



The Holy See

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI FOR THE FUNERAL OF CHIARA LUBICH

*To His Eminence
Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone
Secretary of State*

I am taking part spiritually in the solemn Liturgy through which the Christian community accompanies Chiara Lubich in taking her leave of this earth to enter the heart of the Heavenly Father. I renew with affection my heartfelt condolences to the heads of the entire Focolare Movement - Work of Mary, as well as to those who have collaborated in this generous witness to Christ, which is given unreservedly for the spread of the Gospel message in every sphere of contemporary society, always attentive to the "signs of the times".

There are many reasons to give thanks to the Lord for the gift made to the Church by this woman of intrepid faith, a gentle messenger of hope and of peace, Foundress of a vast spiritual family that embraces many fields of evangelization. I would above all like to thank God for the service that Chiara has given to the Church, a silent and incisive service always in harmony with the Church's Magisterium: "The Popes", she used to like to say, "always understand us". And this is so because Chiara and her Work of Mary have always sought to respond with docile fidelity to the appeals and desires of each of them. The continuous link with my Venerable Predecessors, from the Servant of God Pius XII to Blessed John XXIII and the Servants of God Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II, was a concrete testimony to this. The thought of the Pope was for her a sure guide. Moreover, looking at the initiatives she accomplished, one could even affirm that she had an almost prophetic capacity to perceive and anticipate it. Her legacy passes now to her spiritual family: may the Virgin Mary, a constant model of reference for Chiara, help each Focolare member to travel the same path, always contributing to make the Church, as was written by beloved John Paul II on the day after the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, more a home and school of communion.

May the God of Hope receive the soul of our sister and sustain the commitment of those who inherit her spiritual testament. I assure you of a particular remembrance in prayer, while I extend to

all present at the sacred rite the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 18 March 2008.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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