

Pope: Charity Is the Best Strategy

Addresses Aid Agencies for Eastern Churches

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 25, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is underlining charity as the source, standard and strategy of all organizations that serve the Church.

The Pope affirmed this today in an audience with some 70 members of the Assembly of Societies for Aid to Eastern Churches (ROACO), who are meeting in Rome this week.

The Pontiff referred to St. Paul's discussion of charity in his letter to the Corinthians, and emphasized that this is the greatest virtue for followers of Christ.

"Charity is the fertile source of all forms of service to the Church," he stated, "it is their measure, their method and the means by which they are verified."

The Holy Father acknowledged that the members' desire to live in charity, by making themselves "available to the Bishop of Rome" through the Congregation for Eastern Churches.

In this way, he said, "you will be able to continue, even to augment, that movement of charity which, by papal mandate, the congregation supervises so that, in a disciplined and equitable way, the Holy Land and other eastern regions may receive the spiritual and material support necessary for ordinary ecclesial life and for special needs."

In the group's gathering, which took place this week in Rome, participants discussed the situation in the Holy Land and the state of the Catholic Church in Bulgaria.

Witness

Benedict XVI recalled his recent visit to the Holy Land, affirming that there were many moments of grace in which he was able to encourage the Catholic communities there to persevere in giving witness, "a testimony full of fidelity, celebration and at times a great suffering."

He added, "I was also able to remind the Christians of that region of their ecumenical and interreligious responsibility, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council."

The Pope stated, "I renew my prayer and my appeal for no more war, no more violence, no more injustice."

He continued: "I wish to assure you that the Universal Church remains at the side of all our brothers and sisters who reside in the Holy Land.

"This concern is reflected in a special way in the annual Holy Land collection. I therefore exhort your ROACO agencies to continue their charitable activities with zeal and with fidelity to the Successor of Peter."

The Pope underlined the need to help the Eastern Churches in this economic crisis, paying particular attention to the refugees, the immigrants and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

He also highlighted the need for educating the People of God, "especially now that we have just begun the priestly year."

In this Year for Priests, which began June 19, the Pontiff appealed to his listeners to pray for priests and "to give maximum attention to caring for clergy and supporting seminaries."

On the feast of the Sacred Heart, when he inaugurated the year, he said that he "entrusted all the priests of the world to the Heart of Christ and of Mary Immaculate, with a special thought for those who, in both East and West are experiencing moments of difficulty and trial."

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