

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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The Pope's Reflection before the Angelus and his Appeal after the serious terrorist attack in Norway

## Those who govern are in even greater need of God's help

On Sunday, 24 July, before leading the recitation of the Angelus with the faithful at the Papal Summer Residence in Castel Gandolfo, the Holy Father commented on the Old Testament Reading

in the liturgy about Solomon who asked the Lord for "an understanding heart". The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, in the liturgy, the Old Testament Reading presents to us the figure of King Solomon, the son and successor of David. It presents him at the beginning of his reign, when he was still very young. Solomon inherited a very demanding task and the responsibility that lay heavily on his shoulders was great for a young king. He first of all offered God a solemn sacrifice, "a thousand burnt

offerings", as the Bible says. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and promised to grant him what he asked in prayer. And here we see the greatness of Solomon's soul. He did not ask for a long life, nor wealth, nor the elimination of his enemies; instead he said to the Lord: "Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong" (1 Kings 3:9). And the Lord heard him, so

that Solomon became famous throughout the world for his wisdom and his right judgements.

Therefore he prayed God to grant him "an understanding heart". What do these words mean? We know that the "heart" in the Bible does not only indicate a part of the body, but also the centre of the person, the seat of his intentions and opinions.

We might say: the conscience. Thus an "understanding heart" means a conscience that knows how to listen, that is sensitive to the voice of truth and for this reason can discern right from wrong.

In Solomon's case, the request was motivated by the responsibility of leading a nation, Israel, the people whom God chose to show the world his plan of salvation. The King of Israel, therefore, had to try always to be in tune with God, listening to his word, in order to guide the people on the paths of the Lord, the path of justice and of peace.

However, Solomon's example is valid for every person. Each one of us has a conscience so as to be, in a certain way, "king", that is, to exercise the great human dignity of acting in accordance with an upright

conscience, doing what is right and avoiding wrong.

The moral conscience presupposes the ability to hear the voice of truth and to be docile to its indications. People who are called to the task of government naturally have a further responsibility and, therefore – as Solomon teaches – are in even greater

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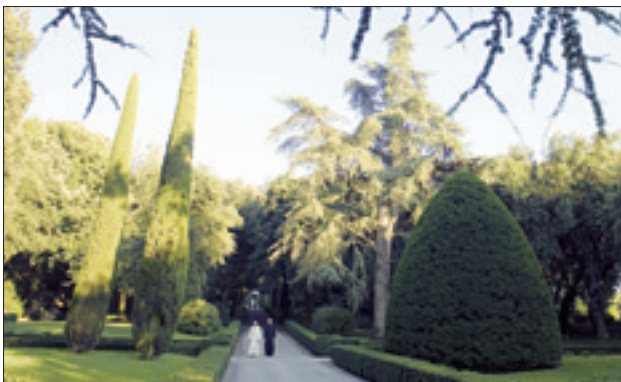
*Ambassador of Israel to Holy See*

Mordechay Lewy recalls that the Catholic Church helped Jews on every possible occasion

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Work and rest in Castel Gandolfo

## The Pope's day



For Benedict XVI these July days in Castel Gandolfo, like last year, have been a period of intense work and recollection, with time for meditation, quiet reading, attention to nature and relaxation. Some customary commitments, such as work meetings with the Cardinal Secretary of State and other prelates or the audience with the Prime Minister of Malaysia on Monday morning 18 July, have taken place. Each day passes in an orderly way, in accordance with a timetable slightly earlier than the usual one. They include a stroll in the gardens, usually in the afternoon, punctuated by the Marian prayer of the Rosary recited with his private secretary and his closest collaborators and which normally ends in front of the image of Our Lady dear to Pius XI. Many documents and books have been brought from the Vatican with

a view among other things to his upcoming journeys to Spain and Germany. Benedict XVI's priority is the preparation and writing of the conclusion of his work on Jesus of Nazareth, dedicated to an analysis of the Infancy Gospels. Benedict XVI has another central topic at heart: reflection on faith, while the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council – in which Joseph Ratzinger took part from the beginning – is approaching (11 October 1962). "Although the Council does not expressly treat faith, it addresses it on every page". Paul VI said this at the General Audience on 8 March 1967 and, on the following 29 June, on the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, he inaugurated a "Year of Faith", which ended on 30 June 1968 with the "Credo of the People of God".



"The Judgement of Solomon" (miniature from "Bible de Sens", XIV century, Turin, Royal Library)

## Vatican Secret Archives revealed



"Lux Arcana: the Vatican Secret Archives revealed": this exhibition at the Capitoline Museums will run from February to September 2012. It was presented to journalists on 5 July by Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State, Cardinal Farina, Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church, and Bishop Pagano, Prefect of the Secret Archives and as well as local authorities.

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