



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INSPECTORATE
FOR PUBLIC SECURITY AT THE VATICAN
FOR THE TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 15 January 2009

Dear Friends of the Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican,

The new year has begun just recently and it is a true pleasure for me to be able to meet you once again and to wish each one of you warm wishes which I cordially extend to your families and to those dear to you. The family atmosphere of this traditional meeting, dear to me, offers me the opportunity to address you a personal greeting and to express to you my deepest and grateful appreciation for the work that you carry out daily with recognized professionalism and great devotion. I warmly greet you, whom the State of Italy has assigned to a special police and vigilance service, linked to my mission as Pastor of the Universal Church.

My greetings and my wishes go, first of all, to Dr Giulio Callini, recently appointed Director General, whom I thank for the words with which he has interpreted your common sentiments, as well as to Prefect Salvatore Festa. With equal affection I greet all the other members of the Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican who are not able to be present. I offer my respectful greeting to Chief of Police, Prefect Antonio Manganelli; the Assistant Chief of Police, Prefect Francesco Cirillo; to the Quaestor of Rome, Dr Giuseppe Caruso and the other Directors and officers of the State Police for their meaningful presence.

Considering the work that you are called to carry out I remember that I always met one or another of you when, as a Cardinal, I crossed St Peter's Square each day I think of the sacrifices your duty requires of you. Sacrifices that you must make, but that also your family is called to share due to the work shifts to continuously guard the places adjacent to St Peter's Square and the Vatican. For this reason today I would also like to include your families in my thanks, with a special thought for

those of you who married recently or who are preparing to take this step. I cordially remember each and every one of you in prayer.

A new year begins and we have many expectations and hopes. However, we cannot ignore that on the horizon not a few shadows are looming that worry humanity. However, we must not feel discouraged; rather we must always keep the flame of hope alight in us. For us Christians, the true hope is Christ, gift of the Father to all of humanity. This proclamation is for all men: it is found in the heart of the Gospel message; in fact Jesus is born, died and risen for all. The Church continues to proclaim it today and to all of humanity, so that each person and each human situation can experience the power of God's saving grace, that alone can transform evil into good. Only Christ can renew the heart of man and make it an "oasis" of peace; only Christ can help us to build a world where justice and love reign.

Dear officers and policemen, in the light of this solid hope, our daily work, whatever it is, assumes a different meaning and value because we anchor it to these perennial human and spiritual values, that render our existence more serene and useful to our brethren. This is why, for example, your work of surveillance can be lived as a mission. It is a service to neighbour, concerning order and security and, at the same time, a personal asceticism so to speak, a constant interior vigilance that demands a discipline in harmony with cordiality, self-control and the discerning welcoming of pilgrims and tourists who come to the Vatican. And this service performed with love becomes prayer, prayer even more pleasing to God when your work is not very gratifying, when it is monotonous and tiring, especially in the night hours or on the days the weather is oppressive. And it is in doing your duty well that each baptized person fulfils his/her own vocation to holiness.

Dear friends, while I renew my most cordial wishes for this new year, I assure you of my spiritual closeness, and I gladly impart to each one of you a special Apostolic Blessing, that I warmly extend to your relations and to those dear to you.

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