



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE PARISH CHURCH
OF "SANTO VOLTO DI GESÙ"
IN ROME'S SUBURB OF MAGLIANA

***ADDRESSES OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
BEFORE AND AFTER PRESIDING AT HOLY MASS***

Fifth Sunday of Lent, 29 March 2009

On arrival

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for being with me on this beautiful Sunday. It is unfortunately raining but the sun is also coming out. Perhaps it is a sign of this time before Easter, in which we feel the Lord's sorrows and all the problems of our world today, each one in his or her own way. But we know too that the sun exists, although it is often hidden; that God is close, helps us and accompanies us. In this regard, let us now move towards Easter, aware that suffering and difficulties are a part of our life but also knowing that behind them too is the Sun of divine goodness. In this regard I greet you all cordially: thank you for your presence. And a good Sunday to the whole of this beautiful parish, many good wishes!

To the children

Dear children, first of all I wish you a good Sunday. I am happy to be with you today, even if the weather is bad and we woke up an hour earlier because of the time change, yet we are all gathered together and I know that you are preparing for your First Communion, for your encounter with Jesus. Today we heard in the Gospel what the Greek people said: "we want to see Jesus". We all want to see and know Jesus, who is present among us. Walk this path of preparation now and then at the moment of First Communion he will be very close to you and you will be able to feel that he is with you. At Easter, with the beauty of the celebration, we shall be better able to feel that it is a feast which brings the presence of the Risen Jesus to the heart. And then I wish you a

good Sunday, a good preparation for Easter and for Communion and great joy in the holidays, and then of course a good celebration for your First Communion: the centre of which, is not the banquet, but Jesus himself, then the banquet can also be good. My best wishes to all of you. Pray for me, I shall pray for you.

To the Pastoral Council

Dear friends, at this moment I can only say thank you for all that you do to build the living Church in this district of Rome. It seems to me that one of the gifts of the Second Vatican Council is the existence of these Pastoral Councils. In them lay representatives of the entire community, together with the pastor and priests, tackle the problems of the neighbourhood's living Church and help to build up the Church, to make the word of God present and to make the people sensitive to the presence of Jesus Christ in the sacraments. At this time in which secularism is pronounced and all the impressions one gathers round one seem to line up somewhat against the presence of God, against the capacity to perceive this presence. It is all the more important that the priest not be left alone but be surrounded by believers that carry with him this seed of the Word and help to make it live and grow in our time too. Therefore, thank you for your initiatives. It is important to comfort, help and assist people in suffering, for them to experience the closeness of believers who feel particularly drawn to all who are suffering.

I saw this in Africa: in Yaoundé, Cameroon, there is a large centre founded by Cardinal Léger, a Canadian great father of the Council, at which I met him. After the Council, of 1968 he felt the need not only to preach and to govern but to be a simple priest to help those who were suffering. He went to Cameroon and created this Centre which today belongs to the State, although mostly clerics work there, and the whole range of sufferings can be seen: Aids, leprosy, everything. But one also sees the power of faith, one sees people who, motivated by the strength of faith and the love that faith inspires, make themselves totally available: suffering is thus transformed and the people who help are transformed, they become more human, more Christian: they feel something of God's love. For this reason, in our own dimensions let us too always be sensitive to suffering, to people who are suffering, to the poor, to all needy people in diverse forms of poverty, including spiritually. They are waiting for us and in them the Lord awaits us. Thank you for all that you do.

According to tradition, the council is a gift of the Holy Spirit and so a parish priest and the Pope even more, need a council to help them in making decisions. Therefore these pastoral councils carry out the work of the Holy Spirit and witness to His presence in the Church.

Thank you for all that you do; may the Lord always help you and give you the joy of Easter throughout the year. Many thanks.

The Pope takes his leave

Dear friends, I would like to thank you for your enthusiasm. It makes me think of Africa, where I saw so many people rejoicing to be Catholic, to be part of the great family of God. Thank you, because I see this joy also in you. I wish you a good Sunday and happy Easter and the joy of the Lord in all life's complications: may his light too always be present. Thank you and my good wishes to you all.

© Copyright 2009 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana