

Benedict XVI Marks Feast of St. James

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, JULY 25, 2010 (Zenit).-

Benedict XVI today greeted pilgrims in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, gathered at the site traditionally held to be St James' tomb, as the Church marks the apostle's feast day.

After praying the midday Angelus with the faithful at the papal residence in Castel Gandolfo, the Pope sent his greetings to Spain on this feast of the nation's patron.

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He affirmed that he is looking forward to his visit to Santiago, scheduled for this November.

During his address in Italian, the Holy Father noted the Apostle James, known as "the Greater," who "left his father and his work as a fisherman to follow Jesus and give his life for him -- the first among the apostles to do so."

"From my heart," he added, "I address a special thought to the many pilgrims traveling to Santiago de Compostela! May the Virgin Mary help us to rediscover the beauty and the profundity of Christian prayer."

Later, speaking in Spanish, the Pontiff noted how James has always been venerated in Compostela, and the influence the apostle has had in Spanish-speaking countries.

"In this Compostelan Holy Year," he said, "I also want to unite myself to the numerous pilgrims there next November, during a trip in which I will also visit Barcelona."

"Following the footsteps of the apostle," Benedict XVI said, "let us walk the path of our lives giving a constant testimony of faith, hope and charity."