



The Holy See

**CONCERT PERFORMANCE OF "AUGUSTINUS - A MOSAIC OF SOUND"
OFFERED BY THE DIOCESE OF WÜRZBURG**

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace, Castel Gandolfo
Wednesday, 26 September 2012*

*Dear Cardinals,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Bishop Hofmann,
Dear Bishop Scheele,
Distinguished Musicians,
Dear Guests from Würzburg and Franconia,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The performance of a work on St Augustine at Castel Gandolfo is without any doubt a unique event. I warmly thank all those who have made this event possible this evening. My thanks go in particular to you, dear Bishop Hofmann, to the *Augustinus-Institut* and to the Diocese of Würzburg for the gift you have made me of this concert in the context of the International Symposium on Augustine that is being held at the Augustinianum in Rome. I thank in particular the musicians — the choirmaster, Prof. Martin Berger; the soloists; the Würzburg Cathedral Chamber Choir; and all the musicians — for their masterful performance. To all of you, a heartfelt "*Vergelt's Gott*" [may God reward you].

The title of this work on Augustine describes it as "a mosaic of sounds". In seven musical images, composed in turn of various voices, songs and melodies, an impressive portrait of St Augustine is painted in sounds. It is a mosaic. Several pieces sparkle depending on where the light falls and where the spectator stands, but only in the whole is his image revealed. This mosaic symbolizes the greatness and complexity of Augustine the man and theologian that escapes any classification

or arrangement which tends to give excessive prominence to individual aspects. This composition, therefore, tells us that if we really want to know Augustine we must never lose sight of his thought as a whole, of his opus and of his personality.

The great Latin Father of the Church has never ceased to be up to date. Once again, the work on Augustine [that we have just heard] has also shown us this. The seven images have acquainted us with the Bishop of Hippo in the language of contemporary music. It must be pointed out that they did so without making the protagonist appear. Yet it is through his “absence” that Augustine makes himself present and is “timeless”. The struggle of human beings, their search for what is closest to them, for the truth, for God, is valid in every era. It does not only concern a rhetorician and a grammar master in the turmoil and upheaval of late antiquity, but also of every person in every age. And thus we find at the end of the work the famous words introducing the *Confessions* that rang out, fading into several languages: “*Magnus es, Domine, et laudibilis valde: magna virtus tua et sapientiae tuae non est numerus... Quaerentes enim inveniunt eum et invenientes laudabunt eum*” — Great are you, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is your power, and of your wisdom there is no end.... And those who seek the Lord shall praise him. For those who seek shall find him, and those who find him shall praise him” (I, 1, 1).

I extend my gratitude once again to the organizers of this evening dedicated to St Augustine and to the musicians and to everyone who contributed to this concert. Thank you for your generous offering and for the precious gift. I also greet all those who are taking part in the International Symposium on St Augustine which is being held in these days at the *Augustinianum*, the headquarters of the Patristic Institute in Rome. May your congress on the relationship between cultures in *De Civitate Dei* make a fruitful contribution to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the thought of the holy Bishop of Hippo and to recognizing his timeliness for the issues and challenges we face today. I warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.