



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MSGR ANDRÉ-JOSEPH LÉONARD
ARCHBISHOP OF MALINES-BRUSSELS
PRESIDENT OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF BELGIUM**

*To Our Venerable Brother,
Archbishop André-Joseph Léonard of Malines-Brussels,
President of the Bishops' Conference of Belgium*

At this sad moment, I wish to express my particular closeness and solidarity with you, dear Brother in the Episcopate, and with all the Bishops of the Church in Belgium, following the astonishing and deplorable manner in which the search was conducted in the Cathedral of Malines and the place where the Belgian Episcopate was gathered in a Plenary Session which, among other things, concerned matters connected with the abuse of minors by members of the clergy. I myself have often stressed that these misdeeds must be dealt with by the civil order and by the canonical order, with reciprocal respect for their specific features and autonomy. In this regard, I hope that justice takes its course as a guarantee of the fundamental rights of persons and institutions, with respect for the victims, in the unprejudiced recognition of those who undertake to cooperate with justice rejecting all that obscures the noble work assigned to it.

With the assurance that I accompany the journey of this Church daily in prayer, I very gladly impart my affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican City, 27 June 2010

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI
