



The Holy See

VISIT TO VATICAN RADIO HEADQUARTERS
ON OCCASION OF THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Friday, 3 March 2006

*Live One-O-Five broadcast at Vatican Radio
"Card. Karol Wojtyła" Studium*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I warmly greet all Vatican Radio's listeners and wish them the peace and joy of the Lord. It is a great joy for me to be here.

We know that 75 years ago Pope Pius XI inaugurated Vatican Radio and thus gave a new voice to the Holy See, indeed, to the Church and to the Lord; a voice through which the Lord's mandate could truly be carried out: "Proclaim the Gospel to all creatures to the ends of the earth".

In the meantime, I see that technology has vastly improved in the past 75 years. Today, the voice of Vatican Radio can reach every part of the world and a great many homes, and - as has been emphasized - there is above all a beautiful reciprocity, not only in speaking but also in welcoming the answers, in a true dialogue so as to understand, respond and build up the family of God.

This seems to me to be the meaning of a means of communication such as this: to help build this great family that knows no frontiers, in which all are brothers and sisters in the multiplicity of cultures and languages and thus constitute a peace-making force.

I would like to express to all who are listening to me at this moment the hope that they will be able

to feel truly involved in this great dialogue of truth.

In the world of the media, as we know, opposing voices are not absent. The existence of this voice that truly wants to put itself at the service of the truth, of Christ and thus of peace and reconciliation in the world, is very important.

I hope that those who work here can be effective instruments of this great work of the Lord's peace. I thank you for all that you do day after day, perhaps also night after night.

I hope that the listeners who are themselves involved in this great dialogue may also become witnesses of the truth and a force for peace in the world.

Marconi Hall

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I willingly visit you at your fine headquarters in the Palazzo Pio, which the Servant of God Paul VI wished to make available to Vatican Radio. I offer you all a cordial greeting and I thank you for your welcome.

I greet in particular the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, and I thank him for the service which, since the origins of Vatican Radio, the Jesuits have rendered to the Holy See, faithful to the Ignation charism of total dedication to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff.

I greet Cardinal Roberto Tucci and Fr Antonio Stefanizzi as well as Fr Pasquale Borgomeo - whom prior engagements have prevented from being here -, who for many years were General Directors of Vatican Radio.

I greet Fr Federico Lombardi, the current General Director. I am grateful to him for his words on behalf of you all. I am also grateful to Mr Candi, who has expressed the sentiments of the lay employees. My thoughts go at this time to those employees who have been detained at the Radio's other offices - the Broadcasting Centre at Santa Maria di Galeria, Palazzina Leone XIII and Palazzina Marconi -, who are taking part in this meeting by audio-visual link-up.

I greet your retired colleagues, the many collaborators, relatives and friends, and everyone who would have liked to have been present but have been prevented by the lack of space. I also

extend my greeting to your listeners scattered throughout the world.

The evocative images of 75 years ago present the first Vatican Radio Station to us which today might seem modest; but Guglielmo Marconi knew that the path opened by science and technology would have a great influence on human life.

My venerable Predecessor Pius XI was also well aware of the importance that the new means of communication with which the Church was equipping herself would have for the dissemination of the Papal Magisterium throughout the world.

With original solemnity, he addressed his first Radio Message on 12 February 1931, which inaugurated the history of your Broadcasting Station, to "all peoples and to every creature". In the years that followed, the Servant of God Pius XII, with his historic Radio Messages during the Second World War, enabled all the peoples to hear his words of comfort, advice and passionate exhortations to hope and for peace.

Furthermore, when Communism extended its domination over various nations in Central and Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world, Vatican Radio increased its programmes and the languages of its broadcasts, to ensure that the witness of closeness and solidarity offered by the Pope and the universal Church would reach the Christian Communities oppressed by totalitarian regimes.

The Second Vatican Council spread an even greater awareness of the importance that the means of communication were to have in the dissemination of the Gospel message in our time, and your Radio Broadcasting Station with effective and modern technical means began to develop ever fuller and more numerous programmes.

Today, at last, thanks to the most advanced technologies - satellite and internet in particular - you can produce programmes in various languages that are relayed and transmitted by numerous broadcasting stations on every continent, thus reaching a wider range of listeners.

Dear friends, we cannot but thank the Lord for all this, and at the same time pray to him to continue to assist you in your work. Call on him with the words written on the main façade of your offices: "*Adsis Christe, eorumque aspira laboribus, qui pro tuo nomine certant* - Help us, O Christ, and inspire the efforts of those who fight for your Name". Yes! Yours is the "good fight of the faith", as the Apostle Paul said (cf. I Tm 6: 12), in order to spread Christ's Gospel.

It consists, as we read in your Statutes, in "proclaiming the Christian message with freedom, fidelity and effectiveness, and in linking the centre of Catholicism with the various countries of the world: spreading the voice and teachings of the Roman Pontiff; providing information on the activities of the Holy See; reporting on Catholic life in the world; directing people to evaluate

current problems in the light of the Magisterium of the Church and with constant attention to the signs of the times" (n. 1.3).

This mission is ever up to date, even if the circumstances and ways of carrying it out change with the times. Indeed, Vatican Radio today is no longer a single voice that sounds from a single point as it was with Marconi's first broadcasting station.

Rather, it is a choir of voices that rings out in more than 40 languages and can keep up a dialogue with different cultures and religions; a choir of voices that travels through the air via electromagnetic waves and is broadcast everywhere by means of the increasingly dense telematic network that spans the globe.

Continue, dear friends, to work in the great areopagus of modern communications, treasuring the extraordinary experience you lived during the great Jubilee of the Year 2000, and especially on the occasion of the death of beloved Pope John Paul II, an event that showed humanity's eagerness to be acquainted with the reality of the Church.

Do not forget, however, that in order to carry out the mission entrusted to you, a proper technical and professional training is of course necessary; above all, though, you must ceaselessly cultivate within you a spirit of prayer and faithful adherence to the teachings of Christ and his Church. May the Virgin Mary, Star of the new evangelization, help and protect you always!

Dear brothers and sisters, as I renew the expression of my gratitude, I gladly impart to everyone present here my Blessing, which I extend to your loved ones and to all Vatican Radio listeners.

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