



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INSPECTORATE
FOR PUBLIC SECURITY AT THE VATICAN
FOR THE TRADITIONAL EXCHANGE OF NEW YEAR OF GREETINGS**

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 15 January 2010

Dear Prefect,

Dear General Commissioner,

Dear Officers and Agents,

I am happy to welcome you, in accordance with the good custom, to the mutual exchange of greetings at the beginning of the New Year. I address to each one of you a cordial welcome which I willingly extend to your respective families and to your colleagues who have been unable to take part in this meeting because they are taken up by their daily service, guaranteeing security in St Peter's Square, in the neighbourhood and in the other areas that belong to the Vatican.

I would like to address a special greeting and good wishes to the General Commissioner, Mr Raffaele Aiello, who has headed your Inspectorate for only a few weeks. I also thank him for his courteous words to me on behalf of those present and of the representatives of the central and peripheral structures of the Ministry of the Interior that cooperate with you in a spirit of service and of painstaking availability.

I also address my respectful greeting to Mr Antonio Manganelli, Chief of Police, to Prefect Salvatore Festa and to the other Officers and Directors, as well as to the Chaplains, reiterating also on behalf of my collaborators, our deep gratitude for the valuable work of this Inspectorate for Public Security.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation of the work and professionalism with which the officers and agents of the State Police Force, as if they were "Guardian Angels", watch

over the Vatican day and night, guaranteeing the necessary security and putting themselves at the pilgrims' service.

This work of vigilance that you carry out with dedication and concern to preserve public order, is certainly considerable and sensitive; it sometimes demands a fair amount of patience, perseverance, sacrifice and readiness to listen. It is a particularly useful service for ensuring that the spiritual and religious demonstrations which take place, especially in St Peter's Square, are peaceful and safe.

May your important presence in the heart of Christendom where throngs of the faithful gather to meet the Successor of Peter and to visit the tombs of the Apostles always inspire in each one of you the resolution to revive the spiritual dimension of your life, as well as the commitment to deepening your Christian faith, joyfully bearing witness to it through consistent behaviour.

In the Christmas Season that has just ended, the Liturgy invited us to welcome the Word which has been in the Father's heart from the very beginning and which he gave to us, revealing his Face in a Child. He is the Eternal One who enters time and fills it with his fullness; he is the light that illuminates and lights the way of those in darkness; he is the Son of God who brings salvation to humanity.

Let us always accept him with trust and joy! The Virgin Mary introduces him to us. May she as a tender caring Mother watch over us. Turn often to her motherly intercession and entrust to her the year 2011 that has just begun, so that it may be a time of hope and peace for everyone.

With these sentiments I invoke upon you and upon your work an abundance of heavenly gifts, while I warmly impart to you a special Apostolic Blessing which I gladly extend to your families and to your loved ones.