



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATION OF THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
OF ATHENS, GREECE**

Friday, 19 September 2003

Dear Brother Priests of the Orthodox Church of Greece,

I am pleased to meet with you during your visit to the Holy See and the historic city of Rome, which has the honour to preserve the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. I rejoice over this new connection that is being established between us.

Your presence recalls to my mind the very special grace that the Lord bestowed upon me in the Jubilee Year, during my pilgrimage made "in the footsteps of St Paul", when he allowed my visit to His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and of All Greece, and to the Orthodox Church of Greece. We must continue to build on the solid foundation of the fraternal and evangelical bonds that we experienced on that occasion. Your visit to Rome becomes a valid initiative in this way, in order to know and to appreciate each other better and to advance relations that facilitate communion.

I continually turn to the Lord, so that he prepares us to open our hearts to his prayer "*that all may be one*" (Jn 17: 11, 21), and to make us capable of genuine obedience to his will so as to search out together ways for closer collaboration and an ever-deeper communion.

I hope that your visit to the holy places of Rome, along with the meetings, conversations and moments of confrontation, make up an experience that is positive and useful for your priesthood. May the Holy Spirit always accompany your ministry and strengthen the witness that each of you gives to the Gospel of our one Lord.

I ask that you transmit to His Beatitude Christodoulos and his Holy Synod my warmest greetings

and sincere best wishes for every good and prosperity in the Lord.

The grace and peace of the Lord be with you!

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