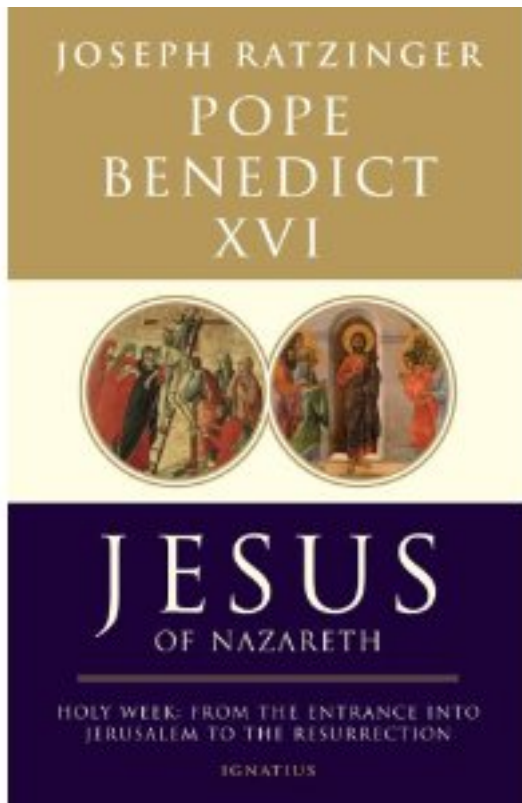


## **Benedict XVI's book on Jesus of Nazareth: "From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection"**

PRESENTATION OF VOLUME TWO OF JESUS OF NAZARETH



VATICAN CITY, 11 MAR 2011 (VIS) - In the Holy See Press Office yesterday afternoon, the second volume of Benedict XVI's book on Jesus of Nazareth: "From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection" was presented in the course of a press conference chaired by Cardinal Marc Ouellet P.S.S. prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and Claudio Magris, a writer and German scholar.

Cardinal Ouellet explained that, "although the author is not presenting an official teaching of the Church, it is easy to imagine that his scholarly authority and the profound consideration given to certain disputed questions will be of great help in confirming many people's faith. This will also serve to enliven debates that have become stagnated because of rationalist or positivist prejudices, impairing the prestige of modern and contemporary exegesis".

### **1. Historical foundation of Christianity**

Going on then to comment on the contents of the new book, the cardinal first noted how "the question of the historical foundation of Christianity has interested Joseph Ratzinger since his formative years and his first experience of teaching, as is evident from his book 'Introduction to Christianity', published forty years ago".

### **2. The Messianism of Jesus.**

A number of modern exegetes, under the influence of dominant ideologies, have made Jesus out to be a revolutionary, a master of morality, an eschatological prophet, an idealist rabbi, a madman of God, a messiah in some way in the image of His exegete".

The prefect of the Congregation for Bishops explains how "the Pope powerfully and clearly outlines the regal and priestly dimensions of this Messianism, the meaning of which is to establish the new form of worship - adoration in spirit and in Truth - which involves all of individual and community life, as an offering of love for the glorification of God in the flesh.

### **3. The meaning of redemption**

"A third issue", the cardinal added, "concerns the meaning of redemption and the place that it should occupy in the expiation of sins. The Pope examines the modern objections to this traditional doctrine, ... and shows how mercy and justice go hand in hand within the framework of the Covenant established by God".

### **4. The priesthood of Christ.**

In terms of today's ecclesial categories, Jesus was a lay person invested with a prophetic vocation. He did not belong to the priestly aristocracy of the Temple . ... This fact has led many interpreters to consider the figure of Jesus as entirely divorced from any relationship with priesthood. ... The Pope provides an ample response to the historical and critical objections, demonstrating how Jesus' new priesthood was coherent with the new worship He came to establish upon the earth, in obedience to the will of the Father".

### **5. The resurrection**

"The final issue", the cardinal went on, "concerns the resurrection and its historical and eschatological dimension, its relationship with corporeity and with the Church. ... The Pope speaks out against ... interpretations which declare that the announcement of Christ's Resurrection is compatible with His body remaining in the tomb. He excludes these theories observing that the empty tomb, even if it is not proof of the resurrection, which had no direct witnesses, remains as a sign, ... a trace in the history of a transcendent event. ... The paradoxical experience of the apparitions reveals that, in this new dimension of existence, ... Jesus lives fully, in a new relationship with real corporeity but free from corporeal ties as we understand them. The historical importance of the resurrection is clear from the evidence of the early communities, which instituted the tradition of Sunday [worship] as a sign identifying the fact that they belonged to the Lord".

## **Two Conclusions**

### *a. Confirm his brothers and sisters in the faith*

"It is clear from this book", the cardinal concluded, "that Peter's Successor dedicates himself to his specific ministry, which is to confirm his brothers and sisters in the faith. ... This book will serve, on the one hand, to mediate between contemporary and Patristic exegesis and, on the other, to foster the necessary dialogue between exegetes, theologians and pastors", he said.

### *b. Invitation to dialogue*

"In this work", the cardinal completed his remarks, "I see a great invitation to dialogue on the essential aspects of Christianity, in a world seeking points of reference, a world in which religious traditions struggle to transmit humanity's heritage of religious wisdom to new generations".

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