July 15th: Memorial of Saint Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Mt* 23:8-12): Jesus said to his disciples: «You, do not let yourselves be called Master because you have only one Master, and all of you are brothers and sisters (...). Let the greatest among you be the servant of all. For whoever makes himself great shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be made great».

Saint Bonaventure, bishop and doctor of the Church (1217-1274)

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

Today we celebrate st. Bonaventure. Fascinated by the witness of fervour and evangelical radicalism of the Friars Minor, Giovanni da Fidanza asked to be admitted to the great family of St Francis' disciples. About the year 1243 Giovanni was clothed in the Franciscan habit and took the name "Bonaventure". He was immediately sent to study and attended the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris.

It is important to remember the title of the thesis he defended in order to qualify to teach theology: “Questions on the knowledge of Christ”. The whole of his thinking was profoundly Christocentric. In 1257, Bonaventure was officially recognized as a doctor and master of the University of Paris. However, he was obliged to relinquish this prestigious office because in that same year the General Chapter of the Order elected him Minister General. He fulfilled this office for 17 years with wisdom and dedication.

—In 1273, St Bonaventure experienced another great change in his life. Pope Gregory X wanted to consecrate him a Bishop and to appoint him a Cardinal. The Pope also asked him to prepare the Second Ecumenical Council of Lyon, a most important ecclesial event, for the purpose of re-establishing communion between the Latin Church and the Greek Church. Bonaventure dedicated himself diligently to this task but was unable to see the conclusion of this ecumenical session because he died before it ended.