

Pope designates Holy Thursday collection for Catholics in Gaza Strip

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI has decided the collection taken up at his Holy Thursday evening Mass will be used to help support the Catholic community in the Gaza Strip.

Each year the pope chooses where to send the collection taken up during the Mass of the Lord's Supper at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome.

Pope Benedict's decision to use the collection from the Mass April 9 to support Catholics in Gaza was announced by the Vatican March 30.

Each year the pope also asks a different person to write the meditations read during his Good Friday celebration of the Way of the Cross in Rome's Colosseum.

The meditations for the April 10 service were written by Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil of Guwahati, India, AsiaNews reported.

The Vatican also confirmed the pope would celebrate the usual slate of Holy Week and Easter liturgies: Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square April 5; on Holy Thursday, April 9, the morning chrism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, followed by the evening Mass at St. John Lateran; on Good Friday, April 10, the afternoon liturgy of the Lord's Passion in St. Peter's Basilica, followed by the nighttime Way of the Cross; the Easter Vigil April 11 in St. Peter's Basilica; and Easter morning Mass April 12 in St. Peter's Square.