

Pope's Retreat Master Compares Benedict's Role to That of Moses



Cardinal Ravasi – The Italian cardinal leading Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten retreat was tweeting and podcasting his reflections, signaling that detachment from the outside world doesn't have to mean a total media blackout.

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, 70, began the spiritual reflections Feb. 17 by describing Pope Benedict's future role in the Church after his resignation as being a presence "like that of Moses, who climbs the hill to pray for the people of Israel."

A contemplative presence whose role will be one of "intercession and interceding (while) we remain in the valley, that valley where Amalek is, where's there's dust, fear, terror, nightmares, but also hope, where you stayed with us for eight years," the cardinal said.

The pope and top officials from the Roman Curia suspended their normal schedules to gather each morning and afternoon in the Redemptoris Mater Chapel for common prayer, eucharistic adoration and 17 meditations that are offered by a different guest preacher each year. The pope chose Cardinal Ravasi, who is president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, for this year's weeklong retreat.

Cardinal Ravasi was offering brief "tweets" from his talks on his Italian and English Twitter accounts: @CardRavasi and @CardRavasi_en. And Vatican Radio was posting the audio of the cardinal's complete meditations in Italian at <http://www.radiovaticana.va/rss/italiano.xml>.

The cardinal reflections were focused on "Ars orandi, ars credendi" (the art of praying, the art of believing), looking particularly at "the face of God and the face of man in the Psalm prayers."

In his second and third meditations, Cardinal Ravasi spoke about how the Word guides people out of the fog, like "a light that banishes the darkness, in particular in today's culture."

Modern times are marked by "a shifting horizon and uncertainty, where amorality is celebrated (as is) absolute indifference, in which there is no difference between sweet and bitter and where everything is a generic gray," he told the pope and top Vatican officials.

God shows what really matters as he both leads and accompanies his flock, offering them both truth

and love, he said.

The cardinal's afternoon talk Feb. 18 also echoed the pope's commitment to reconciling faith and science.

The cardinal said, "Faith answers why, science how." While God created the sun that shines in the sky, he also gave people the Word, "that is the other sun," that illuminates the revealed truth to all mankind, he said.

Carol Glatz - The Tablet