



The Holy See

***FAREWELL ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO BARTHOLOMEW I
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE***

Thursday, 1 July 2004

Your Holiness, As your appreciated visit to Rome for the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul draws to a close, I would like to express to you once again my most cordial gratitude. For three days, accompanied by a highly qualified entourage composed, moreover, of several eminent Metropolitans whom I greet once again, you left the Phanar in the Patriarchal See of Constantinople to be close to the Successor of Peter. Let us thank God together, because in this way he has enabled us to give the faithful a vivid sign of brotherhood and to confirm our resolution to progress with determination towards the goal of full unity between Catholics and Orthodox. There is a great need for these signs of communion as well as of words to accompany and explain them, such as those we subscribed to in a Common Declaration are intended to be. Another important event of these days is a cause of special joy to me: to have had the opportunity to grant to the Ecumenical Patriarchate the use of the Church of San Teodoro al Palatino in the heart of ancient Rome. This will allow the faithful of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in Italy to have a significant and continuing presence close to the tomb of the Apostle Peter. All this, as we know, is a gift of God. And it is a fine thing for brothers to live together in common gratitude to the One who is the "Father of lights" from whom descends "every good endowment and every perfect gift" (Jas 1: 17). I warmly thank you, Your Holiness, and each one of the members of your venerable entourage. As we remember these days of grace and today's festive meeting, let us remain in communion through prayer and fraternal charity.