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Pubblichiamo di seguito la Lettera che il Santo Padre Leone XIV ha inviato a Sua Santità Tawadros II, Papa di Alessandria e Patriarca della Sede di San Marco, in occasione della Giornata dell'amicizia copto-cattolica:

Lettera del Santo Padre

To His Holiness Tawadros II

Pope of Alexandria

Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark

Your Holiness, dear brother in Christ,

Christ is risen! *Al-Messih qam!*

In the joyful light of Easter, I am pleased to greet you on the auspicious occasion of the Day of Friendship between Copts and Catholics, thus continuing the noble tradition of my beloved predecessor Pope Francis.

This Day of Friendship, whose idea originated with Your Holiness, celebrates the relations between the See of Peter and the See of Mark, and is indeed a significant initiative. For us Christians, friendship is not a vague sentiment; it is at the very heart of our life and faith. For our Lord himself calls us his friends (cf. *Jn 15:15*), and he teaches us that “no one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (*Jn 15:13*). Thus it is by drawing upon Christ’s friendship with us that we will be able to strengthen the friendship between ourselves, and between our Churches, as we continue to bear witness together to the divine *philanthropia* for all humanity!

This pilgrimage of friendship has enabled our Churches, separated by centuries of misunderstanding, to engage in a highly fruitful theological dialogue initiated over fifty years ago by Saint Paul VI and His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, of blessed memory. This dialogue, which was initially bilateral, has been taking place since 2003 within the framework of the *Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches*, whose three landmark documents demonstrate an increasing theological understanding. It is my hope that this Commission, whose Coordinating committee is currently meeting in Rome, may resume its work as soon as possible with all Churches of the Oriental Orthodox family, in order to respond to Christ’s prayer, “that they all may be one” (*Jn 17:21*).

I also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Your Holiness and to the Coptic Orthodox Church for the truly fraternal hospitality offered to the participants in the Sixth World Conference of the Faith and Order Commission, including a large Catholic Delegation, held at the Monastery of Saint Bishoy, in Wadi El Natrun, in October 2025. I am confident that the reflections undertaken on the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council will rekindle our desire to achieve the visible unity of the Church — a unity rooted in the one baptism that we profess in the Nicene Creed, and which, I sincerely pray, we shall attain.

At a time when our world is afflicted by so many conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, Christians must, more than ever, strive for full unity so that we may bear witness together to the Prince of Peace. In doing so, we can be confident in the powerful intercession and example of the countless martyrs who have suffered for the name of Christ.

Your Holiness, as our Churches prepare for the feast of Pentecost, I pray that the Holy Spirit, source and bearer of all gifts, will guide Copts and Catholics on our common pilgrimage in truth and charity towards full communion. Looking forward to having the joy of encountering Your Holiness personally, I assure you of my prayers as I convey to you a fraternal embrace of peace in Christ, our risen Lord.

From the Vatican, 4 May 2026

LEO PP. XIV

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