



MESSAGE

By His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

To the Participants of the Annual Conference of the Orientale Lumen Foundation  
Washington DC, 19-22 June 2017

It is with feelings of appreciation and joy that we learned of the upcoming 21<sup>st</sup> Orientale Lumen Conference that will be focusing on two major events that took place last year, namely, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which was convened under our presidency on the great island of Crete, and the meeting of the plenary of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

The first event was, of course, of extreme importance for us, as Orthodox, since synodality constitutes an expression and demonstration of the mystery of the Church itself. *"Coming together in one place"* comprises a characteristic of the Church's nature. In this sense, the realization of the Holy and Great Council was a success in itself. The Holy and Great Council was also an occasion to reflect on Orthodox participation in the so-called *"Ecumenical Movement"*. We Orthodox strongly believe that the aim and the *raison d'être* of the Ecumenical Movement is the reconciliation among Christians in order to fulfil the Lord's final prayer, that *"all may be one"* (Jn. 17:21).

For this reason, since the Pan-Orthodox Conferences held in Rhodes and in Chambésy in the 1960's, the Orthodox Church has engaged in six bilateral dialogues with other, non-Orthodox Churches. Among these, the work of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church has been one of the most successful and important endeavours. We were particularly happy to hear that the fourteenth meeting of this Commission, which was held last September in Chieti, succeeded in producing an important document that can now serve as a basis of what we can say together about primacy and synodality in the first millennium. Thus, the Joint International Commission has proposed to our Churches new steps on our common road towards unity.

Convinced that the presentations and reflections that will be made at your conference will be enlightening for a larger number of Christians, helping them to grasp the importance of these two events for the rapprochement between Christians, we greet all the participants of the 21<sup>st</sup> Orientale Lumen Conference and invoke upon you all the blessing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the ninth of June, 2017

✠ BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome  
and Ecumenical Patriarch