



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE MEDIA OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

*Hall of Blessings
Friday, 2 June 2006*

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,*

Today, I am pleased to meet in the Vatican with the personnel of the Catholic daily, *Avvenire*, of the television channel, *Sat2000*, of the radio broadcasting station *InBlu*, and of the press agency, *Sir*.

This is a very important group in the media connected with the Italian Bishops' Conference, which is represented here by its President, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, to whom I first extend my respectful greeting.

I then greet with affection each one of you, and I thank the Director of *Avvenire* and of *Sat2000* for the kind words on behalf of everyone present.

Dear friends, you carry out a truly important role: your contribution, in fact, gives continuity to the commitment of Italian Catholics to bring Christ's Gospel to the life of the Nation.

I am pleased to remember, in fact, that in the years immediately following the Council, Paul VI strongly desired that *Avvenire* be founded as the national Catholic newspaper. It was a courageous decision to then extend your commitment to the field of radio and television broadcasting, using the most modern technologies as the conciliar Decree *Inter Mirifica* had hoped (cf. nn. 13-14).

You have thus become one of the instruments for the dissemination of the Christian message in

Italy.

Faith and culture

To grasp the overall significance of the work to which you dedicate yourselves every day, it might be helpful to reflect briefly on the relations between faith and culture as they have developed in recent decades.

As you know well, Christianity helped to shape European culture down the centuries. With the advent of Illuminism, Western culture began to drift more and more swiftly away from its Christian foundations. Especially in the most recent period, the break-up of the family and of marriage, attacks on human life and its dignity, the reduction of faith to a subjective experience and the consequent secularization of public awareness are seen as the stark and dramatic consequences of this distancing.

Yet, in various parts of Europe experiences and forms of Christian culture exist that are growing stronger or re-emerging with increased vitality. In particular, the Catholic faith is still substantially present in the life of the Italian People, and the signs of its renewed vitality are visible to all.

In your work as communicators inspired by the Gospel, constant discernment is therefore essential.

As you know well, the Pastors of the Church in Italy are anxious to preserve those Christian forms that derive from the great tradition of the Italian People and mould community life, bringing them up to date, purifying them where necessary, but above all reinforcing and encouraging them.

It is also your task to sustain and promote the new Christian experiences that are being born, and to help them to develop an ever clearer awareness of their own ecclesial roots and of the role that they can play in the society and culture of Italy.

All this, dear friends, is part of your daily labour, of a task that must not be carried out in an abstract or purely intellectual way, but with attention to the thousands of aspects of the practical life of a people, its problems, its needs and its hopes.

May the certainty that the Christian faith is open to "whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, gracious" in the culture of peoples, as the Apostle Paul taught the Philippians (cf. 4: 8), sustain you and give you courage in your labours.

Thus, continue in your work with this spirit and this attitude, bearing a shining witness of a profoundly Christian life and consequently remaining tenaciously united to Christ, so that you can look at the world with his own eyes.

Be happy to belong to the Church and to add your voice and your reasoning to the great

communications circuit. Never grow weary of building bridges of understanding and communication between the ecclesial experience and public opinion. In this way you will be protagonists of a form of communication that is not evasive but friendly to the service of our contemporaries.

I warmly hope that Catholics and all Italians desirous of authentic values will give their attention and support to this communication.

For my part, I assure you of my constant closeness, and in order that your work may bear ever more abundant fruit, I impart with affection to you and your families the Apostolic Blessing, which favours the light and strength that only God can instil in the hearts of his children.

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