



The Holy See

LUNCHEON WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS
FOR THE HOLY FATHER'S 80th BIRTHDAY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Hall of Dukes
Monday, 16 April 2007*

Dear Brothers and Friends,

At this moment I can only say "thank you" with all my heart.

My thanks go first of all to the Cardinal Dean of the Sacred College, both for his words paying homage to me yesterday with exquisite kindness and for what was written in *30 Giorni* [*30 Days* magazine], and then for his most sensitive and competent organization of this very fine luncheon, at which we have experienced a moment of our affective and effective collegiality.

Indeed, I would say that it was not only a moment of collegiality but also of authentic brotherhood. We truly felt how beautiful it is to be together: "*Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum*" (Ps 133[132]: 1).

I am grateful for this experience of brotherhood, which I also feel in my daily life. Even if we do not see one another constantly, I always sense and notice the collaboration of those who help me. The College of Cardinals really offers effective and important support to the work of the Successor of Peter.

I would further like to say "thank you" here to all the Cardinals who wrote such beautiful things, both in *30 Giorni* and in the special column of *Avvenire* newspaper, as well as in other publications.

I also thank those who did not write, but thought and prayed. The true gift to me today is prayer, which gives me the certainty that I am accepted from within and above all, assisted and sustained in my Petrine ministry, a ministry which I cannot carry out on my own but only in communion with all who help me, also by praying, so that the Lord may be with all of us and also with me.

Today, in the Office of Readings we recited the words of a Psalm which ring especially true and are very precious to me: "*In manibus tuis sortes meae*" (Ps 31[30]: 16); in the *Vetus latina* the text was: "*In manu tua tempora mea*"; the Italian translation says: "*Nelle tue mani sono i miei giorni*"; the Greek text speaks of *kairoi mou* [the English translation is "my times are in your hands"].

All these versions mirror a single truth: that our time, every day, the events of our life, our destiny and our action are in the good hands of the Lord. This accounts for the great trust with which we go ahead, knowing that these hands of the Lord are sustained by the hands and hearts of so many Cardinals.

This is a cause of great joy to me today. I thank you all, and offer you very many good wishes!

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