

THE RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY FOR ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE IN THE CASINA OF PIUS IV

September 29, 1989

On Friday evening, September 29, during the reception for the Archbishop of Canterbury in the casina of Pius IV, Cardinal Willebrands spoke the following words of welcome.

Your Eminences, Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters,

It is my pleasure and privilege on behalf of you all to extend a warm welcome to our honoured

guest, the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion. Archbishop Runcie is the fourth Archbishop of Canterbury to visit the Holy Father in recent years. We meet in a beautiful and historic setting, among buildings completed by Pope Pius IV, the Pope who also brought to their completion the proceedings of the Council of Trent. The *Casina Pio IV* now houses the

Pontifical Academy of Sciences founded originally in 1603 and refounded with new statutes in 1936 by Pope Pius XI. The Academy, which has eighty academicians, exists to encourage and further scientific research.

I am most happy that during the Archbishop's visit to the Holy Father he will be able to get to know something of the variety of activities in which the Vatican is engaged. What pleases me most, however, is that the Archbishop of Canterbury should have the opportunity to meet senior representatives of the Roman Curia. The task of working for Christian unity is not a task that can simply be given to one group within the Church.

Rather, as the Second Vatican Council has said, "the concern for restoring unity involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 5). There is no area of Church life, no aspect of Church government that does not have a profound ecumenical dimension. At the initiative of Pope Paul VI, the *Commission for Coordination* was brought into being: it is a regular meeting of senior members of the Roman Curia at which the activities of the Council for Christian Unity are explained and discussed. This is a means of collaboration and consultation which we deem very important.

Your Grace, on behalf of my fellow members of the Roman Curia, I greet you and welcome you as our brother and we welcome those who accompany you. May our being together this afternoon be a sign of the growth in communion which, with God's help and in God's time, we may seek to realize.

The following is Archbishop Runcie's reply to Cardinal Willebrands's address of welcome during the official reception in the "Casina" of Pius IV.

Your Eminences, Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In meeting you, the members of the Roman Curia, I am reminded of the brilliant English Roman Catholic theologian and preacher, Ronald Knox — himself a Protonotary Apostolic of the Holy Roman Church. He hated foreign travel. When asked why he hadn't visited Rome, he replied: "As I'm such a poor sailor I have no desire to visit the engine room".

Unlike Mons. Ronald Knox, I have desired to come to Rome and I compliment you on the elegance and graciousness of your reception for me tonight. Even Knox would have approved of *this* engine room.

You will know that I have just come from a first meeting with the Holy Father. It is therefore more than fitting that I now have the immediate opportunity to meet you at this reception at the invitation of Cardinal Willebrands.

It is particularly appropriate that Cardinal Willebrands should welcome me tonight amongst you, his brethren of the Curia. He is a true and

trusted ecumenical friend of the Anglican Communion and of many other Christians. During and since the Second Vatican Council he has been intimately involved in *all* the ecumenical relations of the Catholic Church. I also recall that this November will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Decree on Ecumenism* of the Second Vatican Council — in which the Council states that "the Anglican Communion occupies a special place" among Western Churches and ecclesial communities separated from the Roman See. (*De oecumenismo*, 13).

All other Christians, not simply Anglicans, owe an immense debt to the Second Vatican Council and the continuing work of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Since the Council the Catholic Church has been deeply engaged in the ecumenical movement as a whole. This involvement has fundamentally changed for the good what was a largely pan-Protestant endeavour. Only the unity of all Christians can be fully true to the prayer of Christ.

In day to day dealings with the Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Anglicans have come to understand the importance of and the need for the Roman Curia as a service to catholic unity under the Bishop of Rome. In Cardinal Willebrands and his collaborators you *all* have excellent ambassadors.

During this visit and especially at this reception I hope to gain a more complete impression of the manifold responsibilities of the different dicasteries of the Roman Curia. Be assured I have no illusions about the difficulty of your responsibilities in the maintenance of a universal communion. I come to you with a respect for those who labour in the "engine room".

I must also say something about the marvellous setting you have chosen for our gathering tonight. The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, with its association with some of the world's greatest scientific thinkers, reminds us that the Church must be both true to its apostolic foundations and open to human discovery. Truth is to be trusted for, as Descartes reminds us, "God does not deceive". This is well expressed in the pontifical academic formula: *Nihil est quod ecclesiae ab inquisitione veri metuatur*.

I was intrigued to learn that this house had been built by Pope Pius IV, a Pope who reigned during the tragic period of our separation. Pius IV was a reforming Pope. His historic achievement was to reconvene the Council of Trent — which Anglicans now come to see was, in spite of its limitations, a great reforming Council. Pius IV, the uncle of St. Charles Borromeo, was a man of moderation. He refrained from excommunicating Elizabeth I in the hope of some reconciliation with England.

He was also a man of human conversation and conviviality. An Anglican historian generously describes him as "a genial diplomat". And truth is to be found through friendship and mutual

understanding. No theological agreements suffice unless we know each other no longer as strangers but as friends. No theological disagreement will permanently divide us when we know each other no longer as strangers but as friends.

Tonight we continue that good tradition of Christian friendship and conviviality in the assurance that in the theological realm conviviality

and communion are closely related to each other.

Your Eminence, members of the Roman Curia, I therefore thank you for your hospitality and welcome in this delightful setting. May we who now drink together in this temple of learning one day come to drink together at the Lord's Table, both in this world and in the fullness of Christ's Kingdom.