

Pontiff Speaks to Muslims of Love for God, Neighbor

Visits Site Dear to 3 Monotheistic Religions

JERUSALEM, MAY 12, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says he wants Christian-Muslim dialogue to explore how the oneness of God is tied to the unity of the human family.

The Pope reflected today on how fidelity to God leads to a recognition that humans are interrelated when he addressed Muslim leaders during his visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The Holy Father is on the fourth full day of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He returns to Rome on Friday.

Reflecting on the spiritual significance of the site, the Pontiff said: "Here the paths of the world's three great monotheistic religions meet, reminding us what they share in common. Each believes in One God, creator and ruler of all. Each recognizes Abraham as a forefather, a man of faith upon whom God bestowed a special blessing. Each has gained a large following throughout the centuries and inspired a rich spiritual, intellectual and cultural patrimony."

The area of the Temple Mount is important for Christianity, Judaism and Islam. There, Solomon built the temple and Herod rebuilt it. It is the site of two mosques, and Muslims consider it the third pilgrimage site, after Mecca and Medina, and the place where the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven. Christians recognize it as the place where Christ spoke of the destruction of the Temple. The golden-domed, octagonal-shaped Dome of the Rock is the oldest extant Muslim monument in the Holy Land. The Pope was greeted there by the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Ahmad Hussein.

Benedict XVI said the site "challenges men and women of goodwill to work to overcome misunderstandings and conflicts of the past and to set out on the path of a sincere dialogue aimed at building a world of justice and peace for coming generations."

A fulcrum

The Holy Father acknowledged the temptation to be ambivalent about a possibility of success in interreligious dialogue.

"Yet," he said, "we can begin with the belief that the One God is the infinite source of justice and mercy, since in him the two exist in perfect unity. Those who confess his name are entrusted with the task of striving tirelessly for righteousness while imitating his forgiveness, for both are intrinsically oriented to the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the human family."

The Pope said it is for this reason that those "who adore the One God should show themselves to be both grounded in and directed towards the unity of the entire human family."

He explained: "In other words, fidelity to the One God, the Creator, the Most High, leads to the recognition that human beings are fundamentally interrelated, since all owe their very existence to a single source and are pointed towards a common goal. Imprinted with the indelible image of the divine, they are called to play an active role in mending divisions and promoting human solidarity." The Pontiff asserted that "love for the One God and charity towards ones neighbor thus become the fulcrum around which all else turns."

"As Muslims and Christians further the respectful dialogue they have already begun, I pray that they will explore how the Oneness of God is inextricably tied to the unity of the human family," he proposed. "In submitting to his loving plan for creation, in studying the law inscribed in the cosmos and implanted in the human heart, in reflecting upon the mysterious gift of God's self-revelation, may all his followers continue to keep their gaze fixed on his absolute goodness, never losing sight of the way it is reflected in the faces of others."

--- --- ---

On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text of Pope's address: <http://www.zenit.org/article-25871?l=english>

© Innovative Media, Inc.

Reprinting ZENIT's articles requires written permission from the [editor](#).