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POPE'S NEW BOOK EXPLORES CREATION, SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Says Science Cannot Get to Whole Language of God

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 2, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- In his latest book, Benedict XVI is underlining the serious need for mankind to recognize and understand truth and the meaning of creation by drawing near to God.

The Pope makes this reflection in his book, "Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week," scheduled to be released March 10 by Ignatius Press. It is the second volume of the Pontiff's study on Jesus; Volume 1 was released in 2007.

Referring to the conversation with Pontius Pilate, the Pontiff noted that Jesus "defines as the essence of his kingship witness to the truth."

He continued, "If Jesus bases his concept of kingship and kingdom on truth as the fundamental category, then it is entirely understandable that the pragmatic Pilate asks him: 'What is truth?'"

This "is a very serious question, bound up with the fate of mankind," the Holy Father affirmed. "What, then, is truth? Are we able to recognize it?"

Drawing from scholastic philosophy and the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, Benedict XVI underlined the definition of truth as "conformity between the intellect and reality."

"If a man's intellect reflects a thing as it is in itself," the Pope explained, "then he has found truth: but only a small fragment of reality -- not truth in its grandeur and integrity."

He affirmed, "We come closer to what Jesus meant with another of Saint Thomas' teachings: 'Truth is in God's intellect properly and firstly; in human intellect it is present properly and derivatively.'"

Thus, the Pontiff stated, God is "truth itself, the sovereign and first truth."

Grandeur and purity

"Again and again in the world, truth and error, truth and untruth, are almost inseparably mixed together," he observed. "The truth in all its grandeur and purity does not appear."

"The world is 'true' to the extent that it reflects God," the Holy Father affirmed, and "it becomes more and more true the closer it draws to God."

He continued: "Man becomes true, he becomes himself, when he grows in God's likeness. Then he attains to his proper nature."

"'Bearing witness to the truth,'" Benedict XVI explained, "means giving priority to God and to his will over against the interests of the world and its powers."

He noted that "the unredeemed state of the world consists precisely in the failure to understand the meaning of creation, in the failure to recognize truth."

As a result, the Pope observed, "the rule of pragmatism is imposed, by which the strong arm of the powerful becomes the god of this world."

Science

He noted that "at this point, modern man is tempted to say: Creation has become intelligible to us through science."

"Indeed, in the magnificent mathematics of creation, which today we can read in the human genetic code, we recognize the language of God," the Pontiff acknowledged. "But unfortunately not the whole language."

He continued: "The functional truth about man has been discovered. But the truth about man himself -- who he is, where he comes from, what he should do, what is right, what is wrong -- this unfortunately cannot be read in the same way."

"Hand in hand with growing knowledge of functional truth there seems to be an increasing blindness toward truth itself -- toward the question of our real identity and purpose," the Holy Father lamented.

"If man lives without truth," Benedict XVI said, "life passes him by; ultimately he surrenders the field to whoever is the stronger."

He continued: "Redemption in the fullest sense can only consist in the truth becoming recognizable. And it becomes recognizable when God becomes recognizable. He becomes recognizable in Jesus Christ."

"In Christ," the Pope affirmed, "God entered the world and set up the criterion of truth in the midst of history."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Excerpt of "Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week:" <http://zenit.org/article-31894?l=english>