

RESPECT FOR THE EARTH AND RECONCILIATION IN AFRICA

VATICAN CITY, 13 NOV 2011 (VIS) - After praying the Angelus this morning, the Pope mentioned that today marks World Diabetes Day, "a chronic illness which affects many people, including the young", he said. "I pray for all those brothers and sisters, for those who share their daily fatigue, and for the healthcare workers and volunteers who assist them".

Speaking French, he also referred to his forthcoming trip to Benin during which he will sign the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The Pope highlighted how his visit will seek "to reaffirm the faith and hope of Christians in Africa To your prayers I entrust this journey and the inhabitants of the dear continent of Africa , especially those who are experiencing insecurity and violence. May Our Lady of Africa accompany and sustain the efforts of everyone who works for reconciliation, justice and peace".

Continuing his remarks in German, he sent greetings "to the faithful who today will participate in the beatification of the martyr priest Karl Lampert in Dornbirn. In the dark days of National Socialism, he clearly understood the words of St. Paul 'we are not of the night or of darkness'. During an interrogation which could have given him his freedom, he declared: 'I love my Church. I remain faithful to my Church and to the priesthood. I am with Christ and love His Church'".

He then recalled how, at the initiative of the "Aid to the Church in Need" association, Poland is currently celebrating a Day of Solidarity with the persecuted Church. "This year", he said, "with your prayers and your offerings you are giving particular support to the Church in Sudan. My hope is that the Day may raise people's awareness to poverty and persecutions, and to the need to respect human dignity and the right to religious freedom".

He also noted that the Italian Church is today celebrating the Day of Thanksgiving. "Looking at the fruits of the earth, which this year too the Lord has given us, we recognise that the work of man would be in vain if He did not make it fruitful. ... Let us give thanks and undertake to respect the earth, which the Lord has entrusted to our care".

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