



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND BARCELONA

(NOVEMBER 6-7, 2010)

VISIT TO THE OBRA BENÉFICO-SOCIAL NEN DÉU

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI

Barcelona

Sunday, 7 November 2010

(Video)

*Your Eminence,
Dear Brother Bishops,
Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious Men and Women,
Distinguished Authorities,
Dear Friends,*

I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet all those who represent what has been for more than a century the *Obra Benéfico-Social del Nen Déu*. I thank the Archbishop of Barcelona, Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, Sister Rosario, Superior of this community, young Antonio and María del Mar who spoke, as well as the children who have sung so marvellously. All of you have given me a beautiful welcome.

I also thank those present, in particular the Patrons of the *Obra*, the Mother General and the Franciscan Religious of the Sacred Heart, the children, the youth and adults of this institution, their parents and relatives, as well as the professionals and volunteers who carry out praiseworthy work in this place.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the authorities, and I invite them to increase their

efforts to provide adequate social services and assistance to the most needy. I also thank those who, with their generous support, build up and sustain private welfare institutions, such as this Special Education School of *Nen Déu*. At a time when many households are faced with serious economic difficulties, the followers of Christ must multiply concrete gestures of effective and constant solidarity, showing in this way that charity is the hallmark of our Christian life.

The dedication of the Basilica of the Sagrada Familia this morning has highlighted that churches are the sign of the true sanctuary of God among men. Here, I would like to emphasize how, through the efforts of this and similar church institutions, including the new Residence which you have wished to name after the Pope, it is clear that, for the Christian, every man and woman is a true sanctuary of God, and should be treated with the highest respect and affection, above all when they are in need. In this way, the Church desires to put into practice the words of the Lord in the Gospel, "I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). In this land, these words of Christ have motivated many sons and daughters of the Church to dedicate their lives to teaching, to works of assistance and the care of the sick and the disabled. Inspired by their example, I ask you to continue to provide loving care to the smallest and the most needy, giving them the very best of yourselves.

In recent decades, remarkable advances in medicine have greatly contributed to the care of those in greatest need, advances which have been accompanied by a growing conviction of the importance of dedicated and humane treatment for the positive outcome of the healing process. Therefore, it is indispensable that new technological developments in the field of medicine never be to the detriment of respect for human life and dignity, so that those who suffer physical illnesses or handicaps can always receive that love and attention required to make them feel valued as persons in their concrete needs.

I now turn to you, dear children and young people, giving thanks to God for your lives, so precious in his eyes, and I assure you that you have a special place in the Pope's heart. I pray for you every day and I ask you to help me by means of your prayers so that I may faithfully fulfil the mission entrusted to me by Christ. I always remember in my prayers those who are dedicated to helping the suffering, and those who work tirelessly so that the handicapped can take their rightful place in society and not be marginalized because of their limitations. In this respect, I wish to recognize, in a special way, the faithful witness of priests and those who visit the sick at home, in hospitals or in other specialized institutions. They incarnate that important ministry of consolation in the face of human frailty, which the Church seeks to carry out in imitation of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37).

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Mercy and of Blessed Mother Carmen of the Child Jesus, may God bless all those who make up the great family of this splendid *Obra*, as well as your loved ones and those who collaborate in the work of this institution and those similar to it. As a pledge of this, I cordially impart to all my Apostolic Blessing.

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