

# The Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity

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# Information Service

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## POPE BENEDICT XVI AND ECUMENISM

October-November, 2008

MESSAGE TO ALEXY II, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW  
AND ALL RUSSIA

September 22, 2008

*On Wednesday October 1<sup>st</sup>, a Message from Pope Benedict XVI, was delivered to Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Archbishop of Naples, Italy. The following is the text of the Message.*

To His Holiness Alexy II  
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

The visit of His Eminence Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Archbishop of Naples, offers me the occasion to extend to Your Holiness my cordial and fraternal greetings in the Lord. I have a deep affection for all the Orthodox brethren, and I am particularly close to them in these most recent days when conflict has caused significant suffering to peoples so dear to me. I never cease to offer daily prayers for peace, asking the Lord that the appeals of Your Holiness to resolve all hostility for the good of the nations may be heeded. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is a bond that unites hearts in a profound way and invites us all to strengthen our commitment to manifest to the world a shared witness of living together respectfully and peacefully.

Our times, so often marked by conflict and sadness, make it even more necessary to hasten the journey toward the full unity of all the disciples of Christ, so that the joyous message of salvation may be spread to all humanity.

Invoking upon Your Holiness the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of God, that she may preserve you in full health and assist you in your daily ministry, I renew to you the assurance of my heartfelt fraternal regard.

*From the Vatican, 22 September 2008*

BENEDICTVS PP. XVI

ORE, October 15, 1008

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\* Sources of the texts are designated as follows: OR: *L'Osservatore Romano*, daily edition in Italian; ORE: *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly edition in English. If texts come from sources other than *Osservatore Romano*, this will be noted. When translation is made by the *Information Service* it is indicated by the abbreviation: IS.

ANGELUS

November 9, 2008

*On Sunday November 9, the liturgical feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, the Holy Father addressed the thousands of faithful gathered in St Peter's Square prior to the recitation of the Angelus. The following is a translation of an excerpt of the Pope's address, given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The liturgy today has us celebrate the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, called the "mother and head of all the Churches of the *Urbe* and *Orbe*". Actually, this Basilica was the first to be built after the Edict of the Emperor Constantine who, in 313, conceded to Christians the freedom to practice their religion.

The same Emperor gave Pope Miltiades the ancient estate of the Laterani family and had the Basilica, the Baptistery and the Patriarchate built for him, the latter being the Bishop of Rome's residence, where Popes resided until the Avignon era (...).

This feast initially only involved the city of Rome; then, from 1565 onwards, it was extended to the entire Church of the Roman rite. Hence, honouring the holy building is meant as an expression of love and veneration for the Roman Church which, as St Ignatius of Antioch affirms, "presides in charity" over the entire Catholic communion (cf. *Epistula ad Romanos*, 1, 1) (...).

*At the conclusion of the Angelus, the Holy Father recalled the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic "Crystal Night" which began the persecution of the Jews in Europe.*

Today is the 70th anniversary of that sad event which happened during the night of 9-10 November 1938 when the Nazi fury against the Jews broke out in Germany. Shops, offices, houses and synagogues were attacked and destroyed, numerous people were also killed, starting the systematic and violent persecution of the German Jews, which ended in the *Shoah*. Still today I feel pain for what came to pass in that tragic situation, the memory of which must serve to ensure that similar horrors do not repeat themselves ever again and that we commit ourselves, at all levels, to work against every form of anti-Semitism and discrimination, educating above all the young generations in respect and reciprocal acceptance. I invite you, moreover, to pray for the victims of those times and to unite with me in a profound manifestation of solidarity with the Jewish world (...).

ORE, November 12, 2008

November 22, 2008

*On Saturday morning November 22, in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall, the Holy Father spoke to pilgrims from the southern Italian Archdiocese of Amalfi-Cava de' Tirreni led by their Pastor, Archbishop Orazio Soricelli, on the occasion of the Jubilee Year of their Patron, St Andrew the Apostle. The following is an excerpt of the Pope's address given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

(...) This pilgrimage is being made precisely in the name of the Apostle Andrew on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the translation of his relics from great Constantinople to your city of Amalfi (...).

It has been a special year which culminated in the solemn commemorative act last 8 May, at which Cardinal Walter Kasper presided as my Special Envoy.

Indeed, by looking at the example of St Andrew and having recourse to his intercession, you desire to give a new impetus to your apostolic and missionary vocation, extending the perspectives of your heart to the expectations of peace among peoples, intensifying prayer for the unity of all Christians.

*Vocation, mission and ecumenism* are therefore the three key-words that have guided you in this spiritual and pastoral commitment, in which today you

receive an encouragement from the Pope to persevere with generosity and enthusiasm (...).

ORE, November 26, 2008

ANGELUS

November 30, 2008

*On Sunday November 30, at the conclusion of the prayer of the Angelus, the Pope addressed the faithful gathered in St Peter's square saying:*

Dear friends, 30 November, that is, today, is the Feast of the Apostle St Andrew, brother of Simon Peter. At first, they were both among the followers of John the Baptist, and after Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan became his disciples, recognizing in him the Messiah.

St Andrew is the Patron of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, thus the Church of Rome feels linked to that of Constantinople by a special bond of brotherhood. Therefore, in accordance with tradition, on this happy occasion a delegation of the Holy See led by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, went to visit the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. I wholeheartedly address my greeting and my good wishes to him and to the faithful of the Patriarchate, invoking upon all an abundance of heavenly blessings (...).

ORE, December 3, 2008

# PLENARY MEETING OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY

*December 9-13, 2008*

*This year's Plenary focused on an overview of the last forty years of dialogue with the four main confessions tracing their origins to the Reformation (Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans and Methodists). The proceedings were based on the preparatory document known as the Harvest Project, which was drafted by the Western section of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).*

*In his introductory remarks, Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the PCPCU, spoke of the ecumenical situation, with words of gratitude for its positive achievements, but also with an understanding of the difficulties facing the path towards unity. This realistic approach to the work of promoting christian unity is important in directing our efforts in the future in order to give new impetus to the ecumenical dialogue and new life to the prayer of our Lord that all may be one.*

*The above mentioned document greatly assisted the work of the Plenary, and was a valuable instrument in inspiring discussion in small working groups. The document will be published with the title "Harvesting the Fruits: Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue".*

## ADDRESS OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

*On Friday morning December 12, in the Vatican's Clementine Hall, the Holy Father spoke to those attending the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, highlighting the recent positive openings in the reflection with the Orthodox on primacy and synodality in the Church. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was given in Italian.*

Your Eminences,  
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate  
and in the Priesthood,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A cordial welcome to all of you who are taking part in the Plenary Meeting of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. In the first place my greeting goes to the Cardinal President, to whom I also express my gratitude for the courteous words with which he described the work you have done during these days. I extend my greeting to the Secretary and to the other collaborators of the Pontifical Council, as well as to all those, from various places, who have contributed their experience to the common reflection on the theme of your meeting: "Reception and future of ecumenical dialogue". This is a topic of considerable interest for the journey towards full unity among Christians, a subject that has two essential dimensions: first, the appraisal of the ground covered thus far, and second, the identification of new ways on which to continue on our way, seeking together how to overcome the divergences that unfortunately still endure in the relations among Christ's disciples.

It is indisputable that theological dialogue is an essential element for re-establishing the full communion we all long for and it should therefore be supported and encouraged. This dialogue is taking place

increasingly in the context of ecclesial relations which, by the grace of God are extending to involve not only Pastors but all the various members and structures of the People of God. Let us thank the Lord for the important advances that have taken place, for example, in relations with the Orthodox Churches and with the ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches, as regards both the theological dialogue and the consolidation and growth of ecclesial brotherhood. The latest Document of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches on the theme, "Ecclesial communion, conciliarity and authority" to which H.H. Bartholomew I referred in his discourse to the recent Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, certainly unfolds a positive prospect of reflection on the relationship that exists between primacy and synodality in the Church. This is a matter of crucial importance in relations with our Orthodox brethren and will be the subject of examination and exchanges at the next meetings. It is also comforting to note that a sincere spirit of friendship between Catholics and Orthodox has been growing in recent years and has also been manifested in the many contacts that have taken place between the Heads of Dicasteries in the Roman Curia and Bishops of the Catholic Church with the Heads of various Orthodox Churches, as well as during the visits of important Orthodox representatives to Rome and to particular Catholic Churches.

At your Plenary Meeting you have reflected in a special way on the Harvest Project: "Ecumenical consensus/convergence on some basic aspects of the Christian faith found in the reports of the first four international bilateral dialogues in which the Catholic Church has taken part since the Second Vatican Council". This exchange has led you to examine the results of four important dialogues: with the Lutheran World Federation, with the World

Methodist Council, with the Anglican Communion and with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. While you have outlined what, with God's help, you have already managed to achieve through reciprocal understanding and with the identification of elements of convergence, with great honesty you have not avoided bringing to the fore all that has yet to be done. It might be said that we find ourselves *on the way*, in an intermediate situation, in which an objective examination of the results achieved certainly seems useful and opportune. Moreover I am certain that the work of this assembly will make a valid contribution to elaborating, in this perspective, a more extensive, precise and detailed reflection.

Dear brothers and sisters, in many regions the ecumenical situation today has changed and, as it is undergoing further changes, this implies endeavouring toward a frank engagement. New communities and groups are surfacing, unheard-of trends are coming into focus and sometimes tensions, even between Christian communities. The theological dialogue that will concern the area of practical life of the various Churches and Ecclesial Communities is therefore important. Placed in this light are the theme of your Plenary Assembly and the discernment indispensable for outlining in practical terms the prospects of ecumenical commitment that the Catholic Church intends to pursue and intensify with prudence and pastoral wisdom. Christ's command, the "*mandatum novum*" and his prayer for unity "*ut omnes unum sint... ut mundus credat quia tu me misisti*" (Jn 17: 21) reverberate in our minds. Charity will help Christians to foster the "thirst" for full communion in truth. And by meekly following the Holy Spirit's inspirations, we may look forward to reaching the hoped for unity on the day chosen by the Lord. This is why ecumenism urges us to make a fraternal and generous exchange of gifts, well aware that full communion in the faith, in the sacraments and in the ministry remains the goal and end of the entire ecumenical movement. Spiritual ecumenism, as the Second Vatican Council clearly affirmed, is the pulsating heart of this vast undertaking.

We are living the days of Advent that prepare us for Christ's Birth. May this season of watchful expectation keep awake within us hope for the fulfilment of God's Kingdom, of the *Basileia tou Theou* and may Mary, Mother of the Church, accompany and guide us on the less than easy journey towards unity. With these sentiments, I express my good wishes for the forthcoming Christmas celebrations and, as I thank you once again for the work you have carried out at this assembly, I invoke God's Blessing upon each and every one of you.

ORE, December 24/31, 2008

#### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

*Cardinal Walter Kasper, President PCPCU*

Eminences, Excellencies, dear brothers!

Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you taking part in the Plenary of the Pontifical

Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The Council and I are very grateful that despite your many commitments, particularly in this period of Advent, you have found the time to respond positively to our invitation. Again, welcome to you all!

Unfortunately, for various reasons, some of our members have been unable to attend and they extend their apologies: Cardinal Levada has undergone surgery and is convalescing in the United States; Cardinal Lehmann has also undergone surgery; Bishop Nossol has had to be admitted to hospital; Cardinal McCarrick has written that he has been out of Washington for the last three weeks, and apologizes that he has felt unable to undertake another overseas trip; Cardinal Tauran is in Lourdes and will take part only from Thursday; Bishop Daucourt will also join us later as his flight to Rome was delayed; Archbishop Forte is also unable to be with us earlier due to commitments in Chieti.

I would like to extend a warm greeting to the new members of the Pontifical Council, namely Cardinal Seán Brady, Bishop Crihlmeanu, Bishop Gualtiero Bassetti, Bishop Carlos Umberto Malfa and Bishop Hee-joong Hyginus Kim. Among the new consultants, I also welcome Monsignor Piero Coda and Professor Dietmar Winkler.

You will notice some new faces among the staff of our office with respect to our last plenary session. On my left, we have Monsignor Eleuterio Fortino, who has been a staff member for 43 years and has been Under Secretary for 21 years. Although he has passed retirement age, Monsignor Fortino is still among us. We are waiting for his successor, and certainly not because we want to see him leave! On the contrary, we look forward to counting upon him in the future for his precious advice and vast experience; we are sincerely indebted to him, as despite his state of health, he has continued to work with dedication, courage and good humour.

Among those who have left us in the last few months, I would like to mention firstly Monsignor Johan Bonny, whom the Holy Father has called to the episcopal ministry in the Belgian Diocese of Antwerp. I am sure I express the feelings of all us here when I extend my gratitude for his 12 years of commitment, and I express our very best wishes and prayer for this important and distinguished new ministry. Monsignor John A. Radano and Monsignor Donald Bolen have also left us, although they are taking part in our plenary as special guests; we extend also to them our gratitude and our best wishes. They have been replaced in our office respectively by Reverend Gregory Fairbanks (United States) and Monsignor Mark Langham (Great Britain). Monsignor John Mutiso Mbinda had already left us, and was replaced by Reverend Gosbert Byamungu (Tanzania).

Furthermore, a very significant loss has been felt with the retirement of Dr Paola Fabrizi, with whom many of you became familiar during her 38 years of untiring work for our office. She retired last 30 June for family reasons.

As you will therefore be aware, there have been many changes over a brief period of time, which have

certainly not helped our work. In this perspective, I extend my deep gratitude to all the current staff of the Pontifical Council, both those who continue their service and those who have only recently arrived. They have done their best with enthusiasm and diligence for the mission of Christian unity and for the preparation of this Plenary. The greatest responsibility has been taken by our Secretary, to whom I extend special thanks.

Eminences, Excellencies, dear brothers!

I would like to present a brief introduction to the theme and work of this Plenary. The Plenary is our highest authority after the Holy Father, and I would like to state from the outset that this Plenary is of particular importance for me and for the staff of the PCPCU. The theme, which was approved by the Holy Father himself, is *Reception and Future of Ecumenical Dialogue*. While looking back at the past, our Plenary will come forward forty years, with gratitude for all that has been accomplished. At the same time, we hope to undertake a realistic appraisal and spiritual discernment of the current situation; and lastly, we hope to be courageous in setting the course and inspiring positive motivation for the future of our work. We are therefore called to undertake a commitment which is both notable and important. The ecumenical commitment is not just any work or a field which is merely secondary to the mission of the Church; it seeks to fulfil the will of our Lord, the fulfilment of his Testament, which he left us on the eve of his death when he prayed: "That they may all be one". Ecumenism is nothing other than making this prayer our own. Therefore, it is not an option, but a sacred duty, an obligation. Ecumenism is part of the identity of the Church of Jesus Christ. A Church which was not disturbed or worried about the scandal of division and which accepted this situation as a matter of fact would not be the Church of Christ.

But the pilgrim Church is *in via*; she lives in the world, in its circumstances and in its history, in every aspect of its existence, which is in rapid fluctuation and change. While her mission is immutable and remains constant yesterday, today and tomorrow, the actual situation in which the Church undertakes her mission is constantly changing. The Church is today faced by a shifting new situation which offers new challenges. This is also true for ecumenism. It is not enough to say, 'Business as usual!'

I am not a person given to dramatic and drastic pronouncements. I have always refuted and continue to refute the slogan of an ecumenical winter, and much less the end of ecumenism, whether this be regretted by some or welcomed by others. Nonetheless, I must also say in all seriousness that ecumenism, particularly with the communities originating in the Reformation, is in crisis and this Plenary is called to give a response to this situation and to offer a new ecumenical impetus.

I can affirm this not only on the basis of my own personal experience and conviction, but also after meeting with the Holy Father in an audience in preparation for this Plenary, during which we dis-

cussed this very issue, on which we were in perfect agreement.

While I have spoken of crisis, I am also well aware of the many reasons for which we are grateful to the Lord for the positive outcomes attained over the last few years. This is particularly so with respect to the dialogues with the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Orthodox Churches. There is every reason to be hopeful. Our dialogues with the communities originating in the Reformation have also marked progress, especially in fields where we had not expected it.

Nonetheless, we must not underestimate the situation and close our eyes to the problems facing us which need to be confronted in ecumenism with the Western churches. It is not a question of a transitory tiredness or disenchantment, which would be understandable after a period perhaps marked by excessive enthusiasm, which had led many to believe that the final goal – full communion – was very close. It is a crisis which is not only psychological, so to speak, but structural and therefore serious. However, a crisis is not necessarily a catastrophe; in its original meaning the word crisis represented a situation requiring a decision and a choice, in one direction or another.

