



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE MUNICIPAL POLICE OF ROME

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 25 February 2006*

Dear Friends,

I welcome and thank you for your kind visit. I know that you were very eager to meet me and it is a also pleasure for me to receive you.

In the many years that I have lived in Rome in the Vatican neighbourhood, I have often had the chance to see you at work, prompt and courteous in regulating traffic, which is not always easy to handle, especially on the occasions when great crowds of pilgrims stream into St Peter's Square and Basilica.

Today, I have the joy of receiving you at a special Audience as Successor of the Apostle Peter, and I gladly take this opportunity to thank you for the service you carry out.

With affection, therefore, I address my sincere and cordial greeting to each one of you and ask you to convey it to your respective families and to all your loved ones.

I would like in particular to greet the Superintendent General of the Municipal Police Force, Dr Aldo Zanetti, and the Commander of your Squad, Dr Rolando Marinelli.

Your daily activity demands constant commitment because the area surrounding the Vatican is visited by so many people and the traffic is heavy.

Indeed, in addition to the comings and goings linked to the district's normal activity there is a constant flow of people entering or leaving the Vatican, lines of visitors to the Vatican Museums, the arrival of groups who come from everywhere every Wednesday for the General Audiences,

the convergence of pilgrims and Romans in St Peter's Square to take part in the recitation of the Angelus on Sundays and other feast days, the continuous flux of the devout and tourists in the Square and in the Basilica, and frequently, official visits by ambassadors and other authorities.

You are ready to offer your help to all; and I thank you, for I am certain that you endeavour to do so with professionalism and dedication.

You gave proof of professionalism and dedication especially during the memorable and tense days of the illness, death and funeral of beloved Pope John Paul II, as well as on the occasion of my election as Supreme Pontiff in April last year. I am also sincerely grateful to you for this.

In contact with the crowds

Dear friends, you exercise a profession that brings you into contact with many people, most of whom are bound for one of the places dearest to Catholics across the world: the tomb of the Apostle Peter, upon which Michelangelo's Basilica is built.

Moreover, you are often present, although at a distance, at the Pope's meetings with the faithful or at liturgical celebrations in St Peter's Square.

I express my heartfelt hope that this will help you to grow spiritually and to feel Christ's presence beside you always. With his help you will be able to carry out your activities serenely, aware that you are rendering a service to the community. May he watch over you and your families with goodness and bring to fruition all your desires for good.

I invoke his help through the intercession of Mary, so that she may protect you as a caring Mother and accompany you always.

With these sentiments, I renew my gratitude to you for your visit, as I bless you and all your loved ones.

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