

MAHRUĠ MILL-ARĊIDJOĊESI TA' MALTA

# *BULLETIN* TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI



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# BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

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## WERREJ

### MILL-KNISJA UNIVERSALI

Papal Visit to the HolyLand 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009

- Interview during the flight to the Holy Land 5
- Welcoming Address at Amman Airport 10
- Visit to the Ancient Basilica of the Memorial of Moses 13
- Meeting with Muslim Leaders, Diplomatic Corps and university Rectors 16
- Vespers with Priests, Religious, Seminarians and Ecclesial Movements 21
- Homily at the International Stadium of Amman 25
- Visit to Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem 29
- Meeting with Organizations for Interreligious Dialogue 32
- Prayer of the Holy Father at the Western Wall 36
- Regina Caeli With the Ordinaries 37
- Homily at Josafat Valley – Jerusalem 41
- Homily at Manger's Square in Bethlehem 45
- Visit to Aida Refugee Camp 50
- Farewell Ceremony at Presidential Palace in Bethlehem 53

- Homily at the Mount of Precipice in Nazareth	55
- Homily at the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth	60
- Visit to the Holy Sepulcher	64
- Farewell Ceremony at Tel Aviv Airport	68
- Interview on the return flight	71
Congregation for the Clergy: The Year of Priests	73

### **DOKUMENTI MILL-KURJA**

- Messaġġ tal-Isqfijiet dwar l-Għażla tar-Rappreżentanti fil-Parlament Ewropew	77
- Jum il-Mezzi tal-Komunikazzjoni Soċjali – 2009 : Diskors tal-Arcisqof	78
- Messaġġ tal-Arcisqof fil-bidu tal-istagun tal-Festi	84
- Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina	
- Nomina tal-Kardinal Antonelli bhala Legat tal-Papa fl-Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina	87
- Omelija tal-Kardinal Ennio Anotonelli	91
- Kummissjoni Interdjoċesana Ambjent: Appell għal aktar responsabbilta’	96
- Ċirkolari Nru 33: Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina	101
- Ċirkolari Nru 34: Ċelebrazzjoni Djoċesana fil-Vgħili ta’ Għid il-Hamsin	102
- Ċirkolari Nru 35: Offerta għall-Papa 2009	104
- Ċirkolari Nru 36: Legat Speċjali tal-Papa għall-Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina	105

## STQARRIJET OHRA MILL-KURJA

- L-Arcisqof jiltaqa' maż-żghażagh  
nhar Pentekoste 107
- Kappillan ġdid għall-Parroċċa Madonna  
tal-Karmnu, Fgura 108
- Griżma tal-Isqof u l-Ewwel Tqarbina  
għat-tfal tal-Emigranti 109
- Stqarrija tal-Kulleġġ tal-Kappillani –  
Solidarjetà mal-Isqof Mario Grech 111
- Ix-xhieda ta' Dun Joe H. Abela 112

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**POPE BENEDICT XVI VISITS THE HOLY LAND**

***INTERVIEW OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI  
DURING THE FLIGHT TO THE HOLY LAND***

*Friday, 8 May 2009*

**Father Lombardi:**

Your Holiness, thank you very much for giving us the opportunity once again for a meeting with you at the beginning of such an important and demanding journey. Among other things, it allows us to wish you a good journey and to assure you that we will play our part in spreading the messages that you wish to convey to us. As usual, the questions I am about to ask are the result of a collection of questions proposed by my colleagues here present. I shall put these questions to you myself, purely for ease of logistics, but they were in fact produced by a joint effort.

*Q. Your Holiness, this journey is taking place at a very delicate moment for the Middle East: there are strong tensions – at the time of the crisis in Gaza, there was even speculation that you might decide not to come. At the same time, a few days after your journey, the principal political leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority will also be meeting President Obama. Do you think you can offer a contribution to the peace process that now seems to have become deadlocked?*

**A.** Good morning! First I should like to thank all of you for the work that you do, and let us all wish one another a good journey, a good pilgrimage, a good return journey. As for the question, certainly I shall seek to contribute to peace not as an individual but in the name of the Catholic Church, and of the Holy See. We are not a political power, but a spiritual force, and this spiritual force is a reality that can contribute

to advances in the peace process. I see three levels. First, as believers we are convinced that prayer is a real force: it opens the world to God. We are convinced that God listens and that he can act in history. I think that if millions of people – millions of believers – all pray, this is truly a force that influences and can contribute to moving forward the cause of peace. Second: we are seeking to assist in the formation of consciences. The conscience is the human capacity to perceive the truth, but this capacity is often impeded by particular interests. And to break free from these interests, to open up more to the truth, to true values, is a major undertaking: it is a task of the Church to help us to know true criteria, true values, and to free us from particular interests. And so – in third place – we also speak – no doubt about it – to reason: precisely because we are not a political force, we can perhaps more easily, and in the light of the faith, see the true criteria, we can assist in understanding what contributes to peace and we can appeal to reason, we can support positions that are truly reasonable. This we have already done and we wish to do so again now and in the future.

*Q. Thank you, Your Holiness. The second question. As a theologian, you have reflected particularly on the common roots shared by Christians and Jews. How is it that, despite the efforts towards dialogue, misunderstandings often occur? How do you see the future of dialogue between the two communities?*

**A.** The important thing is that we really do have the same roots, the same books of the Old Testament, a Book which – both for the Jews and for us – conveys Revelation. Yet of course, after two thousand years of distinct, not to say separate, histories, it is no wonder if misunderstandings arise, because very different traditions of interpretation, language and thought have been formed, there is so to speak a very different “semantic cosmos”, such that the same words used in the two traditions mean different things; and with this use of words that, in the course of history have acquired different meanings,

misunderstandings obviously arise. We must each do all we can to learn the language of the other, and it seems to me that we are making great progress here. Today it is possible for young people, future teachers of theology, to study in Jerusalem, at the Hebrew University, and Jews have academic contacts with us: thus an encounter is taking place between one “semantic cosmos” and the other. Let us learn from one another and let us go forward along the path of true dialogue, let us each learn from the other, and I am sure and convinced that we will make progress. And this will also help peace, indeed it will help mutual love.

*Q. Your Holiness, this journey has two essential dimensions of inter-religious dialogue – with Islam and with Judaism. Are the two directions completely separate from one another, or will there also be a common message concerning the three Abrahamic religions?*

A. Certainly there is also a common message and there will be opportunities to highlight it. Notwithstanding our diverse origins, we have common roots because, as I have already said, Christianity is born from the Old Testament and the Scripture of the New Testament would not exist without the Old, because it makes constant reference to “the Scriptures”, that is, to the Old Testament. Islam too was born in a world where both Judaism and the various branches of Christianity: Judeo-Christianity, Antiochene Christianity, and Byzantine Christianity were all present, and all these circumstances are reflected in the Koranic tradition, with the result that we have much in common in terms of our origins and our faith in the one God. So it is important on the one hand to have bilateral dialogues – with the Jews and with Islam – and then also trilateral dialogue. I myself was the Co-Founder of a foundation for dialogue among the three religions, at which leading figures like Metropolitan Damaskinos and the Chief Rabbi of France René Samuel Sirat and others came together, and this foundation also issued an edition of the books of the three religions: the Koran, the New Testament and the Old Testament. So the trilateral dialogue must

go forward, it is extremely important for peace and also – let us say – for living one’s own religion well.

*Q. One final question. Your Holiness, you have often spoken of the problem of the declining number of Christians in the Middle East and especially in the Holy Land. It is a phenomenon with various causes of a political, economic and social character. What can be done in practice to assist the Christian presence in the region? What contribution do you hope to make with your journey? Is there hope for these Christians in the future? Do you have a particular message for the Christians in Gaza who will come to meet you in Bethlehem?*

A. Certainly there is hope, because while this is a difficult moment, as you have mentioned, it is also a time of hope for a new beginning, for a new impetus along the path to peace. We wish above all to encourage the Christians in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East to remain, to offer their contribution in their countries of origin: they are an important component of the life and culture of these regions. In practice, what the Church brings – in addition to words of encouragement and common prayer – are chiefly schools and hospitals. In this sense, we have thoroughly practical establishments here. Our schools educate a generation that will be able to make its presence felt in life today, in public life. The Catholic Church is opening a University in Jordan, which strikes me as an important setting in which young people – both Muslims and Christians – will meet, will learn together, and where a Christian intelligentsia can be formed that is suitably prepared to work for peace. But in general, our schools provide a very important opportunity that opens up a future for the Christians, and the hospitals make our presence visible. Moreover, there are many Christian associations that help Christians in different ways, and with practical assistance they encourage them to stay. So I hope that the Christians really will find the courage, the humility, the patience to remain in these lands, and to offer their contribution to the future of these lands.

**Father Lombardi:**

*Thank you, Your Holiness, with these replies you have helped us to put our journey in context from a spiritual point of view, and from a cultural point of view. Once more I express to you my own good wishes, and those of all my colleagues on this flight, including the others who are flying to the Holy Land at this time, in order to take part and to assist, through their reporting, in attaining a positive outcome for this demanding mission of yours. May you and all your collaborators have a good journey, and to my colleagues I say: *Buon lavoro!**

WELCOMING CEREMONY

**“QUEEN ALIA” INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OF AMMAN  
FRIDAY, 8 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Your Majesties,  
Your Excellencies,  
Dear Brother Bishops,  
Dear Friends,*

It is with joy that I greet all of you here present, as I begin my first visit to the Middle East since my election to the Apostolic See, and I am pleased to set foot upon the soil of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a land so rich in history, home to so many ancient civilizations, and deeply imbued with religious significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims. I thank His Majesty King Abdullah II for his kind words of welcome, and I offer my particular congratulations in this year that marks the tenth anniversary of his accession to the throne. In greeting His Majesty, I extend heartfelt good wishes to all members of the Royal Family and the Government, and to all the people of the Kingdom. I greet His Beatitude Fouad Twal and His Beatitude Theophilus III and also other Patriarchs and Bishops here present, especially those with pastoral responsibilities in Jordan. I look forward to celebrating the liturgy at Saint George’s Cathedral tomorrow evening and at the International Stadium on Sunday together with you, dear Bishops, and so many of the faithful entrusted to your care.

I come to Jordan as a pilgrim, to venerate holy places that have played such an important part in some of the key events of Biblical history. At Mount Nebo, Moses led his people to within sight of the land that would become their home, and here he died and was laid to

rest. At Bethany beyond the Jordan, John the Baptist preached and bore witness to Jesus, whom he baptized in the waters of the river that gives this land its name. In the coming days I shall visit both these holy places, and I shall have the joy of blessing the foundation stones of churches that are to be built at the traditional site of the Lord's Baptism. The opportunity that Jordan's Catholic community enjoys to build public places of worship is a sign of this country's respect for religion, and on their behalf I want to say how much this openness is appreciated. Religious freedom is, of course, a fundamental human right, and it is my fervent hope and prayer that respect for all the inalienable rights and the dignity of every man and woman will come to be increasingly affirmed and defended, not only throughout the Middle East, but in every part of the world.

My visit to Jordan gives me a welcome opportunity to speak of my deep respect for the Muslim community, and to pay tribute to the leadership shown by His Majesty the King in promoting a better understanding of the virtues proclaimed by Islam. Now that some years have passed since the publication of the Amman Message and the Amman Interfaith Message, we can say that these worthy initiatives have achieved much good in furthering an alliance of civilizations between the West and the Muslim world, confounding the predictions of those who consider violence and conflict inevitable. Indeed the Kingdom of Jordan has long been at the forefront of initiatives to promote peace in the Middle East and throughout the world, encouraging inter-religious dialogue, supporting efforts to find a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, welcoming refugees from neighboring Iraq, and seeking to curb extremism. I cannot let this opportunity pass without calling to mind the pioneering efforts for peace in the region made by the late King Hussein. How fitting that my meeting tomorrow with Muslim religious leaders, the diplomatic corps and University rectors should take place in the mosque that bears his name. May his commitment to the resolution of the region's conflicts continue to bear fruit in efforts to promote lasting peace and

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

true justice for all who live in the Middle East.

Dear Friends, at the Seminar held in Rome last autumn by the Catholic-Muslim Forum, the participants examined the central role played in our respective religious traditions by the commandment of love. I hope very much that this visit, and indeed all the initiatives designed to foster good relations between Christians and Muslims, will help us to grow in love for the Almighty and Merciful God, and in fraternal love for one another. Thank you for your welcome. Thank you for your attention. May God grant Your Majesties happiness and long life! May he bless Jordan with prosperity and peace!

**VISIT TO THE ANCIENT BASILICA  
OF THE MEMORIAL OF MOSES**

**MOUNT NEBO  
SATURDAY, 9 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Father Minister General,  
Father Custos,  
Dear Friends,*

In this holy place, consecrated by the memory of Moses, I greet all of you with affection in our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank Father José Rodríguez Carballo for his warm words of welcome. I also take this occasion to renew my gratitude, and that of the whole Church, to the Friars Minor of the Custody for their age-old presence in these lands, their joyful fidelity to the charism of Saint Francis, and their generous concern for the spiritual and material welfare of the local Christian communities and the countless pilgrims who visit the Holy Land each year. Here I wish to remember also, with particular gratitude, the late Father Michele Piccirillo, who devoted his life to the study of Christian antiquity and is buried in this shrine which was so dear to him.

It is appropriate that my pilgrimage should begin on this mountain, where Moses contemplated the Promised Land from afar. The magnificent prospect which opens up from the esplanade of this shrine invites us to ponder how that prophetic vision mysteriously embraced the great plan of salvation which God had prepared for his People. For it was in the valley of the Jordan which stretches out below us that, in the fullness of time, John the Baptist would come to prepare the way of the Lord. It was in the waters of the River Jordan that Jesus, after his baptism by John, would be revealed as the beloved Son of the Father and, anointed by the Holy Spirit, would inaugurate

his public ministry. And it was from the Jordan that the Gospel would first go forth in Christ's own preaching and miracles, and then, after his resurrection and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, be brought by his disciples to the very ends of the earth.

Here, on the heights of Mount Nebo, the memory of Moses invites us to "lift up our eyes" to embrace with gratitude not only God's mighty works in the past, but also to look with faith and hope to the future which he holds out to us and to our world. Like Moses, we too have been called by name, invited to undertake a daily exodus from sin and slavery towards life and freedom, and given an unshakeable promise to guide our journey. In the waters of Baptism, we have passed from the slavery of sin to new life and hope. In the communion of the Church, Christ's Body, we look forward to the vision of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, where God will be all in all. From this holy mountain Moses directs our gaze on high, to the fulfilment of all God's promises in Christ.

Moses gazed upon the Promised Land from afar, at the end of his earthly pilgrimage. His example reminds us that we too are part of the ageless pilgrimage of God's people through history. In the footsteps of the prophets, the apostles and the saints, we are called to walk with the Lord, to carry on his mission, to bear witness to the Gospel of God's universal love and mercy. We are called to welcome the coming of Christ's Kingdom by our charity, our service to the poor, and our efforts to be a leaven of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace in the world around us. We know that, like Moses, we may not see the complete fulfilment of God's plan in our lifetime. Yet we trust that, by doing our small part, in fidelity to the vocation each of us has received, we will help to make straight the paths of the Lord and welcome the dawn of his Kingdom. And we know that the God who revealed his name to Moses as a pledge that he would always be at our side (cf. *Ex* 3:14) will give us the strength to persevere in joyful hope even amid suffering, trial and tribulation.

From the earliest times, Christians have come on pilgrimage to the sites linked to the history of the Chosen People, the events of Christ's life and the nascent Church. This great tradition, which my present pilgrimage is meant to continue and confirm, is grounded in the desire to see, to touch, and to savor in prayer and contemplation the places blessed by the physical presence of our Savior, his Blessed Mother, the apostles and the first disciples who saw him risen from the dead. Here, in the footsteps of the countless pilgrims who have preceded us in every century, we are challenged to appreciate more fully the gift of our faith and to grow in that communion which transcends every limit of language, race and culture.

The ancient tradition of pilgrimage to the holy places also reminds us of the inseparable bond between the Church and the Jewish people. From the beginning, the Church in these lands has commemorated in her liturgy the great figures of the Patriarchs and Prophets, as a sign of her profound appreciation of the unity of the two Testaments. May our encounter today inspire in us a renewed love for the canon of Sacred Scripture and a desire to overcome all obstacles to the reconciliation of Christians and Jews in mutual respect and cooperation in the service of that peace to which the word of God calls us!

Dear friends, gathered in this holy place, let us now raise our eyes and our hearts to the Father. As we prepare to pray the prayer which Jesus taught us, let us beg him to hasten the coming of his Kingdom so that we may see the fulfilment of his saving plan, and experience, with Saint Francis and all those pilgrims who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, the gift of untold peace – *pax et bonum* – which awaits us in the heavenly Jerusalem.

**MEETING WITH MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS,  
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND RECTORS  
OF UNIVERSITIES IN JORDAN**

**MOSQUE AL-HUSSEIN BIN TALAL - AMMAN  
SATURDAY, 9 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Your Royal Highness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a source of great joy for me to meet with you this morning in this magnificent setting. I wish to thank Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammed Bin Talal for his kind words of welcome. Your Royal Highness's numerous initiatives to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and exchanges are appreciated by the people of the Hashemite Kingdom and they are widely respected by the international community. I know that these efforts receive the active support of other members of the Royal Family as well as the nation's government, and find ample resonance in the many initiatives of collaboration among Jordanians. For all this, I wish to express my own heartfelt admiration.

Places of worship, like this splendid Al-Hussein Bin Talal mosque named after the revered late King, stand out like jewels across the earth's surface. From the ancient to the modern, the magnificent to the humble, they all point to the divine, to the Transcendent One, to the Almighty. And through the centuries these sanctuaries have drawn men and women into their sacred space to pause, to pray, to acknowledge the presence of the Almighty, and to recognize that we are all his creatures.

For this reason we cannot fail to be concerned that today, with

increasing insistency, some maintain that religion fails in its claim to be, by nature, a builder of unity and harmony, an expression of communion between persons and with God. Indeed some assert that religion is necessarily a cause of division in our world; and so they argue that the less attention given to religion in the public sphere the better.

Certainly, the contradiction of tensions and divisions between the followers of different religious traditions, sadly, cannot be denied. However, is it not also the case that often it is the ideological manipulation of religion, sometimes for political ends, that is the real catalyst for tension and division, and at times even violence in society? In the face of this situation, where the opponents of religion seek not simply to silence its voice but to replace it with their own, the need for believers to be true to their principles and beliefs is felt all the more keenly. Muslims and Christians, precisely because of the burden of our common history so often marked by misunderstanding, must today strive to be known and recognized as worshippers of God faithful to prayer, eager to uphold and live by the Almighty's decrees, merciful and compassionate, consistent in bearing witness to all that is true and good, and ever mindful of the common origin and dignity of all human persons, who remain at the apex of God's creative design for the world and for history.

The resolve of Jordanian educators and religious and civic leaders to ensure that the public face of religion reflects its true nature is praiseworthy. The example of individuals and communities, together with the provision of courses and programs, manifest the constructive contribution of religion to the educational, cultural, social and other charitable sectors of your civic society. Some of this spirit I have been able to sample at first hand. Yesterday, I experienced the renowned educational and rehabilitation work of the Our Lady of Peace Centre where Christians and Muslims are transforming the

lives of entire families, by assisting them to ensure that their disabled children take up their rightful place in society. Earlier this morning, I blessed the foundation stone of Madaba University where young Muslim and Christian adults will side by side receive the benefits of a tertiary education, enabling them to contribute justly to the social and economic development of their nation. Of great merit too are the numerous initiatives of inter-religious dialogue supported by the Royal Family and the diplomatic community and sometimes undertaken in conjunction with the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. These include the ongoing work of the Royal Institutes for Inter-faith studies and for Islamic Thought, the *Amman Message* of 2004, the *Amman Interfaith Message* of 2005, and the more recent *Common Word* letter which echoed a theme consonant with my first encyclical: the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor, and the fundamental contradiction of resorting to violence or exclusion in the name of God (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 16).

Such initiatives clearly lead to greater reciprocal knowledge, and they foster a growing respect both for what we hold in common and for what we understand differently. Thus, they should prompt Christians and Muslims to probe even more deeply the essential relationship between God and his world so that together we may strive to ensure that society resonates in harmony with the divine order. In this regard, the co-operation found here in Jordan sets an encouraging and persuasive example for the region, and indeed the world, of the positive, creative contribution which religion can and must make to civic society.

