



White highlights dominate Easter celebrations in Saint Peter's Square

On Sunday 23 March the contribution by Holland Land of Flowers to the Easter celebrations in Saint Peter's Square will once more be dominated by the traditional papal colours of white and yellow. This year the huge selection of white flowers, bulbs and blossoms has inspired the Dutch designer to give white a starring role in the production. At least twenty huge flower arrangements will decorate the immediate vicinity of the altar. This year the thousands of pansies on the steps will also be white, just like many of the, sometimes very tall, shrubs on the terraces next to the altar. Following the traditional Easter mass Pope Benedict XVI will give the traditional Urbi et Orbi blessing to tens of thousands of the faithful who have congregated in Rome, with millions of people all over the world following the mass on television. The traditional Dutch contribution to the floral decorations receives universal acclaim.

Proud sector

The sea of flowers in Saint Peter's Square needs long and careful planning. Charles van der Voort is supported in his efforts by people and organisations from the entire floricultural sector. Together, using everyone's specialist skills, they work to perfect the Easter decorations. They are driven not only by skill, but also by pride. Those present in the square are joined by the whole world to enjoy the fabulous floral creations from the Netherlands. If Pope Benedict XVI continues the tradition and once again speaks the words "Thank you for the flowers" in Dutch, the feeling of pride will be transmitted to every Dutch man and woman present either in person or via television. A subtle hint of Holland will have been added to the Easter celebrations in Rome.

White and yellow

In the Papal banner the colours white and yellow represent the silver and golden keys of Saint Peter which symbolise heavenly and earthly power. The Dutch arrangers have used the white and yellow of the papal banner in their decorations for Saint Peter's Square. In current colour symbolism yellow and white still have a strong link with Easter. Yellow also symbolises light, splendour and glory; white symbolises joy, tenderness and love. The colours are the same every year but their use has changed over time. This year the stronger emphasis is on white flowers. Head designer Charles van der Voort has an endless range of options available in the wide range of white and yellow Dutch flowers, bulbs and shrubs he can use to create different altar decorations each year. When it comes to the stairs and the balcony, where there is more available space to experiment with shades and tones, he basically has the entire spectrum of the Dutch floricultural sector at his fingertips.



23 years of change

Offering the floral decorations for Saint Peter's Square on behalf of the Netherlands has become a genuine tradition. The idea originated in 1985 in Utrecht. That was the year in which Pope John Paul II visited the Netherlands. Designer Nic van der Voort of Leiden took the initiative and decorated the platform at the Jaarbeurs with flowers in honour of the occasion. This was genuinely appreciated and the response was an invitation to provide an appropriate floral backdrop for the beatification of Dutch priest Titus Brandsma that same year in Rome. This was when the idea was born to provide a floral tribute every year at Easter. Since that time the Dutch contribution has only grown. Over the years ten terraces have been created next to and in front of the altar, which are decorated with Dutch products. The number of arrangers volunteering their services to help with the decorations has risen to twenty. This year will be the 23d time that Dutch flowers will adorn Saint Peter's Square. It is already the third time during the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI.

Note for the editorial staff:

In the enclosure you will find details of the products the Dutch floricultural sector has made available for the decoration of Saint Peter's Square.

For more information:

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Floral tribute from the Netherlands

In St. Peter's Square, Rome,
During the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 23 March 2008

The distribution shown below applies per garden.

Terraces 1 to 4

Acer
Azalea mollis
Rhododendron
Japanese azalea
Prunus
Conifer
Erica white
Almond white
Pieris white
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Terraces 5 and 6

Laburnum
Acer
Japanese azalea
Rhododendron
Prunus
Rhododendron short
Pieris
Almond
Broom
Conifer
Erica
Broom
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Terraces 7 and 8

Birch
Acer
Prunus
Azalea mollis
Japanese azalea
Conifer
Broom
Laburnum
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths



Terraces 9 and 10

Birch
Prunus
Laburnum
Acer
Rhododendron
Azalea mollis
Pieris
Conifer
Erica
+ a wide selection of tulips, narcissi and hyacinths

Stairs

Decorated with white pansies

Altar

4 x behind the altar, white flower arrangements
10 x in front of the altar, mixed white flower arrangements
Including: lilies, carnations, roses, Ornithogalum, asters, apple blossom, Amaryllis and tulips.

Balcony

On the balcony a strip including hyacinths, tulips, Gerberas, iris and broom.



holland

