PREFACE

TODAY MARKS THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY of the election of Pope John Paul II. To mark the occasion, newspapers have dedicated customary feature spreads and television newscasts predictable analyses of how this pontificate has elicited polar reactions in both church and world.

Along with these interpretations comes news that the papal author has no intention of letting up on his publications, as a thirteenth encyclical letter, *Fides et Ratio*, issues from the Vatican presses and is posted simultaneously on the Vatican's web site.

Despite temptations to instant analysis, the Holy Father's intellectual leadership of the Church cannot be reduced to a soundbite. Nor can his reflections on the seminal issues of our age be reduced to a limited number of column inches whenever he passes another milestone in life. Instead, profound engagement and ongoing study are called for.

This task is not an easy one, for the pope's thought is regularly clothed in the sometimes dense categories of thought common to the world of academe. Often help in engaging the texts is needed.

This is why I am so pleased that—as was done with papers from earlier assemblies—the proceedings of two recent Jesuit colloquia on the pope's thought are being made available now to a wider audience. Whatever their format—scholarly paper, summaries of papal documents, even a homily—their intent is to clarify and illuminate Pope John Paul II's thought and teaching.

The terms *prophecy* and *diplomacy* in the title are, I believe, quite apt. The prophet seeks to speak the truth from God in a particular set of circumstances for the good of God's people, often without bothering about a *captatio benevolentiae* to render listeners more receptive to the message. The diplomat, by contrast, seeks with great delicacy to establish common cause with interlocutors in order to establish a basis on which agreements may be founded.

Before and following his call to the Chair of Peter, Karol Woj-

tyła—whether engaged as philosopher or theologian, as ambassador or chief shepherd—has always striven to combine the clashing and complementary roles of prophet and diplomat.

I trust that engagement with the themes of these essays may encourage readers to attempt for themselves a closer reading of the pope's own writings, which are alternatively inspiring and demanding. May such study and reflection evoke, where needed, the change of hearts that prophets can only dream about and the change of minds diplomats yearn for.

TERRENCE PRENDERGAST, S.J.
Archbishop of Halifax
October 16, 1998