

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA (C.B.C.I.)

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COPY FOR INFORMATION

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March 30, 2009

HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XVI
VATICAN CITY

Most Holy Father,

I am writing this on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India which consists of the bishops of the three ritual Churches in this country.

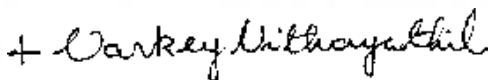
We are grateful to Your Holiness for the letter you wrote to the bishops of the world on 10th March 2009 clarifying your action of remitting the excommunication of the four bishops consecrated by the late Archbishop Lefebvre. In that letter we see shining forth your love for these bishops as persons as well as your uncompromising stand with regard to their Institute.

We share in your deep pain at the unfair and unjust criticism of your Pontificate even by Catholics in the media. We realize that a world without God cannot accept the pure moral teaching of the Catholic Church. We believe that you are faithfully following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your Petrine office of teaching and governing the Universal Church. We would like to affirm our support, loyalty and obedience to the person of Your Holiness. The whole Church knows how greatly you contributed to the decrees of the Second Vatican Council as a theologian. Everyone knows what great services you have rendered to the Church as the trusted collaborator of the Servant of God the late Pope John Paul II for long years. The many theological books that you have authored give you a prominent place among the great contemporary Catholic thinkers. Your rich encyclicals on the Theological virtues and your great efforts in the field of ecumenism are taking the Church forward in her mission.

We consider you as one of the great Popes the Church has had in recent times. We know that you have a big share in the sufferings of our Divine Master whom you represent for us in the world. We will not cease to pray for Your Holiness that the same Lord Jesus through the prayers of Mary His mother give you always the joy, peace and serenity of His Resurrection.

Requesting your Apostolic blessing on all the catholic faithful in India,

Yours devotedly in the Lord Jesus,



+ Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil
President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India