In order to find the right path that opens itself to the future, our work this week will be undertaken in three stages. Firstly, reports will look at our work over the last years, a general report will be presented by our Secretary, and there will also be some individual reports. The second stage will look more closely at the main theme of our Plenary, with the presentation of the document entitled *Ecumenical Consensus/Convergence on Some Basic Aspects of the Christian Faith Found in the Reports of the First Four International dialogues in which the Catholic Church has taken part since the Second Vatican Council*. This document examines the dialogues undertaken over the last forty years with the main ecclesial communities originating in the Reformation, with an evaluation of their achievements and the remaining open questions. This analysis will be the basis of the third stage, which we trust will seek ways to identify the way ahead.

It is not my intention in this introduction to disclose the contents of the reports and the analysis which will be presented. Nor do I want to prescribe the right medicine. I will touch on this in a more extensive way in the introduction to the document I have just mentioned and which we have called simply the *Harvest Project*.

I would like to conclude with a word of hope and encouragement. The ecumenical movement is not our work but the impulse of the Holy Spirit, and it is only with his strength that it may reach its goal, or rather, with its strength effectively *will reach* its goal. We must trust and entrust ourselves to the Spirit. Therefore: *Duc in altum!* Put out into the deep! The logo and emblem of the ecumenical movement is a boat in a storm on the high sea, with its sail unfurled and the wind driving it steadily over the waves. Let us be guided and, if necessary, let us be driven by the

Spirit. Then the boat will set its course, its navigation will be sure and its will reach its destination. Let us not be discouraged and above all let us not lose hope. With the help of God we will reach our goal, and we trust that this Plenary will offer the opportunity to take a step forward towards the full and visible unity of Christians.

SECRETARY'S REPORT ON THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR  
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY 2007-2008

*Bishop Brian Farrell*

INTRODUCTION

Our last Plenary was held in November 2006, and at that time we presented an overview of the wide-ranging work of our Council and the multiple events and activities which month after month, year after year, fill the ecumenical calendar. In particular we gave an overview of the state of each of the fifteen formal international dialogues in which the PCPCU is involved. Two years have passed, and I will now try to bring you up to date on what has been happening in these dialogues (including two new series of conversations with The Salvation Army and Non-Denominational Charismatics) and in our ecumenical work in general. In spite of signs of fatigue and frustration, the ecumenical quest continues to be a central focus of thought and action in the Catholic Church. As can be seen from his numerous meetings and speeches of an ecumenical character, it is certainly a priority for Pope Benedict, as it was for all the Popes since John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council.

*The Consistory of 24 November 2007*

A sign of the centrality of the Holy Father's commitment to the cause of Christian unity is the fact that when the Cardinals of the world gathered for a public ordinary consistory on the occasion of the creation of new cardinals on 24 November 2007, Pope Benedict invited Cardinal Kasper to present to them the current situation of ecumenism and to open a discussion on the Church's continuing commitment to the search for Christian unity. Cardinal Kasper began by saying *what ecumenism is not*. It is not an option but a holy obligation. It is not good-natured humanism towards other Christians, nor does it imply ecclesiological relativism. It is based on the clear self-understanding that the Catholic Church has of herself, and on the Catholic principles of ecumenism formulated in the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, nn.2-4. It is a search for communion through the instrumentality of dialogue: a dialogue between the Churches in truth and love. The question is not *whether* the Church will persevere on the ecumenical path, but *how* this can best be done in the changing landscape of Christianity. Our last Plenary reflected on that rapidly changing landscape, and now this

Plenary is reflecting on the search for the way forward, the *how*.

For the sake of clarity we may speak of the *dialogue of life and love* (better relations between Christians and between the Churches, which is an aspect that includes spiritual ecumenism, and the communion in prayer and worship which is the "soul of the whole ecumenical movement" cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 8) and the *dialogue of truth* (the theological work to find consensus and convergence on the points on which the Churches are divided). In the time since Vatican II, the *dialogue of life and love* has produced a whole new context in which Catholics and other Christians relate to each other in a climate of rediscovered brotherhood and solidarity. The fact is that we have rediscovered one another as brothers and sisters in Christ based on our common baptism, that we have learned to appreciate one another's gifts, and that together we have taken up the journey towards full unity, which is not external uniformity but profound and shared participation in the Trinitarian life of God (cf. *Ut Unum Sint*, 42). We have discovered the meaning of real though incomplete communion. The *dialogue of truth* too has produced many important results; perhaps not as many as expected. And so today some feel that theological dialogue should be abandoned in favour of a model of mutual recognition and cooperation that does not imply full agreement in faith or ecclesial life.

*Doing the truth in love*

This discussion relating to the validity of the *dialogue of truth* was enlivened somewhat during 2007 by two documents from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Firstly, the Responsa to some questions regarding certain aspects of the doctrine of the Church, 29 June 2007, and, secondly, the Doctrinal Note on some aspects of Evangelization, 3 December 2007. Reactions, especially to the first document, were vocal. Cardinal Kasper tried to respond to objections raised, both in his speech at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly at Sibiu (Romania) in September 2007, and in his talk to the Cardinals at the Consistory. He insisted that a dialogue on differences presupposes the kind of clear discernment of the underlying faith that the CDF had proposed in Responsa, but that this can and should be done without offending the sensitivity of others or by discrediting them. "We must not point a finger at what our ecumenical interlocutors are not and at what they do not have. Rather, we must witness to the richness and beauty of our faith in a positive and welcoming way". When this happens, he went on, there is, as the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (cf. 28, 57) says, not only an exchange of ideas but an exchange of gifts leading to mutual enrichment as the dialogue partners seek to grow into ever greater fidelity to the will of Christ. The point being that the dialogue of truth and the dialogue of life and love go hand in hand, and that statements of the magisterium, no matter how objective and necessary, should be presented in a way that is sensitive to the reaction of other Christians. Cardi-

nal Kasper concluded his address to the Consistory saying that “theological dialogue will continue to have an essential role in the future, but it will only be fruitful if it is sustained by an ecumenism of prayer, conversion of heart and personal sanctification. ... Without a true spirituality of communion, which makes space for the other without renouncing one’s own identity, our every effort would lead to arid and empty activism”.

How Catholics in general, but also Church authorities, not just at the personal level but also institutionally, treat our brothers and sisters of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities is an important part of any hope of progress. It is a matter of fundamental importance for the question of ecumenical reception, which is the central theme of this Plenary.

## I. RELATIONS WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

### 1.1. *Ecclesial relations*

The exchange of delegations between Rome and Constantinople for each other’s feast days continues to offer an opportunity to manifest publicly the changed reality of our relationship and to hold formal conversations about questions of common interest and concern. Soon after our last Plenary the Holy Father visited Turkey, and was present at the Phanar for the Feast of Saint Andrew (November 29–30, 2006). By all accounts the visit consolidated the personal relationship between the Pope and the Patriarch, with positive echoes throughout the Orthodox world. The Ecumenical Patriarch has visited the Holy Father on a number of occasions during 2007 and 2008. These included receiving an honorary doctorate from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, his *alma mater* (March 6, 2008), and personally leading the delegation of the Church of Constantinople on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29, 2008) and accepting Pope Benedict’s invitation to address the Synod of Bishops on October 18, 2008.

Patriarch Bartholomew also met the Pope during a visit to Naples and Amalfi (21–23 October 2007) to attend the *Sant’Egidio* ‘Meeting of Peoples and Religions’. On that occasion he received a doctorate *honoris causa* from the department of Eastern studies of the University of Naples, and the gift of relics of Saint Andrew from the Diocese of Amalfi. Many other representatives of the Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches were present at that meeting, including Metropolitan Kyrill (President of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate), who made another visit to Rome at the beginning of December 2007 and had a substantive meeting with the PCPCU.

On the death of Romanian Patriarch Theoctist, His Beatitude Daniel, formerly Metropolitan of Iasi, was elected Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Romania. Patriarch Theoctist had personally promoted good relations with the Holy See, visiting Rome twice and receiving Pope John Paul II in

Bucharest, marking the first visit of a pope to a country with an Orthodox majority. A delegation led by Cardinal Kasper attended both the funeral of Patriarch Theoctist and the inauguration of Patriarch Daniel (30 September 2007). Likewise, a delegation from the Holy See attended the funeral of Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens (30 January 2008), although no non-Orthodox delegations were invited for the installation of the new Archbishop, Hieronymos.

Other Heads of Churches who visited the Holy See during 2007–2008 were: the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, Christodoulos (13–16 December 2006); the Archbishop of Cyprus, Chrysostomos (12–17 June 2007); His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East (20–23 June 2007); His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Armenians (6–10 May 2008); and most recently, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia (24–27 November). Beyond strengthening personal relationships, such meetings promote the perception of a growing closeness between the Churches, and foster gestures of real though incomplete spiritual communion between them.

#### – *The Russian Orthodox Church*

Relations with the numerically largest Orthodox Church are generally positive, despite the on-again off-again impression sometimes given by the media. We should recall the visit of Patriarch Alexis II to France in October 2007. While the visit was principally to the European Parliament and the local Russian Orthodox community in France, Alexis II’s meetings with representatives and faithful of the Catholic Church in the Basilica of Notre Dame in Paris gave a new impulse to relations. Cardinal Kasper visited Russia (Moscow, Smolensk, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Diveevo) from 21 to 30 May 2008, and had a meeting with Patriarch Alexis II. Many other Catholic leaders have made visits to the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate during this period.

#### – *Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate*

Cardinal Kasper visited Kyiv in December 2007 for the inauguration of the new premises of the *Saint Clement Centre – Communion and Dialogue of Cultures*, made possible in part through the support of benefactors of the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration*. The *Centre* represents the first ecumenical initiative of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church aimed at fostering relations with the local Catholic Church, both Greek–Catholic and Latin, and has received the blessing and support of Orthodox Metropolitan Volodymir, as also of the Latin Archbishop of Lviv Cardinal Jaworski and of the Major Archbishop of Kyiv–Halych Cardinal Lubomyr Husar.

#### – *Exarchate of Belarus*

Longstanding and fruitful cooperation between the PCPCU and the Exarchate of Belarus of the

Moscow Patriarchate has continued, particularly with the Faculty of Theology of the State University of Minsk and with the Centre for Christian Formation, under the guidance of the Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk. In May 2007, the PCPCU sent a representative for the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the patron saints of the Centre for Christian Formation. Every year the Pontifical Council helps the *Institute for Interreligious Dialogue and Interconfessional Relations* of the Exarchate to organise its annual international conference, last year on the theme of dialogue with Islam.

### 1.2. *The Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue*

The most significant event in the theological dialogue has been the tenth plenary session of the Joint International Commission held in Ravenna (8–15 October 2007). The Commission approved the fifth joint document, entitled *Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority* (known as the *Ravenna Document*). This outcome has been recognised as a ‘significant step’ and a ‘solid basis’ for continuing the dialogue.

The issues raised can be summarised in two questions:

1) In what way do institutional elements serve the mystery of the Church and visibly express the concept of *communion–koinonia*?

2) In what way do the canonical structures of the Church express its sacramental reality?

The methodology followed by the Commission involves giving an *agreed* response to these questions, while at the same time identifying unresolved issues requiring further discussion. The members of the Joint Commission affirmed: “To this end we distinguished between three levels of ecclesial institutions: that of the local Church around its bishop; that of a region taking in several neighbouring local Churches; and that of the whole inhabited earth (*oikoumene*) which embraces all the local Churches” (*Ravenna Document*, 17). The dimensions of collegiality and authority are embedded analogously in these three levels. At each of the three levels we find a *protos*, or *primus*, who exercises a special role within the communion of those for whom he is the head.

In this regard, the *Ravenna Document* was able to make some important agreed statements on the reality of a *protos* at the universal level, and it is on this point that the document is most relevant for growing theological agreement. Starting from an examination of the situation in the first millennium, the document was able to affirm: “Both sides agree ... that Rome, as the Church that “presides in love” according to the phrase of St Ignatius of Antioch (*To the Romans*, Prologue), occupied the first place in the *taxis*, and that the bishop of Rome was therefore the *protos* among the patriarchs”. However, it is immediately highlighted that they disagree “on the interpretation of the historical evidence from this era regarding the prerogatives of the bishop of Rome as *protos*, a mat-

ter that was already understood in different ways in the first millennium” (*Ravenna Document*, 41). The document further states: “While the fact of primacy at the universal level is accepted by both East and West, there are differences of understanding with regard to the manner in which it is to be exercised, and also with regard to its scriptural and theological foundations” (*Ravenna Document*, 43). In concluding, the members of the Joint Commission expressed the conviction that the declaration “represents positive and significant progress in our dialogue, and that it provides a firm basis for future discussion of the question of primacy at the universal level in the Church” (*Ravenna Document*, 46). “It remains for the question of the role of the bishop of Rome in the communion of all the Churches to be studied in greater depth” (*Ravenna Document*, 45).

The next session (2009) will examine *The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church of the First Millennium*. In the first part of 2008 two sub-committees prepared preparatory documents which were then discussed by the Joint Coordinating Committee which met in Crete (from 27 September to 4 October 2008) to draft a working document to be submitted to the Plenary Session in the fall of 2009.

As you all know, due to a conflict between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate regarding the autonomous status of the Church of Estonia – declared by Constantinople but not recognised by Moscow – the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate reacted to the presence of the Estonian delegates invited by Constantinople and abandoned the Ravenna meeting on the very first day. The Russian representative was also absent from the Crete meeting. In his message to the Ecumenical Patriarch on the feast of Saint Andrew (2007), Benedict XVI expressed the hope that this difficulty might be resolved: “While the meeting in Ravenna was not without its difficulties, I pray earnestly that these may soon be clarified and resolved, so that there may be full participation in the Eleventh Plenary Session and in subsequent initiatives aimed at continuing the theological dialogue in mutual charity and understanding. Indeed, our work towards unity is according to the will of Christ our Lord. In these early years of the third millennium, our efforts are all the more urgent because of the many challenges facing all Christians, to which we need to respond with a united voice and with conviction”. So far no solution has been forthcoming.

## 2. THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

### 2.1. *The Theological Dialogue*

The *Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches* continued its work in 2007 and 2008. The Commission meets yearly under the co-presidency of Cardinal Walter Kasper and Metropolitan Anba Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Seven Oriental Orthodox Churches take part in this dialogue: the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Syrian

Orthodox Church, the Catholicosate of all the Armenians of the Apostolic Armenian Church, the Catholicosate of Cilicia of the Apostolic Armenian Church, the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Eritrea (not represented in recent sessions). The overall plan of the dialogue for the future includes three themes: the mission of the Church; the salvation of the non-baptised; marriage between Christians and Muslims.

Down the centuries, some of these Churches have been able freely to undertake missionary endeavours, while others have not had this same freedom. The dialogue has highlighted the importance for Catholics and Oriental Orthodox alike to work together in proclaiming the Gospel, rejecting all forms of competition and proselytism. The question of the salvation of the non-baptised is particularly relevant in the regions where the faithful of the Oriental Churches live in societies with a Muslim majority. The Catholic Church has developed a doctrinal approach which leaves room for the salvation of the non-baptised under certain conditions (cf. *Lumen gentium* 16). In some Oriental Orthodox Churches this approach meets with severe criticism. In order to avoid the risk of conversion to non-Christian religions, many feel compelled to defend at all costs the absolute requirement of Christian faith and baptism in order to be saved. Both sides are aware that this is not merely a theoretical question, but a matter of great pastoral relevance in many places.

The third theme, regarding marriage between Christians and Muslims, is also to be seen in a pastoral perspective. In certain cases the Catholic Church accepts such marriages, without celebrating or recognising the marriage as a sacrament. Some Orientals follow this same principle, while others categorically reject marriage between a Christian and a non-baptised person. Given the nature of the societies in which they live, some Churches feel obliged to accentuate the requirement that marriage be celebrated only between baptised Christians.

#### – *The Middle-East Council of Churches*

Ecumenism in the Middle East takes place in an unsteady equilibrium between fear and hope, uncertainty and trust. Beyond their confessional differences, Christians in the region are united in the yearning to transmit to the younger generations the rich diversity of their inherited Christian traditions, in their efforts to give children a Christian education, in the concern of pastors for the safety of their faithful and solidarity among them, in their perseverance in the face of fundamentalism and extremism.

