

Take scripture on holiday, says Pope



Benedict XVI leads the Angelus prayer at Castel Gandolfo on Sunday (CNS photo/ Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

Pope Benedict XVI has advised holidaymakers to pack a copy of Sacred Scripture in an address to pilgrims at Castel Gandolfo, his summer residence.

Vatican spokesman Fr Federico Lombardi said the Pope had made “brief but important [holiday] suggestions” to pilgrims over the past few weeks.

His suggestion to “include a copy of the Sacred Scriptures in our suitcase” follows on from his call last year for Catholics to become more familiar with the Bible.

Speaking to Vatican Television, Fr Lombardi said: “First of all, [the Pope] invited those of us who can, to use our vacation time in a way that helps renew our relationships with others and with God. Interrupting the hectic and frantic pace of daily life, we can take time to dedicate ourselves to others and to God.

“The Pope even suggested we include a copy of the Sacred Scriptures in our suitcase. He also invited us to contemplate the greatness, and admire the beauty, of creation around us, recognising in it the wonderful presence of the Creator.

“He knew how to interpret the language and signs of Creation, which is a gift we must respect, protect and care for, in the name of God, humanity and future generations.”

“Finally, Pope Benedict suggested that pilgrims and travellers apply their intelligence and curiosity to discovering the monuments of the past – witnesses of culture and faith, as he called them, examples of our spiritual roots and heritage,” Fr Lombardi reported.

“Cathedral and abbeys, in particular, are places where beauty helps us feel the presence of God and inspires us to pray for the rest of humanity, on its pilgrimage through the Third Millennium.

“The enjoyment of friendship, reading, nature and culture helps to nourish and restore our spirit. It gives us the strength to continue our journey refreshed and renewed.”

Last year Pope Benedict underlined a similar message of using the summer to grow closer to God.

He discussed the Gospel where Jesus visited Martha and Mary, saying: “This Gospel passage is very important at vacation time, because it recalls the fact that the human person must work, must involve himself in domestic and professional concerns, to be sure, but he has need of God before all else, who is the interior light of love and truth.”

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