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UK PRIME MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES PONTIFF'S IMPACT

Stresses Partnership With Holy See

BIRMINGHAM, England, SEPT. 19, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron is underlining the impact of Benedict XVI's visit, affirming that the Pope's message has reached millions of citizens over the past few days.

Cameron stated this in a farewell address to the Pope at the Birmingham International Airport. Today concluded the Pontiff's state visit to the United Kingdom, which the prime minister called "an incredibly moving four days."

He told the Holy Father, "On this truly historic first state visit to Britain you have spoken to a nation of 6 million Catholics but you have been heard by a nation of more than 60 million citizens and by many millions more all around the world."

"For you have offered a message not just to the Catholic Church but to each and every one of us of every faith and none," Cameron stated.

He noted that Cardinal John Henry Newman, "who was beatified here in Birmingham this morning, once said that one little deed whether by someone who helps 'to relieve the sick and needy' or someone who 'forgives an enemy' evinces more true faith than could be shown by 'the most fluent religious conversation' or the most intimate knowledge of Scripture."

The prime minister underlined the "responsibilities of each person in society obligations and opportunities that came from what Cardinal Newman described as the 'common bond of unity' that we all share."

"Your Holiness," he said to Benedict XVI, "this common bond has been an incredibly important part of your message to us. And it's at the heart of the new culture of social responsibility we want to build in Britain."

Cameron affirmed that "people of faith -- including our 30,000 faith-based charities -- are great architects of that new culture."

Importance of faith

"Faith is part of the fabric of our country," he stated. "It always has been and it always will be."

"As you, your Holiness, have said, faith is not a problem for legislators to solve but rather a vital part of our national conversation," the prime minister said. "And we are proud of that." He continued: "You have really challenged the whole country to sit up and think, and that can only be a good thing."

"Because I believe we can all share in your message of working for the common good and that we all have a social obligation each other, to our families and our communities. And, of course, our obligations to each other -- and our care for each other -- must extend beyond these shores too."

Cooperation

"Your Holiness," Cameron said, "in our meeting yesterday and in the discussions with the Papal delegation on Friday evening we agreed to develop the cooperation between this country and the Holy See on the key international issues where we share a common goal."

"I passionately believe that we must continue to help the poorest, even in difficult economic times," he asserted. "A yawning gap between the rich and the poor will be more dangerous and less secure for all of us."

"This country will keep its promises on aid," Cameron said.

He added: "We will work to hold other countries to their keep promises too. And to make sure that money we spend on aid goes to those who need it most."

"I am delighted that the Holy See will be working so actively with us to do all we can to achieve this," the prime minister stated.

"Your Holiness, your presence here has been a great honor for our country," he affirmed.

"And I look forward to ever closer cooperation between the United Kingdom and the Holy See as we redouble our resolve to work for the common good, both here in Britain and with our partners abroad."

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