



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF WALES
ON THEIR AD LIMINA VISIT**

Thursday, 17 December 1992

Dear Brother Bishops,

I am very pleased to welcome you, the Pastors of the Church in the Principality of Wales, on the occasion of your *ad Limina* visit. Through you I am able to reach the beloved priests, religious and laity of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Dioceses of Menevia and Wrexham in order to assure them of my spiritual closeness and affection: "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5-6). I am greatly comforted to know that although your Catholic communities in many cases are small and widely scattered you have a keen sense of unity and of communion with the universal Church and the See of Peter.

Just recently I have had the joy of promulgating the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, a further important result of the Second Vatican Council and a gift of untold value from the "Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (Jam. 1:17). Together with the reformed liturgy and the revised Code of Canon Law, the new Catechism constitutes the firm foundation of the ecclesial renewal which the Council initiated. It is the Bishops' special responsibility to ensure that the wealth of doctrine and discipline contained in these sources reaches the faithful in a full and effective way, so that God's designs for the Church at the approach of the new Christian Millennium will be realized in greater fidelity to his revealed word and in more convincing works of faith and love.

The Catechism offers the whole Church a statement and explanation of the faith in accordance with biblical truth and with authentic Catholic Tradition, in a language which better responds to the

demands of today's world. As I stated when presenting the Catechism: "Conscious adherence to revealed doctrine, genuine and entire, which the Catechism presents in synthesis, will not fail to foster the progressive fulfilment of the plan of God who wants "everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4)... Outlining Catholic doctrinal identity, the Catechism can be a loving appeal even to those who are not part of the Catholic community" (John Paul II, *The Official and Solemn Presentation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 7 December 1992).

Herein lie the two directions of your pastoral ministry: teaching the faith and strengthening the Christian life of the members of the Church, and at the same time building ever deeper understanding and closer cooperation with other Christians. In these tasks I encourage you to continue to work in harmony with one another and in close contact with the wider Catholic community through the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

A specific aspect of the Church's life in your Dioceses is the growing attention being given to the use of the *Welsh language in the Liturgy*. This is not just a matter of historical interest but an important element of the whole question of the inculturation of the faith in the life of your people. Provided that "all of you have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind" (1 Pet. 3:8), you should rejoice that God's praise is proclaimed and sung in the native language of Wales. As Pastors, you will know how to balance this aspect of your communities' experience with complete openness to more recently arrived members of the flock, many of whom are immigrants from different parts of Europe and the wider world. In all things may Christ be served, through evangelical love for every neighbour.

Another concern which I particularly entrust to your prayer and pastoral action is the *vocation and ministry of your priests*. They are your chief collaborators, your brothers and friends, for they share the same priesthood with you (Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7). In building up the Church, your best efforts will be to serve your priests and support them in their needs. I hope that you will always be frequent visitors in their homes and that they will find you ready to receive them when they knock on your own door. May the presbyterate in each of your Dioceses flourish in works of sanctification, evangelization and service.

Dear Brother Bishops, be assured of my constant prayers for yourselves and for the Churches committed to your care. I remember vividly my visit to Wales just over ten years ago, especially the inspiring meeting with young people at Ninian Park. I am pleased to know that on 28 June this year you commemorated that event with a well-attended Eucharistic Procession in Cardiff. I pray that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will continue to bless your efforts with a growth of Christian life and holiness. May Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, and Saint David, your Patron, intercede for the poor and the weak among you, especially the sick, the unemployed, the aged and all who may feel alone and neglected. To the beloved Catholics of Wales I impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of strength and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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