



» 02/28/2013 15:52

VATICAN

Pope to cardinals: in conclave, be docile to the Spirit, I promise "reverence and obedience" to my successor

Pope Benedict XVI bids farewell to the College of Cardinals by. "Among you, there is the future Pope." "I n these 8 years we have experienced in faith beautiful moments of radiant light in the Churches' journey along with times when clouds have darkened the sky. We have tried to serve Christ and his Church with deep and total love which is the soul of our ministry". 3461 media organizations accredited to cover the event.



Vatican City (AsiaNews) - In Conclave " be fully docile to the action of the Holy Spirit in the election of the new Pope", "whom, here to today, I already promise my unconditional reverence and obedience." The Clementine Hall: Benedict XVI's farewell to the College of Cardinals. 144 Cardinal's are present. In addition to resident cardinals, many more who came to Rome to greet Benedict XVI and be ready to respond to the convocation for the Congregations of the Vacant See, although some electors are still missing. Also present were the non-cardinals dicastery heads and other members of the Curia, such as the substitute, the Secretary for Relations with

States, and ceremonial ushers.

The Pope appeared smiling and relaxed, before saying goodbye, one by one, to those present, evoking, like yesterday, his pontificate. "In these eight years - he says - we have experienced in faith beautiful moments of radiant light in the Churches' journey along with times when clouds have darkened the sky. We have tried to serve Christ and his Church with deep and total love which is the soul of our ministry. We have gifted hope that comes from Christ alone, and which alone can illuminate our path. Together we can thank the Lord who has helped us grow in communion, to pray to together, to help you to continue to grow in this deep unity so that the College of Cardinals is like an orchestra, where diversity, an expression of the universal Church, always contributes to a higher sense of harmony and concord".

Benedict XVI responded to the address made by the Cardinal Dean, Angelo Sodano, who expressed "or your selfless witness of apostolic service, for the good of the Church of Christ and of all humanity." "Holy Father - he added - Holy Father, with deep love we have tried to accompany you on your journey, reliving the experience of the disciples of Emmaus who, after walking with Jesus for a good stretch of road, said to one another: "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way?" (Luke 24:32).?"

"I would like - added the Pope - to leave you with a simple thought that is close to my heart, a thought on the Church, Her mystery, which is for all of us, we can say, the reason and the passion of our lives. I am helped by an expression of Romano Guardini's, written in the year in which the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council approved the Constitution Lumen Gentium, his last with a personal dedication to me, so the words of this book are particularly dear to me . Guardini says: "The Church is not an institution devised and built at table, but a living reality. She lives along the course of time by transforming Herself, like any living being, yet Her nature remains the same. At Her heart is Christ. This was our experience yesterday, I think, in the square. We could see that the Church is a living body, animated by the Holy Spirit, and truly lives by the power of God, She is in the world but not of the world. She is of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, as we saw yesterday. This is why another eloquent expression of Guardini's is also true: "The Church is awakening in souls." The Church lives, grows and awakens in those souls which like the Virgin Mary accept and conceive the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. They offer to God their flesh and in their own poverty and humility become capable of giving birth to Christ in the world today. Through the Church the mystery of the Incarnation remains present forever. Christ continues to walk through all times in all places. "

" Let us remain united, dear brothers, to this mystery, in prayer, especially in daily Eucharist, and thus serve the Church and all humanity. This is our joy that no one can take from us.. Prior to bidding farewell to each of you personally, I want to tell you that I will continue to be close to you in prayer, especially in the next few days, so that you may all be fully docile to the action of the Holy Spirit in the election of the new Pope. May the Lord show you what is willed by Him. And among you, among the College of Cardinals, there is also the future Pope, to whom, here to today, I already promise my unconditional reverence and obedience. For all this, with affection and

gratitude, I cordially impart upon you my Apostolic Blessing. "

"These are the words - said Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Press Office of the Holy See, during the daily briefing - which touched us deeply." Father Lombardi later recalled the "beautiful and original" way in which Benedict XVI left no doubt about his obedience to the new Pope at the end of his address, "since he will not be present in the Sistine Chapel when, after the election, the cardinals will make the act of obedience to the new pope". "He wanted to say - he said - that not only has no intention of minimally interfering with his successor, but, like every person who is part of the Church, recognizes the authority of the successor of Peter."

This afternoon, around the time of departure from the Pope from the Vatican, there will be the last tweet of Benedict XVI. During the Vacant See, of course there will be no further tweets and it will be up to the next Pope to decide whether to continue the account. It was also announced today that Card. Sodano will send out the official convocation to the general congregations tomorrow.

Father Lombardi said that, after the departure of Pope Benedict XVI, they will seal the papal apartment and he highlighted attention the entire world is paying to this event, as evidenced by the fact that up to now there are 3641 accredited media. These include 968 different news corporations, in 24 languages from 61 countries. Divided by category, 336 are from the print media, 156 photographers, 2470 television, 231 radio and 115 web. (FP)

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