



## **POPE BENEDICT XVI FIRST MESSAGE FOR LENT FOCUSES ON DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND.**

In Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten message, he reminds us that, "Lent is a privileged time of interior pilgrimage towards Him Who is the source of mercy. It is a pilgrimage in which He Himself accompanies us through the desert of our poverty, sustaining us on our way towards the intense joy of Easter."

The Pope emphasized that God is always there to guard us and sustain us. The Lord is always with us and hears the cry of His people especially to those who are longing for joy, peace and love. Even in the desolation of misery, loneliness, violence and hunger that indiscriminately afflict children, adults, and the elderly, God does not allow darkness to prevail because God continually look after His people. He said that, "Even now, the compassionate 'gaze' of Christ continues to fall upon individuals and people."

Benedict reflected upon an issue much debated today: the question of development. "This has to be emphasized all the more in today's rapidly changing world, in which our responsibility towards the poor emerges with ever greater clarity and urgency."

The primary contribution that the Church offers to the development of mankind and people does not consist merely of material means or technical solutions. Rather, it involves the proclamation of the truth of Christ.

These reflections lead the Holy Father to emphasize "the central role of authentic religious values in responding to man's deepest concerns, and in supplying the ethical motivations for his personal and social responsibilities. Even in this era of global interdependence, it is clear that no economic, social, or political project can replace that gift of self to another through which charity is expressed. Those who act according to the logic of the Gospel live the faith as friendship with God Incarnate and, like Him, bear the burden of the material and spiritual needs of their neighbors."

We must help others to find God in the merciful face of Christ. Without this perspective, civilization lacks a solid foundation.

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