



The Holy See

**LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS
TO HIS HOLINESS TAWADROS II, POPE OF ALEXANDRIA
AND PATRIARCH OF THE SEE OF SAINT MARK**

*To His Holiness Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark*

As the first anniversary of our fraternal meeting in Rome on 10 May 2013 approaches, I take this opportunity to write to Your Holiness as a way of reliving the joy and gratitude we experienced on that occasion. Our encounter strengthened those spiritual bonds which unite the See of Peter and the See of Mark, and which had been renewed by the historic encounter between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III in 1973.

It is with thanksgiving to the Lord that we reflect on the journey of reconciliation and friendship which we have undertaken together. With God's help, we have learned better to understand one another and to build solid foundations for overcoming longstanding differences. Conscious that what unites us is far greater than what separates us, we already experience a real communion, while recognizing that it is neither full nor perfect. With trust in the Lord's grace, we continue to strive through dialogue in charity and truth to overcome the remaining obstacles to full communion. Building upon our shared moment of prayer in the course of Your Holiness's visit to Rome, let us continue to pray to God that all his children, born to new life through the waters of baptism and enlightened by faith, may also become one in love. For my part, I assure Your Holiness of my unceasing prayer for all Christians in Egypt and throughout the Middle East. May the Lord inspire in those who are responsible for the destiny of peoples in these lands, a firm resolve to seek just and peaceful solutions respectful of the rights of all.

On this joyful occasion, which has rightly become known as the day of friendship between Copts and Catholics, I exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace of peace in Christ our Lord.

From the Vatican, 5 May 2014

FRANCIS

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