



The Holy See

**GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO METROPOLITAN AGATHANGHELOS,
DIRECTOR GENERAL, "APOSTOLIKÍ DIAKONÍA " OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE,
AND TO THE DELEGATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF ATHENS**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 16 May 2024*

[[Multimedia](#)]

Your Eminence,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christós anésti! [Christ is risen!]

I am very pleased to welcome you and I thank you for your presence as we join in commemorating two decades of cooperation between the Apostolikí Diakonía of the Church of Greece and the Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. I especially greet and thank His Eminence Metropolitan Agathanghelos, Director General of the Apostolikí Diakonía, who from the outset has been the inspiration and guiding force behind this collaboration. My thoughts also turn with fraternal affection to the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, a man of deep faith and a wise pastor with whom I have met on the occasion of my travels in Greece. I am deeply grateful for the support that he has given and continues to give to the activities jointly promoted by the Apostolikí Diakonía and the Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration.

In these past twenty years, despite times of difficulty – I think, for example, of the economic crisis in Greece and of the pandemic – the Apostolikí Diakonía and the Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration have worked together in promoting projects of common interest on the cultural and educational level. I am most pleased by your decision to give priority to the cultural, theological

and ecumenical formation of coming generations. It is the young, sustained by the hope founded on faith, who can break the bonds of antagonism, misunderstanding and prejudice that for centuries held Catholics and Orthodox back from acknowledging one another as brothers and sisters, united in diversity and capable of bearing witness to the love of Christ, especially in a world so divided and riven by conflict.

I am happy to learn that once again this summer you will welcome to the Theological College of Athens a group of Catholic students, who will be introduced to knowledge of the modern Greek language and the Orthodox Church. I offer you my heartfelt good wishes for the continuation of this fruitful collaboration.

By journeying together, working together and praying together, we prepare ourselves to receive from God the gift of unity that, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, will be a communion and harmony in legitimate diversity.

We must journey together and pray together. Our good brother, [Bishop John] Zizioulas once joked: "When will unity arrive? We do not know. Perhaps on the day of the final judgement!". For us, we must now journey together, pray together and work together. Zizioulas was good indeed!

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I invoke upon all of you the Lord's abundant blessings. And I ask you, please, to remember me in your own prayers.

Now, as brothers and sisters all together, let us pray in the words our Lord taught us. "Our Father...".