



The Holy See

WORDS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI AT THE END OF THE MOZART'S REQUIEM MASS

Courtyard of the Papal Summer Residence, Castel Gandolfo
Tuesday, 7 September 2010

(Video)

Dear Friends,

I warmly thank the Orchestra of Padua and of the Veneto as well as the "Accademia della Voce" Choir of Turin, conducted by Maestro Claudio Desderi, and the four soloists for offering us this interlude of inner joy and spiritual reflection with an intense performance of the *Requiem* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. With them, I thank Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Secretary of the [Pontifical Academy of Sciences](#), for his words, and the various institutions that contributed to the organization of this event. We know well that during his travels in Italy with his father when he was very young Mozart stayed in various Regions, including the Piedmont and the Veneto, but we know above all that he absorbed the lively musical activity in Italy, distinguished by composers such as Hasse, Sammartini, Fr Martini, Piccinni, Jommelli, Paisiello, Cimarosa, to mention but a few.

Allow me, however, to say once again that a special affection binds me I might say, has always bound me to this supreme musician. Every time I hear his music I cannot but think back to my parish church when I was a boy when, on feast days, one of his "Masses" resounded. I felt in my heart that a ray of Heaven's beauty had reached me, and I have this sensation every time, today too, that I hear this great, dramatic and serene meditation on death. In Mozart everything is in perfect harmony, every note, every musical phrase, and it could not be otherwise. Even counterpoints are reconciled and the *Mozart'esche Heiterkeit*, the "Mozartian serenity" enfolds everything and at every moment. This is a gift of God's Grace, but it is also the fruit of the lively faith of Mozart who especially in his sacred music succeeds in making the luminous response of Divine Love shine out. This gives hope, even when human life is lacerated by suffering and death.

In the last letter, dated 4 April 1787, that he wrote to his dying father, he spoke in this way concerning the last phase of life on earth: "... for some years I have become so familiar with this sincere and most beloved friend of man (death), whose image, for me, not only has nothing terrifying about it but even appears very tranquillizing and comforting! And I thank my God for granting me the good fortune of having the opportunity to recognize in it the key to our happiness. "I never go to bed without thinking that I might perhaps be dead on the morrow. Yet not one of those who know me would be able to say that in company I am sad or in a bad mood. And for this good fortune I thank my Creator every day, and I wish for it with all my heart for all my peers". It is a letter that shows a deep and simple faith which likewise emerges in the prayer of the great *Requiem* and leads us, at the same time, to love intensely the events of earthly life as gifts of God and to rise above them, looking serenely at death as the "key" that opens the door to eternal happiness.

Mozart's *Requiem* is a lofty expression of faith that is well acquainted with the tragedy of human existence and is not silent about its dramatic aspects. It is thus an expression of a truly Christian faith, aware that the whole of human life is illumined by God's love. Many thanks again to all of you.

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