



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL OF ST DIONYSIUS - ATHENS

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Friday, 4 May 2001

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I thank above all Archbishop Fóscolos, Archbishop of the Catholics of Athens and President of the Bishops' Conference, for the warm reception and for the great effort expended on the realization of my pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Paul.

I am delighted with the presence of the Bishops, priests and men and women religious here in the Cathedral of St Dionysius. As the Second Vatican Council reminded us, such assemblies are particularly important; in fact, "all should hold in the greatest esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centred around the Bishop, especially in his cathedral church. They must be convinced that the principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the liturgical celebrations" (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 41), presided over by the Bishop surrounded by his presbyterate, which forms around him "a precious spiritual crown" (St Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians*, 13, 1).

This Cathedral is placed under the protection of St Dionysius. He was one of the first Greeks to be converted after hearing the preaching of St Paul on the resurrection. May you all receive this mystery of salvation, in order to live it and become witnesses to it with your brothers in a spirit of reciprocal acceptance, solidarity and Christian charity! St Dionysius is also considered a great spiritual man by tradition. Remember always that life in intimacy with Christ reinforces faith and infuses courage for the mission! Do not be afraid of transmitting the Good News of Christ to young people, to allow them to build their own personal lives and be involved in the Church and in the world. In particular, your communities need to have young persons accept the call to follow Christ

in a radical way in the priesthood and in consecrated life. Stir up vocations!

May the Lord guide you on your way. May Mary, the Mother of God and Mother of the Church, be for you an example of Christian life, in humble availability to the call of God and in the generous concern to serve her neighbour! To you all, to your families, to your communities, I impart my cordial Apostolic Blessing.