



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI DURING LUNCHEON WITH SYNOD FATHERS

*Atrium of Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 24 October 2009*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Now is the time to give thanks. First of all to the Lord who convoked us, united us to listen to his Word, the voice of the Holy Spirit, and thus gave us the possibility to find the path of unity in the multiplicity of experiences, unity of faith and communion in the Lord. Therefore, the expression "Church-Family of God" is not only a concept or an idea, it is a real experience we have lived these past weeks: we were truly united, here, as the Family of God. We also did some good work, with the Lord's help.

I would say that the theme itself was not an easy challenge, containing two dangers. The theme "Reconciliation, Justice and Peace" certainly implies a strong political dimension, even if it is obvious that reconciliation, justice and peace are not possible without a deep purification of the heart, without renewal of thought, a *metanoia*, without that newness which must come precisely from the encounter with God. But even if this spiritual dimension is profound and fundamental, the political dimension also is very real, because without political achievements, these changes of the Spirit usually are not realized. Therefore the temptation could have been to politicize the theme, to talk less about pastors and more about politicians, thus with a competence that is not ours.

The other danger was in order to avoid this temptation to pull oneself into a purely spiritual world, into an abstract and beautiful world, but not a realistic one. A pastor's language, instead, must be realistic, it must touch upon reality, but within the perspective of God and his Word. Therefore this mediation involves, on one hand being truly tied to reality, taking the care to talk about what is, and on the other hand not falling into technically political solutions: this means to demonstrate a concrete but spiritual word. This was the main problem for this Synod and it seems to me that, thanks to God, we managed to resolve it, and for me this is also a reason for thanks because it

makes the Post-Synodal Document easier to draft.

Now I would like to return some thanks. Above all I would like to thank the Presidents Delegate who masterfully moderated the meetings of the Synod and also with good humour. I also thank the Relators: we now have seen in practice that they have borne the greatest burden of the work, they worked nights and even on Sundays, they worked at lunchtime and they now truly merit a round of applause from us.

Here I can announce that I have decided to nominate Cardinal Turkson the new President of the [Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace](#), successor to Cardinal Martino. Thank you, your Eminence, for having accepted; we are happy to have you among us. Then, I thank all the Fathers, the Fraternal Delegates, the Auditors, the Experts and thanks, above all, to the translators for they too have a part in the story of "creating Pentecost". Pentecost means to understand each other: without translators this bridge to understanding would be missing. Thank you! And my thanks go especially to the Secretary General, his team, who silently guided and organized us very well.

The Synod ends and does not end, not only because the work goes ahead with the Post-Synodal Exhortation; *Synodos* means common path. Let us remain on the common path with the Lord, let us go before the Lord to prepare the roads, to help him, to open the doors of the world that he may create his Kingdom among us. In this sense my blessing is upon all of you. Let us now say a prayer of thanks for the meal.

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