



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMAIOS I
FOR THE FEAST OF ST ANDREW**

*To His Holiness Bartholomaios I
Archbishop of Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarch*

"Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (II Jn 1,3).

It is with the Apostle John's blessing, that I greet you, Your Holiness, as well as all the members of the Holy Synod and all the faithful of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on this joyful occasion of the feast of St Andrew, the Apostle and Brother of Peter. The delegation led in my name by our Brother, Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity, will assure the fraternal participation of the Church of Rome. She joins you to implore from the Lord "the stability of the holy Churches of God and union among all" (Liturgy of St John Chrysostom).

The Feast of St Andrew, the first Apostle to be called by Jesus, constantly reminds us of the mystery of the Christian vocation and the duty to announce the Good News: "One of the two who heard John speak and followed [Jesus] was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother" (Jn 1,40). The Christian vocation is intrinsically linked to the recognition of the Messiah, designated by the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (Jn 1,36) whom the Apostles will never cease to proclaim by their words and deeds, by their lives, and even by martyrdom, as Peter and Andrew did.

In our day, Christ's disciples are called to announce with one voice the proclamation of salvation. By jointly celebrating Andrew and Peter, we manifest our common desire to pass on the apostolic faith together to our contemporaries, who all too often allow themselves to give way to a religious indifference that leads them to lose the true meaning of life. With concern for the mission what is asked of us is to bear a common, faithful Christian witness "in truth and in love". The divisions that still endure and the bitterness that appears at times among Christians weakens the force of

Christian preaching, which proclaims the love of God and of neighbour. But I am confident, for "the Lord has made it possible for Christians in our day to reduce the number of matters traditionally in dispute" (Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, n. 49).

Thank you for your generosity in being ready to cooperate with the Church of Rome
I would like to thank you, Your Holiness, for the readiness you have constantly shown by responding favourably to the requests for cooperation that come from the Catholic Church, and for encouraging the initiatives of the Orthodox Churches that call for the participation of the Church of Rome. I particularly appreciated your appointing a Fraternal Delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the recent Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church. This was a new occasion for dialogue, for brotherly exchange and for learning more about one another.

The Catholic Church is ready to do all in her power to promote the development of relations with the Orthodox Churches. The difficulties that the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue has encountered in recent years must be analyzed and resolved. The dialogue must recover its initial positive spirit and be prompted by the will to solve the real problems. It must also show signs of an enthusiasm that only theological faith and hope can foster.

In accord with the invitation of the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 24), let us put our hope in God so that we may advance on the path of unity and that the world may know a better future! In recent months, terrorism and war, with the full impact of the death and disorder they sow, have given rise to an anxiety that paralyses peoples and overthrows the normal course of social life. To implore God to protect the nations and to revive human consciences, I thought it would be helpful to summon believers for a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace next 24 January. The Lord will hear the prayer that with one heart we will make for the salvation of the human race.

With the approach of the Feast of the Apostle St Andrew, before the festal observance, let us pray together to the Lord and make our own the invitation that, in his Second Epistle, St John addresses to the Christians of Asia Minor: let us "love one another" (II Jn 1,5). Thus we will continue on in love and truth. And peace will be with us.

With this hope, and with my prayers for all the members of your Patriarchate, I exchange the kiss of peace with Your Holiness, and I assure you of my brotherly affection.

From the Vatican, 22 November 2001.

JOHN PAUL II

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