

Prayer Vigil for the Pope Benedict XVI and his Pontificate

- **Introduction** (Don Stefano Tardani)
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduction to the Holy Rosary – Mysteries of Light**
- **Lightning the flambeaux**

§ First mystery of Light: The Baptism of Jesus

From the Gospel of Mark (1, 9-11)

And there in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. And suddenly, out of the water, rend the heavens and saw the Spirit descending like a dove toward him. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, my beloved, in you I am well pleased."

Let us meditate on the defense of life.

What's happening to the human being in a society that sometimes individualistic, hedonistic and promoting the culture of death, is unable to affirm the value of life, to fight for the rights of a human embryo, to grasp the gift of life. Life is a gift from God and everyone is called to rediscover its meaning and then accept, promote and defend it. In the Baptism every Christian, by the Grace of Jesus Christ, find the reason and the strength to live with joy the gift of their lives and witness it, announcing to the world the hope and greatness of life, that in God will never end.

From the Holy Father's Message at the Angelus in S. Peter Square - 5.2. 2006

Human life has a value of paramount importance which demands recognition, and the Gospel asks that it always be respected. [...] I would like to underline the importance of the service of love for the support and promotion of human life. [...] Every human life, as such, deserves and demands always to be defended and promoted. We are well aware that all too often this truth risks being opposed by the hedonism widespread in the so-called society of well-being: life is exalted as long as it is pleasurable, but there is a tendency to no longer respect it as soon as it is sick or handicapped. Based on deep love for every person it is possible instead to put into practice effective forms of service to life: to newborn life and to life marked by marginalization or suffering, especially in its terminal phase.

Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, Glory be to the Father, My Jesus

§ Second mystery of Light: The wedding feast of Cana

From the Gospel of John (2, 1-10)

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

There were six stone jars for ritual purification of the Jews, each containing from eighty to one hundred twenty liters. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." They filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the ruler of the feast." So they took it. When the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and didn't know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is worse. You have kept the good wine until now!"

Let us meditate on the elderly.

The elderly are lonely, often relegated to the margins of society and in some cases completely abandoned. Thus grows in them the feeling of resignation and futility. It happens then that they will feel of weight in their families and choose themselves to live alone or in nursing homes!

The advanced age, is a propitious time to grasp the meaning of life, to reach the wisdom of the heart and prepare to end with God. Let us recognize the important mission of the elderly, their wealth of experience and wisdom! Elderly with their advices and valuable lessons can humanize our society.

We are called to observe and estimate the age of oldness, recognizing it as a gift to be valued for all. We must prevent contempt for the lives of the elderly from taking root, as it could, among other things, pave the way for proposals for euthanasia.

Let make the elderly living in our families feel all our love, let's make them feel that they are not alone, but that we consider them an important gift!

From the Holy Father's address to participants in the plenary assembly of the pontifical council for the family, 5.4.2008

Old age, with its problems that are also linked to the new family and social contexts because of modern development, should be evaluated carefully and always in the light of the truth about man, the family and the community. It is always necessary to react strongly to what dehumanizes society. Parish and diocesan communities are forcefully challenged by these problems and are seeking today to meet the needs of the elderly. Ecclesial movements and associations exist which have embraced this important and urgent cause. It is necessary to join forces to defeat together all forms of marginalization, for it is not only they - grandfathers, grandmothers, senior citizens - who are being injured by the individualistic mindset, but everyone.

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§ Third mystery of Light: The proclamation of the kingdom of God.

From the Gospel of Matthew (9, 35-36)

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Let us meditate on work.

Precariousness, fear of being left without work and low wages, nowadays do not help to form a family. In work, sometimes, you are exploited with inhuman hours and without the necessary safety, you are threatened with dismissal if you try to assert your rights. There are people who have become slaves of work and income: there is only that in their lives, everything else comes afterwards.

God is forgotten, family is forgotten, because everybody wants to live only for themselves! Jesus touches the wounded man encourages him and heals him. So the Church constantly shakes the conscience, because the real good may be again the center of social development to ensure human dignity with fair wages and human work.

From homily of Benedict XVI at the Eucharistic celebration for all workers on the feast of Saint Joseph - 19.3.2006

When the Creator shaped man in his image and likeness, he asked him to till the land (cf. Gn 2: 5-6). It was because of the sin of our first parents that work became a burden and an affliction (cf. Gn 3: 6-8), but in the divine plan it retains its value, unaltered [...]

