



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
AT THE MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY
OF EUROPE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND***

*Consistory Hall
Saturday, 7 March 1992*

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this morning on the occasion of your gathering in Rome for the bi-annual *Meeting of the Presbytery of Europe of the Church of Scotland*. Such personal contacts have notable importance, especially in view of the great task to which the Lord Jesus Christ himself has called us, that of seeking the unity for which he prayed at the Last Supper (Cf. Jn. 17:21). It is therefore with deep joy that I greet you in the words of the Apostle: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:2). Contacts between us have increased over the decades since that first historic meeting in 1961 between the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Doctor Archibald Craig, and my predecessor Pope John XXIII. Your presence reminds me of my own visit to Scotland in 1982 and of the warm welcome I received there from the Moderator of the General Assembly. Most recently, last autumn, at the Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops we had the benefit of the presence of the Reverend D. W. Shaw, who took part as a Fraternal Delegate. He has been long acquainted with the Catholic Church's ecumenical activity, having served as an Observer at the Second Vatican Council for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

In these times when the continent of Europe is undergoing profound transformations, *the witness of Christians takes on a renewed urgency*. It is important that the nations of this continent be helped to rediscover the deepest source of their culture, and of that "civilization" which makes it possible to speak of a European identity and to aspire to a unity which goes beyond merely geographical and economic considerations. That source is the Christian faith in which the peoples of Europe were baptized and confirmed, and from which they drew inspiration for their

achievements and for their consciousness of the inalienable dignity of individuals as the basis of justice and peace in society. Perhaps as few times in the past, Europe needs to hear the reconciling word of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. All Christians must be committed to giving this witness, and as a fundamental part of it they must feel the urgency of following together those paths which will lead to overcoming our divisions. May God give us the strength to continue in this direction.

I trust that your meeting in Rome will be a fruitful one, and I ask God to bless you and your families abundantly.

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