

CHURCH'S MISSION IS TO SEEK TRUTH, SAYS POPE

Film Director Says Arts Have Always Been Linked to Religion

LISBON, Portugal, MAY 12, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is affirming that the Church has a mission to promote the search for truth, and from this arises its commitment to dialogue with the art world.

The Pope stated this today in the Belem Cultural Center in Lisbon, before an audience of numerous representatives of the Portuguese world of art and culture. Today is the second day of his apostolic visit to Portugal, which ends Friday.

"The Church considers that her most important mission in today's culture is to keep alive the search for truth, and consequently for God," he said, "to bring people to look beyond penultimate realities and to seek those that are ultimate."

The Pontiff stated, "I invite you to deepen your knowledge of God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ for our complete fulfillment."

He urged the artists to "produce beautiful things, but above all make your lives places of beauty."

"Today's culture is in fact permeated by a 'tension,' which at times takes the form of a 'conflict' between the present and tradition," the Holy Father noted.

He added that "this emphasis on the present as a source of inspiration for the meaning of life, both individual and social, nonetheless clashes with the powerful cultural tradition of the Portuguese people, deeply marked by the millenary influence of Christianity and by a sense of global responsibility."

"This tradition gave rise to what could be called a 'wisdom,' that is to say, an understanding of life and history which included a corpus of ethical values and an 'ideal' to be realized by Portugal, which has always sought to establish relations with the rest of the world," Benedict XVI said.

Tradition

He added: "The Church appears as the champion of a healthy and lofty tradition, whose rich contribution she sets at the service of society."

"Society continues to respect and appreciate her service to the common good but distances itself from that 'wisdom' which is part of her legacy.

"This 'conflict' between tradition and the present finds expression in the crisis of truth, yet only truth can provide direction and trace the path of a fulfilled existence both for individuals and for a people."

"Indeed," the Pope affirmed, "a people no longer conscious of its own truth ends up by being lost in the maze of time and history, deprived of clearly defined values and lacking great and clearly formulated goals."

The Pontiff pointed out that "much still needs to be learned about the form in which the Church takes her place in the world, helping society to understand that the proclamation of truth is a service which she offers to society, and opening new horizons for the future, horizons of grandeur and dignity."

"The Church, in her adherence to the eternal character of truth, is in the process of learning how to live with respect for other 'truths' and for the truth of others," he said.

The Pontiff continued, "Through this respect, open to dialogue, new doors can be opened to the transmission of truth."

Human and Divine

Before the Holy Father's address, film director Manoel de Oliveira gave a welcoming speech to Benedict XVI.

"The arts," he said, "from the beginning, have always been strictly linked to religions."

"Considering religion and art," the film director said, "both are, I think, although certainly in a distinct way, intimately turned towards man and the universe, towards the human condition and Divine Nature."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Benedict XVI's address: www.zenit.org/article-29229?l=english

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