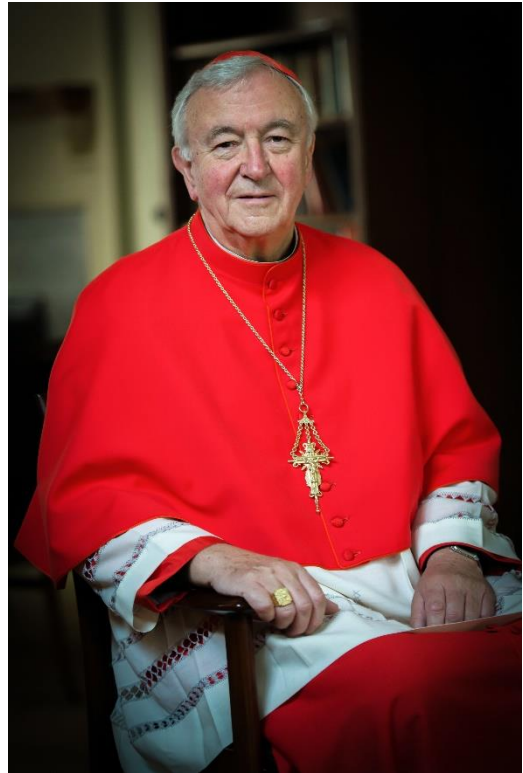


Like many of you, I recall the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to this country in 2010 with great fondness and gratitude. The occasion of a formal Papal Visit to this country was extraordinary in many ways and is still bearing fruit.

I do not think that it is a coincidence that the years since that visit have seen a renewed growth and development of the Catholic Union and the expansion of its work. This is thanks to the hard work of many people, building on the efforts of lay men and women stretching back to 1870 when the Union was founded.

It was a great joy to celebrate Mass for members and supporters of the Catholic Union in February 2020 to mark its 150th anniversary. It was an opportunity to remind people of the importance of the Catholic Union and the need to support its work.



The central mission of the Catholic Union to be a witness to our faith in the public sphere and promote the common good is deeply needed and relevant in our society today. Drawing on the expertise and experience of its members, the Catholic Union makes a significant contribution to matters of concern to the Church – from family life to healthcare and education.

As well as having consultative status to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Catholic Union is a trusted friend and partner in our task of supporting the Catholic community in this country and in making the message of Christ heard in this land.

The Catholic Union has a very particular role in promoting our faith in Parliament and public life – giving expression to the words of Pope Benedict who said: “religion is not a problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to the national conversation”.

As we continue along the path towards being a synodal Church, where priests and lay faithful are called to walk together, groups like the Catholic Union will be even more important.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Catholic Union so far. I encourage you to keep up your generosity, and urge others to join you, so that the work of the Union can continue for another 150 years to come.

With an assurance of my prayers and blessings.

**CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER**