



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATION FROM BULGARIA**

Monday, 25 May 1998

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to welcome the Delegation from Bulgaria, which has come to Rome to honour Sts Cyril and Methodius, who remain linked to the memory of the Church in your country and on the European continent. Your pilgrimage shows that the Bulgarian people recognize how important these two great figures are for their own identity.

The method of evangelization used by Cyril and Methodius is remarkable; it is an example of intercultural dialogue. In fact, these two saints were able to proclaim the Gospel without imposing the culture and customs in which they had been formed and to which they remained attached. They adapted the proclamation of Christ's Gospel to the Slavic world without altering it or taking anything from its rich content. On the contrary, their intention was to unite the people of the region to the universal Church and make the divine truth shine forth.

2. In our time, Cyril and Methodius, who helped form Europe's roots, can also help this continent in the task of unification which it has begun. In fact, their work recalls that Europe, traditionally composed of two parts that were long separated, can rediscover its unity. With its specific spiritual cultures and practices, each part contributes its own riches to the whole, thus fostering communion between individuals and fraternal dialogue between peoples. At the religious level, this must be put into practice through an ever more intense ecumenical commitment. At the civil level, it is an invitation to spare no effort to make peace, harmony and reconciliation prevail.

3. In this spirit, as I thank you for your kind visit, I extend my fervent wishes to your Delegation, to the authorities and to the Bulgarian people. I entrust you to the intercession of Cyril and Methodius and invoke upon you the blessings of God.

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