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## PONTIFF CALLS FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION

### **Underlines Need to Address "Educational Emergency"**

VITERBO, Italy, SEPT. 6, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is underlining the importance of Christian charitable works and social action, especially in the field of education and catechesis.

The Pope affirmed this today in his homily at a Mass he celebrated in the Faul Valley in Viterbo, where he spent the day.

He underlined the priority of "education in the faith," understood as "life in Christ."

The Pontiff affirmed that "catechists and all educators are called to commit themselves," as well as schools from primary age to the universities.

He pointed to the example of saints such as St. Rosa Venerini and St. Lucia Filippini, stating, "One could still happily draw from these spiritual sources to confront, with lucidity and coherence, the current inescapable and pressing 'educational emergency,' a great challenge for every Christian community and for society as a whole [...]."

Along with education, the Holy Father emphasized the importance of "the testimony of the faith."

The Church's initiatives and charitable works are "signs of faith in and love of God, who is Love," he affirmed.

Benedict XVI continued: "This is where voluntary service flourishes and must always increase, whether at the personal level or the organized level. In charity this voluntary service has its propulsive and educative organism."

Charity in prayer

Among these charitable works, he mentioned the consecrated persons in cloistered monasteries, who are "a visible reminder of the primacy of God in our existence" and who "show us that prayer is the first form of charity."

The Pope made particular mention of one of Viterbo's citizens, Blessed Domenico Bàrberi, "the Passionist priest who, in 1845, welcomed John Henry Newman -- who later became a cardinal -- into the Catholic Church."

The Pontiff urged his listeners to give "attention to the signs of God."

He added: "Listening to his word and discerning his signs must be the work of every Christian community.

"The most immediate of God's signs is certainly care for one's neighbor [...]."

The Holy Father stated, "Faithful laypeople, young people, families, do not be afraid to live and bear witness to the faith in the various spheres of society, in the multiple situations of human existence!"

He continued: "The seasons succeed each other, social contexts change, but the vocation of Christians to live the Gospel in solidarity with the human family does not change or go out of fashion with the passing of time.

"This is social commitment; this is the service proper to political action; this is integral human development."

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