



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATIONS OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
AND THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE
OF AL-AZHAR FOR DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS**

29 May 1998

Your Eminence,

Distinguished Members of the Delegation from Al-Azhar, I am pleased to greet you today, one day after the creation of a Joint Committee for Dialogue, established by the agreement signed yesterday by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue between the Monotheistic Religions. This is a further step in the building of ever stronger and more friendly relations between Christians and Muslims. Today, dialogue between our two religions is more necessary than ever. This dialogue needs to be credible and marked by mutual respect, knowledge and acceptance. The long history shared by Christians and Muslims has had its lights and its shadows. Yet there remains a spiritual bond which unites us and which we must strive to recognize and develop. This may require much effort, but it will prove essential for building that peace which we hope future generations will be able to enjoy. Your newly-formed Joint Committee for Dialogue therefore has much work before it. And I am confident that as its members give the best of themselves in sincerity and truth the goals agreed upon will be attained. May the Almighty and Merciful God, from whom all things take their origin and to whom all things make their return, richly bless your endeavours. © Copyright 1998 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana