



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS OF THE SYRO-MALANKARA CHURCH
AND TO THE STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE
PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE**

Monday, 20 November 2000 Dear Archbishop Baselios,

Dear pilgrims of the Syro-Malankara Church,

Staff and Students of the Pontifical Institute of Saint John Damascene,

1. From India and elsewhere you have come to Rome to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Year, and your prayer at the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul is a luminous sign of the profound communion which is ours in Christ.

Seventy years ago, Metropolitan Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Bishop Mar Theophilos and their companions entered into full communion with the See of Peter, because they were profoundly convinced of the truth of the words found beneath the dome of the Vatican Basilica: *Hinc una fides mundo refulget*. «From here the one faith shines forth in the world». They understood that «the Church is one, the Church of Christ between East and West» (*Oriente Lumen*, 20); and they knew that, in entering the communion of the Catholic Church, they «did not at all intend to deny their fidelity to their own traditions» (*ibid.*, 21). In the years since their decision, God has abundantly blessed the Syro-Malankara Church in her work for Christian unity.

As you crown your Jubilee celebrations in the offering of the Holy Qurbana, I ask you to invoke God's love on the Christians of the Oriental Churches, that in new and deeper ways they may «discover the fact that they are all walking together towards the one Lord...and thus towards each other» (*ibid.*, 28). Pray too that this fresh discovery among Christians of the East may be a blessing for the whole Church as we set forth into the Third Millennium.

2. I am especially happy to welcome the Rector, the Staff and the student priests of the Pontifical Institute of Saint John Damascene in this year when, on the Feast of your heavenly Patron, you will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Institute, established by Pope Pius the Twelfth. Today let us together give thanks to God for the many graces which those years have brought.

You priests who are resident in the Institute come from the Syro-Malankara and the Syro-Malabar Churches, and therefore you are all sons of Saint Thomas the Apostle, to whose missionary work you owe your Christian faith. Rightly, you are proud not only of the rich heritage of your Churches, but also of their apostolic fervour, their pastoral energy and

their many vocations. This is the Christian vitality which you bring with you to Rome, and in turn the Church of Rome offers you her gifts. Here you can come to a deeper sense of the special mission of the Successor of the Apostle Peter, the prime servant of the unity of all Christ's faithful. Here you can learn more of what it means to belong to the universal Church, and you can know more of the joy and gratitude which this stirs in Christian hearts.

Dear Brother Bishops, dear friends in Christ, in the course of your Jubilee celebrations, may the words of the Psalmist echo deep within each of you: «How good and how pleasant it is, brothers dwelling in unity» (*Ps 132:1*). And may the all-holy Mother of God, through whom the light rose over the earth, guide you safely on your pilgrim way. As a pledge of grace and peace in her divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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