



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO CYPRUS

(JUNE 4-6, 2010)

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

International Airport of Larnaca

Sunday, 6 June 2010

*Mr President,
Distinguished Authorities,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The time has now come for me to leave you, after my brief but fruitful [Apostolic Journey to Cyprus](#).

Mr President, I thank you for your kind words and I am happy to express my gratitude to you for all that you, your Government and the civil and military authorities have done to make my visit such a memorable and successful one.

As I depart your shores, like many pilgrims before me I am reminded again of how the Mediterranean is made up of a rich mosaic of peoples with their distinctive cultures and their beauty, their warmth and their humanity. In spite of that reality, the Eastern Mediterranean is at the same time no stranger to conflict and bloodshed, as we have tragically witnessed in recent days. Let us all redouble our efforts to build a real and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

Together with that general objective, Cyprus can play a particular role in promoting dialogue and cooperation. Striving patiently for the peace of your own hearths and for the prosperity of your neighbours, you will then be well placed to hear and understand all sides of many complex issues, and to help peoples to come to a greater understanding of one another. The path that you are taking, Mr President, is one which the international community looks to with great interest and hope, and I note with satisfaction all the efforts that have been made to favour peace for your

people and for the whole island of Cyprus.

As I give thanks to God for these days which saw the first encounter of the Catholic community in Cyprus with the Successor of Peter on their own soil, I also recall with gratitude my meetings with other Christian leaders, in particular with His Beatitude Chrysostomos the Second and the other representatives of the Church of Cyprus, whom I thank for their brotherly welcome. I hope that my visit here will be seen as another step along the path that was opened up before us by the embrace in Jerusalem of the late Patriarch Athenagoras and my venerable predecessor Pope Paul the Sixth. Their first prophetic steps together show us the road that we too must tread. We have a divine call to be brothers, walking side by side in the faith, humble before almighty God, and with unbreakable bonds of affection for one another. As I invite my fellow Christians to continue this journey, I would assure them that the Catholic Church, with the Lord's grace, will herself pursue the goal of perfect unity in charity through an ever deepening appreciation of what Catholics and Orthodox hold dearest.

Let me also express again my sincere hope and prayer that, together, Christians and Muslims will become a leaven for peace and reconciliation among Cypriots and serve as an example to other countries.

Finally, Mr President, let me encourage you and your Government in your high responsibilities. As you well know, among your most important tasks is that of assuring the peace and security of all Cypriots. Having stayed these past nights in the Apostolic Nunciature, which happens to be in the United Nations buffer zone, I have seen for myself something of the sad division of the island, as well as learning of the loss of a significant part of a cultural heritage which belongs to all humanity. I have also listened to Cypriots from the north who wish to return in peace to their homes and places of worship, and I have been deeply moved by their pleas. Surely truth and reconciliation, together with respect, are the soundest foundation for the united and peaceful future of this island, and for the stability and prosperity of all her people. Much good has been achieved in this regard through substantive dialogue in recent years, though much remains to be done to overcome divisions. Let me encourage you and your fellow citizens to work patiently and steadfastly with your neighbours to build a better and more certain future for all your children. As you do so, be assured of my prayers for the peace of all Cyprus.