



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO FRASCATI, ITALY HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

St. Peter's Square, Frascati

Sunday, 15 July 2012

[[Video](#)]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am very pleased to be with you to celebrate the Eucharist and to share the joys and hopes, efforts and commitments, ideals and aspirations of this diocesan community. I greet Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who is my Secretary of State and the titular of this Diocese. I greet Bishop Raffaello Martinelli, your Pastor, as well as the Mayor of Frascati. I thank them for the courteous words of welcome with which they have greeted me on behalf of you all. I am glad to greet the Minister, the Presidents of the Region and of the Province, the Mayor of Rome, the other Mayors present and all the distinguished Authorities.

I am also very glad to be concelebrating this Mass today with your Bishop, a very faithful and capable collaborator of mine in the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), as he said, for more than 20 years. He was involved above all in the catechism and catechetics sector where he worked in deep silence and discretion. He contributed to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and to the *Compendium of the Catechism* so in this great symphony of faith his voice is also truly present.

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus takes the initiative of sending the Twelve Apostles out on mission (cf. Mk 6:7-13). In fact the term "apostles" means, precisely, "messengers" or "envoys". Their vocation was to be fully achieved only after Christ's Resurrection with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Yet it is very significant that Jesus wants to involve the Twelve in his action from the outset: it is a sort of "apprenticeship" with a view to the great responsibility that awaited them. The

fact that Jesus calls certain disciples to collaborate directly in his mission demonstrates one aspect of his love, namely, he does not spurn the help that other people can contribute to his work; he knows their limitations, their weaknesses, but bears no contempt for them. On the contrary Jesus confers on them the dignity of being his envoys. He sends them out two by two and gives them instructions which the Evangelist sums up in a few sentences. The first concerns the spirit of detachment: the Apostles must not be attached to money or to other comforts. Then Jesus warns the disciples that they will not always receive a favourable welcome. Sometimes they will be rejected; they might even be persecuted. However this must not frighten them: they must speak in Jesus' name and preach the Kingdom of God without being worried about whether or not they will succeed. Succeed — its success must be left to God.

The First Reading presents us with the same perspective, showing us that all too often God's messengers are not well received. This is the case of the Prophet Amos whom God sent to prophesy in the Sanctuary at Bethel, a sanctuary of the Kingdom of Israel (cf. Amos 7:12-15). Amos preached very energetically against injustices, denouncing in particular the abuses of kings and notables, abuses of power that offend the Lord and nullify acts of worship. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, therefore ordered Amos to leave. Amos answered that it was not he who chose this mission but that the Lord had made him a prophet and sent him to this very place in the Kingdom of Israel. Therefore, whether he was accepted or rejected, he would continue to prophesy, preaching whatever God told him and not what men wished to hear. And this has continued to be the Church's mandate: she does not preach what the powerful wish to hear. Her criterion is truth and justice even if it is unpopular and against human power.

Likewise in the Gospel Jesus warns the Twelve that in some places they may be rejected. Should this be the case, they are to go elsewhere, having shaken the dust from their feet in public. This sign expresses detachment in two senses: moral detachment — as if to say it is you who have refused the proclamation offered to you — and material detachment. We did not seek and do not want anything for ourselves (cf. Mk 6:11).

The other very important instruction in the Gospel passage is that the Twelve must not be content with preaching conversion. They must accompany their preaching, in accordance with Jesus' instructions and example, with care for the sick, with caring for those who are sick in body and in spirit. It speaks of the healing of illnesses and also of driving out demons, that is, of purifying the human mind, cleansing, cleansing the eyes of the soul that are clouded by ideologies and hence cannot see God, cannot see truth and justice. This twofold corporal and spiritual healing is always the mandate of Christ's disciples. Hence the apostolic mission must always include the two aspects of preaching God's word and of showing his goodness in gestures of charity, service and dedication.

Dear brothers and sisters, I give thanks to God who has sent me today to proclaim to you once again this Word of salvation! A Word which is at the root of the life and action of the Church and

also of this Church which is in Frascati. Your Bishop has told me about the pastoral commitment you have most at heart. It is essentially a commitment to formation, addressed first of all to formation teachers: to form formators. This is just what Jesus did with his disciples; he instructed them, he prepared them and he also trained them through a missionary “apprenticeship”, so that they might be able to assume apostolic responsibility in the Church. In the Christian community this is always the first service offered by those in charge: starting with parents who carry out an educational mission for their children in the family.

Let us think of parish priests, who are responsible for formation in the community, of all priests in their various fields of work. They all live an important dimension which is educational. Likewise the lay faithful, in addition to the role of parents, mentioned above, are involved in the service of formation with young people or adults, as those in charge of Apostolic Action and other ecclesial movements, or are involved in civil and social contexts, always paying great attention to a person’s formation.

The Lord calls everyone, distributing different gifts for different tasks in the Church. He calls people to the priesthood and to the consecrated life and he calls them to marriage and to commitment as lay people, both in the Church herself and in society. It is important that the wealth of gifts be fully accepted, especially on the part of the young; so that they feel the joy of responding to God with the whole of themselves, giving joy on the path of the priesthood or of the consecrated life, or on the path of marriage, two complementary routes that illuminate and enrich each other and together enrich the community. Virginity for the Kingdom of God and marriage are both vocations, calls from God to which to respond throughout one’s life.

God calls: it is necessary to listen, to receive and to respond to him, like Mary: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Here too, in the diocesan community of Frascati the Lord sows his gifts by the handful, calls people to follow him and to extend his mission in our day. Here too there is a need for a new evangelization, and for this reason I propose that you live intensely the Year of Faith that will begin in October, 50 years after the opening of the [Second Vatican Council](#). The Council documents contain an enormous wealth for the formation of the new Christian generations, for the formation of our consciences.

Consequently, read it, read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and thereby rediscover the beauty of being Christian, of being Church, of living the great “we” that Jesus formed around him in order to evangelize the world. Be the “we” of the Church, never closed, but ever open and reaching out to proclaim the Gospel.

Dear brothers and sisters of Frascati. May you be united with each other and at the same time open, be missionaries. Stay firm in the faith, rooted in Christ through the Word and the Eucharist; be people who pray, in order to remain linked for ever to Christ, like branches to the vine. At the same time go out, take his message to all, especially the lowly, the poor and the suffering. In every community love one another; do not be divided but live as brothers and sisters so that the world

may believe that Jesus is alive in his Church and that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The Patron Saints of the Diocese of Frascati are two Apostles: Philip and James, two of the Twelve. I entrust to their intercession the progress of your community so that it may be renewed in faith and may give a clear witness with works of charity. Amen.

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