



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE ENGLISH BISHOPS
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR «AD LIMINA» VISIT**

Friday, 3 November 1972

Dear Brothers in Christ,

We are pleased to welcome you to Rome and are happy that you have wished to express your faith and devotion by visiting us. We greet you, and through you we send our greetings to all of the beloved People of God who are in your pastoral care.

What word would you expect to hear from the Pope? What message can he give that you can carry back to your people? Certainly it is the message of faith, an exhortation to believe in Christ and on Christ, an encouragement to open the soul ever more widely to the illuminating graces of revelation, to an ever more full-hearted acceptance of divine reality and the divine sense of values. That light must not be allowed to grow dim through distraction or sophistication, through the confusion of materialism or the false promises of pleasure.

To the message of faith we would add that of joyful hope. God is with us, and there is no strength equal to his strength, no power equal to his power, no promise equal to his promise. That which he asks of us and which we recognise through our faith may be difficult and demanding; but the yoke and the burden are rendered sweet by the gentle Christ, the powerful Christ, the understanding and sustaining Saviour of his People.

The message of the Pope, then, is one of faith and hope which finds fulfilment in love. As the Father has loved his Son, so the Son has loved us; we can indeed abide in his love. We can abide in his love, quietly secure in the fact of God's love for us and in the enriching privilege of our capacity to love him and one another, through the grace that he has given us. We can be one, with him and with each other, building up all the while that magnificent temple of God which is his

Church. The greatest commandment, the greatest privilege, the greatest destiny is to love God and to love his People. This is the message that we would give to you.

We welcome you once again and greet you as the Vicar of Christ and the humble Successor of Peter. With the assurance of our prayers, we gladly impart to you and to the entire beloved Churches of Southwark, Clifton and Nottingham our Apostolic Blessing.