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Pope Benedict XVI

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August 2010



"By Choosing God They Possessed Everything They Needed" Angelus Address, August 1, 2010

In addressing our prayer to Mary Most Holy, I would like to remember other important occasions: tomorrow it will be possible to profit from the Indulgence known as the Portiuncula Indulgence or the "Pardon of Assisi" that St Francis obtained in 1216 from Pope Honorius III; Thursday, August 5, in commemorating the Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major, we will honor the Mother of God, acclaimed with this title at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

"Serve Jesus Present in the Eucharist Generously" Address to 54 000 European Altar Servers, August 4, 2010

May the example of St Tarcisus and St John Mary

Vianney impel us every day to love Jesus and to do his will, as did the Virgin Mary, faithful to her Son to the end.

On the Logic of Love Angelus Address at Castel Gandolfo, August 8, 2010

On August 9, we remember the Carmelite St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, and on August 14, the Franciscan priest, St Maximilian Mary Kolbe, Founder of the Militia of Mary Immaculate. Both passed through the dark time of the Second World War without ever losing sight of hope, of the God of Life and of Love. Let us trust in the motherly support of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Saints, who lovingly shares our pilgrimage. To her we address our prayers.

"Nothing of What Is Precious and Loved Will Be Ruined" - Homily on Feast of Assumption, Parish Church of St. Thomas of Villanueva, August 15, 2010

Today the Church celebrates one of the most important feasts of the liturgical year dedicated to Mary Most Holy: the Assumption. At the end of her earthly life, Mary was taken in soul and body to heaven, that is, to the glory of eternal life, in full and perfect communion with God.

Celebrated this year is the sixtieth anniversary since the Venerable Pope Pius XII solemnly defined this dogma on Nov. 1, 1950, and I would like to read -- although it is somewhat complicated -- the form of the dogmatization. The Pope says: "Hence, the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome

death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages." (Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, 40).

This is, hence, the nucleus of our faith in the Assumption: we believe that Mary, like Christ her Son, has already conquered death and triumphs now in heavenly glory in the totality of her being, "in soul and body."

St. Paul, in today's second reading, helps us to throw some light on this mystery from the central event of human history and from our faith: that is, the event of the resurrection of Christ, who is "the first fruits of those who have died."

Immersed in his Paschal Mystery, we have been made sharers in his victory over sin and death. Herein is the amazing secret and the key reality of the whole of human history. St. Paul tells us that we were all "incorporated" in Adam, the first and old man, we all have the same human inheritance to which he belongs: suffering, death, sin. However, to this reality that all of us can see and live every day he adds something new: We are not only in this inheritance of the one human being, begun with Adam, but we are also "incorporated" in the new man, in the Risen Christ, and thus the life of the Resurrection is already present among us.

Hence, this first biological "incorporation" is incorporation in death, incorporation that generates death. The second, the new one that is given to us in baptism, is "incorporation" that gives life. I quote again today's second letter; St. Paul says: "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:21-24)

Now, what St. Paul states about all men, the Church, in her infallible teaching, says of Mary, in a

precise way and meaning: the Mother of God is inserted to such a degree in the mystery of Christ that she shares in the resurrection of her Son with her whole being already at the end of her earthly life, she lives what we hope for at the end of time when death, "the last enemy," will be destroyed (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26); she already lives what we proclaim in the Creed "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

Hence, we can ask ourselves: What are the roots of this victory over death anticipated miraculously in Mary? The roots are in the faith of the Virgin of Nazareth, as attested in the passage of the Gospel we heard (Luke 1:39-56): a faith that is obedience to the Word of God and total abandonment to divine initiative and action, according to what the archangel announces to her. Faith, hence, is Mary's greatness, as Elizabeth joyfully proclaims: Mary is "blessed among women," "blessed is the fruit of her womb" because she is "the mother of the Lord," because she believes and lives in a unique way the "first" of the beatitudes, the beatitude of faith. Elizabeth confesses it in her joy and that of the child who leaps in her womb: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." (vs. 45)

Dear friends, let us not limit ourselves to admire Mary in her glorious destiny, as a person who is far from us. No! we are called to see what the Lord, in his love, also willed for us, for our final destiny: to live through faith in perfect communion of love with him and thus to truly live.

