
UK: Card. Nichols (primate) remembering Pope Benedict XVI's visit. "He changed the perception of the Catholic Church in the country"

(London) A "visit that built" upon the previous visit by John Paul II to the UK in 1982 which "changed the perception of the Catholic Church in the country". The Catholic Primate of England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, said this to mark the four-day visit by Pope Benedict XVI to the UK ten years ago. To mark the anniversary, which is celebrated tomorrow - the Holy Father arrived in Edinburgh on 16 September 2010 -, Cardinal Nichols released a message on the website of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. "The two weeks of criticism and rancour and distress expressed by some" about this visit "dissipated" as soon as Pope Benedict met Queen Elizabeth II at Holyrood Palace. "We saw in the person of Pope Benedict nothing to do with the name that he had been given of God's Rottweiler. At the end of the visit, one commentator said he appeared as everybody's favourite grandfather. We saw his courtesy, his gentleness, the perceptiveness of his mind and the openness of his welcome to everybody that he met". "There are many highlights that stand out in my mind. One was the drive down the great road approaching Buckingham Palace", the cardinal went on to recall, "packed with people on both sides" who gave a "warm, rapturous welcome" to Pope Benedict. And then his speech at Westminster Hall, when he called for a proper dialogue between "the world of reason, and therefore of politics", and "the world of faith". It was a speech that "still resonates" today at a time "when policies are reduced to tweets".

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