THE Daily Telegraph

Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth

- Font size: **Decrease** *(#)* **Increase** *(#)*
- Email article: **Email** *(/dailytelegraph/email/popup/0,22050,25486520-5001028,00.html)*
- Print article: **Print** *(javascript:print();)*

Article from: Agence France-Presse

By Albion Land
May 15, 2009 02:23am

POPE Benedict XVI has urged faiths in the Holy Land to reject hatred and live in peace, underscoring the point by holding hands and singing with Muslims and Jews in Jesus's hometown.

In a poignant moment, the rarely spontaneous pope rose to his feet and held hands with religious leaders at a meeting at Nazareth's Basilica of the Annunciation as a rabbi sang a peace song that he composed for the pontiff.

"Lord grant us peace," a smiling Benedict mouthed in English, as Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein soulfully sang Shalom, Salam, Lord grant us peace at the end of an inter-faith meeting of Christians, Jews and Muslims of the Galilee.

The pontiff called earlier for all religious faiths sharing the land revered by the world's three main monotheistic faiths to put aside the decades of conflicts and live in peace.

"Sadly ... Nazareth has experienced tensions in recent years which have harmed relations between its Christian and Muslim communities," he told tens of thousands of pilgrims gathered for a morning mass at an open-air amphitheatre just outside Nazareth.

"I urge people of goodwill in both communities to repair the damage that has been done, and ... to work to build bridges and find the way to a peaceful coexistence," he said.

"Let everyone reject the destructive power of hatred and prejudice," Benedict said on Mount of Precipice, where Christians believe Jesus vanished as a crowd angered by his teachings tried to shove him off a cliff.

In an address to the religious leaders, the pope said all faiths were united in their desire to protect their youth from violence.

"Christians readily join Jews, Muslims, Druze and people of other religions in wishing to safeguard children from fanaticism and violence while preparing them to be builders of a better world," he said.

The 82-year-old pontiff celebrated mass in front of around 40,000 faithful, the largest service of his eight-day Holy Land pilgrimage which ends tomorrow.

The Pope later met Israel's hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Franciscan convent adjacent to the basilica.

Ahead of the encounter, an Israeli official said the state had refused a Vatican request to issue multi-entry

visas to 500 priests from Arab countries, in what Holy See spokesman Federico Lombardi said was "clearly one of the points of long discussions" in the Israeli-Vatican bilateral commission.

Encouraging the Holy Land's dwindling Christian community to stay has been one of the main aims of the pontiff's trip.

An estimated 130,000 of Israel's 7.4 million residents are Christian, while in the Palestinian territories the ratio is 50,000 out of a total population of 3.8 million.

In the Basilica of the Annunciation, Benedict also prayed at the Grotto of the Annunciation, which Christians believe marks the spot where the Archangel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary she would conceive the son of God.

The Pope's visit has received a mixed welcome from the Muslim community in Nazareth.

A small but vocal group, still simmering after the pope in 2006 quoted a medieval Christian emperor who criticised some teachings of the Prophet Mohammed as "evil and inhuman," has protested his visit to the city.

The group also objects to the pope's meeting with Netanyahu on the eve of the Naqba - catastrophe - as Palestinians call the creation of the state of Israel that led to 700,000 Palestinians being driven out or fleeing their homes.

Share this article What is this? *(#)*

- **Add to MySpace** *(javascript:GetThis('Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth | The Daily Telegraph', ' POPE Benedict XVI has urged faiths in the Holy Land to reject hatred and live in peace, underscoring the point by holding hands and singing with Muslims and Jews in Jesus&squo;s hometown. In a poignant moment, the rarely spontaneous pope rose to his feet and held hands with religious leaders at a meeting at Nazareth&squo;s Basilica of the Annunciation as a rabbi sang a peace song that he composed for the pontiff.

"Lord grant us peace," a smiling Benedict mouthed in English, as Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein soulfully sang Shalom, Salam, Lord grant us peace at the en... Click Headline for Full Story', 'http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html', 1))*
- **Digg it** *(http://digg.com/submit?phase=2&url=http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html&title=Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth | The Daily Telegraph)*
- **Post to del.icio.us** *(http://del.icio.us/post?url=http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html&title=Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth | The Daily Telegraph)*
- **Post to Newsvine** *(http://www.newsvine.com/_wine/save?popoff=0&u=http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html&h=Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth | The Daily Telegraph)*
- **Post to Facebook** *(http://www.facebook.com/share.php?u='http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html')*
- **Add to kwoff** *(javascript:q='http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html';void(open('http://www.kwoff.com/submit.php?url='+escape(q),'','resizable,location,menubar,toolbar,scrollbars,status'));)*
- **Stumble Upon** *(http://www.stumbleupon.com/submit?url=http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25486520-5001028,00.html&title=Pope sings ode to peace in Nazareth | The Daily Telegraph)*

(http://facebook.dailytelegraph.com.au/)

- Font size: **Decrease** *(#)* **Increase** *(#)*
- Email article: **Email** *(/dailytelegraph/email/popup/0,22050,25486520-5001028,00.html)*
- Print article: **Print** *(javascript:print();)*

Copyright 2009 News Limited. All times AEST (GMT +10).