

## Mariology since Vatican Council II



"Mariology since Vatican Council II: reception, outcomes and prospects" is the theme of the twenty-third International Mariological Congress. Receiving the participants this morning at Castelgandolfo, the Holy Father highlighted the appropriateness of the theme in light of the fact that 11 October this year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Council.

The Pope, who himself participated in Vatican Council II as a young theologian, turned his attention to chapter eight of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen Gentium", entitled: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church". Therein "the figure of Mary - re-examined and reinterpreted from the point of view of the Word of God, the texts of patristic and liturgical tradition, and a broad-ranging theological and spiritual reflection - emerges in all her beauty and uniqueness, closely enclosed within the fundamental mysteries of the Christian faith.

"Mary, whose faith is emphasised above all else, is part of the mystery of love and communion of the Blessed Trinity", Benedict XVI added. "Her participation in the divine plan of salvation and the unique mediation of Christ is clearly affirmed and given its correct import, thus making it a model and a point of reference for the Church which, in her, recognises herself, her vocation and her mission. Popular piety, which has always looked to Mary, is likewise nourished by biblical and patristic references.

"Of course the conciliar text was not able to cover all the questions concerning the Mother of God, but it does provide an essential interpretative horizon for all subsequent reflection, both the theological and the purely spiritual and pastoral. Moreover, it represents a valuable and highly necessary point of equilibrium between theological rationality and the emotion of belief".

The Pope concluded: "The unique figure of the Mother of God must be understood and studied from different and complementary standpoints. While the 'via veritas' remains valid and necessary, we cannot but also follow the 'via pulchritudinis' and the 'via amoris', in order to discover and contemplate ever more profoundly Mary's firm and crystalline faith, her love for God and her unshakeable hope".

