



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY

Tuesday, 3 September 1974

Welcoming you here today,, we recognize at once that for most of you it is not the first time you have visited Rome and the Holy See in a fraternal spirit and in a fraternal relationship.

Many of you made your contribution of service to the Second Vatican Council, in one case as a Council Father and member of its theological commission, in other cases either as our periti or as observers on behalf of the Anglican Communion. In this way you already cemented friendships, and sowed seeds of better understanding-seeds which have taken root and flourished.

We recall too that some of you accompanied our beloved brother in Christ, Michael Ramsey, on his historic visit to this See, more than eight years ago. The memory of that visit has remained green with us, and has been many times refreshed by letters of greeting, full of his characteristic spirit of Christian love and wisdom.

It was from that meeting of nineteen hundred and sixty-six that the resolve came to embark on that “serious dialogue” which continues to bring you together, and which has already brought from you the most generous efforts, the most untiring labour.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council saw and expressed in the Decree on Ecumenism the “special place” occupied by the Anglican Communion in relation to the Catholic tradition. The dedication and the depth manifested in your work during these recent years testify to and strengthen that special relationship. This is so not only because of your own industry and achievements, but also because of the collaboration you have been able to enlist in many parts of the world, showing how widespread is the impulse towards that reconciliation in Christ which strives to perfect the unity which he wills.

You interrupt a difficult phase of your work to come to visit us. At such a moment there is no need for us to remind you of the obstacles that remain to be overcome. Let us rather dwell on hope and encouragement. What you seek to do is God's work-an indispensable aspect in our time of the ministry of Christ, which is a ministry of reconciliation. As you do so our thoughts, our gratitude, our fervent prayers are with you. We pray that you will have the spirit of knowledge and of prophecy, and the faith that moves mountains, but remembering Saint Paul's scale of values, we pray above all that you will have love, which "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" and leads us from partial knowledge to full understanding (Cfr. 1 *Cor.* 13).