



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO AN ECUMENICAL DELEGATION FROM FINLAND

Saturday, 19 January 2002

Dear Friends in Christ,

Once again I have the pleasure of welcoming an Ecumenical Delegation from Finland on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Henrik, the Apostle and Patron of your country. It is a happy coincidence that your visit falls during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

It is vital that Christians should pray incessantly for unity, which will come not as the fruit of human effort, but as a grace given at a time and in a way which we do not know. Our prayer however must be joined by a determination to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ with one heart and voice, "so that the world may believe" (*Jn 17:21*).

Such a task will call for sacrifice and commitment, as it did in the life of Saint Henrik. It is the Cross of Christ that we preach, and it is in the power of the Cross that we have put our faith. From the side of the Crucified Lord there flows the life-giving stream which will heal the wounds of division. Finland too needs Christ. The depths of the Finnish soul can be read in the saints of your history and in buildings such as Turku Cathedral. And who but Christ can satisfy the desires rising from those depths?

We have already travelled far on the ecumenical journey, and there can be no turning back. Certainly the Catholic Church remains "committed irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 3). In this we are sustained by "the hope that comes from being led by the Risen One and the inexhaustible power of his Spirit, always capable of new surprises" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 12). The Spirit must lead us, step by step, to discover the things that we can do together to hasten the full and visible communion of all Christians. May he who can "do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine" (*Eph 3:20*) help us in this task. Amen.

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