



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO CARD. ANDREA CORDERO LANZA DI MONTEZEMOLO
ARCHPRIEST OF THE BASILICA OF ST PAUL OUTSIDE-THE-WALLS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING**

*To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo
Archpriest of the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls*

The Great Door of this Basilica will be opened for a special procession this evening, on the occasion of the Solemnity of Christ the King. During the procession, passages of sacred music and some of the Basilica's works of art that recall the "*Basilica domus*", the house of the King, will be proposed for the faithful's meditation.

This evocative celebration of divine kingship, enlivened by the Community of Benedictine monks, is an invitation to those present to think back to the origins of Christianity in the Roman Empire, when the design of the ancient basilicas, destined for administrative, commercial and judicial functions, inspired the first buildings for Christian worship.

It is also a good opportunity to allow the language of history, art and music to accompany our prayers and help us praise the King of the universe, whom we contemplate in a special way at the end of this liturgical year.

I join you with affection, Your Eminence, and also our venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, the priests, men and women religious and especially the praiseworthy Community of Benedictine Monks who see to the pastoral needs of the faithful with dedication, as well as those who are taking part in this important spiritual and cultural event. I offer my cordial greeting to one and all.

Thinking back to the design of the ancient Roman basilicas as expressed anew in Christian basilicas such as the Ostiense Basilica dedicated to the Apostle to the Gentiles, we cannot but remember with devout admiration the martyrs of the first centuries of Christianity. These forebears in the faith glorified with their lives, and especially with their martyrdom, the divine Kingship of

Christ, who declared himself King, but not of this world.

His logic, in fact, is not inspired by criteria of efficiency or human power; his rule is not imposed by force. On the contrary, he overcomes evil with good, and hatred and violence with forgiveness and love.

The throne of this King whom we worship today is the Cross, and his triumph is the victory of Love, an almighty love that from the Cross pours out his gifts upon humanity of all times and all places.

Therefore, may our hymn of praise and thanksgiving rise joyfully to the One whom on this Solemnity we honour as the King, omnipresent in his Church, Conqueror of death, just and merciful Judge, stone rejected by the builders but who became the cornerstone. May every creature, free from the slavery of sin, serve and praise him for ever.

My Blessing to everyone.

From the Vatican, 25 November 2006

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