



CHURCH WILL BUILD JUSTICE IN AFRICA, SAYS POPE

Underlines Need to Listen to Holy Spirit's Guidance

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 4, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is underlining the Church's dedication to fighting the injustices in Africa, by continuing in its evangelization mission and its charitable works.

The Pope stated this today in his homily at the inaugural Mass of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, which began today and will run through Oct. 25.

The synod is focusing on the theme: "The Church in Africa at the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace. You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world"

He observed that "the acknowledgment of the absolute Lordship of God is one of the salient and unifying features of the African culture."

"Naturally in Africa there are many different cultures," the Pontiff continued, "but they all seem to be in agreement on this point: God is the Creator and the source of life."

Drawing from the liturgy of the day, the Holy Father highlighted certain aspects for the synod participants gathered in St. Peter's Basilica, noting that these "call us to the work that awaits us."

He emphasized: "the primacy of God, Creator and Lord," matrimony and children.

Regarding the first aspect, Benedict XVI underlined Africa's "deep sense of God," as he experienced in his recent pastoral visit, which make it "an enormous spiritual 'lung' for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope."

He next spoke about matrimony, underlining its necessary relationship with God. "To the extent to which it looks after and develops its faith," he said, "Africa could discover immense resources to give in favor of the family that is built on matrimony."

The Pope next mentioned children, who constitute a "large and, unfortunately, suffering part of the African population."

Leaven

He stated that "the Church can most certainly give Africa a great contribution to all of society, which unfortunately experiences poverty, injustice, violence and wars in many countries."

The Pontiff continued: "The vocation of the Church, the community of persons reconciled with God and with each other, is that of being the prophesy and leaven of reconciliation among the various ethnic, linguistic and even religious groups, within each individual nation and throughout the continent.

"Reconciliation, a gift of God that men must implore and embrace, is the stable foundation upon which one builds peace, the necessary condition for the true progress of men and society, according to the project of justice wanted by God."

After the Eucharistic Celebration, when the Holy Father moved to St. Peter's Square to pray the midday Angelus with the pilgrims gathered there, he explained that this synod "is not a matter of a study group, nor a programmatic assembly."

He affirmed: "Communications and speeches are heard in the hall, there is discussion in groups, but we all know that we are not the protagonists: It is the Lord, his Holy Spirit, who guides the Church.

"The most important thing, for everyone, is listening: listening to each other and, everyone, listening to what the Lord wants to tell us. Thus the Synod takes place in a climate of faith and prayer, in religious obedience to the Word of God."

Benedict XVI pointed out the "extraordinary human wealth" in Africa, as well as the poverty and "terrible injustices" there.

He affirmed: "The Church is dedicated to overcome them with the power of the Gospel and the concrete solidarity of many charitable institutions and initiatives.

"Let us pray to the Virgin Mary that she bless the Second Special Assembly for Africa and obtain peace and development for that great and beloved continent."