

ZE10082302 - 2010-08-23

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-30126?l=english>

UK PRELATE PREDICTS NEW PHASE IN CHURCH RELATIONS

Archbishop Explains Significance of Papal Visit

LONDON, AUG. 23, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI's Sept. 16-19 visit to the United Kingdom will mark a new phase in the relations between the papacy and that monarchy, says the archbishop of Westminster.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, stated this Friday to L'Osservatore Romano.

The Pope's visit, he said, "is, without a doubt, an historic event."

It "marks a new phase in the long and complex history of relations between the monarchs of this land and the papacy," the prelate added.

The Pontiff is making the State visit to the United Kingdom in response to an invitation by Queen Elizabeth II, who will officially welcome the Holy Father in Edinburgh, Scotland, on the first day of the visit.

Archbishop Nichols noted that "the Pontiff and the queen share some profound concerns: the well-being of the peoples of the world, the role of education and Christian values, the importance of having stable institutions for the benefit of society."

Education

On Sept. 17, the second day of his visit, Benedict XVI will travel to London, where he will hold a meeting to "celebrate Catholic education and its role in the educational system of this country," the prelate continued.

He added that the Pope plans to address every school of the region, through an Internet connection that will network him to all of the institutions. In this address, which will be made from St. Mary's University in Twickenham, the Pontiff will invite children to follow the events of his visit and to support him with their prayers.

The archbishop explained that this university is also a training venue for the forthcoming 2012 Olympic games, and thus the choice of this location "will add another dimension to the event, highlighting the interest for sports, common to many persons."

He noted that after this address, "Benedict XVI will meet with different personalities in charge of various sectors and businesses, they themselves men and women of faith, belonging to the different confessions present in this country."

Archbishop Nichols reported that the Pope "will speak with them of the importance of God as the formative and inspiring guide of the common good."

The prelate next spoke about another event on that same day in which the Pontiff will address political, civil, diplomatic and business leaders. The address will take place in Westminster Hall, the great historic hall in the heart of London where St. Thomas More was condemned to death in 1535 for adhering to the Catholic faith.

The archbishop expressed his belief that this event "will have great resonance, not only because of its historical value but also because of its timeliness."

In the evening, the Holy Father will hold a prayer service in Westminster Abbey together with leaders of all the Christian communities of the United Kingdom, including the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

Benedict XVI will also pray before the tomb of St. Edward the Confessor. The prelate explained that this king of England, who died in 1066 and who re-founded Westminster Abbey, "represents the profound and common Christian roots of these lands."

Most important moment

Then, Archbishop Nichols continued, on Sept. 18, the Pope will celebrate Mass in Westminster Cathedral, visit an institute for the elderly and dying, preside over a prayer vigil in Hyde Park, a great open space in the heart of London.

The prelate highlighted the Sept. 19 celebration of Mass and the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman in Birmingham as "a most important moment of the visit."

He affirmed, "The beatification of Cardinal Newman puts before the presence of the Church a scholar of great stature, a writer and poet of considerable merits, a parish priest profoundly loved by all those who knew him."

The archbishop noted that the cardinal was "a man who understood how mind and heart must go hand in hand in the great enterprises of life, the greatest of which is the search for God and the salvific relationship with him."

He recalled some words of Cardinal Newman: "If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I would experience the type of feeling that in fact takes hold of me every time I examine this frenetic world and do not see the reflection of its Creator."

Archbishop Nichols ended by expressing "the general hope we have for this visit."

"We want the illuminating presence and the words of Benedict XVI to help many in our lands to understand that faith in God is not a problem to resolve but a gift to discover," he said.

"For many in our society faith has become a problem, something that must be hidden or eliminated from public life," the prelate explained.

"However, the truth is very different: faith in God brings great richness and joy to men," he affirmed. "It is the liberation and guide we seek, motive of inspiration and perseverance, source of forgiveness and compassion."

--- --- ---

On the Net:

Papal U.K. visit: <http://thepapalvisit.org.uk/>