



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE PARISH
OF ST. FELICITY AND HER CHILDREN, MARTYRS

***GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL***

Fifth Sunday of Lent, 25 March 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am simply happy to be here with you, to see a community rich in faith, a young community, and so to see how the Church lives today. While the centre of Rome is somewhat depopulated, here we see that there is a lively Rome. It is the community to which St Paul wrote, where St Peter taught the Gospel. Here St Mark's Gospel came into being, according to tradition, as a reflection of St Peter's preaching.

Therefore, we are in a place where the seed of the Word of God grew from the outset and the "agape", love, also developed, so that 100 years later - more or less in the year 100 - St Ignatius could say that Rome presides in charity. And so it should be. It is not enough for the Pope to be in Rome. An active, committed Church must thrive in Rome, a Church which presides in charity. Therefore, it is a very happy experience for me to see in the parish that this Church of Rome exists, that she is still alive even after 2,000 years. I would like to greet you all. The parish priest has already introduced to me the various members of the community who are present here. We begin of course with the Cardinal Vicar, with the Auxiliary Bishop, with the parish priest, with the priests. And then there are so many groups. It is not necessary here to repeat what your parish priest has already said. I am grateful to all those who collaborate.

And I am grateful for the beautiful poem that was presented to me; one feels that it wells up from the very heart of this community. I see that the gift of poetry is still alive in Rome, even in these rather, as it were, unpoetic times. I do not wish at this point to enter into demanding considerations and reflections. I would only like to thank the adult lay people who are building a living parish. Here you have the Vocationist Fathers. The word "Vocationist" is reminiscent of "vocation". We

can examine two dimensions of this word. First of all, we think immediately of the vocation to the priesthood. But the word has a far broader, more general dimension.

Every person carries within himself a project of God, a personal vocation, a personal idea of God on what he is required to do in history to build his Church, a living Temple of his presence. And the priest's role is above all to reawaken this awareness, to help the individual discover his personal vocation, God's task for each one of us. I see that many here have discovered the project that concerns them, both with regard to professional life in the formation of today's society - where the presence of Christian consciences is fundamental - and also with regard to the call to contribute to the Church's growth and life. Both these things are equally important.

A society where Christian conscience is no longer alive loses its bearings; it no longer knows where to go, what it can do, what it cannot do, and ends up in emptiness, it fails. Only if a living awareness of the faith illumines our hearts can we also build a just society. It is not the Magisterium that imposes doctrine. It is the Magisterium that helps enable the conscience itself to hear God's voice, to know what is good, what is the Lord's will. It is only an aid so that personal responsibility, nourished by a lively conscience, may function well and thus contribute to ensuring that justice is truly present in our society: justice within ourselves and universal justice for all our brothers and sisters in the world today. Today, globalization is not only economic: there is also a globalization of responsibilities, this universality, which is why we are all responsible for everyone.

The Church offers us the encounter with Christ, with the living God, with the "Logos" who is Truth and Light, who does not coerce consciences, does not impose a partial doctrine but helps us ourselves to be men and women who are completely fulfilled and thus to live in personal responsibility and in deeper communion with one another, a communion born from communion with God, with the Lord. I see here this living community. I am grateful to the priests, I am grateful to all of you, their collaborators. And I hope that the Lord will help you and enlighten you always.

Already today, Passion Sunday, I wish you a Happy Easter and I wish your parish, your community, this suburb of Fidene, great good also in the future.

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