



The Holy See

CONFERRAL OF THE "RATZINGER PRIZE 2012"

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 20 October 2012

Photo Gallery

*Venerable Brothers,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I am pleased to address my greeting to all of you who have gathered at this ceremony. I thank Cardinal Ruini for his address, as well as Mons. Scotti who has introduced this meeting. I warmly congratulate Fr Daley and Prof. Brague who with their personalities add distinction to this initiative that is taking place for the second time. And I mean “personalities” in the full sense: the aspect of research and of all scientific work; the valuable service of teaching that they have both carried out for many years; and also, in different ways of course — one is a Jesuit, the other a married layman — their being committed in the Church, actively making their qualified contribution to the Church’s presence in today’s world.

In this regard I noticed something which made me think; namely, that both the prizewinners this year are competent in and involved in two aspects crucial to the Church in our times. I am referring to ecumenism and to the comparison with other religions. Fr Daley, with his in-depth study on the Fathers of the Church, has chosen the best school for knowing and loving the one and undivided Church, also in the wealth of her different traditions; for this reason in addition he is carrying out a responsible service in our relations with the Orthodox Churches. And Prof. Brague is a great scholar of the philosophy of religions, in particular of Judaism and of Islam in the Middle Ages. Thus 50 years after the beginning of the Second Vatican Council I would like to reinterpret with

them two of the Council documents: the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, and the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* on Ecumenism, to which, however, I would add another document that has proven to be of extraordinary importance: the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* on Religious Liberty. It would certainly be most interesting, dear Father and dear Professor, to hear your thoughts and your experiences in these areas where an important part of the Church's dialogue with the contemporary world takes place.

Actually, on reading your publications, some of which are available in various languages, makes this ideal encounter and comparison already take place. I feel it is my duty to express special appreciation of and gratitude for this effort to communicate the fruits of such research. It is a commitment that is difficult but of value to the Church and to all who work in the academic and cultural milieu. In this regard, I would simply like to emphasize the fact that both prizewinners are university professors, deeply committed to teaching. This aspect deserves to be highlighted because it illustrates the consistent policy and work of the Foundation which, in addition to the Prize, sponsors scholarships for those working on doctorates in theology, as well as study symposiums at university level, such as the one held this year in Poland and the one that will take place in Rio de Janeiro in three weeks' time.

Scholars such as Fr Daley and Prof. Brague are exemplary figures for the transmission of a knowledge that combines science and wisdom, scientific rigour and a passion for man, so that one may discover the "art of living". And this is a feature of people who, through an enlightened faith and life bring God close and credible to the people of today. This is what we need: people who keep their gaze fixed on God, drawing from this source true humanity to help those whom the Lord sets on our path to understand that Christ is the way of life; people whose intellect is illuminated by God's light, so that they may also speak to the mind and heart of others.

Working in the Lord's vineyard, where he calls us, so that the men and women of our time may discover and rediscover the true "art of living": this was another great passion of the Second Vatican Council and one which increasingly forms part of the commitment to the new evangelization.

I warmly renew my congratulations to the prizewinners, as well as to the Scientific Committee of the Foundation and to all the co-workers. Many thanks.