



30/2013

CIRCULAR LETTER
From H.L. Mons. Mario Grech
Bishop of Gozo

To the reverend Archpriests, Rectors of Churches, Religious superiors, Consecrated persons and Catholic Laity.

HEARTFELT SALUTE TO POPE BENEDICT XVI

Beloved,

In a few days the Pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI will end. We have every reason to be grateful to this Pope who guided the Church for the past eight years. Apart from being for us a model of how we should be disciples of Jesus Christ, he was a strong wall on which we could rest. But above all, the Gozo Church continues to remember Pope Benedict XVI who, on 18th April 2010, made an extraordinary gesture and personally presented a golden rose to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu on the Floriana granaries. Moreover, we are also grateful to the Pope because it pleased him to call into his family one of our priests, Mgr. Alfred Xuereb, who has been his second secretary during the past six years.

As a token of love toward our Spiritual Father, I am asking all Gozitans to unite with the Universal Church in one prayer during the next few days so that, while we thank God for the gift He lent us in the person of the Pope, we pray for the Lord to help him live these moments of separation in serenity.

Since the last day of Pope Benedict XVI's Pontificate is Thursday 28th February, I propose that on that particular Thursday:

1. there will be a day of fasting as a prayer for the Pope's intention;
2. a mass Pro Pontefice is celebrated in each church;
3. the Holy Hour will be for the Pope's needs;
4. families offer the rosary for him;
5. the Pope's flag is raised on the churches and private residencies;
6. a photograph of the Pope is exposed in churches and church-owned public places (schools, parochial centres, etc.)
7. at noon church bells will toll for 15 minutes;
8. in the evening the churches light up their frontage;
9. a fjakkolata is set up on church properties;
10. all families light a candle in the windows of our houses.

From Friday 1st March 2013 until we have a new Pope, the intercession for the church in the Eucharistic Prayer will be in the way indicated in the subsidy prepared by the Liturgy Secretariat (page 10).

Then, when the conclaves start, a Mass for the Selection of the Pope will be celebrated in all the churches of the Diocese at a time most suitable for the people. The start of the conclaves will be announced by all the churches at eight o'clock in the morning of the opening day through a fifteen-minute bell toll.

When the news of the Pope's election becomes available, the local churches will announce the happy event by bell-tolling for fifteen minutes.

I pray for Heaven's blessing on you.

Given at the Bishop's Curia, Victoria, Gozo, on Friday 22nd February, 2013, feast of the Cathedra of Saint Peter.

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+ **Mario Grech**

Bishop of Gozo

Mgr. Salv. Debrincat

Chancellor.