



DEVOTION TO THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

VATICAN CITY, 5 JUL 2009 (VIS) -

At midday today, before praying the Angelus, Benedict XVI recalled how the first Sunday of July was once dedicated to devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Christ, a tradition confirmed "by Blessed John XXIII who, in his Apostolic Letter 'Inde a primis' of 30 June 1960, explained its significance and approved its litanies".

Addressing the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, the Pope pointed out that "the theme of blood, associated with that of the Pascal Lamb, is of primary importance in Sacred Scripture", and he recalled Christ's words at the Last Supper: "this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins".

"It is written in Genesis that the blood of Abel killed by his brother Cain calls to God from the earth. Unfortunately, today as yesterday, this cry has not ceased as human blood continues to flow because of violence, injustice and hatred. When will men learn that life is sacred and belongs only to God? When will they understand that we are all brothers? To the cry for spilt blood which rises from so many parts of the earth, God responds with the blood of His Son Who gave His life for us. Christ did not respond to evil with evil, but with good, with His infinite love.

"The Blood of Christ is the pledge of God's faithful love for humankind. By gazing at the wounds of the crucified Christ each man, even in conditions of abject moral poverty, can say: 'God has not abandoned me, He loves me, He gave his life for me', and thus rediscover hope".