In this connection, I would like to pause on an aspect of the dogmatic affirmation, where it speaks of assumption to heavenly glory. All of us are conscious today that with the term "heaven," we do not refer to some place in the universe, to a star or something similar. No, we refer to something much bigger and more difficult to define with our limited human concepts. With this term "heaven," we mean to affirm that God, the God who has made himself close to us, does not abandon us, not even in death

and beyond it, but that he has a place for us and he gives us eternity; we want to affirm that there is a place for us in God. To understand this reality somewhat more, let us look at our own life: we all know that when a person dies he continues to subsist in the memory and the heart of those who knew and loved him. We could say that a part of that person continues to live in them, but it is as a "shadow" because this survival in the heart of his loved ones is also destined to end. God instead never passes and all of us exist because of his love. We exist because he loves us, because he has thought of us and called us to life. We exist in the thoughts and love of God. We exist in all our reality, not only in our "shadow." Our serenity, our hope, our peace are founded precisely on this: on God, on his thought and on his love, it is not only a "shadow" of ourselves that survives, but that in him, in his creative love, we are kept and introduced with our whole life, with our whole being into eternity.

It is his love that conquers death and gives us eternity, and it is this love that we call "heaven": God is so great that he also has a space for us. And the man Jesus, who is at the same time God, is for us the guarantee that being-man and being-God can exist and live eternally in one another. This means that each one of us will not continue existing only in a part that has been, so to speak, wrenched from us, while the rest is ruined; it means rather that God knows and loves the whole man, what we are. And God receives in his eternity what now, in our life, made up of suffering and love, of hope, of joy and sadness, grows and comes to be. The whole man, the whole of his life, is taken by God and, purified in him, receives eternity.

Dear friends, I think this is a truth that should fill us with joy. Christianity does not proclaim merely a certain salvation of the soul in some imprecise place beyond, in which everything in this world that was precious and loved by us is erased, but it promises eternal life, "the life of the world to come": Nothing of what is precious and loved will be ruined, but will find its fulfillment in God. All the hairs of our head are

numbered, Jesus said one day (cf. Matthew 10:30). The final world will also be the fulfillment of this earth, as St. Paul states: "creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21)

Understood therefore is that Christianity gives strong hope in a luminous future and opens the way to the realization of this future. We are called, precisely as Christians, to build this new world, to work so that it will become one day the "world of God," a world that will surpass everything that we ourselves could build. In Mary assumed into heaven, fully sharing in the resurrection of her Son, we contemplate the realization of the human creature according to the "world of God."

Let us pray to the Lord to make us understand how precious our life is in his eyes; may he reinforce our faith in eternal life; may he make us people of hope, who work to build a world open to God, people full of joy who are able to perceive the beauty of the future world in the midst of the cares of daily life and, with this certainty, live, believe and hope. Amen!

On the Example of Mary: "A Source of Courage and Hope for All of Us" Angelus Address, Castel Gandolfo August 15, 2010

Today, Solemnity of the Assumption into Heaven of the Mother of God, we celebrate the passage from the earthly condition to heavenly blessedness of her who engendered in the flesh and received in faith the Lord of Life.

Veneration of the Virgin Mary has accompanied the path of the Church since the beginning; Marian feasts began to appear already in the fourth century: exalted in some is the role of the Virgin in the history of salvation; celebrated in others are the principal moments of her earthly existence.

The meaning of today's feast is contained in the final words of the dogmatic definition proclaimed by the

Venerable Pius XII on Nov. 1, 1950, of which the sixtieth anniversary is celebrated this year: "The Ever Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, ending the course of her earthly life, was taken to heavenly glory in soul and body" (Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS 42 [1950], 770).

Artists of all times have painted and sculpted the holiness of the Mother of the Lord adorning churches and shrines. Poets, writers and musicians have paid tribute to the Virgin with liturgical hymns and songs. From East to West the All Holy One is invoked as heavenly Mother, who holds the Son of God in her arms and under whose protection the whole of humanity finds refuge, with the very ancient prayer: "We shelter under your protection, Holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our needs, but deliver us from all danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin."

