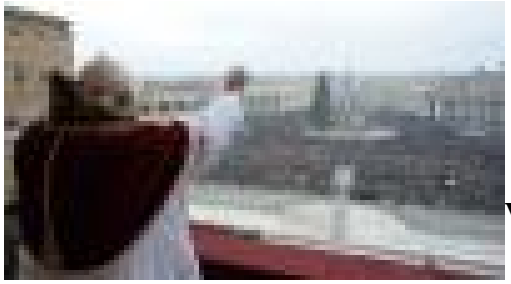
NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Pope Benedict's Christmas message a call for peace

Wire Services | Dec. 27, 2008



VATICAN CITY

Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Christmas with a call to peace and a plea on behalf of the world's children. In the face of violent conflicts, child exploitation and economic woes, the pope said, the birth of Jesus brings a light that "breaks through the gloom" and urges a mentality of solidarity with others.

In his Christmas message, the pope said a more generous and sharing attitude was essential to overcoming global problems, including terrorism, human rights violations and apprehension about "an increasingly uncertain future ... even in affluent nations."

He said, "If people look only to their own interests, our world will certainly fall apart."

In English, he said: "May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies."

Delivering his annual ?*Urbi et Orbi*? message from the balcony of St. Peter?s Basilica, the pope also spoke to the fears of people suffering from the financial crisis.

?Wherever an increasingly uncertain future is regarded with apprehension, even in affluent nations: in each of these places may the light of Christmas shine forth and encourage all people to do their part in a spirit of authentic solidarity,? he said. ?If people look only to their own interests, our world will certainly fall apart.?

The pope called for peace in ?the Holy Land, where the horizon seems once again bleak for Israelis and Palestinians.? He added: ?May it spread throughout Lebanon, Iraq and the whole Middle East.?

Talks are under way for the pope to visit Israel and the Palestinian territories as early as this spring, although the Vatican has not officially announced the trip.

The pope praised the efforts of ?all those who, rather than resigning themselves to the twisted logic of conflict and violence, prefer instead the path of dialogue and negotiation as the means of resolving tensions within each country and finding just and lasting solutions to the conflicts troubling the region.?

Benedict also spoke about conflict in Africa, where he is expected to make his first visit in March, traveling to Angola and Cameroon.

?This light, which brings transformation and renewal, is besought by the people of Zimbabwe, in Africa,

trapped for all too long in a political and social crisis which, sadly, keeps worsening,? he said.

The pope also prayed for ?the men and women of the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially in the war-torn region of Kivu; Darfur, in Sudan; and Somalia, whose interminable sufferings are the tragic consequence of the lack of stability and peace.?

The pope spoke in 64 languages.

Source URL (retrieved on *02/11/2016 - 20:02*): http://ncronline.org/news/pope-benedicts-christmas-message-call-peace