



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOP OF DROMORE
FOR THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE DIOCESAN CATHEDRAL IN NEWRY**

*To my Venerable Brother Francis Gerard Brooks
Bishop of Dromore*

AS THE CHURCH in Dromore celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the Diocesan Cathedral in Newry, I wish to assure you and all the faithful that I am spiritually close to you in this hour of thanksgiving.

I am happy to reflect with you on the innumerable graces that God has given to his people in this house of prayer and worship. It is a source of particular joy to recall that, by the command and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, his life-giving words have been constantly preached in this Cathedral. And this proclamation has reached its summit in the renewal of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which has been offered countless times for the living and the dead. By word and sacrament the People of God have been built up into a spiritual edifice for the glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.

Here generations of Christians have been initiated into the faith of Christ and commissioned to give witness by word and example to his Gospel. Here the conversion of hearts has taken place through the saving action of the Redeemer, human love has been sanctified, and the ministerial priesthood transmitted. In a word, Christ has continued to dwell with the community of his people, becoming wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption for each successive generation.

It is my earnest hope that the joyous celebration of this anniversary will inspire in all the faithful a new awareness of their Christian dignity and mission, and stir up fresh resolves in their hearts. I ask the Holy Spirit to make them ever more conscious of their divine adoption in Christ Jesus as children of God, and of their call to newness and holiness of life. At the same time I pray that all

the priests, religious and laity, in their distinctive roles, will realize the exigencies of their vocation, which is to be intimately associated with Christ in his redemptive activity. With great clarity my predecessor Pius XII explained the important mission of the Christian people in collaborating with Christ the Redeemer, and today I reiterate his teaching: " In carrying out the work of redemption, Christ wishes to be helped by the members of his Body. This is not because he is indigent and weak, but rather because he willed it for the greater glory of his unspotted Spouse. Dying on the Cross, he left to his Church the immense treasury of redemption; towards this she contributed nothing. But when those graces come to be distributed, not only does he share this task of sanctification with his Church, but he wants it in a way to be due to her action". With this awareness of their mission I am convinced that the Catholic people will dedicate themselves anew in holiness and zeal to the cause of the Gospel of salvation and to service of humanity. The salvific and evangelizing work of Christ must be carried on through his Body, the Church, until he comes again in glory.

Commending the whole ecclesial community in Dromore to the intercession of Mary Mother of God, and invoking upon you the protection of your holy patrons, Saint Patrick and Saint Colman, I send my special Apostolic Blessing, embracing all of you in the love of the Redeemer.

From the Vatican, 25 April 1979.

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