

PRAYER SERVICE UPON ARRIVAL AT THE ENGLISH COLLEGE IN ROME

*September 29, 1989*

*On his arrival at Fiumicino Airport, Rome, His Grace Dr Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his entourage were welcomed by Cardinal Willebrands and other Vatican dignitaries. They drove to the Venerable English College where the visitors were guests during their stay in Rome. On arrival at the English College they were welcomed by the Rector, Mons. John Kennedy, who conducted them to the College Chapel for a brief prayer service. The following is the text of Cardinal Willebrands' prayer on the occasion.*

Let us pray,

Heavenly Father, we come before you to seek the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit of

your Son Jesus Christ during the days that lie ahead. As we gather in this place, made sacred by the witness of martyrs, we pray that our own faith in you and our trust in your power may be no less than theirs.

Guide and strengthen our Holy Father John Paul, and Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, together with all the people they are called to represent, that our communities may give ever more effective and united witness to our crucified and risen Saviour. We likewise put before you at this moment, Lord, all those who you would bring to faith through their ministry.

We pray, above all, heavenly Father, to be led into ever deeper prayer together as we share in the

prayer your Son gave us: *They Kingdom come* (Mt 6,10). That Kingdom is already in our midst (cf. Lk 17,21). May it grow into that fullness for which Christ prayed on the night before he died: "that they all may be one; even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (Jn 17,21).

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*The following is the text of the prayer recited by the Archbishop of Canterbury.*

Let us give thanks for the gift all Christians share — the knowledge of God in Christ, the gift of His Holy Spirit, our common baptism, our common Scriptures, the example of the Saints, and our hope of Christ's coming Kingdom.

We pray for the whole Church of Christ in the words of Archbishop William Laud.

Most gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth, with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; where it is in error, direct it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided, heal it, and unite it in your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We praise God for the distinctive witness of our two Communions, for our different histories, and for the way in which our traditions have shaped the discipleship of believers. As we make this thanksgiving, let us acknowledge that God's work in us is not yet complete, but let us be reconciled in our memories, and come to a new and lasting appreciation of each other's faithfulness to Christ.

O God, whose will it is that all your children should be one in Christ; we pray for the unity of your Church. Pardon our

pride, and our lack of faith, understanding and charity, which are the causes of our divisions. Deliver us from narrow-mindedness, bitterness, and prejudice. Save us from considering as normal that which is a scandal to the world and an offence to your love. Teach us to recognize the gifts of grace among all those who call upon you and confess the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In this place where we commemorate the martyrdom of Thomas of Canterbury, Ralph Sherwin and others who died for faith and conscience's sake, let us remember those who today risk hardship, persecution, ridicule and death for their loyalty to the gospel.

Lord God, the refuge and strength of your people in every hour of need, sustain all who suffer for their allegiance to the faith of Christ. Give them courage and patience to endure to the end; that by their example and witness they may win others to the service of Him who suffered for all mankind, our Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

On this Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, let us be conscious that we are surrounded by the whole company of heaven, as we pray in confidence for God's blessing upon all that will happen in the next few days.

We pray in words written by St. Clement of Rome.

God almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the gift of your Spirit establish and ground us in your truth. Reveal to us what we do not know; perfect in us what is lacking; strengthen in us what we know; and keep us in your service without fault; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.