



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE STAFF OF THE PONTIFICAL VILLAS OF CASTEL GANDOLFO***

Papal Summer Residence, Castel Gandolfo

Wednesday, 28 September 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have gathered together at the end of my summer stay in Castel Gandolfo. Once again this year I am glad to meet with you, to address you all together and to express my gratitude for the invaluable service which you have done and continue to do in competently caring for this residence with competence. In the person of Director Saverio Petrillo, who with his usual kindness has conveyed everyone's sentiments, I thank the entire working community who take care of the Residence and the Pontifical Villas.

In this place, we live in continuous contact with nature and in an atmosphere of silence. In these circumstances, I am glad to recall that both these things bring us close to God: nature, inasmuch as the masterpiece that comes from the hands of the Creator; silence, allows us to think and meditate without distractions, an essential part to our existence. Romano Guardini said: "only in silence do I come before God and only in silence do I know myself". In such an environment like this it is easier to rediscover ourselves, listening to the inner voice, I would say the presence of God, which gives deep meaning to our lives.

Living here at Castel Gandolfo, I experienced during these months serene moments of study, prayer and rest. Also, the General Audiences, in the more familiar and joyful context of the Residence's courtyard or the adjacent square, have taken place regularly thanks to your ever attentive collaboration. May the Lord reward each of you with the abundance of his gifts and keep you and your families in peace. In particular, I thank you for accompanying me with the support of your prayer, and this aid will not leave me after my departure from here.

Christians are essentially distinguished by prayer and love. I invite you, dear friends, to continue to practice both in your life, giving witness to your faith. Prayer as much as love enables us to keep our gaze fixed on God, for the benefit of our brethren: our relationship with the Lord in prayer

feeds our spirit and allows us to be ever more generous and open in charity to those in need.

As I also assure you of my remembrance in prayer, I wish you all the best for your family life, for your daily work and in the education of your children and young people. I am thinking also of Christian formation: I invite the youth to take part in the Catechism with commitment, and adults too, to always make the most of formative opportunities. I entrust you to the protection of the Virgin Mary and warmly impart to each one of you present and to your loved ones a special Apostolic Blessing.

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