



The Holy See

***FAREWELL ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
FROM MAR IGNATIUS JACOUB III,
ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH***

Wednesday, 27 October 1971

Your Holiness:

Before this assembly of chosen representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, We would like to express once more Our joy and Our gratitude to God that We have had the opportunity to meet with the spiritual head of the Syrian Orthodox Church in an atmosphere of prayer, openness of spirit and fraternal respect and comprehension.

Throughout the centuries, in times of glory and in times of great suffering, your Church has given witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God made man for our salvation. Preachers, scholars and pastors have all contributed to deepening the understanding of the Incarnation of the Son of God and to making the significance of God's condescension towards man a living reality for your people. Many of them bore witness to their faith by the supreme sacrifice of their lives.

We are happy that Your Holiness has personally been able to visit the Church of Rome which, under God's grace, has also struggled to fulfil its mission through the devoted actions of its own teachers, pastors and witnesses to her faith.

These Fathers in the faith and these saints and martyrs call out to us to apply ourselves with renewed dedication to that mission, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is ever ready to offer us new light and strength. We Ourselves and Our brothers in the episcopate, with humility but also with great confidence, are determined to listen to these promptings of the Spirit and to strive to carry them out to the best of our ability. That is the underlying principle of the work of this Synod of Bishops which is gathered here and which extends today its heartfelt greeting to Your Holiness.

All of us are encouraged by the fact that your own Church, in union with your sister Oriental Orthodox Churches, is also actively engaged in searching for new ways to carry on her mission in a spirit of unity and docility to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Your visit to us makes us even more confident that our Churches will find means for greater cooperation in our common task and, at the same time, will open up the road to that full communion so ardently desired by all of us.

As We pray that the Lord of the Church may lead us to full reconciliation, We are mindful also of the particular needs of the Middle East where so many of your faithful are to be found. May this meeting with Your Holiness be a new stimulus to all Christians, especially to those of that area, to work for reconciliation in Christ among themselves and to search out, with imagination and tenacity, a durable peace with justice for all who dwell in those lands so dear to Us.

Your Holiness, again We express Our heartfelt thanks for your visit. As We take leave of you now, We do so with gratitude to God for what he has permitted us to accomplish up to now, with renewed confidence that the Holy Spirit will continue to show us the ways to accomplish the divine will, and with Our prayers that almighty God will abundantly bless Your Holiness and all the clergy and faithful of your Church.