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POPE ENCOURAGES THE BUILDING OF A "TRUE CIVILIZATION"

Remembers Division, Violence of World War II

By Roberta Sciamplicotti

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 9, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The memory of World War II should spur society to build a "true civilization" that is no longer based on hatred, violence and force, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this Thursday night at the end of the Concert "Youth Against War: 70 Years from the Start of World War II," held in the Auditorium of the Via della Conciliazione in Rome.

Many of those participating in the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, taking place through Oct. 25 in the Vatican, attended the event. Also present was Italy's president, Giorgio Napolitano.

Jochem Hochstenbach and Wolfgang Gonnenswein directed the musicians, who performed pieces from Gustav Mahler and Felix Mendelssohn.

The concert was organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews, the German Embassy to the Holy See and the European Cultural Forum of the cultural association of Mainau.

The event is part of the project "1939-2009: 70 Years Since the Outbreak of World War II."

Benedict XVI addressed the audience to express his gratitude and reflect on the meaning of this event.

"Tonight our memory has returned to the tragedy of World War II, painful page of history

furrowed by violence and inhumanity, which caused the death of millions of persons, leaving the winners divided and a Europe to be reconstructed," he said. "The War, desired by National Socialism, affected many innocent populations of Europe and other continents, and with the tragedy of the Shoah, it wounded above all the Jewish people, object of a planned extermination."

"And yet, there was no lack of appeals to reason and peace raised by many sides," observed the Pope, recalling the urgent appeal of Pius XII in his radio-message Aug. 24, 1939. The appeal, made just before the outbreak of war, proclaimed decisively: "Nothing is lost with peace, everything can be lost with war."

"To recall those sad events must be a warning, above all for the new generations, to never give in again to the temptation of war," the Pontiff said.

Reflecting also on the fact that this year the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall is commemorated, the Pontiff emphasized that "Europe and the whole world are thirsty for liberty and peace."

"It is necessary that we build together the true civilization, which is no longer based on force, but is the fruit of the victory over ourselves, over the forces of injustice, egoism and hatred, which can disfigure man," Benedict XVI exclaimed.

From this point of view, the Pontiff concluded, "the ecumenical movement, which found a catalyst in World War II, can contribute to build it, working together with the Jews and all believers."