



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO FREDERICK DONALD COGGAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY***

Thursday, 28 April 1977

Dear Brothers in Christ,

This is a joyful occasion. For has not Christ our Lord told us that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them”? (*Matth.* 18, 20) Since we are gathered together in the name of the unity of Christians, we are gathered in obedience to the Lord’s will, for he has asked his Father “that they may all be one” (*Jo.* 17, 21). But it is a particular joy for us to gather in this spirit with Your Grace and with other leaders of the Anglican Communion, which in the words of the Second Vatican Council has with us “a special place”.

Last week we kept the feast of Saint Anselm, a fellow-countryman from Aosta, who became Abbot of Bet in Normandy and then Archbishop of Canterbury. At such moments it is natural to think of full communion between our Churches. However, we must not see such a celebration as mere nostalgia for the past, but rather as a spiritual reality. For the liturgy also prophecies what is to come; it is the first-fruits, pointing to what is to come.

The history of relations between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion has been marked by the staunch witness of such men as Charles Brent, Lord Halifax, William Temple and George Bell among the Anglicans; and Abbe Portal, Dom Lambert Beauduin, Cardinal Mercier and Cardinal Bea among the Catholics. The pace of this movement has quickened marvellously in recent years, so that these words of hope “The Anglican Church united not absorbed” are no longer a mere dream.

You yourselves, Brethren, are concerned that the Gospel should be translated into deeds, and renew its significance for a society of Christian tradition. As our predecessor Pius XI put it, “the

Church civilizes by evangelizing”.

That Gospel is the heart and soul of your Christian living and it is equally our inspiration. The civilization of love is our shared hope-something which live in truth.

With the happiness of that shared hope we greet you and bid you welcome here. May your visit be fruitful and carry us forward along the pilgrim way of love and unity in the Risen Christ.

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