

Britain, Holy See Celebrate 30 Years of Diplomatic Relations



Britain, Holy See Celebrate 30 Years of Diplomatic Relations. Venerable English College Hosts Colloquium to Celebrate Anniversary

ROME, MARCH 30, 2012 (Zenit.org).- "Today, for the first time in history, a Bishop of Rome sets foot on English soil. I am deeply moved at this thought. This fair land, once a distant outpost of the pagan world, has become, through the preaching of the Gospel, a beloved and gifted portion of Christ's vineyard."

These words were delivered by Blessed John Paul II in the homily for Mass on May 28, 1982, the first day of the first Apostolic visit to Great Britain.

This Apostolic visit in 1982 was one of the central themes of a Colloquium which took place this week in Rome to celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Apostolic See. The Colloquium, entitled "Britain and the Holy See: A Celebration of 1982 and the Wider Relationship," was sponsored by the British Embassy to the Holy See and hosted by the Venerable English College.

The various sessions of the Colloquium addressed several key themes pertaining to the diplomatic relationship between Britain and the Holy See. The morning sessions, entitled "1982, The First Papal Visit and its Impact,"

Archbishop Mario Conti, Archbishop of Glasgow, was one of the speakers who shared his testimony of the 1982 visit of Blessed John Paul II.

"The visit of Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1982 and his successor Benedict XVI in 2010, despite misgivings [they] have been acclaimed, upon their completion, a significantly positive performance, not only in this era of our Church, and the churches, but in that of the State. They have, in both instances, led to new dialogues – in respect to the latter, still in the process of assessment – but in

respect to the former, it led to a qualitative change in ecumenical relations."

"We respect one another even if we claim that we are not listening enough to one another. But that in itself calls for a more fruitful dialogue. The British Embassy to the Holy See and the Papal Nunciature at the Court of St. James' exist to foster that, and have shown in recent years the capacity to do so, the willingness to do so, the joy in so doing."

Later sessions of the Colloquium touched on the themes of diplomatic relations between Britain and the Holy See from ecumenical ("Vatican II, 1982 and Now: The Ecumenical Relationship"), political ("The Diplomatic and Political Relationship"), and historical ("From Consalvi to Newman: the 19th Century") perspectives.

Other notable speakers of the conference included Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See Nigel Baker, Cormac Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, Bishop Edwin Regan of Wrexham in Wales, and moderator Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh. Speakers of the morning session on the ecumenical relationship included Bishop Christopher Hill of Guildford, and Msgr. Mark Langham of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, moderated by Bishop Canon David Richardson, Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See. Afternoon discourses were delivered by Prof. Norman Tanner, SJ, former Ambassador to the Holy See Mark Pellow, Professor Judith Champ of St. Mary's Oscott, Prof. Eamon Duffy of Cambridge, and Msgr. Canon Charles Burns as Moderator

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