Distinguished friends, today I wish to refer to a task which I have addressed on a number of occasions and which I firmly believe Christians and Muslims can embrace, particularly through our respective contributions to learning and scholarship, and public service. That task is the challenge to cultivate for the good, in the context of

faith and truth, the vast potential of human reason. Christians in fact describe God, among other ways, as creative Reason, which orders and guides the world. And God endows us with the capacity to participate in his reason and thus to act in accordance with what is good. Muslims worship God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who has spoken to humanity. And as believers in the one God we know that human reason is itself God's gift and that it soars to its highest plane when suffused with the light of God's truth. In fact, when human reason humbly allows itself to be purified by faith, it is far from weakened; rather, it is strengthened to resist presumption and to reach beyond its own limitations. In this way, human reason is emboldened to pursue its noble purpose of serving mankind, giving expression to our deepest common aspirations and extending, rather than manipulating or confining, public debate. Thus, genuine adherence to religion – far from narrowing our minds – widens the horizon of human understanding. It protects civil society from the excesses of the unbridled ego which tend to absolutize the finite and eclipse the infinite; it ensures that freedom is exercised hand in hand with truth, and it adorns culture with insights concerning all that is true, good and beautiful.

This understanding of reason, which continually draws the human mind beyond itself in the quest for the Absolute, poses a challenge; it contains a sense of both hope and caution. Together, Christians and Muslims are impelled to seek all that is just and right. We are bound to step beyond our particular interests and to encourage others, civil servants and leaders in particular, to do likewise in order to embrace the profound satisfaction of serving the common good, even at personal cost. And we are reminded that because it is our common human dignity which gives rise to universal human rights, they hold equally for every man and woman, irrespective of his or her religious, social or ethnic group. In this regard, we must note that the right of religious freedom extends beyond the question of worship and includes the right – especially of minorities – to fair access to the

employment market and other spheres of civic life.

Before I leave you this morning I would like to acknowledge in a special way the presence among us of His Beatitude Emmanuel III Delly, Patriarch of Baghdad, whom I greet most warmly. His presence brings to mind the people of neighboring Iraq many of whom have found welcome refuge here in Jordan. The international community's efforts to promote peace and reconciliation, together with those of the local leaders, must continue in order to bear fruit in the lives of Iraqis. I wish to express my appreciation for all those who are assisting in the endeavors to deepen trust and to rebuild the institutions and infrastructure essential to the well-being of that society. And once again, I urge diplomats and the international community they represent together with local political and religious leaders to do everything possible to ensure the ancient Christian community of that noble land its fundamental right to peaceful coexistence with their fellow citizens.

Distinguished friends, I trust that the sentiments I have expressed today will leave us with renewed hope for the future. Our love and duty before the Almighty is expressed not only in our worship but also in our love and concern for children and young people – your families – and for all Jordanians. It is for them that you labor and it is they who motivate you to place the good of every human person at the heart of institutions, laws and the workings of society. May reason, ennobled and humbled by the grandeur of God's truth, continue to shape the life and institutions of this nation, in order that families may flourish and that all may live in peace, contributing to and drawing upon the culture that unifies this great Kingdom! Thank you very much!

**CELEBRATION OF VESPERS  
WITH PRIESTS, MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS  
SEMINARIANS AND ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS  
GREEK-MELKITE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT-GEORGES -  
AMMAN  
SATURDAY, 9 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

It is a great joy for me to celebrate Vespers with you this evening in the Greek-Melkite Cathedral of Saint George. I warmly greet His Beatitude Gregorios III Laham, the Greek Melkite Patriarch, who has joined us from Damascus, Emeritus Archbishop Georges El-Murr and His Excellency Yaser Ayyach, Archbishop of Petra and Philadelphia, whom I thank for his kind words of welcome which I gladly reciprocate with sentiments of respect. I also greet the leaders of the other Catholic Churches present in the East – Maronite, Syrian, Armenian, Chaldean and Latin. To all of you and to the priests, Sisters and Brothers, seminarians and lay faithful gathered here this evening I express my sincere thanks for giving me this opportunity to pray with you and to experience something of the richness of our liturgical traditions.

The Church herself is a pilgrim people and thus, through the centuries, has been marked by determinant historical events and pervading cultural epochs. Sadly, some of these have included times of theological dispute or periods of repression. Others, however, have been moments of reconciliation – marvellously strengthening the communion of the Church – and times of rich cultural revival, to which Eastern Christians have contributed so greatly. Particular

Churches within the universal Church attest to the dynamism of her earthly journey and manifest to all members of the faithful a treasure of spiritual, liturgical, and ecclesiastical traditions which point to God's universal goodness and his will, seen throughout history, to draw all into his divine life.

The ancient living treasure of the traditions of the Eastern Churches enriches the universal Church and could never be understood simply as objects to be passively preserved. All Christians are called to respond actively to the Lord's mandate – as Saint George did in dramatic ways according to popular record – to bring others to know and love him. In fact the vicissitudes of history have strengthened the members of particular Churches to embrace this task with vigor and to engage resolutely with the pastoral realities of today. Most of you trace ancient links to the Patriarchate of Antioch, and your communities are thus rooted here in the Near East. And, just as two thousand years ago it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians, so also today, as small minorities in scattered communities across these lands, you too are recognized as followers of the Lord. The public face of your Christian faith is certainly not restricted to the spiritual solicitude you bear for one another and your people, essential though that is. Rather, your many works of universal charity extend to all Jordanians – Muslims and those of other religions – and also to the large numbers of refugees whom this Kingdom so generously welcomes.

Dear brothers and sisters, the first Psalm (103) we prayed this evening presents us with glorious images of God the bountiful Creator, actively present in his creation, providing life with abundant goodness and wise order, ever ready to renew the face of the earth! The Epistle reading we have just heard, however, paints a different picture. It warns us, not in a threatening way, but realistically, of the need to stay alert, to be aware of the forces of evil at work creating darkness in our world (cf. Eph 6:10-20). Some might be tempted to think this a contradiction; yet reflecting on our ordinary human experience we

recognize spiritual struggle, we acknowledge the daily need to move into Christ's light, to choose life, to seek truth. Indeed, this rhythm – turning away from evil and girding ourselves with the Lord's strength – is what we celebrate at every Baptism, the gateway to Christian life, the first step along the way of the Lord's disciples. Recalling Christ's baptism by John in the waters of the Jordan, the assembled pray that the one to be baptized will be rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the splendour of God's kingdom of light, and so receive the gift of new life.

This dynamic movement from death to newness of life, from darkness to light, from despair to hope, that we experience so dramatically during the Triduum, and is celebrated with great joy in the season of Easter, ensures that the Church herself remains young. She is alive because Christ is alive, truly risen. Vivified by the presence of the Spirit, she reaches out every day, drawing men and women to the living Lord. Dear Bishops, priests, Brothers and Sisters, dear lay faithful, our respective roles of service and mission within the Church are the tireless response of a pilgrim people. Your liturgies, ecclesiastical discipline and spiritual heritage are a living witness to your unfolding tradition. You amplify the echo of the first Gospel proclamation, you render fresh the ancient memories of the works of the Lord, you make present his saving graces and you diffuse anew the first glimmers of the Easter light and the flickering flames of Pentecost.

In this way, imitating Christ and the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, we set out to lead people from the desert towards the place of life, towards the Lord who gives us life in abundance. This marks all your apostolic works, the variety and calibre of which are greatly appreciated. From kindergartens to places of higher education, from orphanages to homes for the elderly, from work with refugees to a music academy, medical clinics and hospitals, interreligious dialogue and cultural initiatives, your presence in this society is a marvellous

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

sign of the hope that defines us as Christian.

That hope reaches far beyond the confines of our own Christian communities. So often you find that the families of other religions, with whom you work and offer your service of universal charity, hold concerns and worries that cross religious and cultural boundaries. This is especially noticeable in regard to the hopes and aspirations of parents for their children. What parent or person of good will could not be troubled by the negative influences so pervasive in our globalized world, including the destructive elements within the entertainment industry which so callously exploit the innocence and sensibility of the vulnerable and the young? Yet, with your eyes firmly fixed on Christ, the light who dispels all evil, restores lost innocence, and humbles earthly pride, you will sustain a magnificent vision of hope for all those you meet and serve.

May I conclude with a special word of encouragement to those present who are in formation for the priesthood and religious life. Guided by the light of the Risen Lord, inflamed with his hope, and vested with his truth and love, your witness will bring abundant blessings to those whom you meet along the way. Indeed the same holds for all young Christian Jordanians: do not be afraid to make your own wise, measured and respectful contribution to the public life of the Kingdom. The authentic voice of faith will always bring integrity, justice, compassion and peace!

Dear friends, with sentiments of great respect for all of you gathered with me this evening in worship, I again thank you for your prayers for my ministry as the Successor of Peter and I assure you and all those entrusted to your pastoral care of a remembrance in my own daily prayer.

Thank you.

**HOLY MASS**

**INTERNATIONAL STADIUM - AMMAN  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, 10 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

I rejoice that we are able to celebrate this Eucharist together at the beginning of my Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Yesterday, from the heights of Mount Nebo, I stood and looked out upon this great land, the land of Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist, the land where God's ancient promises were fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, Jesus our Lord. This land witnessed his preaching and miracles, his death and resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, the sacrament of a reconciled and renewed humanity. As I pondered the mystery of God's fidelity, I prayed that the Church in these lands would be confirmed in hope and strengthened in her witness to the Risen Christ, the Savior of mankind. Truly, as Saint Peter tells us in today's first reading, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Today's joyful celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice expresses the rich diversity of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. I greet all of you with affection in the Lord. I thank His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, for his kind words of welcome. My greeting goes also to the many young people from Catholic schools who today bring their enthusiasm to this Eucharistic celebration.

In the Gospel we have just heard, Jesus proclaims: "I am the good shepherd... who lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11). As the Successor of Saint Peter, to whom the Lord entrusted the care of his flock (cf. Jn 21:15-17), I have long awaited this opportunity to

stand before you as a witness to the Risen Savior, and to encourage you to persevere in faith, hope and love, in fidelity to the ancient traditions and the distinguished history of Christian witness which you trace back to the age of the Apostles. The Catholic community here is deeply touched by the difficulties and uncertainties which affect all the people of the Middle East. May you never forget the great dignity which derives from your Christian heritage, or fail to sense the loving solidarity of all your brothers and sisters in the Church throughout the world!

“I am the good shepherd”, the Lord tells us, “I know my own, and my own know me” (Jn 10:14). Today in Jordan we celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. As we reflect on the Gospel of the Good Shepherd, let us ask the Lord to open our hearts and minds ever more fully to hear his call. Truly, Jesus “knows us”, even more deeply than we know ourselves, and he has a plan for each one of us. We know, too, that wherever he calls us, we will find happiness and fulfilment; indeed, we will find our very selves (cf. Mt 10:39). Today I invite the many young people here present to consider how the Lord is calling you to follow him and to build up his Church. Whether it be in the priestly ministry, in consecrated life or in the sacrament of marriage, Jesus needs you to make his voice heard and to work for the growth of his Kingdom.

In today’s second reading, Saint John invites us to “think of the love that the Father has lavished on us” by making us his adopted children in Christ. Hearing these words should make us grateful for the experience of the Father’s love which we have had in our families, from the love of our fathers and mothers, our grandparents, our brothers and sisters. During the celebration of the present Year of the Family, the Church throughout the Holy Land has reflected on the family as a mystery of life-giving love, endowed in God’s plan with its own proper calling and mission: to radiate the divine Love which is the source and the ultimate fulfilment of all the other loves of our

lives. May every Christian family grow in fidelity to its lofty vocation to be a true school of prayer, where children learn a sincere love of God, where they mature in self-discipline and concern for the needs of others, and where, shaped by the wisdom born of faith, they contribute to the building of an ever more just and fraternal society. The strong Christian families of these lands are a great legacy handed down from earlier generations. May today's families be faithful to that impressive heritage, and never lack the material and moral assistance they need to carry out their irreplaceable role in service to society.

An important aspect of your reflection during this Year of the Family has been the particular dignity, vocation and mission of women in God's plan. How much the Church in these lands owes to the patient, loving and faithful witness of countless Christian mothers, religious Sisters, teachers, doctors and nurses! How much your society owes to all those women who in different and at times courageous ways have devoted their lives to building peace and fostering love! From the very first pages of the Bible, we see how man and woman, created in the image of God, are meant to complement one another as stewards of God's gifts and partners in communicating his gift of life, both physical and spiritual, to our world. Sadly, this God-given dignity and role of women has not always been sufficiently understood and esteemed.

The Church, and society as a whole, has come to realize how urgently we need what the late Pope John Paul II called the "prophetic charism" of women (cf. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 29) as bearers of love, teachers of mercy and artisans of peace, bringing warmth and humanity to a world that all too often judges the value of a person by the cold criteria of usefulness and profit. By its public witness of respect for women, and its defence of the innate dignity of every human person, the Church in the Holy Land can make an important contribution to the advancement of a culture of true humanity and the building of the civilization of love.

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

Dear friends, let us return to the words of Jesus in today's Gospel. I believe that they contain a special message for you, his faithful flock in these lands where he once dwelt. "The good shepherd", he tells us, "lays down his life for his sheep." At the beginning of this Mass, we asked the Father to "give us new strength from the courage of Christ our shepherd", who remained steadfast in fidelity to the Father's will (cf. *Opening Prayer*, Mass of the Fourth Sunday of Easter). May the courage of Christ our shepherd inspire and sustain you daily in your efforts to bear witness to the Christian faith and to maintain the Church's presence in the changing social fabric of these ancient lands.

Fidelity to your Christian roots, fidelity to the Church's mission in the Holy Land, demands of each of you a particular kind of courage: the courage of conviction, born of personal faith, not mere social convention or family tradition; the courage to engage in dialogue and to work side by side with other Christians in the service of the Gospel and solidarity with the poor, the displaced, and the victims of profound human tragedies; the courage to build new bridges to enable a fruitful encounter of people of different religions and cultures, and thus to enrich the fabric of society. It also means bearing witness to the love which inspires us to "lay down" our lives in the service of others, and thus to counter ways of thinking which justify "taking" innocent lives.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me" (Jn 10:14). Rejoice that the Lord has made you members of his flock and knows each of you by name! Follow him with joy and let him guide you in all your ways. Jesus knows what challenges you face, what trials you endure, and the good that you do in his name. Trust in him, in his enduring love for all the members of his flock, and persevere in your witness to the triumph of his love. May Saint John the Baptist, the patron of Jordan, and Mary, Virgin and Mother, sustain you by their example and prayers, and lead you to the fullness of joy in the eternal pastures where we will experience for ever the presence of the Good Shepherd and know for ever the depths of his love. Amen.

VISIT TO YAD VASHEM MEMORIAL

JERUSALEM  
MONDAY, 11 MAY 2009

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI*

“I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name ... I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off” (Is 56:5).

This passage from the Book of the prophet Isaiah furnishes the two simple words which solemnly express the profound significance of this revered place: *yad* – “memorial”; *shem* – “name”. I have come to stand in silence before this monument, erected to honor the memory of the millions of Jews killed in the horrific tragedy of the *Shoah*. They lost their lives, but they will never lose their names: these are indelibly etched in the hearts of their loved ones, their surviving fellow prisoners, and all those determined never to allow such an atrocity to disgrace mankind again. Most of all, their names are forever fixed in the memory of Almighty God.

One can rob a neighbor of possessions, opportunity or freedom. One can weave an insidious web of lies to convince others that certain groups are undeserving of respect. Yet, try as one might, one can never take away the *name* of a fellow human being.

Sacred Scripture teaches us the importance of names in conferring upon someone a unique mission or a special gift. God called Abram “Abraham” because he was to become the “father of many nations” (Gen 17:5). Jacob was called “Israel” because he had “contended with God and man and prevailed” (Gen 32:29). The names enshrined in this hallowed monument will forever hold a sacred place

among the countless descendants of Abraham. Like his, their faith was tested. Like Jacob, they were immersed in the struggle to discern the designs of the Almighty. May the names of these victims never perish! May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten! And may all people of goodwill remain vigilant in rooting out from the heart of man anything that could lead to tragedies such as this!

The Catholic Church, committed to the teachings of Jesus and intent on imitating his love for all people, feels deep compassion for the victims remembered here. Similarly, she draws close to all those who today are subjected to persecution on account of race, color, condition of life or religion – their sufferings are hers, and hers is their hope for justice. As Bishop of Rome and Successor of the Apostle Peter, I reaffirm – like my predecessors – that the Church is committed to praying and working tirelessly to ensure that hatred will never reign in the hearts of men again. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the God of peace (cf. Ps 85:9).

The Scriptures teach that it is our task to remind the world that this God lives, even though we sometimes find it difficult to grasp his mysterious and inscrutable ways. He has revealed himself and continues to work in human history. He alone governs the world with righteousness and judges all peoples with fairness (cf. Ps 9:9).

Gazing upon the faces reflected in the pool that lies in stillness within this memorial, one cannot help but recall how each of them bears a name. I can only imagine the joyful expectation of their parents as they anxiously awaited the birth of their children. What name shall we give this child? What is to become of him or her? Who could have imagined that they would be condemned to such a deplorable fate!

As we stand here in silence, their cry still echoes in our hearts. It is a cry raised against every act of injustice and violence. It is a perpetual reproach against the spilling of innocent blood. It is the cry of Abel rising from the earth to the Almighty. Professing our steadfast

trust in God, we give voice to that cry using words from the Book of Lamentations which are full of significance for both Jews and Christians:

*“The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent;*

*They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.*

*My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him.*

*Good is the Lord to the one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him;*

*It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord”*

(Lam 3:22-26).

My dear friends, I am deeply grateful to God and to you for the opportunity to stand here in silence: a silence to remember, a silence to pray, a silence to hope.

**MEETING WITH ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

**AUDITORIUM OF NOTRE DAME CENTER - JERUSALEM  
MONDAY, 11 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brother Bishops,  
Distinguished Religious Leaders,  
Dear Friends,*

It is a source of great joy for me to meet with you this evening. I wish to thank His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal for his kind words of welcome spoken on behalf of everyone present. I reciprocate the warm sentiments expressed and gladly greet all of you and the members of the groups and organizations you represent.

“God said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your kindred and your father’s house for a land I shall show you’... so Abram went... and took his wife Sarah with him” (Gen 12:1-5). God’s irruptive call, which marks the beginning of the history of our faith traditions, was heard in the midst of man’s ordinary daily existence. And the history that ensued was shaped, not in isolation, but through the encounter with Egyptian, Hittite, Sumerian, Babylonian, Persian, and Greek cultures.

Faith is always lived within a culture. The history of religion shows that a community of believers proceeds by degrees of faithfulness to God, drawing from and shaping the culture it meets. This same dynamic is found in individual believers from the great monotheistic traditions: attuned to the voice of God, like Abraham, we respond to his call and set out seeking the fulfillment of his promises, striving to obey his will, forging a path in our own particular culture.

Today, nearly four thousand years after Abraham, the encounter

of religions with culture occurs not simply on a geographical plane. Certain aspects of globalization and in particular the world of the internet have created a vast virtual culture, the worth of which is as varied as its countless manifestations. Undoubtedly much has been achieved to create a sense of closeness and unity within the world-wide human family. Yet, at the same time, the boundless array of portals through which people so readily access undifferentiated sources of information can easily become an instrument of increasing fragmentation: the unity of knowledge is shattered and the complex skills of critique, discernment and discrimination learned through academic and ethical traditions are at times bypassed or neglected.

The question naturally arises then as to what contribution religion makes to the cultures of the world against the backdrop of rapid globalization. Since many are quick to point out the readily apparent differences between religions, as believers or religious persons we are presented with the challenge to proclaim with clarity what we share in common.

Abraham's first step in faith, and our steps to or from the synagogue, church, mosque or temple, tread the path of our single human history, unfolding along the way, we might say, to the eternal Jerusalem (cf. Rev 21:23). Similarly, every culture with its inner capacity to give and receive gives expression to the one human nature. Yet, the individual is never fully expressed through his or her own culture, but transcends it in the constant search for something beyond. From this perspective, dear friends, we see the possibility of a unity which is not dependent upon uniformity.