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) gathers together representatives of all the Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the region, grouped in four wider families: Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic. The last General Assembly took place in Cyprus from 26–30 November 2007. The debate was greatly influenced by recent developments affecting the area, especially the situation in Iraq and the consequent question of displaced per-

sons and refugees in this region, among whom are many Christian families. Through the financial generosity of Christian aid agencies, the MECC is able to fund initiatives in the fields of education, social outreach and health. It is also committed to interreligious dialogue, and the promotion of justice, peace and human rights. During the Assembly, the question of defending the future presence of Christians in the Middle East was at the centre of the debate. The constantly increasing emigration to the West represents a most serious challenge for all the Churches and Ecclesial Communities in the region.

It is in the interest of all Christians that the cradle of the history of salvation may continue to count on living communities witnessing to the Gospel, and in particular that the holy sites will not become silent witnesses – mere stones – without the living witness of Christian communities. The future of Christianity in the Middle East depends on *rapprochement* and cooperation between the Christian communities themselves, and upon the active support of all the Churches.

#### 3. ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST: VISIT TO ROME OF THE PATRIARCH MAR DINKHA IV

Pope Benedict XVI received the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV of the Assyrian Church of the East on 21 June 2007. After the joint Christological Declaration of 1994, the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East engaged in a bilateral theological dialogue which has produced an agreed statement on the sacraments. Still, difficulties within the Synod of the Assyrian Church have not permitted the agreement to be signed. The purpose of the Patriarch's visit was to discuss the conditions under which the dialogue can continue.

#### 4. CATHOLIC COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL COLLABORATION

In speaking about relations with the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox, we should also mention the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration* of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which was instituted in 1963 as a practical way of strengthening Orthodox-Catholic relations. The *Committee* grants scholarships to Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox students undertaking post-graduate studies in Rome or elsewhere. This aspect of its work has proven to be one of the most effective ways of promoting the exchange of gifts between East and West. As well, the *Committee* offers financial support to various Orthodox theological faculties and ecumenical institutes for the acquisition of texts for their libraries and for special projects (visits, conferences, symposia), and offers support for publishing Catholic texts in Eastern European languages. The *Committee* raises the funds for its activities on a yearly basis. Its benefactors include the Holy Father himself and several institutions and aid agencies. For the 2008–2009 academic year, the *Committee* granted 57 scholar-

ships (both new and renewals) and committed funding for several special projects of Orthodox institutions, including the Faculty of Theology of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Minsk (Belarus), the European Humanities Research Centre of the University of Kyiv-Mohyla (Ukraine), the St Andrew's Biblical and Theological College in Moscow, the Institute of Orthodox Theology of Chambésy, and several other initiatives in the field of publishing.

Another important aspect of the work of the *Committee* involves organizing study visits to Rome. In February last year, a group of students from the Faculty of Theology in Minsk visited Rome in order to become familiar with the Holy See and the Catholic Church in general. A group of professors and students from the seminary of Poltava (Ukraine) visited theological institutions in Rome this year (31 May–5 June 2008). Key staff members of the “Basilica” Press Centre of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate (TV, radio, newspaper, press agency and press office) also recently visited Catholic social communications institutions in Rome (22–29 September 2008).

## 5. ANGLICAN-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

### 5.1. *The current situation*

For some years now, the Provinces of the Anglican Communion have been struggling with deep internal tensions focussed on questions of human sexuality which have threatened the unity of the communion. Efforts to address the moral issues have given rise to serious questions about the nature of the Anglican Communion itself, the interpretation of Scripture, the structures of authority and decision-making within the Communion. These questions, and the way in which they will eventually be resolved, have clear implications for ecumenical relations, including relations with the Catholic Church.

When Archbishop Williams visited the Holy See at the end of 2006, he and Pope Benedict XVI signed a Common Declaration which, while giving thanks for what has been achieved through dialogue and identifying possible areas for common witness, also directly acknowledged recent developments which, “besides being divisive for Anglicans, present serious obstacles to our ecumenical progress”. Throughout this period of Anglican discernment, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has maintained close contact with our Anglican dialogue partners – with the Archbishop of Canterbury and his office at Lambeth Palace, with the Anglican Communion Office in London, and with the Anglican Centre in Rome. Long-established bonds of friendship and trust have resulted in frequent conversations, and a readiness to reflect together on questions as they emerge.

### 5.2. *ARCIC*

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), which is the principal instrument

of dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church, completed its second phase of work in 2005 with the publication of the agreed statement *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*. A preparatory group has met to explore future steps, but a third round of ARCIC dialogue will not be initiated until the outcome of the Lambeth Conference (July 16 to August 4, 2008) becomes clearer.

### 5.3. *The Lambeth Conference*

The Lambeth Conference had two principle aims: strengthening Anglican identity, and equipping bishops for their role as leaders in mission. A key draft text which has been prepared for study at the Lambeth Conference is a proposal for an Anglican covenant, which is to be revised in light of further discussion, with the intention that it will eventually be signed by all the member churches of the Anglican Communion and serve as a constructive bond of union.

The Catholic Church sent six episcopal representatives to the Conference, led by Cardinal Walter Kasper. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who chaired ARCIC from 1982 to 1999, presented an overview of its work. Cardinal Kasper delivered a concise analysis of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations at present, commenting upon the ecumenical repercussions of current difficulties within the Anglican Communion, and their effect on the goal of Anglican-Roman Catholic unity.

The Lambeth Conference proceeded by consensus rather than resolution, which avoided endorsing divisions or factions, but to some extent risked papering over difficult issues without addressing them. Many Anglicans feel unease at notions of legalism or compulsion conveyed by a Covenant or a Pastoral Forum. Given this, there is a danger that these organs will become little more than an invitation to collaboration, without providing the clear restatement of traditional values requested by Cardinal Kasper in his speech to the Conference.

Nevertheless, the Conference showed a strong Anglican commitment to communion, and a recognition of the need for some structures to regulate doctrine and practice within the communion. While there is broad acceptance of this in the centre ground, the reaction of those on the extremes (both conservatives in Africa and the Global South, and the churches of North America and Canada) will be crucial. Given this, while the Anglican and Roman Catholic commitment to dialogue remains, the nature and goals of that dialogue must inevitably be reassessed.

## 6. METHODIST-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

### 6.1. *The Work of the International Dialogue Commission*

For two reasons, 2006 was probably the most fruitful year for Methodist-Catholic relations since the official dialogue between the Catholic Church

and the World Methodist Council (WMC) began 40 years ago. Firstly, the member churches of the WMC unanimously endorsed a statement associating themselves with the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, signed in 1999 by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. Secondly, the Methodist-Catholic dialogue commission published its most important and mature report to date, entitled *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church*. A Catholic commentary, prepared by Professor John Ford, CSC, was published to accompany the dialogue report. All of these texts are available on the PCPCU website.

By contrast, 2007 was a much quieter year, a return to ecumenical work largely carried out behind the scenes, but nonetheless fruitful. A new round of theological dialogue was begun, continuing the pattern of initiating a new phase of conversations every five years. The dialogue commission will continue to work in the field of fundamental theology. Having addressed the apostolic tradition, revelation and faith, teaching authority in the Church, and ecclesiology in the most recent rounds of dialogue, the commission will now turn its attention to issues pertaining to the sacraments and the sacramentality of the Church. The international commission has undertaken a supplementary project as well, aiming to produce a synthesis of the 40 years of dialogue reports. As with other international dialogues, there is a strong sense that it is an appropriate time to harvest the results of decades of work.

#### – 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Charles Wesley

In December 2007, Methodists worldwide celebrated the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley, who with his brother John, is considered a founder of the Methodist movement. In Rome, a celebration presided over by Cardinal Walter Kasper at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls marked the anniversary, with the Chairman of the WMC, the Reverend Dr John Barrett, preaching. In a message to Methodists worldwide, Cardinal Kasper spoke of the thousands of hymns written by Charles Wesley, many of which are sung in Catholic Churches throughout the English speaking world. “His hymns, often combining eloquent language and theological depth drawn from the Scriptures and the faith of the Church through the ages, address themes which reflect the convergence between Methodists and Catholics on foundational aspects of Christian faith: God’s universal love made known in Jesus Christ, the call to scriptural holiness and renewal of life, the sacramental life of the Church, Christian hope and the presence of the Holy Spirit”.

## 7. CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS IN DIALOGUE

### 7.1. A new phase of dialogue

The international dialogue between Catholics and the Lutheran World Federation concluded its fourth phase of dialogue with the publication of a study on

the theme *The Apostolicity of the Church*. The original English text published in 2006 will be published in German in 2008, followed by other translations. In the meantime, consultation has begun in preparation for the fifth phase of dialogue on the theme *Baptism and Growing Ecclesial Communion*. Baptism introduces the faithful into the one Body of Christ but is administered in churches which are divided among themselves. It will be useful to study more closely the ecclesiological consequences of the mutual recognition of baptism.

After 50 years of intense dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans and in view of the 500th anniversary in 2017 of Luther’s pinning his theses on the Church door in Wittenberg, the dialogue is set to look at the current state of our relationship and what further steps we are able to take towards visible unity. The Commission’s task is to understand the extent to which Catholics and Lutherans today still feel the impact of the events of the 16th century, to what extent the aspirations of the Reformers are valid today, and to what degree they have entered the lives of the Churches.

In 2006, the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity held a meeting in Rome to prepare a Symposium of Biblical Scholars to work further on the theme of the “Biblical Basis of the Joint Declaration on Justification”. This Symposium took place at the beginning of October 2008 at St Paul’s Outside the Walls, with the participation of representatives of the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

#### – National dialogues

The international Lutheran–Catholic dialogue is flanked by important bilateral commissions at the national level. We can mention the bilateral dialogue commissions in the United States (working on the theme *The Hope of Eternal Life*), in Finland and Sweden (on the theme *Justification in the Life of the Church*), and in 2008 once again in Germany, where the signing on 29 April 2007 of a declaration on the mutual recognition of baptism between eleven Churches and Ecclesial Communities marked a very positive development.

## 8. THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE WITH THE OLD CATHOLICS

The international dialogue commission between Catholics and Old Catholics of the Union of Utrecht has been involved in official bilateral conversations since 2004. The members of the commission, who come from Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, have met twice in 2007 and once in 2008 for consultation on a draft joint document on ecclesiology. The principal themes include the question of personal, collegial and communitarian responsibility for the unity of the Church, as well as the questions of papal primacy and the *communio* structure of the Church. Convergences, divergences and open ques-

tions have been examined with a view to finding a differentiated consensus. The commission has also studied aspects of canon law which might support ecclesial communion at various levels.

## 9. MENNONITE–CATHOLIC RELATIONS

In the period under review three significant activities took place in Mennonite-Catholic relations. These included, first, several meetings held in different countries to study the report of the international Mennonite–Catholic dialogue (1998-2003) entitled *Called Together to be Peacemakers*; second, the visit to Rome of an official delegation of the Mennonite World Conference; and third, a Mennonite–Catholic consultation held in Rome, in cooperation with the World Council of Churches' program on the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010).

### – *Discussion of the Report: Called Together to be Peacemakers*

In 2007 ecumenical meetings focusing on the Mennonite-Catholic Report *Called Together to be Peacemakers* (2003) took place in the USA, in Colombia and in Germany. On September 21–22, 2007, a conference on *Called Together to be Peacemakers* took place in Hamburg, Germany. Entitled *Healing of Memories*, it was sponsored by the German Bishops' Conference and the Mennonite Community in Germany, with the cooperation of the Johann-Adam Möhler Institute (Paderborn), the Department of Free Church Theology of the University of Hamburg, the Institute for Theology and Peace in Hamburg, and the Catholic Academy of Hamburg, where it took place. Discussion is taking place on ways to continue these conversations.

### – *Visit to Rome of a Mennonite World Conference Delegation*

A delegation of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) visited Rome, October 18–23, 2007. Led by the President Dr Nancy Heisey (USA) and the General Secretary Dr Larry Miller (France), it included Mennonite leaders from Ethiopia, Indonesia, Netherlands, Paraguay, Germany and Canada. This was the first official visit of a MWC delegation to the Holy See. In a private audience, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged the continuing search for unity, noting that “our witness will be impaired as long as the world sees our divisions”. In her greeting to the Pope, Dr Heisey expressed the hope that “in some small way Mennonite–Catholic relations from this time forward may be part of making [that] image of God more visible in our world”.

### – *A Mennonite-Catholic Contribution to the Decade to Overcome Violence*

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Mennonite World Conference, in cooperation with the World Council of Churches' program on the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)

2001–2010, organized a consultation in Rome, October 23–25, 2007, of which the results will be offered to the DOV program which is seeking input from churches and theological institutions from around the world in preparation for an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in May 2011. The fact that the findings of a particular bilateral dialogue are being offered as input to a WCC multilateral program is another way in which this dialogue's results can be received within the larger ecumenical community.

## 10. BAPTIST-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

The second meeting of the second phase of the International Baptist–Catholic conversations took place in Rome, 2–8 December 2007, and the next meeting will take place at Duke University (North Carolina) from 14–20 December 2008. The Baptist World Alliance represents some forty million baptized adherents (more than a hundred million when counting family members and children) throughout the world. These conversations have as their general theme *The Word of God in the Life of the Church: Scripture, Tradition and Koinonia*. Under this theme, the conversations are dealing with issues which have long been controversial between Baptists and Catholics. At the first meeting in 2006 the Commission studied the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, finding some elements of convergence. Many Baptist theologians have a high regard for Vatican II's Constitution *Dei Verbum* (DV), but a phrase in DV9 which says that “Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence”, appears to Baptists as signifying that Catholics do not give sufficient priority to Scripture. As a result, the last meeting continued that discussion. Meeting in Rome, the joint commission was received in audience by Pope Benedict XVI.

## 11. RELATIONS WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Emerging from the frontier revivals in early 19th-century Pennsylvania and Kentucky, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) originally aimed at serving as a unifying force among Protestants, and to this day continues to define its particular mission in terms of the re-establishment of the original unity of the church. Although a relatively small church, its ethos makes it one of the most influential churches within the ecumenical movement. The fact that it does not share a direct history of conflict with the Catholic Church makes it possible for the International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Disciples of Christ to tackle some of the fundamental ecumenical problems with a certain measure of openness. Indeed, that openness has helped both sides to have an impact on the wider ecumenical movement.

The International Catholic-Disciples Commission held its fourth session in the fourth phase of its dialogue at the Pallotine Renewal Centre in St Louis, Mis-

souri from 24–28 June 2007. The theme of the session was *The Relationship Between Word and Sacrament in the Church with Special Reference to the Eucharist*. The meeting aimed at covering an aspect of the overall theme of this phase, which has been *The Presence of Christ in the Church*. This year the Commission met at Klosterneuburg near Vienna, Austria (22–27 June, 2008), and took up the theme *The Priesthood of Christ in Church and Ministry*. The goal was to shed light on the importance of ordained ministers as servants of the Eucharistic mystery, and to reflect on the connection between Word, Eucharist and ministry, and specifically the office of bishop and priest. The next step is to draft an Agreed Statement on all the four phases of the dialogue, underlining the points of both agreement and disagreement, and identifying degrees of convergence within divergent understandings.

## 12. CATHOLICS AND PENTECOSTALS: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP?

### 12.1. *Official dialogues*

The growth of Pentecostalism (from 0 to 600 million in 100 years), as well as the difficult relations between Pentecostals and Catholics across the world, and particularly in Latin America, have been at the centre of the concerns of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The creation of new denominations: Classical Pentecostals from 1906 onwards, *Denominational Pentecostals* from 1950 onwards, and Non-Denominational Pentecostals from 1980, and their penetration within the different Christian traditions has had a significant effect on all Christian communities. There are Evangelical and Protestant communities in many continents which, while retaining their original names, have conserved very little of their original ecclesial tradition after adopting a Pentecostal style. Others have become divided in two or more opposing factions, with one part remaining faithful to the original ecclesial tradition and the other adopting Pentecostalism.

