



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMAIOS I
FOR THE FEAST OF ST ANDREW**

*To His Holiness Bartholomew I
Archbishop of Constantinople
Ecumenical Patriarch*

"May grace and peace come in abundance to you", who have been chosen "according to the design of God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ" (cf. I Pt 1,2).

With these words the Apostle Peter greeted the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. I wish to address the same words of peaceful good wishes to you on this joyful occasion of the Feast of the Holy Patron of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Today, this wish grows into prayer. The Delegation led by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who have come to visit you at my request, joins Your Holiness, the Holy Synod and the whole Church of Constantinople with common fervour to lift to God our Father the great Doxology in which the Eastern and Latin traditions come together in the commemoration of the Apostle Andrew, the Protoclete (the first to be called), the brother of Peter.

The brotherhood of the two Apostles Peter and Andrew, and the same unique vocation to which they were called as they pursued their daily labour (cf. Mk 1,16-17), invites us day by day in concert to seek full communion so as to realize our common mission of reconciliation in God and the promotion of a genuine peaceful, Christian spirit in our world pervaded by tragic divisions and armed conflicts.

The fidelity to Christ of the two holy brothers, Peter and Andrew, leading to their supreme sacrifice of martyrdom, calls our communities, born from the preaching of the Apostles and founded on

uninterrupted apostolic succession, to dedicate ourselves to resolving the difficulties that still prevent our concelebration of the Eucharist.

This same fidelity, which is rooted in the sacrifice of the martyr, is the model toward which we must constantly and whole-heartedly tend, that must guide our steps and dispose us humbly and fully to *the sacrifice for the unity* desired by the Lord.

Our contacts, our conversations and our experiences of collaboration are all oriented towards a single goal, unity, the essential condition indicated by Christ that should permeate the relations between his disciples. For her part, the Catholic Church is dedicated with conviction to this process with the will to promote every initiative that can favour the quest for full unity among all Christ's disciples. We consider that it would be helpful to establish forms of more frequent communication and regular exchanges with each other to make our relations more harmonious and to coordinate our joint efforts more effectively. In this regard, how can I fail to mention the concern, which I have so much at heart and which Your Holiness shares with me, to know how to start again our theological dialogue in a new phase after the uncertainties, difficulties and flounderings of the last decade?

These are the thoughts that occupy my mind and heart as we celebrate the Feast of St Andrew, the brother of Peter. I recall the icon which His Holiness Athenagoras I gave to His Holiness Paul VI as a souvenir of their first, joyful meeting in Jerusalem. It shows the two Apostles Peter and Andrew in a brotherly embrace and it is the symbol of the reality toward which we must tend: the embrace of our Churches in full communion.

With these sentiments and in the hope that our ecclesial relations, inspired by renewed fervour, will experience new developments, I assure you, Your Holiness, of my brotherly affection in the Lord.

From the Vatican, 25 November 2002.

JOHN PAUL II