And in the Gospel of today's Solemnity, St. Luke describes the realization of salvation through the Virgin Mary. She, in whose womb the Omnipotent became small, after the Angel's annunciation, without any hesitation, goes in haste to her cousin Elizabeth to take to her the Savior of the world. And, in fact, "when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and [she] was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41); she recognized the Mother of God in her "who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45). The two women, who were awaiting the fulfillment of the divine promises, already had a foretaste of the joy of the coming of the Kingdom of God, the joy of salvation.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us trust in the One who -- as the Servant of God Paul VI affirmed -- "assumed to heaven, has not ceased her mission of intercession and salvation." (Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, 18, AAS 66 [1974], 130) To her, guide of the Apostles, support of Martyrs, light of the Saints, we address our prayer, imploring that

she accompany us in this earthly life, that she help us to look to Heaven and that she receive us one day together with her Son Jesus.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father said in English: Today we join our voices to the many generations who praise the Virgin Mary and call her blessed for her glorious Assumption into Heaven. Her example of faithful perseverance in doing the will of God and her heavenly reward are a source of courage and hope for all of us. May God bless you and your families with peace and joy!

On Our Mother and Queen: "Let Us Entrust the Daily Prayer for Peace to Her Intercession" Angelus Address, Castel Gandolfo, August 22, 2010

Eight days after the solemnity of her Assumption into heaven, the liturgy invites us to venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary with the title of "Queen." The Mother of Christ is contemplated being crowned by her Son, that is, linked to his universal kingship, as is depicted in numerous mosaics and paintings. This memorial too recurs this year on Sunday, acquiring greater light from the Word of God and from the weekly Easter ("Pasqua") celebration.

In particular, the icon of the Virgin Mary as Queen has a meaningful verification in today's Gospel, where Jesus states: "Behold, there are those who are last who shall be first and those who are first who shall be last" (Luke 13:30). This is a typical expression of Christ, reported many times by the evangelists -- even with similar formulas -- because it evidently reflects a theme dear to his prophetic preaching. The Madonna is a perfect example of such evangelical truth, that is, that God brings low the proud and powerful of this world and raises up the humble (cf. Luke 1:52).

The simple little girl of Nazareth has become the Queen of the world! This is one of the marvels that reveal the heart of God. Naturally, Mary's royalty is completely dependent on Christ's: He is the Lord, who, after the

humiliation of death on the cross, the Father exalted above every creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth (cf. Philippians 2:9-11). Through a design of grace, the Immaculate Mother was completely bound to the mystery of the Son: to his Incarnation; to his earthly life, at first hidden in Nazareth and then manifested in the messianic mystery; to his passion and death; and finally to the resurrection and ascension in heaven. The Mother shared with the Son not only the human aspects of this mystery but also the profound intention, the divine will, in such a way that her entire existence, poor and humble, was elevated, transformed, glorified, passing through the "narrow gate" that is Jesus himself (cf. Luke 13:24). Yes, Mary was the first to walk along the narrow "way," opened up by Christ, to enter into the Kingdom of God, a way that is accessible to the humble, to those who entrust themselves to the Word of God and who endeavor to put it into practice.

In the history of the cities and peoples evangelized by the Christian message there are innumerable witnesses of public veneration, in some cases even institutional, of the Virgin Mary's royalty. But today we desire above all to renew, as sons of the Church, our devotion to her whom Jesus left to us as Mother and Queen. Let us entrust the daily prayer for peace to her intercession, especially in those places where the absurd logic of violence rages most, so that all men are persuaded that in this world we must help each other as brothers to build the civilization of love. *Maria, Regina pacis, ora pro nobis!*

**On the Saints, Companions on the Journey:
"Each One Should Have a Saint That Is Familiar
to Him" Address at the General Audience in
Castel Gandolfo, August 25, 2010**

May the intercession of the Virgin Mary, of St. Augustine and of St. Monica accompany us on this journey.

**On Jesus' Humility: "Christ Himself Took the
Lowest Place"- Angelus Address, Castel**

Gandolfo, August 29, 2010

Dear friends, today we recall the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, the greatest among the prophets of Christ, who knew how to deny himself to make room for the Savior, and who suffered and died for the truth. Let us ask him and the Virgin Mary to guide us along the way of humility to become worthy of the divine recompense.