



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF ORGANIZATIONS

FOR AID TO THE EASTERN CHURCHES (ROACO) Thursday, 23 June 2005 Your Beatitude,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,

Dear Members and Friends of ROACO, I am pleased to welcome you all today when you are gathered in Rome for the Annual Assembly of Organizations for Aid to the Eastern Churches (ROACO). I offer each one of you a cordial welcome. I greet Cardinal Ignace Moussa I Daoud, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, with Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, Secretary, and the Collaborators of the Dicastery. I extend a special greeting to Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, Major Archbishop of Lviv, and to all those who are members of ROACO because of the attention it gives to the territories, communities and institutions of the Eastern Churches. Since Christ was first proclaimed, the poor and needy Christian communities have been supported in various ways by the more fortunate. In our day, all too often marked by incentives to individualism, it is more necessary than ever that Christians offer the witness of a solidarity that crosses every border to build a world in which all feel welcomed and respected. Those who carry out this mission personally or as a community sow the seeds of authentic love, love that sets the heart free and brings everywhere that joy "that no one can take away" because it comes from the Lord. I would like to thank you, dear friends of ROACO, for all you are doing for your brothers and sisters in difficulty, and in particular, for your efforts to make tangible that charity which binds together Christians of the Latin and of the Eastern traditions. Strengthening these bonds is a valuable service to the universal Church. Persevere, therefore, in this admirable task, and indeed, extend the horizons of your action even further. In these days you have examined in particular the situation of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine whose continuous development, following the sad winter of the Communist regime is a cause of joy and hope, also because the ancient and noble spiritual heritage, preserved by the Greek Catholic community, is a true treasure for the progress of the entire Ukrainian People. I therefore tell you: support its ecclesial journey and foster all that encourages reconciliation and brotherhood among the Christians of beloved Ukraine. During your meeting you also reflected on the formation of priests, seminarians and Religious who belong to the various Eastern Catholic Churches and who are studying either in Rome or in their Homeland. The presence beside the Chair of Peter of about 500 Eastern rite students of the Catholic Churches is an opportunity to utilize. At the same time, you rightly realize that it is necessary to take the greatest care in upgrading the institutions for formation that are

open in the Eastern Churches: in addition to providing material aid, it is also necessary to give an impetus to formation activities which, on the one hand deepen the genuine local tradition, duly taking into account the *organic development* of the Eastern Churches (cf. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, n. 6) and on the other, bring to completion the authentic renewal proposed by the Second Vatican Council, which ended 40 years ago. Dear ROACO members, Jerusalem and the Holy Land, to which all Christians have an unforgettable obligation (cf. Rom 15: 27), have always enjoyed your praiseworthy concern. Information about certain positive signs in recent months strengthen the hope that the day of reconciliation between the various communities working in the Holy Land will not be long in coming; for this let us unceasingly pray with trust. To conclude, I would like once again to express my gratitude to you for the appreciated work you carry out. May the divine help and maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, be with you constantly in your daily activities. As I assure you of my special remembrance in prayer, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all, and willingly extend it to the Ecclesial Bodies you represent, and to your families.

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