



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT SYNOD
OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Monday, 3 February 2003

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. The meeting here in Rome of the Permanent Synod of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church affords you the agreeable opportunity to reaffirm your communion with the Successor of Peter. Indeed, you wanted to gather in this city in order to meet, in a spirit of deep unity and cordial fraternity, the Pope and his closest collaborators. Welcome!

I thank Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, your Major Archbishop, for his kind words on your behalf. In greeting each of you individually, I want to convey my affectionate greetings to the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care, as I recall the warmth they showed me during my visit to Ukraine in June 2001. On that occasion, to the joy of your communities so many Orthodox faithful added their welcome and respect, for they saw in the Bishop of Rome a sincere friend.

2. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, reborn after the tragic events of the past century, pursues her work of rebuilding with the consciousness of her great spiritual heritage, the fruitful witness of her martyrs and the need at all levels to maintain the spirit of dialogue, collaboration and communion.

I encourage you in this spirit that, in the context of somewhat difficult daily events, will give you sure guidance in resolving the problems as they appear. In this regard, how can I fail to point to your recent cordial meetings with your Brother Bishops of the Latin rite which have allowed you to consider, in the light of the same obligation of charity and unity, the pastoral issues that concern both communities? They are also a practical application of that effective and affective communion that must guide the Pastors of Christ's flock.

This communion is so much more necessary if one reflects on the challenges which today's situation puts before you. They range from the spiritual needs of large portions of your people to the serious dilemmas of immigration, from the hardship of the less fortunate to family difficulties, and from the need for ecumenical dialogue to the desire for greater integration in the context of Europe.

3. Venerable Brothers, you come from a land that is the cradle of Christianity in Eastern Europe. You are asked to carry out your tasks in this ecclesial "laboratory" in which the Eastern Christian tradition lives alongside the Latin one. Both contribute to beautifying the face of the one Church of Christ. Inscribed in Ukraine's history as a "borderland" and in the blood of so many of her children is a call to make every effort to serve the cause of the unity of all Christians.

I entrust your resolutions to the prayers of your many martyrs and to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, warmly venerated in the many shrines of your country.

With my cordial Apostolic Blessing!