



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO A DELEGATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
FOR THE CELEBRATIONS OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS***

Saturday, 24 May 2008

Mr President, Head of Government

Hon. Members of the Government and Distinguished Authorities

Venerable Brothers, Representatives of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church,

The annual Feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius has brought you to Rome where the relics of St Cyril are preserved. I am delighted to welcome you and to address a cordial greeting to each one of you.

It is my sincere wish that your Country will proceed on the paths of harmony and brotherhood, striving to follow the example of the holy Brothers of Salonika with ever more generous commitment. Enlivened by fervent faith, they scattered the seeds of the Christian faith by the handful, inspiring values and works at the service of the good of men and women and their dignity. The Brothers' effective teaching remains timely and is a source of inspiration for those who desire to enter the service of the Gospel, as well as for those in charge of the common good of nations.

The holy Brothers, Patrons of Europe, with their ceaseless apostolic activity and unflagging missionary zeal became "bridges" connecting the East and the West. Their shining spiritual witness indicates an eternal truth to be increasingly discovered: that is, only if hope is based on God can it become reliable and secure. As I wrote in my Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, "Anyone who does not know God, even though he may entertain all kinds of hopes, is ultimately without hope, without the great hope that sustains the whole of life (cf. Eph 2: 12)". And I added: "Man's great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God - God who has loved us and who continues to love us 'to the end', until all 'is accomplished' (cf. Jn 13: 1 and 19: 30)" (n. 27). This hope becomes a tangible reality when people of good will in every part of the world, imitating Jesus' example and faithful to his teaching like the Brothers Cyril and Methodius, are constantly

dedicated to laying the foundations of friendly coexistence between the peoples with respect for the rights of each one and seeking the good of all.

Thank you for your visit which fits into the context of your annual pilgrimage to Rome: it is at the same time an act of veneration for Sts Cyril and Methodius and an eloquent sign of the bonds of friendship which mark the relations between your Nation and the Catholic Church. I cordially hope that these ties will become ever stronger, encouraging the attitude of fruitful cooperation for the benefit of your entire Country. May Almighty God fill your minds and your hearts with his peace, and may he deign to pour out abundant Blessings on the People of the Republic of Macedonia!

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