



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION PRO PETRI SEDE

Consistory Hall

Friday, 11 March 2011

Dear Friends,

I welcome you with joy this morning while you are making your pilgrimage to the See of Peter. You have come to strengthen your Christian life and to renew your commitment to serve so many people whom the Pro Petri Sede Association helps with great generosity.

Together with the whole Church we have just entered the Season of Lent. This season gives priority to the interior pilgrimage toward the One who is the “Light of the world”.

Indeed we need to let ourselves be enlightened by Christ so that, feeling the urgency of our responsibility for the poor of our time, we in turn may direct to them the gaze that restores trust and unfolds the horizons of blessed eternity.

For each one is called to the salvation won by Christ’s victory over all the evil that oppresses man. The Lenten Season is a time of fasting, prayer and sharing (*cf.* Mt 6:1-18).

By helping to fight poverty, sharing and almsgiving we come closer to others. As you know, giving is nothing without the love that motivates it and the bonds of brotherhood it weaves. Thus in acting charitably we express the truth of our being, for there is greater joy in giving than in receiving (*cf.* Acts 20: 35), and we demonstrate the unity of the twofold commandment of love. In fact, in sharing with our neighbour we experience through the joy we receive that fullness of life comes from the love of God. Consequently almsgiving brings us close to God and invites us to conversion.

The generous offering you have brought to the Successor of Peter today enables him to aid the peoples who have been so harshly tried in recent times, particularly the people of Haiti. The

service of charity is part of the Church's very nature. It is a vivid expression of God's solicitude for all human beings. By bringing them indispensable material aid, the Church can also bring the heartfelt attention and love urgently needed by people who are so sorely tried.

I therefore thank you warmly on their behalf for the support you express to them in the fight against all that demeans and debases the dignity of each person, "created in the image of God".

Dear friends, may you be everywhere luminous and effective witnesses of the hope that God's love gives! As I entrust each one of you and your families, as well as the members of your Association, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St Peter and to the Saints of your country, I wholeheartedly impart to you the Apostolic Blessing.