



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL
OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

Consistory Hall

Thursday, 25 January 2007

Dear and Venerable Brothers,

Thank you for your visit. I greet you all with affection, starting with the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, whom I thank for his words on behalf of you all. Under his guidance, you have met for the fifth time for the purpose of implementing the decisions of the [11th Ordinary General Assembly](#) and to begin preparations for the next Assembly.

I welcome you with the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles whose extraordinary conversion we are commemorating today: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor 1: 3). Jesus is the supreme Pastor of the Church and it is in his name and mandate that we are entrusted with the care of guarding his flock with complete willingness even to making the total gift of our lives.

The upcoming Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be the 12th. Its theme will be: *The Word of God in the life and the mission of the Church*. The importance of this topic, the one that proved the most popular of all in consultation with the Pastors of the particular Churches, escapes no one. This theme has been on the agenda for quite some time.

And this can easily be understood because the spiritual action that expresses and nourishes the life and mission of the Church is necessarily founded on the Word of God.

Furthermore, since the Word of God is destined for all the Lord's disciples, as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity reminded us - it requires special veneration and obedience so that it may also be accepted as an urgent call to full communion among believers in Christ.

You have worked with dedication on the above-mentioned topic and have now reached the final stage of the draft of the *Lineamenta*, a Document intended as a response to the need, so deeply felt by Pastors, to encourage increasingly contact with the Word of God in meditation and in prayer.

I am grateful to you for the appreciated work which, with the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops and a valuable group of experts, you are bringing to completion. And I found your brief report informing me of all the work you have done very interesting.

I am sure that once the *Lineamenta* are published the entire Church will find it is a precious instrument to acquire a deeper knowledge of the theme of the upcoming Synodal Assembly. I express my heartfelt hope that it will help every Christian and every ecclesial and civil community to rediscover the importance of God's Word in their life and also to rediscover the missionary dynamism inherent in the Word of God. The Word of God, as the Letter to the Hebrews recalls, is alive and effective (cf. 4: 12) and illumines us as we continue our earthly pilgrimage towards the total fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.

Thank you again, dear brothers and sisters, for your visit today. I assure you of my special remembrance in prayer for your intentions, as I invoke upon you the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who gave Jesus Christ, the living Word made flesh, to the world. As a sign of gratitude and a pledge of the Holy Spirit's assistance in the future consultation of the universal Church, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all and willingly extend it to all those who are entrusted to your pastoral care.

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