



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO MEMBERS OF THE "PRO PETRI SEDE" ASSOCIATION**

*Hall of Popes
Friday, 15 February 2013*

Dear Friends,

This morning I welcome you who have come to Rome as pilgrims to show your attachment to the Apostolic See and to strengthen your commitment in the *Pro Petri Sede* Association. I acknowledge your generosity and sense of ecclesial communion. The Year of Faith, which the Church is celebrating at this time, invites us to an authentic conversion to the Lord Jesus, the one Saviour of the world. In welcoming through faith the revelation of the saving love of God in our life, we are called to model our whole existence on the radical newness the Resurrection of Christ brought into the world. Faith is a living reality which, if it is to grow, must be ceaselessly discovered and deepened. It is faith that must direct the gaze and action. For faith is a new criterion of knowledge and action which changes the whole life of a person. As I had occasion to say in my Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, the Year of Faith will be a good opportunity to intensify the witness of charity. "Faith without charity bears no fruit, while charity without faith would be a sentiment constantly at the mercy of doubt. Faith and charity each require the other, in such a way that each allows the other to set out along its respective path" (n. 14).

To put into practice this witness of charity, the encounter with the Lord who transforms man's heart and outlook is therefore indispensable. Indeed, it is the witness of God's love for each one of our brothers and sisters in humanity which gives true meaning to Christian charity. Charity cannot be reduced to mere humanism or to a project for human advancement. Material aid, however necessary it may be, is not the be all and end all of charity, which is participation in Christ's love, received and shared. Every authentic charitable action is thus a tangible manifestation of God's love for men and women and thereby becomes a proclamation of the Gospel.

In this Lenten Season, may the acts of charity made (cf. Mt 6:3), enable each and every one to advance towards Christ, the One who never ceases to come to meet men and women!

Dear friends, may your pilgrimage strengthen your relationship with Christ and revive the grace you received in Baptism! May the desire to witness to your faith always increase within you, wherever you may be! I entrust each one of you and each one of your families, as well as the members of your Association, to the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary and to the protection of the Apostle Peter. I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you.

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