



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO CARDINAL WALTER KASPER
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10th INTER-CHRISTIAN SYMPOSIUM**

*To my Venerable Brother
Cardinal Walter Kasper
President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*

I learned with special joy that the 10th Inter-Christian Symposium, organized by the Franciscan Spirituality Institute of the *Antonianum* Pontifical University and by the Theology Department of the Theological Faculty of *Aristotle* University of Thessalonica, will be taking place on the Island of Tinos, where Orthodox and Catholics live side by side in brotherhood.

Ecumenical cooperation in the university sphere contributes to keeping alive the effort to reach the desired communion among all Christians. In this regard, the Second Vatican Council saw in this field an appropriate possibility to involve the entire People of God in the search for full unity.

"For it is upon the formation which priests receive that so largely depends the necessary instruction and spiritual formation of the faithful and of Religious" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 10).

The theme of the upcoming Symposium: "*St John Chrysostom, a Bridge between East and West*", during the 16th centenary of his death (14 September 407), will afford an opportunity to commemorate a distinguished Father of the Church venerated in the East as in the West; a courageous, enlightened and faithful preacher of the Word of God on which he founded his pastoral action; he was such an extraordinary hermeneutician and homilist that the nickname "Chrysostom" or Mouth of Gold has been attributed to him since the fifth century, and his contribution to forming the Byzantine liturgy is known to all.

For his courage and the fidelity of his Gospel witness, he was obliged to suffer persecution and exile. After complicated historical events, since 1 May 1626 his body has rested in St Peter's Basilica, and on 27 November 2004, my venerable Predecessor John Paul II presented part of his

relics to His Holiness Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch; hence, this great Father of the Church is now venerated both in the Vatican Basilica and in the Church of St George at the Phanar.

The reflection of your Symposium, which treats a topic related to St John Chrysostom and to communion with the Church of the West as well as analyzing certain current problems, will contribute to sustaining and strengthening the true, if imperfect, communion that exists between Catholics and Orthodox, so that it will be possible to attain the fullness which will one day enable us to concelebrate the one Eucharist.

And it is precisely to that blessed day that we all look forward with hope, giving life to provident initiatives such as this.

With these sentiments, I invoke upon your meeting and all the participants the abundant Blessing of God: may the Holy Spirit enlighten your minds, warm your hearts and fill each of you with the Lord's joy and peace.

Finally, I take this opportunity to convey a fraternal greeting to the Orthodox and Catholic faithful of Greece, and in a truly special way to H.B. Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, wishing him a complete recovery of health so that he may resume his pastoral service as soon as possible, and for this intention I assure him of my prayers.

May the *Theotokos*, loved and venerated with special devotion on the Island of Tinos, maternally intercede so that our common resolutions may be crowned by the hoped for spiritual success.

From Castel Gandolfo, 12 September 2007

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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