



The Holy See

CONFERRAL OF THE "RATZINGER PRIZE" 2013

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 26 October 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I thank you and I am very glad to meet with you, especially as a sign of our gratitude and of our great affection for Pope emeritus Benedict XVI.

I would like to share a reflection with you which comes spontaneously to mind when I think of the truly singular gift which he has given the Church with his books on Jesus of Nazareth.

I remember when the first volume came out, some said: but what is this? Popes do not write books on theology, they write encyclicals!... Of course, Pope Benedict saw the issue, but here as always he followed the voice of the Lord in his enlightened conscience. In these books he was not setting forth Magisterial teaching in the proper sense nor was he engaging in academic research. He was making a gift to the Church, and to all people, of what he had that was most precious: his knowledge of Jesus, the fruit of years and years of study, theological discussion and prayer. For Benedict XVI pursued theology on his knees, and we all know it. And he made this available in the most accessible way.

No one can measure the good he has done through this gift; the Lord alone knows! But we all have some kind of idea, having listened to the many people who thanks to these books on Jesus of Nazareth have nourished their faith, have deepened, or even encountered for the first time, Christ, in an adult manner, combining the demands of reason with the search for the face of God.

At the same time, the work of Benedict XVI has sparked a new season of historical and

christological studies on the Gospels, and this is the setting of your Symposium for which I congratulate the organizers and relators.

However, special congratulations go to Rev. Prof. Richard Burrige and to Prof. Christian Schaller, to whom the Ratzinger Prize has been awarded this year.

Also on behalf of my beloved Predecessor, with whom I met three or four days ago, I wish to express my heartfelt congratulations to you: May the Lord bless you and your work at the service of his Kingdom.

And may he bless you all, dear friends, and your loved ones. Thank you!