Among the positive aspects of the emergence of Pentecostalism, we can mention the rediscovery of the central role of the Holy Spirit; the personal conversion to Jesus Christ in an explicit and ongoing way throughout the life of the individual Christian; the emphasis on prayer and the power of prayer; and the rediscovery of charisms and spiritual gifts as purposeful and needed realities in the life of every believer. In contrast, it is undoubtedly negative that Pentecostalism and Pentecostals maintain that their experience and their spirituality are the only ones directly bestowed by God himself; therefore, it comes as no surprise that they are not willing to recognise that other Christian experiences may have the same importance or the same saving role. In their view, the fullness of being a Christian is attained through the experience of 'baptism in the Spirit'; thus, the difference between Pentecostals and other Christians is related to the experience of the Holy Spirit in fullness – that is, according to the description given in Acts 2

(with the same manifestations and means). 'A Christian is not always a Pentecostal, but a Pentecostal is always a true Christian'.

Many efforts have been undertaken over the years to understand the Pentecostal reality and to clarify, by contrast, the Catholic tradition. Among these efforts, the international Catholic–Pentecostal dialogue (which commenced in 1972 and is now in its fifth phase) has concentrated its attention on the theme of "becoming a Christian" in the light of biblical and patristic sources. The report entitled *On Becoming a Christian: Insights from Scripture and Patristic Writings* has been published, and represents a genuine innovation, particularly as it is the first time that Catholics and Pentecostals have studied the Fathers of the Church together, citing them widely throughout the text. Regarding *Non-Denominational Pentecostals*, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, after a long preparatory phase, has begun preliminary conversations with a group of leaders. The second session is planned to take place in April 2009. This initiative aims at understanding their ecclesial identity and exploring the possibility of a process of *rapprochement* with Catholics.

### 12.2. *Seminar for Bishops, Buenos Aires, 19-23 September 2007*

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, together with the Bishops' Conference of Argentina [CEA], organised a seminar in Buenos Aires on *The Search for Christian Unity in the Current Situation*, 19-23 September 2007. This is the sixth of a series of seminars for Bishops organized by the Council on the question of Pentecostalism.

The purpose of the seminar, led by Cardinal Kasper, was to reflect upon the new challenges of the ecumenical movement, with special attention to the Pentecostal phenomenon. At the end of the seminar, the participants committed themselves to fostering the ecumenical dialogue in their respective countries, in line with the Catholic principles of ecumenism.

The Bishops attending the seminar drafted conclusions affirming: "We believe that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we should be open to our Pentecostal brothers, benefitting from this current of grace, without silencing the Spirit; with love, prudence and discernment; overcoming any defensive attitude since fear is not a fruit of the Spirit. We should share with other Christians our faith experiences and convictions, our tradition, our spirituality and rich devotional diversity, with an open heart. As Catholics, we desire to establish brotherly relations with Pentecostal Christians through mutual understanding, dialogue, cooperation and common prayer".

During the meeting, the following priorities were identified: make the Church present and visible in all areas of life; affirm Catholic identity through the sense of belonging stemming from baptism; celebrate faith in such a way that people can experience its mystery and grow in knowledge of Christ; promote the knowledge of Scripture through *lectio divina*; encourage the role of lay people in the Church's life,

and give them trust; provide ecumenical formation from an early age in schools, catechetical programmes, religious education and movements; overcome ignorance regarding other Christians; foster spiritual ecumenism by implementing the *Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*; give greater attention to the Catholic Charismatic movement, overcoming diffidence and identifying its positive aspects.

### 13. THE SALVATION ARMY

In recent years the Salvation Army has begun conversations with various Christian Churches and Communion. In March 2007 General Clifton Shaw met with Cardinal Kasper and it was proposed to begin a series of informal conversations. The first session was held at Sunbury Court (London) in December 2007 on the notion of the Church, and the second will take place in Rome in January 2009.

### 14. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

For more than 40 years of the Catholic Church has worked closely with the World Council of Churches (WCC), a fellowship of more than 300 churches and ecclesial communities, in fostering common prayer for unity, social action, theological reflection and joint ecumenical formation and mission. Such collaboration is monitored and promoted through the *Joint Working Group* (JWG), comprising 18 members from each parent body (PCPCU and WCC) who receive a mandate lasting seven years from one General Assembly of the WCC to the next. A new mandate began following the WCC's General Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February 2006.

The JWG executive committee met from 19–20 March 2007 at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey to develop a plan of action. The first Plenary of the JWG was held in Rome from 20–27 January 2008, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Importantly, the JWG meeting was marked by a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI, who also presided at Vespers in the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls to close the Week of Prayer. The Pope affirmed that ecumenical dialogues "... have borne abundant fruits in the past century," underlining that "the reception of those fruits is itself an important step in the process of promoting Christian unity...". The General Secretary of the WCC, Reverend Dr Samuel Kobia spoke at the ceremony and expressed gratitude for the Catholic commitment to the visible unity of the Church, affirming that praying together is an important part of that commitment. A second Plenary meeting was held in Geneva from 16–22 November 2008.

Fragmentation continues to weaken the ecumenical movement, and this question was the focus of the *'Continuation Committee' on Ecumenism in the 21st Century*, which took place from 18–20 November 2007 at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey. The aim of the *Committee* is to explore new ecumenical configurations which can respond effectively to the chal-

lenges which lie ahead in the 21st century. Given that the goal of Christian unity is sometimes understood differently by the various churches, emphasis has been placed on clarifying objectives.

The ecumenical movement ultimately aims at effective evangelization. Indeed, part of the engagement in 2007 of the WCC's Council on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) has been the preparation of the process called *'Toward Edinburgh 2010'*, marking the centenary of the First World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, which is generally seen as the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. Although the Catholic Church did not take part in the conference in 1910, a hundred years later the ecumenical landscape has changed so much that both the PCPCU and the Catholic Church in Scotland are actively involved in the event. The process aims to explore ways of undertaking mission together. A team of the organizers of *'Edinburgh 2010'* visited the PCPCU from 11–15 March 2008.

There is ongoing collaboration with the WCC also in the field of ecumenical formation. A Catholic professor continues to work at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (near Geneva, Switzerland), teaching biblical hermeneutics to students from different parts of the world and from different Christian confessions. This is a valuable gift to the ecumenical movement because a clear understanding of the Word of God is crucial for fruitful dialogue. The PCPCU hosted 40 students from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey from 12–19 February 2007, on a study visit to Rome aimed at offering a personal experience of the structures of the Catholic Church. The encounter was positive and the impact on the students invaluable. In the same spirit, a group of three interns of the WCC came to Rome (15–21 October 2007) for a similar study visit. Particularly important was the encounter of the young people with the Holy Father. Such encounters have been known to help heal the wounds of history, inspiring new levels in ecumenical relationships.

### 15. CONTINUING COLLABORATION WITH FAITH AND ORDER

The Plenary Commission on Faith and Order (F&O) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) consists of 120 theologians representing a broad range of traditions: Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant in the approximately 350 WCC member churches. The Catholic Church, though not a member of the WCC, has been a full voting member of F&O since 1968 and has 12 Catholic theologians on the Commission. A new Plenary Commission is established for the period between WCC General Assemblies, (the last took place in 2006 and the next will be in 2013) and meets once or twice during that period. But a smaller F&O "Standing Commission", consisting of 30 members of the Plenary Commission (including three of the twelve Catholic Commissioners) meets annually and has the primary authority to carry forward the Commission's work. The Standing Commission met from 12–18 June 2007 at Crans Montana, Switzerland. It received reports and updates of all the Faith and Order projects

and launched new initiatives on some of these. It marked the 25th anniversary of the F&O convergence text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* published in 1982 by the F&O Plenary Commission meeting in Lima, Peru. *BEM* is arguably the most famous and ecumenically fruitful F&O text. The result of more than 50 years of dialogue, it has been well received and very influential in the ecumenical world.

### 15.1. *New Study Projects*

The Standing Commission began organizing new study projects for the coming years. The most important relates to ecclesiology, and is the continuation of the study process which has already produced two texts: *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (1998), and a revision of this, entitled *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2005). The latter was sent out to the churches by the World Council of Churches after its General Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006), asking for further reflection and response. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, with the help of a team of theological consultants, has already developed reflections on the recent text, and has sent them to Faith and Order. The PCPCU hopes that an even more refined text on the nature of the Church will be developed in time for the next WCC Assembly in 2013 and that, like *BEM* in 1982, it will be mature enough to be sent to the churches for a more formal response and reception.

A second major study on the theme *Tradition and Traditions: Sources of Authority for the Church* continues Faith and Order's ongoing concern for ecumenical hermeneutics. It has been proposed that a fresh approach to the question of ecumenical hermeneutics might be made by a more concentrated reflection on the Fathers of the Church since, like Scripture, patristics are also a common resource, a common heritage of all Christians. A third new study launched by the Standing Commission on *Moral Discernment in the Churches*, continues the Faith and Order concern for theological anthropology. F&O is also completing a study on Baptism and the results will be published as a study document, probably in 2008.

### 15.2. *The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Week of Prayer*

Among other projects and activities undertaken by Faith and Order, most noteworthy has been its collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity each year since 1966 in producing the materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In 2008, the centenary of the Week of Prayer has been celebrated with special attention in many local churches.

## 16. THE GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM: A NEW ECUMENICAL INITIATIVE

### 16.1. *Origin*

During the 1990s, when the WCC was conducting a study to clarify its own self-understanding and

vision, it clearly acknowledged that there were still many Christians who did not participate in the WCC or in the ecumenical movement and suggested that some type of new forum could be developed, to which representatives of those communities, such as Pentecostals and Evangelicals, which were expanding throughout the world but often not participating in the ecumenical movement, might be invited. The forum would have no pre-developed constitution or by-laws, but rather all the participants might together develop procedures for it.

The PCPCU agreed to participate with the understanding that a new forum would not replace the goal of the ecumenical movement as visible unity, or displace bilateral ecumenical dialogue. Nor would a new and costly ecumenical organization be desirable.

A Continuation Committee was formed to test interest in this idea of a new forum by organizing a series of consultations, with as many Pentecostal and Evangelical leaders from different parts of the world as possible. A brief statement of a theological basis for the process was developed. Regional meetings took place in Asia (Hong Kong, 2004), Africa (Lusaka, Zambia, 2005), Europe (Warburg, Germany, 2006), Latin America (Santiago, Chile, 2007).

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is a "new" ecumenical initiative in several ways. First, from its beginning in the World Council of Churches in the 1990s, it was a *new effort* to draw Pentecostals and Evangelicals into contact with the ecumenical movement. Second, the process made use of a *new methodology*. Instead of starting with theological issues, it focused on allowing participants to share their experience of living the Christian faith, and listening as others did the same. The organizers found that in every meeting this methodology helped participants to dissolve long held stereotypes of one another, and made possible frank conversation – for example on the problem of proselytism. Third, there was a *certain freshness, even newness*, in the fact that the small continuation committee which organized the GCF was "independent" of the WCC and of mainline churches or other organizations represented on it, though clearly supported by them. This too enabled some groups to participate which would not otherwise have accepted to be present, due to their negative attitude towards the WCC.

### 16.2. *The Limuru Meeting*

The Global Christian Forum met from 6–9 November 2007 in Limuru (Nairobi) Kenya. It brought together about 230 persons from 72 nations and 6 continents, representing a wide range of Christian Churches and Communities including Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestant traditions, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and various ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, and others. The range of churches and Christian communities gathered at the meeting was considered unique. Twenty Catholics from different parts of the world were among the 230 participants. These included three from the Sympo-

sium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), four from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), three from the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America (CELAM), three from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), two from the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE), two from the local Episcopal Conference of Kenya, and two members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which coordinated the Catholic delegation.

The Global Christian Forum, in the Limuru meeting, provided the opportunity for new contacts on a broad scale. In some cases this was the first time that certain churches and groups, mainline and Pentecostal/Evangelical, were willing to sign a message with others. This was a step forward. The challenge now is to keep this multilateral process alive, in the hope of engaging all Christian groups in the ecumenical quest.

#### 17. THE DIALOGUE WITH JUDAISM: AT THE ROOTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Judaism has undergone many developments and changes. However, its fundamental component remains the Torah as the Word revealed by God, together with interpretation in the light of both the written and oral traditions; the fulfilment of God's will in conformity with Scripture; and respect for the ethical principles of the Bible as the basis of a life lived in authentic relationship with God. Modern Judaism draws on its rich heritage and endeavours to align it with the contemporary world. Judaism as an abstract normative entity does not exist; what exists are individuals, local communities, associations and organisations with purposes and aspirations inspired by a common tradition shared in different ways.

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council, contact was made with the principal international Jewish organizations and the *International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee* (ILC) was officially instituted in Rome on 23 December 1970. This followed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' drafted by the *International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations* (IJCIC) and the Holy See's Commission for Catholic-Jewish relations. So far this dialogue has held twenty sessions, the last of which was held in November 2008 in Budapest. The joint declarations issued to date cover the important themes of family, ecology, education, holy sites, justice and peace.

This advancement of religious relations with the Jewish people is also exemplified in a formal dialogue with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel established in 2002. One should bear in mind that Israel is the only country in which a Christian minority finds itself within a Jewish majority. Given the complex political reality of that country, it is understandable that this dialogue experiences certain difficulties from time to time. To date, there have been seven meetings of this commission, alternating between Rome and Jerusalem, all marked by a climate of

increasing openness and friendship. The following themes have been discussed: the sanctity of human life, family values, the importance of Sacred Scripture for society and education, social justice and ethical behaviour, the relationship between religious and civil authorities in the Jewish and Christian traditions, the relationship between human life and technology, religious freedom and conscience and their limitations. The last meeting was held from 11–13 March 2007 in Jerusalem. The co-chairman on the Jewish side, Rabbi Cohen of Haifa, was invited to address the Synod of Bishops in October 2008. This gesture has been deeply appreciated in Jewish circles.

The Catholic Church's dialogue with Judaism has to do with our Christian roots and identity. Jesus was Jewish and therefore directly linked to the Jewish tradition. The declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra aetate* (no.4) reiterates this fact and places it within the wider context of Pauline thought: "The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: 'theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh' (*Rom* 9:4-5)".

Two issues are now central to the Jewish-Catholic dialogue: the permanence of the first covenant and whether the Church has a mission to convert Jews. Recently, some groups in the United States have raised new theological challenges for the dialogue. A document published in 2003 entitled *Reflection on Covenant and Mission* tackles the theme of the value and salvific importance of the Old Covenant for the Jewish people, as well as the significance and bearing of the mission of the Catholic Church with regard to Judaism (cf. also *A Sacred Obligation*). These texts have raised some perplexity, and we must reflect further on this question from the theological point of view. There is a need to develop and nurture a 'Christian theology of Judaism' (the relationship between the Old and the New Covenants; the relationship between Synagogue and Church with regard to the term 'People of God'; the missionary nature of the Catholic Church with regard to Judaism, etc.). There is for the first time a certain interest on the part of our Jewish partners to take part in such a theological conversation.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

*Cardinal Walter Kasper*

As we draw to the conclusion of the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, it may be helpful to summarise the main outcomes of our discussion.

1. We must undoubtedly continue relations with our traditional partners (churches and ecclesial communities); as well, we must not suspend any dialogue and we must not refuse any request from a partner seeking serious dialogue. Indeed, it is hoped that our *Harvest Project* will inspire in our partners a renewed

impetus towards responsible dialogue. The years marking the anniversaries of Calvin (2009) and Luther (2017), the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the anniversary of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 2010, and the Kirchentag in Munich in 2010 should be seen as opportunities for us to contribute towards a renewed ecumenical impetus and enthusiasm.

2. We must in the future distinguish between official dialogues and informal conversations with groups within communities that seek our support and encouragement. This has already occurred with some groups, namely Anglicans and Lutherans. This development presupposes and indeed is possible only on one condition, namely that we approach these conversations with loyalty and transparency towards our official partners. We do not want to enter into double dealing.

3. New forms of ecumenism have emerged over the last few years, particularly in relation to some of our spiritual movements (Focolare movement, the community of Sant'Egidio, Chemin neuf, etc.) and congregations of religious sisters, which have established networks with groups, communities and movements from both traditional and charismatic Protestant backgrounds and from the free churches, etc. These networks inspire great hope. Among other initiatives, I would make a special mention of the two important assemblies that took place in Stuttgart in

2004 and in 2007, which it is envisaged will be continued in regional assemblies. We cannot organise such networks and assemblies, but we can support, inspire and seek such developments.

4. Over the last few years the PCPCU has organised symposia for bishops and theologians in Asia, Africa and Latin America in order to reflect on how to deal with the challenge of new pentecostal groups and communities. We may need to continue with similar symposia in different parts of the world in order to motivate a deeper understanding of ecumenism.

5. It is our intention next year to organise a consultation gathering experts to help us develop appropriate strategies and methods to continue the ecumenical dialogue in the current rapidly changing situation.

