



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO A DELEGATION FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*

Saturday, 22 May 1999

Dear Prime Minister,

Dear Friends, Every year the Feast of the Apostles of the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, brings a Delegation from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Rome, to honour the relics of Saint Cyril in the Church of Saint Clement. On these occasions it is a pleasure for me to meet you who represent the civil and religious life of your country. For many weeks now, you and your people have been caught up in the terrible crisis which day after day is bringing untold suffering, death and destruction to the Balkans, leaving hundreds of thousands of human beings mourning the loss of their family members, their property and their basic human rights. Despite the enormous difficulties involved, your own country has become a haven of safety for many refugees and you are bravely and generously trying to alleviate their immediate distress and misery. In expressing to you and your fellow citizens my own and the Church's appreciation of all that you are doing, I again appeal with all my heart to those responsible: to bring an end to the violence and to engage in an open and sincere dialogue aimed at creating a just and lasting basis for agreement and peace. My earnest prayer is that through the intercession of the two holy Brothers the entire region will rediscover the brotherly communion of all its peoples, so that when the present violence and distrust have been overcome it may be for the rest of Europe and the world a clear example of just and peaceful coexistence in mutual respect and liberty. Dear friends, my hope is that your pilgrimage will bring you strength and encouragement in serving the common good of your people. God bless your country and its

citizens!

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