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November 2010



"Sanctity ... Is the Objective of a Christian's Life"- Angelus Address on All Saints' Day, November 1, 2010

... We entrust to the Virgin Mary, sure guide to sanctity, our pilgrimage toward the heavenly homeland, while we invoke her maternal intercession for the eternal rest of our brothers and sisters, who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection.

On Marguerite d'Oingt: "The God-Love That Reveals Himself in Christ Fascinated Her" – General Audience, November 2, 2010

... Referring to Mary, she said: It was no wonder that the sword that destroyed your body also penetrated the heart of your glorious Mother who so wanted to support you [...] because your love was higher than all other loves" (Ibid., *Meditazione II*, 36-39.42, p. 60f). Dear friends, Marguerite d'Oingt invites us to meditate daily on the life of sorrow and love of Jesus and of his mother, Mary. Here is our hope, the

meaning of our existence. From contemplation of Christ's love for us are born the strength and joy to respond with the same love, placing our life at the service of God and of others.

Message to Justice and Peace Council: "The Great Human Family Awaits ... Words of Hope"-
November 3, 2010

... May the Virgin Mary, honored by the Christian people as "Speculum Iustitiae" [mirror of justice] and "Regina Pacis" [queen of peace], protect us and obtain for us with her heavenly intercession the strength, hope and joy necessary to continue dedicating ourselves with generosity to the realization of a new evangelization of the social realm.

Message to New Seminary in Cuba: Entrusts Institution to Our Lady of Charity of Cobre –
November 5, 2010

.... With these wishes, the Holy Father, while entrusting the whole community of that teaching institution to the protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who under the title of Our Lady of Charity of Cobre is invoked with fervor in the beloved Cuban nation, imparts his heartfelt special apostolic blessing, which he gladly extends to all those who contributed generously in the construction of the new building and to the participants in the inaugural celebration.

Homily at Gaudí's Holy Family Church: "Beauty ... Calls Us to Freedom and Draws Us Away From Selfishness" – **Barcelona, November 7, 2010**

... This church began as an initiative of the Association of the Friends of Saint Joseph, who wanted to dedicate it to the Holy Family of Nazareth. The home formed by Jesus, Mary and Joseph has always been regarded as a school of love, prayer and work.

[In Catalan:]

Finally, I wish to commend to the loving protection of the Mother of God, Mary Most Holy, April Rose, Mother of Mercy, all who enter here and all who in word or deed, in silence and prayer, have made this possible this marvel of architecture. May Our Lady present to her divine Son the joys and tribulations of all who come in the future to this sacred place so that here, as the Church prays when dedicating religious buildings, the poor may find mercy, the oppressed true freedom and all men may take on the dignity of the children of God. Amen.

On the Sagrada Familia: "A Hymn of Praise to God Carved in Stone"- Angelus Address in Barcelona, November 7, 2010

... Today I had the great joy of dedicating this church to him who, being the Son of the Most High, emptied himself and became man, and who, under the watchful care of Joseph and Mary, in the silence of the home of Nazareth, taught us without words of the dignity and the primordial value of marriage and the family, the hope of humanity, in which life finds its welcome from conception to natural death.... Filled with devotion to the Holy Family of Nazareth, a devotion spread among the Catalan people by St. Joseph Manyanet, the genius of Antoni Gaudí, inspired by the ardor of his Christian faith, succeeded in raising this sanctuary as a hymn of praise to God carved in stone.... For this reason, he conceived of the three porticos of the exterior of the church as a catechesis on the life of Jesus Christ, as a great Rosary, which is the prayer of ordinary people, a prayer in which are contemplated the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of our Lord....

This morning I also had the satisfaction of declaring this church a minor basilica. In it, men and women of every continent can contemplate the façade of the Nativity. In prayer, let us now consider the mystery of the Incarnation and lift up our prayer to the Mother of God with the words of the Angel, as we entrust our

lives and the life of the entire Church to her, while imploring the gift of peace for each and every person of good will.

*To Members of Eucharistic Congress Committee:
"The Eucharist, Communion with Christ and
Among Ourselves" –*

November 11, 2010

... Dear brothers and sisters, the Eucharistic apostolate to which you dedicate your efforts is very precious. Persevere in it with commitment and passion, encouraging and spreading Eucharistic devotion in all its expressions. Enclosed in the Eucharist is the treasure of the Church, namely, Christ himself, who on the Cross immolated himself for the salvation of humanity. I support your appreciated service with the assurance of my prayer, through the intercession of Mary Most Holy, and with the apostolic blessing, which I impart to you from my heart, to your loved ones, and to your collaborators.

