



The Holy See

OPENING OF THE YEAR OF FAITH

BENEDICTION BESTOWED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI UPON PARTICIPANTS IN THE CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION ORGANIZED BY THE ITALIAN CATHOLIC ACTION

*From the window of his apartment - Apostolic Palace
Thursday, 11 October 2012*

[\[Video\]](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good evening to you all and thank you for coming. Thanks also to Italian Catholic Action which organized this torchlight procession.

Fifty years ago on this day I too was in this square, gazing towards this window where the good Pope, [Blessed Pope John](#) looked out and spoke unforgettable words to us, words that were full of poetry and goodness, words that came from his heart.

We were happy — I would say — and full of enthusiasm. The great [Ecumenical Council](#) had begun; we were sure that a new spring of the Church was in sight, a new Pentecost with a new, strong presence of the freeing grace of the Gospel.

We are also happy today, we hold joy in our hearts but I would say it is perhaps a more measured joy, a humble joy. In these 50 years we have learned and experienced that original sin exists and that it can be evermore expressed as personal sins which can become structures of sin. We have seen that in the field of the Lord there are always tares. We have seen that even in Peter's net there were bad fish. We have seen that human frailty is present in the Church, that the barque of

the Church is even sailing against the wind in storms that threaten the ship, and at times we have thought: “the Lord is asleep and has forgotten us”.

These are some of the experiences of the past 50 years but we have also had a new experience of the Lord’s presence, of his goodness and of his strength. The fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire of Christ, is not a voracious, destructive fire; it is a silent fire, a small flame of goodness and of truth that transforms, that gives light and warmth. We have seen that the Lord does not forget us. Even today in his humble way the Lord is present and warms our hearts, he shows life, creates charisms of goodness and charity that illuminate the world and are a guarantee for us of God’s goodness. Yes, Christ is alive, he is with us even today, and we can be happy today too because his goodness will not be extinguished; it is still strong today!

Finally I dare to make [Pope John](#)’s unforgettable words my own: “When you go home, give your children a kiss and tell them that it is from the Pope”.

In this way I warmly impart my blessing: “May the name of the Lord be blessed...”.