



The Holy See

***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO CARDINAL GIANFRANCO RAVASI,
PREACHER OF THE LENTEN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES***

*To my Venerable Brother
Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi
President of the Pontifical Council for Culture*

I would like to express my deep gratitude to you, Venerable Brother, for the service you have carried out for me and for the Roman Curia by presenting the meditations for the Spiritual Exercises. The week of the Exercises at the beginning of Lent is an especially intense time of silence and prayer, and the theme this year — the dialogue between God and man in the prayer of the Psalms — has been of special help to us: as soon as we entered, so to speak, the wilderness, following in Jesus' footsteps, we were able to draw from the source of the purest and most abundant water of the word of God, which you guided us to find in the Book of Psalms, the biblical place par excellence in which the word becomes prayer.

With your wealth of knowledge and experience, you proposed an evocative itinerary through the Psalter, following a dual movement, ascending and descending. Indeed, the Psalms orientate us first of all to the Face of God, to the mystery in which the human mind is shipwrecked but which the divine word itself enables us to understand, in accordance with the different features with which God revealed himself. And, at the same time, in the very light that shines from the Face of God, the Psalmic prayer makes us look at the face of man, in order to recognize in truth his joys and his sorrows, his anxieties and his hopes.

Thus, dear Cardinal, the word of God mediated by the ancient and ever new *ars orandi* of the Jewish people and of the Church has enabled us to renew the *ars credendi*: a need prompted by the [Year of Faith](#) and rendered even more necessary by the particular moment that I personally, and the Apostolic See, are living through. The Successor of Peter and his co-workers are called to give the Church and the world a clear witness of faith and this is only possible through profound

and permanent immersion in conversation with God. It is those who mirror the light of the Face of God on their face and in their life (cf. Ps 4:7) who can answer the many people who are still asking today: "Who will enable us to see goodness?"

The Lord, Venerable Brother, will know how to reward you for this commitment which you have so brilliantly fulfilled. For my part, I assure you of my grateful remembrance in prayer for you yourself and for your service in the Church, as I renew to you with affection the Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to all who are dear to you.

From the Vatican, 23 February 2013

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