

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD  
DECEMBER 31, 2016/JANUARY 1, 2017

*Mary the Holy Soil*

The Word of God really penetrated the earth and became bread for us all. He is the seed, the fruitful answer in which God's speech has taken living root in this world. The mystery of Christ is almost nowhere so palpable and intimately connected with the mystery of Mary as in the perspective of this promise. When the text says that the word, or the seed, bears fruit, it means that the seed actually sinks into the earth, assimilates the earth's energies, and changes them into itself. It thus brings about something truly new, for now it carries the earth in itself and turns the earth into fruit. The grain of wheat does not remain alone, for it includes the maternal mystery of the soil — Mary, the holy soil of the Church, is an essential part of Christ. The mystery of Mary means precisely that God's Word did not remain alone; rather, it assimilated the other — the soil — into itself, became man in the "soil" of his Mother, and then, fused with the soil of the whole of humanity, returned to God in a new form... Men can become fruitful soil for God's Word. They can become this soil by providing, as it were, the organic elements in which life can grow and mature; by drawing life themselves from this organic matter; by becoming themselves a word formed by the penetration of the Word; by sinking the roots of their life into prayer and thus into God... To be soil for the Word means that the soil must allow itself to be absorbed by the seed... Mary's maternity means that she willingly places her own substance, body and soul, into the seed so that new life can grow.

*Father Jim Secora*

From the writings of: Joseph Ratzinger, *Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI*