



The Holy See

CONCLUSION OF THE WEEK OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FOR THE ROMAN CURIA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

Chapel of the "Redemptoris Mater"

Saturday, 23 February 2013

Dear Brothers,

Dear Friends,

At the end of such an intense spiritual week, there is only one thing to say: thank you! Thank you for this prayerfully attentive community which has accompanied me this week. Thank you, Your Eminence, especially for these beautiful “walks” in the universe of faith, the universe of the Psalms. We are amazed by the richness, profundity and beauty of this universe of faith and we are grateful because the Word of God has spoken to us in a new way, with new force.

“The art of believing, the art of prayer” was the theme. It reminded me of the fact that medieval theologians translated the word “*logos*” not only as “*verbum*”, but also as “*ars*”: “*verbum*” and “*ars*” are interchangeable. Only together, as medieval theologians thought, do they convey the full meaning of the word “*logos*” expressed. “*Logos*” is not only a mathematical reason: “*Logos*” has a heart, “*Logos*” is also love. The truth is beautiful, truth and beauty go hand-in-hand: beauty is the seal of truth.

Yet starting with the Psalms and with our everyday life, you have also strongly underlined that the “very good” the sixth day — expressed by the Creator — is forever contradicted, in this world, by sin, by suffering, by corruption. And it almost seems that the devil wishes to permanently soil creation in order to contradict God and make his truth and his beauty irreconcilable. Also, in a world so marked by evil, the “*Logos*”, eternal Beauty and eternal “*Ars*”, must seem like the “*caput cruentatum*”. The Incarnate Son, the Incarnate “*Logos*”, is crowned with a crown of thorns; and yet

in this way precisely, in this suffering figure of the Son of God, we begin to see the most profound beauty of our Creator and Redeemer. Even in the silence of the “darkness” listen to the Word. To believe is none other than, in the obscurity of the world, to touch the hand of God and thus, in silence, to hear the Word, to see Love.

Your Eminence, thank you for everything and let us “walk” further in this mysterious universe of faith to be ever more capable of beseeching, of praying, of proclaiming, of being witnesses of the truth, which is beauty, which is love.

Finally, dear friends, I would like to thank all of you, and not only for this week, but for the past eight years during which you have carried with me — and with great competence, affection, love and faith — the burden of the Petrine Ministry. This gratitude will remain in me and even though now our “external” and “visible” communion is ending — as Cardinal Ravasi said — our spiritual closeness lives on, a profound communion in prayer endures. In this certainty let us go forward, sure of the victory of God, sure of the truth of beauty and of love.

Thank you all.