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Aide: Pope Gave Rare Insight Into Faith-Reason Link

Father Lombardi Reflects on Pontiff's Talk With Seminarians

ROME, OCT. 2, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The director of the Vatican press office says that while Benedict XVI was in Germany, he gave a rare insight into the link between faith and reason.

In his weekly editorial for Vatican Television, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi reflected on the Pope's Sept. 24 [address](#) to seminarians in Freiburg.

"Among the many valuable things the Pope said in Germany we would like to remember one especially, which was perhaps overlooked because he said it while speaking 'off the cuff' at the end of his conversation with seminarians in Freiburg," Father Lombardi proposed.

Though the Holy Father was particularly encouraging seminarians to be studious, the point he made "is worth everyone's remembering," the Jesuit stated.

Parallel world

The Pontiff said: "Our world today is a rationalist and thoroughly scientific world, albeit often somewhat pseudo-scientific. But this scientific spirit, this spirit of understanding, explaining, know-how, rejection of the irrational, is dominant in our time. There is a good side to this, even if it often conceals much arrogance and nonsense."

The Holy Father continued by affirming that the "faith is not a parallel world of feelings that we can still afford to hold on to."

"Rather," he said, "it is the key that encompasses everything, gives it meaning, interprets it and also provides its inner ethical orientation: making clear that it is to be understood and lived as tending towards God and proceeding from God. Therefore it is important to be informed and to understand, to have an open mind, to learn. Naturally in 20 years' time, some quite different philosophical theories will be fashionable from those of today: when I think what counted as the highest, most modern philosophical fashion in our day, and how totally forgotten it is now ... still, learning these things is not in vain, for there will be some enduring insights among them. And most of all, this is

how we learn to judge, to think through an idea -- and to do so critically -- and to ensure that in this thinking the light of God will serve to enlighten us and will not be extinguished.

"Studying is essential: only thus can we stand firm in these times and proclaim within them the reason for our faith. And it is essential that we study critically -- because we know that tomorrow someone else will have something else to say -- while being alert, open and humble as we study, so that our studying is always with the Lord, before the Lord, and for him."

Personally and concretely

Father Lombardi observed, "We knew that the insistence on the relationship between reason and faith was one of the characteristic marks of this pontificate but rarely have we heard it explained so personally and so concretely as it was to the seminarians of Freiburg."

"Clearly," he added, "Joseph Ratzinger the seminarian studied earnestly and intelligently; and he has continued to do so throughout his life, in order to help the whole Church give a reason for its faith (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), as today's world so greatly desires."

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