



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PERSONNEL AND COLLABORATORS
OF THE VATICAN TELEVISION CENTRE***

Consistory Hall

Thursday, 18 December 2008

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

I am delighted to meet with you: staff, collaborators and advisers of the Vatican Television Centre, accompanied by your relatives, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of your Centre. I greet in particular Cardinal John P. Foley and the Director General, Fr Federico Lombardi, whom I thank for his address describing the situation of the Centre. I would also like to remember the late Dr Emilio Rossi, for several years President of the Centre and then President of its Administration Council, offering his witness of a generous and qualified service to the Church and to society. The Centre was desired by my Predecessor John Paul II in 1983. He realized that the Holy See in addition to the means of communication already at its disposal, should at this point also be equipped with its own television structure, so that the Pope's service to the universal Church and to humanity might also use this means whose effectiveness was proving ever more visible.

Videre Petrum, to see Peter: this has been the desire that has brought countless pilgrims to Rome. Today, this desire, at least in part, may be satisfied thanks to radio and television which have enabled a great number of people, first by voice and now also by means of images, to participate in the celebrations and events that occur in the Vatican or in other places to which the Pope goes to fulfil his ministry. Yours is thus first of all a precious service for communion in the Church. Collaboration with Catholic television stations has characterized your Centre since the outset. In Italy, Telepace and SAT2000 broadcast almost all your programmes and it is very encouraging to know that many Catholic television stations in various parts of the world are linked to you. In this way, an ever greater number of the faithful can follow, either on live or recorded broadcasts, what is happening in the heart of the Church.

However, your television broadcasts do not only reach the Catholic faithful. By making the images available to the most important world television agencies and the large national or commercial television broadcasting stations, you relay relevant news quickly on the life and teaching of the Church in today's world, at the service of the dignity of the human person, justice, dialogue and peace. The relationships of close collaboration that you have been committed to establish in the vast world of televised communications, in particular on the occasions of the Pope's international journeys, you have enlarged the field of your service, one can well say, even to the ends of the world, responding to the human and spiritual expectations of a countless number of our contemporaries.

In your service you are very often called to film and broadcast images of important and splendid liturgical celebrations that take place at the heart of Christendom. The liturgy is truly the culmination of the life of the Church, the time and place for a profound relationship with God. Following the liturgical event through the attentive eye of the television camera in order to make real spiritual participation possible for those who cannot be physically present is a lofty and demanding task. Moreover it requires of you a serious training and real spiritual harmony with what in a certain way you are mediating. Close collaboration with the Office of Liturgical Celebrations, which you have fostered for some time, will help you to develop increasingly in this precious spiritual service to viewers throughout the world.

The images you have taken in the course of the years and now jealously preserved make your archives a precious resource not only for the production of television programmes in the present and in the future, but we may well say for the history of the Holy See and the Church. Preserving the recordings of voices and images properly is a technically difficult and, from the financial point of view, expensive undertaking but it is one of your institutional tasks which I encourage you to face with confidence. In order that the Church may continue to be present with her message "in the great areopagus" of social communications" as John Paul II called it and not find herself foreign to the areas in which countless young people surf seeking answers and a meaning for their life, you must seek ways to spread voices and images of hope in new forms, through the internet that wraps our planet in an ever closer web.

Moreover you are not alone in facing your mission. Today people rightly speak of the "convergence" between the various media. The boundaries between them are fading and synergies are increasing. The instruments of social communications at the service of the Holy See are, of course, also evolving and they must be consciously and actively integrated. The collaboration between your Centre and Vatican Radio has always been very close and has become ever closer because, in your broadcasts, images and sound cannot be separated. However, today the Internet requires an ever increasing integration of written, audial and visual communication, and thus is a challenge to broaden and intensify the forms of collaboration between the media which are at the service of the Holy See. The positive relationship with the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, with which I encourage you to develop initiatives

and fruitful projects, will contribute to this.

So, take heart! May the modest size of your structure in comparison with the immensity of your tasks not cause you dismay. Many people, thanks to your work, can feel closer to the heart of the Church. May you be aware also of the gratitude of the Pope who knows that you are generously dedicated to a task that contributes to the outreach and effectiveness of his daily service. May you be accompanied by the Lord who comes, and whose salvation you seek to proclaim through your images. With this hope and with a special good wishes for a Happy Christmas which I extend to all your loved ones, I warmly bless you all.

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