

***IN-FLIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
FROM AZERBAIJAN TO ROME***

*Papal Flight  
Sunday, 2 October 2016*

"I had two surprises in Georgia. One is Georgia itself. I never imagined so much culture, so much faith, so much Christianity. They are a people of believers with a very ancient Christian culture, a people of many martyrs. I also discovered something I did not know: the deep roots of this Georgian faith. The second surprise was the Patriarch. He is a man of God; this man moved me. The times that I met him, I came away deeply moved, and with the feeling of having found a man of God. Truly, a man of God. As for the things that unite us and divide us, I would say this. Let us not start discussing issues of doctrine, but leave this to the theologians; they are better at it than we are. They discuss these things, they are good at it, good people with good will, on both sides. What do we, the people, have to do? Pray for one another. This is extremely important: prayer. And second, do things together. There are the poor, let us work together with the poor. There are all sorts of problems. Can we face them together? Let us do so together. Are there migrants? Let us do something together... Let us do some good for others, together; this we can do. This is the path of ecumenism. Not only the path of doctrine, that comes last, it will come at the end. But let us start to walk together. With good will, we can do this. We must do this. Nowadays ecumenism means moving forward together, praying for one another. Let the theologians continue to talk to each other, to study together. But Georgia is wonderful, something I did not expect; a Christian nation, to the core!"

(Pope Francis spoke about Georgia on an in-flight interview returning from Baku to Rome, Sunday 2 October 2016)