VERBUM DOMINI - "The Word of the Lord Abides Forever" – Post-synodal apostolic exhortation drawing from the twelfth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, held Oct. 5-26, 2008. The assembly reflected on the theme "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church." The document was signed on September 30, and published on November 11

... But this same Word, Saint John tells us, "became flesh" (Jn 1:14); hence Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is truly the Word of God who has become consubstantial with us. Thus the expression "word of God" here refers to the person of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, made man....

Sacred Scripture itself speaks of the presence of the Holy Spirit in salvation history and particularly in the life of Jesus: he was conceived of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Mt* 1:18; *Lk* 1:35); at the beginning of his public mission, on the

banks of the Jordan, he sees the Holy Spirit descend on him in the form of a dove (cf. *Mt* 3:16); in this same Spirit Jesus acts, speaks and rejoices (cf. *Lk* 10:21); and in the Spirit he offers himself up (cf. *Heb* 9:14). ... Finally, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, we read that the Spirit descended on the Twelve gathered in prayer with Mary on the day of Pentecost (cf. 2:1-4), and impelled them to take up the mission of proclaiming to all peoples the Good News. The word of God is thus expressed in human words thanks to the working of the Holy Spirit. The missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit are inseparable and constitute a single economy of salvation. The same Spirit who acts in the incarnation of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary is the Spirit who guides Jesus throughout his mission and is promised to the disciples....

A key concept for understanding the sacred text as the word of God in human words is certainly that of inspiration. Here too we can suggest an analogy: as the word of God became flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, so sacred Scripture is born from the womb of the Church by the power of the same Spirit....

Mary, “Mother of God’s Word” and “Mother of Faith” The Synod Fathers declared that the basic aim of the Twelfth Assembly was “to renew the Church’s faith in the word of God.” To do so, we need to look to the one in whom the interplay between the word of God and faith was brought to perfection, that is, to the Virgin Mary, “who by her ‘yes’ to the word of the covenant and her mission, perfectly fulfills the divine vocation of humanity.” The human reality created through the word finds its most perfect image in Mary’s obedient faith. From the Annunciation to Pentecost she appears as a woman completely open to the will of God. She is the Immaculate Conception, the one whom God made “full of grace” (cf. *Lk* 1:28) and unconditionally docile to his word (cf. *Lk* 1:38). Her obedient faith shapes her life at every moment before God’s plan. A Virgin ever attentive to God’s word, she lives completely attuned to that word; she treasures in

her heart the events of her Son, piecing them together as if in a single mosaic (cf. *Lk 2:19,51*).

In our day the faithful need to be helped to see more clearly the link between Mary of Nazareth and the faith-filled hearing of God's word. I would encourage scholars as well to study the relationship between *Mariology and the theology of the word*. This could prove most beneficial both for the spiritual life and for theological and biblical studies. Indeed, what the understanding of the faith has enabled us to know about Mary stands at the heart of Christian truth. The incarnation of the word cannot be conceived apart from the freedom of this young woman who by her assent decisively cooperated with the entrance of the eternal into time. Mary is the image of the Church in attentive hearing of the word of God, which took flesh in her. Mary also symbolizes openness to God and others; an active listening which interiorizes and assimilates, one in which the word becomes a way of life.

Here I would like to mention Mary's familiarity with the word of God. This is clearly evident in the *Magnificat*. There we see in some sense how she identifies with the word, enters into it; in this marvelous canticle of faith, the Virgin sings the praises of the Lord in his own words: "The *Magnificat* – a portrait, so to speak, of her soul – is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the word of God. Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the word of God, with ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the word of God; the word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God. Since Mary is completely imbued with the word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate."

Furthermore, in looking to the Mother of God, we see how God's activity in the world always engages our freedom, because through faith the divine word transforms us. Our apostolic and pastoral work can

never be effective unless we learn from Mary how to be shaped by the working of God within us: “devout and loving attention to the figure of Mary as the model and archetype of the Church’s faith is of capital importance for bringing about in our day a concrete paradigm shift in the Church’s relation with the word, both in prayerful listening and in generous commitment to mission and proclamation.”

As we contemplate in the Mother of God a life totally shaped by the word, we realize that we too are called to enter into the mystery of faith, whereby Christ comes to dwell in our lives. Every Christian believer, Saint Ambrose reminds us, in some way interiorly conceives and gives birth to the word of God: even though there is only one Mother of Christ in the flesh, in the faith Christ is the progeny of us all. Thus, what took place for Mary can daily take place in each of us, in the hearing of the word and in the celebration of the sacraments.

... intrinsic link between the word and faith makes clear that authentic biblical hermeneutics can only be had within the faith of the Church, which has its paradigm in Mary’s *fiat*...

Only in silence can the word of God find a home in us, as it did in Mary, woman of the word and, inseparably, woman of silence. Our liturgies must facilitate this attitude of authentic listening: *Verbo crescente, verba deficiunt*...

To all my brother Bishops I recommend frequent personal reading and study of sacred Scripture, in imitation of Mary, *Virgo Audiens* and Queen of the Apostles....

