



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO TURKEY

(28-30 NOVEMBER 2014)

ECUMENICAL PRAYER

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Patriarchal Church of Saint George, Istanbul

Saturday, 29 November 2014

[Multimedia]

Your Holiness, my dear Brother,

Each evening brings a mixed feeling of gratitude for the day which is ending and of hope-filled trust as night falls. This evening my heart is full of gratitude to God who allows me to be here in prayer with Your Holiness and with this sister Church after an eventful day during my Apostolic Visit. At the same time my heart awaits the day which we have already begun liturgically: the Feast of the Apostle Saint Andrew, Founder and Patron of this Church.

In the words of the prophet Zechariah, the Lord gives us anew in this evening prayer, the foundation that sustains our moving forward from one day to the next, the solid rock upon which we advance together in joy and hope. The foundation rock is the Lord's promise: "Behold, I will save my people from the countries of the east and from the countries of the west... in faithfulness and in righteousness" (8:7.8).

Yes, my venerable and dear Brother Bartholomew, as I express my heartfelt "thank you" for your fraternal welcome, I sense that our joy is greater because its source is from beyond; it is not in us, not in our commitment, not in our efforts – that are certainly necessary – but in our shared trust in God's faithfulness which lays the foundation for the reconstruction of his temple that is the Church

(cf. *Zech* 8:9). “For there shall be a sowing of peace” (*Zech* 8:12); truly, a sowing of joy. It is the joy and the peace that the world cannot give, but which the Lord Jesus promised to his disciples and, as the Risen One, bestowed upon them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Andrew and Peter heard this promise; they received this gift. They were blood brothers, yet their encounter with Christ transformed them into brothers in faith and charity. In this joyful evening, at this prayer vigil, I want to emphasize this; they became brothers in hope – and hope does not disappoint us! What a grace, Your Holiness, to be brothers in the hope of the Risen Lord! What a grace, and what a responsibility, to walk together in this hope, sustained by the intercession of the holy Apostles and brothers, Andrew and Peter! And to know that this shared hope does not deceive us because it is founded, not upon us or our poor efforts, but rather upon God’s faithfulness.

With this joyful hope, filled with gratitude and eager expectation, I extend to Your Holiness and to all present, and to the Church of Constantinople, my warm and fraternal best wishes on the Feast of your holy Patron. And I ask a favour of you: to bless me and the Church of Rome.