



The Holy See

INAUGURATION OF THE "BRONZE DOOR"
AT THE CONCLUSION OF ITS RESTORATION

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Friday, 12 October 2007

*Venerable Brothers,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

We are meeting in this place which constitutes the main entrance to the Apostolic Palace in order to bless and inaugurate the Bronze Door which has been completely restored after two years of patient and skilled work. The event is not in itself of great importance but is significant for the role that this singular Door plays and for the centuries of ecclesial history it has seen unfolding. I therefore thank you for being present and address my cordial greeting to each one.

This Main Door was made by Giovanni Battista Soria and Orazio Censore in the Pontificate of Paul V, who, between 1617 and 1619, desired to renew completely the entire structure of the *Porta Palatii*. In 1663, after the colossal architectural intervention which was due to the genius of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the Main Door was relocated to its present position, that is, on the threshold between the Colonnade of St Peter's Square and the Constantine Wing. Worn with time, there was an idea of restoring it for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, but this operation of radical restoration only became possible a few years later. Thus, the main Door was taken and not only carefully restored to its original beauty with the most modern methods and techniques, but also reinforced with a steel frame. And it is now back on its hinges and has resumed its role beneath the splendid mosaic that portrays Our Lady with the Child between Sts Peter and Paul.

Precisely because it marks the access to the House of the one whom the Lord has called to guide the whole People of God as Father and Pastor, this Portal has acquired a symbolic and spiritual

value. Those who come to meet the Successor of Peter walk through it. Pilgrims and visitors on their way to the various Offices in the Apostolic Palace enter by it. I warmly express the hope that those who pass through the Bronze Door may feel welcomed by the Pope's embrace as soon as they enter. The Pope's House is open to all.

My thoughts of appreciation and gratitude go to those who have made this urgently needed and radical restoration work possible. First of all, to those who directed and carried out the work in its various phases: the Technical Services of the Governorate and the Restoration Workshops of the Vatican Museums, which called in specialized firms for the parts in wood and in metal. It was possible to undertake this long and demanding work thanks to the generous financial support of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and the *Credito Artigiano*. I therefore express deep gratitude to these two Institutes, which have thus desired to renew an expression of fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff and attention to the art works that constitute a patrimony of the Holy See. I extend my most sincere thanks to all who have made their contribution in various ways.

And I now assure my remembrance in prayer to those in charge, to the workers and to the benefactors, as well as to each one of you present here, as I impart my Apostolic Blessing with affection to you all.

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