



# JOHN PAUL II

## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO GREAT BRITAIN

Meeting Of John Paul II With Leaders Of Christian Churches, Murrayfield, Tuesday, 1 June 1982

**Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,  
“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with  
your spirit, brethren” (Gal. 6, 18).**

1. It is a joy to meet with you this morning and I am very appreciative of your courtesy in coming at this early hour. Yesterday, soon after my arrival in Scotland, I had the happiness of being greeted by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Right Reverend Professor John McIntyre. In this regard, I cannot fail to recall that first historic meeting in 1961 between the then Moderator, Dr Archibald Craig, and my own predecessor John XXIII; or the courtesy of Dr Peter Brodie during his Moderatorial year in attending, in 1978, both my own installation and that of John Paul I. I am aware too of the significance of last night's happy venue, the precincts of the Assembly Hall itself, the seat of the Church of Scotland's Supreme Court, and also the locus of that momentous meeting in 1910 of the World Missionary Conference which is generally regarded as marking the beginning of the modern Ecumenical Movement.

2. It was in that same spirit of prayerful ecumenical endeavour that I also had the great pleasure last Saturday of meeting representatives of the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church in Scotland, together with other British church leaders. I am sure that you will agree with me that such meetings as this have an importance of their own; the very fact that they take place is a witness before the world that, despite the sad history of division between Christ's followers, all of us who worship the one true God are desirous today of collaborating in the name of God and of working together for the promotion of the human values of which he is the true Author.

3. In particular I have been pleased to learn of the fruitful dialogues in which the Catholic Church in this Country has been engaged with the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland and other Churches, and also of its collaboration with

the Scottish Churches' Council in many aspects of its work. I would like to make special mention of the Joint Commissions on Doctrine and on Marriage with the Church of Scotland and the Joint Study Group with the Scottish Episcopal Church, members of which groups are present here this morning. May I express my appreciation for your patient and painstaking work in the name of Christ. Here too we have an instance of that common witness which is both an expression of the degree of unity, limited but real, which we already enjoy through God's grace, and of our sincere desire to follow the ways by which God is leading us to that full unity which he alone can give. In following this road we have still to overcome many obstacles occasioned by the sad history of past enmities, we have to resolve important doctrinal issues; yet already mutual love, our will for unity, can be a sign of hope to a divided world – not least in these days in which peace is so sorely imperilled. I have looked forward to this meeting. Brief though it is, it offers us an opportunity to greet one another as brethren and, most important of all, to join in prayer that he who has begun this good work in us will bring it to completion (Cfr. Phil. 1, 6).

I am happy to greet also the representative of the Jewish community in Scotland, who, by his presence here, symbolizes the deep spiritual links which bind our two religious communities so closely together (Cfr. *Nostra Aetate*, 4).

I welcome in the same way the representative of the Islamic communities in this country, and I am happy to recall the religious values we have in common, as believers in the one almighty and merciful God (Cfr. *ibid.* 3). May he show his face to us and give us peace!

© Copyright 1982 – Libreria Editrice Vaticana