



The Holy See

***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MSGR. GIUSEPPE MALANDRINO, BISHOP OF NOTO,
FOR THE RE-OPENING OF THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTO (ITALY)***

*To My Venerable Brother
Bishop Giuseppe Malandrino
Bishop of Noto*

On the occasion of the solemn reopening ceremony of the famous Cathedral of Noto, which suddenly collapsed on 13 March 1996 and was rebuilt after many years of intense labour, I spiritually join you and the Bishops of Sicily present at such a significant religious and cultural event.

I address my cordial greeting to everyone, extending it to the priests and consecrated persons as well as to the civil and military Authorities and to all those taking part in the celebration.

I express my deep thanks to those who, with their tenacity and admirable commitment, have contributed to the necessary and urgent reconstruction work of the main Temple in the city of Noto, a true masterpiece of Sicilian baroque architecture, "heritage of humanity".

I know that this monumental work has required the coordinated contributions of competent State and local institutions, of skilful designers and skilled workmen. To all go my applause and appreciation for the sensitivity shown in regard to such a majestic and delicate undertaking.

A special thought goes to you, venerable Brother, for the solicitude and constant dedication with which you have encouraged and overseen the work from the first moment of your arrival in this Diocese, continuing the work begun by your predecessor, Bishop Salvatore Nicolosi, who strongly encouraged this reconstruction. I address my special good wishes to him with affection.

One could not fail to solemnize the reconstruction of the monumental Cathedral that now shines

again, reaffirming its historical value as the recognized jewel of the baroque beauty typical of Southeast Sicily.

Dedicated to St Nicholas, it rises imposingly with its remarkable staircase and constitutes the heart and centre of the city's spiritual life. A majestic Temple, an admirable work of art and a singular witness of faith, the reborn Cathedral is for the entire People of God a constant call to its own vocation and mission.

May all Christians, by admiring it, recall the exhortation of the Apostle Peter: "Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (1 Pt 2: 5). Thus, to the attractive "exterior" of the Cathedral, restored to its full splendour, is now added the "interior" attraction of those who gather there to praise God.

In fact, every believer in Christ and each Ecclesial Community are called to shine for the holiness and love by which they witness their fidelity to the Gospel.

Lastly, may the restoration of the Cathedral, in its beauty, be an invitation to the diocesan community of Noto to grow in communion and apostolic fervour.

I willingly assure you of my prayers for this, especially that, around the restored, holy Temple, the Church of Noto may grow as a spiritual edifice in which Christ is the solid cornerstone. And may the joyful event of the Cathedral's reopening for worship foster in the people of Noto, through the intercession of the Holy Virgin and the patron, St Conrad Confalonieri, a renewed spiritual enthusiasm and a courageous missionary witness.

With these wishes, I warmly send to you, venerable Brother, to those entrusted to your pastoral care and to all the participants at the solemn inaugural ceremony the implored Apostolic Blessing, guarantee of copious heavenly favours.

From the Vatican, 15 June 2007

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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