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## Message of the Holy Father for the opening of the 25th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality (6-9 September 2017)

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the opening of the 25th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality, organised by the Monastic Community of Bose in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches (6-9 September 2017, Monastery of Bose):

### Message of the Holy Father

To Brother Enzo Bianchi  
Monastery of Bose

On the occasion of the opening of the 25th International Ecumenical Conference of Orthodox Spirituality, I wish to address to you, organisers and participants, my cordial greeting. In particular, I would like to convey a warm embrace of peace to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch, dearest Brother Bartholomew, and to His Beatitude Theodoros, Patriarch of Alexandria: your important presence honours the twenty-five years of the Conference that the Monastery of Bose organises in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches and confirms its contribution to the common path towards full unity.

This year's theme, "the gift of hospitality", is evocative and timely. It is true that hospitality is a gift, a gift we have first received: we are guests in a world created for us and which must be protected, but we are also transient here, strangers on earth, because we are guests invited and awaited in heaven, where we have our citizenship (cf. *Phil.* 3: 20).

In the meantime, as itinerant disciples, we are called to focus on what does not wane, on the charity that will never end (cf. *Cor.* 13: 8), to accept each other as gifts from the Lord, to promote mutual care and affection, to "have compassion, to take part in the pain of those who suffer, to consider as one's own ill the misfortunes of others" (N. Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, VI, 8). I hope that this calling is rekindled by the humble and sincere listening and reflections of these days, so fraternal sentiments may grow, and an authentic "hospitality of the

heart” mature, so as we journey in pilgrimage together towards the Kingdom, we are inspired to take more courageous and concrete steps towards full communion.

With these sentiments I invoke upon you and upon the works of the Conference the abundance of the gifts of the Spirit, while asking you to keep a place for me in your prayers.

From the Vatican, 18 August 2017.

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