



The Holy See

***LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER
JOHN PAUL II
TO CARDINAL DANNEELS
ARCHBISHOP OF MECHELEN-BRUSSELS***

*To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Godfried Danneels
Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels*

I like to regard the cares and concerns, the joys and honours of the individual Ecclesial Communities throughout the world as my own, inasmuch as I exercise pastoral authority on behalf of Jesus Christ over all the Lord's flocks and must make sound decisions everyday for the growth, prosperity and vigour of each one.

I am thus most happy to learn of the forthcoming praiseworthy event and special historical occasion that will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, when my Predecessor of happy memory, Pius IX, with great foresight decided to restore and fully re-establish their sacred Church hierarchy. By his decision he laid the solid foundations of a new Catholic era, from which gradually grew that mature firmness of Catholic faith and action which I was delighted to experience firsthand during my Pastoral Visit and will always be pleased to observe from afar.

Therefore, since in May the two communities of England and Wales will be concelebrating such an important event in the annals of their recent history, with fitting ceremonies and festive hearts, the Bishop of Rome, who is also the humble Successor of Pope Gregory the Great, who auspiciously began the evangelization of that region in the sixth century, and of the aforementioned Pius IX, by whose decision the Church of God was finally restored, wishes to take part in this public and admirable commemoration on 4 May, the feast of the Blessed Martyrs of England and Wales.

With deep gratitude and heartfelt joy, by this Letter I gladly appoint you to represent me as my

Special Envoy at the public liturgical celebrations of this event, since you already know my mind well and hold the episcopal office once occupied by Cardinal Mercier, who played a great and active role in this affair. You will directly address those present, urging them to defend and promote the true faith and to further the ecumenical cause. Lastly, you will grant my Apostolic Blessing to those present, as a pledge of heavenly light and strength for the Christian faithful of England and Wales, so that Pius IX's salutary endeavour may always prosper.

From the Vatican, 30 March 2000, the 22nd year of my Pontificate.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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