While the differences we explore in inter-religious dialogue may at times appear as barriers, they need not overshadow the common sense of awe and respect for the universal, for the absolute and for truth, which impel religious peoples to converse with one another in the first place. Indeed it is the shared conviction that these transcendent

realities have their source in – and bear traces of – the Almighty that believers uphold before each other, our organizations, our society, our world. In this way not only do we enrich culture but we shape it: lives of religious fidelity echo God’s irruptive presence and so form a culture not defined by boundaries of time or place but fundamentally shaped by the principles and actions that stem from belief.

Religious belief presupposes truth. The one who believes is the one who seeks truth and lives by it. Although the medium by which we understand the discovery and communication of truth differs in part from religion to religion, we should not be deterred in our efforts to bear witness to truth’s power. Together we can proclaim that God exists and can be known, that the earth is his creation, that we are his creatures, and that he calls every man and woman to a way of life that respects his design for the world. Friends, if we believe we have a criterion of judgment and discernment which is divine in origin and intended for all humanity, then we cannot tire of bringing that knowledge to bear on civic life.

Truth should be offered to all; it serves all members of society. It sheds light on the foundation of morality and ethics, and suffuses reason with the strength to reach beyond its own limitations in order to give expression to our deepest common aspirations. Far from threatening the tolerance of differences or cultural plurality, truth makes consensus possible and keeps public debate rational, honest and accountable, and opens the gateway to peace. Fostering the will to be obedient to the truth in fact broadens our concept of reason and its scope of application, and makes possible the genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today.

Each one of us here also knows, however, that God’s voice is heard less clearly today, and reason itself has in so many instances become deaf to the divine. Yet that “void” is not one of silence. Indeed, it is the din of egotistical demands, empty promises and false hopes

that so often invades the very space in which God seeks us. Can we then make spaces – oases of peace and profound reflection – where God’s voice can be heard anew, where his truth can be discovered within the universality of reason, where every individual, regardless of dwelling, or ethnic group, or political hue, or religious belief, can be respected as a person, as a fellow human being? In an age of instant access to information and social tendencies which engender a kind of monoculture, deep reflection against the backdrop of God’s presence will embolden reason, stimulate creative genius, facilitate critical appreciation of cultural practices and uphold the universal value of religious belief.

Friends, the institutions and groups that you represent engage in inter-religious dialogue and the promotion of cultural initiatives at a wide range of levels. From academic institutions – and here I wish to make special mention of the outstanding achievements of Bethlehem University – to bereaved parents groups, from initiatives through music and the arts to the courageous example of ordinary mothers and fathers, from formal dialogue groups to charitable organizations, you daily demonstrate your belief that our duty before God is expressed not only in our worship but also in our love and concern for society, for culture, for our world and for all who live in this land.

Some would have us believe that our differences are necessarily a cause of division and thus at most to be tolerated. A few even maintain that our voices should simply be silenced. But we know that our differences need never be misrepresented as an inevitable source of friction or tension either between ourselves or in society at large. Rather, they provide a wonderful opportunity for people of different religions to live together in profound respect, esteem and appreciation, encouraging one another in the ways of God.

Prompted by the Almighty and enlightened by his truth, may you continue to step forward with courage, respecting all that

differentiates us and promoting all that unites us as creatures blessed with the desire to bring hope to our communities and world.

May God guide us along this path!

***PRAYER OF THE HOLY FATHER  
BENEDICT XVI  
AT THE WESTERN WALL***

***Jerusalem  
Tuesday, 12 May 2009***

God of all the ages,  
on my visit to Jerusalem, the “City of Peace”,  
spiritual home to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike,  
I bring before you the joys, the hopes and the aspirations,  
the trials, the suffering and the pain of all your people throughout the  
world.

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,  
hear the cry of the afflicted, the fearful, the bereft;  
send your peace upon this Holy Land, upon the Middle East,  
upon the entire human family;  
stir the hearts of all who call upon your name,  
to walk humbly in the path of justice and compassion.

“The Lord is good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul that seeks him” (*Lam 3:25*)!

**REGINA CAELI PRAYER  
WITH THE ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND**

**UPPER ROOM - JERUSALEM  
TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brother Bishops,  
Dear Father Custos,*

It is with great joy that I greet you, the Ordinaries of the Holy Land, in this Upper Room where according to tradition the Lord opened his heart to his chosen disciples and celebrated the Paschal Mystery, and where the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost inspired the early disciples to go forth and preach the good news. I thank Father Pizzaballa for the warm words of welcome which he has expressed to me on your behalf. You represent the Catholic communities of the Holy Land who, in their faith and devotion, are like lighted candles illuminating the holy places that were graced by the presence of Jesus our living Lord. This unique privilege gives you and your people a special place of affection in my heart as the Successor of Peter.

“When Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1). The Upper Room recalls the last supper of our Lord with Peter and the other apostles and invites the Church to prayerful contemplation. In this vein we gather together, the Successor of Peter with successors of the apostles, in this same place where Jesus revealed in the offering of his own body and blood, the new depths of the covenant of love established between God and his people. In the Upper Room the mystery of grace and salvation, of which we are recipients and also heralds and ministers, can be

expressed only in terms of love. Because he has loved us first and continues to do so, we can respond with love (cf *Deus Carita Est*, 2). Our life as Christians is not simply a human effort to live the demands of the Gospel imposed upon us as duties. In the Eucharist we are drawn into the mystery of divine love. Our lives become a grateful, docile and active acceptance of the power of a love which is given to us. This transforming love, which is grace and truth (cf. *Jn* 1:17), prompts us, as individuals and communities, to overcome the temptation to turn in upon ourselves in selfishness or indolence, isolation, prejudice or fear, and to give ourselves generously to the Lord and to others. It moves us as Christian communities to be faithful to our mission with frankness and courage (cf. *Acts* 4:13). In the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his flock, in the Teacher who washes the feet of his disciples, you find, my dear brothers, the model of your own ministry in the service of our God who promotes love and communion.

The call to communion of mind and heart, so closely related to the commandment of love and to the central unifying role of the Eucharist in our lives, is of special relevance in the Holy Land. The different Christian Churches found here represent a rich and varied spiritual patrimony and are a sign of the multiple forms of interaction between the Gospel and different cultures. They also remind us that the mission of the Church is to preach the universal love of God and to gather, from far and near, all who are called by him, in such a way that, with their traditions and their talents, they form the one family of God. A new spiritual impulse towards communion in diversity within the Catholic Church and a new ecumenical awareness have marked our times, especially since the Second Vatican Council. The Spirit moves our hearts gently towards humility and peace, towards mutual acceptance, comprehension and cooperation. This inner disposition to unity under the prompting of the Holy Spirit is decisive if Christians are to fulfill their mission in the world (cf. *Jn*:17:21).

In the measure in which the gift of love is accepted and grows in the Church, the Christian presence in the Holy Land and in the neighboring regions will be vibrant. This presence is of vital importance for the good of society as a whole. The clear words of Jesus on the intimate bond between love of God and love of neighbor, on mercy and compassion, on meekness, peace and forgiveness, are a leaven capable of transforming hearts and shaping actions. Christians in the Middle East, together with other people of good will, are contributing, as loyal and responsible citizens, in spite of difficulties and restrictions, to the promotion and consolidation of a climate of peace in diversity. I wish to repeat to them what I stated in my 2006 Christmas message to Catholics in the Middle East: "I express with affection my personal closeness in this situation of human insecurity, daily suffering, fear and hope which you are living. I repeat to your communities the words of the Redeemer: 'Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Lk 12:32)" (Christmas Message to Catholics living in the Middle East Region, 21 December 2006).

Dear Brother Bishops, count on my support and encouragement as you do all that is in your power to assist our Christian brothers and sisters to remain and prosper here in the land of their ancestors and to be messengers and promoters of peace. I appreciate your efforts to offer them, as mature and responsible citizens, spiritual sustenance, values and principles that assist them in playing their role in society. Through education, professional preparation and other social and economic initiatives their condition will be sustained and improved. For my part, I renew my appeal to our brothers and sisters worldwide to support and to remember in their prayers the Christian communities of the Holy Land and the Middle East. In this context I wish to express my appreciation for the service offered to the many pilgrims and visitors who come to the Holy Land seeking inspiration and renewal in the footsteps of Jesus. The Gospel story, contemplated in its historical

and geographical setting, becomes vivid and colorful, and a clearer grasp of the significance of the Lord's words and deeds is obtained. Many memorable experiences of pilgrims to the Holy Land have been possible thanks also to the hospitality and fraternal guidance offered by you, especially by the Franciscan Friars of the Custody. For this service, I wish to assure you of the appreciation and gratitude of the Universal Church and I express the wish that many more pilgrims will visit in the future.

Dear brothers, as we address together our joyful prayer to Mary, Queen of Heaven, let us place confidently in her hands the well-being and spiritual renewal of all Christians in the Holy Land, so that, under the guidance of their Pastors, they may grow in faith, hope and love, and persevere in their mission as promoters of communion and peace.

**HOLY MASS**

**JOSAFAT VALLEY - JERUSALEM  
TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,*

“Christ is risen, alleluia!” With these words I greet you with immense affection. I thank Patriarch Fouad Twal for his words of welcome on your behalf, and before all else I express my joy at being able to celebrate this Eucharist with you, the Church in Jerusalem. We are gathered beneath the Mount of Olives, where our Lord prayed and suffered, where he wept for love of this City and the desire that it should know “the path to peace” (Lk 19:42), and whence he returned to the Father, giving his final earthly blessing to his disciples and to us. Today let us accept this blessing. He gives it in a special way to you, dear brothers and sisters, who stand in an unbroken line with those first disciples who encountered the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, those who experienced the outpouring of the Spirit in the Upper Room and those who were converted by the preaching of Saint Peter and the other apostles. My greeting also goes to all those present, and in a special way to those faithful of the Holy Land who for various reasons were not able to be with us today.

As the Successor of Saint Peter, I have retraced his steps in order to proclaim the Risen Christ in your midst, to confirm you in the faith of your fathers, and to invoke upon you the consolation which is the gift of the Paraclete. Standing before you today, I wish to acknowledge the difficulties, the frustration, and the pain and suffering which so many of you have endured as a result of the conflicts which have afflicted these lands, and the bitter experiences of displacement which

so many of your families have known and – God forbid – may yet know. I hope my presence here is a sign that you are not forgotten, that your persevering presence and witness are indeed precious in God’s eyes and integral to the future of these lands. Precisely because of your deep roots in this land, your ancient and strong Christian culture, and your unwavering trust in God’s promises, you, the Christians of the Holy Land, are called to serve not only as a beacon of faith to the universal Church, but also as a leaven of harmony, wisdom and equilibrium in the life of a society which has traditionally been, and continues to be, pluralistic, multiethnic and multireligious.

In today’s second reading, the Apostle Paul tells the Colossians to “seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1). His words resound with particular force here, beneath the Garden of Gethsemani, where Jesus accepted the chalice of suffering in complete obedience to the Father’s will, and where, according to tradition, he ascended to the right hand of the Father to make perpetual intercession for us, the members of his Body. Saint Paul, the great herald of Christian hope, knew the cost of that hope, its price in suffering and persecution for the sake of the Gospel, yet he never wavered in his conviction that Christ’s resurrection was the beginning of a new creation. As he tells us: “When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, you too will be revealed with him in glory!” (Col 3:4).

Paul’s exhortation to “set our minds on the things that are above” must constantly echo in our hearts. His words point us to the fulfilment of faith’s vision in that heavenly Jerusalem where, in fidelity to the ancient prophecies, God will wipe away the tears from every eye, and prepare a banquet of salvation for all peoples (cf. Is 25:6-8; Rev 21:2-4).

This is the hope, this the vision, which inspires all who love this earthly Jerusalem to see her as a prophecy and promise of that universal reconciliation and peace which God desires for the whole

human family. Sadly, beneath the walls of this same City, we are also led to consider how far our world is from the complete fulfilment of that prophecy and promise. In this Holy City where life conquered death, where the Spirit was poured out as the first-fruits of the new creation, hope continues to battle despair, frustration and cynicism, while the peace which is God's gift and call continues to be threatened by selfishness, conflict, division and the burden of past wrongs. For this reason, the Christian community in this City which beheld the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit must hold fast all the more to the hope bestowed by the Gospel, cherishing the pledge of Christ's definitive victory over sin and death, bearing witness to the power of forgiveness, and showing forth the Church's deepest nature as the sign and sacrament of a humanity reconciled, renewed and made one in Christ, the new Adam.

Gathered beneath the walls of this city, sacred to the followers of three great religions, how can we not turn our thoughts to Jerusalem's universal vocation? Heralded by the prophets, this vocation also emerges as an indisputable fact, a reality irrevocably grounded in the complex history of this city and its people. Jews, Muslims and Christians alike call this city their spiritual home. How much needs to be done to make it truly a "city of peace" for all peoples, where all can come in pilgrimage in search of God, and hear his voice, "a voice which speaks of peace" (cf. Ps 85:8)!

Jerusalem, in fact, has always been a city whose streets echo with different languages, whose stones are trod by people of every race and tongue, whose walls are a symbol of God's provident care for the whole human family. As a microcosm of our globalized world, this City, if it is to live up to its universal vocation, must be a place which teaches universality, respect for others, dialogue and mutual understanding; a place where prejudice, ignorance and the fear which fuels them, are overcome by honesty, integrity and the pursuit of peace. There should be no place within these walls for narrowness,

discrimination, violence and injustice. Believers in a God of mercy – whether they identify themselves as Jews, Christians or Muslims – must be the first to promote this culture of reconciliation and peace, however painstakingly slow the process may be, and however burdensome the weight of past memories.

Here I would like to speak directly to the tragic reality – which cannot fail to be a source of concern to all who love this City and this land – of the departure of so many members of the Christian community in recent years. While understandable reasons lead many, especially the young, to emigrate, this decision brings in its wake a great cultural and spiritual impoverishment to the City. Today I wish to repeat what I have said on other occasions: in the Holy Land there is room for everyone! As I urge the authorities to respect, to support and to value the Christian presence here, I also wish to assure you of the solidarity, love and support of the whole Church and of the Holy See.

Dear friends, in the Gospel we have just heard, Saint Peter and Saint John run to the empty tomb, and John, we are told, “saw and believed” (Jn 20:8). Here in the Holy Land, with the eyes of faith, you, together with the pilgrims from throughout the world who throng its churches and shrines, are blessed to “see” the places hallowed by Christ’s presence, his earthly ministry, his passion, death and resurrection, and the gift of his Holy Spirit. Here, like the Apostle Saint Thomas, you are granted the opportunity to “touch” the historical realities which underlie our confession of faith in the Son of God. My prayer for you today is that you continue, day by day, to “see and believe” in the signs of God’s providence and unfailing mercy, to “hear” with renewed faith and hope the consoling words of the apostolic preaching, and to “touch” the sources of grace in the sacraments, and to incarnate for others their pledge of new beginnings, the freedom born of forgiveness, the interior light and peace which can bring healing and hope to even the darkest of human realities.

In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, pilgrims in every century have venerated the stone which tradition tells us stood before the entrance to the tomb on the morning of Christ's resurrection. Let us return frequently to that empty tomb. There let us reaffirm our faith in the victory of life, and pray that every "heavy stone" that stands before the door of our hearts, blocking our complete surrender to the Lord in faith, hope and love, may be shattered by the power of the light and life which shone forth from Jerusalem to all the world that first Easter morn. Christ is risen, alleluia! He is truly risen, alleluia!

**HOLY MASS**

**MANGER'S SQUARE - BETHLEHEM  
WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

I thank Almighty God for giving me the grace to come to Bethlehem, not only to venerate the place of Christ's birth, but also to stand beside you, my brothers and sisters in the faith, in these Palestinian Territories. I am grateful to Patriarch Fouad Twal for the sentiments which he has expressed on your behalf, and I greet with affection my brother Bishops and all the priests, religious and lay

faithful who labor daily to confirm this local Church in faith, hope and love. In a special way my heart goes out to the pilgrims from war-torn Gaza: I ask you to bring back to your families and your communities my warm embrace, and my sorrow for the loss, the hardship and the suffering you have had to endure. Please be assured of my solidarity with you in the immense work of rebuilding which now lies ahead, and my prayers that the embargo will soon be lifted.

“Do not be afraid; for behold I proclaim to you good news of great joy ... today in the city of David a Savior is born for you” (Lk 2:10-11). The message of Christ’s coming, brought from heaven by the voice of angels, continues to echo in this town, just as it echoes in families, homes and communities throughout the world. It is “good news”, the angels say “for all the people”. It proclaims that the Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of David, has been born “for you”: for you and me, and for men and women in every time and place. In God’s plan, Bethlehem, “least among the clans of Judah” (Mic 5:2), has become a place of undying glory: the place where, in the fullness of time, God chose to become man, to end the long reign of sin and death, and to bring new and abundant life to a world which had grown old, weary and oppressed by hopelessness.

For men and women everywhere, Bethlehem is associated with this joyful message of rebirth, renewal, light and freedom. Yet here, in our midst, how far this magnificent promise seems from being realized! How distant seems that Kingdom of wide dominion and peace, security, justice and integrity which the Prophet Isaiah heralded in the first reading (cf. Is 9:7), and which we proclaim as definitively established in the coming of Jesus Christ, Messiah and King!

From the day of his birth, Jesus was “a sign of contradiction” (Lk 2:34), and he continues to be so, even today. The Lord of hosts, “whose origin is from old, from ancient days” (Mic 5:2), wished to

inaugurate his Kingdom by being born in this little town, entering our world in the silence and humility of a cave, and lying, a helpless babe, in a manger. Here, in Bethlehem, amid every kind of contradiction, the stones continue to cry out this “good news”, the message of redemption which this city, above all others, is called to proclaim to the world. For here, in a way which surpassed every human hope and expectation, God proved faithful to his promises. In the birth of his Son, he revealed the coming of a Kingdom of love: a divine love which stoops down in order to bring healing and lift us up; a love which is revealed in the humiliation and weakness of the Cross, yet triumphs in a glorious resurrection to new life.

Christ brought a Kingdom which is not of this world, yet a Kingdom which is capable of changing this world, for it has the power to change hearts, to enlighten minds and to strengthen wills. By taking on our flesh, with all its weaknesses, and transfiguring it by the power of his Spirit, Jesus has called us to be witnesses of his victory over sin and death. And this is what the message of Bethlehem calls us to be: witnesses of the triumph of God’s love over the hatred, selfishness, fear and resentment which cripple human relationships and create division where brothers should dwell in unity, destruction where men should be building, despair where hope should flourish!

“In hope we were saved”, the Apostle Paul says (Rom 8:24). Yet he affirms with utter realism that creation continues to groan in travail, even as we, who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, patiently await the fulfilment of our redemption (cf. Rom 8:22-24). In today’s second reading, Paul draws a lesson from the Incarnation which is particularly applicable to the travail which you, God’s chosen ones in Bethlehem, are experiencing: “God’s grace has appeared”, he tells us, “training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and to live, temperately, justly and devoutly in this age”, as we await the coming of our blessed hope, the Savior Jesus Christ (Tit 2:11-13).

Are these not the virtues required of men and women who live in hope? First, the constant conversion to Christ which is reflected not only in our actions but also in our reasoning: the courage to abandon fruitless and sterile ways of thinking, acting and reacting. Then, the cultivation of a mindset of peace based on justice, on respect for the rights and duties of all, and commitment to cooperation for the common good. And also perseverance, perseverance in good and in the rejection of evil. Here in Bethlehem, a special perseverance is asked of Christ's disciples: perseverance in faithful witness to God's glory revealed here, in the birth of his Son, to the good news of his peace which came down from heaven to dwell upon the earth.

“Do not be afraid!” This is the message which the Successor of Saint Peter wishes to leave with you today, echoing the message of the angels and the charge which our beloved Pope John Paul II left with you in the year of the Great Jubilee of Christ's birth. Count on the prayers and solidarity of your brothers and sisters in the universal Church, and work, with concrete initiatives, to consolidate your presence and to offer new possibilities to those tempted to leave. Be a bridge of dialogue and constructive cooperation in the building of a culture of peace to replace the present stalemate of fear, aggression and frustration. Build up your local Churches, making them workshops of dialogue, tolerance and hope, as well as solidarity and practical charity.

