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Letter of the Holy Father to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of his election as Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch

The following is the Letter sent by the Holy Father Francis to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of his election as Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch:

Letter of the Holy Father

To His All Holiness Bartholomew
Archbishop of Constantinople
Ecumenical Patriarch

“Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come” (Rev 1:4)

Dearest brother in Christ,

On the joyful occasion of the 30th anniversary of your election as Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch, I express my fervent best wishes: Χρόνια πολλά! Ad multos annos!

I join you in thanksgiving to the Lord for the many blessings bestowed upon your life and ministry over these years, and pray that God, from whom all gifts come, will grant you health, spiritual joy and abundant grace to sustain every aspect of your lofty service.

It is with gratitude to God that I reflect on our own profound personal bond, from the time of the inauguration of my papal ministry, when you honoured me with your presence in Rome. Over time, this bond has become a fraternal friendship nurtured in many meetings not only in Rome, but also at the Phanar, in Jerusalem, Assisi, Cairo, Lesvos, Bari and Budapest. As clearly reflected once again by your participation in events recently held in Rome, where your presence was most appreciated, I share with you the understanding of our common pastoral responsibility in the face of the urgent challenges confronting the entire human family today.

In particular, I assure you of my appreciation for your commitment to safeguarding creation and for your reflection on this issue, from which I have learned and continue to learn much. With the outbreak of the pandemic and the ensuing grave health, social and economic repercussions, your testimony and teaching on the need for the spiritual conversion of humanity have acquired enduring relevance.

Moreover, I sincerely thank you for ceaselessly indicating the way of dialogue, in charity and in truth, as the only possible way for reconciliation between believers in Christ and for the re-establishment of their full communion. With God's help, this is the path along which we will most certainly continue to walk together, for the closeness and solidarity between our Churches are an indispensable contribution to universal brotherhood and social justice, of which humanity is so urgently in need.

With sentiments of deep fraternal affection, I exchange with Your All Holiness a holy embrace in the love of Christ the Lord.

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 22 October 2021

FRANCIS
