



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO AZERBAIJAN AND BULGARIA

VISIT TO THE LATIN CO-CATHEDRAL

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Sofia, Saturday, 25 May 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. "May the God of peace [...] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (*Heb 13:20-21*).

With this wish, taken from the Letter to the Hebrews, I greet you with affection in your Co-Cathedral dedicated to Saint Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of the Universal Church.

My thoughts turn in the first place to Bishop Gheorghi Jovcev, to the priests and to the men and women religious, and from here I wish to extend my greeting to all the Catholic faithful of the Latin Rite in the different localities of Bulgaria, especially to the children, to those who are sick, and to the elderly.

2. I am pleased to learn that work on the new Cathedral will soon begin not far from here, on the very site where there stood the ancient church destroyed by the war. My prayer is that the variety of stones needed for building will be images of the "living stones" that each of you is called to be, by virtue of your Baptism, "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (*1 Pet 2:5*).

May the intercession and example of Blessed John XXIII, whose paternal figure stands at the entrance of this church to welcome you, accompany and sustain you on the road of life. With my Apostolic Blessing!

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