

POPE CALLS LAITY TO RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH

Says a Change of Mentality Is Needed

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, AUG. 24, 2012 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI says the laity should be seen as truly "co-responsible" for the Church, and not just "collaborators" with the clergy.

The Pope said this in an Aug. 10 message released Thursday by the Vatican. It is addressed to the 6th Assembly of the International Catholic Action Forum. The five-day assembly is under way through Sunday in Romania.

"Co-responsibility requires a change in mentality, particularly with regard to the role of the laity in the Church," the Holy Father said.

Laity should be considered "persons truly 'co-responsible' for the being and activity of the Church," he stated.

Hence, he called for a committed laity who are united, each making his own "specific contribution to the Church's mission, in accordance with the ministries and tasks each one has in the life of the Church, and always in cordial communion with the bishops."

Recalling that Lumen Gentium spoke of the laity-clergy relationship as "familiar," the Pontiff said it is "important to deepen and to live out this spirit of profound communion in the Church, which characterized the early Christian community, as the book of the Acts of the Apostles attests."

"Feel the commitment to work for the Church's mission to be your own," he exhorted, "through prayer, through study, through active participation in ecclesial life, through an attentive and positive gaze at the world, in the continual search for the signs of the times."

Benedict XVI encouraged "serious and daily" ongoing formation, saying the laity are "called to be courageous and credible witnesses in every sphere of society, so that the Gospel might be the light that brings hope in difficult situations, in troubles and in the darkness that men today so often find along the path of life."

"To guide others to an encounter with Christ by announcing his message of salvation with language and ways understandable in our own day marked by rapidly transforming social and cultural advances, is the great challenge of the new evangelization," he added. "[...] At this stage in history, work in the light of the Church's social teaching to become a laboratory of 'globalization of solidarity and charity,' in order to grow with the entire Church in the co-responsibility of offering a future of hope to humanity, by having the courage to make even demanding proposals."--- --- ---