



The Holy See

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

*To Archbishop Geraldo Lyrio Rocha of Mariana,
President of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil*

At the beginning of the spiritual journey of Lent, the Paschal way towards the Resurrection of the Lord, I would like once again to adhere to the Brotherhood Campaign which, in this year 2009, will focus on the theme "Peace is the fruit of justice". It is a time of conversion and reconciliation for all Christians, so that the noblest aspirations of the human heart may be fulfilled and true peace prevail between peoples and communities.

My venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II, emphasizing in his Message for the World Day of Peace 2002 that true peace is the fruit of justice, noted that "human justice is always fragile and imperfect", and must "include and, as it were, be completed by the forgiveness which heals and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations" (n. 3).

In treating of the *Kingdom of God and the promotion of human dignity*, the Final Document of Aparecida recalled the visible signs of the presence of the Kingdom: in the personal and communal experience of the Beatitudes; in the evangelization of the poor; in knowing and doing the Father's will, in martyrdom for the faith; in universal access to the goods of creation; in mutual, sincere and fraternal forgiveness; in accepting and respecting the wealth of plurality; in the struggle not to succumb to temptation and not to become slaves to evil (cf. n. 8, 1).

Lent calls us to an unflinching struggle to do good, precisely because we know how difficult it is for us human beings to dedicate ourselves seriously to the practice of justice, and because coexistence is still far from being inspired by peace and love rather than by hatred and indifference. Nor should we ignore the fact that even if we succeed in achieving a fair distribution of goods and a harmonious organization of society, illness and suffering, misunderstanding, loneliness, the death of our loved ones and the experience of our limitations will never disappear.

Our Lord abhors injustice and condemns those who commit it; but he respects the freedom of

each individual and for this reason allows it to exist, because it forms part of the human condition after original sin. Yet, his heart full of love for humankind brought him to shoulder, along with the Cross, all these torments: our suffering, our sadness, our hunger and thirst for justice. In order to achieve eternal Beatitude, let us ask him to enable us to bear witness to the same sentiments of peace and reconciliation that inspired him in the Sermon on the Mount.

With these hopes, I invoke the protection of the Most High so that he may extend his beneficent hand over the whole of Brazil. May new life in Christ reach everyone with abundant gifts of peace and prosperity in their personal, family, social and cultural dimensions and reawaken sentiments of brotherhood and warm cooperation in every heart. With a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 25 February 2009

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