



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO MALTA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 1950th ANNIVERSARY
OF ST. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK ON THE ISLAND
(17-18 APRIL 2010)

***INTERVIEW OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI
DURING THE FLIGHT TO MALTA***

*Papal Flight
Saturday, 17 April 2010*

Dear friends, good evening! Let us hope we have a good journey, without this dark cloud that is overshadowing part of Europe.

So what is the reason for this journey to Malta? There are many reasons.

The first is St Paul. The Pauline year of the universal Church has come to an end but Malta is celebrating 1,950 years since his shipwreck. And this gives me an opportunity once again to bring to light this great figure of the Apostle to the Gentiles, together with his message, important, precisely, also for today. I think the essential of his journey may be summed up in the words that he himself used at the end of his Letter to the Galatians: *faith working through love*.

Today too, these are the important things: faith, the relationship with God that is subsequently transformed into love. However, I also think that the reason for the shipwreck speaks to us. It was from the shipwreck that Malta's good fortune to acquire the faith was born so we may likewise believe that the shipwrecks of life can fulfil God's plan for us and can also be useful for new beginnings in our own lives.

The second reason: I like to live in the midst of a lively Church, such as the Church in Malta in which vocations are blossoming even today and which is full of faith in the midst of our time and

responds to the challenges of our time. I know that Malta loves Christ and loves his Church which is his Body, and knows that even if this Body is wounded by our sins, the Lord loves this Church nevertheless and his Gospel is the true purifying and healing force.

The third point: Malta is the place where waves of refugees arrive from Africa and knock at Europe's door. This is a great problem in our time and, of course, it cannot be solved by the Island of Malta. We must all respond to this challenge, we must work to ensure that all may live a dignified life in their own country. On the other hand, we must do our utmost to enable these refugees, in every case and wherever they arrive, to find a dignified living place. A response to a great challenge of our time: Malta reminds us of these problems and also reminds us that faith itself is the power that provides charity, hence also the imagination to respond well to these challenges. Many thanks.

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