

In a 2012 Sunday Angelus address, Benedict XVI spoke of the “Woman of Christmas” – the Blessed Virgin Mary – and the experience of joy:

Mary Immaculate speaks to us: she speaks to us of joy, of that authentic joy that fills the heart freed from sin. Sin carries a sadness with it that leads us to close ourselves up within ourselves. Grace brings with it the true joy that does not depend on having things but is rather rooted in the most intimate, deepest part of the person, and that nothing and nobody can take away.

Christianity is essentially a “gospel,” “glad tidings,” although some think that it is an obstacle to joy, because they see in it a collection of prohibitions and rules. In reality, Christianity is the proclamation of the victory of grace over sin, of life over death. . . .It is necessary therefore to learn to say no to the voice of egoism and to say yes to the voice of authentic love.

Mary’s joy is full because there is no shadow of sin in her heart. This joy coincides with the presence of Jesus in her life: Jesus conceived and carried in her womb, then the child entrusted to her maternal care, the adolescent and young man and the mature adult; Jesus leaving home, followed at a distance with faith, even to the cross and the resurrection: Jesus is Mary’s joy and the joy of the Church, of all of us.

He concluded: “In this season of Advent, Mary Immaculate teaches us to listen to the voice of God that speaks in silence; to welcome His grace, which liberates us from sin and from all egoism; to taste, therefore, the true joy.” And so, we pray: Mary, Cause of Our Joy, pray for us!