



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO CYPRUS

(JUNE 4-6, 2010)

WELCOMING CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

International Paphos Airport

Friday, 4 June 2010

*Mr President,
Your Beatitude Chrysostomos,
Your Beatitudes,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Authorities,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Χαίρετε! Ειρήνη μαζί σας! Είναι μεγάλη η χαρά μου που είμαι σήμερα μαζί σας. [\[1\]](#)

Mr President, I am grateful for the kind invitation to visit the Republic of Cyprus. I express my cordial greetings to you and to the Government and people of this nation, and thank you for your gracious words of welcome. I also recall with gratitude your recent visit to the Vatican and look forward to our meeting tomorrow in Nicosia.

Cyprus stands at the crossroads of cultures and religions, of histories both proud and ancient but which still retain a strong and visible impact upon the life of your country. Having recently acceded to the European Union, the Republic of Cyprus is beginning to witness the benefit of closer economic and political ties with other European states. Membership has already given your country access to markets, technology and know-how. It is greatly to be hoped that membership will lead to prosperity at home and that other Europeans in their turn will be enriched by your

spiritual and cultural heritage which reflects your historical role, standing between Europe, Asia and Africa. May the love of your homeland and of your families and the desire to live in harmony with your neighbours under the compassionate protection of almighty God, inspire you patiently to resolve the remaining concerns that you share with the international community for the future of your island.

Following in the footsteps of our common fathers in the faith, Saints Paul and Barnabas, I have come among you as a pilgrim and the servant of the servants of God. Since the Apostles brought the Christian message to these shores, Cyprus has been blessed by a resilient Christian heritage. I greet as a brother in that faith His Beatitude Chrysostomos the Second, Archbishop of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus, and I look forward shortly to meeting many more members of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus.

I also look forward to greeting other Cypriot religious leaders. I hope to strengthen our common bonds and to reiterate the need to build up mutual trust and lasting friendship between all those who worship the one God.

As the Successor of Peter, I come in a special way to greet the Catholics of Cyprus, to confirm them in the faith (cf. Lk 22:32) and to encourage them to be both exemplary Christians and exemplary citizens, and to play a full role in society, to the benefit of both Church and state.

During my stay with you, I will also consign the *Instrumentum Laboris*, a working document in view of the [Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops](#) to be held later this year in Rome. That Assembly will examine many aspects of the Church's presence in the region and the challenges that Catholics face, sometimes in trying circumstances, in living out their communion within the Catholic Church and offering their witness in the service of society and the world. Cyprus is thus an appropriate place in which to launch our Church's reflection on the place of the centuries-old Catholic community in the Middle East, our solidarity with all the Christians of the region and our conviction that they have an irreplaceable role to play in peace and reconciliation among its peoples.

Mr President, dear friends, with these thoughts, I entrust my pilgrimage to Mary, the Mother of God, and to the intercession of Saints Paul and Barnabas.

Ο Θεός ας ευλογήση τον Κυπριακό Λαό. Η Παναγία ας σας προστατεύει πάντα! [2]

[1] Greetings! Peace be with you! It is a great pleasure to be with you today.

[2] May God bless the people of Cyprus. May the All-Holy [Virgin] protect you always!

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