



The Holy See

***MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH,
HIS HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW I***

*To His Holiness Bartholomew I
Archbishop of Constantinople
Ecumenical Patriarch*

The feast of the first Apostle called (cf. Jn 1:40) gives the Church in Rome an opportunity to express the deep bonds that unite her to the Church of Constantinople.

Andrew found the Messiah and goes to tell his brother, Simon. He brings him to Jesus, who gives him the name Peter (cf. Jn 1:41-42).

The communion of the two brothers in their acceptance of God's Word continues to be an example and a model for the Churches placed under their protection. The Word received, which transforms us, must be proclaimed in such a way that it can be passed on to subsequent human generations, who are called to be enlivened by it. The direct link of apostolic succession guarantees their mission's authenticity.

It is in this perspective that our mutual participation in the feasts of Peter and Andrew find their full meaning. The celebration of the saints who are at the origins of our Churches enables us to have a renewed awareness of the unity that already exists and which we must bring to completion. In God's presence, joined in thanksgiving, praise and supplication, let us renew our resolution to walk together towards the destination to which we are called and where we are awaited.

The presence of the delegation led by Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, will be the concrete expression of these sentiments, of this determination, of this hope.

Your Holiness, I express once again my deepest charity.

From the Vatican, 25 November 1997

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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