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PEACE AND JOY ARE FOR EVERYONE, SAYS POPE

Notes Mission of Church Is to Spread God's Mercy

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, APRIL 11, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI says the mission of the Church is to bring to all people the "joyous reality" of God's merciful love.

The Pope proposed this today when he addressed crowds gathered at the Apostolic Palace in Castel Gandolfo to pray the midday Regina Caeli. The Holy Father is taking a few days of rest at the summer papal residence following his intense Holy Week and Easter schedule.

"The Gospel passage from St. John for this Sunday is rich with divine mercy and goodness," the Pontiff noted. "[...] Jesus showed the signs of the passion to the point of permitting the incredulous Thomas to touch him."

Benedict XVI said that the "divine condescension" with the incredulous Thomas "allows us to draw profit."

"In fact, touching the Lord's wounds, the hesitant disciple not only heals his own diffidence but ours too," the Pope said.

He went on to explain how the mission of the Church, "perennially assisted by the Paraclete [is] to bring to all the glad tidings, the joyous reality of the merciful Love of God, 'so that,' as St. John says, 'you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and so that, believing, you may have life in his name.'"

The Holy Father made reference to the Year for Priests, encouraging pastors to follow St. John Vianney. He cited his own letter proclaiming the year, in which he noted that the Curé d'Arns "was able to transform the hearts and the lives of so many people because he enabled them to experience the Lord's merciful love."

"Our own time urgently needs a similar proclamation and witness to the truth of Love," he affirmed. "In this way we will render ever more familiar and close him who our eyes have not seen but whose infinite mercy we are absolutely certain of."

The Pontiff concluded by entrusting the mission of the Church to Our Lady, adding that "we invoke her exultant with joy."

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