



The Holy See

CONCLUSION OF THE ANNUAL LENTEN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Redemptoris Mater Chapel

Saturday, 3 March 2007

Your Eminence,

On behalf of all of us gathered here, I would like to say "thank you" to you for the marvellous inspirational presentation you have given us this week.

At Holy Mass, before the Eucharistic Prayer, we respond every day to the invitation, "Lift up your hearts" with the words, "We lift them up to the Lord". And I fear that this response is often more ritual than existential.

But during this week you have truly taught us to rise, to elevate our hearts, to soar upwards towards the invisible, towards the true reality. And you have also given us the key to respond every day to the challenges of this reality.

During your first conference I became aware that in the in-lay of my prie-dieu the Risen Christ is shown surrounded by flying angels. These angels, I thought, can fly because they are not regulated by the gravity of the earth's material things but by the gravity of the Risen One's love; and that we would be able to fly if we were to step outside material gravity and enter the new gravity of the love of the Risen One.

You have really helped us to come out of this gravitational force of everyday things, to enter into this other gravity of the Risen One and thus, to rise to on high. We thank you for this.

I would also like to say "thank you" because you have given us a very acute and precise diagnosis of our situation today, and you have especially shown us how, behind so many phenomena of our

time that appear to be very far from religion and from Christ, there is a question, an expectation, a desire; and that the one true response to this ever-present desire precisely in our time is Christ.

Thus, you have helped us to follow Christ more courageously and to have greater love for the Church, the "*Immaculata ex maculatis*", as you taught us together with St Ambrose.

Lastly, I would like to say "thank you" for your realism, your humour and your concreteness; even for the somewhat audacious theology of your maid: I should not dare to submit these words, "The Lord may have his faults", to the judgment of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith! But in any case, we have been able to learn and your thoughts, dear Cardinal, will accompany us for more than the weeks to come.

Our prayers are with you. Thank you.

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