



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF BULGARIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION
OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS****

Thursday, 24 May 2007

*Mr President of the Parliament,
Honourable Members of the Government,*

Venerable Brother Representatives of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church, I am pleased to address to each one of you my cordial welcome on the liturgical Memorial of Sts Cyril and Methodius. This occasion is most opportune to manifest my esteem and closeness to the Bulgarian People, who also today have wished to witness their Christian roots by sending this Delegation.

In this gesture I also see the desire to reaffirm your own European traditions, profoundly marked by Gospel values.

Certainly, given its origin, the history of Bulgaria precedes Christian revelation. It is without doubt, however, that the Nation has found in the Gospel a source of values able to strengthen its culture, identity and the genius typical of this people.

In this way the teaching of the Brothers from Thessalonica has contributed to moulding the spiritual physiognomy of the Bulgarian People, ensuring them a just place in the cultural tradition of the European Continent.

After the sad and difficult Communist domination, Bulgaria today is directed toward full integration with the other European nations. By making its own the teachings of Cyril and Methodius, this noble Nation can strengthen the objectives reached thus far, drawing from that font of precious human and spiritual values which has nourished its life and development.

It is my fervent hope that the cultural and spiritual foundations present in Bulgarian society may continue to be cultivated not only in the territory of the Republic, but with its valid contribution they can be defended and proposed also in those Assemblies where Bulgaria is already an authoritative protagonist.

In particular, I hope that Bulgaria and its people preserve and promote those Christian virtues that come down from the teachings of Sts Cyril and Methodius, which are still valid and necessary today.

On this occasion, I wish to recall that the thoughts and concerns of the Bulgarian People are always with me, and for this reason I assure them of my prayer and spiritual closeness.

With these sentiments, I renew the expression of my esteem and, assuring that the Holy See will follow the progress of this Nation with friendly attention, I renew to you, Mr President, and to the honourable Members of the Delegation my Blessing and prayerful greeting, which I extend to all the citizens of the dear Bulgarian Republic.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n. 23 p. 2.*

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