

REFLECTIONS ON POPE BENEDICT XVI'S MONTHLY INTENTIONS

February 2010

Editor's Note: Apostleship of Prayer receives monthly prayer intentions from Pope Benedict XVI and urges Christians throughout the world to unite in prayer for those intentions. The reflections below seek to illuminate the Holy Father's concerns.

General Intention

Scholars. *That scholars and intellectuals, by sincere search for the truth, may come to know the one true God.*



Pope John Paul II wrote of faith and reason as the two wings by which the human spirit can find truth (Fides et Ratio). Himself a prominent scholar, Pope Benedict XVI laments the trend toward relativism among today's intellectuals. He asks us to pray this month that intellectuals will seek truth sincerely and, by so doing, come to know God.

The union of Christian faith and classical reason, the Pope has said, led to the flourishing of the gospel in the first and second millennia. Faith and reason worked together as scholars and scientists expanded the world's knowledge. They built an intellectual tradition on the idea that all truth is God's truth. But that view of truth has weakened in our secular age (Benedict XVI,

Address to Academic Community, Prague, Sep. 27, 2009).

The relativism the Holy Father deplors holds that truth is not absolute (true for everyone at all times), but is only true for some people some of the time.

Under relativism, truth is no longer objective like a hard fact of physics or math, but is subjective, personal and changeable, like a feeling. (Absurdly, their assertion that truth is relative is itself a claim to absolute truth.)

Benedict says that relativistic scholars tend toward partial and temporary conclusions. Relativists tend to assign the same importance to every idea and be swayed by what is fashionable, convenient, or well-funded.

Meanwhile humans yearn for truth, "and it is to this yearning that religious faith, the various arts, philosophy, theology, and



other scientific disciplines, each with its own method, should seek to respond" (Benedict XVI, Sep. 27, 2009).

We pray that scholars and teachers will again seek truth and come to know the one true God.

Reflection:

How will you open yourself to ongoing learning that will help you share your faith with others?

Reading:

Romans 1: 19-23 For what can be known about God is evident to them... Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes.

Mission Intention

The Church's Missionary Identity. *That the Church, aware of its missionary identity, may strive to follow Christ faithfully and to proclaim his gospel to all peoples.*



We begin Lent this month - a time for conversion and growth. With that in mind, Pope Benedict asks us to pray that the entire Church may become more aware of its missionary identity, striving to follow Christ faithfully in proclaiming the gospel to the whole world.

Why do we sometimes forget that evangelizing is a happy duty? Jesus has connected us to God. Our lives, even our sufferings, have meaning and purpose now. Thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit, our hearts are full of love for God and for one another. We have received the wonderful gift of eternal life. All of this is tremendously good news. Of course we want to share it with others.

On World Mission Sunday 2009, Pope Benedict wrote, "The Church's mission is to spread hope contagiously among all peoples." Contagiously is a word we ordinarily use to describe the spread of disease. But our Holy Father uses it to make the point that we should be spreading the gospel without even being aware of it. People will naturally be drawn to us and become "infected" by our good humor, our kindness, our cheerfulness, our faith. They will want what we have.

In that same message the Pope also asked us "to pray to the Holy Spirit for an increase in the Church's passion for her mission to spread the Kingdom of God."

That Kingdom of God is already among us, transforming the world from age to age. The Kingdom of God is within us too, converting and renewing our hearts.

Lent is a time of preparation for Holy Week and the solemn remembrance of Jesus' life-giving death and resurrection. And it's preparation for Pentecost, when we pray for a new outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. May we be open to those gifts and pray, as Pope Benedict has asked, that we may follow Christ, who was led by the Spirit, to proclaim the good news of God's love in all that he said and did.

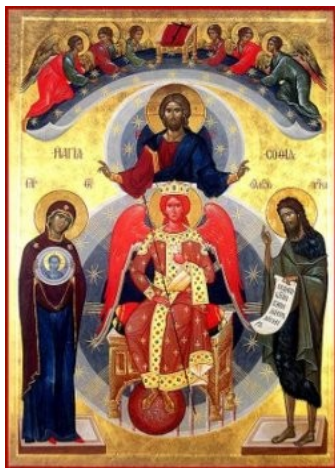


Reflection:

How do you show others your joy and gratitude for the gifts that God has given you?

Reading:

1 Peter 3:15 Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.



Prayer of the Month

God of my fathers, Lord of mercy, you who have made all things by your word, with you is Wisdom. Send her forth from your holy heavens and from your glorious throne dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is your pleasure. For she knows and understands all things, and will guide me discreetly in my affairs and safeguard me by her glory.

-from Solomon's prayer, Wisdom 9: 1-11

To register as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer, to subscribe to leaflets, or to order additional leaflets for distribution to others, please contact us. Thank you for your generous support of our ministry.

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

3211 South Lake Dr., Ste. 216- Milwaukee, WI 53235- 414-486-1152
www.apostleshipofprayer.org Copyright, 2010: Apostleship of Prayer