



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Castel Gandolfo

Wednesday, 16 August 2006

Meditation on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, our customary weekly Wednesday appointment is again taking place in the atmosphere of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption. I would therefore like to ask you to turn your gaze once again to our heavenly Mother, whom yesterday's liturgy helped us to contemplate triumphant with Christ in Heaven.

Since the first centuries of Christianity, the Christian people has always found this feast deeply stirring; as is well known, it celebrates the glorification, also in body, of that creature whom God chose as Mother and whom Jesus on the Cross gave as Mother to the whole of humanity.

The Assumption evokes a mystery that concerns each one of us because, as the Second Vatican Council affirms, Mary "shines forth on earth... a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 68).

However, taken up by the events of each day, one can sometimes forget this comforting spiritual reality that constitutes an important truth of faith; so how can it be ensured that this luminous sign of hope is ever more clearly perceived by all of us and by contemporary society?

Some people today live as if they never had to die or as if, with death, everything were over; others, who hold that man is the one and only author of his own destiny, behave as though God

did not exist, and at times they even reach the point of denying that there is room for him in our world.

Yet, the great breakthroughs of technology and science that have considerably improved humanity's condition leave unresolved the deepest searchings of the human soul.

Only openness to the mystery of God, who is Love, can quench the thirst for truth and happiness in our hearts; only the prospect of eternity can give authentic value to historical events and especially to the mystery of human frailty, suffering and death.

By contemplating Mary in heavenly glory, we understand that the earth is not the definitive homeland for us either, and that if we live with our gaze fixed on eternal goods we will one day share in this same glory and the earth will become more beautiful.

Consequently, we must not lose our serenity and peace even amid the thousands of daily difficulties. The luminous sign of Our Lady taken up into Heaven shines out even more brightly when sad shadows of suffering and violence seem to loom on the horizon.

We may be sure of it: from on high, Mary follows our footsteps with gentle concern, dispels the gloom in moments of darkness and distress, reassures us with her motherly hand.

Supported by awareness of this, let us continue confidently on our path of Christian commitment wherever Providence may lead us. Let us forge ahead in our lives under Mary's guidance. Thank you.

To special groups

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at this Audience, including the altar servers from Malta and the groups from England, Ireland, Canada, Nigeria and the United States of America. Yesterday, we contemplated the Virgin Mary's Assumption into Heaven. This mystery reminds us that our definitive homeland is not here on earth and that our longing for fulfilment finds complete satisfaction only in eternal happiness. May our Mother in Heaven, who guides us on our way, inspire us with courage and hope through the struggles of our daily life! I wish you a pleasant stay, and may God bless you all!

And lastly, I would like to greet warmly all the pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square in Rome.

I extend my greeting to all the *young people* present, and there are a great many of them. We all feel rejuvenated here! I extend my greeting to the *sick* and to the *newly-weds*. Dear friends, may the light of Christ that we contemplated yesterday reflected in Mary Most Holy taken up into

Heaven always illumine your lives and make them rich in goodness.

Finally, I would like to end this meeting of ours with a special remembrance of Frère Roger Schutz, the Founder of Taizé, who was assassinated on 16 August last year during evening prayer. His witness of faith and ecumenical dialogue was a precious lesson for entire generations of youth.

Let us ask the Lord to enable the sacrifice of his life to help consolidate the commitment to peace and solidarity of all those who have humanity's future at heart.

Let us end this Audience as usual by singing together the *Pater Noster*.

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