

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

December 7, 2011 at 9:04am

Pope: Follow Christ, not some ethical code

by Carol Glatz by Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Following the Gospel is not adhering to a doctrine or code of ethics but entails truly following the person of Christ in one's life, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, "we can turn with trust to God our Father, confident that, in doing his will, we shall find true freedom and peace," he said during his weekly general audience Dec. 7.

In his audience talk to about 3,000 people in Paul VI hall, Pope Benedict continued a series of talks on Christian prayer.

Divine revelation doesn't follow earthly rules in which the powerful hold the keys to knowledge, he said. God takes a completely different approach, choosing instead to share with "the little ones" true knowledge of the divine, he said.

Only those who are pure of heart and are open to God's will can see the face of God in Jesus, he said.

People must have a simple heart, like a child, free of any self-assured presumptions that they can live their own life without any help from anyone, not even God, the pope said.

"But we need God, we need to meet him, listen to him and talk to him," and only through him will people find peace, he said.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls for "all you who labor and are burdened" to go to him for he shall give them rest "for my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

Jesus asks people to go to him because, as the son of God who is in real communion with God, he possesses "true knowledge" of the father and can bring them closer to him, the pope said.

By following Christ then, the faithful set off on the path of understanding the Gospel, "which is not a doctrine to learn or an ethical proposal, but is a person to follow," said the pope.

"We, too, with the gift of the Holy Spirit can turn to God in prayer" with the pure and simple heart of a child, and call him father as well, he said.

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