



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO HIS HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW I, ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT ANDREW**

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

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom 15:13).

In the communion of the faith that we have received from the Apostles and in the brotherly charity that binds us, I wholeheartedly join in the solemn celebration at which you are presiding, Your Holiness, on the Feast of the Apostle and Martyr, St Andrew, the brother of Peter and the holy protector of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to wish Your Holiness, the members of the Holy Synod, the clergy and all the faithful an abundance of heavenly gifts and divine Blessings. My prayers, like those of all Catholic brothers and sisters, accompany yours in order to invoke God our Father, who loves his Church and built her on the foundations of the Apostles, for peace throughout the world, the prosperity of the Church and the unity of all those who believe in Christ.

The Delegation I have sent to you, led by my venerable brother, Cardinal Kurt Koch, to whom I have entrusted this goodwill Message, is the tangible sign of my participation and offers you the fraternal greeting of the Church of Rome.

I treasure in my heart the still very vivid memory of our last meeting when we went together as pilgrims of peace to the town of [Assisi](#), to reflect on the profound relationship that combines the sincere quest for God and the truth, and that of peace and justice in the world. I thank the Lord who has permitted me to strengthen with you, Your Holiness, the ties of sincere friendship and authentic brotherhood that bind us, and to bear witness to the whole world the broad vision that we share, with regard to the responsibilities to which we are called as Christians and Pastors of the flock that God has entrusted to us.

The present circumstances, whether they are cultural, social, economic, political or ecological in nature, pose exactly the same challenge to both Catholics and Orthodox. Today the proclamation of the mystery of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ needs to be powerfully renewed in many of the regions that were the first to receive the light and today are suffering the effects of a secularization capable of impoverishing man in his deepest dimension.

In the face of such an urgent task, it is our duty to offer to humanity in its entirety the image of people who have acquired maturity in faith who can join forces despite human tensions, thanks to their common search for the truth, in the awareness that the future of evangelization depends on the witness of unity borne by the Church and on the quality of her charity, as the Lord taught us in the prayer he bequeathed to us: “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

It is a very great comfort to me to note likewise, that Your Holiness, since you were called to the ministry as Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch, 20 years ago, has always had at heart the matter of the witness borne by the Church and of her holiness in today’s world.

Your Holiness, on this day when we are celebrating the Feastday of the Apostle Andrew let us once again raise our ardent entreaty to the Lord that he grant us to advance on the path of peace and reconciliation. May we receive, through the intercession of St Andrew and Sts Peter and Paul, the respective Patron Saints of the Church of Constantinople and of the Church of Rome, the gift of unity which comes to us from on high.

With these sentiments of faith, hope and charity, I repeat to you, Your Holiness, my most fervent good wishes and exchange with you a fraternal greeting in Christ Our Lord.

From the Vatican, 24 November 2011

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI