



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDATION OF EPISCOPAL ACTION "ADVENIAT"**

*To my Venerable Brother
Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck of Essen*

I learned with joy that the relief organization *Adveniat* is celebrating its 50th anniversary in these days and I offer my affectionate greetings and blessings to all those who have come to Essen for the occasion.

During the Season of Advent in 1961 for the first time the German Bishops earmarked the Christmas collection, taken up throughout the Federal territory, for the pastoral projects of the Church in Latin America. It is precisely from this faithful relationship between the Church in Germany and our brothers and sisters in South and Central America that the Relief Organization *Adveniat* came into being.

Through their generous donations and their unconditional commitment, German Catholics have enabled countless aid projects in the Latin American countries to be implemented. This generous expression of Christian *Caritas* deserves sincere recognition. The name *Adveniant* represents a programme. In fact, the Action took its name from the entreaty of the *Lord's Prayer*, "*Thy Kingdom come*". God's Kingdom was introduced to us by the incarnation of Jesus and in the same way Christians are called to collaborate in building this Kingdom. In this regard, *Adveniat* enables the human and divine Face of Christ to shine ever more brightly in Latin America and effectively cooperates in the development of a vital society that deserves to live in justice and peace.

By means of innumerable social assistance and charitable aid projects as well as formation programmes, poor and underprivileged people have received great support. Collaboration in the Kingdom of God has an essentially spiritual dimension. In the *Lord's Prayer*, Christ teaches us to pray for the coming of the Kingdom. We cannot simply create it because it is above all a gift. The Kingdom of God and the work of Christ go hand in hand and flourish wherever, with the

proclamation of the Good News and the celebration of sacraments, the encounter with the Redeemer and Saviour of humankind takes place.

He himself is the source of peace and the giver of salvation. He does not allow our social effort to remain material, exterior and empty, but fills it from within with spirit and life. The Relief Organization *Adveniat* always seeks to address the human person in his/her entirety, by catering for supernatural needs. Then the Kingdom of God truly rises in our midst.

Bl. [Pope John XXIII](#), in his Letter of 11 January 1961 to the Bishops of Germany, thanked them for their wise decision “to help Latin America”. Today, I would like to renew this gratitude and say to you and to all the Catholics in Germany a heartfelt “Vergelt’s Gott”, for these 50 years of beneficial aid.

I gladly accompany *Adveniat*’s further work for the people of Latin America with my prayers, in particular to Our Lady of Guadalupe, as well as to the holy patrons of Latin America. I warmly impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 4 October 2011

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI