



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE CATHOLICOS OF THE MALANKARESE SYRIAN-ORTHODOX CHURCH

Chapel of Mar Elias (India)

Saturday, 8 February 1986 Your Holiness,

Dear Friends and Brothers in the Lord,"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" .1. It is a joy for me to greet you with these words of faith and hope which were addressed by Saint Paul to the Christians of Corinth. Blessed be the Spirit of God who has filled us with his love and who guides us into the fullness of truth. It is this same Spirit which plants in the hearts of the baptised throughout the world a desire to come together in perfect unity to accomplish the will of Jesus expressed in his prayer to his Father: "That they may be one so that the world may believe" . We must first of all give thanks for the rapprochement which has come about between our Churches in recent years.2. The visit that Your Holiness paid to me three years ago marked an important stage on our journey towards greater unity with one another and with Christ. It is with gratitude that I recall both our meeting and your pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. You then addressed to me words that were full of hope and of fraternal love: "It is our task", you said, "to repent and to recreate history in accordance with the will of the Lord". We are now in the process of fulfilling the Lord's will – a process of which our meeting today, although brief, is a sure sign. We cannot tarry on our journey towards unity; our separations – like all separations among those who believe in Christ – are an obstacle to the spreading of the Gospel and to the fulfilment of our calling. I know that Your Holiness has expressed on various occasions your desire to see progress in the fraternal relations between Catholics and Syrian Orthodox in India. As I said to you when you made your historic visit to the Church of Rome: "Ecumenism on the local level has decisive importance for the general promotion of the unity of all Christians. Unity is a distinctive mark of the Christian community. Division in its various expressions tarnishes it, sometimes compromises it" .3. With you I desire that our Churches may soon find effective ways of resolving the urgent pastoral problems that face us, and that we may progress together in brotherly love and in our theological dialogue, for it is by these means that reconciliation among Christians and reconciliation in the world can come about. I can assure you that the Catholic Church, with the commitment she made at the Second Vatican Council, is ready to participate fully in this enterprise. The joy of greeting you and your delegation here in this holy place, Your Holiness, nourishes our hope and our prayer. May the Lord hasten the day when, having overcome the differences that stand between us, we may celebrate the Eucharist together, at his holy altar. I thank you for this meeting, and I implore the blessing of Almighty God on Your Holiness and on the clergy and people of your Church. Be assured of my love in Christ Jesus our Lord. © Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
