



The Holy See

***LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO HIS HOLINESS ALEXEI II,
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND OF ALL THE RUSSIAS***

*To His Holiness Alexei II
Patriarch of Moscow and of All the Russias*

I have learned that in the very near future Your Holiness will be visiting Belgrade, the capital of that country where an armed conflict is causing immense human suffering. Very disturbing reports about the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have been sent to me, and I myself am deeply troubled by them.

I am comforted to know, then, that Your Holiness will be going there to visit the venerable Patriarch Pavle and the Serbian Church, thus proclaiming the Easter message of peace and expressing Christian solidarity with all the victims of the persecution and violence which have unfortunately marked this region for so long. I firmly hope that those you meet will accept the message you bring, recognizing it as the only way to restore peace and stability, so that every person, whatever his ethnic, religious or political background, can live in harmony with others.

All who profess the Gospel of peace have the duty of declaring with one voice that every form of violence, ethnic cleansing, deportation of peoples and their exclusion from society cannot be considered as a way to reach civilized solutions to problems which can only be resolved by procedures that respect the law. All too often violence seems the easiest formula for resolving difficult situations.

I join you in prayer, asking the risen Lord to spread his blessings upon those who are now deprived of the most basic goods and to make peace prevail in that beloved land which has suffered too long. May your visit bear fruit and help us all to bring comfort to such a human tragedy!

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you (cf. 2 Cor 13:13)!

From the Vatican, 18 April 1999.

JOHN PAUL II

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