



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF SCOTLAND
ON OCCASION OF THEIR «AD LIMINA» VISIT**

Saturday, 30 May 1987

Dear Brothers in Christ,

1. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope". (Cfr. *Rom.* 15,13) These words of Saint Paul express my own prayerful sentiments for each of you on the occasion of your *ad limina* visit. They also capture the spirit of the present season. During these days preceding the Solemnity of Pentecost, we are invited to experience personally and liturgically the Church's sense of *eager expectation of the coming of the Holy Spirit* with power from on high. At the same time it is an expectation which we know is always being fulfilled in history as " God's Spirit... with wondrous providence directs the course of time and renews the face of the earth". (*Gaudium et Spes*, 26) It is an expectation of the Church's renewal in every age so that she may bear universal witness to the truth until the end of time.

I rejoice with you today, as I did on the occasion of my Pastoral Visit to Scotland five years ago, at the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are at work in your local Churches. At that time I expressed my admiration and satisfaction at the intense programme which the Scottish Bishops proposed for the spiritual renewal of the Catholic community, so as to help ensure that the effects of my visit would produce enduring fruit. (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Homilia in magnis hortis vulgo Bellahouston cognominatis, apud Glasguam, habita, die 1 iun. 1982: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, V, 2* (1982) 2064 ss.) I join with you in giving thanks that through the power of the Holy Spirit those hopes have not been disappointed. The Church in Scotland has taken to heart the exhortation of the Second Vatican Council to seek "purification and renewal to that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the Church". (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 15; cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 43) 2. Fundamental to this purification and renewal is the *daily sacramental life of the Church*, especially the Holy Eucharist. From their participation in these mysteries, and from personal and group prayer, the faithful of your dioceses draw the strength they need for their part in the Church's mission. At the same time, as the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* reminds us, "it is not only through the sacraments and ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the

People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills, he also distributes *special graces among the faithful of every rank*. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, 'to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good' (Cfr. *Ibid.* 12, 7) " (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 12) I know that in your dioceses much reflection is being given to the gifts conferred upon all by the Holy Spirit for the renewal of the Church. The aim is greater participation in the Church's life and mission on the part of all the faithful, for their own sanctification and the sanctification of the world. As pastors, you are to be commended for your encouragement of *lay participation* and *spiritual renewal* among all the faithful. These have now reached a level which calls for further evaluation so that people will continue to grow in their understanding and practice of the faith and in their sense of belonging to the Church. As you know, the forthcoming Synod of Bishops will also make a contribution to this process of reflection and evaluation in the light of developments since the Second Vatican Council. The Conciliar Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, in particular, exhorts those of us who are pastors to remember "that the right and duty of exercising the apostolate are common to all the faithful... and that in the building up of the Church the laity too have parts of their own to play. For this reason (pastors) will work as brothers with the laity in the Church and for the Church". (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 25) 3. At the same time, the renewed participation of the laity is not of course meant to detract in any way from *the importance of the ordained ministry*. As I reminded the priests of Scotland during my pastoral visit, by sharing in the one priesthood of Christ the High Priest, they are "appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins". (Cfr. *Hebr.* 5, 1) In priests we recognize "the good shepherd, the faithful servant, the sower who goes out to sow the good seed, the labourer in the vineyard, the fisherman who launches his net for a catch". (Cfr. *Ioannis Pauli PP. II Edimburgi, allocutio ad religiosos et religiosas Scotiae habita*, 2 die 31 maii 1982: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V, 2 (1982) 2028) I know that you and your clergy and people share the present concern for priestly vocations as well as vocations to the religious life. The appointment of *vocations directors* on the national and regional levels is an important step in providing the human resources that are essential if more young people are to be encouraged to consider the possibility that the Lord may be calling them to the priesthood or religious life. 4. For the vast majority of Scottish Catholics, the renewed sense of belonging to and sharing in the Church's life is felt particularly within the local parish. But there is also *an appreciation of the wider ecclesial communion* which unites the faithful to their dioceses, to other local Churches, and in a special way to the Church in Rome. In this regard, mention must be made of those dioceses which are the *material needs of their brothers and sisters* abroad, and in supporting activities which bear practical witness to the Church's faith and promote her religious mission. The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) is an outstanding example of this generosity, particularly to the people of Africa and Latin America. Of equal importance is the willingness on the part of those dioceses which are able to do so to send priests and lay missionaries to sister Churches in developing countries. The sense of communion is also strengthened by your own commendable spirit of collegiality, close cooperation and fraternity as Bishops in union with Peter. 5. Christian love—the ultimate measure of all authentic renewal—is also practised closer to home. Those who

