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Letter of the Holy Father on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the erection of the Apostolic Administration of Estonia

The following is the Letter sent by the Holy Father to Bishop Philippe Jourdan of Tallinn, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the erection of the Apostolic Administration of Estonia:

Letter of the Holy Father

To The Most Reverend Philippe Jourdan

Bishop of Tallinn

With fond memories of my Apostolic Journey to your country in 2018, I send heartfelt greetings, together with the assurance of my spiritual closeness, to you and the entire Catholic community on the happy occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the creation of the Apostolic Administration of Estonia, recently raised to the level of a Diocese.

This significant milestone in your history marks a century of steadfast fidelity to the Catholic faith, which has enabled this small yet vibrant Church to be a source of compassion and spiritual nourishment for countless men and women across the nation. At the same time, this anniversary commemorates unwavering hope and trust in the Lord through decades of suffering, occupation and oppression.

In this regard, as you reflect upon these past hundred years, I join you in giving thanks to Almighty God for the example of faith offered by your courageous and resilient forefathers who were instrumental in nurturing and sustaining the Catholic community in Estonia. In a particular way, I think of Servant of God Archbishop Eduard Profittlich, whose witness to Christ and fortitude in remaining close to his flock, even to the shedding of his blood, sowed seeds which even today are bearing fruit. May his testimony always be a source of inspiration for you and remind you that even the tiniest of plants, the smallest of gestures and the lowliest of offerings can grow

far beyond their humble beginnings to bestow a rich harvest (cf. *Mt* 13:31-32).

Moreover, I am confident that this admirable legacy of faith and charity that characterizes your Diocese will encourage the present generation of priests, religious and lay faithful to continue to grow in joyful missionary discipleship as they look to the future. Indeed, may the present centenary be an opportunity for spiritual renewal in your land, igniting a renewed sense of zeal for evangelization, especially among young people. In this way, they will more effectively be able to proclaim God's message of love, mercy, and reconciliation, and so, bring the light of Jesus and the liberating power of the Gospel to the many men and women of today who do not even believe in God.

It is likewise my hope that as the Catholics of Estonia seek to build a society rooted in peace, justice, solidarity, and the dignity of every human person, they will work increasingly with the men and women of other Christian denominations in bearing a united witness to God's promises. This is especially important in the context of today's war in Europe, which is a source of deep anxiety and tragically echoes the darker moments of yesteryears. Even so, the Holy Spirit can guide you to be an eloquent sign of continued trust in God's providence and lead Estonian Christians, together with all people of good will, to extend the hand of friendship to refugees and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. May Christ the Prince of Peace bless you with his gifts of perseverance, fraternal unity and concord.

With these sentiments, it is my fervent prayer that the grace of God will continue to accompany you, the clergy, religious, and lay faithful of the Church in Estonia, as you embark upon the next chapter of your journey full of faith, hope, and love. Entrusting all of you to the intercession of Saint Victor and to the loving protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, I gladly impart my Blessing as pledge of abundant heavenly graces.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 1 November 2024

FRANCIS
