



POPE BENEDICT XVI

Archbishop Nichols Address of Welcome

Westminster Cathedral, Saturday 18 September 2010.

Most holy Father,

It is difficult to find words to express our joy and happiness at your presence here among us. You are most welcome.

I know I speak for everyone in this great congregation, drawn from every diocese in our countries and for so many who are participating by radio and television as I express these words of greeting.

Holy Father we offer you our love and prayers to help and sustain you in your ministry as the successor of St Peter. Your ministry is a great gift to us for the Lord asks you to strengthen and nourish us, His people. That is what you do, being a sign and servant of the unity of the whole Church. Standing in the shoes of the Fisherman is demanding. So we give you our loving loyalty and sincere devotion.

Today we are full of joy that you lead us in the celebration of the Holy Mass in this Cathedral of the Most Precious Blood of our Saviour. We come to Him because we know we stand in need of His forgiveness and healing. Wonderfully we find these gifts opened for us in his death on the Cross. For in dying, He, who alone is God in our flesh, destroys every death that threatens us and restores our life. This is our faith, the faith of the Church, the faith which you affirm and proclaim with such authority, integrity and eloquence.

Holy Father, thank you for coming to be with us. Please lead us to the Lord, in Word and Sacrament, that He may strengthen and renew us.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols
President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales