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POPE: JESUS REMAINS NEAR US

Marks 2010 World Communications Day

VATICAN CITY, MAY 16, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Though Jesus ascended into heaven, he remains close to us in order to guide us along our Christian path, says Benedict XVI. The Pope stated this today in a public address before praying the midday Regina Caeli with the pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

"Today in Italy and other countries, the Ascension of Jesus into heaven is celebrated, which occurred 40 days after Easter," he noted.

"In the liturgy," the Pontiff observed, "Jesus' final departure from his disciples is narrated, but this is not an abandonment because he remains with them, with us, forever, in a new form."

"The Lord draws the gaze of the Apostles, our gaze, to show how we should travel the good road during life on earth," he said.

The Holy Father continued: "Nevertheless, he remains in the plot of human history; he is near to each of us and guides our Christian path.

"He is the companion of those who are persecuted because of their faith; he is in the heart of those who are marginalized; he is present in those to whom the right to life is denied."

"We can hear, see and touch the Lord Jesus in the Church, especially through the Word and the sacraments," Benedict XVI noted.

He exhorted "children and young people, who are receiving the sacrament of Confirmation in this Easter season, to remain faithful to the Word of God and the teaching that comes from it, and to assiduously approach Confession and the Eucharist as well, conscious of being chosen and constituted to witness the Truth."

New media

The Pope noted that today is also World Communications Day, which has as its theme this year: "The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word."

The Pontiff invited "my brothers in the priesthood," to "distinguish themselves by a powerful evangelical witness" and "know also how to use the means of communication wisely, to make the life of the Church known and help the men of today to find the face of Christ."

He concluded by thanking "the Virgin Mary, whom I was able to venerate at the shrine in Fatima a short time ago, for her maternal protection during the intense pilgrimage in Portugal," which began Tuesday and ended Friday.

The Holy Father affirmed, "With confidence we address our prayer to her who watches over the witnesses of her beloved Son."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: <http://zenit.org/article-29272?l=english>

Papal Message for 2010 World Communications Day: <http://zenit.org/article-28139?l=english>

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