that St. Luke says at least three times, perhaps four times, that she assimilated and kept the Word in her heart. For the Fathers, she was the model of the Church, the model of the believer that keeps the Word, bears the Word in himself; who does not just read it or interpret it with his intelligence in order to know what happened at that time, what the philological problems are. All this is interesting and important, but it is more important to listen to the Word that is kept and that becomes Word in me, life and the Lord's presence in me. That is why I find the connection important between Mariology and theology of the Word, of which the synodal fathers spoke and of which we shall speak in the post-synodal document.

It is obvious: The Virgin is the word of listening, silent word, but also word of praise, of proclamation, because in listening, the Word again becomes flesh and thus becomes the presence of God's greatness.

Papal Address to Members of the "Pro Petri Sede" and "Etrennes Pontificales" charitable Associations from Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – February 27, 2009

Entrusting you and your loved ones to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, I impart to you from my heart the apostolic blessing, as well as to the members of your associations and their families.