



The Holy See

"CHRISTMAS ORATORIO FROM THE ALPS" AND PROJECTION OF THE FILM
"FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH - ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS"
OFFERED BY THE *BAYERISCHER RUNDFUNK*

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Clementine Hall

Friday, 2 December 2011

*Your Eminence, Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,*

At the end of this Advent meeting here in the Apostolic Palace I would like to address a few words to you. First of all, I cordially thank all those who have made this evening possible. I thank Mr Hans Berger, together with his Ensemble and the Montini Choir for their performance of the "Christmas Oratorio from the Alps", which moved me deeply. My heartfelt thanks. I then thank the Bavarian Radio and Television, represented by Mr Mandlik and Mrs Sigrid Esslinger, for the screening of the film on Advent and Christmas in the Bavarian Prealps. You have all brought a taste of typically Bavarian customs and life to the Pope's house. I can only wish you a very warm "*Vergelt's Gott*" [may the Lord reward you] for this gift!

And I hope that our Italian friends have also enjoyed themselves with this inculturation of faith in our lands, especially you, Your Eminence [*turning to Cardinal Bertone*], on your birthday. As has been said, we call Advent the 'time of silence' — *staade Zeit*. Nature pauses; the earth is covered in snow; it is impossible, in the farming world, to work outside; all are obliged to stay at home. Through faith the silence of the house becomes expectation of the Lord, joy in his presence. So it is that all these melodies come into being, all these traditions which — as was also said today — "make" a little bit of "heaven present on earth". A silent time, a time of silence.

Today Advent is often exactly the opposite: a time of frenzied activity, of people buying and selling, making preparations for Christmas, for large meals and so forth. It is also like this for us. Yet, as

you have seen, the popular traditions of faith have not disappeared, indeed, they are being renewed, deepened, updated. And thus they create islands for the soul, islands of silence, islands of faith, islands for the Lord in our time, and to me this seems very important. And we must say “thank you” to all those who perpetrate them: they do so in families, in churches, with more or less professional groups, but they all do the same thing: they make the reality of faith present in our homes, in our epoch. And let us hope that in the future too this effort of faith, its visibility, will endure and will help us move forward, as Advent wishes, towards the Lord.

Once again, my heartfelt thanks and a *Vergelt's Gott* to everyone!