



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO CARD. PAUL POUPARD
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PAN-ASIATIC MEETING
OF MEMBERS AND CONSULTORS
OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE AND PRESIDENTS
OF THE NATIONAL EPISCOPAL COMMISSIONS FOR CULTURE
(DENPASAR, BALI - 26-30 NOVEMBER 2006)**

To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Paul Poupard
President of the Pontifical Council for Culture
and of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

On the occasion of the Pan-Asian meeting of Members and Consultors of the Pontifical Council for Culture and Presidents of the National Episcopal Commissions for Culture, I am pleased to send greetings to you and to all the participants who have come together in Bali to reflect on the theme: "The Fullness of Jesus Christ Alive in Asian Cultures: 'And from his Fullness Have We All Received, Grace Upon Grace.'"

It was in Asia that God revealed and fulfilled his saving purpose from the beginning, and it was there too, in the fullness of time, that he sent his only-begotten Son to be our Saviour (cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, 1). I pray, therefore, that this Continent, in which the great events of salvation history took place, may encounter anew the living Lord, the Word made flesh, in the context of its rich variety of cultures. Truly, Asia is a Continent of deep spirituality and mysticism, closely attuned to the mystery of God, and for this reason it constitutes fertile ground where the Word of God can be sown and bring forth a rich harvest.

I am convinced that there is a great need for the whole Church to rediscover the joy of evangelization, to become a community inspired with missionary zeal to make Jesus better known and loved. In the course of your deliberations, may the Holy Spirit lead you to discover new ways of proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel of Christ to the peoples of Asia, new ways of evangelizing

those cultures and inculturating the Christian faith in that fertile ground. Naturally, such evangelization has to be accompanied by a commitment to sincere and authentic dialogue between cultures and between religions, marked by respect, reciprocity, openness and charity. When such conditions exist, the preacher can joyfully prepare a way for the Lord, who desires to make his home among all people of goodwill. And if the faith is to put down deep roots, the missionary also needs to take steps to inculturate the Gospel message so that it is expressed and lived in the language of local traditions and practices, provided always that any hint of relativism or syncretism is avoided. Keep this at the forefront of your minds in these days of prayerful reflection: evangelization and inculturation constitute an inseparable pair, both elements of which must be present if the Gospel of Christ is truly to become incarnate in the lives of people of every race, nation, tribe and language (cf. *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, 5).

In commending you and all those present at this gathering to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in our living Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

From the Vatican, 15 November 2006

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