

# REFLECTIONS ON POPE BENEDICT XVI'S MONTHLY INTENTIONS

**September 2010**

*Editor's Note: Apostleship of Prayer receives monthly prayer intentions from Pope Benedict XVI and urges Christians throughout the world to unite in prayer for those intentions. The reflections below seek to illuminate the Holy Father's concerns.*

## **General Intention**

**The Word of God as Incentive for Social Development.** *That the proclamation of the Word of God may renew people's hearts, encouraging them to work toward authentic social progress.*



Pope Benedict XVI has said, "The Word of God is the foundation of everything, it is the true reality." Yet we build our lives on money, believing it makes us secure. "With the fall of large banks, this money disappears, it is nothing. The one who builds his life on matter, on success, on appearances, builds upon sand. Only the Word of God is the foundation of all reality...The realist is the one who builds his life on this foundation, which is permanent" (Opening Address, Synod of Bishops, 2008).

September's prayer intention reminds us that the Word of God is our rock and our inspiration. The Pope asks us to pray that the Word will go forth in our time and renew our hearts.

The reality is that there can be no difference between preaching the Gospel and doing the Gospel. We "translate the Word we have heard into gestures of love because this is the only way to make the Gospel proclamation credible" (Concluding Homily, Synod of Bishops, 2008).

The Holy Father reminds us that Sacred scripture commands us to work for justice. We are faithful to the Word of God when we respect the rights of every person and work with love to help those who suffer. The Holy Spirit calls the whole Church to live this Gospel.

Jesus Christ reveals God's love for us -the lost, the weak, the suffering. In so doing, he reveals our great worth, for he who is the "image of the invisible God," is fully human, like us in everything except sin. He restores in us the divine likeness and raises us to everlasting life.

May all who hear the Word of God recognize its reality and be inspired to work for authentic social progress, justice for all.



**Reflection:**

How do you recognize that the Word of God - not material goods - is the foundation for your life? As you listen to the Word, how does it encourage you to work for justice?

**Reading:**

*Isaiah 55:10-11* For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

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**Mission Intention**

**End of War.** *That by opening our hearts to love we may put an end to wars and conflicts which continue to bloody our world.*



Does it seem odd to you that this month's mission intention has to do with putting an end to war? What does war have to do with missions?

Ask any missionary striving to bring the Gospel to people who are caught up in conflict. War hinders evangelization. People fear for their lives. They grieve for the dead. They must flee their homes. They are forced to fight. How can they give time and attention to the Word of God?

Perhaps it seems odd to you that the Pope seeks a spiritual solution to the physical reality of war. He asks us to "open our hearts to love" as the way to end war. Is it unrealistic to pray for peace? Is this how to end war?

At World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, 2005, Pope Benedict explained how Jesus Christ is putting an end to violence in our world. "By making the bread into his Body and the wine into his Blood, [Jesus] anticipates his death, he accepts it in his heart, and he transforms it into an action of love. What on the outside is simply brutal violence - the Crucifixion - from within becomes an act of total self-giving love...Here now is the central act of transformation that alone can truly renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and death into life."

The Holy Father continued, "This is like inducing nuclear fission in the very heart of being - the victory of love over hatred, the victory of love over death. Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can trigger the series of transformations that little by little will change the world. All other changes remain superficial and cannot save."

At Fatima in 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary called for prayer and penance, warning of a worse war. Mary's peace plan has not been followed. Humanity has not turned to God in prayer, has not opened its heart to love.

Peace is only possible if there is conversion of heart through the Gospel and grace. We are praying for an end to



war when we pray that people will receive the Word of God, be transformed by him, and live as the one human family God intended us to be.

**Reflection:**

How will you uproot war and establish peace in your own heart?

**Reading:**

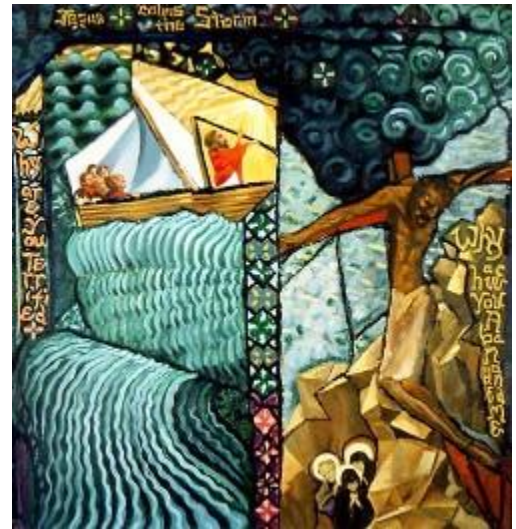
*Isaiah 32:17* Justice will bring about peace; right will produce calm and security.

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**Prayer of the Month**

O Lord, see how everywhere the winds have burst forth and the sea is convulsed with rising waves. Command both the winds and the sea, we beseech you, for you alone are able. Restore to humanity the true peace of your Name, that peace which the world cannot give, and the calm of social harmony. Under your favor and inspiration may people return to due order, and having overthrown the rule of greed, bring back again the love of God, justice, charity toward neighbor, and temperance in all desires. May your kingdom come! Amen.

- A prayer for peace by Pope Leo XIII



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**APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER**

3211 South Lake Dr., Ste. 216

Milwaukee, WI 53235

414-486-1152

[www.apostleshipofprayer.org](http://www.apostleshipofprayer.org)

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