



The Holy See

FAREWELL FROM THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES OF CASTEL GANDOLFO

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Hall of the Swiss, Castel Gandolfo

Friday, 28 September 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Before leaving Castel Gandolfo, I would like to address a word of cordial gratitude to each one of you who has helped in various ways to make my summer stay beneficial and relaxing. I greet first of all the Parish Priest of Castel Gandolfo and the Parish Community, as well as the various men's and women's Religious Communities who live and work here. I would like to tell each one: the Pope is counting on your spiritual support. He accompanies you with his prayers so that you may respond with constant generosity to the demanding call to Gospel perfection, in order to serve the Lord and your brethren with joy and dedication.

I would now like to thank in particular Mr Mayor and the representatives of the Municipal Administration of Castel Gandolfo. I warmly thank you for your visit. I have felt your closeness in these months and I know how well you take care of me and of those who live in the Apostolic Palace. Everyone knows the style of cordial hospitality that distinguishes your town and its inhabitants. Your welcome is not only reserved for the Pope but is also offered to the numerous pilgrims who come to visit him, especially on Sundays for the customary recitation of the Angelus. I ask you, dear friends, to express my grateful sentiments to the entire community of the town which I was able to meet on various occasions. "Thank you" to everyone!

I cannot omit a word of sincere gratitude to the medical personnel and the employees in all the Services of the Governorate; in these past months you have worked with competence and self-denial, each one in his own sector. Dear friends, I am familiar with your availability and with the sacrifices involved in the different duties you are required to carry out. May the Lord reward you for them all.

I likewise feel the need to express once again my appreciation and gratitude to the officials and agents of the various Italian Security Forces who have flanked the Corps of the Vatican Gendarmerie and the Pontifical Swiss Guard with their usual willingness. Thank you for your discreet and effective presence which has facilitated orderly and safe access to the Apostolic Palace for pilgrims and visitors.

And how, finally, could I fail to remember the officials and airmen of the 31st Squadron of the Italian Air Force? Dear friends, you carry out a particularly high quality and useful task, flying me and my collaborators by helicopter and plane. I am deeply grateful to you for your useful service.

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to stop and talk to each one of you to thank you personally for the contribution you make with consideration and generosity to the smooth functioning of the Pope's activities here at Castel Gandolfo. These are often hidden services that oblige you to comply with an exhausting schedule for long hours far from home. Thus, your families are also involved in the sacrifices you have to make.

I am therefore anxious to assure you once again of my deepest gratitude, which I extend to your relatives. I carry you all in my heart and I entrust you all to the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, while I warmly bless you and your loved ones.

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