

"Mary Immaculate is light, comfort in trials of life"

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TURN TO THE VIRGIN MARY IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

VATICAN CITY, 8 DEC 2009 (VIS) -

At midday today, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Benedict XVI appeared at the window of his study to pray the Angelus with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square below.

The Holy Father commented on the title of "Immaculate" by referring to the book of Genesis and the account of the Annunciation in the Gospel of St. Luke. "It is through woman that God Himself will triumph", he said. "That woman is the Virgin Mary from whom was born Jesus Christ Who, with His sacrifice, defeated the ancient tempter once and for all. For this reason, in so many paintings and statues of the Immaculate, she is shown in the act of crushing a serpent under her foot.

"For his part", he added "the Evangelist Luke shows us the Virgin Mary receiving the announcement from the heavenly messenger. She appears as the humble and authentic daughter of Israel, the true Zion in which God wishes to establish His dwelling. She is the branch from which the Messiah, the just and merciful King, will grow. ... Unlike Adam and Eve, Mary remains obedient to the Lord's will. With all of herself she pronounces her 'yes' and fully places herself at the disposal of the divine plan. She is the new Eve, the true 'mother of all creatures'; that is, of everyone who, through faith in Christ, receives eternal life".

"What an immense joy it is", Pope Benedict exclaimed, "to have Mary Immaculate as our mother! Whenever we experience our own fragility and the lure of evil, we can turn to her and our hearts receive light and comfort. Even in the trials of life, in the storms that unsettle our faith and hope, we know that we are her children and that the roots of our life lie deep in the infinite grace of God. In her the Church, though exposed to the negative influences of the world, always finds a star by which to guide herself and to follow the route Christ shows her. Mary is, in fact, the Mother of the Church, as solemnly proclaimed by Pope Paul VI and Vatican Council II".

The Pope concluded by rendering thanks unto God "for this marvellous sign of His goodness", and by entrusting to the Virgin Immaculate "each one of us, our families and communities, the whole Church and the world entire".