



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO PRESIDENT GEORGI PURVANOV OF BULGARIA
FOR THE CELEBRATIONS IN HONOUR
OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS***

Friday, 22 May 2009

Mr President,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Government Delegation,

Venerable Representatives of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church,

At this meeting which is taking place on the occasion of the annual Feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius it gives me great pleasure to address my most cordial greetings to each one of you. On this happy occasion, I would like to renew my sentiments of friendship for the beloved Bulgar people, whose spiritual roots as, furthermore, your visit today testifies date back to the preaching of these saints, Co-Patrons of Europe. I offer a respectful greeting to each one of you and I extend these sentiments to the authorities and to the whole of the Bulgarian people, as well as to the leaders and faithful of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church, present in your beloved country.

This meeting offers us the opportunity to think once again of the evangelical and social work carried out by Sts Cyril and Methodius, these two outstanding Gospel witnesses. Their spiritual heritage marked the life of the Slavic peoples; their example supported the witness and fidelity of innumerable Christians down the centuries who dedicated their lives to spreading the message of salvation, working at the same time to build a just and supportive society. May their spiritual testimony remain alive in your Nation so that Bulgaria too, drawing from this source of light and hope, may contribute effectively to building a Europe that stays faithful to its Christian roots. The values of solidarity and justice, of freedom and peace, today constantly reaffirmed, in fact find even greater power and solidity in the eternal teaching of Christ, expressed in the life of his disciples of every epoch.

These are the sentiments that I would like to express to each one of you, as I assure you of my esteem and spiritual closeness. You may be sure too that the Holy See continues to follow with sympathy the progress of your Nation and the commitment of all those who work for its good. I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon each one of you.

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