

## **Pope's Address at Conclusion of Lenten Spiritual Exercises**

**"In this Suffering Figure of the Son of God, We Begin to See the Most Profound Beauty of Our Creator and Redeemer"**

VATICAN CITY, February 24, 2013 - Here is the translation of Pope Benedict's address at the conclusion of the Lenten Spiritual Exercises led by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi.

Dear brothers,

Dear friends!

At the end of this spiritually dense week, there remains just one thing to say: Thank you! I thank you for this praying and listening community that accompanied me during this week. Thank you, above all, Eminence, for these very beautiful "walks" in the universe of faith, in the universe of the Psalms. We are left fascinated by the richness, by the profundity, by the beauty of this universe of faith and we are grateful that the Word of God has spoken to us in a new way, with new power.

"The art of believing, the art of praying" was the thread. It came to my mind that the medieval theologians translated the word "logos" not only as "verbum" (word) but also as "ars" (art): "verbum" and "ars" are interchangeable. For the medieval theologians, only in the two words together does the whole meaning of the word "logos" appear. The "Logos" is not only mathematical reason: the "Logos" has a heart, the "Logos" is love. Truth is beautiful, truth and beauty go together: beauty is the seal of truth.

And, nevertheless, you, through the Psalms and through our daily experience, also firmly stressed that the "very beautiful" of the sixth day – spoken by the Creator – is permanently contradicted, in this world, by evil, by suffering, by corruption. It seems that the evil one wants permanently to stain creation, to contradict God and to make his truth and beauty unrecognizable. In a world so characterized also by evil, the "Logos," the eternal Beauty and the eternal "Art," must appear as a "caput cruentatum" (bloody head). The incarnate Son, the incarnate "Logos," is crowned with a crown of thorns; and nevertheless, precisely in this way, in this suffering figure of the Son of God, we begin to see the most profound beauty of our Creator and Redeemer; and yet we can, in the silence of the "dark night," hear the Word. Believing is nothing other than touching the hand of God in the darkness of the world and thus, in silence, to hear the Word, to see Love.

Eminence, thank you for everything and let us continue to take "walks" in this mysterious universe of faith, to be ever more able to pray, to proclaim, to be witnesses of truth, which is beautiful, which is love.

Finally, dear friends, I would like to thank all of you, and not only for this week, but of these 8 years in which you have borne with me, with great competence, affection, love, faith, the weight of the Petrine office. This gratitude remains in me and even if now there ends the "external," "visible" communion – as Cardinal Ravasi said – there remains spiritual closeness, there remains a profound communion in prayer. In this certainty we go forward, certain of God's victory, certain of the truth of beauty and love. I thank all of you.