



The Holy See

LIGHTING VIA VIDEO LINK
OF THE LARGEST ILLUMINATED CHRISTMAS TREE
LOCATED IN GUBBIO (PERUGIA)

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Foconi Hall

Wednesday, 7 December 2011

*Dear Citizens of Gubbio,
Dear Friends,*

I willingly accepted the invitation to light the large Christmas Tree, which every year towers over the city of Gubbio. I thank the Organizing Committee and especially Bishop Ceccobelli for his words to me on behalf of the city and the Diocese of Gubbio. I greet all who are in the Square of Gubbio or linked live via television!

Before lighting the tree I would like to make a simple threefold wish. This large Christmas Tree is located on the slopes of Mount Ingino at the peak of which, as the Bishop recalled, the Basilica of the Patron of Gubbio, Saint Ubald, stands. Looking at it our gaze naturally turns upward, towards Heaven, towards the world of God.

The first wish, then, is that our gaze, that of the mind and the heart, may not only pause at the horizon of our world, at material things, but be a little like this tree, knowing how to be drawn above and how to turn to God. He never forgets us but also asks us not to forget him!

The Gospel tells us that on the night of holy Christmas a light shone on the shepherds (cf. Lk 2:9-11) announcing to them a great joy: the birth of Jesus, the One who comes to bring light, rather the One who is the true Light that enlightens every man (cf. Jn 1:9). The large tree, which will soon be lit, overlooks the city of Gubbio and will illuminate with its light the dark of the night.

The second wish is that it may serve as a reminder that we too need light that can illumine the path of our life and which gives us hope, especially in our time when we particularly feel the burden of difficulties, problems, suffering and a veil of darkness seems to envelope us. But what light is truly able to illuminate our heart and give us hope, firm and sure? It is the Child himself, whom we contemplate at holy Christmas in a simple and poor grotto, because it is the Lord who comes near to every one of us and asks that we welcome him again into our life, asks that we love him and trust in him, to feel his presence, he is with us, he sustains us and he helps us.

This large tree is made up of many lights. The last wish that I would like to make is that everyone may know how to bring a little light to the places where they live: in the family, at work, in the neighbourhood, in towns, in cities. May each of us be a light for those nearby; may we step out of the selfishness which often closes hearts and makes us think only of ourselves; may we give a little attention and love to others. Every small act of kindness is like a light of this great tree. Together with other lights it is able to illuminate the obscurity of the night, even the darkest.

Thank you and may the Lord's light and blessing rest upon you all.