



POPE BENEDICT XVI

Cardinal O'Brien's Farewell Address

Oscott College, Sunday 19 September 2010

Holy Father, it is a great privilege for me to address you, as Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh and President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

As you prepare to leave us, we remember the joy and pride we felt when we learned of your State visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of Her Majesty the Queen and Her Government.

In Edinburgh, just three days ago, in the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Her Majesty, the Duke of Edinburgh and leaders of Church and State welcomed you and the words you so thoughtfully delivered to us when you addressed our country.

It was a particular joy for us in Scotland to realise that you would arrive in our country to begin your visit on the 16th of September, the Feast of St Ninian. Ninian was of course a bishop, ordained in Rome and sent back to his homeland to spread the Christian message. Your words and your very presence brought to our minds our ancient Christian heritage.

The welcoming cavalcade along Princes Street in Edinburgh reminded a worldwide audience of the Christian roots of our land. Like Ninian before you, you too moved across our countries, strengthening us in that same Christian faith whose seed had been first sown over 1600 years ago.

At Bellahouston Park in Glasgow, the first of your Masses in our country was celebrated with great joy. For many months our people had been preparing to greet you with very great happiness in prayer and song. Major events followed in England, both temporal and spiritual, allowing you to engage with our fellow Catholics, our Christian brothers and sisters, with civil society, and all people of goodwill.

At the heart of your pilgrimage was the beatification of John Henry Cardinal Newman. We are happy to acknowledge the Scottish links of the new Blessed John Henry Newman – coming to Abbotsford in the Scottish Borders for relaxation and prayer and celebrating Mass on the occasions of his visits wearing the vestments which had been brought to my Chapel in Edinburgh for you to see as a reminder of these Scottish links.

From your first encyclical letter 'Deus Caritas Est', your words have always been given detailed attention and careful study not only by the Catholic faithful but by peoples of all faiths and none.

As the Chief Teacher of our Faith we thank you for the guidance and inspiration you offer us. Your words to us; at Bellahouston Park, Twickenham, Westminster, Hyde Park, at the Beatification, and here in Birmingham will be studied and used to fortify us all in the faith passed on to us through the ages by the apostles and delivered over these four great days by the successor of Peter himself.

Your visit to us was both State and pastoral but our farewell to you is entirely personal. We thank you on behalf of all the people of the United Kingdom for agreeing to spend this time in our midst. On behalf of the Bishops and Priests gathered here and the whole people of God in our country, I pledge our love and fidelity to you and in asking for your prayers we offer the promise of our own prayers in the certain hope that Almighty God may indeed bless you, Holy Father, and inspire you in your service of love.