



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
"SACRA FAMIGLIA DI NAZARETH" FOUNDATION AND
OF THE LAY ASSOCIATION "COMUNITÀ DOMENICO TARDINI"***

Paul VI Audience Hall

Saturday, 11 November 2006

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I rejoice to be here with you today to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Institution, born from the insight of the then Mons. Domenico Tardini, and later directed by the late Cardinal Antonio Samorè and by our Cardinal Silvestrini, with the contribution of friends from the world of school, culture and work, and of both Italian and American benefactors.

I greet all of you, students, alumni, friends and all your families, and I thank you for your warm welcome. I greet in particular Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, President of the "Fondazione Sacra Famiglia di Nazareth"; I am grateful to him for his presentation of this educational and ecclesial institution to which he devotes so much thought and love.

I greet Prof. Angela Groppelli, Vice-President, a psychologist who has been doing her utmost for Villa Nazareth for more than 50 years, and Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, together with the Bishops and priests who have lavished or are lavishing upon it the gifts of the spiritual life, as well as the members of the Council of the Foundation and of the lay Association "Comunità Domenico Tardini", with Pier Silverio Pozzi, Vice-President, and all the members.

Villa Nazareth is a promising work that continues to develop, thanks to the commitment of the students during their training period and then through the professional integration and the new families which come into being. It is the whole of this large family that I desire to greet in its

entirety, with special fatherly affection.

Villa Nazareth, which in the past 60 years has accepted several generations of children and young people, proposes to enhance its students' intelligence with respect for personal freedom and oriented to viewing the service of others as an authentic expression of Christian love.

Villa Nazareth intends to teach its young people to make courageous decisions through an approach of openness to dialogue and with reference to reason, purified in the crucible of faith.

Faith, in fact, can offer perspectives of hope to every project that has human destiny at its core. Faith examines the invisible and is thus a friend of reason, which asks itself the essential questions from which it draws meaning for our earthly journey.

In this regard, the question which, according to Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles, the Deacon Philip asked the Ethiopian he met on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza: "Do you understand what you are reading?" (*Acts* 8: 30), can be enlightening. The Ethiopian answered him: "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (*ibid.*, v. 31).

Philip then spoke to him of Christ. Thus, the Ethiopian discovered the answer to his questions in the person of Christ, proclaimed in the prophet Isaiah's veiled words. It is important, therefore, that someone be beside those who are on their way and proclaim to them "the Good News of Jesus" (v. 35), as Philip did.

Sketched here is the "diakonia" [service] which Christian culture can carry out in helping those who are searching to discover the One who is concealed in the biblical passage, as well as in the events of every person's life. However, it should not be forgotten that the Lord said that he was *given food, drink and hospitality, and that he was clothed and visited* in every needy person (cf. Mt 25: 31-46). Consequently, he is also "concealed" in these persons and events.

I know, dear friends, that you are accustomed to reflecting on these and other similar biblical texts. They are words that accompany your days.

By combining these images and advice, you can clearly understand how inseparable truth and love are. No culture can be satisfied with itself until it discovers that it must be attentive to the real and profound needs of the human being, every human being.

At Villa Nazareth, you are able to experience that living the Word of God to the full demands attentive listening and a generous and mature heart. The content of Jesus' Revelation is concrete, and a Christianly-inspired intellectual must always be ready to communicate it when he converses with those seeking solutions that can improve life and respond to the anxiety that assails every human heart.

It is necessary above all to show the deep correspondence that exists between the requests that emerge from reflection on human events and the divine *Logos* who "became flesh" and came "to dwell among us" (cf. Jn 1: 14).

Thus, a fruitful convergence is established between the postulates of reason and the responses of Revelation, and it is precisely from here that a light shines forth and illuminates the path on which to guide one's own commitment.

In daily contact with Scripture and the Church's teachings, you mature and develop the human, professional and spiritual dimensions, and you can thus enter ever more deeply into the mystery of that creative Reason which continues to love the world and to speak with the freedom of creatures.

A Christian intellectual - and this is certainly what those who come from Villa Nazareth wish to be - must always foster his or her own wonder at this basic truth. It facilitates docile attachment to the Spirit of God, and at the same time impels one to serve others with ready willingness.

You can deduce the "style" of your commitment from something St Paul said to the Christian community living in Philippi: "Brethren, finally, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil 4: 8).

It is precisely in this perspective that you can weave a fertile dialogue with culture and make your contribution to ensuring that many people find the answer in Jesus Christ. May you also feel stirred by the Spirit of Jesus as did Philip the deacon when he heard himself told: "'Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza'. This is a desert road" (cf. Acts 8: 26).

Today too, dear young people, there are many "desert roads" on which you will find yourselves walking in your lives as believers: it is on these very roads that you will be able to come abreast of those who are seeking life's meaning. Prepare yourselves also to be at the service of a culture that encourages the brotherly encounter of man with man and the discovery of salvation that comes to us from Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, Villa Nazareth has always been the object, from the very outset, of special predilection on the part of my venerable Predecessors: the Servant of God Pius XII, who saw it come into being; the Servant of God John Paul II, who came to visit you 10 years ago on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its foundation. This benevolence of the Popes has nourished and continues to nourish your spiritual bond with the Holy See.

At the same time, this bond of esteem and affection engages you to walk faithfully in the footsteps

of that great "man of God", Cardinal Domenico Tardini. With his words and example, he urges you to be especially sensitive, attentive and receptive to the teachings of the Church.

With these sentiments, as I invoke upon you the special protection of Our Lady "*Mater Ecclesiae*", I assure each one of you of my remembrance in prayer and bless you all with affection, starting with your numerous children.

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