



ANGELUS: LOVE IS THE LIFESTYLE OF BELIEVERS

VATICAN CITY, 31 JAN 2010 (VIS) - At midday today Benedict XVI appeared at the window of his private study to pray the Angelus with the faithful gathered below in St. Peter's Square.

The Holy Father mentioned the readings of today's liturgy, one of which was the so-called "hymn to charity" from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, which he described as "one of the most beautiful passages of the New Testament, and of the entire Bible".

"Charity", the Pope explained, "is the 'greatest' gift, which gives value to all the others. ... In the end, when we find ourselves face to face with God, all other gifts will fail and all that will be left to last for eternity is love, because God is love and we will be like unto Him, in perfect communion with Him.

"For now", he added, "as long as we are in this world, charity is the distinctive mark of Christians. It is the synthesis of all their lives, of what they believe and what they do". In this context he recalled his first Encyclical, dedicated to the subject of Christian love, "Deus Caritas est", which, he said, is made up of two parts "corresponding to the two aspects of charity: its significance and its practical implementation".

The Holy Father went on: "Love is God's very essence, it is the meaning of creation and history, it is the light that gives goodness and beauty to the existence of each man and woman. At the same time love is, so to say, the 'style' of God and of believers, it is the behaviour of those who, responding to the love of God, order their lives as a gift of self to God and to neighbour".

"If we think of the saints, we recognise the variety of their spiritual gifts and their human characters. But the life of each one of them is a hymn to charity, a living canticle to the love of God".

Benedict XVI concluded by recalling how today marks the Feast of St. John Bosco, founder of the Salesian Family and patron saint of the young. And he called for the saint's intercession during this Year for Priests, that "the clergy may always be educators and fathers to the young; and that, experiencing this pastoral charity, many young people may accept the call to give their lives for Christ and the Gospel".

ANG/CHARITY/...

VIS 100201 (410)