6. The most important development is to highlight and to focus principally on spiritual ecumenism. This aspect accompanied the very beginning of the ecumenical movement, and is its very heart; we must now return to its origins and concentrate on the essential. Spiritual ecumenism is not reserved for experts; all Christians can become *players* in the field of spiritual ecumenism. The recent Synod of Bishops affirmed the importance of reading, reflecting and praying together on the Sacred Scriptures. Our divisions arose over the Scriptures, and over the Scriptures we can and must find ourselves again. Let us therefore make the Bible the heart of ecumenism!

## XII ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

October 5-26, 2008

*On Saturday October 18, in the Sistine Chapel the Holy Father led the celebration of First Vespers for the 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time on the occasion of the participation of the Ecumenical patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I in the Synod of Bishops. This visit was of particular importance as it was the first time that an Ecumenical Patriarch had spoken on such a solemn occasion for the Catholic Church as the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. The Holy Father introduced the Patriarch's reflections of which the following is a translation from Italian.*

*Your Eminences,  
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate  
and in the Priesthood,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

With the celebration of Vespers, we have addressed God using his very words: the Psalms. The meditation on the Word of God is a light that guides our steps. We have had the joy of having with us on this occasion of intense recollection the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I, whom I greet warmly also on your behalf. I now invite you to listen to the reflections he will present to us on the subject of the Word of God, the theme of the Synod of Bishops which is being celebrated in the Vatican in these days.

SPEECH BY THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I

*Your Holiness,  
Synodal Fathers,*

It is at once humbling and inspiring to be graciously invited by Your Holiness to address the XII Ordinary General Assembly of this auspicious Synod of Bishops, an historical meeting of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church from throughout the world, gathered in one place to meditate on “the Word of God” and deliberate on the experience and expression of this Word “in the Life and Mission of the Church”.

This gracious invitation of Your Holiness to our Modesty is a gesture full of meaning and significance – we dare say an historic event in itself. For it is the first time in history that an Ecumenical Patriarch is offered the opportunity to address a Synod of the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus be part of “the life of” this sister Church at such a high level. We regard this as a manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit leading our Churches to a closer and deeper relationship with each other, an important step towards the restoration of our full communion.

It is well known that the Orthodox Church attaches to the Synodical system fundamental ecclesiological importance. Together with primacy, synodal-

ity constitutes the backbone of the Church's government and organization. As our Joint International Commission on the Theological Dialogue between our Churches expressed it in the Ravenna document, this interdependence between synodality and primacy runs through all the levels of the Church's life: local, regional and universal. Therefore, in having today the privilege to address Your Synod our hopes are raised that the day will come when our two Churches will fully converge on the role of primacy and synodality in the Church's life, to which our common Theological Commission is devoting its study at the present time.

The theme to which this episcopal synod devotes its work is of crucial significance not only for the Roman Catholic Church but also for all those who are called to witness to Christ in our time. Mission and evangelization remain a permanent duty of the Church at all times and places; indeed they form part of the Church's nature, since she is called “Apostolic” both in the sense of her faithfulness to the original teaching of the Apostles and in that of proclaiming the Word of God in every cultural context everytime. The Church needs, therefore, to rediscover the Word of God in every generation and make it head with a renewed vigour and persuasion also in our contemporary world, which deep in its heart thirsts for God's message of peace, hope and charity.

This duty of evangelization would have been, of course, greatly enhanced and strengthened, if all Christians were in a position to perform it with one voice and as a fully united Church. In his prayer to the Father little before His passion our Lord has made it clear that the unity of the Church is unbreakably related with her mission “so that the world may believe” (Jn 17, 21). It is, therefore, most appropriate that this Synod has opened its doors to ecumenical fraternal delegates so that we may all become aware of our common duty of evangelization as well as of the difficulties and problems of its realization in today's world. This Synod has undoubtedly been studying the subject of the Word of God in depth and in all its aspects, theological as well as practical and pastoral. In our modest address to you we shall limit ourselves to sharing with you some thoughts on the

theme of your meeting, drawing from the way the Orthodox tradition has approached it throughout the centuries and in the Greek patristic teaching, in particular. More concretely we should like to concentrate on three aspects of the subject, namely: on *hearing and speaking the Word of God through the Holy Scriptures*; on *seeing God's Word in nature and above all in the beauty of the icons*; and finally on *touching and sharing God's Word in the communion of saints and the sacramental life of the Church*. For all these are, we think, crucial in the life and mission of the Church.

In so doing, we seek to draw a rich Patristic tradition, dating to the early third century and expounding a doctrine of five spiritual senses. For listening to God's Word, beholding God's Word, and touching God's Word are all spiritual ways of perceiving the unique divine mystery. Based on Proverbs 2.5 about "the divine faculty of perception  $\alpha\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\iota\nu$ )," Origen of Alexandria claims: This sense unfolds as sight for contemplation of immaterial forms, hearing for discernment of voices, taste for savoring the living bread, smell for sweet spiritual fragrance, and touch for handling the Word of God, which is *grasped by every faculty of the soul*.

The spiritual senses are variously described as "five senses of the soul," as "divine" or "inner faculties," and even as "faculties of the heart" or "mind". This doctrine inspired the theology of the Cappadocians (especially Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa) as much as it did the theology of the Desert Fathers (especially Evagrius of Pontus and Macarius the Great).

### 1. *Hearing and Speaking the Word through Scripture*

At each celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the presiding celebrant at the Eucharist entreats "that we may be made worthy to hear the Holy Gospel". For "hearing, beholding and handling the Word of life" (1 Jn 1:1) are not first and foremost our entitlement or birthright as human beings; they are our privilege and gift as children of the living God. The Christian Church is, above all, a scriptural Church. Although methods of interpretation may have varied from Church Father to Church Father, from "school" to "school," and from East to West, nevertheless, Scripture was always received as a living reality and not a dead book.

In the context of a living faith, then, Scripture is the living testimony of a lived history about the relationship of a living God with a living people. The Word, "who spoke through the prophets" (Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed), spoke in order to be heard and take effect. It is primarily an oral and direct communication intended for human beneficiaries. The scriptural text is, therefore, derivative and secondary; the scriptural text always serves the spoken word. It is not conveyed mechanically, but communicated from generation to generation as a living word. Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord vows:

"As rain and snow descend from heaven, watering the earth ... so shall my word go from mouth to mouth, accomplishing that which I purpose" (55:10-11).

Moreover, as St. John Chrysostom explains, the divine Word demonstrates profound considerateness ( $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\lambda\ \alpha\tau\ \leftarrow\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ ) for the personal diversity and cultural contexts of those hearing and receiving. Adaptation of the divine Word to the specific personal readiness and the particular cultural context defines the missionary dimension of the Church, which is called to transform the world through the Word. In silence as in declaration, in prayer as in action, the divine Word addresses the whole world, "preaching to all nations" (Mt 28:19) without either privilege or prejudice to race, culture, gender and class. When we carry out that divine commission, we are assured: "Behold, I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). We are called to speak the divine Word in all languages, "becoming all things to all people, that [we] might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22).

As disciples of God's Word, then, it is today more imperative than ever that we provide a unique perspective – beyond the social, political, or economic on the need to eradicate poverty, to provide balance in a global world, to combat fundamentalism or racism, and to develop religious tolerance in a world of conflict. In responding to the needs of the world's poor, vulnerable and marginalized, the Church can prove a defining marker of the space and character of the global community. While the theological language of religion and spirituality differs from the technical vocabulary of economics and politics, the barriers that at first glance appear to separate religious concerns (such as sin, salvation, and spirituality) from pragmatic interests (such as commerce, trade, and politics) are not impenetrable, crumbling before the manifold challenges of social justice and globalization.

Whether dealing with environment or peace, poverty or hunger, education or healthcare, there is today a heightened sense of common concern and common responsibility, which is felt with particular acuteness by people of faith as well as by those whose outlook is expressly secular. Our engagement with such issues does not of course in any way undermine or abolish differences between various disciplines or disagreements with those who look at the world in different ways. Yet the growing signs of a common commitment for the well-being of humanity and the life of the world are encouraging. It is an encounter of individuals and institutions that bodes well for our world. And it is an involvement that highlights the supreme vocation and mission of the disciples and adherents of God's Word to transcend political or religious differences in order to transform the entire visible world for the glory of the invisible God.

### 2. *Seeing the Word of God – The Beauty of Icons and Nature*

Nowhere is the invisible rendered more visible than in the beauty of iconography and the wonder of creation. In the words of the champion of sacred images, St. John of Damascus: "As maker of heaven and earth, God the Word was Himself the first to paint and portray icons". Every stroke of an iconog-

rapher's paintbrush – like every word of a theological definition, every musical note chanted in psalmody, and every carved stone of a tiny chapel or magnificent cathedral – articulates the divine Word in creation, which praises God in every living being and every living thing (cf. Ps. 150.6).

In affirming sacred images, the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea was not concerned with religious art; it was the continuation and confirmation of earlier definitions about the fullness of the humanity of God's Word. Icons are a visible reminder of our heavenly vocation; they are invitations to rise beyond our trivial concerns and menial reductions of the world. They encourage us to seek the extraordinary in the very ordinary, to be filled with the same wonder that characterized the divine marvel in Genesis: "God saw everything that He made; and, indeed, it was very good" (Gn 1:30-31). The Greek (Septuagint) word for "goodness" is *κάλλος*, which implies – etymologically and symbolically – a sense of "calling". Icons underline the Church's fundamental mission to recognize that all people and all things are created and called to be "good" and "beautiful".

Indeed, icons remind us of another way of seeing things, another way of experiencing realities, another way of resolving conflicts. We are asked to assume what the hymnology of Easter Sunday calls "another way of living". For we have behaved arrogantly and dismissively toward the natural creation. We have refused to behold God's Word in the oceans of our planet, in the trees of our continents, and in the animals of our earth. We have denied our very own nature, which calls us to stoop low enough to hear God's Word in creation if we wish to "become participants of divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). How could we ignore the wider implications of the divine Word assuming flesh? Why do we fail to perceive created nature as the extended Body of Christ?

Eastern Christian theologians always emphasized the cosmic proportions of divine incarnation. The incarnate Word is intrinsic to creation, which came to be through divine utterance. St. Maximus the Confessor insists on the presence of God's Word in all things (cf. Col 3.11); the divine Logos stands at the center of the world, mysteriously revealing its original principle and ultimate purpose (cf. 1 Pet 1:20). This mystery is described by St. Athanasius of Alexandria:

As the Logos [he writes], he is not contained by anything and yet contains everything; He is in everything and yet outside of everything ... the firstborn of the whole world in its every aspect.

The entire world is a prologue to the Gospel of John. And when the Church fails to recognize the broader, cosmic dimensions of God's Word, narrowing its concerns to purely spiritual matters, then it neglects its mission to implore God for the transformation – always and everywhere, "in all places of His dominion" – of the whole polluted cosmos. It is no wonder that on Easter Sunday, as the Paschal celebration reaches its climax, Orthodox Christians sing:

Now everything is filled with divine light: heaven and earth, and all things beneath the earth. So let all creation rejoice.

All genuine "deep ecology" is, therefore, inextricably linked with deep theology:

"Even a stone", writes Basil the Great, "bears the mark of God's Word. This is true of an ant, a bee and a mosquito, the smallest of creatures. For He spread the wide heavens and laid the immense seas; and He created the tiny hollow shaft of the bee's sting".

Recalling our minuteness in God's wide and wonderful creation only underlines our central role in God's plan for the salvation of the whole world.

### 3. *Touching and Sharing the Word of God - The Communion of Saints and the Sacraments of Life*

The Word of God persistently "moves outside of Himself in ecstasy" (Dionysius the Areopagite), passionately seeking to "dwell in us" (Jn 1:14), that the world may have life in abundance (Jn 10:10) God's compassionate mercy is poured and shared "so as to multiply the objects of His beneficence" (Gregory the Theologian). God assumes all that is ours, "in every respect being tested as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15), in order to offer us all that is God's and render us God's by grace. "Though rich, He becomes poor that we might become rich," writes the great Apostle Paul (2 Cor 8:9), to whom this year is so aptly dedicated. This is the Word of God; gratitude and glory are due to Him.

The word of God receives His full embodiment in creation, above all in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It is there that the Word becomes flesh and allows us not simply to hear or see Him but to *touch* Him with our own hands, as St. John declares (1 John 1:1) and make Him part of our own body and blood (σύσσωμοι καί σὺναιμοι) in the words of St. John Chrysostom.

In the Holy Eucharist the Word *heard* is at the same time *seen* and *shared* (κοινωνία). It is not accidental that in the early eucharistic documents, such as the book of Revelation and the *Didache*, the Eucharist was associated with *prophesy*, and the presiding bishops were regarded as successors of the prophets (e.g. Martyrion Polycarpi). The Eucharist was already by St. Paul (1 Cor 11) described as "proclamation" of Christ's death and Second Coming. As the purpose of Scripture is essentially the proclamation of the Kingdom and the announcement of eschatological realities, the Eucharist is a foretaste of the Kingdom, and in this sense the proclamation of the Word par excellence. In the Eucharist Word and Sacrament became one reality. The word ceases to be "words" and becomes a *Person*, embodying in Himself all human beings and all creation.

Within the life of the Church, the unfathomable self-emptying (κένωσις) and generous sharing (κοινωνία) of the divine Logos is reflected in the lives of the saints as the tangible experience and human expression of God's Word in our community. In this way, the Word of God becomes the Body of Christ, crucified and glorified at the same time. As a result, the saint has an organic relationship with heaven and earth, with God and all of creation. In ascetic struggle, the saint reconciles the Word and the world.

Through repentance and purification, the saint is filled – as Abba Isaac the Syrian insists – with compassion for all creatures, which is the ultimate humility and perfection.

This is why the saint loves with warmth and spaciousness that are both unconditional and irresistible. In the saints, we know God’s very Word, since – as St. Gregory Palamas claims – “God and His saints share the same glory and splendor”. In the gentle presence of a saint, we learn how theology and action coincide. In the compassionate love of the saint, we experience God as “our father” and God’s mercy as “steadfastly enduring” (Ps 135, LXX). The saint is consumed with the fire of God’s love. This is why the saint imparts grace and cannot tolerate the slightest manipulation or exploitation in society or in nature.

The saint simply does what is “proper and right” (Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), always dignifying humanity and honoring creation. “His words have the force of actions and his silence the power of speech” (St. Ignatius of Antioch).

And within the communion of saints, each of us is called to “become like fire”. (*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*), to touch the world with the mystical force of God’s Word, so that – as the extended Body of Christ – the world, too, might say: “Someone touched me!” (cf. Mt 9.20). Evil is only eradicated by holiness, not by harshness. And holiness introduces into society a seed that heals and transforms. Imbued with the life of the sacraments and the purity of prayer, we are able to enter the innermost mystery of God’s Word. It is like the tectonic plates of the earth’s crust: the deepest layers need only shift a few millimeters to shatter the world’s surface. Yet for this spiritual revolution to occur, we must experience radical *metanoia* – a conversion of attitudes, habits and practices – for ways that we have misused or abused God’s Word, God’s gifts and God’s creation.

Such a conversion is, of course, impossible without divine grace; it is not achieved simply through greater effort or human willpower. “For mortals, it is impossible; but for God all things are possible” (Mt 19:26). Spiritual change occurs when our bodies and souls are grafted onto the living Word of God, when our cells contain the life-giving blood-flow of the sacraments, when we are open to sharing all things with all people. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us, the sacrament of “our neighbour” cannot be isolated from the sacrament of “the altar”. Sadly, we have ignored the vocation and obligation to share. Social injustice and inequality, global poverty and war, ecological pollution and degradation result from our inability or unwillingness to share. If we claim to retain the sacrament of the altar, we cannot forgo or forget the sacrament of the neighbour – a fundamental condition for realizing God’s Word in the world, within the life and mission of the Church.

Beloved Brothers in Christ,

We have explored the patristic teaching of the spiritual senses, discerning the power of hearing and speaking God’s Word in Scripture, of seeing God’s

Word in icons and nature, as well as of touching and sharing God’s Word in the saints and sacraments. Yet, in order to remain true to the life and mission of the Church, we must personally be changed by this Word. The Church must resemble the mother, who is both sustained by and nourishes through the food she eats. Anything that does not feed and nourish everyone cannot sustain us either. When the world does not share the joy of Christ’s Resurrection, this is an indictment of our own integrity and commitment to the living Word of God. Prior to the celebration of each Divine Liturgy, Orthodox Christians pray that this Word will be “broken and consumed, distributed and shared” in communion. And “we know that we have passed from death to life when we love our brothers” and sisters (1 Jn 3:14).

