



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO MEXICO WITH A STOPOVER IN HAVANA FOR A MEETING WITH H.H. KIRILL,
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA
(12-18 FEBRUARY 2016)

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO JOURNALISTS DURING THE FLIGHT FROM CUBA TO MEXICO

Papal Flight
Friday, 12 February 2016

[Multimedia]

Good evening.

I believe that with the Declaration you received (the Joint Declaration with Patriarch Kirill), you have enough work for the night and for tomorrow as well! For that reason, let's not have a question and answer session. But I would like to share my feelings with you.

First of all, a feeling of welcome and readiness from President Castro. I had spoken with him the last time about this encounter and he was ready to do everything and, as we saw, he did prepare everything for this. And we need to thank him for that.

Secondly, with Patriarch Kirill. It was a conversation between brothers. We discussed clear points that concerned us both, in all honesty. I felt like I was standing before a brother, and he said the same to me. We were two bishops speaking about the state of their Churches, in the first place; and in the second, about the state of the world, about wars, wars that are now in danger of changing from a matter being fought "piecemeal" to involving the whole. We also spoke about the state of Orthodoxy, of the up-coming pan-Orthodox Synod.... I tell you, truly, I felt an inner joy that was really of the Lord. He spoke freely and I spoke freely. You could feel the joy. The translators were good, both of them. It was a conversation of six: Patriarch Kirill, myself, Metropolitan Hilarion

and Cardinal Koch, as well as two translators. But all conducted freely. The two of us spoke, and the others if they had questions.

Thirdly, a plan of possible joint activities, for unity is made on the journey. Once I said that if unity were produced in a lab, by studying theology and the like, maybe when the Lord comes, we would still be working on unity. Unity is made on the journey, walking. When the Lord arrives, may he at least find us walking.

Then we signed the [Declaration](#) that you have in your hands: there will be many interpretations, many. But if there are any doubts, Fr Lombardy can tell you the true significance of the matter. It is not a political or a sociological Declaration, it is a pastoral Declaration, even when it speaks about secularism and specific issues, biogenetic manipulation and all these things. It is pastoral; of two bishops who met together with pastoral concerns. And I am very happy. Now, 23 kilometres of an open popemobile are waiting for me...

I thank you for your work: do what you can! Thank you so much, thank you.