



The Holy See

MEETING WITH MILITARY AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES,
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF CASTEL GANDOLFO

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Hall of the Swiss, Papal Summer Residence, Castel Gandolfo
Thursday, 1st October 2009*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year too the summer period which I habitually spend at the Residence in Castel Gandolfo is drawing to a close. These months have given me the opportunity to observe from close at hand the generous dedication and competent work of so many people to ensure every possible assistance to me and to my collaborators, my guests and the pilgrims who come to pay me visits, especially on Sundays for the customary recitation of the *Angelus*. I renew to each one of you my sincere gratitude for all this now, when I am taking leave of this beautiful, happy place that is dear to me.

First of all I greet and thank Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano Laziale, the parish priest and the parish community of Castel Gandolfo, together with the various religious communities who live and work here. In various meetings, I have been granted to note the spiritual dynamism that enlivens the whole local Church of Albano, which I encourage to continue with renewed enthusiasm in the proclamation and witness of the Gospel.

I then offer a respectful greeting to the Mayor and to the members of the Municipal Administration, who never fail to do their utmost in the areas of their competence to make my stay smooth here at Castel Gandolfo. In thanking you for the helpful collaboration with the Administration of the Pontifical Villas that you keep up throughout the year, I gladly take this opportunity to extend my sentiments of affection and appreciation to the entire population of Castel Gandolfo.

I now address the directors and officials of the various Services of the Governorate, starting with the Police Force, the *Floreria* and the Technical Assistance. Dear friends, here in Castel Gandolfo I have also been able to appreciate the self-denial that distinguishes you in your work at the service of the Successor of Peter. I assure you of my constant remembrance in prayer for you and your families. With deep cordiality, I also address my grateful greeting to the Pontifical Swiss Guard, whose presence and efficiency here in the Apostolic Palace and at the meetings with the Pope and pilgrims, certainly offers visitors a more efficient welcome.

Then a thought of sincere gratitude goes to the officers and agents of the various Italian Police Forces, for their constant collaboration, as well as to the officers and airmen of the 31st Squadron of the Italian Airforce. I thank you all for your qualified service that contributes to the serenity of my stay and that of my collaborators, and which is particularly useful to me in my helicopter trips.

Dear brothers and sisters, once again I repeat my truly wholehearted thanks to you all. Today the Church is commemorating St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a Carmelite of the Monastery of Lisieux. Her witness shows that the word of God alone, received and understood in practical requirements, becomes a renewed source of life. To our society, all too often permeated by a rationalistic culture and widespread practical materialism, the little Thérèse of Lisieux points out in response to the great existential questions, the "little way", which instead looks at the essential of things. It is the humble path of love, able to envelop and to give meaning and value to every human event. Dear friends, follow the example of this Saint; the road she took is within everyone's reach, because it is the road of total trust in God who is Love and never abandons us.

Thank you once again for coming to this meeting; I thank in a special way those who have expressed your sentiments. I entrust you all to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin and I warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, which I extend to your families and to your loved ones.

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