



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV
TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC ECUMENICAL PILGRIMAGE
FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

*Castel Gandolfo
Thursday, 17 July 2025*

[[Multimedia](#)]

My dear brothers and sisters,

I offer a cordial greeting to all of you, especially to Metropolitan Elpidophoros and Cardinal Tobin and I thank them for arranging this meeting as part of your pilgrimage. You are all very welcome. I am sorry that I am a little bit late. Several meetings were scheduled this morning. But I am very happy to have this moment to spend with you in this beautiful place, Castel Gandolfo.

You have set out from the United States, which as you know, is also my native country, and this journey is meant to be a return to the roots, the sources, the places, the memorials of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, and of the Apostle Andrew in Constantinople. It is also a way to experience anew and in a concrete way the faith that comes from listening to the Gospel, hearing the Gospel handed down to us by the Apostles (cf. *Rom* 10:16). It is significant that your pilgrimage is taking place this year, in which we celebrate one thousand seven hundred years of the Council of Nicaea. The Symbol of Faith adopted by the assembled Fathers remains – together with the additions made at the Council of Constantinople in 381 – the common patrimony of all Christians, for many of whom the Creed is an integral part of their liturgical celebrations. Then too, by a providential coincidence, this year the two calendars in use in our Churches coincide, with the result that we were able to chant as one the Easter Alleluia: “Christ is risen! He is truly risen!”

Those words proclaim that the darkness of sin and death have been vanquished by the Lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ our Lord. This inspires us with great hope, for we know that no cry of the

innocent victims of violence, no lament of mothers mourning their children will go unheard. Our hope is in God, yet precisely because we constantly draw from the inexhaustible source of his grace, we are called to be witnesses and bearers of hope. The Catholic Church is presently celebrating our Jubilee year whose motto, chosen by my predecessor [Pope Francis](#), is “*Peregrinantes in Spe*”, that is, pilgrims in hope. Your Eminence, Metropolitan Elpidophoros, your very name tells us that you are a bearer of hope! It is my hope that your pilgrimage will confirm all of you in the hope born of our faith in the risen Lord!

Here in Rome, you have spent time in prayer at the tombs of Peter and Paul. As you now visit the See of Constantinople, I would ask you to bring greetings and my embrace, an embrace of peace, to my venerable brother Patriarch Bartholomew, who so kindly attended the Holy Mass for the inauguration of my pontificate. I hope to be able to meet you again, in a few months, to take part in the ecumenical commemoration of the anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

Your pilgrimage is one of the abundant fruits of the ecumenical movement aimed at restoring full unity among all Christ’s disciples in accordance with the Lord’s prayer at the Last Supper, when Jesus said, “that they may all be one” (*Jn 17:21*). At times, we take for granted these signs of sharing and fellowship that, albeit not yet signifying full unity, already manifest the theological progress and the dialogue of charity that have marked recent decades. On December 7th, 1965, on the eve of the conclusion of the [Second Vatican Council](#), my predecessor [Saint Paul VI](#) and the Patriarch, Athenagoras signed a [Joint Declaration](#) removing from memory and the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication that followed the events of the year 1054. Before then, a pilgrimage like your own would probably not even have been possible. The work of the Holy Spirit created in hearts the readiness to take those steps as a prophetic presage of full and visible unity. For our part, we too must continue to implore from the Paraclete, the Consoler, the grace to pursue the path of unity and fraternal charity.

Unity among those who believe in Christ is one of the signs of God’s gift of consolation; Scripture promises that “in Jerusalem you will be comforted” (*Is 66:13*). Rome, Constantinople and all the other Sees, are not called to vie for primacy, lest we risk finding ourselves like the disciples who along the way, even as Jesus was announcing his coming passion, argued about which of them was the greatest (cf. *Mk 9:33-37*).

In his Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year, [Pope Francis](#) noted that “the Holy Year will also guide our steps towards yet another fundamental celebration for all Christians: 2033 will mark the two thousandth anniversary of the redemption won by the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus” ([*Spes Non Confundit*](#), 6). Spiritually, all of us need to return to Jerusalem, the City of Peace, where Peter, Andrew and all the Apostles, after the days of the Lord’s passion and resurrection, received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and from there bore witness to Christ to the ends of the earth.

May our return to the roots of our faith make all of us experience the gift of God's consolation and make us capable, like the Good Samaritan, of pouring out the oil of consolation and the wine of gladness on today's humanity. Thank you.