



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT
OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO ASSISI
ON THE EIGHTH CENTENARY
OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT FRANCIS

MEETING WITH THE BAVARIAN,
GERMAN CAPUCHIN POOR CLARES

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Chapter Hall of the Sacro Convento

Sunday, 17 June 2007

Dear Sisters,

When Archbishop Sorrentino and I arranged this Visit, I immediately said: "I have to meet the Bavarian, the German, Capuchins". For me, they comprise a profound part of Assisi, and I cherish so many beautiful memories of the meetings I have had at their House - both before and after the earthquake - that for me a Visit to Assisi without a Meeting with the Capuchin nuns, the German ones, would be only half an Assisi experience.

So I rejoice: here we are together, almost as though we were at your Convent.

I am very grateful and glad that centuries ago Providence founded this convent, that it is still alive, and that young girls constantly come here from Germany and in particular from the Land of Bavaria to take the way of the Lord in communion with St Francis: the way of poverty, chastity, obedience and, above all, the way of love for Christ and for his Church.

I know that you say many prayers for me and for the whole Church. Knowing that I am backed by

so many prayerful people, so many dear Sisters who pray and support my work from within, gives me constant strength. Hence, I also wish to say a word of thanks for this.

This year we are celebrating the conversion of St Francis. We know that we are always in need of conversion: we know that throughout life we find ourselves on the ascent, often arduous but also always beautiful, of successive conversions; we know that this is how, day after day, we come closer to the Lord.

And St Francis also shows us that in his life, beginning with his first deep encounter with the Crucified Christ of San Damiano, his communion with Christ developed increasingly until he became one with him in the event of the stigmata.

For this reason we seek him, for this we fight: to listen to his voice with ever greater attention so that it may penetrate our hearts ever more deeply and increasingly shape our lives, and so that from within we may be conformed to him and the Church may live within us.

Just as Mary was in herself a living Church, through your praying, your believing, your hoping and your loving, you become a living Church and thus one with the one Lord. Thank you for everything. I am truly grateful to the Lord that we have been able to see one another here.

We also have a small present. (Of course, I say thank you for the flowers!). We have brought you an image of Our Lady, which will remind you of this Visit during which we were able to meet.

I believe I can hear more singing... (at this point a song is sung).

Thank you! That was a hymn we often used to sing at the Seminary of Traunstein and it takes me back to my early youth, thus enabling me to perceive all the joy in the Lord and in the Mother of God, then as now, which we carry in our hearts. I can now impart to you my Blessing.

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