



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE FAITHFUL OF BRAZIL
FOR THE 2013 BROTHERHOOD CAMPAIGN**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Unfolding before us is the path of Lent, imbued with prayer, penance and charity, and which prepares us to live and to participate more deeply in the passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Brazil this preparation has found considerable support and inspiration in the Brotherhood Campaign, being organized for the 50th time and this year assumes the spiritual tones of the 27th World Youth Day that will be held in July in Rio de Janeiro. It is here that the motto “Brotherhood and Youth” was proposed by the National Bishops’ Conference in the hope of seeing an increase in the number of today’s young people who, like the Prophet Isaiah will answer God: “Here am I! Send me” (6:8).

I gladly join in this Lenten initiative of the Church in Brazil, sending to everyone my cordial greeting in the Lord, to whom I entrust the efforts of those working to help the youth become — as I asked them in São Paulo — protagonists of “a more just and fraternal society”, inspired by the Gospel (*Discourse to Brazilian youth, 10 May 2007*). In fact “the signs of the times”, in society and in the Church, also spring from youth; underestimating these signs or not knowing how to discern them means missing out on opportunities for renewal. If they are the present they will be the future too. We want young people to be leaders well integrated into the communities that accept them, demonstrating the trust the Church places in each one of them. This requires guides — priests, consecrated persons and lay people — who remain youthful at heart, even if they are no longer young in years. They must be able to find paths without imposing directions, to show solidarity and empathy, to bear witness to salvation which faith and following Jesus Christ nourish every day.

I therefore invite the young people of Brazil to search increasingly in the Gospel of Jesus for the meaning of life, the certainty that it is through friendship with Christ that we experience what is beautiful and redeems us: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven” (Is 6:7). From this transforming encounter, which I hope every young Brazilian will experience, is born the full availability of those who let themselves be overwhelmed by God who

saves: “*Here am I! Send me*” to my peers, to help them discover the strength and beauty of faith “in the (spiritual) deserts of today’s world, taking with us only what is necessary:… the Gospel and the faith of the Church, of which the Council documents are a luminous expression, as is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*” (*Homily at Holy Mass for the Opening of the Year of Faith, 11 October 2012*).

May the Lord grant everyone the joy of believing in him, of growing in his friendship, of following him on the path of life and of witnessing to him in every situation, to pass on to the next generation the immense wealth and beauty of faith in Jesus Christ. As I wish every Brazilian, especially the new generations, a fruitful Lent in their lives, under the maternal protection of Nossa Senhora Aparecida, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you all.

From the Vatican, 8 February 2013

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