



The Holy See

THE HOLY FATHER'S 85TH BIRTHDAY

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE BAVARIAN DELEGATION***

Clementine Hall

Monday, 16 April 2012

[[Video](#)]

*Dear Mr Minister President,
Your Eminence,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Friends,*

I will dispense with addressing each one of you by your name and title — it would take far too long. However I assure you that I have read the guest list twice, the list of those who have come. I read it with my heart and in doing so I greeted each one of you individually within myself: no one present here is anonymous. I have seen each one of you in my mind's eye and I am glad to greet you here now. I have had a talk with each one of you — welcome to you all!

What can be said on such an occasion? My feelings go beyond words and so, as a way of thanking you, I must say what on the contrary has not been said. Yet I would like to thank you really warmly for your words, Mr Minister President, you have enabled the heart of Bavaria — a Christian, a Catholic heart — to speak, and have thereby moved me and at the same time mentioned all the important aspects of my life. I am equally grateful to you, Your Eminence, for your affectionate words as Pastor of the diocese to which I belong as a priest, in which I grew up and to which, I still belong in spirit, remembering at the same time the Christian aspect, our faith in its full grandeur and beauty.

Dear Mr Minister President, you have gathered here a sort of mirror image of both the interior and exterior geography of my life; of the exterior geography, which is nonetheless also always interior, and which began in Markt am Inn, passing through Tittmoning to Aschau and then to Hufschlag and Traunstein, to Pentling and hence to Regensburg.... In all these stages that are present here, there is always a little piece of my life, a part in which I lived and struggled and which contributed to making me what I am as I am now in your presence and as, one day, I must present myself to the Lord. Then, there are all the areas of Bavarian life: the living Church of our land is here — and for this I thank the Bavarian bishops. There is also, thanks be to God, the ecumenical dimension with the Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Munich.... This reminds me of the great friendship that bound me to Bishop Hansemann, whose memory I treasure, and it bears witness to me of how one progresses. Likewise, I remember the Jewish community with Dr Lamm and Dr Snopkowski: with them too cordial friendships were born which brought me inwardly close to the Jewish portion of our people, and to the Jewish People as such who are present within me in memories. Then there are the media which convey to the world what we are doing and saying... at times we have to make a few adjustments but what would we be without their service? And then, dear Mr Minister President, you have presented Bavaria as alive in the children, in whom we recognize that Bavaria continues to be faithful to itself because it is faithful to itself, remains youthful and continues to advance. In addition, there is the music I have been able to listen to, which reminds me of my father, who used to play on the zither, “Gott grüße Dich”: the sounds of my childhood have returned but they are also the sounds of the present and of the future — “Gott grüße Dich”....

A full heart would need many words, while I am limiting myself because what I would have to say would be too much. In the end, however, everything is summed up in the one word with which I would like to conclude: “Vergelt’s Gott!” — may God reward you.