



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 25 October 2009*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A short while ago, with the Eucharistic celebration in St Peter's Basilica, the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops ended. Three weeks of mutual prayer and listening, to discern what the Holy Spirit says today to the Church who lives in the African Continent, but at the same time to the Universal Church. The Synodal Fathers, having come from all the Countries in Africa, presented the richness of the local Churches' realities. Together we shared their joys for the dynamism of the Christian communities, which continue to grow in quantity and quality. We thank God for the missionary impetus that found a fertile terrain in many dioceses and which expresses itself by sending missionaries to other African Countries and to other Continents. Special emphasis was given to the family, which also in Africa constitutes the primary cell of society, but which today is threatened by ideological currents coming from outside as well. Then what can be said about the young people exposed to this sort of pressure, influenced by models of thought and behavior that contrast with the human and Christian values of the African peoples? Naturally during this Assembly, today's problems in Africa came out, as well as its great need for reconciliation, justice and peace. To this the Church answers re-proposing, with renewed impetus, proclaiming the Gospel and the act of human promotion. Enlivened by the Word of God and the Eucharist, it strives to make everyone have what is necessary to live so that all may live an existence worthy of a human being.

Remembering the Apostolic Visit to Cameroon and Angola I made last March, which also had the aim of beginning the immediate preparation for the second Synod for Africa, today I would like to speak to all the African populations, in particular those who share the Christian faith, to give them

the Final Message of this Synodal Assembly. It is a Message that comes from Rome, the See of Peter's Successor, who presides universal communion, but we can say, from another true sense, originates in Africa, gathering its experiences, expectations, projects and now returns to Africa, bearing the richness of a profound communion in the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters who are listening to me from Africa! I entrust to your prayer the fruits of the work of the Synodal Fathers' work in a special way and I encourage you with the words of the Lord Jesus: be the salt and the light of the beloved African land!

While this Synod is ending, I would like to remind you now that a Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops is scheduled for next year. On the occasion of my Visit to Cyprus, I will have the pleasure of presenting the *Instrumentum Laboris* for that assize. Let us thank the Lord, who never tires of building his Church in communion, and we invoke the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary with trust.

After the Angelus:

I now address a special greeting to the thousands of faithful gathered in Milan's Cathedral Square, where this morning, the liturgy of Beatification was celebrated for the priest Don Carlo Gnocchi. He was first of all a worthy educator of children and youth. During the Second World War, he became the chaplain of the Alpine guard, with whom he made the tragic retreat from Russia, escaping death miraculously. He then decided to dedicate himself entirely to charity work. Thus, in the Milan of the reconstruction era, Don Gnocchi worked "to restore the human person", gathering together orphaned and mutilated children, offering them assistance and education. He gave his all to the very end, and when he died, he donated his corneas to two blind children. His work continues to develop through the Don Gnocchi Foundation which is in the forefront of care for persons of all ages who require rehabilitation therapy. As I greet Cardinal Tettamanzi, Archbishop of Milan, and rejoice with the entire Ambrosian Church, I take as my own the motto of this Beatification, "Alongside of life!".

To the English-speaking the Holy Father said:

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking visitors present today in St Peter's Square. We have just concluded the [Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops](#) which has been a period of grace. I invite all of you to pray for our brothers and sisters of Africa. May the Lord, who granted sight to the blind man of the Gospel, renew their faith that they may always see and follow clearly the path of reconciliation, justice and peace which leads to salvation. Upon all of you and upon all the people of Africa I invoke God's abundant blessings.

