



Foreword by
The Most Revd and Rt Hon Rowan Williams,
Archbishop of Canterbury

Twenty eight years ago, Pope John Paul II made his historic visit to Britain, a visit that included an unforgettable act of worship at Canterbury Cathedral in company with my predecessor Archbishop Robert Runcie. It marked a great change in relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Its effects are still making themselves felt.

The warmth of our present friendship, shown in the regular meetings of the bishops of both our communions, and in many local instances, testifies to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our ecumenical endeavours. We have learned more and more what it means to share God's mission in Jesus Christ in these islands, recognising that we have the same passion for Jesus Christ to be made

known in the lives of faithful and joyful communities gathered around the Lord's Table.

As we now warmly welcome Pope Benedict XVI, we give thanks for his courageous and consistent witness to the abiding and central truths of the faith in a climate so often marked by indifference and ignorance about Christian truth.

Our hope and prayer is that this visit may inspire us to greater energy and imagination in that shared mission. Pope John Paul wrote in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* ('*May they all be one*') in 1995 of how the papal office could, and should, be a ministry of unity in the gospel that would serve all Christians. We pray that in this visit, Pope Benedict will draw us closer together in the love of God and the service of Christ, so that the transforming power of the gospel will be proclaimed more effectively to all in our society. **E**