



The Holy See

WORDS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI AT THE LUNCHEON WITH THE CARDINALS

*Hall of Dukes, Apostolic Palace
Monday, 21 May 2012*

*Your Eminence,
Dear Brothers,*

At this moment my words can only be of gratitude. A “thank you” first of all to the Lord for the many years he has given me; years filled with many days of joy, marvelous times but also with dark nights. Yet, in retrospect, one understands that those nights were necessary and good, a cause for thanksgiving.

Today the phrase *ecclesia militans* is somewhat out of fashion but in fact we can understand ever more so that it is true, that it contains within it the truth. We see how evil wishes to dominate in the world and that it is necessary to fight against evil. We see that it does so in so many ways: cruelty, through the different forms of violence, but even disguised as good and thereby undermining the moral foundations of society.

St Augustine said that all history is a struggle between two loves: love of self to the point of despising God; and love of God to the point of despising oneself, in martyrdom. We are caught up in this struggle and in this struggle it is very important to have friends. And as for myself, I am surrounded by my friends in the College of Cardinals; you are my friends and I feel at home with you, I feel safe in this company of great friends, who are here with me and all together with the Lord.

Thank you for this friendship. Thank you, Your Eminence, for all you have done for this event today and for all that you always do. Thank you for the communion in joys and in troubles. Let us move ahead, the Lord said: courage, I have conquered the world. We are on the Lord’s team,

hence on the winning team. I thank you all. May the Lord bless all of you. And let us raise our glasses.

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