



Year of St. Paul
Archdiocese of Toronto

Remarks from Pope Benedict XVI

June 28, 2007

Promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Rome

Dear brothers and sisters, as in early times, today too Christ needs apostles ready to sacrifice themselves. He needs witnesses and martyrs like St Paul. Paul, a former violent persecutor of Christians, when he fell to the ground dazzled by the divine light on the road to Damascus, did not hesitate to change sides to the Crucified One and followed him without second thoughts. He lived and worked for Christ, for him he suffered and died. How timely his example is today!

And for this very reason I am pleased to announce officially that we shall be dedicating a special Jubilee Year to the Apostle Paul from 28 June 2008 to 29 June 2009, on the occasion of the bimillennium of his birth, which historians have placed between the years 7 and 10 A.D.

It will be possible to celebrate this "Pauline Year" in a privileged way in Rome where the sarcophagus which, by the unanimous opinion of experts and an undisputed tradition, preserves the remains of the Apostle Paul, has been preserved beneath the Papal Altar of this Basilica for 20 centuries.

It will thus be possible to have a series of liturgical, cultural and ecumenical events taking place at the Papal Basilica and at the adjacent Benedictine Abbey, as well as various pastoral and social initiatives, all inspired by Pauline spirituality.

In addition, special attention will be given to penitential pilgrimages that will be organized to the Apostle's tomb to find in it spiritual benefit. Study conventions and special publications on Pauline texts will also be promoted in order to make ever more widely known the immense wealth of the teaching they contain, a true patrimony of humanity redeemed by Christ.

Furthermore, in every part of the world, similar initiatives will be implemented in the dioceses, shrines and places of worship, by Religious and by the educational institutions and social-assistance centres which are named after St Paul or inspired by him and his teaching.

Lastly, there is one particular aspect to which special attention must be paid during the celebration of the various moments of the 2,000th Pauline anniversary: I am referring to the ecumenical dimension. The Apostle to the Gentiles, who was especially committed to taking the Good News to all peoples, left no stones unturned for unity and harmony among all Christians.

May he deign to guide and protect us in this bimillennial celebration, helping us to progress in the humble and sincere search for the full unity of all the members of Christ's Mystical Body.