



The Holy See

*LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO HIS BEATITUDE VOLODYMYR,
METROPOLITAN OF KIEV AND ALL UKRAINE*

*To His Beatitude Volodymyr
Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine*

I received the Letter addressed to me and delivered on 23 January 2001 to the Apostolic Nunciature in Kyiv. I wish to assure you that I carefully read what Your Beatitude wanted to express to me about my Apostolic Pilgrimage to Ukraine, which, at the invitation of the Catholic Bishops and the President of Ukraine, I am preparing to make, with the grace of God, in June.

I am particularly pleased to take this occasion to send this Letter to you, Venerable Brother, to tell you that, as Supreme Pastor of the Catholic Church, I can finally, after repeated invitations, fulfil the sincere desire of Ukrainian Catholics - quite numerous and deeply rooted in this country - to meet them and confirm them in their faith in Jesus Christ, our only Saviour. The Apostolic Nuncio in Ukraine, Archbishop Nikola Eterovic, has not failed to keep you informed about these invitations and about the programme for my visit.

It is in this spirit that I am preparing to come as a pilgrim to the beloved and noble land of Ukraine. I am stirred by feelings of joy at meeting my Catholic brethren and children, and by feelings of affection and Gospel brotherhood for everyone in that nation who shares our faith in Christ and wishes to bear witness in the world, as we do, to the love of God the Father revealed in his Son Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

My forthcoming visit, then, is also meant to express a constant and respectful attention to our Orthodox brethren, along with a firm commitment to continue on the way of dialogue in truth and charity. A sign of this profound intention, whose goal is to overcome any problem that might arise between us, is the Mixed Commission of members of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and

the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - which includes two representatives from the Patriarchate of Moscow and two from the Holy See - recently established to fulfil the wish of His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II to examine relations between Catholics and Orthodox in Western Ukraine. It is my fervent hope that this Commission will begin working as soon as possible.

Precisely to emphasize this longing for unity, following the Divine Master's command *ut unum sint*, "that they may all be one", I would greatly desire, on the occasion of my visit, also to meet you, Venerable Brother, and to express to you personally, with a fraternal embrace, my love for you and for all the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Until then, may the Lord grant us an awareness of the longing we share for the unity of all Christians. It is indispensable, if the proclamation of the Gospel is to resound with new fervour throughout the world, until the time when the day comes, awaited by all, of the joyful encounter with the Risen Christ, Lord of the Universe.

From the Vatican, 26 March 2001.

JOHN PAUL II