We find the supreme synthesis and fulfilment of this process in the Mother of God. For every member of the faithful Mary is the model of docile acceptance of God’s word, for she “kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (*Lk 2:19*; cf. *2:51*); she discovered the profound bond which unites, in God’s great plan, apparently disparate events, actions and things....

The word of God and Marian prayer

Mindful of the inseparable bond between the word of God and Mary of Nazareth, along with the Synod Fathers I urge that Marian prayer be encouraged among the faithful, above all in life of families, since it is an aid to meditating on the holy mysteries found in the Scriptures. A most helpful aid, for example, is the individual or communal recitation of the Holy Rosary, which ponders the mysteries of Christ's life in union with Mary, and which Pope John Paul II wished to enrich with the mysteries of light. It is fitting that the announcement of each mystery be accompanied by a brief biblical text pertinent to that mystery, so as to encourage the memorization of brief biblical passages relevant to the mysteries of Christ's life.

The Synod also recommended that the faithful be encouraged to pray the *Angelus*. This prayer, simple yet profound, allows us "to commemorate daily the mystery of the Incarnate Word. It is only right that the People of God, families and communities of consecrated persons, be faithful to this Marian prayer traditionally recited at sunrise, midday and sunset. In the *Angelus* we ask God to grant that, through Mary's intercession, we may imitate her in doing his will and in welcoming his word into our lives. This practice can help us to grow in an authentic love for the mystery of the incarnation.

The ancient prayers of the Christian East which contemplate the entire history of salvation in the light of the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, are likewise worthy of being known, appreciated and widely used. Here particular mention can be made of the *Akathist* and *Paraklesis* prayers. These hymns of praise, chanted in the form of a litany and steeped in the faith of the Church and in references to the Bible, help the faithful to meditate on the mysteries of Christ in union with Mary. In particular, the venerable *Akathist* hymn to the Mother of God – so-called because it is sung while standing – represents one of the highest expressions of the Marian piety of the Byzantine tradition. Praying with

these words opens wide the heart and disposes it to the peace that is from above, from God, to that peace which is Christ himself, born of Mary for our salvation.

The word of God and the Holy Land

As we call to mind the Word of God who became flesh in the womb of Mary of Nazareth, our heart now turns to the land where the mystery of our salvation was accomplished, and from which the word of God spread to the ends of the earth....

“Mater Verbi et Mater laetitiae”

This close relationship between God’s word and joy is evident in the Mother of God. Let us recall the words of Saint Elizabeth: “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” (*Lk 1:45*) Mary is blessed because she has faith, because she believed, and in this faith she received the Word of God into her womb in order to give him to the world. The joy born of the Word can now expand to all those who, by faith, let themselves be changed by God’s word. The *Gospel of Luke* presents this mystery of hearing and joy in two texts. Jesus says: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.” (8:21) And in reply to a woman from the crowd who blesses the womb that bore him and the breasts that nursed him, Jesus reveals the secret of true joy: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!” (11:28) Jesus points out Mary’s true grandeur, making it possible for each of us to attain that blessedness which is born of the word received and put into practice.

Address to Members of Culture Council - "A Christian Life Lived to the Full Speaks for Itself" – November 13, 2010

... Dear friends, I thank you for what you do daily with competence and dedication and, as I entrust you to Mary Most Holy, from my heart I impart to all the apostolic blessing.

On Agricultural Work: "This Is the Moment for the Reevaluation of Agriculture" – Angelus Address, November 14, 2010

... Let us pray to the Virgin Mary that these reflections can serve as a stimulus to the international community, while we give our thanks to God for the fruits of the earth and the work of man.

Message to Health Care Conference: "The Bond Between Justice and Charity ... Is Very Close"- November 15, 2010

... In praying for the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, "Salus infirmorum," I impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing which I extend also to your families.

On the Solemnity of Christ the King: "Jesus, from the Throne of the Cross Receives Every Man With Infinite Mercy" – Angelus Address, November 21, 2010

... To the Virgin Mary, in today's observance of her Presentation in the Temple, we entrust the new members of the College of Cardinals and our earthly pilgrimage toward eternity.

In Italian he said:

... In today's memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple the Church remembers cloistered men and women with particular affection: it is "Pro Orantibus Day" in which the invitation to concretely support these communities is renewed. To them I impart the apostolic blessing from my heart.

Address to Twenty-four New Cardinals: "I Encourage You to Continue in Your Spiritual and Apostolic Mission" – November 22, 2010

... I invoke on you and on those present the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and of martyr St. Cecilia, whose memorial

we celebrate today. May the patroness of music and bel canto accompany and support you in your commitment to be in the Church attentive listeners of the different voices, to render more profound the unity of hearts. With such sentiments I impart with affection to you and to all those present a special apostolic blessing.

