



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATION
OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE**

28 June 1998

Dear Brothers in Christ, I cordially welcome you, the Delegates of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who have come to Rome to take part in the solemn Eucharistic Celebration to mark the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul. For a number of years, this brotherly exchange has brought together representatives of the Church which owes its beginning to the apostolate of Saints Peter and Paul here in Rome and the Church which traces its origin to Saint Andrew. The two brother Apostles Peter and Andrew, Patrons respectively of the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople, bring to mind the vocation received from the Lord to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom: "As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, *'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'*" (Mt 4:18-19). This is the mysterious vocation prefigured in their condition as fishermen, which now takes on a new and superior meaning. Jesus himself provides the perfect example of the Apostolic task: "He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people" (Mt 4:23). This is the perennial task of the disciples of the Lord in every age and every place: the proclamation of the Kingdom and the healing of the evils afflicting the People of God. As we approach the Third Millennium, the Spirit makes us understand the urgency of a more intense dedication to this task. And the witness of Christian unity becomes even more imperative: "that they may all be one...so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21). In this perspective, it is with joy that I recall the Joint Declaration signed by His Holiness Bartholomew I and myself, in which we urged Catholics and Orthodox "to make this spiritual pilgrimage together towards the Jubilee". We expressed our shared conviction that "reflection, prayer, dialogue, reciprocal forgiveness and mutual fraternal love will bring us closer to the Lord and will help us better to understand his will for the Church and for humanity". Your presence among us for the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul is a clear sign of our common will to undertake this journey in fraternal charity and in love for the truth, trusting in Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Saviour of the world. I ask you to take the assurance of my cordial greeting and fraternal regard to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch. May God who has begun a good work in us bring it to completion. Amen. © Copyright 1998 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
