



The Holy See

***EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
AND HIS BEATITUDE ANTONIOS NAGUIB,
PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA FOR THE COPTIC CATHOLICS***

LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE ANTONIOS NAGUIB

Your Holiness,

The Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Coptic Church, meeting at the Convent of St Joseph of the Egyptian Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Madinet el-Obour [Cairo] from 27 to 30 March 2006, as agreed at the last meeting, elected me, unworthy as I am, to succeed H.B. Cardinal Stéphanos II Ghattas, who was a true "*Pater et Caput*" for the whole of our Coptic Catholic Church and set an example of fatherhood, charity and sacrifice for at least 20 years throughout his ministry.

With this letter, I implore of your Holiness the concession of "ecclesiastical communion", while I promise to be faithful to Our Lord and to do my utmost to serve as well as possible his flock entrusted to my care, and expressing my fidelity, veneration and obedience to the Supreme Pastor of the Church, Successor of Peter, and Our beloved Pope.

As we beg you for your Apostolic Blessing, and ask you for your prayers for the upcoming Synod and for the future period that will be crucial to the life of our Church, we assure you of our full fidelity to "*Sancta Mater Ecclesiae*" and our devotion to your most beloved person.

Your Holiness, I remain yours most devotedly in Christ,

Antonios Naguib
Patriarch of Alexandria for Catholic Copts
Cairo, 30 March 2006

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LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI

To His Beatitude Antonios Naguib Patriarch of Alexandria for Copts

With great joy I received the announcement of Your Beatitude's election to the Patriarchal See of Alexandria for Copts and your request for Ecclesiastical Communion.

The Church, Your Beatitude, gives thanks to Almighty God for the gift made to her in your person. As I express my very warm and brotherly congratulations, I assure you of my fervent prayers that Christ the Good Shepherd will sustain you in the accomplishment of the mission you have received from him.

I wholeheartedly welcome your request for Ecclesiastical Communion, Venerable Brother, in accordance with the custom and desire of the entire Catholic Church.

Your Beatitude, I am certain that, filled with the strength of the Risen One, you will be able to guide the Catholic Coptic Church with wisdom and prudence, together with the Fathers of the Patriarchal Synod, our Brothers in the Episcopate. Adorned with the glory of the saints and ready, like the Bride in the Book of Revelation, the Catholic Coptic Church will be able to go towards her Bridegroom who comes.

May the Lord help you in your new ministry to proclaim the saving Word, so that it may be lived and celebrated lovingly, in accordance with the ancient spiritual and liturgical traditions of the Catholic Coptic Church. May the faithful entrusted to you find consolation in your fatherly solicitude.

I convey a fraternal greeting to you, your Beatitude, as well as to all the members of the Synod, and I impart to you a special, affectionate Apostolic Blessing, which I extend to all the Bishops, priests, men and women religious and faithful of your Patriarchate.

From the Vatican, 6 April 2006

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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