



The Holy See

FUNERAL MASS FOR CARDINAL EGANO RIGHI-LAMBERTINI

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Friday 6 October 2000

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit.... Blessed are the meek.... Blessed are the peacemakers" (cf. *Mt* 5: 3-9). Christ's words, re-echoing at this sad celebration, once again propose the great message of the Beatitudes for our reflection and invite us to view in the light of faith the last farewell we are about to offer our venerable Brother, dear Cardinal Egano Righi-Lambertini. How often did he hear these words of the Gospel and meditate on their deep spiritual meaning! It was precisely to this spirit of the Beatitudes that he sought to conform his pastoral ministry and his long and appreciated diplomatic service to the Holy See.

We know that God created us for happiness. By following Jesus' Word it is possible to transform even the trials and sufferings that are an inevitable part of our earthly life into a source of peace and greater joy. As we celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy for the late Cardinal's chosen soul, let us ask the Lord to welcome him into that eternal bliss whose first fruits he was already able to foretaste in ecclesial communion and in establishing bonds of peace and harmony between the peoples and nations to whom he was sent as a papal representative.

2. His very surname - Righi-Lambertini - indicated that he belonged to a distinguished Bolognese family which in various ages gave the Church great figures such as Pope Benedict XIV and Bl. Imelda Lambertini. After several years of pastoral ministry and studies in canon law at the Gregorian University, the young Righi-Lambertini entered the Secretariat of State and first served at the Nunciature in Italy and later in France with the then-Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli. He was later posted to the papal legations in Costa Rica, England and Korea.

Appointed titular Archbishop of Doclea in 1960, he carried out his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Lebanon, Chile, Italy and France, working energetically for the growth of the Christian community and the progress of civil society, while everywhere receiving expressions of esteem, appreciation and gratitude.

The pastoral and diplomatic work of Cardinal Righi-Lambertini was usually performed in silence and without clamour, but for this reason it was all the more effective and fruitful, being constantly inspired by that trust in divine Providence, that

optimism in viewing human affairs which he had learned from Bl. John XXIII.

3. Because of the wisdom of his ecclesial service and the great human and spiritual gifts that enriched his personality, our venerable Brother was called to the College of Cardinals. Having become more deeply and directly involved in the life of the Church of Rome, he continued to offer his useful collaboration to the Pope in various ways, helping him, in sincere harmony with the other members of the Sacred College, in his pastoral concern for the entire People of God throughout the world.

We thank the Lord for all the good that the Cardinal was able to accomplish with the help of God's grace in the various areas where he carried out his valuable pastoral and diplomatic activity. We trust that, because of the good our venerable Brother accomplished during his earthly life, he can now see face to face the Lord Jesus, whom he loved so much and served in his brothers and sisters (cf. 1 *Jn* 3: 2).

4. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (*Wis* 3: 1). The words of Scripture rekindle in our spirit the light of faith and hope in the God of life. As we prepare to offer our last farewell to our venerable Brother, let us open our hearts to the hope which, as the first reading recalled, "is full of immortality" (cf. *Wis* 3: 4). That hope which illumined the priestly and apostolic life of Cardinal Righi-Lambertini now finds its complete and definitive fulfilment in the divine call to take part in the banquet of heaven.

With intense and trusting prayer, we now want to entrust his spirit to Mary Most Holy, Queen of Apostles and Mother of the Church, whom dear Cardinal Egano Righi-Lambertini so tenderly loved and called upon - how often was he seen walking in the Vatican Gardens reciting the Rosary! May Mary, the Virgin of listening and acceptance, receive him in her motherly arms and open the doors of heaven to him. Amen!

© Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana