(A Journey of Promise, Fulfillment, and Eternal Grace)

Dear Seeker of Truth,

At the heart of human history beats a profound question, a divine mystery spanning centuries: *Who is God's People today?* The answer, illuminated by the Cross and the Holy Spirit, reveals a love story as ancient as Abraham and as new as Pentecost. Join me on this journey of faith, where theology becomes life and sacred history unfolds in your present.

I. The Original Promise: A Chosen People

In His unfathomable mercy, God chose Abraham: "Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). Israel was established as His *"kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Exodus 19:6). They received the Law, the Prophets, a covenant sealed in animal blood, and the Messianic promise. Undeniably, they were the guardians of Revelation, the olive tree planted by God Himself (Romans 11:17–24).

II. The Messiah's Arrival: The Hour of Fulfillment

Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David, came *"only to the lost sheep of Israel"* (Matthew 15:24). He is the **fulfillment** of all promises—the Law made flesh (John 1:14). Yet His message of universal salvation and His identity as the divine *Son* (not merely a prophet) confronted many Jewish leaders. Their rejection culminated at the Cross, but that very rejection became the source of redemption for *all*.

Saint Paul, a converted Pharisee, clarifies with divine clarity:

> *"For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly… Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, with circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code" (Romans 2:28–29).*
> *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile… for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and*

> *heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28–29).*

III. The New and Eternal Covenant: Birth of the Church

At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the **New Covenant** in His Blood (Luke 22:20). This Covenant did not abolish God's promise to Abraham but **brought it to fulfillment**, extending it to all nations. The Resurrection confirmed Christ's divinity. Pentecost marked the public birth of the **Catholic Church**—the new "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

- **The Church Is the New Israel:** Not by violent replacement but through **transformed continuity**. She is the cultivated olive tree into which wild branches (Gentiles) are grafted, while some original branches (part of historical Israel) were broken off *"because of unbelief"* (Romans 11:17–24)—though the door for their return remains open.
- **The Church Is the Body of Christ:** (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). She is no longer an ethnic or territorial nation but a **Sacramental People**, universal ("catholic"), united by Baptism, nourished by the Eucharist, and guided by the Holy Spirit and the Magisterium of the Pope and Bishops.
- **The Church Is the Bride of Christ:** (Ephesians 5:25–27). God's relationship with His people reaches its deepest intimacy and fidelity in the spousal union between Christ and His Church.

IV. Current Theological Relevance: A Mystery of Mercy and Mission

- **Against Religious Nationalism:** God's election no longer depends on blood or land but on faith in Christ and incorporation into His Body. This is an **antidote** to all ethnic or religious exclusivism.
- **Universality of Salvation:** The Church is the **"universal sacrament of salvation"** (*Lumen Gentium* 14–16). Her mission is to lead *all* people to encounter Christ, the sole Savior.
- **Dialogue and Respect:** The Church venerates Hebrew Scripture (our Old Testament) and acknowledges a unique bond with the Jewish people—"our elder brothers in faith" (St. John Paul II). She rejects all antisemitism but proclaims with love that the *fullness of Revelation* resides in Christ and His Church.

V. PRACTICAL GUIDE: LIVING AS GOD'S TRUE PEOPLE

This truth is not mere history or abstract theology. It is **identity and mission**. How to live it today?

1. **Deepen Your Sacramental Identity:**
    - **Live the Sacraments:** Your Baptism made you God's own. Confession restores this covenant. The Eucharist is the manna of the New Exodus. Embrace them with full awareness!
    - **Study Scripture:** Read the Old Testament seeing its *types* and *figures* fulfilled in Christ and the Church (e.g., Exodus = Baptism; Manna = Eucharist; David = Christ the King).
2. **Embrace Catholic Universality:**
    - **Reject Prejudice:** In the Church, there are no "outsiders." Welcome those of different cultures, races, or backgrounds with Christ-like charity.
    - **Be Missionary:** Share the Gospel with respect and conviction. Salvation in Christ is the greatest gift God's People offer the world.
3. **Honor the Roots and Pray for Israel:**
    - **Cherish the Old Testament:** It is your spiritual history. Pray the Psalms, meditate on the Prophets. Understand Jesus' Jewish context.
    - **Pray for the Jewish People's Conversion:** As St. Paul taught, their "full inclusion" will mean *"life from the dead"* (Romans 11:15). Pray with hope for this mystery.
4. **Live Charity as the New Law:**
    - **Love as Christ Loves:** The Old Law culminates in the New Commandment (John 13:34). Your concrete love for others—especially the suffering—is the mark of God's true People (Matthew 25:31–46).
5. **Cleave to the Magisterium:**
    - **Love and Obey the Church:** She is the "pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). In the Pope and Bishops united with him, Christ guides His People. Study the Catechism; follow Church teaching with joyful fidelity.

Conclusion: A Pilgrim People Toward the Heavenly Jerusalem

Beloved friend, historical Israel retains a unique place in God's plan as bearers of the first

promise. But the **fullness of the Covenant**—entrance into God's family as children in the Son—is realized only in **Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church**. We are the People of the New Covenant, pilgrims toward our true homeland: the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21).

Do not live this identity with pride, but with **deep humility and gratitude**. We were "grafted in" by pure grace. Our response must be holiness, burning charity, and tireless mission. **You are part of God's elect People—the Bride of Christ. Live with the dignity and love this vocation demands!**

> *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9–10).*

May this truth flood your heart and transform your every step. Forward, beloved member of God's People!