



God's Revolution

Pope Benedict XVI

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Benedict XVI continues to astound people. In Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, they were told, the world was getting "God's Rottweiler" as Pope. Now, after Benedict's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* or "God is Love", many people are wondering if he isn't really the "Love Pope."

God's Revolution by Benedict XVI (Ignatius Press, 2006), the collection of his World Youth Day talks and other addresses in Cologne, only adds to the amazement. Thoughtful readers will discover in its author far more than they bargained for.

It's August, 2005. The newly elected Benedict XVI returns to his homeland, Germany, for World Youth Day—the spectacular event created by his popular predecessor, Pope John Paul II. All eyes are on the German pope in Cologne. "Will he relate to young people as John Paul II did?"

The zealous loving welcome of more than a million young people provides the answer. Benedict XVI pulls it off—in his own way, with his own style, without missing a beat. His encounters with young people are magical, even mystical. His message—a straightforward presentation of the Christian faith aimed at answering the perennial questions of young people: Who am I? Where am I going? Is there Someone who can help? How can I make a difference in the world?

Benedict XVI's answers to these questions all point to Jesus Christ and his teaching. He urges young people not to think that following Jesus requires abandoning anything of real worth. "Christ takes from you nothing that is beautiful and great," he declares. He dares young people to become "radicals"—to be part of "God's revolution." To commit themselves without reservation to Jesus Christ.

"Only from God does true revolution come," he declares, "the definitive way to change the world." "It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom; the guarantor of what is really good and true," Benedict says.

But *God's Revolution* also warns against abusing faith in God: "There are many who speak of God: some even preach hatred and perpetuate violence in God's Name. So it is important to discover the true face of God." "In Jesus Christ," the Pope declares, "who allowed his heart to be pierced for us, the true face of God is seen."

God's Revolution isn't only for young people, for Catholics alone or even only for Christians. Benedict XVI's thoughtful and inspiring messages to the Jewish and Muslim communities in Germany are included. Speaking in a synagogue in Cologne, Benedict urges Jews and Christians to grow closer to one another. He recalls the horrors of the Holocaust and warns against "new signs of anti-Semitism." As he commemorates the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation from the Nazi death camps, the Pope's words are especially poignant: as a teenager, Benedict XVI was forced to join the Hitler Youth, against his will and that of his anti-Nazi parents.

Benedict speaks to representatives of Muslims in Germany of the common faith in one God that Christians and Muslims share. He acknowledges how some Muslim leaders have rejected terrorism. Yet he adds: "Those who instigate and plan these attacks evidently wish to poison out relations and destroy trust, making

use of all means, including religion, to oppose every attempt to build a peaceful and serene life together."

God's Revolution also addresses Protestant Christians. Coming from the land of the Reformer Martin Luther, Benedict knows Protestant concerns. He presents Catholic teaching in a way that underscores Catholics and Protestants' common Christian commitment. "Together we confess that Jesus Christ is God and Lord," he states, "together we acknowledge him as the one mediator between God and man (cf. 1 Tim 2:5), and we emphasize together that we are members of his Body."

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