Above all, be witnesses to the power of life, the new life brought by the Risen Christ, the life that can illumine and transform even the darkest and most hopeless of human situations. Your homeland needs not only new economic and community structures, but most importantly, we might say, a new “spiritual” infrastructure, capable of galvanizing the energies of all men and women of good will in the service of education, development and the promotion of the common

good. You have the human resources to build the culture of peace and mutual respect which will guarantee a better future for your children. This noble enterprise awaits you. Do not be afraid!

The ancient Basilica of the Nativity, buffeted by the winds of history and the burden of the ages, stands before us as a witness to the faith which endures and triumphs over the world (cf. 1 Jn 5:4). No visitor to Bethlehem can fail to notice that in the course of the centuries the great door leading into the house of God has become progressively smaller. Today let us pray that, by God's grace and our commitment, the door leading into the mystery of God's dwelling among men, the temple of our communion in his love, and the foretaste of a world of eternal peace and joy, will open ever more fully to welcome, renew and transform every human heart. In this way, Bethlehem will continue to echo the message entrusted to the shepherds, to us, and to all mankind: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to those whom he loves"! Amen.

**VISIT TO AIDA REFUGEE CAMP**

**BETHLEHEM**

**WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Mr President,*

*Dear Friends,*

My visit to the Aida Refugee Camp this afternoon gives me a welcome opportunity to express my solidarity with all the homeless Palestinians who long to be able to return to their birthplace, or to live permanently in a homeland of their own. Thank you, Mr President, for your kind greeting. And thank you also, Mrs Abu Zayd, and our other speakers. To all the officials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency who care for the refugees, I express the appreciation felt by countless men and women all over the world for the work that is done here and in other camps throughout the region.

I extend a particular greeting to the pupils and teachers in the school. By your commitment to education you are expressing hope in the future. To all the young people here, I say: renew your efforts to prepare for the time when you will be responsible for the affairs of the Palestinian people in years to come. Parents have a most important role here, and to all the families present in this camp I say: be sure to support your children in their studies and to nurture their gifts, so that there will be no shortage of well-qualified personnel to occupy leadership positions in the Palestinian community in the future. I know that many of your families are divided – through imprisonment of family members, or restrictions on freedom of movement – and many of you have experienced bereavement in the course of the hostilities. My heart goes out to all who suffer in this way. Please be assured that

all Palestinian refugees across the world, especially those who lost homes and loved ones during the recent conflict in Gaza, are constantly remembered in my prayers.

I wish to acknowledge the good work carried out by many Church agencies in caring for refugees here and in other parts of the Palestinian Territories. The Pontifical Mission for Palestine, founded some sixty years ago to coordinate Catholic humanitarian assistance for refugees, continues its much-needed work alongside other such organizations. In this camp, the presence of Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary calls to mind the charismatic figure of Saint Francis, that great apostle of peace and reconciliation. Indeed, I want to express my particular appreciation for the enormous contribution made by different members of the Franciscan family in caring for the people of these lands, making themselves “instruments of peace”, in the time-honored phrase attributed to the Saint of Assisi.

Instruments of peace. How much the people of this camp, these Territories, and this entire region long for peace! In these days, that longing takes on a particular poignancy as you recall the events of May 1948 and the years of conflict, as yet unresolved, that followed from those events. You are now living in precarious and difficult conditions, with limited opportunities for employment. It is understandable that you often feel frustrated. Your legitimate aspirations for permanent homes, for an independent Palestinian State, remain unfulfilled. Instead you find yourselves trapped, as so many in this region and throughout the world are trapped, in a spiral of violence, of attack and counter-attack, retaliation, and continual destruction. The whole world is longing for this spiral to be broken, for peace to put an end to the constant fighting.

Towering over us, as we gather here this afternoon, is a stark reminder of the stalemate that relations between Israelis and Palestinians seem to have reached – the wall. In a world where more

and more borders are being opened up – to trade, to travel, to movement of peoples, to cultural exchanges – it is tragic to see walls still being erected. How we long to see the fruits of the much more difficult task of building peace! How earnestly we pray for an end to the hostilities that have caused this wall to be built!

On both sides of the wall, great courage is needed if fear and mistrust is to be overcome, if the urge to retaliate for loss or injury is to be resisted. It takes magnanimity to seek reconciliation after years of fighting. Yet history has shown that peace can only come when the parties to a conflict are willing to move beyond their grievances and work together towards common goals, each taking seriously the concerns and fears of the other, striving to build an atmosphere of trust. There has to be a willingness to take bold and imaginative initiatives towards reconciliation: if each insists on prior concessions from the other, the result can only be stalemate.

Humanitarian aid, of the kind provided in this camp, has an essential role to play, but the long-term solution to a conflict such as this can only be political. No one expects the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to arrive at it on their own. The support of the international community is vital, and hence I make a renewed appeal to all concerned to bring their influence to bear in favor of a just and lasting solution, respecting the legitimate demands of all parties and recognizing their right to live in peace and dignity, in accordance with international law. Yet at the same time, diplomatic efforts can only succeed if Palestinians and Israelis themselves are willing to break free from the cycle of aggression. I am reminded of those other beautiful words attributed to Saint Francis: “where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon ... where there is darkness, light, where there is sadness, joy.”

To all of you I renew my plea for a profound commitment to cultivate peace and non-violence, following the example of Saint

Francis and other great peacemakers. Peace has to begin in the home, in the family, in the heart. I continue to pray that all parties to the conflict in these lands will have the courage and imagination to pursue the challenging but indispensable path of reconciliation.

May peace flourish once more in these lands! May God bless his people with peace!

**FAREWELL CEREMONY**  
**COURTYARD OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE -**  
**BETHLEHEM**  
**WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY 2009**  
***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Mr President,*  
*Dear Friends,*

I thank you for the great kindness you have shown me throughout this day that I have spent in your company, here in the Palestinian Territories. I am grateful to the President, Mr Mahmoud Abbas, for his hospitality and his gracious words. It was deeply moving for me to listen also to the testimonies of the residents who have spoken to us about the conditions of life here on the West Bank and in Gaza. I assure all of you that I hold you in my heart and I long

to see peace and reconciliation throughout these tormented lands. It has truly been a most memorable day. Since arriving in Bethlehem this morning, I have had the joy of celebrating Mass together with a great multitude of the faithful in the place where Jesus Christ, light of the nations and hope of the world, was born. I have seen the care taken of today's infants in the Caritas Baby Hospital .

With anguish, I have witnessed the situation of refugees who, like the Holy Family, have had to flee their homes. And I have seen, adjoining the camp and overshadowing much of Bethlehem, the wall that intrudes into your territories, separating neighbors and dividing families.

Although walls can easily be built we all know that they do not last for ever. They can be taken down. First, though, it is necessary to remove the walls that we build around our hearts, the barriers that we set up against our neighbors. That is why, in my parting words, I want to make a renewed plea for openness and generosity of spirit, for an end to intolerance and exclusion. No matter how intractable and deeply entrenched a conflict may appear to be, there are always grounds to hope that it can be resolved, that the patient and persevering efforts of those who work for peace and reconciliation will bear fruit in the end. My earnest wish for you, the people of Palestine, is that this will happen soon, and that you will at last be able to enjoy the peace, freedom and stability that have eluded you for so long.

Be assured that I will continue to take every opportunity to urge those involved in peace negotiations to work towards a just solution that respects the legitimate aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians alike. As an important step in this direction, the Holy See looks forward to establishing shortly, in conjunction with the Palestinian Authority, the Bilateral Permanent Working Commission that was envisioned in the Basic Agreement, signed in the Vatican on 15 February 2000 (cf.

*Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organization, art. 9).*

Mr President, dear friends, I thank you once again and I commend all of you to the protection of the Almighty. May God look down in love upon each one of you, upon your families and all who are dear to you. And may he bless the Palestinian people with peace.

**HOLY MASS**

**MOUNT OF PRECIPICE - NAZARETH  
THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

“May the peace of the Risen Christ reign in your hearts, for as members of the one body you have been called to that peace!” (Col 3:15). With these words of the Apostle Paul, I greet all of you with affection in the Lord. I rejoice to have come to Nazareth, the place blessed by the mystery of the Annunciation, the place which witnessed the hidden years of Christ’s growth in wisdom, age and grace (cf. Lk 2:52). I thank Archbishop Elias Chacour for his kind words of welcome, and I embrace with the sign of peace my brother Bishops, the priests and religious, and all the faithful of Galilee, who, in the diversity of their rites and traditions, give expression to the universality of Christ’s Church. In a special way I wish to thank all

those who have helped to make this celebration possible, particularly those involved in the planning and construction of this new theatre with its splendid panorama of the city.

Here in the home town of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we have gathered to mark the conclusion of the Year of the Family celebrated by the Church in the Holy Land. As a sign of hope for the future I will bless the first stone of an International Center for the Family to be built in Nazareth. Let us pray that the Center will promote strong family life in this region, offer support and assistance to families everywhere, and encourage them in their irreplaceable mission to society.

This stage of my pilgrimage, I am confident, will draw the whole Church's attention to this town of Nazareth. All of us need, as Pope Paul VI said here, to return to Nazareth, to contemplate ever anew the silence and love of the Holy Family, the model of all Christian family life. Here, in the example of Mary, Joseph and Jesus, we come to appreciate even more fully the sacredness of the family, which in God's plan is based on the lifelong fidelity of a man and a woman consecrated by the marriage covenant and accepting of God's gift of new life. How much the men and women of our time need to reappropriate this fundamental truth, which stands at the foundation of society, and how important is the witness of married couples for the formation of sound consciences and the building of a civilization of love!

In today's first reading, drawn from the book of Sirach (3:3-7, 14-17), the word of God presents the family as the first school of wisdom, a school which trains its members in the practice of those virtues which make for authentic happiness and lasting fulfilment. In God's plan for the family, the love of husband and wife bears fruit in new life, and finds daily expression in the loving efforts of parents to ensure an integral human and spiritual formation for their children.

In the family each person, whether the smallest child or the oldest relative, is valued for himself or herself, and not seen simply as a means to some other end. Here we begin to glimpse something of the essential role of the family as the first building-block of a well-ordered and welcoming society. We also come to appreciate, within the wider community, the duty of the State to support families in their mission of education, to protect the institution of the family and its inherent rights, and to ensure that all families can live and flourish in conditions of dignity.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Colossians, speaks instinctively of the family when he wishes to illustrate the virtues which build up the “one body” which is the Church. As “God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved”, we are called to live in harmony and peace with one another, showing above all forbearance and forgiveness, with love as the highest bond of perfection (cf. Col 3:12-14). Just as in the marriage covenant, the love of man and woman is raised by grace to become a sharing in, and an expression of, the love of Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32), so too the family, grounded in that love, is called to be a “domestic church”, a place of faith, of prayer and of loving concern for the true and enduring good of each of its members.

As we reflect on these realities here, in the town of the Annunciation, our thoughts naturally turn to Mary, “full of grace”, the mother of the Holy Family and our Mother. Nazareth reminds us of our need to acknowledge and respect the God-given dignity and proper role of women, as well as their particular charisms and talents. Whether as mothers in families, as a vital presence in the work force and the institutions of society, or in the particular vocation of following our Lord by the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, women have an indispensable role in creating that “human ecology” (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 39) which our world, and this land, so urgently needs: a milieu in which children learn to love

and to cherish others, to be honest and respectful to all, to practice the virtues of mercy and forgiveness.

Here too, we think of Saint Joseph, the just man whom God wished to place over his household. From Joseph's strong and fatherly example Jesus learned the virtues of a manly piety, fidelity to one's word, integrity and hard work. In the carpenter of Nazareth he saw how authority placed at the service of love is infinitely more fruitful than the power which seeks to dominate. How much our world needs the example, guidance and quiet strength of men like Joseph!

Finally, in contemplating the Holy Family of Nazareth, we turn to the child Jesus, who in the home of Mary and Joseph grew in wisdom and understanding, until the day he began his public ministry. Here I would simply like to leave a particular thought with the young people here. The Second Vatican Council teaches that children have a special role to play in the growth of their parents in holiness (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 48). I urge you to reflect on this, and to let the example of Jesus guide you, not only in showing respect for your parents, but also helping them to discover more fully the love which gives our lives their deepest meaning. In the Holy Family of Nazareth, it was Jesus who taught Mary and Joseph something of the greatness of the love of God his heavenly Father, the ultimate source of all love, the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name (cf. Eph 3:14-15).

Dear friends, in the Opening Prayer of today's Mass we asked the Father to "help us to live as the Holy Family, united in respect and love". Let us reaffirm here our commitment to be a leaven of respect and love in the world around us. This Mount of the Precipice reminds us, as it has generations of pilgrims, that our Lord's message was at times a source of contradiction and conflict with his hearers. Sadly, as the world knows, Nazareth has experienced tensions in recent years which have harmed relations between its Christian and Muslim

communities. I urge people of good will in both communities to repair the damage that has been done, and in fidelity to our common belief in one God, the Father of the human family, to work to build bridges and find the way to a peaceful coexistence. Let everyone reject the destructive power of hatred and prejudice, which kills men's souls before it kills their bodies!

Allow me to conclude with a word of gratitude and praise for all those who strive to bring God's love to the children of this town, and to educate new generations in the ways of peace. I think in a special way of the local Churches, particularly in their schools and charitable institutions, to break down walls and to be a seedbed of encounter, dialogue, reconciliation and solidarity. I encourage the dedicated priests, religious, catechists and teachers, together with parents and all concerned for the good of our children, to persevere in bearing witness to the Gospel, to be confident in the triumph of goodness and truth, and to trust that God will give growth to every initiative which aims at the extension of his Kingdom of holiness, solidarity, justice and peace. At the same time I acknowledge with gratitude the solidarity which so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world show towards the faithful of the Holy Land by supporting the praiseworthy programs and activities of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

“Let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). May our Lady of the Annunciation, who courageously opened her heart to God's mysterious plan, and became the Mother of all believers, guide and sustain us by her prayers. May she obtain for us and our families the grace to open our ears to that word of the Lord which has the power to build us up (cf. Acts 20:32), to inspire courageous decisions, and to guide our feet into the path of peace!

**CELEBRATION OF VESPERS  
WITH BISHOPS, PRIESTS, MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS,  
ECCLESIAL AND PASTORAL MOVEMENTS OF GALILEE  
UPPER BASILICA OF THE ANNUNCIATION - NAZARETH  
THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2009**

***HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Brother Bishops,  
Father Custos,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

It is profoundly moving for me to be present with you today in the very place where the Word of God was made flesh and came to dwell among us. How fitting that we should gather here to sing the Evening Prayer of the Church, giving praise and thanks to God for the marvels he has done for us! I thank Archbishop Sayah for his words of welcome and through him I greet all the members of the Maronite community here in the Holy Land. I greet the priests, religious, members of ecclesial movements and pastoral workers from all over Galilee. Once again I pay tribute to the care shown by the Friars of the Custody, over many centuries, in maintaining holy places such as this. I greet the Latin Patriarch Emeritus, His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, who for more than twenty years presided over his flock in these lands. I greet the faithful of the Latin Patriarchate and their current Patriarch, His Beatitude Fouad Twal, as well as the members of the Greek-Melkite community, represented here by Archbishop Elias Chacour. And in this place where Jesus himself grew to maturity and learned the Hebrew tongue, I greet the Hebrew-speaking Christians, a reminder to us of the Jewish roots of our faith.

What happened here in Nazareth, far from the gaze of the world, was a singular act of God, a powerful intervention in history, through which a child was conceived who was to bring salvation to the whole world. The wonder of the Incarnation continues to challenge us to open up our understanding to the limitless possibilities of God's transforming power, of his love for us, his desire to be united with us. Here the eternally begotten Son of God became man, and so made it possible for us, his brothers and sisters, to share in his divine sonship. That downward movement of self-emptying love made possible the upward movement of exaltation in which we too are raised to share in the life of God himself (cf. Phil 2:6-11).

The Spirit who "came upon Mary" (cf. Lk 1:35) is the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of Creation (cf. Gen 1:2). We are reminded that the Incarnation was a new creative act. When our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived in Mary's virginal womb through the power of the Holy Spirit, God united himself with our created humanity, entering into a permanent new relationship with us and ushering in a new Creation. The narrative of the Annunciation illustrates God's extraordinary courtesy (cf. Mother Julian of Norwich, *Revelations* 77-79). He does not impose himself, he does not simply pre-determine the part that Mary will play in his plan for our salvation: he first seeks her consent. In the original Creation there was clearly no question of God seeking the consent of his creatures, but in this new Creation he does so. Mary stands in the place of all humanity. She speaks for us all when she responds to the angel's invitation. Saint Bernard describes how the whole court of heaven was waiting with eager anticipation for her word of consent that consummated the nuptial union between God and humanity. The attention of all the choirs of angels was riveted on this spot, where a dialogue took place that would launch a new and definitive chapter in world history. Mary said, "Let it be done to me according to your word." And the Word of

God became flesh.

When we reflect on this joyful mystery, it gives us hope, the sure hope that God will continue to reach into our history, to act with creative power so as to achieve goals which by human reckoning seem impossible. It challenges us to open ourselves to the transforming action of the Creator Spirit who makes us new, makes us one with him, and fills us with his life. It invites us, with exquisite courtesy, to consent to his dwelling within us, to welcome the Word of God into our hearts, enabling us to respond to him in love and to reach out in love towards one another.

In the State of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Christians form a minority of the population. Perhaps at times you feel that your voice counts for little. Many of your fellow Christians have emigrated, in the hope of finding greater security and better prospects elsewhere. Your situation calls to mind that of the young virgin Mary, who led a hidden life in Nazareth, with little by way of worldly wealth or influence. Yet to quote Mary's words in her great hymn of praise, the *Magnificat*, God has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, he has filled the hungry with good things. Draw strength from Mary's canticle, which very soon we will be singing in union with the whole Church throughout the world! Have the confidence to be faithful to Christ and to remain here in the land that he sanctified with his own presence!

Like Mary, you have a part to play in God's plan for salvation, by bringing Christ forth into the world, by bearing witness to him and spreading his message of peace and unity. For this, it is essential that you should be united among yourselves, so that the Church in the Holy Land can be clearly recognized as "a sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race" ( *Lumen Gentium*, 1).

Your unity in faith, hope and love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, enabling you to be effective instruments of God's peace, helping to build genuine reconciliation between the different peoples who recognize Abraham as their father in faith. For, as Mary joyfully proclaimed in her *Magnificat*, God is ever "mindful of his mercy, the mercy promised to our forefathers, to Abraham and his children for ever" (Lk 1:54-55).

Dear friends in Christ, be assured that I constantly remember you in my prayer, and I ask you to do the same for me. Let us turn now towards our heavenly Father, who in this place looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and let us sing his praises in union with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with all the choirs of angels and saints, and with the whole Church in every part of the world.

**VISIT TO THE HOLY SEPULCHRE**

**JERUSALEM**

**FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2009**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

The hymn of praise which we have just sung unites us with the angelic hosts and the Church of every time and place – “the glorious company of the apostles, the noble fellowship of the prophets and the white-robed army of martyrs” – as we give glory to God for the work of our redemption, accomplished in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before this Holy Sepulchre, where the Lord “overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers”, I greet all of you in the joy of the Easter season. I thank Patriarch Fouad Twal and the Custos, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, for their kind greeting. I likewise express my appreciation for the reception accorded me by the Hierarchs of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church. I gratefully acknowledge the presence of representatives of the other Christian communities in the Holy Land. I greet Cardinal John Foley, Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher and also the Knights and Ladies of the Order here present, with gratitude for their unfailing commitment to the support of the Church’s mission in these lands made holy by the Lord’s earthly presence.

Saint John’s Gospel has left us an evocative account of the visit of Peter and the Beloved Disciple to the empty tomb on Easter morning. Today, at a distance of some twenty centuries, Peter’s Successor, the Bishop of Rome, stands before that same empty tomb and contemplates the mystery of the Resurrection. Following in the

footsteps of the Apostle, I wish to proclaim anew, to the men and women of our time, the Church's firm faith that Jesus Christ "was crucified, died and was buried", and that "on the third day he rose from the dead". Exalted at the right hand of the Father, he has sent us his Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. Apart from him, whom God has made Lord and Christ, "there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Standing in this holy place, and pondering that wondrous event, how can we not be "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), like those who first heard Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost? Here Christ died and rose, never to die again. Here the history of humanity was decisively changed. The long reign of sin and death was shattered by the triumph of obedience and life; the wood of the Cross lay bare the truth about good and evil; God's judgement was passed on this world and the grace of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon humanity. Here Christ, the new Adam, taught us that evil never has the last word, that love is stronger than death, that our future, and the future of all humanity, lies in the hands of a faithful and provident God.

