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Message of the Holy Father to the Patriarch Tawadros II for the Ninth Day of Friendship between Copts and Catholics

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the Patriarch Tawadros II for the Ninth Day of Friendship between Copts and Catholics, held today:

Message

To His Holiness Tawadros II

Pope of Alexandria

Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark

Your Holiness, beloved brother in Christ,

The ninth *Day of Friendship Between Copts and Catholics* offers me once again the auspicious opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude for the spiritual bonds uniting the See of Peter and the See of Mark, and to assure you of my unfailing friendship in Christ.

Attentive to Christ's words – "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (*Jn 15:14*) – may we continue our pilgrimage of Christian fraternity, especially in preparation for next year's celebration of the tenth anniversary of our memorable meeting in Rome and of the fiftieth anniversary of the historic encounter between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III.

Friendship is the surest way to achieve unity between Christians, for therein we see the face of Christ himself, who calls us no longer servants but friends (cf. *Jn 15:15*) and who prays that "they may all be one" (*Jn 17:21*). May the intercession of Saint Athanasius, whose life and teaching inspires both our Churches, guide us on the

journey towards full visible communion.

Dear brother in Christ, as we approach the feast of Pentecost, I pray that the Holy Spirit will unite us ever more and bestow his gifts of consolation upon our suffering human family, especially in these days of pandemic and war.

With the assurance of my continued spiritual closeness, I offer prayerful good wishes for your wellbeing and serenity, and I cordially exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace of peace in the Risen Lord.

Rome, from Saint John of Lateran, 10 May 2022

FRANCIS
