



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH PILGRIMS OF LIVERPOOL

Friday, 1st of June 1990

Dear Friends from Liverpool,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here on the occasion of your *pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi*. Your presence brings to mind my visit to your city eight years ago. You have come from Great Britain in order to deepen your faith through prayer and reflection at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and at the places connected with Saint Francis, whose example and teaching have a special appeal throughout the Christian world and far beyond. As Catholics, Anglicans, and members of the Free Churches, your pilgrimage is also an ecumenical search for greater mutual understanding amid the divisions that have separated Christians in your country for over four hundred years.

I am confident that the experience of these days will not disappoint you. In Rome and Assisi you come into contact with a *heritage which in a way belongs to all Christians*. We have only to reflect on how the Gospel spread, beginning with the life and ministry of the Apostles, especially Peter and Paul, and the great martyrs, confessors and pastors who followed them, first in the Mediterranean world and then throughout Europe and elsewhere. It was from this city that my predecessor Pope Saint Gregory the Great sent Saint Augustine of Canterbury to England. His labours, together with those of other faithful heralds of Christ's Gospel, left an indelible mark on your country: the mark of the Spirit, the sign of faith. As for Saint Francis of Assisi, he too bears witness to an age when, at least in the West, the Church remained united. I am sure that his example of Christian love and joyful self-giving will inspire you to ever greater efforts on the path towards the unity of all Christ's followers.

But your reflection on the personages, deeds and monuments of the past would remain only a dead letter without the *living presence of the Holy Spirit*, whose descent at Pentecost we are about

to celebrate this Sunday. He is the "Spirit of truth" who, as Christ promised, "teaches us all things" and remains with us "forever" (Cfr. *Io.* 14, 17; 26, 16). As the "giver of life" (Cfr. *Symbolum Nicaenum*), he can help us to heal the divisions introduced into the Church in the course of the centuries since the first Pentecost. It is our task "to do all in our power to cooperate with the grace of the Holy Spirit, who alone can lead us to the day when we will profess the fullness of our faith together" (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio in Cathedrali templo Cantuariensi habita*, 3, die 29 maii 1982: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V, 2 [1982] 1935).

As you continue your journey, may the Holy Spirit be with you to transform your minds and hearts and give you an ever greater love and understanding. Upon each of you and your families may he bestow an abundance of joy and peace.

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