The empty tomb speaks to us of hope, the hope that does not disappoint because it is the gift of the Spirit of life (cf. Rom 5:5). This is the message that I wish to leave with you today, at the conclusion of my pilgrimage to the Holy Land. May hope rise up ever anew, by God's grace, in the hearts of all the people dwelling in these lands! May it take root in your hearts, abide in your families and communities, and inspire in each of you an ever more faithful witness to the Prince of Peace! The Church in the Holy Land, which has so often experienced the dark mystery of Golgotha, must never cease to be an intrepid herald of the luminous message of hope which this empty tomb proclaims. The Gospel reassures us that God can make all things new, that history need not be repeated, that memories can be healed, that the bitter fruits of recrimination and hostility can be overcome, and that a future of

justice, peace, prosperity and cooperation can arise for every man and woman, for the whole human family, and in a special way for the people who dwell in this land so dear to the heart of the Saviour.

This ancient Memorial of the Anástasis bears mute witness both to the burden of our past, with its failings, misunderstandings and conflicts, and to the glorious promise which continues to radiate from Christ's empty tomb. This holy place, where God's power was revealed in weakness, and human sufferings were transfigured by divine glory, invites us to look once again with the eyes of faith upon the face of the crucified and risen Lord. Contemplating his glorified flesh, completely transfigured by the Spirit, may we come to realize more fully that even now, through Baptism, "we bear in our bodies the death of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our own mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:10-11). Even now, the grace of the resurrection is at work within us! May our contemplation of this mystery spur our efforts, both as individuals and as members of the ecclesial community, to grow in the life of the Spirit through conversion, penance and prayer. May it help us to overcome, by the power of that same Spirit, every conflict and tension born of the flesh, and to remove every obstacle, both within and without, standing in the way of our common witness to Christ and the reconciling power of his love.

With these words of encouragement, dear friends, I conclude my pilgrimage to the holy places of our redemption and rebirth in Christ. I pray that the Church in the Holy Land will always draw new strength from its contemplation of the empty tomb of the Savior. In that tomb it is called to bury all its anxieties and fears, in order to rise again each day and continue its journey through the streets of Jerusalem, Galilee and beyond, proclaiming the triumph of Christ's forgiveness and the promise of new life. As Christians, we know that the peace for which this strife-torn land yearns has a name: Jesus Christ. "He is our peace", who reconciled us to God in one body through the Cross,

bringing an end to hostility (cf. Eph 2:14). Into his hands, then, let us entrust all our hope for the future, just as in the hour of darkness he entrusted his spirit into the Father's hands.

Allow me to conclude with a special word of fraternal encouragement to my brother Bishops and priests, and to the men and women religious who serve the beloved Church in the Holy Land.

Here, before the empty tomb, at the very heart of the Church, I invite you to rekindle the enthusiasm of your consecration to Christ and your commitment to loving service of his mystical Body. Yours is the immense privilege of bearing witness to Christ in this, the land which he sanctified by his earthly presence and ministry. In pastoral charity enable your brothers and sisters, and all the inhabitants of this land, to feel the healing presence and the reconciling love of the Risen One. Jesus asks each of us to be a witness of unity and peace to all those who live in this City of Peace.

As the new Adam, Christ is the source of the unity to which the whole human family is called, that unity of which the Church is the sign and sacrament. As the Lamb of God, he is the source of that reconciliation which is both God's gift and a sacred task enjoined upon us. As the Prince of Peace, he is the source of that peace which transcends all understanding, the peace of the new Jerusalem.

May he sustain you in your trials, comfort you in your afflictions, and confirm you in your efforts to proclaim and extend his Kingdom. To all of you, and to those whom you serve, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of Easter joy and peace.

FAREWELL CEREMONY

“BEN GURION” INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TEL AVIV  
FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2009

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI*

*Mr President,  
Mr Prime Minister,  
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As I prepare to return to Rome, may I share with you some of the powerful impressions that my pilgrimage to the Holy Land has left with me. I had fruitful discussions with the civil authorities both in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories, and I witnessed the great efforts that both governments are making to secure people's well-being. I have met the leaders of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, and I rejoice to see the way that they work together in caring for the Lord's flock. I have also had the opportunity to meet the leaders of the various Christian Churches and ecclesial communities as well as the leaders of other religions in the Holy Land. This land is indeed a fertile ground for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, and I pray that the rich variety of religious witness in the region will bear fruit in a growing mutual understanding and respect.

Mr President, you and I planted an olive tree at your residence on the day that I arrived in Israel. The olive tree, as you know, is an image used by Saint Paul to describe the very close relations between Christians and Jews. Paul describes in his Letter to the Romans how the Church of the Gentiles is like a wild olive shoot, grafted onto the cultivated olive tree which is the People of the Covenant (cf. 11:17-24). We are nourished from the same spiritual roots. We meet as brothers, brothers who at times in our history have had a tense relationship, but

now are firmly committed to building bridges of lasting friendship.

The ceremony at the Presidential Palace was followed by one of the most solemn moments of my stay in Israel – my visit to the Holocaust Memorial at Yad Vashem, where I paid my respects to the victims of the *Shoah*. There also I met some of the survivors. Those deeply moving encounters brought back memories of my visit three years ago to the death camp at Auschwitz, where so many Jews - mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends - were brutally exterminated under a godless regime that propagated an ideology of anti-Semitism and hatred. That appalling chapter of history must never be forgotten or denied. On the contrary, those dark memories should strengthen our determination to draw closer to one another as branches of the same olive tree, nourished from the same roots and united in brotherly love.

Mr President, I thank you for the warmth of your hospitality, which is greatly appreciated, and I wish to put on record that I came to visit this country as a friend of the Israelis, just as I am a friend of the Palestinian people. Friends enjoy spending time in one another's company, and they find it deeply distressing to see one another suffer. No friend of the Israelis and the Palestinians can fail to be saddened by the continuing tension between your two peoples. No friend can fail to weep at the suffering and loss of life that both peoples have endured over the last six decades. Allow me to make this appeal to all the people of these lands: No more bloodshed! No more fighting! No more terrorism! No more war! Instead let us break the vicious circle of violence. Let there be lasting peace based on justice, let there be genuine reconciliation and healing. Let it be universally recognized that the State of Israel has the right to exist, and to enjoy peace and security within internationally agreed borders. Let it be likewise acknowledged that the Palestinian people have a right to a sovereign independent homeland, to live with dignity and to travel freely. Let

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

the two-state solution become a reality, not remain a dream. And let peace spread outwards from these lands, let them serve as a “light to the nations” (Is 42:6), bringing hope to the many other regions that are affected by conflict.

One of the saddest sights for me during my visit to these lands was the wall. As I passed alongside it, I prayed for a future in which the peoples of the Holy Land can live together in peace and harmony without the need for such instruments of security and separation, but rather respecting and trusting one another, and renouncing all forms of violence and aggression. Mr President, I know how hard it will be to achieve that goal. I know how difficult is your task, and that of the Palestinian Authority. But I assure you that my prayers and the prayers of Catholics across the world are with you as you continue your efforts to build a just and lasting peace in this region.

It remains only for me to express my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed in so many ways to my visit. To the Government, the organizers, the volunteers, the media, to all who have provided hospitality to me and those accompanying me, I am deeply grateful. Please be assured that you are remembered with affection in my prayers.

To all of you, I say: thank you, and may God be with you. Shalom!

***INTERVIEW OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI  
DURING THE FLIGHT FROM THE HOLY LAND TO ROME***

**PAPAL FLIGHT  
FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2009**

*Dear Friends,*

Thank you for your work. I can imagine how difficult it must have been in the midst of so many problems, multiple transfers, etc. and I want to thank you for accepting all these inconveniences in order to tell the world about this pilgrimage, thereby inviting others to go on pilgrimage to these Holy Places.

Since I already made a brief summary of my journey in my speech at the airport, I do not wish to add much. I could mention many, many more details: the moving descent to the most profound spot on earth, at the River Jordan, which for us is also a symbol of the descent of God, of the descent of Christ to the deepest points of human existence.

I could mention the Upper Room, in which the Lord gave us the Eucharist, in which Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit, took place; the Holy Sepulchre too, and many other impressions, but it seems to me that this is not the moment to reflect on them.

Yet perhaps I could make a few brief comments on them. There are three fundamental impressions: the first is that I found everywhere, in every context, Muslim, Christian and Jewish, a determined readiness for interreligious dialogue, for encounter and collaboration among the religions. And it is important that everyone see this not only as an action let us say inspired by political motives in the given situation but as a fruit of the very core of faith. Because believing in one God who has created us all, the Father of us all, believing in this

God who created humanity as a family, believing that God is love and wants love to be the dominant force in the world, implies this encounter, this need for an encounter, for dialogue, for collaboration as a requirement of faith itself.

The second point: I also found a very encouraging ecumenical atmosphere. We had many meetings with the Orthodox world in great cordiality; I was also able to speak to a representative of the Anglican Church and two Lutheran representatives and it is clear that this atmosphere of the Holy Land itself also encourages ecumenism.

And the third point: there are enormous difficulties as we know, as we have seen and heard. But I also saw that there is a deep desire for peace on the part of all. The problems are more visible and we must not conceal them: they exist and need clarification. However, the common desire for peace, for brotherhood, is not so visible and it seems to me that we should also talk about this, and encourage in everyone the desire to find solutions to these problems that are certainly far from simple.

I came as a pilgrim of peace. Pilgrimage is an essential element of many religions and also of Islam, of the Jewish religion and of Christianity. It is also the image of our existence that is moving forward towards God and hence towards the communion of humanity.

I came as a pilgrim and I hope that many will follow in my footsteps and by so doing encourage the unity of the people of this Holy Land and in turn become their messenger of peace. Thank you!

## CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY

### *The Year for Priests*

Dear Priests,

The Year for Priests, announced by our beloved Pope Benedict XVI to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the saintly Curé of Ars, St. John Mary Vianney, is drawing near. It will be inaugurated by the Holy Father on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests. The announcement of the Year for Priests has been very warmly received, especially amongst priests themselves. Everyone wants to commit themselves with determination, sincerity and fervour so that it may be a year amply celebrated in the whole world – in the Dioceses, parishes and in every local community – with the warm participation of our Catholic people who undoubtedly love their priests and want to see them happy, holy and joyous in their daily apostolic labours.

It must be a year that is both positive and forward looking in which the Church says to her priests above all, but also to all the Faithful and to wider society by means of the mass media, that she is proud of her priests, loves them, honours them, admires them and that she recognises with gratitude their pastoral work and the witness of their life. Truthfully priests are important not only for what they do but also for who they are. Sadly, it is true that at the present time some priest have been shown to have been involved in gravely problematic and unfortunate situations. It is necessary to investigate these matters, pursue judicial processes and impose penalties accordingly. However, it is also important to keep in mind that these pertain to a very small portion of the clergy. The overwhelming majority of priests are people of great personal integrity, dedicated to the sacred ministry; men of prayer and of pastoral charity, who invest their entire existence in the

fulfilment of their vocation and mission, often through great personal sacrifice, but always with an authentic love towards Jesus Christ, the Church and the people, in solidarity with the poor and the suffering. It is for this reason that the Church is proud of her priests wherever they may be found.

May this year be an occasion for a period of intense appreciation of the priestly identity, of the theology of the Catholic priesthood, and of the extraordinary meaning of the vocation and mission of priests within the Church and in society. This will require opportunities for study, days of recollection, spiritual exercises reflecting on the Priesthood, conferences and theological seminars in our ecclesiastical faculties, scientific research and respective publications.

The Holy Father, in announcing the Year in his allocution on the 16<sup>th</sup> March last to the Congregation for the Clergy during its Plenary Assembly, said that with this special year it is intended “to encourage priests in this striving for spiritual perfection on which, above all, the effectiveness of their ministry depends”. For this reason it must be, in a very special way, a year of prayer by priests, with priests and for priests, a year for the renewal of the spirituality of the presbyterate and of each priest. The Eucharist is, in this perspective, at the heart of priestly spirituality. Thus Eucharistic adoration for the sanctification of priests and the spiritual motherhood of religious women, consecrated and lay women towards priests, as previously proposed some time ago by the Congregation for the Clergy, could be further developed and would certainly bear the fruit of sanctification.

May it also be a year in which the concrete circumstances and the material sustenance of the clergy will be considered, since they live, at times, in situations of great poverty and hardship in many parts of the world.

May it be a year as well of religious and of public celebration which will bring the people – the local Catholic community – to pray, to reflect, to celebrate, and justly to give honour to their priests. In the ecclesial community a celebration is a very cordial event which expresses and nourishes Christian joy, a joy which springs from the certainty that God loves us and celebrates with us. May it therefore be an opportunity to develop the communion and friendship between priests and the communities entrusted to their care.

Many other aspects and initiatives could be mentioned that could enrich the Year for Priests, but here the faithful ingenuity of the local churches is called for. Thus, it would be good for every Dioceses and each parish and local community to establish, at the earliest opportunity, an effective programme for this special year. Clearly it would be important to begin the Year with some notable event. The local Churches are invited on the 19<sup>th</sup> June next, the same day on which the Holy Father will inaugurate the Year for Priests in Rome, to participate in the opening of the Year, ideally by some particular liturgical act and festivity. Let those who are able most surely come to Rome for the inauguration, to manifest their own participation in this happy initiative of the Pope.

God will undoubtedly bless with great love this undertaking; and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Clergy, will pray for each of you, dear priests.

*Cláudio Cardinal Hummes*

Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo  
Prefect, Congregation for the Clergy.



## L-GHAŻLA TAR-RAPPREŻENTANTI FIL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW

### Messaġġ mill-Isqfijiet Maltin

Ftit jiem oħra pajjiżna jiehu sehem fl-elezzjonijiet tal-Parlament Ewropew. Il-ħidma ta' din l-istituzzjoni tinfluwenza mhux biss il-mixja tal-Ewropa, imma ukoll dik tal-poplu tagħna f'pajjiżna.

Għalhekk dawk li jigu eletti bħala membri tal-Parlament Ewropew għandhom sehem importanti ħafna f'dan il-proċess. Barra li jharsu l-interessi ta' pajjiżna, huma jgħinu ukoll biex l-Unjoni Ewropea tieħu direzzjoni tajba.

Aħna ningħaqdu ma' ħutna l-Isqfijiet tal-Unjoni Ewropea biex infakkru lill-Maltin u l-Għawdxin li għandhom ir-responsabilità li jużaw il-vot tagħhom biex jagħzlu bħala membri parlamentari lil dawk li jistgħu jagħtu kontribut attiv biex fil-legislazzjoni, programmi u *policies* tal-Unjoni Ewropea ikun hemm:

- **rispett għall-hajja tal-bniedem** mit-tnissil sal-mewt naturali;
- **appoġġ għall-familja** mibnija fuq iż-żwieġ – kif mifhum bejn raġel wiehed u mara waħda.
- **ħarsien tad-drittijiet soċjali** tal-ħaddiema;
- **appoġġ għal miżuri ekonomiċi** msejsa fuq valuri etiċi;
- **solidarjetà** ma' dawk l-iżjed dgħajfin u fqar fis-soċjetajiet tagħna (partikolarment persuni b'diżabilità, nies li jkunu qed ifittxu l-asil, migranti);

- **aktar sensibilità** favur l-ambjent.

Inheggu lill-Insara kollha biex jitolbu halli l-Mulej iġhina fil-qadi ta' dan id-dmir, bl-interċessjoni ta' Ommna Marija

+ Pawlu Cremona, O.P., Arcisqof ta' Malta

+ Mario Grech, Isqof ta' Għawdex

+ Annetto Depasquale, Isqof Awżiljarju

29 ta' Meju 2009

## **JUM IL-MEZZI Tal- KOMUNIKAZZJONI SOĊJALI – 2009**

**Diskors tal-Monsinjur Arcisqof Pawlu Cremona O.P.**

### **Il-Komunikazzjoni li Twassal Għall-Komunjoni**

Alla tagħna huwa 'Alla tal-Komunikazzjoni u tal-Komunjoni'. Hekk jgħid il-messaġġ tal-Knisja għall-Jum Dinji tat-Komunikazzjoni Soċjali ta' din is-sena (permezz tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju tal-Komunikazzjoni Soċjali).

Skond il-Ktieb tal-Ġenesi Alla ħalaq lill-bniedem diga' bħala

‘Komunikazzjoni’ bejn raġel u mara li trid twassal għall-Komunjoni. F’sens aktar wiesgħa, dan huwa ukoll indikazzjoni tan-natura tal-bniedm li jrid jikkomunika ma’ oħrajn, biex eventwalment jidhol f’komunjoni ma’ oħrajn.

F’dan il-kuntest it-teknoloġija tal-informatika hija don għall-umanita’. U b’mod speċjali hija don għal dawk li huma fqar u fil-ħtiega tal-għajjnuna.

Permezz ta’ dawn il-mezzi, anki min m’għandux possibilitajiet ekonomiċi kbar, jista’ jikkomunika u jidhol f’komunjoni ma’ haddiehor. Il-messaġġ tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju jagħtina diversi eżempji ta’ dan:

Il-familji li jinsabu mifrudin fiżikament minn xulxin, għaliex jinsabu f’postijiet imbiegħda, jistgħu jibqgħu f’kuntatt bil-lehen u bi-immagni. L-istudenti u r-riċerkaturi, anki jekk ma jgawdux minn appoġġ finanzjarju kbir, għandhom aċċess aktar faċli għad-dokumenti, għall-ghejjun tax-xjenza, u għas-sejbiet xjentifiċi, li jagħtihom anki l-possibbiltà li jaħdmu flimkien. In-natura interattiva tal-mezzi l-ġodda tagħmel aktar faċli forom dinamiċi għall-għarfien ta’ persuni oħra u għal komunikazzjoni aktar wiesgħa. Is-suċċess ta’ dawn il-mezzi juru x-xewqa li hemm fil-bniedem li jikkomunika mal-oħrajn.

Mill-għajnejn insara meta il-persuni jhossu L-bżonn li jersqu lejn l-oħrajn biex isiru jafuhom aktar, u jixtiequ li huma jkunu magħrufin minn oħrajn, huma jkunu qegħdin iwiegħbu għas-sejha ta’ Alla għall-Komunikazzjoni u l-Komunjoni.

Dan juri aktar u aktar il-qawwa li għandhom fuq il-persuni dawk kollha li jmexxu dawn il-mezzi ġodda u mezzi oħra ta’ Komunikazzjoni tal-Massa. Huma għandhom f’idejhom il-qawwa u r-responsabbiltà li jaraw li din il-komunikazzjoni u komunjoni virtwali permezz ta’ dawn il-mezzi tkun biss ta’ għajjnuna għar-realta’ u mhux tohdilha

postha. Dan jista' jsehh kemm meta il-komunikazzjoni virtwali bejn il-persuni tiehu post jew tfixkel l-interazzjoni umana, kemm ukoll meta l-komunikazzjoni ta' poter bejn mim ihaddimhom u dawk li jużawhom tkun ta' dominazzjoni u soġġezzjoni reali mingħajr kritika, Meta jiġri dan, ma jibqax iktar il-bniedem li jirċevihom u jagħzel minnhom, iżda li l-bniedem jiġi manipulat minn dawn il-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni. Jiġri li b'hekk il-bniedem ikun aktar qed jgħix f'dinja ta' fantasija milli tar-realta' tiegħu permezz ta' dawn il-mezzi.

