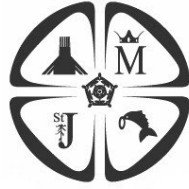


LIVERPOOL ARCHDIOCESAN CENTRE FOR EVANGELISATION



Papal message on the occasion of the Episcopal Silver Jubilee of the Most Reverend Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool Friday 3 April 2009

During the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King at 5.30 pm His Excellency Archbishop Faustino Sainz Munoz, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain read the following message written by Pope Benedict XVI to Archbishop Kelly to mark the occasion:

To our Venerable Brother PATRICK ALTHAM KELLY Metropolitan Archbishop of Liverpool

It was with great pleasure that we learned that, in the coming month of April, you, Venerable Brother, will be celebrating the completion of twenty-five years since your Episcopal ordination.

For that bond of charity by which we are closely bound, brother in the episcopacy, we wanted somehow to be part of this auspicious event in your life and we give you this letter as a sign of our best wishes and to offer abundant thanks to God for all the benefits which the same benign Father has heaped upon you.

For, feeling called to follow the Divine Master and sustained by his goodness, you entered the Venerable English College in Rome and, after attaining licences in philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, you received the priesthood in this same city of Rome.

Having returned home, you admirably and diligently fulfilled a number of tasks in your native diocese of Lancaster where you were, indeed, an assistant priest in a parish. You then fulfilled the task of professor of theology and rector of Saint Mary's College in Oscott.

In the year 1984, on account of your clear intellectual and personal gifts and your expertise in sacred matters, John Paul II, our predecessor of most blessed memory, chose you as bishop of Salford; you were later transferred to the distinguished metropolitan see of Liverpool, whose loyal servant you now are.

Carrying out the vital ministry of Pastor and Father of these ecclesial communities, with complete trust in the help of the Almighty, you have laboured daily to hand on the Gospel of salvation to the faithful entrusted to you and rule, teach and sanctify them, especially through the administration of the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, the sacred banquet 'in which

Christ is received... the mind is filled with grace and the pledge of future glory is given to us' (*Magnificat Antiphon from second vespers of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ*).

We are also aware that you have performed with keen interest the function of Vice-President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and indeed that you are a conscientious member of the Standing Committee and the Department of International Affairs.

So on such a propitious day in your life, when you will renew your pristine joy, rejoice in the most high God, place your hope in Him and commit yourself totally to Him 'to live in whom is to stand firm' (St. Augustine, *Soliloquies* 1,1,3: *PL* 32, 870).

May the Divine Redeemer, by the prayers of the glorious and ever virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, strengthen, keep and enrich you, admirable minister of grace, with the choicest heavenly gifts of his grace, love and mercy.

May the Apostolic Blessing which we lovingly impart to you from this See of Saint Peter convey these things to you and procure them for you, Venerable Brother, as well as the Auxiliary Bishop and the ecclesial community of Liverpool, all dear to us, and bear witness to the love that unites us.

From the Vatican, on the 3rd of March of the year 2009, the 4th year of our Pontificate.

Benedictus P.P. XVI

(The original, written in Latin, is personally signed by Pope Benedict XVI.)