



ZE09091108 - 2009-09-11

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-26839?l=english>

## **BENEDICT XVI ENCOURAGES INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY**

### **Notes "Major Obstacle to Development"**

VATICAN CITY, SEPT. 11, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI has given his support to U.N. efforts to promote literacy, noting that along with hunger, poverty and disease, illiteracy is one of the major obstacles to development.

The Pope affirmed this in a note sent through his secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, to the director-general of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, on the occasion of International Literacy Day, celebrated Sept. 8.

The statement expresses the Holy Father's "encouragement for all people who work for literacy with UNESCO," since, "like hunger, poverty and endemic disease, illiteracy is one of the major obstacles to development."

The Pontiff called literacy "one of the most important springboards for the integral development of the person, making them more capable of self-orientation and able to participate more actively in public life."

As he mentioned in his encyclical "Caritas in Veritate," Benedict XVI expressed his wish that literacy can help bring about an evolution toward "better instructed and more solidary societies," consolidating a "democratic life capable of ensuring peace and freedom" (cf. No. 21).

The Pope asked "disciples of Christ to commit themselves with particular concern to this fount of humanization that should also allow people to more freely approach sacred Scripture." And he affirmed that the "reading and meditation of Scripture reveals the 'eminent science of Jesus Christ.'"

The papal message concluded with the promise of a special blessing for UNESCO collaborators.

According to UNESCO, one in five adults is still not literate and two-thirds of them are women.