

Pope urges Romanian archbishop to draw on John Paul II's teachings to face country's struggles

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Vatican City, May 8, 2009 / 10:20 am (CNA).- Benedict XVI has sent a message to Archbishop Ioan Robu of Bucharest, Romania, for the celebrations taking place to mark the tenth anniversary of John Paul II's visit to the country in May 1999. He encouraged him to draw on the teachings of the late Pontiff in order to face "the great challenges of our time."

The Pope praised the Church in Romania, the Romanian Orthodox Church and the State for bringing together "the Catholic and Orthodox faithful of that country which, for its geographical location and its long history, for its culture and its traditions, has a unique ecumenical vocation inscribed in its very roots."

He also expressed the hope "that believers in Christ will not only treasure the memory of those unforgettable days, but that, drawing from the teaching of my venerated predecessor John Paul II, they will commit themselves to seeking courageous ways to face together the great challenges of our time."

"I am thinking particularly of the defense of human life at every stage, protection of the family, respect for creation and promotion of the common good," he continued. Furthermore, making the wishes of the beloved John Paul II my own, I invite people to pray that, as soon as possible, we may achieve the full fraternal communion of all Christians, both of the West and the East.

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