The challenge before us is the discernment of God’s Word in the face of evil, the transfiguration of every last detail and speck of this world in the light of Resurrection. The victory is already present in the depths of the Church, whenever we experience the grace of reconciliation and communion. As we struggle - in ourselves and in our world - to recognize the power of the Cross, we begin to appreciate how every act of justice, every spark of beauty, every word of truth can gradually wear away the crust of evil. However, beyond our own frail efforts, we have the assurance of the Spirit, who “help us in our weakness” (Rom 8:26) and stands beside us as advocate and “comforter” (Jn 14:6), penetrating all things and “transforming us – as St. Symeon the New Theologian says – into everything that the Word of God says about the heavenly kingdom: pearl, grain of mustard seed, leaven, water, fire, bread, life and mystical wedding chamber”. Such is the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, whom we invoke as we conclude our address, extending to Your Holiness our gratitude and to each of you our blessings:

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth  
present everywhere and filling all things;  
treasury of goodness and giver of life:  
Come, and abide in us.  
And cleanse us from every impurity;  
and save our souls.  
For you are good and love humankind.  
Amen!

ORE, October 22, 2008

ADDRESS OF CARDINAL MARC OUELLET

October 6, 2008

*The following is an excerpt of the Relatio ante disceptationem originally delivered in French on Monday October 6<sup>th</sup>, by Cardinal Marc Ouellet, P.S.S., Archbishop of Quebec, Canada, General Reporter of this Synodal Assembly.*

(...) *Ecumenical testimony*

After the official entry of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement, popes made a priority of the

cause for Christian unity. Also, the ecumenical “rapprochement” allowed the Churches and ecclesial communities to question themselves together about their own faithfulness to the Word of God. Although the ecumenical encounters and dialogue have produced fruits of brotherhood, reconciliation and mutual aid, the situation today is characterized by a certain degree of discomfort that calls for a deeper conversion to “spiritual ecumenism”. “This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name, spiritual ecumenism” (UR 8).

This orientation of the Council maintains its relevance as exhorted by the Holy Father: “Together listen to the Word of God, practice the *Lectio Divina* of the Bible, that is to say reading associated with prayer, marvel at the novelty that never ages and never fades, the Word of God, to overcome our deafness to those words that do not agree with our prejudice and our opinions, to listen to study in the communion of believers of all times, all this makes up a path to follow to achieve unity in faith, as a response to listening to the Word”.

Among the many ecumenical witnesses of our time, let us mention as an example, the Focolare Movement founded by Chiara Lubich, whose spirituality of unity places the accent on “mutual love” and obedience to the Word of life”. The pedagogy of this Movement correctly gives priority to the dynamic element of love in relationship to the Noetic element of the Word. This priority demands an ever deeper conversion to the plan of love of the Trinitarian God from all the ecumenical partners, that the Holy Spirit tries to achieve with the “groans that cannot be put into words” (Rm 8:26).

It is significant that this Catholic and ecumenical Movement – should we not use “catholic” only, that is to say ecumenical? – bears the canonic name of “Work of Mary”. We can see happily and harmoniously drawn – as in other movements the Biblical movement, the ecumenical movement, and the Marian movement, thanks to the resolute exercise of the Word of God, made flesh and shared. This witness recalls that unity of Christians and its missionary impact are not our first “task”, but the task of the Spirit and of Mary.

ORE, October 15, 2008

FINAL MESSAGE OF THE XII ORDINARY  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

October 24, 2008

*During the 21<sup>st</sup> General Congregation held on Friday October 24, the Synodal Fathers approved the Synod of Bishops’ Message to the People of God at the conclusion of the XII Ordinary General Assembly. Here below is an excerpt of the English version.*

(...) In the house of the word we also encounter brothers and sisters from other Churches and ecclesial communities who, even with the still existing separations, find themselves with us in the veneration and love for the word of God, the principle and source of a first and real unity, even if not a full unity. This bond must always be reinforced through the common biblical translations, the spreading of the sacred text, ecumenical biblical prayer, exegetical dialogue, the study and the comparison between the various interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, the exchange of values inherent in the various spiritual traditions and the announcement and the common witness of the word of God in a secularized world. (...)

Along the roads of the world, the divine word generates for us Christians an equally intense encounter with the Jewish people, who are intimately bound through the common recognition and love for the Scripture of the Old Testament and because from Israel “so far as physical descent is concerned, came Christ” (Rm 9:5). Every page of the Jewish Scriptures enlightens the mystery of God and of man. They are treasures of reflection and morality, an outline of the long itinerary of the history of salvation to its integral fulfillment, and illustrate with vigor the incarnation of the divine word in human events. They allow us to fully understand the figure of Christ, who declared “Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill them” (Mt 5:17). These are a way of dialogue with the chosen people, “who were adopted as children, the glory was theirs and the covenants; to them were given the Law and the worship of God and the promises” (Rm 9:4), and they allow us to enrich our interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures with the fruitful resources of the Hebrew exegetical tradition. (...)

ORE, October 29, 2008

## VISIT TO ROME OF HIS HOLINESS ARAM I CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA

*November 23-27, 2008*

*On Monday November 24, the Holy Father received in audience His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, during his official visit to the Vatican.*

*The Catholicos of Cilicia had already visited the Pope and the Church of Rome in 1997, just two years of his election (1995). During this new visit he again had a private audience with the Holy Father, who also greeted the bishops of the delegation accompanying him. A brief prayer with the Holy Father and the Catholicos followed the private audience, in the presence of the bishops and about 30 faithful from Armenian communities throughout the world.*

*Aram I gave a public address at the Pontifical Urban University in the morning of November 25, and in the afternoon of the same day he visited the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. On November 26 he met Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, and later visited the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and met with the President, Cardinal Walter Kasper in an informal encounter about ecumenical commitment.*

*We publish here below the original English text of the Pope's greeting and the address of the Catholicos.*

### GREETING OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Your Holiness,*

With heartfelt affection in the Lord I greet you and the distinguished members of your delegation on the occasion of your visit to the Church of Rome. Our meeting today stands in continuity with the visit which you made to my beloved predecessor Pope John Paul II in January 1997, and with the many other contacts and mutual visits which, by God's grace, have led in recent years to closer relations between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church.

In this year of Saint Paul, you will visit the tomb of the Apostle of the Nations and pray with the monastic community at the basilica erected to his memory. In that prayer, you will be united to the great host of Armenian saints and martyrs, teachers and theologians, whose legacy of learning, holiness and missionary achievements are part of the patrimony of the whole Church. We think of Saint Nerses Shnorkhali and Saint Nerses of Lambron who, as Bishop of Tarsus, was known as "the second Paul of Tarsus". That testimony culminated in the twentieth century, which proved a time of unspeakable suffering for your people. The faith and devotion of the Armenian people have been constantly sustained by the memory of the many martyrs who have borne witness to the Gospel down the centuries. May the grace of that witness continue to shape the culture of your nation and inspire in Christ's followers an ever greater trust in the saving and life-giving power of the Cross.

The See of Cilicia has long been involved in encouraging positive ecumenical contacts between the Churches. Indeed, the dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church has benefited significantly from the presence of its

Armenian delegates. We must be hopeful that this dialogue will continue to move forward, since it promises to clarify theological issues which have divided us in the past but now appear open to greater consensus. I am confident that the current work of the International Commission – devoted to the theme: "The Nature, Constitution and Mission of the Church" – will enable many of the specific issues of our theological dialogue to find their proper context and resolution.

Surely the growth in understanding, respect and cooperation which has emerged from ecumenical dialogue promises much for the proclamation of the Gospel in our time. Throughout the world Armenians live side by side with the faithful of the Catholic Church. An increased understanding and appreciation of the apostolic tradition which we share will contribute to an ever more effective common witness to the spiritual and moral values without which a truly just and humane social order cannot exist. For this reason, I trust that new and practical means will be found to give expression to the common declarations we have already signed.

Your Holiness, I cannot fail to assure you of my daily prayers and deep concern for the people of Lebanon and the Middle East. How can we not be grieved by the tensions and conflicts which continue to frustrate all efforts to foster reconciliation and peace at every level of civil and political life in the region? Most recently we have all been saddened by the escalation of persecution and violence against Christians in parts of the Middle East and elsewhere. Only when the countries involved can determine their own destiny, and the various ethnic groups and religious communities accept and respect each other fully, will peace be built on the solid foundations of solidarity, justice and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples.

With these sentiments and with affection in the

Lord, I thank Your Holiness for your visit, and I express my hope that these days spent in Rome will be a source of many graces for you and for all those entrusted to your pastoral care. Upon you and to all the faithful of the Armenian Apostolic Church I invoke an abundance of joy and peace in the Lord.

ORE, December 3, 2008

#### ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS ARAM I

It gives me a profound spiritual joy to greet Your Holiness in the spirit of Christian love and with the commitment to the visible unity of the church, which Your Predecessor His Holiness Pope John Paul II of blessed memory and we greeted each other in 1997. In the Common Declaration that we signed we said that “our meeting has offered a privileged opportunity to pray and reflect together, and to renew our commitment and common efforts to the unity of Christians”.

Renewed and strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit, we continued the ecumenical journey of our predecessors. We firmly believe that this is the only way, sustained by our Lord's commandment of love and unity, that shall lead us to a common mission in a world in dire need of the life-giving message of the Gospel. In fact, the deep involvement of the Armenian Church, together with the other churches of the Oriental Orthodox family, in the bilateral theological dialogue with the Catholic Church, our active participation in major ecumenical initiatives of the Catholic Church on the global level, as well as our close collaboration through ecumenical structures and joint ventures, on local and regional levels, are tangible and eloquent expressions of our Church's firm conviction that ecumenism is crucial for the life and mission of the churches in the world today.

Your Holiness, the ecumenical relations and collaboration of our two Churches are deeply rooted in our respective histories. In fact, due to geopolitical circumstances, when the Armenians were obliged to leave Armenia and establish their national and political life in Cilicia in the 10th century by creating the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, the Armenian Church, too, moved its administrative center, the Catholicoate, from Armenia to Cilicia. This new environment, with its multi-religious, multi-confessional and multi-ethnic character, engaged the Armenians in a creative and dynamic interaction with the Latin and Byzantine Churches. Fraternal meetings, exchanges of letters, formal visits and ecumenical encounters have marked the long history of our relations.

The world of today, with its complexities, polarisations and uncertainties, challenges our Churches to deepen and broaden our ecumenical collaboration and theological dialogue, aimed at the visible unity of the church. In spite of the considerable advances in ecumenical growth and multilateral and bilateral theological dialogues, world Christendom remains divided. We believe that a divided church cannot credibly and effectively take the Gospel to the world. The united voice and the common witness of

the churches in a polarized world is the call of Christ, which is more imperative and urgent today than ever before.

The world of today, with its corrupted values, reminds us of the vital importance of healing and transformation. Our Churches should not remain indifferent to the growing decay of ethical and spiritual values, nor to the marginalization of Christian traditions and the distortion of Christian identity. Uncritical openness of our communities to the “new values” of globalization and secularism need to be tested by the Gospel values that give quality and meaning to Christian life and ensure its integrity and identity.

The world of today, with its dire need for justice and reconciliation, urges our Churches to become the true messengers of peace by promoting human rights, working for justice for those who are denied justice, and seeking peace and reconciliation in situations of tension and conflict. These imperatives form an integral part of Christian witness and diakonia. In this context the churches, the religions and states must recognize all genocides, including the Armenian Genocide, and must endeavour to prevent new genocides by affirming the rights of all people for dignity, freedom and self-determination. This is crucial for a peaceful world.

The world of today, with its growing pluralism, manifested in all spheres and aspects of social life, calls our Churches to involve themselves in a responsible inter-faith dialogue. We are living in a globalized world characterized by interdependence and interaction. We must become part of the dialogue that preserves and articulates the integrity and uniqueness of Christian faith and opens God's revelation, enfolded in the Bible and the Tradition, to other religions, while at the same time, respecting their traditions and values. Lebanon, where I come from, is, indeed, a country of such dialogue.

Your Holiness, this is the challenge before us.

In spite of our doctrinal, ecdesiological and theological differences, we must work together on the basis of our common apostolic faith and in faithfulness to our common calling.

This encounter in the presence of our archbishops, bishops, and laity, representing our communities in the Middle East, in Europe and in North America, marks an important step forward in our centuries-old fraternal relation and collaboration. I am confident that it will enhance our ecumenical commitment to reflecting and acting, witnessing and serving together on the way towards the full realization of God's kingdom inaugurated by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray to the Almighty God to strengthen Your Holiness physically and spiritually as you carry on your pontifical mission in a world torn apart by so many crises and conflicts.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us.

ORE, December 3, 2008

November 26, 2008

*Before the General Audience on Wednesday November 26, held in the Paul VI Audience Hall, the Holy Father greeted H.H. Aram I. Here below is the Papal Greeting, followed by the address of the Catholicos.*

This morning I greet with great joy His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenians, together with the distinguished delegation accompanying him, and the Armenian pilgrims from various countries. This fraternal visit is a significant occasion for strengthening the bonds of unity already existing between us, as we journey towards that full communion which is both the goal set before all Christ's followers and a gift to be implored daily from the Lord.

For this reason, Your Holiness, I invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit on your pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and I invite all present to pray fervently to the Lord that your visit, and our meetings, will mark a further step along the path towards full unity.

Your Holiness, I wish to express my particular gratitude for your constant personal involvement in the field of ecumenism, especially in the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and in the World Council of Churches.

On the exterior façade of the Vatican Basilica is a statue of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, founder of the Armenian Church, whom one of your historians has called "our progenitor and father in the Gospel". The presence of this statue evokes the sufferings he endured in bringing the Armenian people to Christianity, but it also recalls the many martyrs and confessors of the faith whose witness bore rich fruit in the history of your people. Armenian culture and spirituality are pervaded by pride in this witness of their forefathers, who suffered with fidelity and courage in communion with the Lamb slain for the salvation of the world.

Welcome, Your Holiness, dear Bishops and dear friends! Together let us invoke the intercession of Saint Gregory the Illuminator and above all the Vir-

gin Mother of God, so that they will enlighten our way and guide it towards the fullness of that unity which we all desire.

ORE, December 3, 2008

#### DISCOURSE OF H.H. ARAM I

Your Holiness, it gives me a profound spiritual joy to greet you once again in the spirit of Christian love and fellowship. I would like also to greet the faithful of the Church of God who have come here from different parts of the world to get the blessing of Your Holiness.

This Saturday the Armenian Church is going to celebrate its Founders. As Saint Peter and Saint Paul are the Founders of the Church of Rome, Saints Thaddaeus and Bartholomew, the disciples of Christ are Founders of the Armenian Church. Our two Churches have Apostolic origin, but for centuries for our Churches, the apostolicity has never been a sheer ideological legacy but a source of witness and evangelism, of diakonia and mission.

The world of today in which we are experiencing the decay of moral values, the marginalization of spiritual values and Tradition I believe that we should translate the apostolic origin of our Churches to apostolic vocation.

And I greet the See of Your Holiness to involve the Churches in this period of time where we are faced with tremendous problems and crises in a process of re-evangelization.

I believe that we need re-evangelization of our Christian communities, our families, our communities, this is a top priority, an evangelistic priority for our churches.

Therefore, Your Holiness I would like to associate myself with the missionary and evangelistic work, of Your Holiness and on this occasion I would like to make a special appeal to all the churches of the world to join their efforts in a common evangelism in Europe, in the Middle East and in different parts of the world.

Therefore, on this occasion, Your Holiness, I would like to extend to you my best wishes. May God strengthen you physically and spiritually to carry on your Pontifical mission in a world which is in dire need of spiritual transformation. And may God Bless you all.

