



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO A GROUP OF CATHOLIC AND GREEK ORTHODOX FAITHFUL

Monday, 15 February 1999

Your Eminences,

Dear Friends,

In the love of the Most Holy Trinity, I welcome you with the words of the Apostle Paul: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13). I greet especially His Eminence Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, and His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Krinis, Greek Orthodox Bishop in Chicago in the United States of America.

You are making a pilgrimage of faith - first to Constantinople, sacred to the memory of the Apostle Andrew, and now to Rome, the city sacred to the memory of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Since the Second Vatican Council, Catholics and Orthodox have come to appreciate more fully the unity of faith which is ours in Christ Jesus. We have come to see how "the Lord is enabling us to discover ourselves as "Sister Churches" once more" (cf. *Ut unum sint*, n. 57). The regular exchanges between our two Churches and the work of the theological dialogue have been important in this process; and joint initiatives such as your pilgrimage help in another way to strengthen the bonds of *koinonia*.

As we prepare to celebrate the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit's call to communion becomes more pressing. Overcoming the misunderstandings of the past, we look in hope to a future when love will be perfect among us and the world will therefore know that we are Christ's disciples (cf. Jn 13:35). Upon all of you I invoke the protection of the Mother of God and of the great host of saints, the citizens of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, "which has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rv 21:23). God bless you all!

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