L-ewwel responsabbilta' hija fuq il-kwalita' tal-komunikazzjoni. Id-Dokument tal-Kumissjoni Pontifiċja, ma' l-elementi, tajbin, isemmilna ukoll xi effetti ħżiena li johorġu minn dan il-poter kbir, li jistgħu jieħdu l-post ta' komunikazzjoni pożitiva u umana:

- Jista' jkun hemm ingann minn dawk li, permezz tal-Mass Media, qegħdin ifittxu biss konsumaturi f'suq u jipprezentaw dak li jbiegħu mingħajr distinzjoni tal-veru valur tal-prodott fil-hajja tal-bniedem, hekk li johloqu wkoll aspettattivi artifiċjali;

- Meta l-għażla stess, issir it-tajjeb fih innifsu; fejn il-ġdid, hu x' inhu, jiġi muri bhala s-sabiħ fih nnifsu mingħajr referenza għall-valuri; fejn l-esperjenza soġġettiva u personali, issir il-verita' assoluta bla referenza għal xi valuri komuni tas-soċjeta';

- “Għal din ir-raġuni, irridu noqogħdu attenti biex ma nibbanalizzawx il-kunċett u l-esperjenza tal-ħbiberija. Ikun ta' dannu jekk ix-xewqa tagħna biex insostnu u niżviluppaw on-line il-ħbiberija tagħna, din tiġi mwettqa għad-dannu tad-disponibilita' għall-familja, għal dawk qrib tagħna, u għal dawk li niltaqgħu magħhom fir-realta' ta' kull jum”.

“Meta, infatti, ix-xewqa ta' komunikazzjoni virtwali issir ossessiva, il-konsegwenza hi li l-persuna tiżola lilha nfisha, u tfixkel

l-interazzjoni soċjali reali. Dan iwassal biex jitfixxlu wkoll il-mudelli ta' mistrieħ, ta'skiet u ta' riflessjoni neċessarja għal żvilupp uman san".

Għalhekk il-komunikazzjoni virtwali, kultant bl-anonimita' tagħha, ma tistax tiġi eżentata mill-valuri fundamentali tal-komunikazzjoni reali bejn il-persuni: jiġifieri r-rispett reċiproku. Fil-kominkazzjoni ż-żewġ partijiet iridu jħarsu lejn xulxin fid-dinjita' proprja tagħhom u allura fil-valur veru tal-persuna li qed tikkomunika, u tal-persuna li magħha tkun qed tikkomunika). Huwa r-rispett reċiproku li joħloq il-veru djalogu (meta t-tnejn ikollhom il-herqa li jidhlu f'kuntatt biex jaqsmu u jisimgħu lill-persuna l-oħra u hekk jagħnu u mhux jużaw lii xulxin). Mir-rispett reċiproku toħroġ il-ħbiberija tassew (meta l-komunikazzjoni twassal biex tinbet ħbiberija ibbażata fuq xewqa ta' komunjonijoni vera, li mhijiex la dominazzjoni u sfruttamnet, u lanqas soġġezzjoni ta' persuna li tiġi dominata).

It-tieni responsabbilta' hija fuq il-valuri l-oħra li joħorgu minn din il-komunikazzjoni. L-attitudni ġenerali hija li d-dinja tal-Mezzi ta' Komunikazzjoni Soċjali hija ggwidata biss minn qlieġ u popolarita', mil-liġi tas-suq. Il-problema tibda meta naħsbu li dan ma għandux jiġi soġġett għall-ebda valur etiku. Diġa' kellna dibattitu fuq il-kriżi finanzjarja u issa qegħdin nirriflettu li waħda mir-raġunijiet fundamentali ta' din il-kriżi hija li l-kilba għall-qlieġ hadet il-post tal-etika u saret valur assolut fih innifsu sakemm gābet il-kollass tas-sistema finanzjarja kollha. Issa, iva, issa qed nitkellmu, waqt li d-dinja qed tipprova toħroġ minn din il-kriżi, fuq il-bżonn ta' parametri etici, ta' x' inhu tajjeb u xieraq, u x' mhuwiex, biex ma tergax tigris xi haġa aġar.

Fid-dinja tal-Mezzi ta' Komunikazzjoni soċjali għandu jkollna l-istess raġunar. Hemm bosta f'dan is-settur li jaħsbu li għanda tkun dinja li hija barra l-kunsiderazzjonijiet etici. Hemm min jaħseb li

għanda tagħmel il-finijiet hi, li huma popolarita' a kwalunkwe kost u li jwassal ukoll għal suċċess finanzjarju għal min jinvesti f'dawn il-mezzi. Biex tagħmel dan, trid tkun dinja li twarrab fil-ġenb il-kunsiderazzjonijiet etiċi, u ma tqisx li fid-dawl tal-ġid komuni tas-soċjeta', hemm it-tajjeb u l-hazin. Il-fatt hu li r-riżultati tal-ħsara li tista' toħrog minn din l-attitudni ma tidhirx daqskemm dehret fil-kriżi finanzjarja fl-effetti ħziena tagħha. Izda l-effetti ħziena jinisabu hemm ukoll flimkien mal-effetti pożitivi.

Fil-bidu tax-xandir tal-massa, kien hemm ħafna minn dawk li jmexxu u jużaw dawn il-mezzi li kellhom il-kuraġġ li joħorġu minn dik il-kultura li xi drabi kienet tkun wisq restrittiva u limitata fuq dak li għandu jinstema' u jintwera. Illum waslana fl-estrem l-ieħor fejn hemm ftit, jekk hemm, restrizzjonijiet esterni għal din id-dinja ta' dawn il-mezzi. Għalhekk jridu jkunu l-persuni nvoluti stess li jgħorru l-piż tal-konsegwenzi ta' dak li jxandru.

Illum hemm bżonn kuraġġ ieħor li jrid ikun qawwi daqs dak ta' l-ewwel żminijiet. Huwa l-kuraġġ li, flimkien ma' kunsiderazzjonijiet oħra, il-Mezzi ta' Komunikazzjoni Soċjali isibu r-rwol tagħhom li jgħinu lis-soċjeta' tgħix aħjar anki f'kuntest ta' valuri. Jiena ħsibt biex naqsam magħkom xi suggerimenti dwar dan:

- Li minbarra programmi li jwasslu lil dawk li jsegwuhom jgħixu fil-fantasija, dinja li qatt m'hi se tkun tagħhom, anzi li taljenahorn mir-realta' li jkunu qed jgħixu, isiru programmi krejativi li jgħinuhom u jerggħu jitfgħuhom lura lejn ir-realta' li fiha jgħixu: fir-realta' ta' kull jum, fil-ħajja taż-żwieġ u l-familja, tad-dinja tax-xogħol, jew dik tal-iskola, bis-sabiħ u d-diffikultajiet tagħha.
- Li dawk li jmexxuhom jippruvaw jgħaqqdu ir-realta' li jkunu qed jgħixu huma fii-ħajja privata tagħhom mal-programmi u l-messaġġ li jkunu qed jagħmlu u jagħtu. Dan ifisser li ma jhallux li ssir firda

bejn dak li jixtiequ huma għall-familji tagħhom u għal uliedhom, u dak li jipprogettaw fuq il-mezzi tax-xandir lill-udjenzi tagħhom.

• Li jsir iġhodd aktar il-kliem ta' Gesu': "Aghmel lil haddiehor dak li tixtieq li haddiehor jagħmel lilek". Li wiehed b'umilta' kollha ma jarax biss il-qliegħ u l-popolarita' li jkun kiseb mill-programmi li jtella', iżda li jara u jivvaluta l-effetti u l-konsegwenzi fuq il-ħajja soċjali f'pajjiżna; fuq il-mod kif inħarsu lejn kull persuna hi min hi; fuq il-kwalita' tar-relazzjonijiet bejn il-persuni differenti; fuq ir-realta' tal-istabilita' u l-kwalita' tai-ħajja fiż-żwieġ u fil-familja u l-konsegwenzi li joħorgu minnha. Jekk inkunu qegħdin nibnu dawn il-valuri, nkunu qegħdin nibnuhom anki għalina nfusna u għal dawk li huma qrib tagħna.

Anki hawnhekk hija għażla li dawk li għandhom u jmexxu dawn il-mezzi jridu jagħmlu: li jisbu sodisfazzjon tal-kontribut tagħhom għall-kwalita' tal-ħajja fis-soċjeta', anki f'dan is-settur.

Dan kollu huwa wkoll sejha għall-insara u għall-Knisja. Il-Knisja trid tidhol aktar f'dawn il-mezzi ta' Komunikazzjoni Soċjali u tħalli lill-Mutej li huwa Alla tal-Komunikazzjoni u tal-Komunjoni biex jużahom bħalma uża lil San Pawl 2000 sena ilu biex jagħti dimensjoni oħra lill-Komunikazzjoni u lill-Komunjoni fis-sens Kristjan u fid-dawl tal-valuri Nsara.

+Pawlu Cremona O.P.  
Arċisqof ta' Malta

## MESSAĠĠ TA' L-ARĊISQOF FIL-BIDU TAL-ISTAĠUN TAL-FESTI

Din is-sena hija s-Sena Pawlina. Xieraq li anki l-Festi nghixuhom f'dan il-wirt li tana San Pawl Missierna. Jekk hemm kelma li tixraq lill-Festi tagħna, din il-Kelma hija: "Ifraħ, Ferħ". U dan il-Ferħ, fil-Festi tagħna dejjem isir fid-dawl tal-Fidi tagħna. Il-Festi tagħna huma msemmin jow għal xi misteru tad-Divinità jew tal-ħajja ta' Sidna Ġesù Kristu, jew għal xi qaddisin, l-ikbar fosthom Marija, Omm Alla.

Naf li kull min jaħdem għall-Festa jagħmel dan b'sagrifiċċju, u b'sens kbir ta' mpenn. Imma mhux bilfors dan l-impenn ikollu togħma kristjana. F'xi whud thoss li hemm fidi u talb u devozzjoni vera lejn il-Festa. Iżda sfortunatament, hemm xi whud li ma tagħrafx il-ħidma tagħhom fil-Festi minn dak li jagħmlu xi oħrajn biex itellgħu festa għal xi avveniment ieħor, jew għal xi Festival muzikali.

### Appell

Jiena qiegħed nappella għal nies ta' rieda tajba biex jibdeu attivament isaffu l-Festi tagħna, jagħmluhom hekk li min ikun qiegħed jagħrafhom jagħraf li huma Festi Reliġjużi. Din għandha tkun l-unika raġuni li nagħmlu l-Festi u din għandha tkun il-missjoni ta' min jixtieq Festi Nsara Vera. Qiegħed nappella għal dawn innies ta' rieda tajba: "Aħdmu fuq sħabkom li għandhom bżonn għajnuna biex jifhmu dawn l-affarijiet. Ibdew proċess li fih tiferħu li tagħmlu l-Festa tagħkom verament Nisranija, verament ta' ġieħ għas-sejha nisranija tagħna, tixraq lill-Qaddis li nkunu qegħdin niċċelebraw".

Nixtieq inħalli lil San Pawl jgħallimna kif il-Ferħ tagħna jista' jkun nisrani. Ħa nisimgħu l-ewwel x'jikteb San Pawl lill-Filippin: "Ifirħu dejjem fil-Mulej: nerga' ngħidilkom, ifirħu. Il-ħlewwa tagħkom, ħa jkunu jafuħa l-bnedmin koliha. Il-Mulej qorob.

Mill-bqija, ħuti, f'dan għandkom taħsbu: f'kull ma hu veru, f'kull ma hu xieraq, f'kull ma hu ġust, f'kull ma hu safi, f'kull ma jigbed l-imħabba, f'kull ma jisthoqqlu l-ġieħ, f'kull ma hu virtù, f'kull ma haqqu t-tifhir; f'dan kollu aħsbu.” (4,4).

**Ifirħu fil-Mulej:** Ma nistgħux nifirħu verament fil-Mulej, jekk f'qalbna għandna firdiet, jew jekk nippretendu li l-ferħ tagħna nuruh billi ngħajru lil dawk li mhux tal-Festa tagħna.

**Il-hlewwa tagħkom ha jkunu jafu biha l-bnedmin kollha:** Aħna nistgħu nħossu f'qalbna li għandna lill-Qaddis, iżda l-oħrajn, forsi li ma jemmnux, kif se nuruhom il-hlewwa ta' Ġesù, meta jarawna niġgieldu jew irrabjati għal xulxin?

**Aħsbu f'kull ma hu veru:** Jekk qegħdin niċcelebraw lil xi Qaddis u mhux biss l-istatwa tal-Qaddis, irridu dejjem iktar nitolbu flimkien u nitgħallmu flimkien biex insiru nafu x'habb il-Qaddis, kif għex, biex niċcelebraw ukoll il-hajja tiegħu nistranija, inkella nkunu qed nifirdu l-istatwa mill-Qaddis li tippreżenta.

**Aħsbu f'kull ma hu xieraq, kull ma jisthoqqlu l-ġieħ, f'kull ma haqqu t-tifhir:** In-nisrani suppost ikollu wkoll mġiba differenti kif iġib ruħu. Nistgħu nsemmu wkoll xi affarijiet li n-nisrani ma jistax jaċċetta bħala parti mill-hajja tiegħu: il-kliem hażin, u d-dagħa, jekk mhux ukoll kontra xi qaddis ieħor; l-eċċess ta' l-alkoħol forsi anke f'dawk li huma zġhar; l-eċċess fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni purament umana, b'mod speċjali f'xi marċijiet fejn anki d-diċenza tkun nieqsa. Dawn ma jaqblux b'ferħ li jsir f'isem xi Qaddis.

**Holma u tama:** Jiena għidt dan kollu għaliex nixtieq li nnaqqsu dak kollu li jista' jfixkel il-valuri veri tal-Festi. Jiena noħlom u nittama li xi darba fil-Festi tagħna nersqu lejn dak li jgħid San Pawl: li fil-Ferħ tagħna jkun għad fadal biss dak li “**jigbed l-imħabba**”.

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

Nibgħat il-Barka tiegħi fuq il-Festi li se jiġu celebrati din is-sena: fuq il-komunitajiet tal-Knisja li fi hđanhom jiġu celebrati, fuq dawk li jahdmu għalihom, u fuq dawk li jattendu għalhom.

Il-Paċi magħkom.

+ Pawl Cremona O.P.  
Arċisqof ta' Malta

17 ta' Ġunju 2009

**GHELUQ TAS-SENA PAWLINA**

Lettera con la quale il Papa ha nominato  
l'Em.mo Card. Ennio Antonelli,  
Presidente del Consiglio Pontificio per la Famiglia, Suo Inviato  
Speciale alla celebrazione  
della chiusura dell'Anno Paolino a Malta. Paolino a Malta.

Venerabili Fratri Nostro  
Ennio S. R. E. Cardinali Antonelli  
Praesidi Pontificii Consilii pro Familia

Postquam nonnulla eadem loca quae Gentium Apostolus calcavit, magno cum animi delectamento invisimus, Nos, universa cum Ecclesia Annum Paulinum celebrantes, theologiam eius spiritalemque doctrinam diligentissime perscrutamur dum plurima Pastorum incepta in terrarum orbe animi Nostri laetitia et propensione perspicimus. Mirabili enim modo sancti Pauli scripta de Christo eiusque salvifica opera, de unitate populi Dei, de rebus novissimis deque iustificatione et transitu a peccato ad libertatem Ecclesiae doctrinam saeculorum decursu illuminaverunt nec non praecipuum hodiernae etiam christianae considerationis et asceticae meditationis fontem constituunt.

Ille qui in iuventute Ecclesiam persequebatur Dei (cfr Gal 1, 13), peculiarem accepit a Domino gratiam dum Damascum se conferret Eiusque vocem audiret: "Surge et ingredere civitatem, et dicetur tibi quid te oporteat facere" (Act 9, 6). Post hunc cum Domino Resuscitato occursum conversus, Evangelium nuntiare coepit, novas instituere christianas communitates atque epistulas exarare quibus fideles, nostra etiam aetate, ad veram agendam conversionem adhortatur novumque spiritale iter prosequendum. Beatus ille Apostolus, qui dixit "Mihi vivere Christus est" (Philp 1, 21), quoniam exemplar nobis est divinae

voluntatis quaerendae et adimplendae, omnimodae Domino eiusque Ecclesiae deditiois nec non spiritus maxime ad humanum cultum aperti.

Quandoquidem Annus Apostolo Paulo dicatus ad finem iam vergit, placet Nobis eminentissimos quosdam Viros in illa loca mittere, in quibus praeclarus ille Christi Evangelii nuntiator vitam suam navitatemque gessit quaeque iure meritoque Loca Paulina appellari possunt. Inter ea peculiaris esse ponderis videtur Melita ubi ille Apostolus, Romam ductus, post naufragium quosdam commoratus est menses, incolis adferens insulae spem consolationemque.

Ad Te, Venerabilis Frater Noster, mentem vertimus, qui Pontificio praees Consilio pro Familia, Teque hisce Litteris MISSUM EXTRAORDINARIUM NOSTRUM nominamus ad celebrationes exeuntis Anni Paulini, quae die XXIX proximi mensis Iunii, in sollemnitate videlicet sanctorum Petri et Pauli, Apostolorum, Melitae sollemniter agentur.

De Domino Iesu loquens, quem Deus excitavit a mortuis (cfr Rom 10, 9), omnes illic fideles adstantes adhortaberis ut precibus, meditatione nec non spiritalium necessitatum consideratione novatis viribus novoque studio divinam voluntatem quaerere atque fidei zelo in vita cotidiana fervere velint. Coram religiosis civilibusque auctoritatibus tum momentum personae et doctrinae Apostoli Gentium tum eius sollicitudo de totius generis humani salute ut innotescant operam dabis.

Cunctos Melitae Pastores ceterosque sacros Praesules ibidem congregatos, sacerdotes, religiosos viros mulieresque et christifideles laicos ad maiorem usque spiritali unitatem concitans, Nostro salutabis nomine Nostramque iis ostendes benevolentiam.

Nosmet Ipsi Te, Venerabilis Frater Noster, in tua missione

implenda intercessioni ipsius Apostoli Gentium committimus dum precibus iam nunc Te comitamur. Benedictionem denique Apostolicam libentes Tibi impertimur, signum Nostrae erga Te benevolentiae et caelestium donorum pignus, quam omnibus celebrationum participibus rite largiri volumus.

Ex Aedibus Vaticanis, die XVI mensis Maii, anno MMIX,  
Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

### TRADUZZJONI BIL-MALTI

Lill-Venerabbli Huna,  
L-Eminenza Tiegħu Reverendissima l-Kardinal Ennio Antonelli,  
President tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju għall-Familja

Wara li żorna, bi pjaċir kbir ta' qalbna, xi postijiet li l-Appostlu tal-Ġnus rifes, Aħna, waqt li qed niċcelebraw is-Sena Pawlina flimkien mal-Knisja Universali, qegħdin niflu bl-ikbar reqqa t-teologija u d-duttrina spiritwali tiegħu waqt li qegħdin ninnotaw b'ferh u propensjoni ta' qalbna l-biċċa l-kbira tal-inizjattivi tar-Rgħajja tal-Erwieħ fid-dinja. Għaliex b'mod tal-ghageb il-kitbiet ta' San Pawl fuq Kristu u fuq l-opra salvifika tiegħu, fuq l-unità tal-poplu t'Alla, fuq l-aħħar żminijiet u fuq il-ġustifikazzjoni u l-passaġġ mid-dnub għall-helsien dawlu d-duttrina tal-Knisja tul is-sekli u jiffurmaw il-prinċipju anke tal-ħsieb Nisrani tal-lum u l-ghajn tal-meditazzjoni axxetika.

Hu, li kien f'żgħožitu jippersegwita l-Knisja t'Alla (ara Gal 1,13), aċċetta minghand il-Mulej il-grazzja speċjali waqt li kien sejjer lejn Damasku u sema' leħnu: "Qum u idhol fil-belt, u hemm ser jghidulek x'hemm bżonn li tagħmel" (Atti 9, 6). Wara li kkonverta wara din il-laqgħa mal-Mulej Irxox, huwa beda jxandar l-Evangeliu,

iwaqqaf komunitajiet godda Insara u jibgħat l-ittri li bihom ihegġeg lill-fidili, anke ta' zmienna, biex jgħaddu minn konverżjoni vera u biex isegwu t-triq spiritwali ġdida. Imbierek dak l-Appostlu li qal "Għaliya li tgħix huwa Kristu" (Fil 1, 21), għaliex Huwa ta' eżempju għalina tat-ftitxija u t-tishiħ tar-rieda divina, tal-ghotja ta' kull xorta lill-Mulej u lill-Knisja tiegħu u tal-ispirtu apert speċjalment għall-kult uman.

