



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO CYPRUS

(JUNE 4-6, 2010)

VISIT AT THE CATHEDRAL OF THE MARONITE CHURCH OF CYPRUS

GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Nicosia

Sunday, 6 June 2010

(Video)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am very pleased to make this visit to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Graces. I thank Archbishop Youssef Soueif for his kind words of welcome on behalf of the Maronite community in Cyprus, and I cordially greet all of you with the words of the Apostle: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:3)!

As I visit this building, in my heart I make a spiritual pilgrimage to every Maronite church of the island. Be assured that, moved by a father's care, I am close to all the faithful of those ancient communities.

This Cathedral church in some way represents the very long and rich – and sometimes turbulent - history of the Maronite community in Cyprus. Maronites came to these shores at various times throughout the centuries and were often hard-pressed to remain faithful to their distinct Christian heritage. Nevertheless, in spite of their faith being tested like gold in a fire (cf. 1 Pet 1:7), they remained constant in the faith of their fathers, a faith which has now been passed on to you, the Maronite Cypriots of today. I urge you to treasure this great inheritance, this precious gift.

This Cathedral building also reminds us of an important spiritual truth. Saint Peter tells us that we Christians are the living stones which are being “built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:4-5). Together with Christians throughout the world, we are part of that great temple which is the Mystical Body of Christ. Our spiritual worship, offered in many tongues, in many places and in a beautiful variety of liturgies, is an expression of the one voice of the People of God, united in praise and thanksgiving to him and in enduring communion with each other. This communion, which we hold so dear, impels us to carry the Good News of our new life in Christ to all mankind.

Ιδου η πρόκλησις που σας αφήνω σήμερα: εγώ προσεύχομαι ώστε η εκκλησία σας, με ενότητα μαζί με τους ποιημένες σας και με τον Επίσκοπον Ρώμης, να αυξάνεται εις την αγιοσύνη, εις την πίστην του Ευαγγελίου και εις την αγάπη για τον Κύριον και για τον πλησίον. [1]

Commending you and your families, and especially your beloved children to the intercession of Saint Maron, I willingly impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

[1] This is the charge I leave with you today: I pray that your Church, in union with all your pastors and with the Bishop of Rome, may grow in holiness, in fidelity to the Gospel and in love for the Lord and for one another.

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