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JOSEPH FADELLE

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Pope Benedict XVI Believes Christianity Will Rekindle in Europe (1993)

'The Truth Never Ages,' the Holy Father declares in a new documentary screened at the Synod of Bishops, which continues through Oct. 28.

BY CNA/ EWTN NEWS 10/17/2012 Comments (7)

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VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI granted a rare interview to the creators of a documentary in which he said that he is "convinced" that "there will also be a new springtime for Christianity" in Europe.



— Giancarlo Giuliani-Vatican Pool via Getty Images

The bishops, experts and observers at the Synod on the New Evangelization were treated to a screening of the new documentary at the Oct. 15 afternoon session.

"[T]he desire for God ... is profoundly inscribed into each human soul and cannot disappear. Certainly we can forget God for a time ... but God never disappears," Pope Benedict said on screen, though he was not in the audience. "This restlessness ... is an expression of the hope that man may, ever and anew ... start to journey towards this God."

The movie, entitled *Bells of Europe: A Journey Into the Faith in Europe*, considers Christianity, European culture and the future of the continent. In addition to the Pope, it features interviews with leaders of the other main Christian denominations in Europe, as well as leaders in politics and culture.

To emphasize Europe's common Christian roots, the reflections are bound together by the sound of bells ringing out from around the continent, the casting of a bell in the ancient foundry of Agnone, and the music of Estonian composer Arvo Part.

Based on an idea by Jesuit Father Germano Marani, the film was produced by the Vatican Television Center.

In his interview, the Pope expressed several reasons for hope for the future of Christianity in Europe.

"The Gospel ... is true and can therefore never wear out. In each period of history, it reveals new dimensions ... as it responds to the needs of the hearts and minds of human beings, who can walk in this truth and so discover themselves," the Pope said. "It is for this reason, therefore, that I am convinced there will also be a new springtime for Christianity."

Another reason he offered is that "faith in Jesus Christ is quite simply true; and the truth never ages."

No ideology can prevail against Christianity in the long run, he stated.

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"Ideologies have their days numbered. They appear powerful and irresistible, but, after a certain period, they wear out and lose their energy because they lack profound truth. They are particles of truth, but, in the end, they are consumed."

Young people are another source for the Pope's hope.

"Young people have seen much — the proposals of the various ideologies and of consumerism — and they have become aware of the emptiness and insufficiency of those things.

"Thus, among the new generations, we are seeing the reawakening of this restlessness, and they, too, begin their journey making new discoveries of the beauty of Christianity; not a cut-price or watered-down version, but Christianity in all its radicalism and profundity. That is Christianity. It is true, and the truth always has a future," the Pope said.

The future will not be easy, especially in Europe, since it suffers from a spiritual bipolarism, he explained.

"[I]n Europe today, we see two souls," he said toward the end of the interview.

"One is abstract anti-historical reason, which seeks to dominate all else because it considers itself above all cultures ... and intends to liberate itself from all traditions and cultural values in favor of an abstract rationality. Yet we cannot live like that, and, moreover, even 'pure reason' is conditioned by a certain historical context, and only in that context can it exist."

The other soul is Europe's Christian one. This soul is "open to all that is reasonable, a soul which itself created the audaciousness of reason and the freedom of critical reasoning, but which remains anchored to the roots from which this Europe was born, the roots which created the continent's fundamental values and great institutions, in the vision of the Christian faith," the Pope said.

"The challenge for Europe," he asserted, is for its Christian soul "to find a shared expression in ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches" and then "encounter this abstract reason. In other words, it must accept and maintain the freedom of reason to criticize everything it can do and has done, but to practice this and give it concrete form on the foundations and in the context of the great values that Christianity has given us."

"Only by blending these elements can Europe have weight in the intercultural dialogue of mankind today and tomorrow. Only when reason has a historical and moral identity can it speak to others" and "find a fundamental unity in the values that open the way to the future, to a new humanism," Benedict said.

"This must be our aim," the Pope said. "For us, this humanism arises directly from the view of man created in the image and likeness of God."

From the Bloggers



Edward Pentin: Pope to Take to Twitter



Edward Pentin: Pope Congratulates President Obama, Stresses Freedom and Justice

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Posted by Mark on Wednesday, Oct 17, 2012 7:48 PM (EDT):

Consider Raymond Arroyo's 2003 with Cardinal Ratzinger:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/issues/ratzintv.htm>

Raymond: ... in such a powerful way, when they interact. Talk for a moment about the New Springtime. The Pope has talked a great deal about the New Springtime and you, yourself have laid out your own ideas. Your vision is a little different from some. Some see the numbers growing and everybody believing and dancing hand-in-hand (the Cardinal chuckles) into the millennium. You see a different picture. Tell us what that picture involves. How do you see this Springtime evolving?

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Cardinal: As I do not exclude even this dancing hand-in-hand, but this is only one moment. And my idea is that really the springtime of the Church will not say that we will have in a near time buses of conversions, that all peoples of the world will be converted to Catholicism. This is not the way of God. The essential things in history begin always with the small, more convinced communities. So, the Church begins with the 12 Apostles. And even the Church of St. Paul diffused in the Mediterranean are little communities, but this community in itself is the future of the world, because we have the truth and the force of conviction. So, I think also today it should be an error to think now or in 10 years with the new springtime, all people will be Catholic. This is not our future, nor our expectation. But we will have really convinced communities with élan of the faith, no? This is springtime — a new life in very convinced persons with joy of the faith.

