

# **Aide: Benedict XVI Turns Difficulty to Opportunity**

## **Father Atuire Reflects on Precedents in Pontificate**

By Mercedes de la Torre

JERUSALEM, MAY 12, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- In the pontificate of Benedict XVI, difficulties become moments for dialogue, says a Vatican aide.

Father Caesar Atuire, the delegate administrator of Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, spoke with ZENIT about some of the adversity touching the Pope's weeklong pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

He pointed to an incident Monday during the Holy Father's meeting with interreligious dialogue leaders, when Sheikh Taysir Tamimi, supreme judge of the Islamic Courts of Jerusalem, took the podium although he was not in the program, and launched a verbal attack against Israel.

The Vatican immediately released a statement saying the intervention was "a direct negation of what a dialogue should be."

But Father Atuire reflected that "the same thing happened during John Paul II's visit in the same place nine years ago and today we have already forgotten about what happened."

"We have seen, moreover, that in the pontificate of Benedict XVI, the moments of difficulty become moments of dialogue, as has happened with other incidents that afterward gave room for deeper encounters to resolve conflicts and prejudices, which sometimes have lasted centuries," he added. Father Atuire contended that this is precisely the consequence to expect from the Pope's visit today to the Wailing Wall.

"Before this wall, we find ourselves before the temple that guards the presence of the one God, the God of the Jews, of the Christians and the Muslims," he said. "And I think that, in this sense, to go and pray precisely before the Western Wall is a way of saying that all of us are children of the one God and we try to follow what this God teaches us and thus we can find the way to live together, in harmony and peace."

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