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## AIDE: WHEN WILL CHRISTIANS UNITE?

### Recalls Pope's Visit to Jesus' Birthplace

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 22, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Vatican spokesman is expressing the hope that this Christmas will bring a new gift to Bethlehem: freedom from the divisions among Christians.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press office, stated this in his latest edition of "Octava Dies," in which he reflected on Benedict XVI's May 13 visit to the city of Christ's birth.

The priest also noted that on Monday, in an address to the Roman Curia, the Pope spoke about how his visit enabled him to see the "suffering and the hopes present" in the Holy Land.

"Everything that one can see in those countries calls for reconciliation, justice and peace," the Pontiff told the curia.

Father Lombardi recalled the "festive celebration of the Mass," celebrated by the Holy Father in Manger Square, which was "overflowing."

Even though it took place in a very different context from the Bethlehem of 2,000 years ago, he said, "the Eucharist continues being the moment in which the mystery of the real presence of Jesus with us is relived."

However, the spokesman added, it is hard to ignore the presence of the walls around the city. Thus, he said, it is with good reason that Benedict XVI, upon leaving, stated: "We all know that the walls do not last forever. They can be taken down."

"First, though, it is necessary to remove the walls that we build around our hearts, the barriers that we set up against our neighbors."

Fragility and strength

The Pope prayed in the grotto of Bethlehem, but as Father Lombardi noted, "also there -- as in other holy places -- he experienced the fact that Christians are not united: They have to share places and temples to avoid litigation!"

"When will we be able to overcome our divisions?" the spokesman asked.

The Jesuit then noted his "fondest memory," which is when he saw the "sick children at Caritas Baby Hospital in the hands of the Pope."

"Infinite fragility of humanity! Mysterious and invincible force of love," the aide exclaimed.

"How fragile was Jesus born in Bethlehem, but how strong is his message of love!"

He noted that this love is offered to us, but that it also demands of us this fragility. "What human intelligence could have imagined this incredible message?" he said.

Father Lombardi concluded: "Let us come and see the Child: God is still with us."