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Lettera di Sua Santità Bartolomeo I, Patriarca Ecumenico di Costantinopoli, al Santo Padre Francesco in occasione della Solennità dei Santi Apostoli Pietro e Paolo

Pubblichiamo di seguito la Lettera che Sua Santità Bartolomeo I, Patriarca Ecumenico di Costantinopoli, ha fatto pervenire al Santo Padre Francesco tramite la Delegazione ufficiale giunta a Roma in occasione della Solennità dei Santi Apostoli Pietro e Paolo:

Lettera di Sua Santità Bartolomeo I

To His Holiness and Beatitude Pope Francis of Senior Rome: rejoice in the Lord.

Once more, the joyous day is dawning for the venerable feast and sacred remembrance of the chief Apostles Peter and Paul, who were martyred for Christ's sake in the see of Your Church. Wherefore, we hasten to concelebrate and commemorate with You again this year through our formal delegation in accordance with the long-established blessed custom.

We retain in our heart, like a precious treasure, the recollection of our recent personal encounters with Your Holiness both in Jerusalem and Rome, which further renewed and sealed our fraternal bonds, while also affirming our desire to continue on the path toward our full union and communion desired by the Lord. Thus, in the Holy City during this past May we were deemed worthy together to venerate the sacred place where the leader of our faith, our Lord Jesus Christ, taught, suffered, was buried and arose from the dead, even as we honored the fiftieth anniversary of the historical meeting there of our late predecessors Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, whose bold initiatives opened up the period of rapprochement and reconciliation for our Churches.

Moreover, our meeting in Rome, through the gracious initiative and invitation of Your Holiness at the beginning of this month, for the purpose of together contributing - with the Presidents of Israel and Palestine - to the prevalence of peace in a region of the Middle East torn apart by conflict, was profoundly and personally moving, while at the same time conveying a message of our Lord's peace and love to a contemporary world that so thirsts for this.

For all these things, we again express our sincere gratitude to Your Holiness together with our whole hearted prayer that the Lord may strengthen You with His grace and power in order that You may for many years continue Your invaluable leadership and service in our modern world, inspiring everyone with the virtues of Your personality and love toward God and humanity.

May the celebrated chief Apostles Peter and Paul intercede to God for His Church and the whole world guiding and encouraging us along the way of truth and love "until we all attain to the unity of the faith ... speaking the truth in love in order that we might grow in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ." (Eph. 13-15)

These congratulatory and festive feelings will be conveyed to Your Holiness by our delegation - led by His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, accompanied by His Excellency Archbishop Job of Telmessos and the Very Reverend Archdeacon John Chryssavgis - representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate and ourselves during the celebrations of the Thronal Feast of Your Church.

In communication these sentiments with Your Holiness in a spirit of deep love, we embrace You fraternally in the Lord, and remain with love and special esteem in Him.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate; on June 24th, 2014

Your Holiness' beloved brother in Christ

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

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