



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE EMPLOYEES WHO WORKED TO
RENOVATE HIS PRIVATE APARTMENTS***

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 23 December 2006*

Dear Collaborators,

Unfortunately, the numerous commitments in these days have not permitted me to prepare a speech worthy of all the work you have done. Please excuse me. I can only speak, as they say, "off the cuff". But the words truly come from my heart.

I do not have much to say. Only a word; but this word, with all my conviction, is a "big thank you" that comes from the bottom of my heart.

In less than three months you have done a major piece of restoration work in my Apartments. I am convinced - since I had a small house built for me in Germany - that elsewhere this work would have lasted for at least a year and probably more.

Thus, I have seen how and with what dedication you have worked, with what skill and the sort of collaboration between the different technical services employed in this task which I cannot but admire and which, in my opinion, witnesses to an inner commitment to work well both to serve the Holy See and the Successor of Peter.

You have thus truly given an example of responsible work. I can only admire all you have done, such as these beautiful floors.

Then, I particularly like my new library with that antique ceiling. It is as though I were surrounded by friends, now that the bookshelves and books have arrived. There is then the medical room and all the other things that I cannot list now.

But I have noticed, even though I am not very competent in such matters, that in the past three months you have worked, I would say almost night and day, with incredible dedication. I can only assure you of my deep gratitude and my prayers.

It came to my mind that in the New Testament, the word "tector" appears, which was the profession of the Lord Jesus before his public ministry. We usually translate the word as "carpenter", because at that time houses were made mainly of wood. But more than a "carpenter", he was an "artisan" who must have been able to do all that was required in building a house.

Thus, in this sense, you are "colleagues" of Our Lord, who have done precisely what he would have willingly done, in accordance with what he had chosen, before proclaiming his great mission to the world. In this way the Lord desired to demonstrate the nobility of this craft.

In the Greek world, intellectual work alone was considered worthy of a free man. Manual work was left to slaves.

The biblical religion is quite different. Here, the Creator - who according to a beautiful image, made man with his own hands - appears exactly as the example of a man who works with his hands, and in so doing works with his brain and his heart. Man imitates the Creator so that this world given to him by the Creator may be an inhabitable world.

This is apparent in the biblical narrative from the very start. But in the end, the nobility and grandeur of this work strongly emerges from the fact that Jesus was a "tector", an "artisan", a "worker".

Now, so close to the celebration of Christmas, is the time to say "thank you" for all of this, for your work, which encourages me - just as you have given everything - to give on my part, at this late stage in my life, everything that I can give.

Greetings to your loved ones and I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all!

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