



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO MEMBERS OF THE VATICAN'S GENERAL INSPECTORATE
FOR PUBLIC SECURITY DURING THE MEETING
FOR THE EXCHANGE OF NEW YEAR GREETINGS**

Clementine Hall

Friday, 11 January 2008

Dear Friends,

The meeting with you who belong to the General Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican has become an event that is awaited and looked forward to at the beginning of the New Year. While I welcome you with pleasure and greet you with affection, I make the most of this opportunity to renew to you the expression of my esteem and gratitude for the service you carry out daily. In the first place I greet the Prefect, Salvatore Festa, the Questore of Rome, Marcello Fulvi, and Dr Vincenzo Caso, whom I thank for their courteous words and to whom I express my gratitude for the work they have done in these years as Directors of the Inspectorate. I also address a special respectful thought to the Chief of Police, Prefect Antonio Manganelli. I then address in friendship the other members of the Inspectorate of the State Police assigned to Vatican City who are unable to be with us today but join us in spirit on this most happy occasion. To each and every one I am pleased to express every good wish for the year that has just begun, and I extend these good wishes to your respective families.

This year, when I was drafting my [Message for the World Day of Peace celebrated on 1 January](#), I was thinking precisely of families. In this text, whose theme is *The human family, a community of peace*, I recalled that "the natural family, as an intimate communion of life and love, based on marriage between a man and a woman, constitutes the primary place for the 'humanization' of the person and society, the 'cradle of life and love'. The family, therefore, is rightly defined as the first natural society, "a divine institution that stands at the foundation of life of the human person as the prototype of every social order" ([n. 2](#)).

Dear Officers and Agents, you come across many families in the task of vigilance which you carry out daily. They come here from every part of the world to pay homage to the Apostles and in particular to St Peter, on whose faith Christ founded the Church. They come to renew together the profession of this faith, to visit and to make contact with the various realities of the Vatican, and to take part in the Audiences and celebrations at which the Successor of the Apostle Peter presides. I am grateful to you for your service, marked by diligence and professionalism, by constant attention to people and to the purposes that motivate them, and at the same time by your availability, patience and spirit of sacrifice. Thus, with the collaboration of the Authorities responsible for making the city of Rome ever more beautiful and welcoming, you also contribute to the fruitful meeting and serene coexistence with one another of the citizens of Rome as well as her guests, who come from various countries of the world!

How many are the pilgrims you happen to meet throughout the year! I would like to ask you to see in each one of them the face of a brother or sister whom God sets on your path, a friendly albeit unknown person to be welcomed and helped with patient listening in the knowledge that we all belong to the one great human family. Is it not true, as I wrote in the [Message](#) cited above, that we do not all live alongside one another purely by chance? Are we not all on the same journey as human beings and hence, as brothers and sisters? For this reason, then, it is essential that each person strives to live his or her own life in an attitude of responsibility before God, recognizing him as the original source of his or her and everyone else's existence. Indeed, it is precisely by returning to this supreme Principle that one is enabled to perceive the unconditional value of every human being; it is thanks to this knowledge that the foundations for building a peaceful humanity can be laid. Let it be very clear: without the transcendent foundation which is God, society risks becoming a mere agglomeration of neighbours; it ceases to be a community of brothers and sisters, called to form one great family (cf. [ibid.](#), n. 6).

Dear friends, may the Lord help you to carry out your profession, ever faithful to those ideals that must constantly inspire you. Society stands in need of people who do their duty, in the knowledge that every job, every service, carried out conscientiously contributes to building a more just and truly free society. I entrust you to the Blessed Virgin and as I renew to each one of you my sincere thanks for your kind visit, I willingly impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and to all your loved ones.