



# The Holy See

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***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO THE PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND OF ALL THE RUSSIAS,  
HIS HOLINESS ALEXAI II***

*To His Holiness Alexei II  
Patriarch of Moscow and of All the Russias*

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray's visit to Moscow, to share with the entire Christian Community of Russia the joy of the double celebration of Your Holiness' birthday and name day, gives me the pleasant opportunity of sending you my fervent and cordial good wishes.

I would like to join this joyful celebration in spirit, and I invoke abundant Blessings from the Lord upon you yourself and upon your ministry, generously dedicated to the great cause of the Gospel. Gestures and words of renewed brotherhood between Pastors of the Lord's flock show that an ever more intense collaboration in truth and charity help increase the spirit of communion that must guide the steps of all the baptized.

The contemporary world needs to hear voices that indicate the path of peace, of respect for all, of the condemnation of all forms of violence, of the superior dignity of every person and of the innate rights to which he or she is entitled.

With these sentiments, I offer you my best wishes for your good health; after the example and with the intercession of St Alexis, may you continue to fulfil fruitfully the mission that God has entrusted to you.

*From the Vatican, 17 February 2006*

**BENEDICTUS XVI**

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*Moscow, 22 February 2006*

*To His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI*

*Your Holiness,*

I warmly thank you for your cordial good wishes and remembrance in prayer that you sent to me on the occasion of my birthday and name day, which Cardinal Roger Etchegaray brought to me.

In our time, when secularism is rapidly spreading, Christianity faces grave challenges that require a common witness. I am convinced that for our Churches, which share the same view of many current problems in the contemporary world, a priority task today must be the defence and affirmation in society of the Christian values by which humanity has lived for more than a millennium. I hope that this will also contribute to finding a speedy solution to the problems between the two Churches.

I reciprocate in prayer for you, Your Holiness, my best wishes for your good health, as I invoke an abundance of divine help upon you in the fulfilment of your lofty office as Primate of the Roman Catholic Church.

*With affection in the Lord,*

**ALEKSIJ II**

*Patriarch of Moscow and of All the Russias*

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