

Papal Audience on Wednesday 22nd September in St Peter's Square. Pope Benedict made his main speech in Italian. This is the translation.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to speak about my apostolic journey to the United Kingdom, which God enabled me to carry out over the past few days. It was an official visit and, at the same time, a pilgrimage to the heart of the history and the present of a people rich in culture and faith, as the British are. It was a historic event, which marked a new important phase in the long and complex history of relations between those peoples and the Holy See.

The main objective of the visit was to beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman, one of the greatest Englishmen of recent times, an outstanding theologian and man of the Church. In fact, the beatification ceremony represented the climax of my apostolic journey, the theme of which was inspired in the motto of Blessed Cardinal Newman's crest: "Heart Speaks Unto Heart." And in the four intense and very beautiful days spent in that noble land, I had the great joy of speaking to the heart of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, and they spoke to mine, especially with their presence and the testimony of their faith. I was able to see how the Christian heritage is still strong and also active in all strata of social life. The hearts of the British and their lives are open to the reality of God and there are numerous expressions of religiosity that this visit of mine has made even more evident.

From the first day of my stay in the United Kingdom, and during my whole time there, I received everywhere a warm welcome from the authorities, representatives of the various social realities, representatives of the various religious confessions and especially the ordinary people. I am thinking particularly of the faithful of the Catholic community and their pastors who, although being a minority in the country, are much appreciated and respected, committed to the joyful proclamation of Jesus Christ, making the Lord shine and making themselves his voice especially among the least. To all I renew the expression of my profound gratitude, for the enthusiasm shown and for the praiseworthy diligence with which they have worked for the success of my visit, the memory of which I will always keep in my heart.

The first meeting was in Edinburgh with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who together with her consort, the Duke of Edinburgh, received me with great courtesy in the name of all the British people. It was a very cordial meeting, characterized by sharing some profound concerns for the well-being of the peoples of the world and for the role of Christian values in society. In Scotland's historic capital I was able to admire artistic beauties, testimony of a rich tradition and of profound Christian roots. I made reference to this in my address to Her Majesty and the authorities present, recalling that the Christian message has become an integral part of the language, thought and culture of the peoples of those islands. I also

spoke of the role Great Britain has had and has in the international scene, mentioning the importance of the steps taken for a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

The atmosphere of celebration and joy created by the young people and children made the Edinburgh stage a joyful one. On arriving later in Glasgow, a city beautified by enchanting parks, I presided over the first Holy Mass of the trip, specifically in Bellahouston Park. It was a moment of intense spirituality, very important for the country's Catholics, also considering the fact that on that day the liturgical feast of St. Ninian was celebrated, the first evangelizer of Scotland. In that liturgical assembly gathered in attentive and shared prayer, made even more solemn by the traditional melodies and catchy songs, I recalled the importance of the evangelization of culture, especially in our time in which a penetrating relativism threatens to darken the immutable truth about the nature of man.

On the second day I began my visit to London. There I first met the world of Catholic education, which has an important role in the educational system of the country. In a genuine family atmosphere, I spoke to educators, reminding them of the importance of faith in the formation of mature and responsible citizens. To numerous adolescents and young people, who welcomed me with joy and enthusiasm, I proposed that they not pursue limited objectives, being content with comfortable choices, but to aim for something greater, that is, the pursuit of true happiness, which is found only in God.

In the following meeting with leaders of other religions largely present in the United Kingdom, I called to mind the inescapable need for sincere dialogue, which requires respect for the principle of reciprocity to be fully fruitful. At the same time, I made manifest the search for the sacred as common ground for all religions on which to reinforce friendship, trust and collaboration.

The fraternal visit to the archbishop of Canterbury was the occasion to reaffirm the joint commitment to give witness to the Christian message that unites Catholics and Anglicans. It was followed by one of the most significant moments of the apostolic trip: the meeting in the great chamber of the British Parliament with institutional, political, diplomatic, academic, religious personalities, and representatives of the cultural and business world. In this very prestigious place I stressed that, for law makers, religion should not represent a problem to resolve but a factor that contributes in a vital way to the historic path and public debate of the nation, in particular, recalling the essential importance of the ethical foundation for decisions in the various sectors of social life.

In that same solemn atmosphere, I then went to Westminster Abbey: For the first time a Successor of Peter was in that place of worship that is a symbol of the very ancient Christian roots of the country. The recitation of the prayer of Vespers, together with the various communities of the United Kingdom, represented an important moment in relations between the Catholic community and the Anglican

Communion. When we venerated together the tomb of St. Edward the Confessor, while the choir sang "Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor," I praised God, who leads us on the path of full unity.

On Saturday morning, the meeting with the prime minister opened the series of meetings with the most important representatives of the British political world. It was followed by a Eucharistic celebration in Westminster Cathedral, which is dedicated to the most Precious Blood of Our Lord. It was an extraordinary moment of faith and prayer -- which manifested the rich and precious tradition of "Roman" and "English" liturgical music -- in which various ecclesial components took part, spiritually united to the multitude of believers of the long Christian history of that land. Great was my joy to have met with a large number of young people who participated in the Holy Mass from outside the cathedral. With their presence full of enthusiasm and at the same time attentive and eager, they demonstrated their desire to be the protagonists of a new stage of courageous witness, of solidarity in deeds, of generous commitment at the service of the Gospel.

In the apostolic nunciature I met with some victims abused by members of the clergy and religious. It was an intense moment of emotion and prayer. Shortly after, I also met with a group of professionals and volunteers responsible for the protection of children and young people in ecclesial environments, a particularly important and current aspect in the pastoral commitment of the Church. I thanked them and encouraged them to continue their work, which is inserted in the Church's long tradition of care for the respect, education and formation of the new generations.