are needy or troubled, poor or alone, have a special claim to that love. As with every modern society, Scotland is experiencing social and economic changes which leave in their wake many such people, and it is to them that you have increasingly directed your pastoral care. I am thinking especially of *your concern for the unemployed, and your support of drug rehabilitation*. Both of these problems, which in different ways threaten the common good as well as the dignity of the human person, deserve the continued attention of the Church. In addition to these particular concerns, there are *the sick, the poor and those with special needs* such as the elderly who receive care from the many Catholic institutions of your country. We may look to the shining example of Saint Margaret of Scotland for confirmation that what is done for the least of our brothers and sisters is done for Christ himself. (Cfr. *Matth.* 25, 31-46) The challenges of modern life also create great tensions for the family, especially for young people. I am confident that your concerted efforts to strengthen marriage and family life will bear fruit for the good of the Church and of Scotland, and that your guidance and encouragement of the young will help them live a Christian life in close conformity with the Gospel. I understand that the Scout and Guide Movement is one of the ways in which young people receive sound direction in life. May God bless every effort which promotes Christian values among youth.

6. During my Pastoral Visit in 1982 I spoke of the *Scottish Education Act of 1918*, whereby Catholic schools are a constituent part of the State system with essential guarantees covering religious education and the appointment of teachers. (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio in «Saint Andrew's College» in loco «Beardsen» habita*, 2, die 1 iun. 1982: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V, 2(1982) 2051) This arrangement respects the religious diversity of your country and makes possible a Catholic education for your children and young people. The presence of *Catholic chaplains* in institutions of higher learning and the careful training of future religious teachers are also important to the success of the Church's educational mission.

7. Finally, I rejoice with you at *the progress that has been made in ecumenical relations* since my visit. On that occasion I expressed to those of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities the wish that, amid the religious diversity of your country, our earthly pilgrimage be made together, walking hand-in-hand. (Cfr. Eiusdem *Homilia in magnis hortis vulgo Bellahouston cognominatis, apud Glasquam, habita, die 1 iun. 1982*:: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V, 2 (1982) 2064ss) I am pleased to note the numerous fruitful contacts which have been made and the shared endeavours which have begun since that time. These include the Saint Andrew's Conference with the theme "Not Strangers but Pilgrims", which considered questions on the nature of the Church; the ecumenical pilgrimage of Church Leaders to Iona, a place intimately connected with the early Celtic origins of the Church in Scotland, and, together with Whithorn, a cradle of Christianity in your country; and the ecumenical character of both the 850th anniversary celebration of Melrose Abbey and of the annual Marian pilgrimage to Haddington. These efforts are a part of both corporate and personal renewal. The Conciliar Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* reminds us that "Church renewal has notable ecumenical importance. Renewal in various spheres of the Church's life... should be considered as promises and guarantees for the future progress of ecumenism". (Cfr. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 6) Likewise, "there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion". (Cfr. *Ibid.* 7) We must always remember that " this change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be

regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement". (Cfr. *Ibid*, 8) 8. Dear Brothers, this year's celebration of the Solemnity of Pentecost has an added dimension in that it inaugurates the *Marian Year*. This serves as a reminder of *Mary's spiritual motherhood*. It is, as I have written in my Encyclical Letter "Redemptoris Mater", "motherhood in the order of grace, for it implores the gift of the Spirit who raises up the new children of God, redeemed through the sacrifice of Christ: that Spirit whom together with the Church Mary too received on the day of Pentecost". (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptoris Mater*, 44) I commend you and your clergy, religious and laity to the Mother of the Redeemer who is also our Mother. May she be a model of Christian faith and holiness, and a sure sign of hope and solace on this earthly pilgrimage, not only for you, but "for all those who, in fraternal dialogue with you, wish to deepen their obedience of faith". (*Ibid*. 33) Invoking her maternal intercession, and with affection in the Lord Jesus, I impart to you and to all the clergy, religious and laity of Scotland my Apostolic Blessing.

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