



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DELEGATION OF THE ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

Saturday, 29 June 2002

Dear Brothers in Christ,

1. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 Jn 4,7).

With great joy I welcome you to Rome on this feast day. I am deeply grateful to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I, and the Holy Synod who have sent you for this celebration in a spirit of ecclesial brotherhood and mutual love.

2. The annual exchange of visits in Rome for the feast of Sts Peter and Paul, and at the Phanar, for the feast of St Andrew, revives the love of our hearts and encourages us to continue on our way toward full communion. As we journey on, we can already live now a form of harmony with a view to full unity round the one altar of the Lord. During this year, the Lord has given us occasions to manifest to the world our common desire to seek and explore all the paths that can lead us to unity, to direct to humanity an appeal for peace and brotherhood, in mutual respect, justice and charity.

3. Today once again I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I, for his fraternal participation in the [World Day of Prayer for Peace](#) in Assisi. With other brethren, we have proclaimed to the world in our different forms, John's exhortation: "Let us love one another, for love comes from God" (1 Jn 4,7). If humanity is firmly committed to taking this path, little by little the violence and threats that threaten men and women will be eased.

4. At the end of the Fourth Symposium on the Environment which was dedicated to the Adriatic Sea, I had the joy of signing the *Venice Declaration* with His Holiness Bartholomew I. This text expresses our common commitment to safeguarding and respecting nature; it manifests equally our desire to work to ensure that in our world science is at the service of people and that people always feel responsible for creation.

5. Much still remains to be done so that a greater brotherhood may reign on earth. The desire for revenge often prevails over peace, especially in the Holy Land and in other regions of the world struck by blind violence. This gives us a sense of the precariousness of peace that obliges us to *unite* our forces and so that we may be *together* and act *together* so that the world may find in our common witness the strength required to make the changes that are indispensable. This path of collaboration will also lead us to full communion following Christ's will for his disciples.

6. However, if we are firmly convinced that they are necessary, *the dialogue of charity* and our own brotherhood must not suffer. We have to persevere so that the dialogue of charity may sustain and nourish our *dialogue of truth*; I refer here to the theological dialogue whose beginning we announced to the world on the occasion of the feast of St Andrew in 1979, with the late lamented Patriarch Dimitrios, putting in this step great hope. In spite of our efforts, this theological dialogue is at a standstill. We realize our inability to overcome our divisions and find the strength in ourselves to look with hope to the future. This delicate stage must not dismay us; nor can we be indifferent to this state of affairs. We cannot renounce the continuation of the theological dialogue that is an indispensable step to unity.

Your Eminence, dear members of the Delegation, I thank you for your visit. I would be grateful if you would convey my brotherly greetings to His Holiness Bartholomew I, to the members of the Holy Synod and to all the faithful of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. My visit to the Phanar remains an indelible memory, which I recall with the greatest joy. May the Lord be always with us!