



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE VATICAN GENTLEMEN-IN-WAITING

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 7 January 2006*

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you this morning at a special Audience and I greet you with deep cordiality. This is a favourable occasion to become better acquainted with you and to express my gratitude for the service you render to the Successor of Peter. I see you at ceremonies and official receptions, when I meet Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Ambassadors and other Authorities. I am deeply grateful to you for your collaboration!

Today, you have not accompanied important political figures but your kind consorts, as to a family reunion. I am also pleased to welcome them and to greet them with fatherly affection.

Your service, dear Gentlemen-in-waiting, is a courtly service that belongs to the age-old tradition of the Pontifical Household. Today, of course, everything in it has been greatly simplified, but although functions and roles are different compared with those of the past, the purpose of all who work in it has remained the same: to serve the Successor of the Apostle Peter.

We are meeting at the end of the Christmas season and at the beginning of the New Year. In this period we have kept our gaze fixed on the Saviour who came down to earth. It is he, in the disarming simplicity of Holy Night, who brought us the riches of communion with his own divine life.

He is the light that is never extinguished, the centre of our existence, and after pausing in prayer before the Crib, like the shepherds of Bethlehem and the Magi who came from the East to worship him, we set out anew on our daily routine, bearing in our hearts the joy of having experienced his

presence.

Wrapped in this great mystery, let us start the New Year with serenity and trust, under the sign of God's life-giving love.

In this perspective, dear friends, I am pleased to wish you a prosperous 2006. In the Church, every task is important, when people cooperate in the realization of the Kingdom of God.

To continue safely on her voyage, the Barque of Peter is in need of many inconspicuous services that help her, together with others that are more visible, to navigate smoothly. It is indispensable never to lose sight of the common scope, that is, dedication to Christ and to his work of salvation.

I entrust you and your families to Mary, Mother of the Saviour, so that she will accompany and support you at every moment of your existence, while I hope that you will increasingly experience the joy of Christ's presence in your lives.

And I gladly bless you all, assuring you of my special remembrance in prayer.

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