Peress li s-Sena msejha għall-Appostlu Pawlu qegħda ġa tersaq lejn ittniem, għandna l-pjaċir li nibagħtu Eminentissimi Kardinali f'dawk il-postijiet li fihom dak ix-xandar famuż tal-Evangelju ta' Kristu għadda ħajtu u wera ż-żelu tiegħu u li ġustament u meritatevolment jistgħu jissejhu Postijiet Pawlini. Fosthom tidher li hi ta' importanza speċjali Malta fejn l-Appostlu maġhruf, fi triqtu lejn Ruma, għadda xi xhur wara nawfragju, waqt li ġab it-tama u l-konsolazzjoni lin-nies tal-gżira.

Lejk, o Venerabbli Huna, aħna ndawru hsiebna, int li tippresiedi fuq il-Kunsill Pontifiċju għall-Familja, u naħtruk b'din l-ittra l-MIBG HUT STRAOR DINARJU TAG HNA għaċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet tas-Sena Pawlina li qegħda tintemm, li ser isiru f'Malta b'mod solenni fid-29 tax-xahar li ġej, tabilhaqq fis-solennità tal-qaddisin Pietru u Pawlu, Appostli.

Waqt li titkellem fuq il-Mulej Ġesù, li Alla qajmu mill-imwiet (ara Rum 10, 9), inti ser thegġeg lill-fidili kollha hemmhekk preżenti sabiex bit-talb, bil-meditazzjoni u l-kunsiderazzjoni ta' neċessitajiet spiritwali, b'hegġa mġedda u b'żelu ġdid, ikunu jixtiequ jfittxu r-rieda divina u li ixegħlu biż-żelu tal-fidi fil-hajja ta' kuljum. Quddiem l-awtoritajiet reliġjużi u ċivili, inti ser tagħti attenzjoni sabiex isiru jafu x'hini l-importanza tal-persuna u tad-duttrina tal-Appostlu tal-Ġnus, u x'hinu l-hsieb tiegħu dwar is-salvazzjoni tal-generu uman kollu.

Waqt li thegġeg r-Rgħajja tal-Erwieħ kollha ta' Malta u

ċ-ċelebranti l-oħra hemmhekk miġbura, is-saċerdoti, ir-religjużi rġiel u nisa u l-lajċi fidili lejn Kristu għal unità spiritwali dejjem akbar, inti ser issellmilhom f'Isimna u turihom ix-xewqat sbieħ Tagħna.

Aħna stess nirrakkomandawk, o Venerabbli Ħuna, fit-twertiq tal-missjoni tiegħek, lill-interċessjoni tal-istess Appostlu tal-Ġnus waqt li nsegwuk iss'issa bit-talb tagħna. Fl-aħħar nett, nagħtuk bil-qalb kollha il-Barka Appostolika, sinjal tar-rieda tajba Tagħna lejku u rahan tal-grazzji mis-Sema - Barka li nixtiequ tinghata b'mod solenni lil dawk kollha li jkunu qed jieħdu sehem fiċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet.

Mill-Palazz tal-Vatikan, fis-16-il jum tax-xahar ta' Mejju, fis-sena 2009, fil-ħames tal-Pontifikat Tagħna.

Papa Benedittu XVI

**OMELIJA**  
**TAL-EM.MU KARDINAL ENNIO ANTONELLI**  
**FL-GHELUQ TAS-SENA PAWLINA**

Maħbubin Maltin, huwa ta' ferħ kbir għalija li niġi f'din il-ġzira nobbli tagħkom bħala r-rappreżentant speċjali tal-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa Benedittu XVI għall-għeluq ta' din is-sena ddedikata lil San Pawl, l-appostlu li wellidkom fi Kristu. Insellem b'rispett kbir lill-President tar-Repubblika, l-Eċċellenza Tiegħu Dr George Abela u s-Sinjura tiegħu Margaret Abela. Ngħannaq miegħi f'tgħanniqa fraterna lill-Arċisqof ta' Malta, l-Eċċellenza Tiegħu Monsinjur Paul Cremona, lin-Nunzju Appostoliku, l-Eċċellenza tiegħu Monsinjur Tommaso Caputo, lill-arċisqfijiet u lill-isqfijiet li qed jikkonċelebraw magħna llejla. Insellem ukoll lis-saċerdoti, lir-religjużi u lil-lajċi

kollha ta' Malta, "l-omm li tatkom isimha", bħalma tkantaw fi-innu nazzjonali.

Is-salm tal-lum hu stedina sabiħa u qawwija: "Ħarsu lejha, u wiċċkom jiddi bil-ferħ." (Salm 33, 5). Qegħdin niġu mistiedna nikkontemplaw il-wiċċ ta' Alla; hija stedina biex inwahnha ħarsitna fuqu, sabiex niehdu sehem iktar profond f'ħajtu u fil-missjoni salvifika tiegħu.

Il-kontemplazzjoni ta' Kristu Rxoxt lil San Pawl bidlitu kompletament u għamlitu dixxiplu u appostlu mimli heġġa għalih. Fi kliemu stess: "Kristu Ġesù ħataf lili" (Fil 3, 12); "Ngħix, iżda mhux jien ngħix, iżda jgħix fija Kristu" (Gal 2, 20). Minħabba fi Kristu Ġesù, Pawlu jagħti l-enerġija kollha tiegħu, jagħmel vjaġġi twal, jissaporti l-għeja, jgħaddi l-jeleli shaħ bla rqaq, isofri perikli, qrati, persekuzzjonijiet, umiljazzjonijiet, u kull xorta ta' tbatija. Mingħand Kristu Ġesù, Pawlu jirċievi s-saħħa, jara l-frott tal-ministeru tiegħu, jikseb il-ferħ li jiżboq kull tbatija: "Għal kollox niflaħ, bis-saħħa ta' dak li jqawwini" (Fil 4, 13), "Kollni farag; imfawwar bil-ferħ fost id-dieqa kollha tagħna" (2 Kor 7, 4).

Kif smajna fil-qari tal-lum, f'wieħed mill-iktar mumentu dramatiċi ta' ħajtu, dan ir-raġel meraviljuż jasal Malta. Mal-ewwel daqqa t'għajn jidher li Pawlu qisu ġie Malta b'kumbinazzjoni, minħabba tempesta qawwija li wasslet għal nawfragju. Nemmnu, iżda, li kien Alla li baġħtu hawn bħala messagġier tiegħu: "Aħna ambaxxaturi ta' Kristu, bħallikieku Alla stess qiegħed isejhilkom permezz tagħna" (2 Kor 5, 20).

Missirijietkom laqgħu lil Pawlu u lill-oħrajn li ħelsuha mill-għarqa bis-sħana tan-nar u b'ospitalità mill-iktar generuża. San Luqa, l-awtur tal-Atti jikteb: "In-nies tagħha ġiebu ruħhom magħna bi hlewwa liema bħalha" (Atti 28, 2). Din ir-rara *humanitas* li wrew il-

Maltin għadha waħda mill-karatteristiċi tal-poplu tagħkom.

L-apostlu dam Malta biss tliet xhur; iżda dawn kienu xhur kruċjali għal din il-gżira għax immarkaw l-istorja tagħha. Għaddew dsatax-il seklu u nofs minn dakinhar. Matul dan iż-żmien, garrabtu bosta grajjiet differenti; għaddejt看 minn hafna maltempati u minn mumententi ta' prova. Minkejja dan, bqajtu fidili lejn it-tagħlim ta' San Pawl u lejn Kristu. Illum ukoll għandna l-prova tal-maltempa tal-materjalizmu u tad-degradazzjoni morali. Il-Knisja f'Malta mhix imħarsa minn dawn il-maltempati moderni, għax il-fidi u l-valuri morali ma jiġux mgħoddija minn generazzjoni għall-oħra b'mod awtomatiku u lanqas nistgħu nassumu li din it-trasmissjoni tal-fidi u tal-valuri isseħħ b'ċertezza. Fl-enċiklika tiegħu *Spe Salvi*, il-Papa Benedittu XVI jgħid hekk: "Il-progress miżjud huwa possibbli biss fil-qasam materjali, għxjentifiku u tekniku. (...)

Iżda fil-qasam tal-għarfien etiku u tad-deċiżjonijiet morali m'hemmx possibbiltà bħal din għar-raġuni sempliċi li l-libertà tal-bniedem hija dejjem għdida u trid dejjem tiegħu d-deċiżjonijiet tagħha mill-għdid. (...) Il-libertà trid li fid-deċiżjonijiet fundamentali ta' kull bniedem, kull nisel ikun bidu għdid" (par. 24).

Għeżież insara ta' Malta, intom kburin, u bir-raġun, bl-istorja u bil-fidi ta' missirijietkom. Iżda tridu tkomplu tgħixu din il-fidi, u tagħtu xhieda ta' din l-istess fidi lil uliedkom. Dan ifisser li tridu tibqgħu żzommu l-ħarsa tagħkom fuq il-Mulej, fit-talb personali u f'dak komunitarju, fil-liturġija, u billi tisimgħu l-Kelma ta' Alla u timmeditawha. Tridu tkunu marbutin ma' Kristu, tridu tilqgħuh f'ħajjietkom, u flimkien ma' San Pawl ittenu li "Ġesù hu l-Mulej" (Rum 10,9), mhux biss bil-kliem imma l-iktar bl-imġieba tagħkom.

Intom insara, werrieta ta' San Pawl u werrieta ta' tradizzjoni glorjuża. Intom tħobbu lil Kristu u lill-Knisja tiegħu. Inħeġġigkom sabiex tibqgħu dejjem mimlija ħeġġa u biex tiegħu sehem attiv fil-

ħajja tal-Knisja. L-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta għadha kif iċċelebrat sinodu djoċesan: aċċettaw b'responsabbiltà ġeneruża d-direzzjonijiet u l-inizjattivi pastorali li ħargu minnu. Iktar ma tkunu magħqudin ma' Kristu u mal-Knisja tiegħu, iktar tħossukom mibgħuta fuq missjoni bħal San Pawl. Il-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II, li ġie Malta fuq żewġ żjarat pastorali, uriekom li l-Ewropa għandha bżonn ix-xhieda ta' Malta, tal-valuri umani tagħkom, *tar-rara humanitas* tagħkom u tal-fidi nisranija tagħkom.

Bħala President tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju għall-Familja, inħeġġgkom fl-inizjattivi pastorali li ħadtu biex tgħinu lill-familja b'mod speċjali permezz tal-Kummissjoni Djoċesana tal-Familja, tal-Moviment ta' Kana u tal-Caritas Malta.

Rajt, fost affarijiet oħra, li għandkom thejjija soda għaž-żwieġ. Nittama li din it-thejjija tkopri l-perjodu kollu ta' qabel iż-żwieġ u bl-għajjnuna ta' koppji miżżewġa tagħmel minn dan iż-żmien, mixja ta' fidi. L-iskop tal-programmi ta' thejjija m'għandux ikun biss ta' formazzjoni teoretika imma wkoll thejjija Prattika fuq l-aspetti differenti tal-ħajja nisranija u taż-żwieġ nisrani. B'hekk inkunu qed inħeġġu wkoll lil dawn il-koppji li jkunu se jizżewġu sabiex jidhlu f'relazżjonijiet ta' ħbiberija ma' familji oħra.

Qaluli li minbarra korsijiet ta' thejjija għaž-żwieġ, qed tippurvaw tintroduċu programm għall-koppji li għadhom kemm izżewġu. Nissuggerielkom li tippromwovu l-laqqgħat bejn il-familji, kemm fuq livell parrokkjali imma wkoll fi gruppi iżgħar, laqqgħat li jsiru regolarment u li jkunu mmexxija minn koppji miżżewġa. Dawn il-laqqgħat għandhom jinbnew fuq it-talb u l-Kelma t'Alla, fuq ir-riflessjoni u l-ħbiberija, fuq il-qsim tal-esperjenzi u mument i ta' mistrieh.

Fil-Vangelu li għadu kif tħabbri lna, smajna l-istqarrija ta' Pietru: "Inti l-Messija, Bin Alla l-ħaj" (Mt 16, 16). Min-naħa tiegħu, San Pawl

jikkompeti ma' San Pietru meta jistqarr il-fidi tiegħu fi Kristu: “Alla wieħed hemm, il-Missier...u Mulej wieħed, Ġesù Kristu” (1 Kor 8,6); “sabiex il-ħlejjaq kollha fis-sema, fl-art u f’qiegħ l-art, jinżlu għarkupptejhom u kull ilsien jistqarr Ġesù Kristu hu l-Mulej, għall-glorja ta’ Alla l-Missier’ (Fil 2,10-11).

Ħuti għeżież, ibqgħu denji ta’ missierkom fil-fidi; ibqgħu ulied xierqa ta’ *Pawlu ta’ Malta*, bħalma sejjahlu wieħed mill-poeti tagħkom. Żommu n-nar tal-fidi u tal-imħabba tagħkom dejjem jaqbad; nar iktar imdawwal u iktar sħun mir-*rara humanitas* li kebbsu missirijietkom mal-miġja ta’ San Pawl u ta’ dawk kollha li miegħu sabu kenn fuq din il-ġżira. Amen.

Kard. Ennio Antonelli  
Legat tal-Papa

29 ta’ Ġunju, 2009

## KUMMISSJONI INTERDJOĊESANA AMBJENT

### APPELL GĦAL AKTAR RESPONSABBILTÀ U TRASPARENZA

Bħalma thabbar fit-22 ta' Meju, l-Konferenza Episkopali Maltija ħasset li wasal iż-żmien li l-Kummissjoni Ambjent, tiżviluppa f'waħda interdjoċesana, jiġifieri li tkun responsabbli wkoll mid-djoċesi ta' Għawdex. Il-KA tixtieq tiringrazzja lill-Isqfijiet ta' dawn il-gżejjer tal-fiduċja li wrew fil-ħidma tagħna, kif ukoll lil daww kollha li matul dawn l-aħħar snin esprimew ix-xewqa li jseħħ dan l-iżvilupp. Aħna mwegħdu li l-impenn tagħna ser ikun l-istess bħal qabel. Infatti bħala l-ewwel pass f'dan l-iżvilupp, il-KA ser theggi pjan ta' hidma li issa ser jinkludi lil Għawdex.

Il-KA ma tixtieqx thalli din l-okkazjoni tgħaddi mingħajr ma tagħmel dan l-appell dirett lejn kull individwu – kulhadd skont ir-rwol li għandu fis-soċjetà. Spiss in-nuqqas ta' qbil f'diversi kwistjonijiet ambjentali fil-gżejjer tagħna (li huma tant limitati fir-riżorsi ambjentali tagħhom), jaraw il-bidu tagħhom min-nuqqas ta' fiduċja bejn il-partijiet involuti. Dan iwassal għal kunflitt b'mod li, minflok isiru tentattivi sabiex jinstab ftehim (li fih tirbaħ kull naha), tinhela ħafna enerġija f'pika u kontroversji. Sitwazzjonijiet bħal dawn imorru 'lil hinn mit-twettiq tal-ġid komuni u jostakolaw il-progress sostenibbli ta' pajjiżna. Is-soluzzjoni għal dawn il-konflitti tinsab f'impenn akbar lejn ir-responsabbiltà u t-trasparenza fl-operat ta' KULL min hu nvolut fl-ambjent (mill-għola awtorità tal-pajjiż sa' kull ċittadin) b'mod li dan ikun irid jagħti kont lis-soċjetà għal għemilu.

Il-KA qed terġa' ssostni dan abbażi ta' riflessjonijiet u stqarrijiet li ħarġet matul is-snin dwar diversi kwistjonijiet ambjentali f'pajjiżna. Aktar milli toffri soluzzjonijiet immedjati għas-sintomi tal-problemi ambjentali ta' pajjiżna, l-iskop tal-KA minn dejjem kien dak li tgħin sabiex tkun identifikata u eliminata l-kawża tagħhom. Forsi kien

hemm każijiet li l-appelli tal-KA waqgħu fuq widnejn torox (jew li għażlu li ma jagħtux widen) u forsi wkoll intużaw għall-skopijiet oħra li jmorru 'lil hinn mill-intenzjoni li għalihom kienu saru. Għalhekk il-KA ser tfakkar xi ftit mir-rakkomandazzjonijiet li għamlet fil-passat li kienu jwasslu għal aktar responsabbiltà.

1. Fil-kwistjoni tal-iżvilupp tal-impjant tal-iskart ta' Sant Antnin, in-nies tal-lokal baqgħu ma emmnux li r-riskji ta' dan l-impjant, setgħu jkunu kkontrollati kif stipulat min-nies tekniċi. Il-KA waqt li kienet qablet mal-proġett, kienet ukoll issugġeriet li jitwaqqaf Bord Regolatorju bis-sehem ta' rappreżentanti tal-WasteServ, tal-MEPA u, b'mod speċjali, tal-komunitajiet tar-reġjun. Il-Bord Regolatorju kellu jkun responsabbli sabiex jissorvelja kull stadju tal-proġett kif ukoll tal-operat ta' dan l-impjant. L-ironija tas-sitwazzjoni kienet li fl-istorbju tal-kwistjoni, il-partijiet konċernati, filwaqt li kkwotaw li qablilhom mill-istqarrija tal-Kummissjoni, injoraw kompletament is-suggeriment li jitwaqqaf il-Bord Regolatorju – u li kellu jagħti aktar setgħa u kontroll lir-residenti fid-deċiżjonijiet ambjentali li jsiru fil-lokalità tagħhom.
2. Fil-kwistjoni dwar it-tibdil fil-konfini tal-iżvilupp li seħħew fl-2006, il-KA kienet appellat lil dawk kollha li jistgħu jkunu nvoluti fit-tkabbir tal-konfini fid-dmir li jpoġġu l-gid komuni u l-kwalità tal-ħajja f'pajjiżna bħala l-ewwel priorità. Dan id-dmir għandu jkun ir-responsabbiltà ta' kull ċittadin Malti ... speċjalment jekk hu Nisrani. Ftit hemm evidenza li dan l-appell halla xi effett fuq l-għażliet li saru.
3. Fl-2006, l-awditor tal-Awtorità tal-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar ikkonkluda li jew il-Bord tal-MEPA jew dak tad-DCC ma kienx mexa kif suppost u li l-għażliet li saru għal ċerti żviluppi la kienu ġustifikati u lanqas ibbażati fuq raġunar ċar. Il-KA kienet staqsiet (u għadha tistaqsi) jekk kull min kellu xi responsabbiltà

politika u/jew teknika f'dawn il-kazijiet, kienx kostrett jaghti rendikont għal ghemilu. F'dawn il-jiem, il-MEPA ħarġet il-permess għall-iżvilupp fil-Wied tal-Marga, il-Qala, Għawdex. Parti mill-iżvilupp propost jaqa' barra miż-żoni għall-iżvilupp, u jmur kontra l-Pjan Lokali għal Għawdex u Kemmuna, li kienet fasslet l-istess Awtorità. Din it-tip ta' inkonsistenza fi hdan il-MEPA jwassal għall-nuqqas ta' fiduċja taċ-ċittadin fis-sistema u jnibbet suspetti serji dwar kemm l-operat tagħha hu wiehed oġġettiv.

