



The Holy See

PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE HOLY LAND
(8-15 MAY 2009)

SHORT VISIT TO THE CO-CATHEDRAL OF THE LATIN

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Jerusalem
Thursday, 12 May 2009

Your Beatitude,

I thank you for your words of welcome. I also greet the Patriarch Emeritus and I assure you both of my fraternal good wishes and prayers.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I am happy to be here with you today in this Co-Cathedral, where the Christian community in Jerusalem continues to gather, as it has been doing for centuries, ever since the earliest days of the Church. Here in this city, Peter first preached the Good News of Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost, when about three thousand souls were added to the number of the disciples. Here too the first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). From Jerusalem, the Gospel has gone out “to all the earth ... to the ends of the world” (Ps 19:4), yet all the time, the Church’s missionary effort has been sustained by the prayers of the faithful, gathered around the altar of the Lord, invoking the mighty power of the Holy Spirit upon the work of preaching.

Above all, it is the prayers of those whose vocation, in the words of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, is to be “love, deep down in the heart of the Church” (*Letter to Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart*) that

sustains the work of evangelization. I want to express a particular word of appreciation for the hidden apostolate of the contemplatives who are present here, and to thank you for your generous dedication to lives of prayer and self-denial. I am especially grateful for the prayers you offer for my universal ministry, and I ask you to continue to commend to the Lord my work of service to God's people all over the world. In the words of the Psalmist, I ask you also to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (*Ps* 122:6), to pray without ceasing for an end to the conflict that has brought so much suffering to the peoples of this land. And now, I give you my blessing.

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