Still in London, I visited a home for the elderly run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, with the precious contribution of numerous nurses and volunteers. This structure for welcoming is a sign of the great consideration that the Church has always had for the elderly, as well as an expression of British Catholics' commitment to respect for life, regardless of age or condition.

As I was saying, the culmination of my visit to the United Kingdom was the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman, illustrious son of England. It was preceded and prepared for by a special prayer vigil, which took place on Saturday night in London, in Hyde Park, in an atmosphere of profound recollection. To the multitude of faithful, especially young people, I wished to propose again the luminous figure of Cardinal Newman, intellectual and believer, whose spiritual message can be summarized in the testimony that the path to knowledge is not being closed in on one's "I," but openness, conversion and obedience to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The rite of beatification took place in Birmingham, during the solemn Sunday Eucharistic celebration, with the presence of a vast throng from the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, with representation from many other countries. This impressive event has highlighted even more an erudite man of great stature,

a distinguished writer and poet, a wise man of God, whose thought enlightened many consciences and who still today brings an extraordinary fascination. May believers and ecclesial communities of the United Kingdom in particular be inspired in him, so that also in our days that noble land will continue to produce abundant fruits of evangelical life.

The meeting with the Episcopal conference of England and Wales and that of Scotland concluded a day of great celebration and intense communion of hearts for the Catholic community in Great Britain.

Dear brothers and sisters, in this visit of mine to the United Kingdom, as always I wanted in the first place to support the Catholic community, encouraging it to work tirelessly to defend the immutable moral truths that, taken up again, illumined and confirmed by the Gospel, are at the base of a truly human, just and free society. I also wished to speak to the hearts of all the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, excluding no one, about the true reality of man, about his most profound needs, about his ultimate destiny. On addressing the citizens of that country, a crossroads of world culture and economy, I had the whole of the West present, dialoguing with the reason of this civilization and communicating the everlasting novelty of the Gospel, with which it is permeated.

This apostolic journey confirmed a profound conviction in me: The old nations of Europe have a Christian soul, which forms a unity with the "genius" and the history of each respective people, and the Church does not cease to work to continually maintain this spiritual and cultural tradition.

Blessed John Henry Newman, whose figure and writings are still of extraordinary timeliness, merits to be known by all. May he sustain the intentions and efforts of Christians to "spread everywhere the perfume of Christ, so that all their life is only a radiation of his," as he wrote wisely in his book "Radiating Christ."

[The Holy Father then addressed the people in various languages. In English, he said:]

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you know, I have just returned from my first Apostolic Journey to the United Kingdom, and I wish to send my affectionate greetings to all those I met and those who contributed to the visit through the media during four days, which have begun a new and important phase in the long-standing relations between the Holy See and Great Britain.

Last Thursday, I was honoured by the warm welcome of Her Majesty The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in Scotland's historic capital Edinburgh. Later that day, I celebrated Mass in Glasgow in the presence of many bishops, priests, religious and a great concourse of the faithful against the backdrop of a beautiful sunset at Bellahouston Park, within sight of the place where my beloved predecessor celebrated Mass with the Scots twenty-eight years ago.

Upon arriving in London, I met thousands of Catholic students and schoolchildren at a very joyful celebration, reminding all of us of the excellent and essential work being done by Catholic schools and

teachers throughout the land. I then had the pleasure of meeting the clerical and lay representatives of different religions and of discussing the search for the sacred common to all men.

Later, I had the honour of calling upon His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury who has come on several occasions to meet me in Rome. Our meeting at Lambeth Palace, in the presence of the Bishops of the Church of England, was very cordial and fraternal. I then crossed the river to Westminster where I was given the unprecedented opportunity to address both Houses of Parliament gathered in Westminster Hall on the importance of a fruitful dialogue between religion and reason, a theme as relevant in the time of Saint Thomas More as it is in our own day. Finally that day, I had the privilege of kneeling in prayer with the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Tomb of Saint Edward in Westminster Abbey, and of giving thanks to God with the Archbishop, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and other British Christian leaders, for the many blessings God has bestowed upon our efforts to re-knit the fabric of our Christian fellowship.

The next morning, I had the pleasure of greeting Prime Minister David Cameron, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Ms Harriet Harman, leader of the Opposition, before celebrating Mass in Westminster Cathedral, with a liturgy evocative of the best of the English musical tradition in the celebration of the Roman rite. That afternoon, I was welcomed very cordially by the Little Sisters of the Poor and the elderly people they look after. There I also had the chance to thank and encourage those charged with the safeguarding of children in Britain. That evening I participated at a beautiful vigil of deep prayerfulness and stillness at Hyde Park with tens of thousands of the faithful.

On Sunday morning, I travelled to Birmingham where I had the joy of celebrating the Beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman. Later that day, after a warm and fraternal meeting with all the Bishops of Britain, I was bidden farewell by Prime Minister Cameron during a very cordial speech at Birmingham International Airport on the Government's wish to build a partnership for development with the Catholic Church and others.

Sunday, then, was a moment of deep personal satisfaction, as the Church celebrated the blessedness of a great Englishman, whose life and writings I have admired for many years and who has come to be appreciated by countless people far beyond the shores of his native land. Blessed John Henry Newman's clear-minded search to know and express the truth in charity, at whatever cost to his own personal comfort, status and even friendships, is a wonderful testimony of a pure desire to know and love God in the communion of the Church. His is surely an example that can inspire us all.