



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
CHARGED WITH PREPARING THE THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
AND THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES**

Tuesday, 28 January 2003

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Fathers, I am pleased to welcome the members of the *Preparatory Committee charged with preparing the theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches*. First of all, I greet the representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches themselves. Through you, I extend my fraternal greetings to my Venerable Brothers, the Heads of the Churches which you represent: His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, His Holiness Patriarch Zakka I Iwas, His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II, His Holiness Catholicos Aram I, His Holiness Patriarch Paulus, His Holiness Patriarch Yakob and His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews II. I recall with gratitude the various opportunities I have had to meet them and to strengthen the bonds of charity between us. My greetings also go to the Catholic members of this Preparatory Committee, representing various communities from both East and West. Substantial ecumenical progress has already been made between the Catholic Church and the different Oriental Orthodox Churches. Essential clarifications have been reached with regard to traditional controversies about Christology, and this has enabled us to profess together the faith we hold in common. This progress is most encouraging, since "it shows us that the path followed is the right one and that we can reasonably hope to discover together the solution to other disputed questions" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 63). May your efforts to establish a Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue prove a major step forward towards full communion in truth and charity. Many of you come from the Middle East and surrounding countries. Let us pray together that this region will be preserved from the threat of war and further violence. May our ecumenical endeavours always be directed to the building up of a "civilization of love", founded on justice, reconciliation and peace. Upon you and upon all those entrusted to your pastoral care I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.
