



The Holy See

***LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mons. STEPHEN J. KOCISKO,
ARCHBISHOP OF PITTSBURGH BYZANTINE RITE,
AND TO THE OTHER BYZANTINE-RUTHENIAN BISHOPS
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

*To my venerable and dear Brother Stephen J. Kocisko
Archbishop of Pittsburgh Byzantine Rite
and to the other Byzantine-Ruthenian Bishops
in the United States of America*

It is a joy for me to welcome you on the occasion of your “ad limina” visit to the Memorials of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In you I greet with love and reverence all the Ruthenian faithful in America.

As you come in pilgrimage to this Apostolic See, you bring with you the hopes and joys, the problems and aspirations of your beloved people. All of these aspects of life are linked to some extent with the origin of your ancestors, the conditions of their emigration and the reality of your present situation. Your history, which I honour today, is one that has been dominated by that Christian hope which finds its source in the Paschal Mystery of the death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ—a mystery continually lived in each generation of the Church.

The hope that sustained your forebears is likewise the inspiration of your ecclesial communities today. Perpetuating, as they do, the sound traditions of your people, your local Churches are rooted in the same holy Catholic faith and are animated by strong attachment to the See of Peter and to the universal Church of Christ. At the same time that you endeavour to pass on to future generations the rich patrimony of the past - above all your venerable liturgical tradition - you are striving to be an example of Christian life in today’s society. As Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ I am spiritually close to your faithful in the great challenge that the Lord presents to them day after day: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give

glory to your Father who is in heaven” (*Matth.* 5, 16).

I encourage all your efforts to form young priests in the authentic teaching of the Church, which has been reaffirmed and applied by the Second Vatican Council. My blessing goes to your students in Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary and to all those who work to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Be assured also that all your ecclesial activities are supported by my prayers; in particular I pray for the success of your devoted efforts to rebuild the fabric of unity with your Christian brethren who, like you, are mindful of the Lord’s desire for perfect unity in faith and love.

I send my greeting of peace to all the priests and religious who generously collaborate with you in the cause of the Gospel. My love goes to the Christian families and in particular to the sick and to all those who suffer in any way. With the Apostle Peter I say: “Peace to all of you who are in Christ” (*1 Petr.* 5, 14).

From the Vatican, December 2, 1983.

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