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Video Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of his imminent Apostolic Journey in Cyprus and Greece (2 to 6 December 2021)

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the peoples of Cyprus and Greece on the occasion of his upcoming Apostolic Journey, to take place from 2 to 6 December 2021:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters of Cyprus and Greece, *kaliméra sas!* [Good morning!]

Only a few days remain before our meeting and I am preparing to come as a pilgrim to your magnificent lands, blessed by history, culture and the Gospel! I come with joy, precisely in the name of the Gospel, in the footsteps of the first great missionaries, especially the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. It is good to return to the origins and it is important for the Church to rediscover the joy of the Gospel. It is with this spirit that I am preparing for this *pilgrimage to the wellsprings*, which I ask everyone to help me prepare with their prayers.

By meeting you I will be able to quench my thirst at the *wellsprings of fraternity*, which are so precious at a time when we have just begun a universal synodal journey. There is a “synodal grace”, an apostolic fraternity that I desire a lot, and with great respect: it is the expectation of visiting the dear Beatitudes Chrysostomos and Hieronymos, Heads of the local Orthodox Churches. As a brother in the faith, I will have the grace to be received by you and to meet you in the name of the Lord of Peace. And I come to you, dear Catholic sisters and brothers, gathered in those lands in small flocks which the Father loves so tenderly and to which Jesus the Good Shepherd repeats: “Fear not, little flock” (Lk 12:32). I come with affection to bring you the encouragement of the whole Catholic Church.

Visiting you will also give me the opportunity to drink from the *ancient wellsprings of Europe*: Cyprus, the outpost of the Holy Land on the continent; Greece, the home of classical culture. But even today, Europe cannot ignore the Mediterranean, the sea which has seen the spread of the Gospel and the development of great civilisations. The *mare nostrum*, which connects so many lands, invites us to sail together, not to be divided by going our

separate ways, especially at a time when the fight against the pandemic still requires effort, and the climate crisis is looming large.

The sea, which embraces many peoples, with its open ports reminds us that the sources of living together lie in mutual acceptance. Even now I feel welcomed by your affection and I thank those who have been preparing my visit for some time. But I am also thinking of those who, in recent years and still today, have been fleeing from war and poverty, landing on the shores of the continent and elsewhere, and encountering not hospitality but hostility and even exploitation. They are our brothers and sisters. How many have lost their lives at sea! Today our sea, the Mediterranean, is a great cemetery. As a pilgrim to the *wellsprings of humanity*, I will go to Lesbos again, convinced that the sources of common life will only flourish again in fraternity and integration: together. There is no other way and with this vision I go to you.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is with these sentiments that I look forward to meeting you all, all of you! Not just all Catholics! I invoke on you all the blessing of the Most High, as I bring before him even now your faces and your expectations, your worries and your hopes. *Na íste pánda kalá! [May you always be well!]*
