Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Lk* 11:29-32): While still more people gathered in the crowd, he said to them, “This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation (...), and there is something greater than Jonah here”.

Jesus, the "true Jonah"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today Jesus is presented as "one who is greater than Jonah". Jesus Christ loaded the blame of all mankind’s guilt upon His shoulders; He bore it down into the depths of the Jordan. He inaugurated His public life by stepping into the place of sinners. His inaugural gesture is an anticipation of the Cross. He is, as it were, the true Jonah who said to the crew of the ships: "Take me and throw me into the sea" (Jon 1:12).

If in Lazarus’ resurrection we can see Jesus’ response to the request of signs by His contemporaries, His principal answer was, however: "for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Mt 12:40).

—God’s sign for men is the Son of Man; it is Jesus Himself. And at the deepest level, He is this sign in His Paschal Mystery, in the mystery of His death and Resurrection. He Himself is the "sign of Jonah". To believe and follow Him is God’s great sign.