



Pope Benedict XVI's Visit to United Kingdom - Rector of Shrine of Fatima reflects on "most important" apostolic visit

Under the title "Through Mary, Mother of Unity", the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal reflects, in editorial in the September issue of "Voz da Fátima", the institution's official newspaper, on the apostolic visit Holy Father Benedict XVI is making to the United Kingdom on the 16th thru the 19th of this month. Fr. Virgílio Antunes states that "the doctrinal dialogue (between the Anglican and the Catholic Churches), always difficult, has gone on, producing some fruits, as it is evident from the joint declarations issued by the committees constituted for that kind of work". On the other hand, he admits that "some sectors of the Anglican Church have caused great fractures, specially in what pertains to morals and pastoral ministry". That is why the visit of Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom is seen by the Rector as "very important", "since it is a nation with an Anglican majority and an enormous influence throughout the world as well as one of the great targets of the ecumenical dialogue in which the Catholic Church is engaged in". And he adds: "Pope Benedict XVI seems keen on opening the doors of the church to all those who, due to historical circumstances, find themselves outside full communion with the Catholic Church, as it is clear from measures he has already taken. He knows fully well that the weight of centuries as well as of institutions firmly rooted, coupled with sentimental reasons, end up being greater than the weight of theology or doctrine, the weight of reflection and reason. He is thus aware that signs and gestures of closeness, dialogue and willingness express the desire of getting together and uniting". Regarding devotion to Mary, the Rector says that "both in the Catholic world and the Anglican world, the devotion to Mary is widespread; both sides express belief in the Gospel's word that all generations will call Her blessed". And he notes that "for some decades now some sectors in the Anglican Church have shown devotion to Our Lady of Fatima". And he concludes: "Therefore, we hope that, through Mary, the bonds of unity will grow stronger".

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