



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE WORKERS OF THE FABRIC OF ST PETER'S***

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
dear Friends,*

I am very pleased to have this meeting with you at the headquarters of an ancient and distinguished Papal Institution: the Fabric of St Peter's. I first greet Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Archpriest of St Peter's Basilica and your President, who has expressed your common sentiments. I then greet Bishop Vittorio Lanzani, Delegate of the Fabric, and each one of you.

You work in the Apostle's venerable Basilica which is the heart of the Catholic Church, a vibrant heart, thanks to the Holy Spirit who always keeps it alive but also thanks to the activity of those who daily ensure it fulfils its role.

As Archbishop Comastri recalled, just over 500 years have passed since the foundation stone of the second Vatican Basilica was laid: yet, it is still alive and young, it is not a museum, it is a spiritual organism and even the stones feel its vitality!

You who work here, first among others, are the "living stones", as the Apostle Peter wrote, living stones of the spiritual edifice which is the Church.

I am happy to have this meeting with you, even if it is brief, to close the celebrations of the fifth centenary of the Vatican Basilica, where you carry out your duties.

I would like to take this opportunity to recall at this moment all your colleagues who preceded you in the past 500 years. I express my gratitude to you for all that you do with commitment and competence to enable this "heart" of the Church, as I said above, to continue to beat with perennial vitality, attracting men and women of the whole world and helping them to have a

spiritual experience that marks their life.

In fact, thanks to your contribution, almost always unseen but always appropriate, a great many people, pilgrims from all parts of the world, are able to make the most of their pilgrimage or simply their visit to the Vatican Basilica, and take back with them in their hearts a message of faith and hope: a certainty of having seen not only great works of art but of being in contact with the Church alive, with the Apostle Peter and in the end, with Christ.

Once again, I thank and encourage you: always do your work as an act of love for the Church, for St Peter and hence, for Christ.

I entrust you all, you and your loved ones, to the special protection of St Peter and, as I assure you of my remembrance in prayer and ask you to reciprocate by praying for me, I cordially bless you all.

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