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On Importance of Sunday Mass

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"Not an Imposition, But a Joy"

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 13, 2005 (Zenit) - Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered Sunday from the window of his study, before praying the midday Angelus with thousands gathered in St. Peter's Square.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The Year of the Eucharist continues, called by our beloved Pope John Paul II, to reawaken ever more, in the consciences of believers, wonder toward this great Sacrament. In this singular Eucharistic time, one of the recurring topics is Sunday, the Day of the Lord, a topic that was also at the center of the recent Italian Eucharistic Congress, held in Bari. During the conclusive celebration, I also underlined how participation at Sunday Mass must be seen by a Catholic not as an imposition or a weight, but as a need and joy. To meet with brothers, to listen to the Word of God and to be nourished of Christ, immolated for us, is an experience that gives meaning to life, which infuses peace in the heart. Without Sunday, we Catholics cannot live.

For this reason parents are called to make their children discover the value and importance of the response to Christ's invitation, who calls the whole Christian family to Sunday Mass. In this educational endeavor, a particularly significant stage is the first Communion, a real celebration for the parish community, which receives for the first time its smallest children at the Lord's Table.

To underline the importance of this event for the family and the parish, next October 15, God willing, I will have in the Vatican a special meeting of catechesis for children, in particular of Rome and Latium, who during this year have received their first Communion. This festive gathering will fall almost at the end of the Year of the Eucharist, while the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is under way, centered on the Eucharistic mystery. It will be an opportune and beautiful circumstance to confirm the essential role that the sacrament of the Eucharist has in the formation and spiritual growth of children.

From now on I entrust this meeting to the Virgin Mary, that she may teach us to love Jesus ever more, in constant meditation of his Word and adoration of his Eucharistic presence, and help us to make young generations discover the "precious pearl" of the Eucharist, which gives true and full meaning to life.

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Pope Benedict XVI - Bishop of Rome, 661-869-1000
Email: info@yourcatholicvoice.org
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