

# **Pope earmarks Holy Thursday collection for rebuilding Haiti's seminary**

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI has decided the collection taken up at his Holy Thursday evening Mass will be used to help rebuild Haiti's major seminary in Port-au-Prince. The seminary was reduced to rubble by the magnitude 7 quake that struck Jan. 12.

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 1 to support the rebuilding effort of the Catholic Church in Haiti was announced by the Vatican March 22.

Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach, which has been supporting church programs in Haiti for years and is responding to the post-quake needs of Haiti, was meeting with Vatican officials when the announcement was made.

"The Haitians have always been very religious, even though they are very poor, and their faith has remained remarkably strong in the face of such tragedy," Cavnar said after meeting with Cardinal Paul Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum.

Cavnar, who visited Haiti in February, said, "The church in Haiti was hit very hard" by the earthquake, which killed dozens of church workers and severely damaged churches, schools, hospitals and seminaries. Still, he said, even the day after the quake, walking through the streets of the city, one would come across groups of people praying and singing hymns.

Cor Unum coordinates and encourages Catholic charitable giving, but it also is

responsible for distributing funds in the name of the pope and for identifying Catholic projects that need special help. Since 2004, Cross International has been distributing about \$500,000 a year to projects identified by Cor Unum.

In announcing the pope's decision to use the Holy Thursday collection for Haiti, the Vatican also published the pope's Holy Week schedule.

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

According to Passionist Father Ciro Benedettini, vice director of the Vatican press office, the meditations for the April 2 service were written by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, former president of the Italian bishops' conference and former vicar of Rome.

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 March 28; the chrism Mass in the morning April 1 in St. Peter's Basilica; the Mass of the Lord's Supper that evening; on Good Friday, April 2, 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 3 in St. Peter's Basilica; and Easter morning Mass April 4 in St. Peter's Square.

*Contributing to this story was Cindy Wooden at the Vatican.*