



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Tuesday, 29 June 2004

1. The Church is celebrating the feast day of the *Holy Apostles Peter and Paul*: the fisherman of Galilee who first professed faith in Christ, and the teacher and doctor who proclaimed salvation to the Gentiles (cf. *Preface*). Through the design of divine Providence they both came to Rome where they suffered martyrdom within a few years. From that time, the city that had been the capital of a great empire was called to a very different glory: to be the home of the *Apostolic See* that *presides over the universal mission of the Church* to spread throughout the world the Gospel of Christ, Redeemer of humanity and of history.

2. This year, today's Solemnity is gladdened by the presence of *His Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople*, whom I have just had the joy of welcoming and greeting. His welcome visit has a special reason: *40 years ago*, to be precise, in January 1964, *Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I* met in Jerusalem and exchanged a fraternal embrace. That embrace has become the symbol of the longed for reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, as well as a prophecy of hope on the journey toward full unity among Christians.

I have invited Patriarch Bartholomew I to take part in Holy Mass at 6 p.m. later today in St Peter's Square, at which I will preside. Together we will give the homily and proclaim the common profession of faith.

During today's celebration I will also have the joy of conferring *the "Pallium"* upon the *Metropolitan Archbishops* appointed during the last year. The conferral of the *Pallium* is a traditional sign of communion between the See of Rome and the Churches scattered across the world, which fits

beautifully into the context of the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

3. I especially entrust to the two eminent Patrons *the beloved Diocese of Rome* as well as the Capitoline civil community. As we invoke their intercession together with that of Mary Most Holy, *Salus Populi Romani*, let us pray that every man and every woman may accept the message of love for which Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom.

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