

*Message of Mons. Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, Archbishop of Reims, France and
President of the French Bishops' Conference, to the Catholics in Turkey*

I came to Izmir at first then to Ephesus, with the invitation of Mons. Martin. He invited to see th Church in turkey for many times. Finally I could organised and came here on the occasion of 15 August. First of all I would like to state that I am very happy for being here. I am very impressed. I travelled for many times Turkey and this is the third visit to the Virgin Mary of Ephesus. When I was 15 years old, I came here with a group of 30 travellers and pilgrims accompanied by local Church priest. It was first trip without my family.

However I don't have any specific message to you, I would like to state that I am very impressed being where the roots of the church are there. Next year, on the occasion of the 1600. Anniversary of the Concil of Nicea, we will remember the Council of Ephesus, Council of Chalcedonia and the presence of St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary; the travels of St. Paul. All of them are impress us.

I am aware that here is a Church made up of a differenciated population, bearing the scars of the conflicts and misfortunes of our history. And This makes me more encouraged to be persistence. As St Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans: 'The righteous man lives by his faithfulness.'

It seems to me that we live in times of perseverance and faithfulness. The Christians here, whether they are of Turkish origin or refugees from the Near East or the Middle East, are all witnesses to the faithfulness and perseverance of Jesus Christ and this is a very important lesson for us western Christians.

Mons. Eric de Moulins-Beaufort