4. Il-festi tagħna huma eżempju ieħor ta' fejn hemm nuqqas ta' responsabbiltà lejn il-proxxmu. Għal dawn l-aħħar snin, il-KA appellat sabiex jiefqu l-abbużi li spiss isehħu kemm fil-ħruq tan-nar u kemm fl-imġieba ta' xi wħud waqt il-festa. Wasal iż-żmien li KULL min hu responsabbli jwettaq id-dmirijiet li titlob minnu l-kariga li jokkupa. Dan jgħodd anke fejn jidhol il-logħob tan-nar fejn: (a) l-awtoritajiet ċivili għandhom juru rieda ferm aktar soda sabiex jirrangaw ir-regolamenti li jikkontrollaw il-produzzjoni u l-ħruq tal-logħob tan-nar; (b) il-mezzi tax-xandir għandhom jifhmu r-responsabbiltà ġurnalistika tagħhom li jqajmu diskussjoni nazzjonali aktar razzjonali fuq kif jistgħu jkunu kkontrollati darba għal dejjem l-eċċessi. Jidher li sa issa li l-interess tal-mezzi tax-xandir iqum biss meta sseħħ xi disgrazzja; (ċ) l-awtoritajiet lokali (dawk ċivili u dawk tal-Knisja) għandhom jaħdmu flimkien sabiex il-festi tagħna jgħibu l-għaqda u mhux ta' firda fil-komunità.
5. Fl-aħħar stqarrija li ħarġet f'Marzu, 2009 il-KA kienet qablet mar-Revizjoni tal-Istrateġija tal-Immaniġġjar tal-Iskart Solidu fuq il-bżonn li jitjiebu *technical standards* u *codes of practice* f'kull operazzjoni li għandha x'taqsam mal-immaniġġjar tal-iskart. Dawn il-prattiċi għandhom ikunu żviluppanti f'kull livell: ibda mill-ġbir tal-iskart mit-triqat sal-ogħla tekniku responsabbli fl-impjanti tat-trattament (jew incineraturi) tal-iskart. Wasal iż-

żmien li r-responsabbiltà tal-operatur għandu jkollha marbut magħha l-obbligu (*liability*) lejn il-pubbliku. Dan ifisser li operatur imħallas sabiex jaċċerta li mpjant jaħdem tajjeb fil-limiti ta' kriterji stabbiliti, għandu jinżamm responsabbli individwalment u direttament għal kull dannu fuq is-saħħa tan-nies jew fuq ir-riżorsi ambjentali, jekk ikun ippruvat li dan id-dannu seħħ b'negligenza fl-operat tiegħu. Din ir-responsabbiltà trid tingarr ukoll mill-entità li tħaddem lil dan l-impjegat. Dan għandu japplika għal kull settur u mhux biss għal dak tal-iskart.

6. Fl-istess stqarrija l-KA fahhret id-dokument: “Strategija Nazzjonali ta’ Mizuri ta’ Politika u Tnaqqis tal-Emissjonijiet tal-Gassijiet Serra” għax irrakomanda politika kordinata sabiex din il-problema tkun indirizzata fuq livell nazzjonali. Għalhekk il-KA ma tistax tifhem kif filwaqt li d-dokument jissuġġerixxi li jinstabu mezzi sabiex it-traffiku f’toroq arterjali jkun aktar mexxej fl-istess hin toħrog direttiva li wħud minn dawn it-toroq ikollhom limitu ta’ veloċità ta’ 60 km fis-siegħa. Dwar l-impjant il-ġdid tal-*Power Station* f’Dellimara, l-awtoritajiet huma fid-dover li jaraw li din tkun kompatibbli ma’ għażliet strateġiċi oħra li qieghed jieħu l-istess Gvern f’oqsma bħal per eżempju dawk li jikkonċernaw t-tniġġiż u l-kwalità tal-arja.

Nifhmu li għad fadal ħafna x’isir sabiex nilhqu dan il-livell ta’ responsabbiltà (*accountability*) u sabiex tinqered darba għal dejjem l-attitudni tax-“xejn mhu xejn”. Ninnutaw b’dispjaciir li din l-attitudni hija komuni mhux biss fejn jidhol l-ambjent imma fil-prattiċi tax-xogħol f’Malta l-iktar fis-servizz pubbliku. Izda nemmnu li dan is-sens ta’ responsabbiltà għall-aġir jista’ jitwettaq biss jekk ikun żgurat li kulhadd iwettaq xogħlu kif imiss mingħajr ebda indhil ... kemm ta’ natura politika u/jew amministrattiva.

Kull strategija ambjentali tirnexxi jew tfalli fil-fazi tal-implimentazzjoni tagħha. F’din l-implimentazzjoni hemm tliet livelli ta’ responsabbiltà: dik politika, dik amministrattiva u dik teknika.

## BULLETTIN TAL-ARĊIDJOĊESI

Normalment ir-responsabbiltà tal-politiku tiddependi mill-għażla tal-poplu waqt elezzjoni. Mhux l-istess nistgħu nġhidu għal min iġorr responsabbiltà amministrattiva jew operattiva. Donnu f'pajjiżna m'għandniex la l-kultura u lanqas il-qafas legali meħtieġ sabiex persuna tinzamm responsabbli għal għemilha lejn min isofri xi dannu f'dan is-sens.

Il-KA tixtieq tindirizza dan l-appell għal aktar responabbiltà u trasparenza lejn kull ċittadin. Wara kollox nemmnu li dawn l-elementi importanti fl-imġieba tagħna huma mhegġa mill-valuri morali tan-Nisrani. Nitolbu lil Alla li fil-ħidma ġdida tagħha, b'risq iż-żewġt djoċesi ta' Malta u ta' Għawdex, il-KA tkun xhieda ħajja ta' dawn il-valuri bażiċi.

12 ta' Ġunju, 2009

## ĊIRKOLARI NUMRU 33

### GHELUQ SENA PAWLINA

Sena ilu kien gie mħabbar programm mill-Isqfijiet Maltin għas-Sena Pawlina li kien nieda l-Papa Benedittu XVI.

L-aħħar attivita' mħabbra f'dan il-programm hija ċelebrazzjoni tal-Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina nhar it-Tnejn 29 ta' Gunju 2009 u li għal din l-okkażjoni l-Papa kien avża li ser jibgħat Mibgħut speċjali tiegħu. Dan ser ikun il-Kardinal Ennio Antonelli, li ser imexxi din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-Għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina.

Minħabba li għal din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tkun haġa xierqa li lkoll inkunu preżenti bhala Knisja f'Malta, dak in-nhar filgħaxija m'għandhom isiru ebda ċelebrazzjonijiet liturgici jew religjuzi, kif ukoll ebda attivitajiet ohra organizzati minn entitajiet ekkleżjali. L-unika eċċezzjoni tista' tkun ċelebrazzjoni tas-sagrament taż-żwieġ digà stabilita għal dak il-ħin.

Mahruga mill-Kurja Arciveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana,  
illum 8 ta' Mejju 2009.

(ft.) ✠ Annetto Depasquale  
Isqof Awżiljarju  
Vigarju Ġenerali

(ft.) Mons. Lawrence Gatt  
Kancellier

ĊIRKOLARI NUMRU 34

ĊELEBRAZZJONI DJOĊESANA  
FIL-VĠILI TA' GHID IL-HAM SIN

Il-ġrajja ta' Ghid il-Hamsin tat bidu għall-ħajja tal-Knisja. Dakinhar id-dixxipli ta' Kristu bdew l-esperjenza tax-xandir tal-Bxara it-Tajba mad-dinja kollha.

It-tifkira ta' kull sena ta' din il-ġrajja tgħinna nissahħu fil-missjoni tagħna bhala Knisja, li aħna lkoll, bil-Magħmudija, sirna membri tagħha.

Huwa għalhekk xieraq, u hija x-xewqa ta' Mons. Arċisqof, li fil-Vġili ta' Ghid il-Hamsin aħna l-Insara Maltin ningabru flimkien f'ċelebrazzjoni ta' radd il-ħajr 'l Alla, li permezz ta' l-Ispirtu Tiegħu qed ikompli jgedded il-Knisja f'Malta.

Fuq ix-xewqa ta' Monsinjur Arċisqof, it-tema ta' din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni hija l-istess li għażel il-Papa Benedittu XVI għall-okkazjoni tal-24 Jum Dinji taż-Żgħażaġh. Il-Papa qed jistieden liż-żgħażaġh biex, kif insibu fil-vers meħud mill-ewwel ittra lil Timotju 4:10, ipogġu t-tama tagħhom f'Alla l-ħaj "*It-tama tagħna hi f'Alla l-ħaj*".

Mons. Arċisqof ihegġeg lil kull min jista' biex jieħu sehem fiċ-Ċelebrazzjoni Djoċesana li ser issir nhar il-Vġili ta' Ghid il-Hamsin, nhar **is-Sibt 30 ta' Mejju 2009, f'San Pawl il-Baħar, hdejn it-Torri, wara l-Knisja Parrokkjali**. Fis-7.30 p.m. ser nibdew bil-talba ta' l-Għasar biex fit-8.00 tibda quddiesa konċelebrata immexxija minn Mons. Arċisqof.

Mons. Arċisqof irid li nhar is-Sibt 30 ta' Mejju, l-aħħar quddiesa

li tkun iċċelebrata fil-knejjes jew fil-komunitajiet tkun spiċċat sas-7.30 p.m., hlief għall-każijiet taċ-ċelebrazzjoni tas-sagrament taż-żwieġ. M'għandux ikun hemm ċelebrazzjonijiet oħra reliġjużi fil-hin taċ-Ċelebrazzjoni Djoċesana.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 18 ta' Mejju 2009.

(ft.) ✠ Annetto Depasquale  
Isqof Awżiljarju  
Vigarju Ġenerali

(ft.) Mons. Lawrence Gatt  
Kancellier

## ĊIRKOLARI NUMRU 35

### OFFERTA GHALL-PAPA 2009

Fil-Quddies kollu li jiġi ċelebrat fil-knejjes ta' l-Arċidjoċesi tagħna nhar is-Sibt filgħaxija u l-Ħadd 27 u 28 ta' Ġunju, għandha ssir il-ġabra magħrufa bħala l-“Offerta ta' San Pietru”.

B'din il-ġabra ngħinu lill-Papa biex ikun jista' jsaħħaħ u jifrex dejjem aktar il-ħidmiet tiegħu ta' Ragħaj tal-Knisja Universali speċjalment permezz ta' għotjiet ta' Karità mad-dinja kollha ma' ħutna l-aktar fil-bżonn, l-aktar ma' dawk milqutin minn xi emergenza, diżastru naturali jew gwerra.

Nixtiequ nhegġu lil kulhadd biex fil-ġabra nkunu ġenerużi kif dejjem konna. B'hekk inkunu wkoll nuru l-għaqda tagħna mal-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa u fl-istess hin inkunu naqdu dmirna ta' karità lejn ħutna fil-bżonn.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 15 ta' Ġunju 2009.

+ Annetto Depasquale  
Isqof Awżiljarju  
Vigarju Ġenerali

Mons. Lawrence Gatt  
Kancellier

## ĊIRKOLARI NUMRU 36

### GHELUQ IS-SENA PAWLINA

Kif diġà tħabbar, nhar it-Tnejn 29 ta' Ġunju 2009 se jsir l-għeluq tas-Sena Pawlina b'ċelebrazzjoni Ewkaristika li ser issir f'Misraħ San Ġwann il-Belt Valletta. Għal din iċ-Ċelebrazzjoni il-Qdusija Tiegħu il-Papa Benedittu XVI ser jibgħat lill-E.T. il-Kardinal Ennio Antonelli bħala Legat Speċjali.

Nhar it-Tlieta hareġ pubblikament il-programm taż-żjara fostna hawn Malta. Nirrikmandaw lil ħutna nsara jipparteċipaw bis-sħiħ fil-partijiet tal-programm li fihom huma mistiedna jieħdu sehem.

Iċ-Ċelebrazzjoni Ewkaristika li ser tagħlaq is-Sena Pawlina se tibda fis-7.00 ta' filgħaxija. Qabel, ser isir pellegrinaġġ li jitlaq f'żewġ partijiet, mill-knejjes ta' San Pawl Nawfragu il-Belt u San Publiju, il-Furjana waqt li se jsir talb immexxi minn animaturi minn quddiem il-Konkattidral ta' San Ġwann. Dan il-pellegrinaġġ ser jibda fil-5.30 p.m.

Infakkru li l-membri tal-Knisja li se jattendu din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni jistgħu jirbħu Indulġenza Plenarja, bil-kundizzjonijiet tas-soltu (Qrara sagramentali, Tqarbina u talb skont il-fehma tal-Papa). F'din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tingħata wkoll il-Barka Appostolika.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 23 ta' Ġunju 2009.

+ Annetto Depasquale  
Isqof Awżiljarju  
Vigarju Ġenerali

Mons. Lawrence Gatt  
Kancellier



**STQARRIJET OHRA MILL-KURJA**

**L-ARĊISQOF JILTAQA' MAŻ-ŻGHAŻAGH  
NHAR PENTEKOSTE**

L-Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona O.P. qed ikun l-Isqof ta' Kulhadd, missier viċin il-poplu tiegħu. L-Arċisqof, li għandu hafna għal qalbu liż-żgħażaġh ser jiltaqa' magħhom f'attivitá speċjali nhar is-Sibt 30 ta' Mejju fl-okkażjoni tal-Festa ta' Pentekoste. Din l-attivitá ser issir San Pawl il-Baħar hdejn it-Torri, wara il-Knisja Parrokjali.

Din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ser tintrabat mas-Sena Pawlina, u b'hekk ser issir f'San Pawl il-Baħar, quddiem il-Gzejjer ta' San Pawl f'post marbut mal-ġrajja ta' San Pawl fostna.

Iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tibda fis-7.30 ta' filgħaxija li tinkludi l-quddiesa mmexxija minn Mons. Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona OP. L-animazzjoni taċ-ċelebrazzjoni ser issir miż-żgħażaġh li wara l-quddiesa ser jibqgħu flimkien għall-kunċert żgħir. It-tema magħzula hija l-istess waħda li għażel il-Papa Benedittu XVI għall-mixja li qed jagħmlu ż-żgħażaġh fid-dinja kollha: *"It-tama tagħna hi f'Alla ħaj"*

Kulhadd hu mistieden għal din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni.

26 ta' Mejju 2009

## KAPPILLAN ĠDID GĦALL-PARROĊĊA

### MADONNA TAL-KARMNU, FGURA

B'digriet maħruġ fis-27 ta' Mejju, 2009, Mons. Arċisqof Pawl Cremona O.P. innomina lil Patri Renald Lofreda O.Carm bħala Kappillan tal-Parroċċa Madonna tal-Karmnu, il-Fgura.

Patri Renald Lofreda O.Carm tweled nhar id-9 ta' Settembru 1978 minn John u Mary nee Mallia u tgħammed fil-parroċċa ta' San Gejtanu l-Ħamrun. Hu għadda ħafna żmien fil-parroċċa ta' Santa Venera fejn kien abbati għal bosta snin u hemm sar jaf lill-patrijiet Karmelitani.

Daħal mal-Karmelitani bħala pre-novizz fit-23 ta' Settembru 1996 u għamel in-novizzjat f'Pisa, l-Italja bejn Awissu 1998 u Settembru 1999. Fl-1 t' Ottubru ta' l-istess sena għamel il-professjoni sempliċi fl-Ordni Karmelitan. Matul is-snin tal-formazzjoni lesta l-istudji tiegħu tal-filosofija u t-teolo[ija fl-Università ta' Malta. Fis-17 ta' Settembru 2002 P. Renald għamel il-Professjoni Solenni u fit-13 t'Ottubru ta' l-istess sena ġie ordnat djaknu fil-parroċċa taż-Żejtun. Ġie ordnat saċerdot fil-Kon-Katidral ta' San Ġwann mill-Arċisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca nhar l-20 ta' Ġunju 2003.

Wara li kiseb il-Liċenzjat fit-teoloġija fl-Università ta' Malta, ntbagħat jistudja l-liturġija fl-Università Pontifiċja *St. Patrick's College*, f'Maynooth fl-Irlanda. Fl-istess żmien huwa għex fil-komunità Karmelitana ta' *WhiteFriars* fiċ-ċentru ta' Dublin.

L-ewwel esperjenza pastorali tiegħu kienet fil-parroċċa tal-Fgura fejn ħadem ħafna ma' l-Għaqda ta' l-Abbatini u fil-Kummissjoni Liturġika Parrokkjali. Kien ukoll Viċi Direttur u aktar

tard Direttur tal-Vokazzjonijiet Karmelitani. F'dawn l-aħħar tliet snin ta s-servizz pastorali tiegħu bhala viċi fil-parroċċa tal-Fgura fejn kien ukoll responsabbli miż-żgħażaġh tal-festa u mill-abbatini. Fl-istess hin ta servizz lill-Provinċja Karmelitana Maltija bhala ċeremonjier tal-Provinċjal, direttur spiritwali u għalliem tar-religjon f' St. Elias College immexxi mill-Karmelitani.

1 ta' Ġunju, 2009

## **GRIZMA TAL-ISQOF U L-EWWEL TQARBINA GHAT-TFAL TAL-EMMIGRANTI – 2009**

### **AVVIZ MILL-KUMMISSJONI EMMIRGANTI**

Il-Kummissjoni Emmigranti tixtieq tavza li l-Ewwel Tqarbina u l-Grizma tal-Isqof ghal ulied ta' emigranti Maltin matul ix-xhur tas-sajf se jinzammu f'dawn il- granet nhar l-Erbgħa 29 ta' Lulju u l-Erbgħa 26 ta' Awissu. Il-Kummissjoni tavza wkoll li biex ulied l-Emigranti jkunu jistgħu jersqu ghal dawn is-Sagramenti jkun mehtieg:

1. li it-tfal ikollhom seba' snin magħluqa għall-Ewwel Tqarbina u għaxar snin magħluqa għal-Grizma ta' l-Isqof.
2. li jiprezentaw ic-certifikati:
  - tal-Magħmudija
  - tal-Ewwel Tqarbina jekk ikunu għamluha

- permess bil-miktub tal-Kappillan tal-Parrocča taghhom barra minn Malta.
  - Certifikat ta' attendenza tal-kors preparatif ghas-sagrament li jkunu ser jaghmlu.
3. barra dan kemm it-tfal kif ukoll il-genituri huma mistennija jattendu ghal-laghat li jinzzammu f'Dar l-Emigrant, Valletta.

Il-Kummissjoni Emmigranti ma taccettax li jersqu tfal ghal dawn is-Sagramenti bla preparazzjoni u bla permess tal-Kappillan tal-parrocča taghhom barra minn Malta. Il-Genituri li taht dawn il-kundizzjonijiet jixtiequ li uliedhom jersqu ghas-Sagrament tal-Ewwel Tqarbina jew/u tal-Grizma ghandhom japplikaw sa sitt gimghat qabel id-dati ta-celebrazzjoni. Ghal aktar informazzjoni cempel jew ikkuntatjawna fuq l-indirizz tal-email:

**KUMMISSJONI EMMIGRANTI  
MISRAH KASTILJA, VALLETTA, MALTA  
Tel: (00356) 21222644/21240255/21232545  
Fax: (00356) 21240022  
E-mail [cecmalta@onvol.net](mailto:cecmalta@onvol.net)**

3 ta' Ġunju, 2009

**SOLIDARJETÀ MAL-ISQOF MARIO GRECH**

*STQARRIJA TAL-KULLEĠĠ TAL-KAPPILLANI*

Il-Kulleġġtal-Kappillanità'Maltaesprimad-diżapprovazzjoni tiegħu għall-att vandalu li sar fuq il-Kurja tal-Isqof ta' Għawdex u għall-insulti li saru kontra l-Isqof stess. Huma juru s-solidarjeta' sħiħa mal-Isqof Mario Grech u jwegħduh it-talb tagħhom biex ikompli bil-ħidma dedikata tiegħu bħala Ragħaj tad-Djoċesi ta' Għawdex u jkompli jaħdem għall-ġid tal-Knisja f'Għawdex.

5 ta' Ġunju, 2009

## IX-XHIEDA TA' DUN JOE H. ABELA

Dwar ix-xhieda ta' Dun Joe Abela fuq il-*play Stitching* li dehret f'xi gazzetti u li gie ipprezentat bhala "Ic-chairman tal-Bord tal-Knisja għall-Klassifikazzjoni tal-film, huwa mehtieg li jkun iċċarat li:

Fr Joe Abela kien qed jixhed b'inizjattiva tiegħu u f'ismu biss u ma kienx qed jirrapreżenta l-Bord. Dan il-Bord, huwa tal-Knisja u għalhekk huwa mistenni li jkun l-vuċi li tirrifletti il-valuri nsara tal-Knisja għall-gid tal-poplu Malti;

Fr Joe Abela ma kienx qed jirrifletti l-valuri tal-Knisja Kattolika;

Il-Knisja kattolika qiset u qed tqis dan il-kaz fil-Qorti bhala ta' natura civili, u għalhekk fil-kuntest tax-xewqat u tad-deċiżjonijiet tal-poplu Malti. Għalhekk il-Knisja Kattolika ma tridx li tidhol fil-merti ta' dan il-kaz partikulari, hlief biex itenni l-prinċipji tal-valuri etici li dejjem ipprezentat lill-membri tagħha u lis-Socjeta Maltija.

22 ta' Ġunju, 2009