Work is of fundamental importance to the fulfillment of the human being and to the development of society. Thus, it must always be organized and carried out with full respect for human dignity and must always serve the common good.

At the same time, it is indispensable that people not allow themselves to be enslaved by work or idolize it, claiming to find in it the ultimate and definitive meaning of life.

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§ Fourth mystery of Light: The Transfiguration.

From Gospel of Luke (9, 28-35)

Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."

Let us meditate on youth discomfort.

Many young people today, live situations of obvious discomfort by using drugs and alcohol, taking distorted forms of sexuality and bullying.

The family plays an important role. There are families where superficiality, boredom, worldliness and materialism reign rather than love, where parents abandon their children in front of the television or the Internet to avoid being disturbed or because they have no time, families far from God, where no prayers and works of faith exist.

Provoked by consumer society, young people often live their sexuality in a distorted way: thus the use of the body and excessive pursuit of pleasure become experiences that leave a mark, until you lose the sense of sin in life, true love and dignity. Young people need to discover that their life is precious, especially as wanted and loved by God.

The Gospel of the Transfiguration of Christ that we have heard, in which God reveals His Son as the salvation of humanity, invites us to convey to young people the profound truth of our existence: that we were created for love and to love in truth.

From the address of Benedict XVI at welcoming celebration by the young people during the apostolic journey to Sydney on the occasion of the 23rd World Youth Day - 17.7.2008

In our personal lives and in our communities, we can encounter a hostility, something dangerous; a poison which threatens to corrode what is good, reshape who we are, and distort the purpose for which we have been created. [...].

There is also something sinister which stems from the fact that freedom and tolerance are so often separated from truth. This is fuelled by the notion, widely held today, that there are no absolute truths to guide our lives. Relativism, by indiscriminately giving value to practically everything, has made "experience" all-important. Yet, experiences, detached from any consideration of what is good or true, can lead, not to genuine freedom, but to moral or intellectual confusion, to a lowering of standards, to a loss of self-respect, and even to despair.

Dear friends, life is not governed by chance; it is not random. Your very existence has been willed by God, blessed and given a purpose!

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§ Fifth mystery of Light: The institution of the Eucharist.

From the Gospel of Matthew (26, 26-28)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins".

Let us meditate on the Church.

Today the Church suffers for sins, infidelities and scandals of its children: it is heartbroken for its faithful, disoriented by the lack of confidence in its priests and constant slander of the world. How much pain our Pope is bearing or our sake and how much patience and meekness is witnessing the world! He, pastor of the Church, carries on with strength and courage the truth even if it hurts. Like Jesus, he is not afraid to expose his face to the world to protect the Church from what threatens it from inside and outside.

We need to return to live in our Church, to regain the hope and freedom that we have always felt and that can not be erased by human limitations and sin.

The Church has always been the natural place of sharing and joy. Here the families experience the joy of being together and children learn to have hope for the future, trust in God and in others. So the Church is the family of God where we can call each others brothers and sisters: it is here that everybody finds maternal embrace that makes the human the heart and the paternal force that pushes us to move forward with courage and faithfulness to the Lord.

From the Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father to the Catholics of Ireland 19 March 2010

To the victims of abuse and their families

You have suffered grievously and I am truly sorry. I know that nothing can undo the wrong you have endured. [...] It is understandable that you find it hard to forgive or be reconciled with the Church. In her name, I openly express the shame and remorse that we all feel. At the same time, I ask you not to lose hope. It is in the communion of the Church that we encounter the person of Jesus Christ, who was himself a victim of injustice and sin. Like you, he still bears the wounds of his own unjust suffering. He understands the depths of your pain and its enduring effect upon your lives and your relationships, including your relationship with the Church [...]. Yet Christ's own wounds, transformed by his redemptive sufferings, are the very means by which the power of evil is broken and we are reborn to life and hope [...].

I pray that, by drawing nearer to Christ and by participating in the life of his Church – a Church purified by penance and renewed in pastoral charity – you will come to rediscover Christ's infinite love for each one of you. I am confident that in this way you will be able to find reconciliation, deep inner healing and peace.

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- **Hail, holy Queen**
- **Homely of His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Comastri**
- **Prayer for Holy Father Benedict XVI**
- **Blessing**