



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE DIOCESE OF SAN MARINO-MONTEFELTRO

OFFICIAL MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, OF CONGRESS AND OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Hall of the Great and General Council of the Public Palace - Republic of San Marino
Sunday, 19 June 2011*

(Video)

*Most Serene Captains Regent,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I warmly thank you for your welcome; in particular I express my gratitude to the Captains Regent, and also for their courteous words. I greet the members of Government and of the Congress as well as the Diplomatic Corps and all the other authorities gathered here. In addressing you, I embrace in spirit the whole population of San Marino. Ever since it came into being this Republic has maintained friendly relations with the Apostolic See, which in recent times have developed and consolidated. My presence here, in the heart of this ancient Republic, expresses and confirms this friendship.

More than 17 centuries ago, a group of the faithful, won over to the Gospel by the preaching of the Deacon Marinus with his witness of holiness, gathered round him to give life to a new community. Taking up this precious heritage, the Sammarinesi have always been faithful to the values of the Christian faith, in which they firmly anchored their own peaceful coexistence, in accordance with criteria of democracy and solidarity.

Aware of these Christian roots, your ancestors were able to bring to fruition down the centuries the

great moral and cultural patrimony that they in turn had received, giving life to a hard-working, free people who, even in this tiny territory, did not fail to make a specific contribution to the neighbouring peoples of the Italian Peninsula and to the whole world of civilization, marked by peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

In addressing you today, I rejoice in your attachment to this patrimony of values and urge you to preserve it and make the most of it, since it is at the root of your deepest identity, which requires to be assumed fully by the people and institutions of San Marino. This identity makes it possible to build a society attentive to the true good of the human person, of human dignity and freedom, and that can safeguard the right of every people to live in peace. These are the strong points of healthy secularism within which the civil institutions must act in their constant commitment to defending the common good. The Church, respecting the legitimate autonomy which the civil authority must enjoy, collaborates with it at the service of man, to defend his fundamental rights, those ethical requirements that are engraved in human nature itself.

For this reason the Church strives to ensure that civil legislation always promotes and protects human life, from conception until its natural end. She also asks for due recognition of the family, as well as effective support. In fact, we know well that in the present context the family institution is being called into question, as if in the attempt to ignore its inalienable value. Those that suffer the consequences are the weakest social categories, especially the young generations that are more vulnerable and so more easily exposed to disorientation, situations of self-marginalization and the slavery of dependence. It is sometimes difficult for educational institutes to provide youth with adequate responses and when family support is lacking they often find natural insertion into the social fabric difficult. For this reason too it is important to recognize that the family, as God made it, is the milieu that best encourages harmonious growth and helps free and responsible individuals to develop, trained in the deep and enduring values.

In the difficult economic situation that the Community of San Marino must also reckon with in the Italian and international context, I would like to give you a word of encouragement. We know that the years that followed the Second World War were a time of straitened economic circumstances that forced thousands of your fellow citizens to emigrate. Then came a period of prosperity, in the wake of the development of trade and tourism, especially in the summer because of the closeness to the Adriatic coast. Such periods of relative prosperity often bring a certain impoverishment in the Christian meaning of life and in fundamental values. Nevertheless San Marino's society still manifests its wholesome vitality and has retained the best of its energy. Proof of this is the range of charitable and volunteer projects to which many of your fellow-citizens are dedicated.

I would like here also to recall the numerous missionaries of San Marino, lay people and religious, who in recent decades left this land to take Christ's Gospel to various parts of the world. Hence positive forces are not lacking that will permit your community to face and to get the better of the present difficult situation. In this regard, I hope it will be possible to resolve the issue of border-

workers who see their employment threatened, taking into account the right to work and the protection of families.

In the Republic of San Marino, the current crisis is an incentive to re-programme the way to proceed and is an opportunity for discernment (cf. Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 21). Indeed, it confronts the entire social fabric with the impelling need to face problems with courage and a sense of responsibility, with generosity and dedication, with reference to that love of freedom which distinguishes your people. In this regard, I would like to repeat to you the words Bl. John XXIII addressed to the Regents of the Republic of San Marino during an official visit they made to the Holy See: “The love of freedom”, Pope John said, “boasts among you exquisitely Christian roots, and your forefathers, understanding their true meaning, taught you never to disassociate its name from God’s, which is its irreplaceable foundation” (*Discorsi, Messaggi, Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII, I, 341-343: AAS 60 [1959], 423-424*). Still today the great Pope’s recommendation has kept its imperishable value: freedom, that institutions are called to promote and defend in society, indicate a greater and more profound one, that freedom enlivened by the Spirit of God whose life-giving presence in our heart gives the will the ability to orient itself and opt for goodness. As the Apostle Paul said: “God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). St Augustine, commenting on this passage, emphasized: “It is certain that it is we that will when we will, but it is he who makes us will what is good”, it is God, and St Augustine adds: “The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and his way does he will” (*On Grace and Free Will*, n. 16, 32).

It is therefore your task, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, to build the earthly city with the proper autonomy and respect for the human and spiritual principles to which every individual is called to adhere with a fully responsible conscience, and, at the same time, it is your duty to continue working actively to build a community founded on shared values. Most Serene Captains Regent and distinguished authorities of the Republic of San Marino, I wholeheartedly express the hope that the whole of your community, in sharing the civil values and with your specific cultural and religious features, may write a new and noble page of history and become, increasingly, a land in which solidarity and peace thrive. With these sentiments I entrust this beloved people to the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Grace and I warmly invoke upon each and every one the Apostolic Blessing.