

Pope says prostitution, pornography threaten human dignity of women

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI called for an end to prostitution and pornography, saying the practices denigrate women and represent "a serious lack of humanity."

The pope made the remarks as he welcomed Reinhard Schweppe as Germany's ambassador to the Holy See Nov. 7. The pope's talk focused on the church's role in defending human dignity.

"A relationship that does not take into account the fact that a man and a woman have the same dignity represents a serious lack of humanity," the pope said.

With the "materialistic and hedonistic tendencies" that seem to be gaining space in the West, there is a growing form of discrimination against women, the pope said.

"The moment has come to energetically halt prostitution as well as the widespread distribution of material with an erotic and pornographic content, including through the Internet in particular," he said.

The pope said the Holy See would encourage and assist the Catholic Church in Germany so efforts "against these types of abuse would be more decisive and clearer."