

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO SYDNEY (AUSTRALIA) ON THE OCCASION OF THE
23rd WORLD YOUTH DAY
(JULY 12 - 21, 2008)

Related to Climate Change and Care of Creation

INTERVIEW OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI DURING THE FLIGHT TO
AUSTRALIA

Saturday, 12 July 2008

In answer to Mr Paul John Kelly (The Australian Newspaper):

I think Australia in its present historical configuration is a part of the "Western world", economically and politically, and so it is clear that Australia shares also the successes and the problems of the Western world. The Western world has had in the last 50 years great successes - economic successes, technical successes; yet religion - Christian faith - is in a certain sense in crisis ... And now in this historical moment, we begin to see that we do need God. We can do so many things, but we cannot create our climate. We thought we could do it, but we cannot do it. We need the gift of the Earth, the gift of water, we need the Creator; the Creator reappears in his creation. And so we also come to understand that we cannot be really happy, cannot be really promoting justice for all the world, without a criterion at work in our own ideas, without a God who is just, and gives us the light, and gives us life. So, I think there will be in a certain sense in this "Western world" a crisis of our faith, but we will always also have a revival of the faith, because Christian faith is simply true, and the truth will always be present in the human world, and God will always be truth. In this sense, I am in the end optimistic.

In answer to Mrs. Martine Nouaille, of "Agence France Presse" on whether His Holiness will address the issue of climate change while in Australia:

[The problem of climate change] will certainly be present at this World Youth Day since we are speaking of the Holy Spirit and consequently of the Creation and of our responsibilities with regard to Creation. I do not claim to enter into the technicalities that politicians and experts must resolve but rather to provide an essential impetus, to make the responsibilities visible so that we may respond to this great challenge: to rediscover the Face of the Creator in Creation, to rediscover in the Creator's presence our responsibilities for his Creation, which he has entrusted to us, to form the ethical capacity for a lifestyle that we must adopt if we wish to tackle the problems of this situation and if we really want to reach positive solutions. Therefore, I would like to awaken awareness and to make people see the broad context of this problem to which fitting answers, which do not depend on us, will be applied by political policies and experts.

WELCOMING CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Government House, Sydney
Thursday, 17 July 2008

With many thousands of young people visiting Australia at this time, it is appropriate to reflect upon the kind of world we are handing on to future generations. In the words of your national anthem, this land “abounds in nature’s gifts, of beauty rich and rare”. The wonder of God’s creation reminds us of the need to protect the environment and to exercise responsible stewardship of the goods of the earth. In this connection I note that Australia is making a serious commitment to address its responsibility to care for the natural environment.

WELCOMING CELEBRATION BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Barangaroo, Sydney Harbour
Thursday, 17 July 2008

For some of us, it might seem like we have come to the end of the world! For people of your age, however, any flight is an exciting prospect. But for me, this one was somewhat daunting! Yet the views afforded of our planet from the air were truly wondrous. The sparkle of the Mediterranean, the grandeur of the north African desert, the lushness of Asia’s forestation, the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, the horizon upon which the sun rose and set, and the majestic splendour of Australia’s natural beauty which I have been able to enjoy these last couple of days; these all evoke a profound sense of awe. It is as though one catches glimpses of the Genesis creation story - light and darkness, the sun and the moon, the waters, the earth, and living creatures; all of which are “good” in God’s eyes (cf. Gen 1:1 - 2:4). Immersed in such beauty, who could not echo the words of the Psalmist in praise of the Creator: “how majestic is your name in all the earth?” (Ps 8:1).

And there is more – something hardly perceivable from the sky – men and women, made in nothing less than God’s own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). At the heart of the marvel of creation are you and I, the human family “crowned with glory and honour” (Ps 8:5). How astounding! With the Psalmist we whisper: “what is man that you are mindful of him?” (Ps 8:4). And drawn into silence, into a spirit of thanksgiving, into the power of holiness, we ponder.

What do we discover? Perhaps reluctantly we come to acknowledge that there are also scars which mark the surface of our earth: erosion, deforestation, the squandering of the world’s mineral and ocean resources in order to fuel an insatiable consumption. Some of you come from island nations whose very existence is threatened by rising water levels; others from nations suffering the effects of devastating drought. God’s wondrous creation is sometimes experienced as almost hostile to its stewards, even something dangerous. How can what is “good” appear so threatening?

And there is more. What of man, the apex of God's creation? Every day we encounter the genius of human achievement. From advances in medical sciences and the wise application of technology, to the creativity reflected in the arts, the quality and enjoyment of people's lives in many ways are steadily rising. Among yourselves there is a readiness to take up the plentiful opportunities offered to you. Some of you excel in studies, sport, music, or dance and drama, others of you have a keen sense of social justice and ethics, and many of you take up service and voluntary work. All of us, young and old, have those moments when the innate goodness of the human person - perhaps glimpsed in the gesture of a little child or an adult's readiness to forgive - fills us with profound joy and gratitude...

Dear friends, life is not governed by chance; it is not random. Your very existence has been willed by God, blessed and given a purpose (cf. Gen 1:28)! Life is not just a succession of events or experiences, helpful though many of them are. It is a search for the true, the good and the beautiful. It is to this end that we make our choices; it is for this that we exercise our freedom; it is in this – in truth, in goodness, and in beauty – that we find happiness and joy. Do not be fooled by those who see you as just another consumer in a market of undifferentiated possibilities, where choice itself becomes the good, novelty usurps beauty, and subjective experience displaces truth...

My dear friends, God's creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity. They cannot, however, be understood apart from a profound reflection upon the innate dignity of every human life from conception to natural death: a dignity conferred by God himself and thus inviolable. Our world has grown weary of greed, exploitation and division, of the tedium of false idols and piecemeal responses, and the pain of false promises. Our hearts and minds are yearning for a vision of life where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion. This is the work of the Holy Spirit! This is the hope held out by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to bear witness to this reality that you were created anew at Baptism and strengthened through the gifts of the Spirit at Confirmation. Let this be the message that you bring from Sydney to the world!

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER RELIGIONS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Chapter Hall of St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney
Friday, 18 July 2008

The religious sense planted within the human heart opens men and women to God and leads them to discover that personal fulfilment does not consist in the selfish gratification of ephemeral desires. Rather, it leads us to meet the needs of others and to search for concrete ways to contribute to the common good. Religions have a special role in this

regard, for they teach people that authentic service requires sacrifice and self-discipline, which in turn must be cultivated through self-denial, temperance and a moderate use of the world's goods. In this way, men and women are led to regard the environment as a marvel to be pondered and respected rather than a commodity for mere consumption. It is incumbent upon religious people to demonstrate that it is possible to find joy in living simply and modestly, generously sharing one's surplus with those suffering from want.

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 23rd WORLD YOUTH DAY

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Randwick Racecourse
Sunday, 20 July 2008

Dear young people, let me now ask you a question. What will you leave to the next generation? Are you building your lives on firm foundations, building something that will endure? Are you living your lives in a way that opens up space for the Spirit in the midst of a world that wants to forget God, or even rejects him in the name of a falsely-conceived freedom? How are you using the gifts you have been given, the "power" which the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you? What legacy will you leave to young people yet to come? What difference will you make?