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RELIGION MUST PROMOTE FORGIVENESS, SAYS POPE Commemorates Anniversary of WWII Outbreak

VITERBO, Italy, SEPT. 6, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is expressing the hope that by commemorating the anniversary of World War II, there will be a renewed effort to build a culture of peace for future generations.

The Pope stated this today before praying the midday Angelus with the pilgrims gathered in the Faul Valley of Viterbo, where he is making a pastoral visit.

He greeted participants of an international congress taking place in Krakow, Poland, on the theme "Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue."

The congress, organized by the Archdiocese of Krakow along with the Community of Sant'Egidio, is bringing together representatives of various religions to pray for peace on the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

Regarding this anniversary, the Pontiff stated, "We cannot fail to recall the dramatic events that brought on one of the most terrible conflicts in history, that caused tens of millions of deaths and provoked so much suffering among the beloved Polish people; a conflict that saw the tragedy of the Holocaust and the extermination of many other innocent people." He continued: "May the memory of these events move us to pray for the victims and for those who still carry wounds in their bodies and hearts."

The Holy Father expressed the hope that the memory may also "be an admonishment to all not to repeat such barbarities and to intensify the efforts to create in our time, marked by conflicts and oppositions, an enduring peace, transmitting above all to the new generations, a culture and a lifestyle shaped by love, solidarity and esteem for the other."

"In this perspective," he stated, "what is especially important is the contributions that religions can and must make in promoting forgiveness and reconciliation against violence, racism, totalitarianism and the extremism that disfigure the image of the Creator in man, erase God from the horizon and, consequently, lead to the scorn of man himself."

Benedict XVI concluded, "May the Lord help you to build peace beginning from love and from mutual understanding."

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