



# The Holy See

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***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO HIS HOLINESS BARTHOLOMAIOS I  
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY***

*To His Holiness Bartholomaios I  
Archbishop of Constantinople  
Ecumenical Patriarch*

The happy occasion of your Seventieth Birthday offers me a welcome opportunity to give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Giver of every good gift, for the abundant blessings which he has bestowed upon Your Holiness, and at the same time to convey my warm good wishes.

These fervent and fraternal good wishes are accompanied by my prayers that our One Lord will sustain you with his strength and grace as you carry out your high ministry of Pastor, Preacher of the Gospel and Teacher of the spiritual life.

With pleasant memories of our meetings, particularly my visit to the Phanar for the Feast of the Apostle Andrew, Peter's brother, I exchange with Your Holiness a holy embrace, while expressing my prayerful confidence that the Spirit of God will continue to enlighten and guide our path towards the full communion willed by Christ for all his disciples.

**BENEDICTUS PP. XVI**