

Angelus: Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Sts Peter and Paul, 29 June

A celebration of communion and catholicity

Upcoming social Encyclical encourages sustainable progress

On Monday, 29 June, after celebrating Holy Mass in St Peter's Basilica on the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Sts Peter and Paul, the Holy Father introduced the recitation of the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims present. He commented on the

Solemnity of the Holy Patrons of the Church of Rome and after the Marian prayer spoke of his third Encyclical, 'Caritas in Veritate' soon to be published. The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we are solemnly celebrating the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, special Patrons of the Church of Rome: Peter, the fisherman from Galilee, who was the first to confess the faith: "our leader" who "raised up the Church from the faithful flock of Israel"; Paul, the former persecutor of Christians who "brought your call to the nations and became the teacher of the world" (cf. Preface of today's Mass). In one of his Homilies to the community of Rome, Pope St Leo the Great said: "These are your Holy Fathers and true Shepherds, who gave you claims to be numbered among the heavenly Kingdom" (*Sermo I, in Nat. App Petri et Pauli, c I, PL 54, 422*). On the occasion of this feast, I would like to address a warm and special welcome, together with fervent good wishes, to the diocesan Community of Rome which divine Providence has entrusted to my care as Successor of the Apostle Peter. It is a greeting that I willingly extend to all the inhabitants of our metropolis and to the pilgrims and tourists who in these days are visiting it, coinciding also with the closure of the Pauline Year.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Lord bless and protect you through the intercession of Sts Peter and Paul! As your Pastor, I urge you to stay faithful to the Christian vocation and not to conform to the mindset of this world – as the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote precisely to the Christians of Rome – but always to let yourselves be transformed and renewed by the Gospel, to follow, what is truly good and pleasing to God (cf Rm 12:2).

For this reason I pray constantly that Rome may keep alive her Christian vocation not only preserving unaltered her immense spiritual and cultural heritage, but also in order that its inhabitants may express the beauty of the faith received in practical ways of thinking and act-

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Benedict XVI's General Audience

Word and sign indivisible for priests

On Wednesday, 24 June, the Holy Father spoke on the significance of the Year for Priests, which he had inaugurated on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, 19 June.

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Detail of Michelangelo's "Conversion of St Paul" in the recently restored Pauline Chapel, Vatican Museums, 1542-1545

Pauline Year concludes as Year for Priests begins

Through truth in love humanity makes a leap forward

On Sunday, 28 June, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated First Vespers of the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul for the conclusion of the Pauline Year in the Basilica of St Paul-Outside-the-Walls. During his Homily, he announced that recent scientific analysis of the contents of the tomb of St Paul seems to confirm the undisputed tradition claiming that the mortal remains of the Apostle lie within.

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Helping those in need

No more war in the Holy Land

On Thursday morning, 25 June, the Pope addressed members of the Assembly of Organizations for Aid to the Eastern Churches (ROACO).

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Faith and the Apostles

On the Feast of the Holy Patrons of Rome, Benedict XVI addressed to all Catholics enduring words that also deserve to be heard beyond the visible boundaries of the Church, as he meditated upon what is essential: the truth. That truth which Peter and Paul preached, until their blood was poured out under Nero, bearing supreme witness (*martyrion*, in Greek) to Christ in the capital of the Empire. The Roman Church is founded on the martyrdom of the two Apostles, just as over the centuries thousands of the faithful recognized, kneeling before their tombs that were already identified 18 centuries ago by Christian devotion, which is clearly rooted in history; just as Pius XII and Paul VI affirmed for St Peter and as their Successor is now affirming for St Paul.

Speaking of the convert on the road to Damascus the Pope recalled how, with Christ, a new way of worshipping God began, a personal and profoundly true devotion because it is realized in one's own life through interior renewal, which is the only way to change the world without conforming to it – to arrive at a new way of thinking and of being, not as children but as adults. But not, of course, in a childish way, as people have come to twist the expression "adult faith", seeing it as a mature and courageous attitude possibly even opposed to the Magisterium of the Church. With bitter irony Benedict XVI recalled that this is not the way to show great courage in today's de-Christianized society.

An adult faith, on the other hand, the Pope described as faith in the truth that knows how to uphold the inviolability of human life – from its very first moments – and to the ordering, which is natural and Christian, of indissoluble marriage. It is opposing falsehood in the name of truth, which cannot be separated from love. And the commitment to truth that looks to Christ is profound: "We need a reason illumined by the heart, to learn to act in accordance with the truth in love", Benedict XVI summarized.

Since his studies and youthful works, Joseph Ratzinger, steeped in the Christian tradition, has set himself the goal of explaining the "alphabet of faith" in our day, and as the Successor of Peter he is continuing to carry out this service which is at the same time theological and pastoral.

And through the first of the Apostles he has looked once again to Christ, the "Bishop of souls", in the solemn Liturgy for the conferral of the pallium, which also visibly expresses Catholic communion.

To descend to the depths of the truth witnessed by the Apostles and to repeat that – despite the conformism of the world and despite the enemies, once again identified by the Gospel term: "wolves" – after the example of Peter and Paul and Saints such as Francis, the Curé d'Ars and Padre Pio, the task of Bishops and priests is above all to open hearts and souls to God. Because only in this way is it possible to make God present in the world and thus to renew it.

G.M.V.