

3-2011

March 2011

Pope Benedict XVI

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Benedict XVI, Pope, "March 2011" (2011). *Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI*. Paper 72.
http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi/72

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March 2011



Lectio Divina to Roman Seminarians: "The Christian Life Begins with a Call and Always Remains a Response" - Homily at a celebration of lectio divina with the Major Roman Seminary. In keeping with an annual tradition, the Holy Father visited on the feast of the seminary's patron, Our Lady of Trust, March 4, 2011.

The address reflects on the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

... I spoke about the call of the first apostles, but with the word "call" we think above all of the Mother of every call, of Mary Most Holy, the chosen one, the one called par excellence. The depiction of the Annunciation to Mary represents much more than that particular Gospel episode, however fundamental: it contains the whole mystery of Mary, her entire history, her being; and at the same time it speaks of the Church, of the essence that is always hers; as of every

individual believer in Christ, of every Christian soul who is called.

... At this point we must remember that we are not speaking of people of the past. God, the Lord, has called each of us; he has called each one by name. God is so great that he has time for each one of us, he knows me, he knows each of us by name, personally. It is a personal call for each of us. I think that we must meditate on this mystery often: God, the Lord, called me, calls me, knows me, awaits my response as he awaited Mary's response, as he awaited the response of the Apostles.

... The mystery of the Church is altogether animated by the dynamism of the Holy Spirit, which is a vocational dynamism in a wide and everlasting sense, beginning with Abraham, who first heard the call of God and responded with faith and action (cf. Genesis 12:1-3); to the "here I am" of Mary, perfect reflection of that of the Son of God, at the moment that she receives from the Father the call to come into the world (cf. Hebrews 10:5-7).

... And we pray to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Trust, to help us walk with joy in the unity of the Spirit.

On the Foundation of Rock: "Find Space Every Day for the Word of God" – Angelus
Address, March 6, 2011

... Let us invoke the help of the Virgin Mary, whose existence was marked by fidelity to the Word of God. We contemplate her in the Annunciation, at the foot of the cross and, now, participating in the glory of the risen Christ. Like her, we want to renew our "yes" and entrust our journey to God.

Homily During Ash Wednesday Mass: "Let Us Begin This Lenten Itinerary Confident and

Joyful" – March 9, 2011

... May Mary, our guide on our Lenten path, lead us to an ever more profound knowledge of Christ, dead and resurrected, may she help us in the spiritual battle against sin, may she sustain us on invoking forcefully: Convert us, "Deus salutaris noster"--"Convert us to You, O God, our salvation." Amen!

Address to Belgian Pro Petri Sede Association: "The Service of Charity Belongs to the Very Nature of the Church" – March 11, 2011

... Dear friends, may you be everywhere luminous and effective witnesses of the hope that the love of God infuses! Entrusting each one of you and your families, as well as the members of your association, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Peter and to the saints of your countries, I impart to you with all my heart the apostolic blessing.

Address to Italian Political Leaders: "Unity and Plurality Are ... Values That Mutually Enrich Each Other" – To members of the National Association of Italian Local Authorities, March 12, 2011.

... Invoking the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary -- venerated by the Italian people in their many sanctuaries, places of spirituality, of art and of culture-- and of the holy patrons Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, I bless all of you, your coworkers and the whole Italian nation.

On Sin and Evil: "God Is Determined to Deliver His Children from Slavery to Lead Them to Freedom" – Angelus Address, March 13, 2011

... We thus invoke the help of Mary Most Holy for the Lenten journey just begun so that it be rich

with the fruit of conversion.

In English:

... Turning to the pilgrims present at today's "Angelus" prayer, I greet especially the Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy and their chaplains, as well as the members of the Nazareth Academy Choir. Entrusting all of you to the care of Mary, Mother of the Church, I invoke upon you and your loved ones the blessings of Almighty God.

To Spiritual Exercises Preacher: "This Retreat ... Made Us Sense the Church as Communion of Saints" – Letter sent XVI to Discalced Carmelite Father François-Marie Lethel, secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Theology, who preached this year's Lenten retreat.

... May Our Lady and St. Joseph, Husband and Patron of the universal Church, whose feast we celebrate today, and to whom you dedicated this morning's meditation, obtain for you the abundance of heavenly gifts in pledge of which I bestow from my heart a special apostolic blessing, which I extend also to those whom you hold dear.

At the Vatican, March 19, 2011

BENEDICTUS PP XVI

On the Lord's Transfiguration: "It Is a Revelation of His Divinity" – *Angelus* Address, March 20, 2011

... We invoke the Virgin Mary so that she might help us always to listen to and follow the Lord Jesus Christ even unto the passion and the cross, to participate in his glory also.

On St. Lawrence of Brindisi (1559-1619): "All His Activity Was Inspired in His Great Love for Sacred Scripture" – General Audience,

March 23, 2011

... being a Mariologist of great value, and author of a collection of sermons on Our Lady entitled *Mariale*, he made evident the unique role of the Virgin Mary. He affirmed with clarity the Immaculate Conception and her cooperation in the work of redemption carried out by Christ.

On Christ, Weary and Thirsty – Angelus Address, March 27, 2011

... Let us pause a moment in silence, in our room, or in a church, or in a place apart. Let us listen to the voice that says: "If you knew the gift of God." May the Virgin Mary help us not to miss this opportunity on which our true happiness depends.

Letter to Family Meeting of Latin American Bishops in Bogota – March 29, 2011

... I conclude expressing my affection and solidarity to all the families of Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular those who find themselves in situations of difficulty, while commending at the same time to the powerful protection of the most Holy Virgin Mary the fruits of this laudable initiative, I impart from my heart the apostolic blessing, which I am pleased to extend to all those who are involved in the evangelization and promotion of the good of families.

On St. Alphonsus Liguori: "Priests Are a Visible Sign of the Infinite Mercy of God" – General Audience, March 30, 2011

... Read and translated into numerous languages, the works of St. Alphonsus have contributed to mold popular spirituality of the last two centuries. Some of them are texts to be read with great profit again today, such as *The Eternal Maxims*,

The Glories of Mary, The Practice of Loving Jesus Christ -- this last one a work that represents the synthesis of his thought and his masterpiece. ...

... And precisely because it is Christological, Alphonsus' piety is also exquisitely Marian. Most devoted to Mary, he illustrated her role in the history of salvation: partner of the Redemption and Mediatrix of grace, Mother, Advocate and Queen. Moreover, St. Alphonsus affirmed that devotion to Mary will be of great comfort at the moment of our death. ...

[In English, he said:]

... Alphonsus' ... many spiritual writings, marked by a deep Christological and Marian piety, stressed the practice of prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament.

[In Italian, he continued:]

... Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I invoke the Lord's blessing on you, on the bishops, the priests, the men and women religious and on all the faithful.