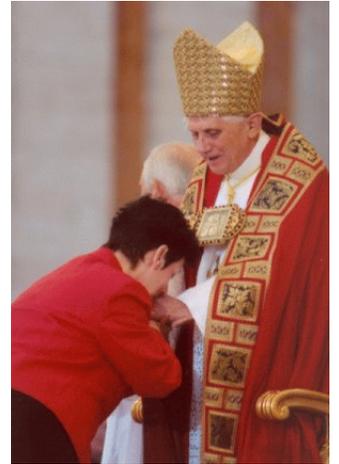


2006 Pentecost Vespers Address



Pope Benedict XVI and Patti Mansfield

Dear Holy Father,

With all our hearts we thank you for inviting us to meet with you on this glorious feast of Pentecost. We are your sons and daughters; we are sons and daughters of the Church, children of Mary, and we are the fruit of the Second Vatican Council.

Holy Father, I was given the grace, in February 1967, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit at a retreat for students from Duquesne University which marked the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Immediately I turned to the Documents of Vatican II for guidance in understanding my experience. What I read in Lumen Gentium, 12 about the charismatic gifts encouraged me to be open to the Holy Spirit and His surprises. Every movement and community has its own special history, but in each one exists this same reality: “The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rm. 5:5).

Holy Father, thank you for loving us. Thank you for your constant support and encouragement. Thank you for saying that you are a friend of the movements and that we are a sign of the New Springtime. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my word” (cf. Jn. 14:23), and we stand ready to receive your word, Holy Father, and to follow your direction because we love you.

St. Catherine of Siena called the Pope of her day, “Daddy, the sweet Christ on earth.” We echo her tenderness and affection today by calling you, Pope Benedict XVI, “the sweet Christ on earth” for us. We place ourselves in full availability to your service in the New Evangelization. For it is not ourselves that we preach - not our movements, our communities, nor our works - no, it is not ourselves that we preach, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake (cf. II Cor. 4:5).

Holy Father, you have cried out to the Church and the world: “Deus Caritas Est!” May we join you in proclaiming that Jesus Himself is indeed the pearl of great price and the treasure hidden in the field worth giving up everything else to possess (cf. Mt.13:46).

Thank you, Holy Father, for calling us here to the heart of the Church, for it is here that we discover the vocation we share as ecclesial movements and new communities. Our vocation is love! Today we make our own the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and we say: “In the heart of the Church, our Mother, we want to be and we will be love!”

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