Message to Cor Unum Retreat: "Renew Your Commitment to Be of Service to Your Brothers and Sisters" - on the occasion of the spiritual exercises taking place at the Marian shrine of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, Poland sent on November 23, 2010

... With these sentiments, His Holiness assures all those present of his closeness in prayer. Commending them all to the intercession of Our Lady of Czestochowa, he cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

Homily on Christ the King: "The Authentic Place of the Vicar of Christ Is on the Cross"- November 24, 2010

... In Jesus crucified divinity is disfigured, stripped of all visible glory, but it is present and real. Only faith is able to recognize it: Mary's faith, who also united in her heart this last tile of the mosaic of the life of her Son; she still does not see the whole, but continues to trust in God, repeating yet again with the same abandonment, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." (Luke 1:38)

It [the first and fundamental message that the Word of God says to us today] calls us to be with Jesus, like Mary, and not to ask him to come down from the cross, but to stay there with Him.

... The Blood of Christ that, according to an ancient iconography, Mary receives from the pierced side of her Son dead on the cross; and that the Apostle John contemplates while it gushes together with water, according to the prophetic Scriptures.

Life Must Be Protected with Greatest Care –
**Vespers for the first Sunday of Advent,
November 27, 2010.**

... In regard to the embryo in the maternal womb, science itself provides evidence of its autonomy, capable of interaction with the mother, the coordination of biological processes, the continuity of development, the growth in the complexity of the organism. ... It is not a matter of an aggregate of biological material, but of a new living, dynamic and marvelously ordered being, a new individual of the human species. This is how Jesus was in Mary's womb. This is how it was for each of us in the mother's womb. The Lord's incarnation and the beginning of human life, in fact, are intimately connected.

On the First Sunday of Advent: "Man Is Alive So Long As He Waits" – Angelus Address
November 28, 2010

Today, the first Sunday of Advent, the Church begins a new liturgical year, a new journey of faith that, on one hand, remembers the event of Jesus Christ and, on the other, opens onto its ultimate fulfillment. It is precisely in this double perspective that the season of Advent is situated, both looking to the first coming of the Son of God, when he was born of the Virgin Mary, and to his glorious return, when he will come "to judge the living and the dead," as we say in the "Credo."...

But no one could have imagined that the Messiah would be born from a humble girl like Mary, the betrothed of the just man Joseph. Not even she could have thought of it, and yet in her heart the longing for the Savior was so great, her faith and hope were so ardent, that he was able to find in her a worthy mother. After all, God himself had prepared her before all time. There is a mysterious correspondence between the waiting for God and the waiting for Mary, the creature "full of grace," totally transparent to the plan of love of the Most High. Let us learn from her, the woman of Advent, to

live with a new spirit in our daily gestures, with the sentiment of a profound expectation that only the coming of God can fulfill.

Address to Filipino Bishops: "A Unified and Positive Voice Needs to Be Presented to the Public" – November 29, 2010

... Dear Brother Bishops, as my predecessor Pope John Paul II rightly noted, "You are Pastors of a people in love with Mary" (January 14, 1995). May her willingness to bear the Word who is Jesus Christ into the world be for you a continuing inspiration in your apostolic ministry.

Message for Funeral of Manuela Camagni: "Where No One Can Accompany Us, God Awaits Us"- proclaimed by Msgr. G. Gänswein, November 30, 2010

... Dear brothers and sisters, in this faith full of hope, which is Mary's faith near the cross of Jesus, I celebrated the Mass for Manuela's soul the very morning of her death.

Words at Prayer Vigil for Unborn Life: "Respect, Protect, Love and Serve Life, Every Human Life"- November 27, 2010

... During the Season of Advent we shall feel the Church which takes us by the hand and - in the image of Mary Most Holy, expresses her motherhood, enabling us to experience the joyful expectation of the coming of the Lord, who embraces us all in his love that saves and consoles.

... Precisely, the beginning of the Liturgical Year helps us live anew the expectation of God who took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, God who makes himself little, who becomes a child; it speaks to us of the coming of a God who is close, who chose to experience human life from the very beginning in order to save it totally, in its fullness.

... This is what Jesus was in Mary's womb; this is

what we all were in our mother's womb. We may say with Tertullian, an ancient Christian writer: "the one who will be a man is one already" (Apologeticum IX, 8), there is no reason not to consider him a person from conception. ... Let us entrust our prayers and our commitment to unborn life to the Virgin Mary, who welcomed the Son of God made man with her faith, with her maternal womb, with her attentive care, with her nurturing support, vibrant with love. Let us do so in the Liturgy - which is the place where we live the truth and where truth lives with us - adoring the divine Eucharist in which we contemplate Christ's Body, that Body which took flesh from Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, and was born of her in Bethlehem for our salvation. Ave, verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine!