

University of Dayton eCommons

Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI

Marian Thoughts of the Popes

8-2009

August 2009

Pope Benedict XVI

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi

eCommons Citation

Benedict XVI, Pope, "August 2009" (2009). *Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI*. Paper 53.
http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi/53

This Letter to the Editor is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Thoughts of the Popes at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu.

August 2009



On the Saints of August Angelus Address in Castel Gandolfo on August 2, 2009

Jesus appeared to him [St. Francis] in his glory, with the Virgin Mary on his right and surrounded by many Angels. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, help priests to be totally in love with Christ, after the example of these models of priestly holiness.

On the Cur d'Ars Address during the General Audience held at the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo on August 5, 2009

Let us pray that, through the intercession of St. John Mary Vianney, God will give holy priests to his Church and will increase in the faithful the desire to sustain and help them

in their ministry. Let us entrust this intention to Mary, whom on this very day we invoke as Our Lady of the Snow.

[In English, he said:]

Today, the liturgical Memorial of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the liturgy invites us to turn our gaze to Mary, mother of Christ. Always look to her, dear young people, imitating her in doing God's will faithfully; turn to her with trust, dear sick people, to experience the effectiveness of her protection in moments of trial; entrust your family to her, dear newlyweds, so that it may always be supported by her maternal intercession.

More Saints of August - Angelus Address in Castel Gandolfo on August 9, 2009

Except for the Virgin Clare of Assisi, who was consumed with divine love in her daily sacrifice of prayer and community life, the others are martyrs, two of whom were killed in the concentration camp at Auschwitz: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, who, born into the Jewish faith and won over by Christ as an adult, became a Carmelite nun and sealed her existence with martyrdom; and St. Maximilian Kolbe, a son of Poland and of St. Francis of Assisi, a great apostle of Mary Immaculate.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us pray the Virgin Mary to help all of us and in the first place priests to be holy like these heroic witnesses of faith and of self-dedication to the point of martyrdom. And charity in truth is the only credible and exhaustive response one can offer to the profound human and spiritual crisis of the contemporary world.

General Audience Castel Gandolfo August 12, 2009

... As the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed

Virgin draws near in this Year of the Priest, my catechesis today is centered on Mary the mother of priests. She looks upon them with special affection as her sons. Indeed, their mission is similar to hers; priests are called to bring forth Christs saving love into the world. On the cross, Jesus invites all believers, especially his closest disciples, to love and venerate Mary as their mother. Let us pray that all priests will make a special place for the Blessed Virgin in their lives, and seek her assistance daily as they bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus.

Papal Homily for the Assumption - Church of San Tommaso da Villanova in Castel Gandolfo, August 15, 2009

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today's Solemnity crowns the series of important liturgical celebrations in which we are called to contemplate the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the history of salvation. Indeed, the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, the Divine Motherhood and the Assumption are the fundamental, interconnected milestones with which the Church exalts and praises the glorious destiny of the Mother of God, but in which we can also read our history.

The mystery of Mary's conception recalls the first page of the human event, pointing out to us that in the divine plan of creation man was to have had the purity and beauty of the Virgin Immaculate. This plan, jeopardized but not destroyed by sin, through the Incarnation of the Son of God, proclaimed and brought into being in Mary, was recomposed and restored to the free acceptance of the human being in faith.

Lastly, in Mary's Assumption, we contemplate what we ourselves are called to attain in the following of Christ the Lord and in obedience to his word, at the

end of our earthly journey. The last stage of the mother of God's earthly pilgrimage invites us to look at the manner in which she journeyed on toward the goal of glorious eternity.

In the Gospel passage just proclaimed, St. Luke tells that, after the angel's announcement, Mary "arose and went with haste into the hill country," to visit Elizabeth (Lk 1: 39). With these words the Evangelist wishes to emphasize that for Mary to follow her own vocation in docility to God's Spirit, who has brought about within her the Incarnation of the Word, means taking a new road and immediately setting out from home, allowing herself to be led on a journey by God alone. St. Ambrose, commenting on Mary's "haste," says: "the grace of the Holy Spirit admits of no delay." (Expos. *Evang. sec. Lucam*, ii, 19: PL 15, 1560)

Our Lady's life is guided by Another: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1: 38); it is modeled by the Holy Spirit, it is marked by events and encounters, such as that with Elizabeth, but above all by her very special relationship with her Son Jesus. It is a journey on which Mary, cherishing and pondering in her heart the events of her own life, perceives in them ever more profoundly the mysterious design of God the Father for the salvation of the world.

Then, by following Jesus from Bethlehem to exile in Egypt, in both his hidden and his public life and even to the foot of the Cross, Mary lives her constant ascent to God in the spirit of the Magnificat, fully adhering to God's plan of love, even in moments of darkness and suffering, and nourishing in her heart total abandonment in the Lord's hands in order to be a paradigm for the faithful of the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 64-65).

The whole of life is an ascent, the whole of life is meditation, obedience, trust and hope, even in darkness; and the whole of life is marked by this "holy haste" which knows that God always has priority and nothing else must create haste in our existence.

And, lastly, the Assumption reminds us that Mary's life, like that of every Christian, is a journey of following, following Jesus, a journey that has a very precise destination, a future already marked out: the definitive victory over sin and death and full communion with God, because, as Paul says in his Letter to the Ephesians, the Father "raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2: 6).

This means that with Baptism we have already fundamentally been raised and are seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, but we must physically attain what was previously begun and brought about in Baptism. In us, union with Christ resurrection is incomplete, but for the Virgin Mary it is complete, despite the journey that Our Lady also had to make. She has entered into the fullness of union with God, with her Son, she draws us onwards and accompanies us on our journey. In Mary taken up into Heaven we therefore contemplate the One who, through a unique privilege, was granted to share with her soul and her body in Christ's definitive victory over death. "When her earthly life was over," the Second Vatican Council says, the Immaculate Virgin "was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory... and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords (cf. Rv 19: 16) and conqueror of sin and death." (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 59) In the Virgin taken up into Heaven we contemplate the crowning of her faith, of that journey of faith which she points out to the Church and to each one of us: the one who, at every moment, welcomed the Word of God, is taken up into Heaven, in other words she herself is received by the Son in the "dwelling place" which he prepared for us with his death and Resurrection (cf. Jn 14: 2-3).

Human life on earth as the First Reading has reminded us is a journey that takes place, constantly, in the intense struggle between the dragon and the woman, between good and evil. This is the plight of human history: it is like a voyage on a

sea, often dark and stormy. Mary is the Star that guides us towards her Son Jesus, "the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history" (cf. *Spe Salvi*, n. 49) and gives us the hope we need: the hope that we can win, that God has won and that, with Baptism we entered into this victory. We do not succumb definitively: God helps us, He guides us.

This is our hope: this presence of the Lord within us that becomes visible in Mary taken up into Heaven. "The Virgin" in a little while we shall read in the Preface for this Solemnity "that you made to shine out as 'a sign of hope and comfort for your people on their pilgrim way'."

With St. Bernard, a mystic who sang the Blessed Virgin's praises, let us thus invoke her: "We pray you, O Blessed One, for the grace that you found, for those prerogatives that you deserved, for the Mercy you bore, obtain that the One who for your sake deigned to share in our wretchedness and infirmity, through your prayers may make us share in his graces, in his bliss and in his eternal glory, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who is above all things, Blessed God forever and ever. Amen" (*Sermo 2 "de Adventu," 5: PL 183, 43*).

On the Marian Devotion of St. John Vianney Angelus Address, August 15, 2009 in Castel Gandolfo

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the heart of the month of August, a holiday period for many families and also for me, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. This is a privileged opportunity to meditate on the ultimate meaning of our existence, helped by today's liturgy which invites us to live in this world oriented to eternal happiness in order to share in the same glory as Mary, the same joy as our mother (cf. Opening Prayer). Let us, therefore, turn our gaze to Our Lady, Star of Hope, who illumines us on our earthly journey, and follow the example of the Saints who turned to her in every

circumstance.

You know that we are celebrating the Year for Priests in remembrance of the Holy Cur d'Ars, and I would like to draw from the thoughts and testimonies of this holy country parish priest some ideas for reflection that will be able to help all of us, especially us priests, to strengthen our love and veneration for the Most Holy Virgin. His biographers claim that St. John Mary Vianney spoke to Our Lady with devotion and, at the same time, with trust and spontaneity. "The Blessed Virgin," he used to say, "is immaculate and adorned with all the virtues that make her so beautiful and pleasing to the Blessed Trinity." (B. Nodet, *Il pensiero e l'anima del Curato d'Ars*, Turin 1967, p. 303) And further: "The heart of this good mother is nothing but love and mercy; all she wants is to see us happy. To be heard, it suffices to address oneself to her." (ibid., p. 307) The priest's zeal shines through these words. Motivated by apostolic longing, he rejoiced in speaking to his faithful of Mary and never tired of doing so. He could even present a difficult mystery like today's that of the Assumption, with effective images, such as, for example: "Man was created for Heaven. The devil broke the ladder that led to it. Our Lord, with his Passion, made another.... The Virgin Most Holy stands at the top of the ladder and holds it steady with both hands." (ibid.)

The Holy Cur d'Ars was attracted above all by Mary's beauty, a beauty that coincides with her being Immaculate, the only creature to have been conceived without a shadow of sin.

"The Blessed Virgin," he said, "is that beautiful Creature who never displeased the good Lord." (ibid. p. 306) As a good and faithful pastor, he first of all set an example also in this filial love for the mother of Jesus by whom he felt drawn toward Heaven. "Were I not to go to Heaven," he exclaimed, "how sorry I should be! I should never see the Blessed Virgin, this most beautiful creature!" (ibid., p. 309) Moreover, on several occasions he consecrated his parish to Our Lady, recommending that mothers in particular do

the same, every morning, with their children.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us make our own the sentiments of the Holy Cur d'Ars. And with his same faith let us turn to Mary, taken up into Heaven, in a special way entrusting to her the priests of the whole world.

[In English, he said:]

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors gathered here at Castel Gandolfo and also in St. Peter's Square. As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, we are invited to raise our eyes to Heaven and contemplate Mary, the mother of Jesus and our mother. She who on earth believed in God's word is now glorified in body and soul. May Mary's intercession and example guide you always and renew your hearts in faith and hope. May God grant you and your families abundant blessings of peace and joy! I wish you all a good Feast of the Assumption!

Mary's "Yes" and Our "Yes" Angelus Address in Castel Gandolfo on August 16, 2009

Dear brothers and sisters: Yesterday we celebrated the great feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven and today we read in the Gospel these words from Jesus: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." (John 6:51) We cannot remain indifferent to this parallel, which revolves around the symbol of "heaven." Mary has been "elevated" to the place from which the Son had "come down."

But then, from whom has the Son of God taken his "flesh," his concrete and earthly humanity? He took it from the Virgin Mary. God took from her a human body to enter into our mortal human condition. In turn, at the end of an earthly existence, the body of the Virgin was taken to heaven by God and brought to enter into the celestial condition. This is an interchange in which God always takes the initiative, but in which in a certain sense, as we have seen on

other occasions, he also has need of Mary, of the "yes" of a creature, of her flesh, of her concrete existence, to prepare the matter of his sacrifice: the body and blood to be offered on the cross as an instrument of eternal life, and, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, as spiritual food and drink.

Dear brothers and sisters: What happened to Mary is also valid, though in a different but real way, for every man and woman, because God asks each of us to welcome him, to place at his disposal our hearts and our bodies, the whole of our existence, our flesh -- as the Bible says -- so that he can dwell in the world.

He calls us to unite ourselves with him in the sacrament of the Eucharist, bread broken for the life of the world, to together form the Church, his body in history. And if we say "yes," like Mary, in the same measure of this our "yes," this mysterious interchange will also happen for us and in us: we will be assumed into the dignity of the One who has assumed our humanity.

Let us ask the holy Virgin to help us to always with faith nourish ourselves on the bread of eternal life to experience already on earth the joy of heaven.

On St. John Eudes Address during the General Audience held at the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo on August 19, 2009

Dear brothers and sisters: Celebrated today is the liturgical memorial of St. John Eudes, tireless apostle of devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, who lived in France in the seventeenth century, a century marked by opposing religious phenomena and also by great political problems. While contempt was being spread for the Christian faith by some currents of thought that were prevalent then, the Holy Spirit inspired a fervent spiritual renewal, with prominent personalities such as that of Berulle, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort and St. John Eudes. The

path of holiness he followed and proposed to his disciples had as its foundation a solid confidence in the love that God revealed to humanity in the priestly Heart of Christ and the maternal Heart of Mary. In that time of cruelty and loss of interior silence, he addressed himself to the heart so as to leave in the heart a word from the Psalms very well interpreted by St. Augustine. He wanted to remind people, men and above all future priests of the heart, showing the priestly Heart of Christ and the maternal Heart of Mary. A priest must be a witness and apostle of this love of the Heart of Christ and of Mary.

I conclude by addressing to all the exhortation of St. John Eudes, who said thus to priests: "Give yourselves to Jesus to enter into the immensity of his great Heart, which contains the Heart of his Holy Mother and of all the saints, and to lose yourselves in this abyss of love, of charity, of mercy, of humility, of purity, of patience, of submission and of holiness." (*Coeur admirable*, III, 2) [In English, he said:]

Saint John Eudes particular contribution was the foundation of a religious congregation dedicated to the task of giving solid formation to the diocesan priesthood. He encouraged seminarians to grow in holiness and to trust in God's love revealed to humanity in the priestly heart of Jesus and in the maternal heart of Mary. ...

On the Scandal of the Christian Faith - Angelus Address in Castel Gandolfo, August 23, 2009

... If we open our hearts to Christ with confidence, if we let ourselves be conquered by him, we too can experience, together with the Cur d'Ars, "that our only happiness on this earth is to love God and to know that he loves us."

Let us ask the Virgin Mary always to keep alive in us this faith impregnated by love, which made her, the

humble girl of Nazareth, Mother of God and model for all believers.

On Marriage and Virginitv Conclusion of the Angelus address on August 30, 2009 at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo

... Dear brothers and sisters, in this Year for Priests, we pray that, "through the intercession of the holy Cur d'Ars, Christian families become little churches, in which all the Christian vocations and all charisms, given by the Holy Spirit, can be welcomed and valued." (from the Prayer for the Year for Priests)
May the Holy Virgin, whom we now invoke together, obtain this grace for us.