



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO OUR LADY
STAR OF EVANGELIZATION PARISH OF ROME

*GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PARISH CHILDREN*

II Sunday of Advent, 10 December 2006

Dear Young People,

Thank you for this welcome! They tell me that this will be "Benedict XVI Hall"; therefore, we are at home! Thank you for your presence! They tell me that you are on your way to First Holy Communion and Confirmation, but before that we still have Christmas to celebrate.

Christmas is the day when God gave a great gift to us, not something material, but his gift was the gift of himself. He gave us his Son, so Christmas became the feast of gifts.

Let us imitate God and not only live for ourselves, not think only of myself, but think of someone else, give a present to another, also to parents, brothers and sisters, and so forth.

And here too the most beautiful gift is to be kind to others, to show goodness, fairness and love. This is the best gift. The other gifts only express this meaning, this desire to be kind to one another.

And giving this true gift, in which we imitate God, we also prepare ourselves for First Holy Communion and Confirmation; because in First Holy Communion, Christmas becomes, so to speak, perfect. At Christmas God gave us himself; in First Holy Communion he gives this gift to each one of us individually, he comes to each one of us. Under the appearance of a little piece of bread, he himself gives himself, he wants to enter our hearts. If an important guest is expected at home, every effort is made to clean, prepare and so on, so that he will find the house welcoming.

Thus, knowing that God himself wants to enter me, my heart, let us do all we can to ensure that this heart is a good and beautiful heart, thus the joy will be greater.

And Confirmation repeats in a certain sense this same act of God. The Holy Spirit comes to guide us throughout our life. In life, there are so many complications where we need help: the Holy Spirit helps us, accompanies us and shows us the way.

Thus, in this sense, we proceed towards Christmas full of joy, because God exists, God knows me, and because God wants to know me and come to me in my heart.

I now wish you all a Merry Christmas and beautiful weeks of preparation for First Holy Communion. I compliment you on this beautiful church which will help you to rejoice in God, to rejoice in being Catholic and in having faith! My best wishes to you!

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