

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*

Forty-fifth year, number 5 (2231)

Vatican City

Wednesday, 1 February 2012

At the Angelus Benedict XVI appeals for peace in the Holy Land and asks us to pray for those sick with leprosy

Authority means service, humility and love

At noon on Sunday, 29 January, the month traditionally dedicated to peace, before leading the Angelus the Holy Father spoke of authority which, he said, for God means "service, humility and love". Among the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square were the children of Rome's Catholic Action with the "Caravan of Peace". After the Marian prayer the Pope and two children, invited to the papal apartment, released two doves. The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday's Gospel (Mk 1:21-28) presents to us Jesus, who was preaching on the Sabbath in the Synagogue of Capernaum, the little town on the Sea of Galilee where Peter and his brother Andrew lived. His teaching, which gave rise to wonder among the people, was followed by the deliverance of "a man with an unclean spirit" (v. 23), who recognized Jesus as "the Holy One of God", that is, the Messiah. In a short time his fame spread across the region which he passed through proclaiming the Kingdom of God and healing the sick of every kind: words and action. St John Chrysostom pointed out that the Lord "varies the mode of profiting his hearers, after miracles entering on words, and again from the instruction by his words passing to miracles" (*Hom. in Matthaeum* 25, 1: PG 57, 328).

The words Jesus addresses to the

people immediately give access to the will of the Father and to the truth about themselves. This was not the case for the scribes who instead had to make an effort to interpret the Sacred Scriptures with countless reflections. Moreover Jesus united the efficacy of the word with the efficacy of the signs of deliverance from evil. St Athanasius notes that "for his charging evil spirits and their being driven forth, this deed is not of man, but of God"; indeed the Lord "drove away from men all diseases and infirmities"... Those "who saw his power... will no longer doubt whether this be the Son and Wisdom and Power of God?" (*Oratio de Incarnatione Verbi* 18,19: PG 25, 128 BC. 129 B).

The divine authority is not a force of nature. It is the power of the love



of God that creates the universe and, becoming incarnate in the Only-Begotten Son, descending into our humanity, heals the world corrupted by sin. Romano Guardini wrote: "Jesus' entire existence is the translation of power into humility... here is the sovereignty which lowers itself into the form of a servant" (*Il Potere*, Brescia 1999, 141.142).

Authority, for human beings, often means possession, power, dominion and success. Instead for God authority means service, humility and love; it means entering into the logic of Jesus who stoops to wash his disciples' feet (cf. Jn 13:5), who seeks man's true good, who heals wounds, who is capable of a love so great that he gives his life, because he is Love. In one of her Letters St Catherine of Siena wrote: "It is necessary for us to see and know, in truth, with the light of the faith, that God is supreme and eternal Love and cannot want anything but our good" (*Ep. 13 in: Le Lettere*, vol. 3, Bologna 1999, 206).

Dear friends, next Thursday, 2 February, we shall celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, the World Day of Consecrated Life. Let us invoke Mary Most Holy with trust so that she may guide our hearts to draw always from divine mercy, which frees and guarantees our humanity, filling it with every grace and benevolence and with the power of love.

After the Angelus the Pope said:

Dear brothers and sisters, today Hildegard Burjan is being beatified in Vienna. She was a lay woman, the mother of a family who lived between the 19th and 20th centuries,

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Vespers at St Paul Outside-the-Walls

Christian unity a responsibility for all



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To the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

The renewal of faith takes priority

The Holy Father reflected on Christian unity and the need to speak with one voice on moral questions regarding human life.

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The Pope's condolences on the death of Oscar Luigi Scalfaro

Having learned the news of the death of Senator Oscar Luigi Scalfaro during the night between Saturday, 28, and Sunday, 29 January, the Pope expressed his condolences in a Telegram to Marianna Scalfaro, daughter of the deceased statesman.

Spiritually close in this moment of sorrow at the death of your beloved father, Senator Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, President emeritus of the Italian Republic, I would like to offer you my most heartfelt condolences together with the assurance of my sincere participation in the serious bereavement, which also affects the entire Italian Nation. As I remember with deep affection and with special gratitude this distinguished Catholic statesman, a most honest magistrate and a most faithful servant of the institutions, who in the public responsibilities he held always strove to promote the common good and the perennial Christian ethical and religious values proper to the historical and civil tradition of Italy, I raise fervent prayers of suffrage, invoking from the divine goodness through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, for whom he had a special veneration, eternal peace for his soul, and I warmly impart to you and to all your relatives the comfort of the Apostolic Blessing.

BENEDICT XVI

Benedict XVI expressed similar sentiments to President Giorgio Napolitano of the Italian Republic in a telegram signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State.

To the Roman Rota

Within the Church

The Pope expounds on the foundations of Canon Law and the correct context within which to interpret it.

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