



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE SYNODAL FATHERS AT THE CLOSING LUNCH
FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

Saturday, 22 October 2005

*Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Brothers and Sisters,*

With this festive meal, we have arrived, so to speak, at the point of the "*Ite, Missa est*" of our Synod, even if the real conclusion will be celebrated tomorrow with the Holy Eucharist. In a certain sense we are ending here our being together, our discussion, our moments of sharing.

In the pre-Christian use of the words, *Ite, missa est*, it was only a formula to say: "The assembly is over, it has ended". The Roman liturgy has chosen these words to say: "Our assembly is now ended".

Little by little, however, this has taken on a deeper significance. In ancient Rome, it only meant: "It is finished". "Missa" meant "dismissal". Today, it is no longer "dismissal" but is "mission", since this assembly is not a technical, bureaucratic one, but is a being together with the Lord who touches our hearts and gives us a new life.

After this Synod, we too return home not only with a lot of printouts, even if these are precious, but especially with renewed and deepened love for the Lord, for his Church, and in this sense also with a renewed commitment to do our part so that the Lord's mission is fulfilled and the Gospel reaches everyone.

In this moment, however, it is necessary to speak not only of "high" things that are the heart of our being together, but also to express joy and gratitude for the things of this world, so to speak. The Lord would not have chosen the image of a banquet to prefigure Heaven if he had not also

approved of the beauty of a lunch, of being together, of eating together; the joy too of the things of this world, created by him.

And so I say "thank you" to all those who have organized this lunch, to all those who have served it, to those who have prepared it. I think I may say in the name of all that it was a lunch truly worthy of this Synod!

I renew my thanks to all, beginning with the Presidents' Delegates, the Relators, the General Secretary and all the Fathers who have contributed to the Synod, to those who worked behind the scenes. A big thanks to all! We carry with us in our hearts this gratitude, also for this experience of fraternity.

I return once more to the *"Ite, Missa est"*. Many modern translations have added to this sober phrase of the Roman rite the closing phrase of the Byzantine rite: "Go in peace". I make these words my own at this moment.

Dear brothers and sisters, go in peace! We are aware that this peace of Christ is not a static one, a kind of "rest"; rather, it is a dynamic peace that wishes to transform the world so that it is a world of peace enlivened by the presence of the Creator and Redeemer. In this sense, with a big "thanks" I say: let us go in peace!

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