ORE, December 3, 2008

VISIT TO THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
BY A DELEGATION OF THE HOLY SEE  
FOR THE FEAST OF ST ANDREW

*November 29 - December 1, 2008*

*In the context of the exchange of delegations for the respective Feasts of their Holy Patrons – 29 June in Rome for the celebration of Sts Peter and Paul and 30 November in Istanbul for the celebration of St Andrew – Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity led the Delegation of the Holy See for the Feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, November 29 – December 1, 2008. He was accompanied by Bishop Brian Farrell, L.C., Secretary of the Dicastery, and by Rev. Vladimiro Caroli, O.P., Official of the Eastern Section of the same Dicastery. Archbishop Antonio Lucibello, Apostolic Nuncio in Turkey, joined the delegation in Istanbul. The delegation of the Holy See took part in the solemn divine liturgy at the Patriarchal Church of the Phanar at which H. H. Bartholomew I presided. Cardinal Kasper brought the Ecumenical Patriarch a gift from the Holy Father, accompanied by a hand-written message to him from Pope Benedict XVI, which the Cardinal read out, dated November 26. We publish here below the Pope's message as well the addresses of the Ecumenical Patriarch and Cardinal Kasper.*

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

*To His Holiness Bartholomew I  
Archbishop of Constantinople, Ecumenical Patriarch*

*"Grace to you and peace from God the Father" (Gal 1: 3)*

It is with deep joy that I address these words of Saint Paul to Your Holiness, the Holy Synod and all the Orthodox clergy and lay people assembled for the feast of Saint Andrew, the brother of Saint Peter and, like him, a great apostle and martyr for Christ. I am pleased to be represented on this festal occasion by a delegation led by my venerable brother Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, to whom I am entrusting this message of greetings. My own prayers join with yours as we plead with the Lord for the well-being and unity of the followers of Christ throughout the world.

I give thanks to God that he has enabled us to deepen the bonds of mutual love between us, supported by prayer and ever more regular fraternal contact. In the course of the year that is now drawing to a close, we have been blessed three times by the presence of Your Holiness in Rome: on the occasion of your magisterial address at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, which is honoured to number you among its *alumni*; at the opening of the Pauline Year on the feast of Rome's patron saints, Peter and Paul; and at the Twelfth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church, held in October on the "Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church", when you delivered a most thoughtful address.

As a sign of our growing communion and spiritual closeness, the Catholic Church for her part was represented at the celebrations of the Pauline Year overseen by Your Holiness, including a symposium

and a pilgrimage to the Pauline sites in Asia Minor. These experiences of encounter and shared prayer contribute to an increase in our commitment to attain the goal of our ecumenical journey.

In this same spirit, Your Holiness has informed me of the positive outcome of the Synaxis of the Primate and Representatives of the Orthodox Churches, which took place recently at the Phanar. The hopeful signs which emerged for inter-Orthodox relations and ecumenical engagement have been welcomed with joy. I believe and pray that these developments will have a constructive impact on the official theological dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church, and will lead to a resolution of the difficulties experienced in the last two sessions. As Your Holiness remarked during your address to the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox is now addressing a crucial issue which, once resolved, would draw us closer to full communion.

On this feast of Saint Andrew, we reflect with joy and thanksgiving that the relations between us are entering progressively deeper levels as we renew our commitment to the path of prayer and dialogue. We trust that our common journey will hasten the arrival of that blessed day when we will praise God together in a shared celebration of the Eucharist. The inner life of our Churches and the challenges of our modern world urgently demand this witness of unity among Christ's disciples.

It is with these brotherly sentiments that I extend to Your Holiness my cordial greetings in the Lord, who assures us of his grace and peace.

*From the Vatican, 26 November 2008*

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

ORE, December 10, 2008

November 30, 2008

Your Eminence  
Cardinal Walter Kasper  
Representative of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI,  
Bishop of Rome  
Along with your esteemed entourage,

With much joy and jubilation in the Lord we welcome your presence and participation in the annual celebration of the memory of the glorious Saint Andrew the First Called Disciple, founder of our Holy Church of Constantinople. From our heart we thank our very beloved brother Pope Benedict, the head of the Church in Rome, because he was well disposed to send you here, as the bearer of his brotherly message of feelings of love and honor. These feelings we also return from our hearts, wishing him and the holy sister Church of Rome every blessing and grace from God.

Decades ago, a holy practice was established encouraging the visitation of the representatives of our Churches at each other's thronal feasts. The ever-memorable heads of our Churches, Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI established the first event. It was animated by the living desire that our Churches which had been separated for a whole millennium and, occasionally, found themselves at opposing positions that were not beneficial, finally came into a period of a dialogue of love and truth. This dialogue would have as its end the full restoration of complete unity, just as in the first millennium after Christ.

Today, those who have been entrusted by the mercy of God with the leadership of our Churches possess this same deep desire to continue this bilateral dialogue of love and truth, entrusting the results to the All Holy Spirit, Who leads to "All truth" (John 16:3) and to God Who multiplies our seed (1 Cor 3 :6-7).

Continuing to observe vigilantly from this sacred Center the course of this double dialogue, we rejoice in its continuation and progress. For on the one hand the dialogue of love cleanses our relations from every proselytistic or other activity contradicting the spirit of mutual respect and love, while on the other hand the dialogue of truth, entrusted to the Mixed International Committee, continues its difficult and painful task under the co-presidency of your beloved Eminence, for which we congratulate and thank you.

In today's reading of the Holy Gospel of John during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, we heard how strong the bond was between the Lord and the brothers Andrew and Peter. Since Andrew with another disciple, most probably John, spent a whole day conversing and remaining with the Lord in his lodgings- what a great privilege indeed! Andrew hastens and announces to Peter that we have found the Messiah and presents him to the Lord. This scene is indeed moving and of decisive importance for those things which would take place in the future. Peter

and Andrew, brothers according to the flesh, at that moment also became brothers in Christ, united not only with Him, but also with one another, by imperishable bonds.

After the Ascension of the Lord into the heavens, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the two Apostles went out evangelizing the peoples, being witnesses of the Resurrected Christ. Peter went as far as Rome, sanctifying the Church there through his blood, and Andrew came, according to the ancient tradition, to Byzantium, founding the Church in that place, which would later, by divine providence, become the New Rome, the City of Constantine. Thus, the two brothers, Peter and Andrew, while they may have followed a separate geographical path in bearing witness to the Gospel, they remained united in history through the bond of our two Churches, Rome and Constantinople.

This union between the two apostles, which started as a biological bond, in order for it to become a spiritual bond in the Lord himself, and concluded as a bond of our Churches, we are called to unceasingly have in mind as we proceed toward the restoration of the full union of our Churches. Today, honoring the Apostle Andrew, we also honor his brother Peter, and just as it is not possible for Peter and Andrew to be thought of separately from one another, it is not proper that the Churches of Rome and Constantinople should continue journeying in division.

We are therefore obligated to remove from our midst the thorns, which have accumulated for a millennium, in the relationships of our Churches in matters of faith as well as in issues touching upon the structure and the government of the Church. In this matter, we have as a most valuable guide our common tradition of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the first millennium after Christ, from which we will draw out the basic beliefs and criteria in order to remove the things that the millennium of our separation from one another contributed to the accentuation of the distance between us.

To this, we are not only called as we said earlier, out of respect to the sacred memory of the two first called apostles from whom our Churches draw their very being, but also from our responsibility to the contemporary world which is shaken by a variety of conflicts and has an urgent need of the message of reconciliation brought by the Founder of the Church through His Cross and Resurrection. It is evident that if this message it is not respected by us Christians, its influence upon contemporary man shall remain difficult. The Church must always be in the position to repeat to everyone the words of Philip to Nathaniel, which we heard in today's Gospel passage: "come and see" (John 1:47). Only then will her message be convincing when she is able to give first herself the example of reconciliation and love.

In this spirit, and with these thoughts and feelings, we greet again in our midst the presence of the venerable delegation of the elder sister Church of Rome and His Holiness, her head, our beloved

brother Pope Benedict, asking the Lord to bless and direct the course of our Churches to the fulfillment of His holy will. Amen.

GREETINGS OF CARDINAL WALTER KASPER TO HIS HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW I

Your Holiness,  
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our Lord!

Ἐν εἰρήνῃ προέλθωμεν! Ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου!

*Let us go in peace! In the name of the Lord!*

These words that we have just heard at the conclusion of the Celebration of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostomos have always had a distinct resonance in my mind and in my heart. *Let us go* – we will not cease, we will go ahead. *In peace* – in the peace of the Lord and in the peace among his disciples, extended also towards others. These are things we say and do in the blessed name of the Lord, so that His name may be blessed now and forever. These words extend the liturgy beyond the liturgy itself. They seek to transform the lives of believers into a liturgy without borders, a permanent prayer for peace in our world.

The same words could also be said about our search for full communion. We are called to go ahead in the name of the Lord, by the Lord himself, to continue our efforts to do all that is possible to overcome the existing differences among our Churches so that the world may believe.

It is with these sentiments that I bring the greeting of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to Your Holiness, to the Holy Synod, and to all the clergy and faithful gathered today to celebrate the feast of Saint Andrew, the brother of Peter. The same feast is also being celebrated today in Rome. Let us rejoice in this parallel feast as a sign of shared apostolic heritage, which is handed down to us and which obliges us to pray and to work for the rapprochement of our Churches. For ecumenical commitment is for us not an option but in obedience to our Lord and an essential part of being the Church of Christ.

In reflecting upon relations between the Church of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, I thank the Lord for all that He has enabled us to experience over the last year. Our bond has deepened and has become more clearly focused as we increasingly reinforce our mutual commitment to full communion.

It has been with great joy that we welcomed Your Holiness in Rome three times this year: in March, June and October, respectively for the lectio magistralis at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, for the open-

ing of the Pauline Year in the Basilica St. Paul Outside the Walls, and for your esteemed address to the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church, mindful of course that this address represents a unique historical circumstance, being the first speech of an Ecumenical Patriarch to the Synod of the Church of Rome.

In turn, there have also been many opportunities for the Catholic Church and local Catholic Churches to foster contacts with the See of Constantinople. Recently, a delegation appointed by the Holy Father Benedict XVI took part in the bimillenary celebration of the birth of Saint Paul, an event organised by Your Holiness involving a symposium and pilgrimage to various Pauline sites. Personally I am profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to celebrate together with your Holiness' Delegate the opening of the Pauline Year in Tarsus, the birthplace of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

It is in such ways that our Churches are able to rejoice in the experience of living together in peace. This is truly a step forward in the search for full communion.

In the context of this fraternal encounter of prayer, I feel deeply the need to ask the Lord for insight and support to take more rapid steps towards full unity.

I reflect with optimism on the fact that after the successful outcome of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between our two Churches held in Ravenna (2007), and in line with its recommendations, there have been meetings of the study sub-commissions and more recently of the Joint Coordinating Committee to prepare the continuation of the dialogue.

The session in Ravenna agreed on an important and well-received document on the theme Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority, and decided to tackle now the more specific theme of The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church of the First Millennium. The Joint Coordinating Committee met in Crete as the guests of the Orthodox Church in order to prepare the next plenary session to be held in Cyprus next year. The hospitality of the Church of Crete was generous and overwhelming, and was a further sign of the growing sense of ecclesial fraternity which our Churches mutually endeavour to nurture.

It is an honour and a joy to pass on to Your Holiness the message of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who deeply holds Your Holiness in high esteem and brotherly love. I do so with a sense of respectful esteem, fraternal goodwill and deep prayer for the Church of Constantinople, for Your Holiness and for your distinguished ministry, for all the bishops, all the clergy and the faithful belonging to this Ecumenical Patriarchate. May God bless us and enable us to go ahead in peace and to be witnesses and instruments of peace!

POPE'S MESSAGE ON THE DEATH OF HIS HOLINESS ALEXEY II  
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND OF ALL RUSSIA

*December 5, 2008*

*On the death of Alexey II, Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia on Friday December 5, the Holy Father sent to the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church a telegram in Italian. We publish here below the translation.*

I was profoundly saddened to receive news of the death of His Holiness Alexey II, Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, and with fraternal affection I wish to convey to the Holy Synod and to all the Members of the Russian Orthodox Church my most sincere condolences, assuring you of my spiritual closeness at this very sad time. In my prayer I beseech the Lord to welcome into his Kingdom of eternal peace and joy this tireless servant, and to grant consolation and comfort to all those who mourn his passing. Mindful of the common commitment to the path of mutual understanding and cooperation between Orthodox and Catholics, I am pleased to recall the efforts of the late Patriarch for the rebirth of the Church, after the severe ideological oppression which led to the martyrdom of so many witnesses to the Christian faith. I

also recall his courageous battle for the defence of human and Gospel values, especially in the European Continent, and I trust that his commitment will bear fruit in peace and genuine progress, human, social and spiritual. At this sad time of loss, as his mortal remains are consigned to the earth in the sure hope of resurrection, may the memory of this servant of the Gospel of Christ be a support for those who are now in sorrow and an encouragement for those who will benefit from his spiritual legacy as leader of the venerable Russian Orthodox Church.

With fraternal affection in the Risen Lord,

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

ORE, December 10, 2008

## ECUMENICAL NEWS

MESSAGE OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> CONSULTATION OF UNITED AND UNITING CHURCHES

*Johannesburg, October 29 - November 5, 2008*

As representatives of United and Uniting Churches, we gathered together to reflect on our particular vocation in this time and context, and to consider how God's mission calls us forward. The way we have been responding to the central mandate of the ecumenical movement, namely its call to visible unity, may no longer be sufficient. As the theme, *Going the Second Mile*, suggests, a changing landscape asks for new approaches and a renewed commitment to unity, which may also produce new insights into the nature and mission of our churches. While we thank God and rejoice in the fruits of our ecumenical ventures, we cannot do so without being aware of this enterprise as a continuing process, including the possibility that solutions can become questions again.

From 25 United and Uniting Churches from 20 countries and all continents, we convened at the Cedar Park Convention Centre near Johannesburg, South Africa, together with observers from the Roman Catholic Church and the Organisation of African Instituted Churches. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity was represented by one of its staff members Rev. Gregory Fairbanks. Invited by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, we shared experiences and explored options for our future role within God's mission in reconciling the world to God's self.

Presenters were invited to offer papers on five themes: identity, episcopate, unity & mission, non-traditional perspectives, and criteria for unity/limits of diversity. The conference was hosted by the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Opportunities to visit the Apartheid Museum in Soweto and local congregations gave vital context to our reflections. Guest speakers from South Africa provided important input at the beginning of our conference. Prof. Tinyiko Maluleke (Unisa, Pretoria), Prof. Russel Botman and Prof. Dirk Smit (both University of Stellenbosch) shared with us their profound comments on our theme, from their perspectives of recent experiences of churches in Southern Africa.

In his presentation, Prof. Dirk Smit referred to the structure of the Belhar Confession that emphasized the indissoluble ties between unity, reconciliation and justice. Unity is never an aim by itself. This insight had a great impact on the reflections of this consultation.

In a time of intensifying globalisation we are acutely aware of the contextual character of each

attempt at church unity. Political, social and cultural factors have played a role – and continue to do so – in the still ongoing history of divisions and of uniting processes within Christianity. Often doctrinal issues have been and are being given as exclusively decisive. This can mask the fact that sometimes theological reasoning can be co-opted to serve secular interests. We are more and more conscious that so-called non-theological issues like size, finances, nationality, cultural identity, and other historical and sociological factors, can become either driving forces or stumbling blocks whenever churches try to achieve visible unity. If these issues become the predominant orientation we must recognise their ambivalent impact, because they can be helpful but can also veil the clarity of the purpose. Non-theological issues can have theological implications and vice versa. Like doctrinal decisions, non-theological issues need theological assessment. Given the complexity of these questions, do we have to reconsider our criteria for unity?

We confess that the unity of the universal Church is rooted in the triune God, and is a matter of faith. Unity as a human effort is a response to the unity given in God. Living out of the reconciliation in Christ offered to all, United and Uniting Churches are seeking visible forms of unity. For some, unity is based on a new common confession (organic unity); for others, unity seeks to preserve the distinctiveness of the respective confessional traditions, and these distinctions are welcomed as mutually enriching (reconciled diversity), not seen as a division of the body of Christ.

Unity can only be given a valid visible form when the wider need for reconciliation in specific contexts is taken into account. Unity and reconciliation can only flourish if the liberating message of justification and its implemented understanding of God's justice incites us to pursue human justice.

More than ever we need to stress the relationship among the various aspects of the church's unity and mission. Inclusiveness, although sometimes costly, is essential for a credible witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

United and Uniting Churches do not claim to be forerunners within the ecumenical movement, nor do we see ourselves as relics of an ecumenical past. We do not choose to organise ourselves as another Christian World Communion. We do confirm and renew our commitment to travelling the road to more visible unity. We recognize that our churches will need to maintain an identity-in-process, in which what has been experienced as defining does not exclude the openness to new insights from sometimes unexpected places. Newcomers, migrants, outside voices can offer fresh perspectives. We know that dynamics of arrogance, inertia and error often play a

role in ecclesial life. We intend to keep looking for fresh ways of mutual encouragement and support, in the midst of the complexities of life in the early 21st century.

