



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NINTH DAY OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN COPTS AND
CATHOLICS**

*To His Holiness Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria
Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark*

Your Holiness, beloved brother in Christ,

The ninth *Day of Friendship Between Copts and Catholics* offers me once again the auspicious opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude for the spiritual bonds uniting the See of Peter and the See of Mark, and to assure you of my unflinching friendship in Christ.

Attentive to Christ's words – "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (*Jn 15:14*) – may we continue our pilgrimage of Christian fraternity, especially in preparation for next year's celebration of the tenth anniversary of our memorable meeting in Rome and of the fiftieth anniversary of the historic encounter between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III.

Friendship is the surest way to achieve unity between Christians, for therein we see the face of Christ himself, who calls us no longer servants but friends (cf. *Jn 15:15*) and who prays that "they may all be one" (*Jn 17:21*). May the intercession of Saint Athanasius, whose life and teaching inspires both our Churches, guide us on the journey towards full visible communion.

Dear brother in Christ, as we approach the feast of Pentecost, I pray that the Holy Spirit will unite us ever more and bestow his gifts of consolation upon our suffering human family, especially in these days of pandemic and war.

With the assurance of my continued spiritual closeness, I offer prayerful good wishes for your wellbeing and serenity, and I cordially exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace of peace

in the Risen Lord.

Rome, from Saint John of Lateran, 10 May 2022

FRANCIS

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