

## CHRISTMAS JOY BECOMES A PRAYER, SAYS POPE

### Beseches Peace at Christmas Eve Mass

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 24, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is asking the Christ Child tonight to establish the dominion of His truth and love.

The Pope made this prayer during the Christmas Eve Mass that he celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica beginning at 10 p.m. Rome time.

He reflected on the prophecies applied to Christ that were originally part of the coronation rite of the kings of Israel.

"Truly," the Pontiff said, "the words of Israel's coronation rite were only ever rites of hope which looked ahead to a distant future that God would bestow. None of the kings who were greeted in this way lived up to the sublime content of these words. In all of them, those words [...] were only pointers towards what was to come -- as it were signposts of hope indicating a future that at that moment was still beyond comprehension."

Thus, he reflected, the fulfillment of the prophecy in Christ "is both infinitely greater and in worldly terms smaller than the prophecy itself might lead one to imagine."

"It is greater," the Pope said, "in the sense that this child is truly the Son of God, truly 'God from God, light from light, begotten not made, of one being with the Father.' The infinite distance between God and man is overcome. God has not only bent down, as we read in the Psalms; he has truly 'come down,' he has come into the world, he has become one of us, in order to draw all of us to himself. This child is truly Emmanuel -- God-with-us. [...]"

"But at the same time it is true that the 'rod of his oppressor' is not yet broken, the boots of warriors continue to tramp and the 'garment rolled in blood' (Isaiah 9:4f) still remains."

Benedict XVI said that part of Christmas is "simply joy at God's closeness. We are grateful that God gives himself into our hands as a child, begging as it were for our love, implanting his peace in our hearts."

"But this joy is also a prayer," he said. "Lord, make your promise come fully true. Break the rods of the oppressors. Burn the tramping boots. Let the time of the garments rolled in blood come to an end. Fulfill the prophecy that 'of peace there will be no end' (Isaiah 9:7)."

"We thank you for your goodness," the Holy Father prayed, "but we also ask you to show forth your power. Establish the dominion of your truth and your love in the world -- the 'kingdom of righteousness, love and peace.'"

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