



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO BRAZILIAN BISHOPS
FOR THE 2012 BROTHERHOOD CAMPAIGN**

*To my Venerable Brother
CARDINAL RAYMUNDO DAMASCENO ASSIS
Archbishop of Aparecida, SP
President of the CNBB*

Fraternal greetings in Christ the Lord!

I willingly join the National Catholic Bishops' Conference of Brazil which is launching a new Brotherhood Campaign with the motto "May Health on this Earth Increase" (cf. Sir 38:8), aimed at awakening — on the basis of reflection on the real situation of health in Brazil — a more brotherly and community spirit in regard to the sick and to ensure society guarantees more people the right of access to the means necessary for good health.

The biblical saying reminds Christians in particular that health goes beyond mere physical well-being. In the episode of the healing of a paralytic (cf. Mt 9:2-8), before enabling the man to walk, Jesus forgave his sins, teaching that perfect healing is the forgiveness of sins and that health par excellence is that of the soul, because "for what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" (Mt 16:26).

In fact the words "health" and "salvation" originate in the same Latin term: "*salus*", and for the same reason we see in the Gospel the action of humanity's Saviour associated with various forms of healing: "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (Mt 4:23).

With his example before our eyes, in accordance with the real Lenten spirit, may this Campaign inspire in the hearts of the faithful and of people of good will an ever deeper solidarity with the sick, who all too often suffer more from loneliness and neglect than from their illness. And may we

remember that Jesus himself chose to identify with them: “I was sick and you visited me” (Mt 25:36).

May he help them at the same time to discover that if on the one hand illness is a painful trial, on the other, in union with the Crucified and Risen Christ it can be a participation in the mystery of his suffering for the world’s salvation. For “by offering our pain to God through Christ, we can collaborate in the victory of good over evil, because God makes our offering, our act of love fruitful” (Benedict xvi, *Meeting with the Sick*, Turin, 2 May 2010).

Therefore by joining in this initiative of the cnbb and making my own the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of each one, I greet fraternally all those who are taking part, physically or spiritually in the “Brotherhood and Public Health” Campaign. I invoke for everyone — through the intercession of Nossa Senhora Aparecida — but in a special way for the sick, the comfort and empowerment of God in the fulfilment of the duties proper to one’s individual, family and social state, a source of health and of progress for Brazil making it fertile in holiness, prosperous in the economy, just in the sharing of riches, joyful in public service, impartial in power and brotherly in development. Further, to strengthen everyone in these good resolutions, I impart to you a propitious Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 11 February 2012

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI