



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STAFF AND STUDENTS
OF SAINT EDMUND'S COLLEGE**

Monday, 25 October 1993

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am pleased to welcome you, the staff and students of Saint Edmund's College, as you make a pilgrimage to Rome to mark the two hundredth anniversary of your school's location at Old Hall Green and its dedication to Saint Edmund of Canterbury.

Saint Edmund's has a long and distinguished history, of which you are rightly proud. It can trace its roots back to 1568, when Cardinal Allen founded the English College at Douai to promote the education of young Englishmen in a properly Catholic atmosphere.

Your college gave them a sound foundation in the Christian faith, as well as in the arts and sciences, while at the same time preparing some of them for the priesthood. During difficult times the school helped to keep the flame of Catholicism alive in England.

It is a happy coincidence that you are here in Rome for the feast of *the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales*, some of whom studied at the English College in Douai. These were brave men filled with faith and joy in the Risen Lord. In spite of the hardships which awaited them at home, they were determined to return there to pastor Christ's flock. Above all they were faithful to the Holy See, suffering martyrdom for their loyalty to the Successor of Peter. Your presence here today testifies to the fruitfulness of their witness. As your motto suggests, you have preserved their heritage: *Avita pro Fide*.

Nowadays Saint Edmund's College is dedicated to educating young men to take their place in English society as mature, well-educated Christians. More than ever, the Catholic layman has the

responsibility of bearing witness to the truth of Christ. When you return to England, as your predecessors did, proclaim that Gospel message, and "be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable" (2Tim. 4: 2).

The school's staff too should be inspired by the wise and holy leaders of its past and be ever ready to foster a joyful faith and sound moral values among the students in their care.

May the intercession of Saint Edmund of Canterbury and the Douai Martyrs deepen your faith in Christ and your love of his Church. To all the staff and students of Saint Edmund's College I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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