



## The Holy See

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### **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO PILGRIMS FROM THE DIOCESE OF VERONA**

**IN NORTHERN ITALY** Saturday, 4 June 2005 Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Verona, Thank you for your enthusiasm. Thank you for your joy, which is the expression and result of faith.

I am delighted to welcome you on your pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles. I cordially greet you all, starting with your Bishop, whom I thank for expressing your common sentiments. I greet the priests, the men and women religious, the leaders of the ecclesial associations and movements, as well as the civil Authorities who wished to be present at this meeting. At the end of the diocesan Synod, with today's pilgrimage to the Apostolic See, you desire to express the bonds of communion that bind the diocesan Community of Verona to the Church of Rome and to reaffirm your full adherence to the magisterium of the Successor of Peter, constituted by Christ, "Pastor of all the faithful", who is "to promote the common good of the universal Church and the particular good of all the Churches" (Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 2). You have come here to be strengthened in the faith and I, only recently called to this weighty task, am glad to greet, through you, such an ancient and illustrious Ecclesial Community as that of St Zeno, very venerated in my Country as well, and to encourage you to persevere in your commitment to Christian witness in the contemporary world. Your Synod, which began three years ago, has reached its culmination in the Year of the Eucharist. This happy coincidence helps us to understand better that the Eucharist is the heart of the Church and of Christian life. "*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*" - "*the Church draws her life from the Eucharist*" - this is what the Servant of God John Paul II has left written for us in his last Encyclical. All the contexts of your Diocese must live on the Eucharist: from the families, small domestic churches, to every social and pastoral section of the parishes and of the territory. At Bari last Sunday, at the end of the [Italian] National Eucharistic Congress, I wanted to recall that "Christ is truly present among us in the Eucharist. His presence is not static. It is a dynamic presence that grasps us, to make us his own, to make us assimilate him. Christ draws us to him, he makes us come out of ourselves to make us all one with him. In this way he also integrates us in the communities of brothers and sisters, and communion with the Lord is always also communion with our brothers and sisters" (*Homily, Solemnity of Corpus Domini, Bari*, 29 May 2005; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 1 June 2005, p. 7). It is true: our spiritual life essentially depends upon the Eucharist. Without it, faith and hope are extinguished and charity cools. This is why, dear friends, I urge you to take better and better care of the quality of the Eucharistic celebrations, especially

those on Sunday, so that Sunday may truly be the Lord's Day and confer fullness of meaning on everyday events and activities, demonstrating the joy and beauty of the faith. The family was rightly one of the main themes of your Synod, as it has been in the pastoral guidelines of the Church in Italy and throughout the world. Indeed, in your Diocese, moreover, as elsewhere, divorce and de facto unions are on the increase, and this constitutes for Christians an urgent appeal to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel of Life and of the Family in its integrity. The family is called to be an "intimate partnership of life and love" (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 48), because it is founded on indissoluble marriage. Despite the difficulties and the social and cultural conditioning of this period of history, Christian spouses must not cease to be in their lives a sign of God's faithful love: may they collaborate actively with priests in the pastoral guidance of engaged couples, young married couples and families, and in bringing up the new generations. Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday we celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: only in this inexhaustible source of love will you be able to find the necessary energy for your mission. The Church was born from the Heart of the Redeemer, from his pierced side, and she is ceaselessly renewed in the sacraments. May it be your concern to draw spiritual nourishment from prayer and an intense sacramental life; deepen your personal knowledge of Christ and strive with all your might for the "high standard of ordinary Christian living" which is what holiness is, as our beloved John Paul II used to say. May Mary Most Holy, whose Immaculate Heart we are commemorating today, obtain as a gift for all the members of your Diocese total fidelity to Christ and to his Church. I entrust the post-synodal journey that awaits you to the intercession of the heavenly Mother of the Redeemer and to the support of the saints and blessed of your region. For my part, I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, as I affectionately impart a special Apostolic Blessing to your Bishop, to you and to your entire diocesan Community.

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