



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE DELEGATION OF THE ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW***

*Room adjacent to Paul VI Audience Hall
Wednesday, 30 May 2018*

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Thank you very much for your visit, and also for this meeting, which helps us so much to live our faith in unity and in the hope of walking together. I am pleased to take the road to unity with you: the only road that promises us something certain, because the road of division leads us to wars and destruction. And before you I would like to reiterate — in a special way before you, dear Brother, and before all of you — that the Catholic Church will never allow an attitude of division to issue from her members. We will never allow ourselves to do that; I do not want this. In Moscow — in Russia — there is only one Patriarchate: yours. We will not have another. And when some Catholic faithful, be they lay people, priests or bishops, take up the banner of ‘Uniatism’ which no longer functions, which is over, for me it is also painful. The Churches that are united with Rome must be respected, but ‘Uniatism’ as a road to unity does not work today. Instead, it gives me comfort when I find this: the outstretched hand, the fraternal embrace, thinking together, and walking. Ecumenism is accomplished by walking. Let us walk.

Some think — but this is not fair — that first there must be doctrinal agreement, on all points of division, and then the journey. This does not work for ecumenism, because we do not know when the agreement will come. I once heard a man of the Church, a man of God, say: “I know what day the doctrinal agreement will be signed”. They asked him, “When?” — “The day after the coming of the glorious Christ”.

We must continue to study theology, to clarify the details, but in the meantime we must walk together, not wait for these things to be resolved in order to walk, no. One walks and one also

does this, but walking in charity, in prayer; as in this example of the relics. Praying together, one for the other, in dialogue. This does so much good.

The meeting with His Holiness Kirill did me well; I found a brother. And now, spiritually, we walk together.

Finally, two words. One on Catholics' respect for you, Russian Orthodox brothers and sisters: the Catholic Church, the Catholic Churches, must not interfere in the internal affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, nor in political matters. This is my stance, and the stance of the Holy See today. And those who meddle do not obey the Holy See. That is for politics.

The second thing: piety. Prayer for one another is important, as is personal prayer. We meet new brothers and sisters, and therefore also personal prayer. I would like to say one thing to you: when we met with the Patriarch, afterwards, he sent me a relic of Saint Seraphim. I keep that relic on my bedside table, and at night, before going to bed, and in the morning, when I get up, I venerate it and pray for our unity. Thank you so much. Let us pray for each other. Let us bless each other. And let us go forward together. Thank you.