



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PLENARY SESSION
OF THE SECOND ANGLICAN - ROMAN CATHOLIC
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION** *Wednesday, 2 September 1987*

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I wish to express my appreciation for the kind invitation of Cardinal Willebrands to be with you today, here in the summer house of the Pontifical English College, so close to my residence in Castelgandolfo, on the occasion of this plenary session of the second Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission. This meeting calls to mind that day in 1982 when I journeyed to Canterbury at the invitation of Archbishop Runcie. It was then that this Commission was constituted with a mandate to examine all those things which stand in the way of fuller communion between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. With the publication of *Salvation and the Church* the Commission shared the fruit of its labours in probing the heart of the Reformation controversies. Your present study of the theology of communion is also of great importance. It is my hope that in pursuing this topic you will be able to discern more clearly the steps towards that unity which is the will of Christ for his followers. The path of dialogue may be long, but we must not lose heart. The Holy Spirit has called us to the ecumenical task and it is he who will sustain us with his grace. We may draw inspiration and strength from the words of the Prophet: "From this time forth I make you hear new things, hidden things which you have not known. They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them, lest you should say, 'Behold, I knew them'" (Cfr. *Is.* 48, 6-7). These words of Isaiah remind us of the humility required of those who would search for unity along the road marked by God. We must respond with an open heart to his grace—that grace which summons us to conversion, to new knowledge and to new life. My friends: I assure you of my prayers for yourselves and for the important work in which you are engaged. May God enlighten your minds and bless your deliberations, so that you may discern his will and know his purpose. "(To) him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen" (Cfr. *Eph.* 3, 20-21).

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