



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

ANGELUS

St Peter's Square

Sunday, 10 July 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tomorrow is the feast of St Benedict, Patron of Europe, a saint and abbot particularly dear to me as you can guess from my choice of his name.

Born in Norcia around 480, Benedict completed his first studies in Rome but, disappointed with city life, withdrew to Subiaco, where for about three years he lived in a grotto - the famous "Sacro Speco" - and dedicated himself entirely to God. Making use of the ruins of a cyclopean villa of the Emperor Nero at Subiaco, he built several monasteries together with his first followers. Thus, he brought into being a fraternal community founded on the primacy of love for Christ, in which prayer and work were alternated harmoniously in praise of God.

Some years later, he perfected the form of this project at Monte Cassino and wrote it down in the "Rule", his only work that has come down to us. Seeking among the ashes of the Roman Empire first of all the Kingdom of God, Benedict perhaps unknowingly scattered the seed of a new civilization that would develop, integrating Christian values with the classical heritage on the one hand, and on the other, the Germanic and Slav cultures.

Today, I would like to emphasize one typical aspect of his spirituality. Benedict, unlike other great monastic missionaries of his time, did not found a monastic institution whose principal aim was the evangelization of the barbarian peoples; he pointed out to his followers the search for God as the fundamental and indeed, one and only aim of life: "*Quaerere Deum*" [to seek God].

He knew, however, that when the believer enters into a profound relationship with God, he cannot be content with a mediocre life under the banner of a minimalistic ethic and a superficial religiosity. In this light one can understand better the expression that Benedict borrowed from St Cyprian and summed up in his Rule (IV, 21), the monks' programme of life: "*Nihil amori Christi praeponere*", "Prefer nothing to the love of Christ". Holiness consists of this, a sound proposal for every Christian that has become a real and urgent pastoral need in our time, when we feel the need to anchor life and history to sound spiritual references.

Mary Most Holy is a sublime and perfect model of holiness who lived in constant and profound communion with Christ. Let us invoke her intercession, together with St Benedict's, so that in our time too the Lord will multiply men and women who, through witnessing to an enlightened faith in their lives, may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world in this new millennium.

After the recitation of the Angelus the Holy Father said:

We all feel a deep sorrow for the atrocious terrorist attacks in London last Thursday. Let us pray for the people killed, for the injured and for their loved ones. But let us also pray for the attackers: may the Lord move their hearts. To all who nurture sentiments of hatred and to all who carry out such repugnant terrorist acts I say: God loves life, which he created, and not death. Stop, in God's name!

Tomorrow I will be going to the Aosta Valley where I shall spend a short period of rest. I will be staying as a guest in the house that frequently offered hospitality to Pope John Paul II. I thank all those who will accompany me with their prayers and I say to you all with affection, "see you soon".

The Pope then greeted pilgrims; to the English-speaking faithful he said:

I offer a cordial greeting to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors gathered for this Angelus prayer. With great affection I invoke upon you and your families an abundance of joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I wish you all a good Sunday!

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