



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE ROMAN CURIA AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE WEEK OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**

Redemptoris Mater Chapel

Saturday, 7 March 2009

Your Eminence,

Dear Venerable Confreres,

To say "thank you" is one of the Pope's most beautiful duties. I would like here, on behalf of all of us and all of you, to express heartfelt thanks to you, Your Eminence, for these meditations which you have given us. You have guided us, illumined us and helped us to renew our priesthood. Your talks were no theological acrobatics. Instead of theological acrobatics, you offered us a healthy doctrine, the good bread of our faith.

In listening to your words, I remembered a prophecy of the Prophet Ezekiel interpreted by St Augustine. In the Book of Ezekiel, the Lord, God as a Shepherd, says to his people: I will lead my sheep to the mountains of Israel, to good pastures. And St Augustine asks where these mountains of Israel are to be found and what these good pastures mean. He replies: the mountains of Israel and the good pastures are Sacred Scripture, the word of God which gives us true nourishment.

Your preaching was steeped in Sacred Scripture, showing great familiarity with the word of God, interpreted in the context of the living Church, from the Fathers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and always within the context of the Reading and the Liturgy. And precisely in this way, Scripture was made present with its full timeliness. Your theology, as we have said, was not abstract theology but marked with healthy realism. I admired and enjoyed this practical experience of your 50 years of priesthood, of which you spoke and in the light of which you helped us to actualize our faith. You spoke to us words that are right and practical for our life, our conduct as priests, and I hope that many people will also read these words and take them to heart.

At the start, you began with this ever fascinating and beautiful account of the first disciples who followed Jesus. Still somewhat hesitant and timid they ask: Rabbi, where are you staying? And the answer, which you interpreted, is "Come and see". In order to see we must come, we must walk after, we must follow Jesus, who always goes before us. Only by walking after and following Jesus can we see too. You have shown us where Jesus dwells, where his dwelling place is: in his Church, in his word, in the Blessed Sacrament.

Thank you, Your Eminence, for your guidance. Let us all continue on the way towards Easter with a new impetus and with new joy. I wish you all a good Lenten Season and a happy Easter.

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