

THE VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI TO BRITAIN - 2010

Archbishop Kelly writes:

The visit of Pope Benedict: I remind you of these words of Pope Benedict on the occasion of the Inauguration of his Service as Bishop of Rome, successor of Simon Peter, in the Church uniquely founded on the preaching and martyrdom of two Apostles, Peter and Paul. Speaking about the Pallium, the woollen yoke, woven with crosses, worn by an Archbishop, he said:

“The human race, - every one of us – is the sheep lost in the desert which no longer knows the way. The Son of God will not let this happen; he cannot abandon humanity in so wretched a condition. He leaps to his feet and abandons the glory of heaven, in order to go in search of the sheep and pursue it, all the way to the Cross. He takes it upon his shoulders and carries our humanity; he carries us all – he is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. What the Pallium indicates first and foremost is that we are all carried by Christ. But at the same time it invites us to carry one another. Hence the Pallium becomes the symbol of the shepherd’s mission. The pastor must be inspired by Christ’s holy zeal, for him it’s not a matter of indifference that so many people are living in the desert. And there are so many kinds of desert. There is the desert of poverty, the desert of hunger and thirst, the desert of abandonment, of loneliness, of destroyed love. There is the desert of God’s darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life. The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. Therefore the earth’s treasures no longer serve to build God’s garden for all to live in, but they have been made to serve the powers of exploitation and destruction.”

I recall this as a foretaste of the depth, breadth, compassion, all clearly emerging from the Word of God, which he will proclaim among us. I am certain his visit will be Evangelisation. That is why I have no hesitation in commending to you and through you to the people the collection to be taken soon to raise the diocesan share of the funds needed for the visit in all its many aspects. I realise that many will be disappointed that he will not be walking in the footsteps here of Pope John Paul II, but soon the ways in which many may take part, especially in the Youth Event in Hyde Park and the Mass of the Beatification of Cardinal Newman in Coventry, will be published. It is good to take steps to encourage at this time awareness of the shrine of Blessed Dominic Barberi, who, as the Pope reminded the crowds in St Peter’s Square only two days after announcing his visit, received Cardinal Newman into full communion. I have been asked to be specifically involved in the Youth Event and that for people of faith committed in ways formed by their faith in public life.

Sean will soon send you further details, but it is wise to give you this information without delay:

1. There will be a second collection in all our churches on Pentecost Sunday 23 May 2010, to be announced on 8/9 May.
2. Every parish will receive from the Bishops’ Conference General Secretariat a package containing a letter from Archbishop Nichols and Cardinal O’Brien, instructions regarding the collection, gift aid envelopes, 4 posters and sufficient prayer cards for everyone attending Mass on that day.
3. The gift aid envelopes are printed and addressed to CaTEW, which handles financial matters for the Bishops’ Conference, and the Chairman has undertaken that the database of names collected by CaTEW for the purposes of this collection will not be used for any other fund-raising.

4. Please send the sums raised to the Diocesan Finance Office. Because money is already being spent and cash-flow is a significant concern, please send the money no later than 18 June.