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Papal Note to Bartholomew I on Feast of St. Andrew

"We Need to Continue Our Progress ... Toward Full Communion"

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 30, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the message Benedict XVI sent today to the Orthodox ecumenical patriarch, Bartholomew I, on the occasion of today's feast of St. Andrew, patron of that patriarchate.

The message was delivered by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who led a delegation from the Holy See to participate in the celebrations in Istanbul.

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To His Holiness Bartholomaïos I
Archbishop of Constantinople
Ecumenical Patriarch

It is with great joy that I write this letter to you, to be delivered by my Venerable Brother Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, brother of Saint Peter and Patron of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in order to wish Your Holiness and the Members of the Holy Synod, the clergy, the monks and all the faithful an abundance of heavenly gifts and divine blessings.

On this joyful feast-day, in union with all my Catholic brothers and sisters, I join you in giving thanks to God for the wonders he has worked, in his infinite mercy, through the mission and martyrdom of Saint Andrew. By generously offering their lives in sacrifice for the Lord and for their brethren, the Apostles proved the credibility of the Good News that they proclaimed to the ends of the known world. The Feast of the Apostle, which falls on this day in the liturgical calendars of both East and West, issues a strong summons to all those who by God's grace and through the gift of Baptism have accepted that message of salvation to renew their fidelity to the Apostolic teaching and to become tireless heralds of faith in Christ through their words and the witness of their lives.

In modern times, this summons is as urgent as ever and it applies to all Christians. In a world marked by growing interdependence and solidarity, we are called to proclaim with renewed conviction the truth of the Gospel and to present the Risen Lord as the answer to the deepest questions and spiritual aspirations of the men and women of our day.

If we are to succeed in this great task, we need to continue our progress along the path towards full communion, demonstrating that we have already united our efforts for a common witness to the Gospel before the people of our day. For this reason I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Your Holiness and to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the generous hospitality offered last October on the island of Rhodes to the

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Delegates of the Catholic Episcopal Conferences of Europe who came together with representatives of the Orthodox Churches in Europe for the Second Catholic-Orthodox Forum on the theme "Church-State Relations: Theological and Historical Perspectives".

Your Holiness, I am following attentively your wise efforts for the good of Orthodoxy and for the promotion of Christian values in many international contexts. Assuring you of a remembrance in my prayers on this Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, I renew my good wishes for peace, well-being and abundant spiritual blessings to you and to all the faithful.

With sentiments of esteem and spiritual closeness, I gladly extend to you a fraternal embrace in the name of our one Lord Jesus Christ.

From the Vatican, 30 November 2010

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