



# The Holy See

---

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE PATRIARCH  
OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

*Thursday, 8 November 1984*

*Your Holiness,*

the love which unites all the disciples of Christ as urged you to visit the Church of Rome and its Pastor. I have not forgotten that you were also present at the inaugural Mass of my ministry as Bishop of Rome. I thank you for this new expression today and I bid you a heartfelt welcome.

After long centuries of separation our Churches are drawing near again, for "the Lord of ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of grace on behalf of us sinners. In recent times he has begun to bestow more generously upon divided Christians remorse over their divisions and a longing for unity". It is in him, the only Lord of all, that we put our hope of one day establishing full communion between us.

Your Church, founded in ancient Mesopotamia, took root in the biblical revelation and is counted among the most ancient Churches of the East. The treasures of faith that we have in common are such that what unites us is already stronger and greater than what still separates us. But it is necessary to clarify the misunderstandings and eventually to resolve the differences which might still remain between us. By doing this, we can reach towards full communion, and so work that by fervent prayer and fraternal dialogue we may be able to respond to the aspiration of Christ, who prayed "that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1).

I know that in many places the clergy and the faithful of our Churches are living in friendly harmony, and trying, in conditions that are sometimes difficult, to bear witness together to the Gospel of Christ. And you also have in common with Catholics of the Chaldean Patriarchate a prestigious missionary history, the witness and teaching of numerous saints, the courageous

example of many martyrs, and a rich theological, liturgical and spiritual patrimony. My wish is that a heritage such as this may be for all a continual invitation to pray and to work so that the visible unity of the Body of Christ may be re-established. In order to contribute to this great purpose, the pastors and the faithful are called to a constant conversion of heart, so that each Church may bring the strength of its charity and the wealth of its own patrimony to the building up of the one Church of God.

Your Holiness come from a region where a terrible war has plunged the people into suffering and mourning for many years. I do not cease to be preoccupied by this tragedy, and I assure you that the Apostolic See is using all the means at its disposal in order to contribute to a rapid re-establishment of peace. With you I ask the Lord to raise up among the faithful of our Churches and among all people of good will artisans of peace, so that everywhere in the world humanity may be able to live in peace and dignity.

I pray also to the Apostles Peter and Paul, whom you have come to venerate in Rome, that through their intercession the Lord may shower his abundant blessings on you and on all the people whom he has entrusted to your pastoral care.

© Copyright 1984 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

---

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana