



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO PILGRIMS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF TURIN (ITALY)

Paul VI Audience Hall

Monday, 2 June 2008

Your Eminences,

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Archdiocese of Turin,

To each and every one of you I extend my cordial greeting: welcome to the house of the Successor of St Peter! I am pleased to meet you at the conclusion of your pilgrimage to Rome, which crowns the spiritual and pastoral journey taken by your diocesan community in these years. While I welcome you with joy, I extend my greeting first of all to your Archbishop, Cardinal Severino Poletto, thanking him for his kind words with which he described the ecclesial journey travelled by you up to now and the future missionary plans which await you. I greet the Auxiliary Bishop, Cardinal Francesco Marchisano, the priests, men and women religious, catechists, and representatives from parishes and various organizations of your Archdiocese. I greet the Authorities and all those who have wished to join you at this meeting. Through those present, I wish to extend my greeting to the entire population of Turin, a city rich in civil and religious history. I feel I must address a word of special spiritual closeness and solidarity to the populations of the Pinerolo and Cuneo, struck in these days by the consequences of the bad weather. I assure you of a special prayer to the Lord, that he may welcome all the victims into his peace and sustain all who are struggling in the wake of this grave natural disaster.

Dear brothers and sisters, after having celebrated the Eucharist yesterday in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls, this morning, it was at the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles that together you renewed the solemn profession of faith. And what place could be more appropriate for such a meaningful gesture than the *Redditio fidei*? In St Peter's Basilica where everything speaks of the heroism at the beginning of Christianity, the blood of the martyrs continues to be an eloquent invitation to follow Christ without compromise. Catholics from all parts of the world come to the

Basilica and the Vatican Grottoes and, though they belong to different languages and cultures, they profess the very same faith and are part of the unique Church of Christ. You too were able to immerse yourselves in this climate of holiness and Catholicism and now, before returning to your communities, you await a word of encouragement from the Pope to be consistent Gospel witnesses in our age.

Your Archbishop kindly wished to inform me of the journey your diocesan Community began in 1999, when he was called by the Lord to be its Pastor and, even more so, since September 2003, when he began his pastoral visit, which will come to an end, God willing, next Sunday. This ecclesial itinerary has seen you as protagonists of a vast apostolic and missionary action, starting from an intense spiritual movement centred primarily on the Sunday Eucharist, weekly Eucharistic adoration, and the rediscovery of the importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Animated by a sincere longing for a "renewed first evangelization", you have committed yourselves to draw near to the so-called "farthest away", extending the borders of pastoral charity of every parish community. This missionary task has become even more greatly shared in this present pastoral year, the year of *Redditio fidei*, and finds its culmination precisely in the solemn profession of faith which you proclaimed together this morning at the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles.

But all does not end here: after this refreshing pause in Rome, it is necessary to take up the way again and the new tasks which await you. The next pastoral year, in fact, you will dedicate to the Word of God and the following year you will be oriented toward a more attentive contemplation of the mystery of the Passion of Christ. In that context, I will be pleased to meet your great expectations and to welcome your Archbishop's wish that in the Spring of 2010, another solemn "Exposition of the Shroud". If the Lord gives me life and health, I hope that I too may come to this Exposition. It will be a propitious occasion - I am sure of it - to contemplate that mysterious Face, which speaks silently to the hearts of men, inviting them to recognize the Face of God, which "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3: 16).

Dear brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to entrust yourselves to Christ: only He can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. Let no difficulty, no obstacle diminish your love for his Gospel! If Jesus is the centre of your families, your parishes and every community, you will feel that his presence is alive and unity and communion will grow between all the various diocesan realities. Therefore, constantly nurture union with the Lord in prayer and the frequent recourse to the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Among your pastoral concerns may there be that of ensuring a continuous Christian formation of youth and adults. In the wake of your Saints, attentive to the needs of the young and the poor, like Don Bosco, Murialdo, Cottolengo, Cafasso and others, truly a land of saints, may your Diocese shine for its works of charity and for its choral effort in facing the great "educational challenge" of the new generation. May the heavenly Mother of God, whom you invoke as Consoler and Auxiliatrix, protect your priests and pastoral workers, may your communities obtain numerous and holy vocations to the priesthood

and consecrated life, and kindle in boys and girls the desire to follow the high ideal of holiness. May she be for all a comfort and support, particularly for the elderly, the sick, the suffering, those who are alone and abandoned. And while I assure you of a special remembrance in prayer, with affection I bless all of you present, extending my thoughts to all your loved ones.

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