



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Saint Peter's Square
Wednesday, 10 May 2023

[Multimedia]

Brothers and sisters!

It is with great joy today that I greet His Holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark, and the distinguished delegation that is accompanying him.

His Holiness Tawadros accepted my invitation to come to Rome to celebrate with me the fiftieth anniversary of the historic meeting of Saint Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III in 1973. It was the first meeting between a Bishop of Rome and a Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, which culminated in the signing of a memorable [joint Christological Declaration](#), on 10 May precisely. In memory of this event, His Holiness Tawadros came to visit me for the first time on 10 May ten years ago, a few months after his and my election, and proposed to celebrate the “Day of friendship between Copts and Catholics” every 10 May, which since then we have celebrated every year. We call each other on the telephone, we send greetings, and we remain good brothers; we haven’t quarreled!

Dear friend and brother Tawadros, thank you for accepting my invitation on this dual anniversary, and I pray that the light of the Holy Spirit may illuminate your visit to Rome, the important meetings you will have here, and in particular our personal conversations. I thank you from my heart for your commitment to the growing friendship between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.

Your Holiness, dear Bishops and friends, all of you — together with you I implore God Almighty, through the intercession of the Saints and Martyrs of the Coptic Church, that He may help us grow in communion, in a single and holy bond of faith, hope and Christian love. And speaking of martyrs of the Coptic Church, who are also ours, I want to recall the martyrs on the Libyan beach, who were martyred a few years ago.

I ask all of you present to pray to God that He may bless Pope Tawadros' visit to Rome, and protect the entire Coptic Orthodox Church. May this visit hasten us to the blessed day when we will be one in Christ! Thank you.

Speaker:

I extend a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially the groups from England, Finland, India, Korea, Indonesia, Egypt, South Africa, Australia and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!