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BISHOPS' CONFERENCE



Bishops present a composition to the Pope

On Sunday at noon, Pope Benedict XVI met with the German bishops for lunch. The President of the German Bishops' Conference, archbishop Dr Robert Zollitsch expressed his gratitude to the Head of the Catholic Church for his visit to Germany and presented him the official gift of the German bishops, a piece of music especially composed for this occasion. This is a musical setting of the text chosen by young Joseph Ratzinger when he held his first Mass: "Domineering over your faith is not my purpose. I prefer to work with you toward your happiness". This text was set to music by the director of music at Eichstätt Cathedral, Christian Matthias Heiß.

The four-minutes composition for choir, wind instruments, percussion and organ will be given its first public performance at the autumn plenary assembly of the German Bishops' Conference in Fulda on 5 October, Zollitsch announced. He handed the Pope the unique example of the score, bound by Werner Welter, a bookbinder from Bonn. Later the Pope will receive a CD of the piece of music. After its first performance, the composition will be edited by the Eichstätt Jubilate publishing house. The complete parts will then be obtainable in music stores under the Latin title "Non quia dominamur".

With a smile, archbishop Dr Zollitsch reminded the audience that the motto the Pope had chosen for his ordination to priesthood 1951 already "by a wink of heaven" was connected to music. He quoted from Pope Benedict XVI's autobiography: "At that moment when the elderly archbishop laid his hands on me, a little bird – perhaps a lark – flew up from the high altar in the cathedral and trilled a little joyful song. And I could not but see in this a reassurance from on high, as if I heard the words – This is good, you are on the right way."

The composer Heiß spent his schooldays with the *Regensburger Domspatzen*, the choir at that time directed by the Pope's brother, Prelate Georg Ratzinger. Heiß remembers: "The former Munich Cardinal Ratzinger and later Pope Benedict XVI often visited our concerts given in the vicinity of Munich and afterwards had a nice chat with us choir boys." Heiß was born in 1967 and studied church music and organ at the Munich academy of music. Afterwards he was musical assistant at Eichstätt Cathedral, before he started working as church musician in Ravensburg. As of 1999, he was organist at Eichstätt Cathedral. In autumn 2002, he was appointed director of music at Eichstätt.

Please note:

Pictures of the composition to the Pope are available at charge on KNA-Bild:
<http://bilddb.kna-bild.de/marsKna/open.jsp?action=job&id=1037367>

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