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His Royal Highness
Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammed Bin Talal

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Royal Highness,

let me first crave your indulgence, for my English is not so perfect as you might be used to listen to, it is what I learnt at school. Also, I am not so certain in diplomatic protocol. I beg your pardon, if I step across a border, it is not bad will, it is just my incertitude.

My name is Alhard-Mauritz Snethlage, I am 30 years old, I have studied Catholic theology and I am preparing to become a Roman-Catholic priest. Hence, I had a natural interest in the pope's pilgrimage to Jordan and Israel and concentrated my attention on the speeches spoken during his visit. This way, I also happened to have the luck to listen to your speech held in the Al Hussein-Bin Talal-mosque in Amman.

I want to thank you. It was an enjoyment to hear a man of such great faith in God and intellect. In your speech you welcomed and received the Holy Father in four ways. Please allow me to thank you in four ways.

First, as a Christian. As you stated in your speech, the two religions Islam and Christianity are the two religions that the majority of the world's population believe in. It is sad that so little has been done until nowadays to learn to know each other. Too many prejudices exist about each other's religion. The more important is your and the pope's commitment for respect and true dialogue between our religions.

Second, as a Catholic Christian. You recognised Pope Benedict XVI. as a man pledged to his conscience and the search for the truth (which is God) – no matter how the world reacts on it. You have also mentioned positively his encyclicals about charity and hope and his effort for intra- and interreligious dialogue, as to be seen in rehabilitating the traditional Latin Mass, or in an academic debate like the Regensburg lecture. It is nice to see that his efforts are not only

being seen within the Catholic Church, but also beyond these religious frontiers. Actually, I wish, more Catholics shared your point of view on his deeds.

Third, as a European. During the long Christian period that formed the Occident, many virtues have been cultivated, virtues that seem to get lost. In my opinion, the reason for that lies in the like a cancer growing faithlessness of the people, who think they can master their lives without God. What we can model ourselves on the Arab people, is to live with our belief in God with an implicitness, to internalise the matter of fact that God is a reality that cannot be faded out from daily grind. Hold on to being an ambassador of this message.

Fourth, as a German. In Germany, many people (at least five percent of the population, i.e. about 4-5 million people) are of Turkish provenance, most of them are Muslims; but only very few of them live in true community with the Germans. Most of them live in situations almost comparable to ghettos. Your example of respect and prejudice-free approach will hopefully be seen as well in Germany and improve the relations between not only Germans and strangers, but also Muslims and Christians.

Maybe you will never read these lines, but if you do, I hope they will encourage you to keep on trying to turn this world into the world God wants it to be, to make it comply with the divine creation order. Again, thank you!

May God bless you, your family and the people of Jordan.

Yours,



Alhard-Mauritz Snethlage