



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Messaggio del Santo Padre Francesco a Sua Santità Bartolomeo I, Patriarca Ecumenico, per la Festa di Sant'Andrea

*To His All Holiness Bartholomew
Archbishop of Constantinople
Ecumenical Patriarch*

On the occasion of the feast of the Apostle Andrew, the first-called and brother of the Apostle Peter, and patron saint of the Church of Constantinople and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, my thoughts turn to you, beloved brother in Christ, and to the Church that our Lord Jesus, “the great shepherd of the sheep” (*Heb 13:20*), has entrusted to your ministry. I do so, not only in view of our own fraternal friendship but also of the ancient and profound bond of faith and charity between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople. With the assurance of my spiritual closeness, I have sent a delegation to convey my good wishes for joy and peace to you, your brother Bishops, and the clergy, monks and lay faithful gathered in the Patriarchal Church of Saint George for the Divine Liturgy in memory of the Apostle Andrew.

It was a source of joy for me that during your recent visit to Rome we were able not only to share our concerns regarding the present and future of our world but also to express our shared commitment to addressing issues of crucial significance for our whole human family, including the care of creation, the education of future generations, dialogue among the different religious traditions and the pursuit of peace. In this way, we as Pastors, together with our Churches, strengthen the profound bond that already unites us, since our common responsibility in the face of current challenges flows from our shared faith in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; in the one Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, who became man for our salvation, died and rose from the dead; and in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, who harmonizes differences without abolishing them. United in this faith, let us seek with determination to make visible our communion. While recognizing that there remain theological and ecclesiological questions at the heart of the work of our ongoing theological dialogue, it is my hope that Catholics and Orthodox may increasingly work together in those areas in which it is not only possible, but indeed imperative that we do so.

Beloved brother in Christ, along the path towards full communion between our Churches, we are sustained by the intercession of the holy brothers Peter and Andrew, our patron saints. The full unity for which we yearn is, of course, a gift from God, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. May our Lord help us to be ready to embrace this

gift through prayer, interior conversion and openness to seeking and offering pardon.

With these heartfelt sentiments, I renew my warm good wishes for the feast of Saint Andrew, and exchange with Your All Holiness an embrace of peace.

FRANCIS

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 30 November 2021

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