

# Pope encourages unemployed not to be discouraged

ROMANO CANAVESE, Italy – Pope Benedict XVI told the jobless of northern Italy that with faith and a commitment to justice and hard work they could be sure of a brighter future.

The pope traveled by helicopter to Romano Canavese, about 50 miles from his Alpine vacation home in Les Combes, for the recitation of the Angelus prayer July 19.

The town, near Ivrea, once was home to hundreds of employees of Olivetti, famed for its portable typewriters. Now owned by Telecom Italia, the company has gone from a high of 33,000 employees in 1970 to about 1,200 today. Unemployment in the Piedmont region, which includes Romano Canavese, has grown to 7 percent this year; the rate was 4 percent in 2007.

Pope Benedict told the estimated 10,000 people gathered in front of the parish church that the region's people are known as enthusiastic and hard workers.

But, he said, today "many families are experiencing economic difficulties because of the lack of employment."

"Dear friends, do not be discouraged," he told them.

"Your grandparents were forced to emigrate because of a lack of jobs, but then economic development brought well-being and others immigrated here from around Italy and from abroad," the pope said.

"The fundamental values of the family and respect for human life, sensitivity to social justice, the ability to face hard work and sacrifice, a strong attachment to the Christian faith through parish life and especially participation in the Mass have been your true strength for centuries," he said.

Pope Benedict said those same values are the secret to building the town's future, "giving life to a society truly marked by solidarity and brotherhood and where all the

spheres of life, institutions and the economy are permeated by a Gospel spirit.”