



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, 27 February 2010

Dear Brothers,

Dear Fr Enrico,

On behalf of all of us here I would like to thank you warmly, Fr Enrico, for these Exercises, for the passionate and very personal way in which you led us on the path towards Christ, on the path to the renewal of our priesthood.

You chose as the starting point, as the ever present background, as the finishing post we have now seen it Solomon's prayer for "a heart that listens". It really seems to me that this sums up the whole of the Christian vision of the human being. In himself man is not perfect; he is a relational being. It is not his *cogito* [I think] that can *cogitare* [think] of the whole of reality. He needs listening, he needs to listen to the other and especially to the Other with a capital "O", to God. Only in this way does he know himself, only in this way does he become himself.

From my place here I could always see the Mother of the Redeemer, the *Sedes Sapientiae*, the living throne of wisdom with Wisdom incarnate on her lap. And, as we have seen, St Luke presents Mary precisely as a woman with a heart that listens, who is steeped in the word of God, who listens to the Word, meditates on it (*synballein*), composes it and preserves it, who cherishes it in her heart. The Fathers of the Church say that at the moment of the conception of the eternal Word in the Virgin's womb, the Holy Spirit entered Mary through her ear. In listening she conceived the eternal Word, she gave flesh to this Word. And thus she tells us what it means to have a listening heart.

Here Mary is surrounded by the Fathers and Mothers of the Church, by the Communion of Saints.

And thus, in these very days we have seen and understood precisely that it is not in the isolated "I" that we can truly listen to the Word but only in the "we" of the Communion of Saints.

And, dear Fr Enrico, you showed us, you gave voice to five exemplary figures of priests, from Ignatius of Antioch to the beloved and venerable [Pope John Paul II](#). Thus we truly perceived anew what it means to be a priest, what it means to develop as priests.

You also stressed that consecration leads toward mission; it is destined to become mission. In these days, with God's help we have examined our consecration in depth. Thus, let us now face our mission with fresh courage. May the Lord help us. Thank you for your assistance, Fr Enrico.

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