



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

ANGELUS

Papal Summer Residence, Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 17 August 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the liturgy offers to us for reflection the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him... these will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer... for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is 56: 6-7). In the Second Reading the Apostle Paul also refers to the universality of salvation, as does the Gospel passage that recounts the episode of the Canaanite woman, a foreigner for the Jews, whose wish was granted by Jesus because of her great faith. The Word of God thus gives us an opportunity to reflect on the universality of the mission of the Church which is made up of people of every race and culture. From precisely this stems the great responsibility of the ecclesial community which is called to be a hospitable home for all, a sign and instrument of communion for the entire human family.

How important it is, especially in our time, that every Christian community increasingly deepens its awareness of this in order also to help civil society overcome every possible temptation to give into racism, intolerance and exclusion and to make decisions that respect the dignity of every human being! One of humanity's great achievements is in fact its triumph over racism. However, unfortunately disturbing new forms of racism are being manifested in various Countries. They are often related to social and economic problems which can, however, never justify contempt and racial discrimination. Let us pray that respect for every person everywhere will increase, together with a responsible awareness that only in the reciprocal acceptance of one and all is it possible to build a world distinguished by authentic justice and true peace.

Today, I would like to suggest another prayer intention, given the current news of numerous serious road accidents - especially in this period. We must not resign ourselves to this sad reality! Human life is too precious a good and death or incapacitation by causes which in most cases could have been avoided is most unworthy of man. A greater sense of responsibility is certainly essential, first and foremost on the part of drivers since accidents are often due to excessive speed or rash conduct. Driving a vehicle on public roads demands a moral and a civic sense. To encourage the latter, the constant work of prevention, watchfulness and penalization by the authorities in charge is indispensable. On the other hand, we as Church feel directly challenged on the ethical level: Christians must first of all make a personal examination of conscience regarding their own behaviour as car-drivers. Furthermore, may communities teach every man and woman to consider driving as another area in which to defend life and put love of neighbour into practice.

Let us entrust the social problems I have mentioned to the motherly intercession of Mary, whom we shall now call upon together with the recitation of the *Angelus*.

After the Angelus:

I am continuing to follow the situation in Georgia with anxious attention and I feel especially close to the victims of the conflict. As I raise a special prayer of suffrage for the deceased and express heartfelt condolences to the bereaved, I am appealing for the generous relief of the serious hardships of the refugees, especially of women and children, who sometimes lack even the basic necessities for survival. I ask that humanitarian corridors be opened without further delay between the Region of Southern Ossetia and the rest of Georgia so that the fallen who are still abandoned may be given a dignified burial, the injured be adequately cared for and those who so desire be reunited with their loved ones. In addition, may the ethnic minorities involved in the conflict also be guaranteed safety and those fundamental rights which can never be violated. I also hope that the truce being observed, thanks to the contribution of the European Union, may be consolidated and become a peace that endures, while I invite the International Community to continue offering its support so that through dialogue and common good will a lasting solution may be found.

I heard with profound sorrow of the death yesterday evening of Bishop Wilhelm Egger of Bolzano-Bressanone at the age of 68. The loss of Bishop Egger profoundly distresses me, for only a week ago I was with him as his guest. May the Lord reward this Pastor's fidelity in proclaiming Christ's love for men and women and admit him to the Communion of Saints in Heaven. With deep distress I learned of the sudden death of Bishop Wilhelm Emil Egger, of Bolzano-Bressanone. I had left him a few days earlier apparently in good health. There was nothing to suggest that he was so soon to depart. I join in the mourning of his relatives and of the whole diocese in which he was appreciated and loved for his hard work and dedication. As I raise a fervent prayer of suffrage to the Lord for this good and faithful servant, I send a special comforting Apostolic Blessing to his brother, a Capuchin religious, to his other relatives and to all the priests, men and women religious

and faithful of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone.

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present for this Sunday Angelus prayer. In today's Gospel Jesus invites us, after the example of the Canaanite woman, to profess our faith and our complete trust in God. He alone, through the power of his Word and his Holy Spirit, can touch our hearts and save us. May your stay in Castel Gandolfo and Rome draw you nearer to Christ, and may God bless you all!

I wish you all a good Sunday and a good week. Thank you for your presence and your faith.

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