

# BENEDICT XVI: GOD MATTERS

## Conference Considers How With or Without Him, Everything Changes

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 11, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says he is hoping for the success of a conference under way in Rome that is considering the theme "God Today: With or Without Him Everything Changes."

In a note to Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, archbishop of Genoa and president of the Italian episcopal conference, which is sponsoring the three-day event, the Pope expressed "profound appreciation for this important initiative, which addresses one of the great topics that has always fascinated and questioned the human spirit."

The Holy Father proposed that the "question of God" is key for our time as well, since "openness to the Transcendent" is often considered irrelevant.

In fact, he said, a relationship with God is "essential for humanity's journey."

The international congress will look at the "God question" from the perspective of various disciplines and themes: philosophy, music, visual arts, cinema, science, the issue of creation and evolution, and the enigma of violence.

Such a lineup, the Pontiff suggested, "will be a stimulation for a profound reflection on God's place in the culture and life of our time."

The Pope noted the attempt to "show the different ways that lead to affirming the truth about the existence of God, that God which humanity has always known in some way."

"He is the Son of God, the Living who enters into the life and history of man to illumine him

with his grace, with his presence," he said.

The Holy Father also pointed to the aim "to bring to light the essential importance that God has for us, for our personal and social life, for understanding ourselves and the world, for the hope that illumines our way, for the salvation that awaits us beyond death."

Semi-darkness

Benedict XVI expressed hope that the conference "might at least contribute to disperse that semi-darkness that makes openness to God precarious and fearful for the men of our time, though he never ceases to knock on our door."

This openness is important, the Pope said, since "experiences of the past, although not remote to us, teach us that when God disappears from man's horizon, humanity loses its direction and runs the risk of taking steps to its own destruction."

On the other hand, faith in God "opens man to the horizon of certain hope, which does not disappoint," the Pope affirmed.

This gives the "solid foundation on which to base life without fear," he said, adding that it "calls for abandoning oneself with confidence in the hands of the Love which sustains the world."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: [www.zenit.org/article-27811?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-27811?l=english)