



BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

STATEMENT

PROMOTING DIALOGUE

19 NOVEMBER 2010

The warmth of the reception given to the Holy Father personally and in response to his Address in Westminster Hall illustrated a profound appreciation for his openness and commitment to dialogue. Indeed one of the gifts that Pope Benedict XVI brought to our countries was a vivid sense of dialogue in all its richness. True dialogue requires an open heart and a committed will that always seeks what is best in those that we encounter and looks to build the common good. The Papal visit has renewed our determination to pursue such dialogue. In Westminster Hall Pope Benedict said "I invite all of you to seek ways of promoting and encouraging dialogue between faith and reason at every level of national life. Your readiness to do so is already implied in the unprecedented invitation extended to me today." This means that a more sustained dialogue is possible between religion and government, especially about how to create the kind of "noble and generous action" that the Holy Father described in Twickenham.

The witness given by our document Meeting God in Friend and Stranger provides us with a solid foundation to develop practical projects. Amongst these are the establishment of an Annual Benedict XVI Lecture, to be inaugurated by the Chief Rabbi on 15 Sept 2011; a conference due in early 2011 on "Faith in Your Future" for young people interested in public life; a partnership with St Mary's University College on "Faiths Working Together for the Common Good" in Autumn 2011; and the "Faith in the City" project in collaboration with the Mayor of London, which marks the beginning of a programme aimed at building understanding and cooperation between people of different religions.

I Westminster Hall 17 September 2010

II St Mary's University College Twickenham 17 September 2010