

THE ASSISI MEETING WAS A SIGN OF FRIENDSHIP AND FRATERNITY

VATICAN CITY, 28 OCT 2011 (VIS) - This morning in the Vatican, the Holy Father received representatives of various religions, and of non-believers, who yesterday participated in the Day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world, celebrated in the Italian town of Assisi under the theme: "Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace".

Addressing the group in English he thanked them for having taken part in yesterday's event. "In a certain sense", he said, "this gathering is representative of the billions of men and women throughout our world who are actively engaged in promoting justice and peace. It is also a sign of the friendship and fraternity which has flourished as the fruit of the efforts of so many pioneers in this kind of dialogue. May this friendship continue to grow among all the followers of the world's religions and with men and women of good will everywhere".

"Looking back, we can appreciate the foresight of the late Pope John Paul II in convening the first Assisi meeting. ... Meetings of this sort are necessarily exceptional and infrequent, yet they are a vivid expression of the fact that every day, throughout our world, people of different religious traditions live and work together in harmony. It is surely significant for the cause of peace that so many men and women, inspired by their deepest convictions, are committed to working for the good of the human family.

"In this way", Benedict XVI added, "I am sure that yesterday's meeting has given us a sense of how genuine is our desire to contribute to the good of all our fellow human beings and how much we have to share with one another.

"As we go our separate ways, let us draw strength from this experience and, wherever we may be, let us continue refreshed on the journey that leads to truth, the pilgrimage that leads to peace. I thank all of you from my heart".

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