Raymond: But, smaller numbers? In the macro?

Cardinal: Smaller numbers, I think. But from these small numbers we will have a radiation of joy in the world. And so, it's an attraction, as it was in the old Church. Even when Constantine made Christianity the public religion, there were a small number of percentage at this time; but it was clear, this is the future. So we can live in the future, just give us a way in a different future. And so, I would say, if we have young people really with the joy of the faith and this radiation of this joy of the faith, this will show to the world, "Even if I cannot share it, even if I cannot convert it at this moment, here is the way to live for tomorrow."

Posted by Cindy on Thursday, Oct 18, 2012 12:05 AM (EDT):

This year of faith and the new evangelization is a time to renew our dedication to education, evangelization and conversion of mind and heart. <http://www.hprweb.com/2012/10/the-year-of-faith-recovering-a-culture-that-is-genuinely-catholic/>

Posted by Michael Donnelly on Thursday, Oct 18, 2012 11:05 AM (EDT):

If the Gospel isnt true, forget everything for we are all doomed. I am ur theGospel i true. Thus we have trials but we ave already succeeded - the joy mekes the trials harder and harder to see!

Posted by LoneThinker on Thursday, Oct 18, 2012 1:20 PM (EDT):

The Church is guaranteed by JESUS to survive by the power of His HOLY SPIRIT. It must if all life for the Gospel, die to self and drop the pettiness that kills us- refusing to go along with the Vatican Council, denying human rights that are God-derived within the Church, championing them in the public square. Getting rid of left-over medieval external trappings such as calling bishops excellency and eminence. Everyone living a simple life-style in every way; witnessing a practical relationship with , and talking about, JESUS when we are inclined to speak of the Church or "God." GOOD NEWS not idolatry of a system that is lifeless when we only work for and defend its externals and ignore its Heart, JESUS and His Unconditional love.

Posted by rod larcocque on Thursday, Oct 18, 2012 2:10 PM (EDT):

From the article it seems that the Holy Father has confidence for the future of the Church based on the reality that the gospels are true and that the strong conviction of the faithful will inspire the world. ummmm OK, that sounds reasonable, BUT since when has anyone recently encountered a Catholic priest, bishop or religious that acted and spoke as if the gospels were true? Where I am from, Canada, the priests and religious seem to go out of their way to apologize for everything related to the gospel message and the Church.

If they truly believed that Catholicism were true and acted in accordance we wouldn't be in this mess.

A few simple examples, a Catholic High School uses their chapel as a storage room while the school undergoes construction, Our Lord is left in the tabernacle, no one cares.

Communion is distributed like potatoe chips at mass, do we really think Our Lord, the King of the Universe, is present?

The mass is celebrated with hand holding, guitars, banjos and politically liberal intercesory prayers, do we really believe it is primarily a sacrifice to the Godhead for sins?

Religious go out to bars (I have witnessed this) and drank shooters and drove home in an expensive car, do they really believe in the vow of poverty and a life of penance?

I could go on and on.... The Church is in a major crisis, pray to Our Lady to wake us up and live in reality.

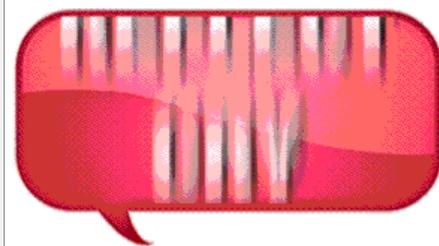
Posted by Linda Nelson on Thursday, Oct 18, 2012 10:55 PM (EDT):

God writes the truth on our hearts. Only saints will follow it without hearing it from others. That is why I question whether the "ecumenical" approach is better than the "Catholic" approach to Europe, since I believe the Catholic Church is the only one Christ founded, and it is the Truth. We must have confidence in our faith. What does "freedom to criticize" have to do with Catholicism? And "audaciousness of reason"?... is that where the writers got the in-your-face "We dare to say" before the Our Father in the Mass? I don't get the Yin and Yang of it all - classifying Europeans into those who are right (those who criticize with audaciousness of reason) and those who are wrong (those who use abstract anti-historical reason). The whole thing is illogical and unreasonable to me, since atheistic communism is founded on the same principles of argumentation. Or is this a Yin-Yang thing with Catholicism vs Communism? Obviously, the goal is NOT to make Europe Catholic, but "Christian" and humanistic. Hopefully, the Holy Father will promote



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bring the
Truth of
the Gospel
to more
Catholics!

is making you



Catholicism in Europe. I'm unsure that's what he wants to do.

Posted by LoneThinker on Friday, Oct 19, 2012 12:56 PM (EDT):

I think the salient point would be Catholicism as first choice and other Christian groups that have not abandoned the Natural Law on sexual moral matters. Orthodox Christianity would rank up there with their integrity on social justice teachings, along with love of Mary which is the basis of respect for womanhood and marriage and life in the womb.

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