



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO A DELEGATION FROM BULGARIA
FOR THE CELEBRATIONS
IN HONOUR OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS***

Monday, 23 May 2011

*Madam President of Parliament,
Hon. Members of Government,
Distinguished Authorities,
Venerable Brothers of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church,*

I wish to address my respectful greeting to the Official Delegation of Bulgaria in Rome — led by the President of the Parliament — as is customary in the context of the liturgical Feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius. This welcome meeting, taking place again this year, offers me the opportunity to highlight the spiritual and cultural relevance of these two distinguished and worthy pioneers of the evangelization of Europe, figures honoured in the East and in the West. Thanks to their courageous preaching along the roads of the Continent, they fostered a vast spiritual renewal and laid the foundations for an authentic promotion of the freedom and unity of Christian Europe. Cyril and Methodius were “living Gospels” and eloquent signs of the goodness of the Lord, and therefore their witness reached the people of their time more easily.

These two great Saints remind the European peoples, who have recently opened themselves to new perspectives of cooperation, that their unity will be strengthened if it is based on their common Christian roots. In fact, in the complex history of Europe, Christianity represents a central and qualifying element. The Christian faith has molded the culture of the Old Continent and is permanently woven into its history, to the point that this would not be understandable if it did not refer to the events which first characterized the long period of evangelization and then the great centuries in which Christianity assumed an ever more significant role.

Therefore, it is important that Europe grow also in a spiritual dimension in line with its salutary history. The unity of the Continent, which is progressively maturing in consciences and is also defining itself on the political front, represents a perspective of great hope. Europeans are called to commit themselves to creating a condition of deep cohesion and of effective cooperation between peoples. To build the new Europe upon a solid base it is not enough to depend on economic interests alone; rather it is necessary to rely on authentic values which are founded on the universal moral law, inscribed on the heart of every person. I warmly wish that the moral and cultural legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius may always nourish in everyone esteem for the spiritual patrimony of your lands and, at the same time, openness and communion in mutual respect. May this meeting serve to motivate further relations of brotherhood and solidarity. May the Lord bless your dear Country and all of its citizens.