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Concession of the “Ecclesiastica Communio” to the new Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites, His Beatitude Youssef Absi

The Holy Father has granted the “Ecclesiastica Communio” in accordance with canon 76 § 2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches to His Beatitude Youssef Absi, canonically elected as Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites on 21 June 2017 by the Synod of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church.

The following is the text that Pope Francis sent to the new Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites for the concession of the “Ecclesiastica Communio”:

Message of the Holy Father

To His Beatitude YOUSSEF

Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

It is with great joy that I received the letter in which you informed me of your election as Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites by the Synod of Bishops, requesting the *Ecclesiastica Communio*.

I wish to congratulate you and assure you from now on of my prayer that Christ, Good Shepherd, will support you in the fulfilment of the mission entrusted to you and for the service required of you.

The election of Your Beatitude comes at the time of a delicate situation for the venerable Greco-Melkite Church and when many Christian communities in the Middle East are called to bear witness in a special way to their faith in the dead and risen Christ. In this particularly difficult time, Pastors are called upon to manifest communion, unity, closeness, solidarity and transparency before the suffering people of God.

I am certain that your Beatitude, in fraternal harmony with all the Synod Fathers, will know, in all evangelical

wisdom, how to be not only "*Pater et Caput*" in the service of the faithful of the Greco-Melkite Church, but also a faithful and authentic witness to the Risen One.

Therefore, Beatitude, as the Successor of Peter called by Jesus to preserve in unity His one Church, I grant you with deep joy the Ecclesiastical Communion solicited in accordance with the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

By commending you to the maternal protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, I willingly grant you the Apostolic Blessing which I extend to bishops, priests, religious and to all the faithful of the Greek Melkite Church.

From the Vatican, 22 June 2017

Francis
