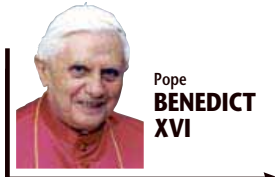


# Resurrection proves Christ is the son of God



Pope **BENEDICT XVI**

While Jesus' death shows the depths of his love for humanity, it is his resurrection that proves he is the Son of God, Pope Benedict XVI said.

The pope used his March 26 weekly general audience to underline the importance of celebrating the 50-day Easter season.

The pope came to the Vatican by helicopter from Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, and returned to the papal villa by

helicopter after the audience.

St. Peter's Square was still decorated with some of the tulips, daffodils, pansies and blossoming trees that were set up for the pope's March 23 Easter morning Mass. An estimated 30,000 people attended the audience, which was marked by brief sprinkles of rain.

The pope told the crowd, "Death was not sufficient to demonstrate that Jesus was really the Son of God, the expected Messiah."

Hundreds of people over the course of history have dedicated their lives to doing good and to bringing justice, the pope said. But "they died and remained dead," he said.

**On the Web:**  
[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

"The death of the Lord demonstrates the immense love with which he loved us, going so far as to sacrifice himself for us," the pope said. "But only his resurrection is sure proof, the certainty that what he affirmed is true and that it is valid for us, is valid for all time."

While the Resurrection is celebrated every Sunday all year long, he said, the church asks Catholics to focus on its meaning and rejoice over it more intensely in the days immediately following Easter.

"All the liturgies of the Easter season sing the certainty

and joy of the resurrection of Christ," he said.

Faith in the Resurrection is what makes Christianity what it is and gives Christians the strength to live in hope, the pope said.

"Isn't it the certainty that Christ is risen that gives courage and prophetic audacity and perseverance to the martyrs of every age?" he asked. "Isn't the encounter with the living Christ that which converts and fascinates the many men and women who, since the beginning of Christianity, continue to leave everything to follow him and put their

lives at the service of the Gospel?"

It is possible to meet the risen Christ, as did the women who encountered Jesus as they went to visit his tomb and the apostles who met him on the road to Emmaus, the pope said.

"The Lord is walking alongside us and he explains the Scriptures" and shares himself in the breaking of the bread, he said. "This should make our hearts burn within us so that our eyes may be opened" as were the eyes of the apostles walking to Emmaus.

- VATICAN CITY (CNS)

## Where did all the Catholics go?



Father Eugene **HEMRICK**  
THE HUMAN SIDE

"If everyone raised Catholic stayed (with their religious affiliation), Catholics would be one-third of the population."

This observation was made by John Green, a senior research fellow and a principal author of the "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey" recently conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

With Catholic adults presently comprising 25 percent of the American population when they should be 33 percent of it, we need to ask: Why are so many Catholics leaving?

In past studies, researchers found that the one reason the Catholic Church was so strong was because of the creed. Our clear-cut understanding of and commitment to what we believe not only attracts people to Catholicism, but keeps Catholics in the church.

As much as we sometimes resisted being a dogmatic church, our dogma was and is the ballast that keeps us balanced and strong.

If we focus on this finding alone, it gives us several reasons why we might be losing Catholics.

Could it be, as the last two popes have pointed out, our present age is becoming increasingly resistant to absolute truths and is moving toward greater relativism?

Applying this question to our church, do we believe in the one true Catholic Church? Does this truth hold strong appeal for us? If not, why remain a Catholic since it then becomes relative to how a religion is seen?

Could it be our truths are watered down and have weakened the beauty and strength of the church? In the apostolic exhortation "On Evangelization in the Modern World," Pope Paul VI points to the bite that truth must possess to be attractive:

"For the church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever

greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation."

Here we learn that the truth of the Gospel must be upsetting, challenging people to rethink their present values and what inspires them most.

Could it be our people want to be challenged and it isn't happening; that we aren't making people stop, think and rethink; that the presentation of our beliefs don't have bite, cutting-edge thinking, or that they don't reveal deep commitment on the part of those presenting them?

No doubt many other reasons exist for the exit of Catholics. Whatever they may be, they come down to one question: "Are those who are leaving doing so because they never experienced the backbone of our creed?"

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7:20 pm – *Q&A w/Director and Cast*

8:00 pm – *The Calling*

9:30 pm – *Q&A w/Director and Cast*

**Admission:**

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Ms. Rebecca Kientz  
at  
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**The Calling**