In imagining our journey into the future we identified different categories of issues.

– Some ecclesiological issues have been part of the ecumenical agenda for decades, like the role of episcopate and episcopacy in unification processes, the partly new questions regarding baptism practices, and the significance of confessional documents in bringing and keeping churches together. They will continue to engage us, albeit from new perspectives.

– Some theological issues are related to rather new challenges that have only played a minor role so far. In many contexts the so-called mainline churches are confronted with fast growing Christian communities that seem to better draw upon experiences and expectations of the people, especially of the youth. New forms of responding to cultural changes have to be explored, not only in the South, but also in the North, where churches have to some extent lost contact with modern and post-modern lifestyles. Do we not sometimes tend to stress the autonomy of congregations at the expense of conciliar decision making?

– Particular questions are linked with the phenomenon of globalisation. Modern means of information and communication provide new options for our communities. Direct contacts between Christians from different cultural backgrounds, especially through migration, imply new challenges and opportunities as well. In certain Evangelical and Pentecostal communities, a Western way of life, particularly as expressed in the so-called prosperity gospel, is sometimes seen as a Christian asset in itself. At the same time certain consequences of globalisation jeopardize peace, justice and the integrity of creation, especially in Southern continents.

We are aware of the fact that these categories can be distinguished, but can not be fully separated: all kinds of cross-references play a role here. It is our intention to share some of our questions in this respect with the Faith and Order Commission, as a reaction to its study on *The Nature and Mission of the Church*.

We will continue to ask ourselves and our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical movement: “What could keep us, in our different contexts, from going further, yet another mile on the road to full visible unity?”.

JOINT WORKING GROUP BETWEEN THE RCC  
AND THE WCC, PLENARY MEETING

November 16-23, 2008

*Ecumenical Institute Château de Bossey  
Geneva, Switzerland*

The Joint Working Group (JWG) which is the instrument that monitors and promotes collaboration between the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and

the World Council of Churches (WCC), met at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva (Switzerland) from 16 to 23 November, 2008. This was the second meeting of the group in its ninth phase running between the 2006 and the 2013 WCC Assemblies.

An essential part of this meeting was to provide detailed information on the World Council of Churches. The first meeting of the group in January of this year had focused on the Roman Catholic Church. Under the leadership of the co-moderators, His Eminence Archbishop and Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste (Romania) and His Excellency Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin (Ireland), the JWG members visited the WCC secretariat in Geneva. They were received by the General Secretary of the WCC, Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, who underlined the importance for the JWG to deepen and foster relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the member churches of the WCC.

During the encounter, the WCC staff introduced the programmes of the WCC to the group. Special emphasis was given to the study projects of the Faith and Order Commission, and the WCC's work on migration, on youth concerns and on the challenges the ecumenical movement is facing at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Presentations on important upcoming events, e.g. the celebration of the centennial of the 1910 World Conference on Mission in 2010 in Edinburgh (United Kingdom), the International Peace Convocation in 2011 in Kingston (Jamaica), and the next WCC General Assembly in 2013, were also included in the programme of the JWG plenary. Members of the group pointed in these discussions to the need to identify and harvest the fruits of ecumenical cooperation in previous decades. This also entails to receive them and to build on them at a time when the ecumenical movement is facing a changing ecclesial landscape within also rapidly changing social, political and cultural contexts.

Another highlight of this plenary meeting of the JWG was a visit to the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambesey. The group attended the evening worship in the church of the centre where its members were warmly welcomed by His Eminence Metropolitan Jérémy. The group visited also the St. Pierre Cathedral of Geneva and the International Museum of the Reformation, given also that churches in Geneva are preparing for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reformer John Calvin in 2009. The programme of visits was concluded with a trip to the community of sisters at Grandchamps because of its spiritual and ecumenical contributions to the churches.

The JWG plenary began to pursue two study processes on *Reception* and *Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism*, motivated by the need to harvest the fruits of many years of mutual encounter and dialogue. The JWG pointed to the fact that churches have been influenced and enriched by their involvement in the ecumenical movement. The group went on to explore the possible ways through which the churches could

make their own the agreements and convergences of ecumenical dialogue and bilateral theological dialogues between churches. Careful attention still needs to be paid to processes essential for receiving the agreements so that prayer, life, and mission of the whole community will be enriched as a necessary element of the goal of full visible unity, which the churches are seeking.

Discussing the important role of Christian spirituality as a basis of ecumenical dialogue, the group discovered the rich treasures of Christian spirituality in different church traditions that are sustaining and nurturing Christians on their common ecumenical pilgrimage. Putting them at the disposal of the ecumenical quest was deemed a necessary practical dimension of the process.

Two themes were also launched as elements of the work of this JWG mandate. The present global phenomenon of migration was analyzed in the different ways it is affecting churches both in the countries from where people leave and to which they go. Migration is changing the face of the local church in many places of the world. While migrants are at times seen as a threat by receiving communities, the group examined possibilities where the church could utilize such new opportunities for deepening Christian ecumenical relations across boundaries of nations and cultures. Not least, the JWG focused its attention on youth, highlighting the need to give a space of leadership and responsibility to young people in the ecumenical movement. The JWG is ready to co-operate with the ECHOS youth commission of the WCC and youth organizations in the RCC in strengthening youth involvement in the ecumenical movement.

The next JWG Plenary was scheduled to take place on September 27 to October 3, 2009 in Cordoba, Spain.

BAPTIST-CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS  
Durham, North Carolina, U.S.A.

December 14-20, 2008

The third round in the second series of conversations between the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the Catholic Church took place December 14-20, 2008 in Durham, North Carolina (United States) at the Duke Divinity School. The group was welcomed by Dr. L. Gregory Jones, Dean, of the Duke Divinity School. The first round in this series was held at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama (USA), from December 10-15, 2006.

The second round was held December 2-8, 2007 in Rome, Italy. A first phase of international conversations had taken place in 1984-1988, resulting in a report in 1990 entitled "Summons to Witness to Christ in Today's World".

The overall theme of this phase, from 2006-2010, is "The Word of God in the Life of the Church: Scripture, Tradition and Koinonia". Bishop Arthur Serratelli, Bishop of Paterson, New Jersey, USA, and Rev. Dr. Paul Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Oxford, Oxford, England, UK, co-chair these conversations on behalf of the Catholic Church and Baptist World Alliance respectively. The secretaries for the co-chairs were Dr. Fausto Vasconcelos of the Study and Research Division of the BWA and Rev. Gregory J. Fairbanks of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The Baptist team consists of permanent members, and persons specially invited as "esteemed guests". Permanent members participating in this round of conversations include Drs. Fred Deegbe from Ghana, Tadeusz Zielinski from Poland, Tomas Mackey of Argentina, Rev. Tony Peck of the Czech Republic and Drs. Timothy George, Steven Harmon and Nora Lozano of the United States. Esteemed guests for this round of conversations included Drs. Curtis Freeman, Elizabeth Newman and Nancy Elizabeth Bedford of the USA.

The Catholic team consists of permanent members and consultants. Participating Catholic members included Drs. Peter Casarella and Susan K. Wood, SCL of the USA, Dr. Krzysztof Mielcarek from Poland, Rev. William Henn, ofm cap. and Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, of Italy, and Rev. Jorge Scampini, O.P. of Argentina. Consultants present included Sr. Sara Butler, M.S.B.T. and Rev. Dermis McManus of the USA.

The topic of this round was "Mary in the Communion of the Church". Papers delivered for the Catholic delegation were *Mary in the Light of Scripture and the Early Church* by Dr. Krzysztof Mielcarek; *Mary in the Light of Ongoing Tradition* by Sr. Sara Butler, M.S.B.T.; *Mary and Contemporary Issues of Inculturation and Spirituality* by Dr. Peter Casarella, and *Marian Issues in Feminism* by Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi. Baptist papers delivered were a response paper by Dr. Elizabeth Newman to Dr. Krzysztof Mielcarek's presentation; *Mary and Contemporary Issues of Inculturation and Spirituality* by Dr. Nora Lozano; and *Mary in the Light of Ongoing Tradition* by Dr. Timothy George.

The group will convene for its fourth round of these conversations in 2009 to study "Oversight and Primacy in the Ministry of the Church".

## COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO A DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH  
COMMITTEE ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

*Thursday, 30 October 2008*

*On Thursday October 30, the Holy Father spoke to a delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations at the Vatican's Hall of Popes. The Pope emphasized the need for serious and honest dialogue which "respects differences and recognizes others precisely in their otherness". The following is the text of the Papal address.*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome this delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. For over thirty years your Committee and the Holy See have had regular and fruitful contacts, which have contributed to greater understanding and acceptance between Catholics and Jews. I gladly take this occasion to reaffirm the Church's commitment to implementing the principles set forth in the historic Declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council. That Declaration, which firmly condemned all forms of antisemitism, represented both a significant milestone in the long history of Catholic-Jewish relations and a summons to a renewed theological understanding of the relations between the Church and the Jewish People.

Christians today are increasingly conscious of the spiritual patrimony they share with the people of the Torah, the people chosen by God in his inexpressible mercy, a patrimony that calls for greater mutual appreciation, respect and love (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 4). Jews too are challenged to discover what they have in common with all who believe in the Lord, the God of Israel, who first revealed himself through his powerful and life-giving word. As the Psalmist reminds us,

God's word is a lamp and a light to our path; it keeps us alive and gives us new life (cf. *Ps* 119:105). That word spurs us to bear common witness to God's love, mercy and truth. This is a vital service in our own time, threatened by the loss of the spiritual and moral values which guarantee human dignity, solidarity, justice and peace.

In our troubled world, so frequently marked by poverty, violence and exploitation, dialogue between cultures and religions must more and more be seen as a sacred duty incumbent upon all those who are committed to building a world worthy of man. The ability to accept and respect one another, and to speak the truth in love, is essential for overcoming differences, preventing misunderstandings and avoiding needless confrontations. As you yourselves have experienced through the years in the meetings of the *International Liaison Committee*, dialogue is only serious and honest when it respects differences and recognizes others precisely in their otherness. A sincere dialogue needs both openness and a firm sense of identity on both sides, in order for each to be enriched by the gifts of the other.

In recent months, I have had the pleasure of meeting with Jewish communities in New York, Paris and here in the Vatican. I thank the Lord for these encounters, and for the progress in Catholic-Jewish relations which they reflect. In this spirit, then, I encourage you to persevere in your important work with patience and renewed commitment. I offer you my prayerful good wishes as your Committee prepares to meet next month in Budapest with a delegation of the Holy See's *Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews*, in order to discuss the theme: "Religion and Civil Society Today".

With these sentiments, dear friends, I ask the Almighty to continue to watch over you and your families, and to guide your steps in the way of peace.

ORE, November 5, 2008

## DOCUMENTATION SUPPLEMENT

### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2010

LETTER FROM THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN UNITY TO THE ECUMENICAL COMMISSIONS  
OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES AND OF THE SYNODS  
OF THE ORIENTAL CATHOLIC CHURCHES

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity is pleased to send you the enclosed resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2010. As you will be aware, 2010 marks the centenary of the modern Ecumenical movement, which is generally considered to have begun with the Edinburgh Mission Conference of 1910.

These materials have been prepared by an international committee comprising representatives from the Pontifical Council and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, working from material provided by an ecumenical group of Christians in Scotland. Thus, the material recalls the involvement of Scottish Christians in preparing the Edinburgh Conference a century ago.

The biblical theme which provides the focus for the material is "You are witnesses of these things," drawn from the discourse of the Lord before his ascension following the events of Easter morning, and the reactions of the women, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the eleven disciples gathered in fear and doubt (Luke 24). Christian Unity is seen as fundamental, and intimately related, to our call to mission.

The contribution of Scottish Christians reflects not merely the historical anniversary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference, but also Scotland's strong

tradition of internationalism, ecumenical co-operation and mission. The contributors use the image of Scottish Tartan to indicate the horizontal lines of dialogue and co-operation between the various Christian communities in Scotland, and the vertical lines of united engagement with society.

The materials include an introduction to the theme, an ecumenical worship service, a selection of readings and reflections for the eight days of the Week of Prayer octave, and an account of the ecumenical context in Scotland. The resources can be drawn upon in many ways, and are intended for use not only during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, but throughout the year 2010. They are available for download on the internet at : [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrs\\_tuni/sub-index/index\\_weeks-prayer.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrs_tuni/sub-index/index_weeks-prayer.htm).

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity requests that you bring these resources to the attention of those responsible for coordinating Prayer for Christian Unity events. We strongly encourage the regional or local adaptation of the material, so that it may effectively address the social and cultural context; this process will provide a further valuable opportunity for collaboration between Christians at a local level.

With every good wish, and in appreciation of your efforts for the cause of Christian Unity, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ

✠ Brian Farrell  
*Secretary*

## NOTE

This text is the English version of the material for the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It has been prepared by the joint group drawn from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches with a view to international distribution. The Ecumenical Commissions of the Bishops' Conferences and the Synods of the Oriental Catholic Churches are invited to adapt it if necessary in order to take into account the local ecumenical situation and the different liturgical traditions.

Kindly contact the Ecumenical Commission of your Bishops' Conference or the Synod in your country in order to obtain a copy of the text adapted for your local context.

## RESOURCES FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR 2010

### YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS

(Lc 24: 48)

*The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity  
The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches*

### TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

#### THE SEARCH FOR UNITY: THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the week of prayer, for example around Pentecost (which was suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the church. Mindful of this flexibility concerning the date, we encourage you to understand the material presented here as an invitation to find opportunities throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already received, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

#### ADAPTING THE TEXT

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use at the local level. In doing this, account must be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should normally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for

adapting the material. In other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

#### USING THE WEEK OF PRAYER MATERIAL

For churches and Christian communities which observe the week of prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.

Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the week of prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the 'eight days', and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.

Communities which observe the week of prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the eight days.

Those wishing to do bible studies on the week of prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.

Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's church.

## BIBLICAL TEXT

### Luke 24

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of [http://profile.ak.fbcdn.net/object3/208/78/n167283984656\\_2058.jpg](http://profile.ak.fbcdn.net/object3/208/78/n167283984656_2058.jpg) our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' <sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because

it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

<sup>36</sup> While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' <sup>37</sup>They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

(New Revised Standard Version).

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2010

During the past century reconciliation between Christians has taken on very different forms. Spiritual ecumenism has shown how important prayer is for Christian unity. Great energy has been put into theological research which has led to a large number of doctrinal accords. Practical cooperation between churches in the social field has given birth to fruitful initiatives. Alongside these major accomplishments, the question of mission has had a particular place. It is even generally held that the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh marked the beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement.

Not everyone naturally makes the link between missionary endeavour and the desire for Christian Unity. Yet surely the missionary commitment of the church must go hand in hand with its ecumenical commitment? Because of our baptism we are already one body and we are called to live in communion. God has made us brothers and sisters in Christ. Is not this the fundamental witness that we are called to?

Historically the fact that the question of Christian unity was often first raised by missionaries was for practical reasons. This was often simply so as to avoid unnecessary competition in the face of enormous human and material need. The territory to be evangelized was shared out and occasionally attempts were made to go further than having activities running in parallel to one another and to favour some common projects. Missionaries from different churches might for example combine their resources to undertake a new translation of the Bible and this cooperation in the service of the Word of God led to reflections on the divisions between Christians.

Without denying the rivalries that existed between missionaries sent by different churches, it should also be recognized that those who were first in the mission field were also the first to recognize the tragedy of Christian division. Europe had got used to divisions between churches but the scandal of disunity seemed dreadful to missionaries who were announcing the gospel to people who had known nothing of Christ until then. Of course the different church divisions which have marked Christian history did have theological reasons, but they were also marked by the context (historical, political, intellectual ...) which gave birth to them. Could it be justified to export these divisions to peoples who were discovering Christ?

In the midst of their fresh beginnings the new local churches could hardly fail to notice the gap between the message of love which they wanted to live out and the actual separation between Christ's disciples. How can you make others understand the reconciliation offered in Jesus Christ if the baptised themselves ignore or fight one another? How could Christian groups who lived in mutual hostility preach one Lord, one faith and one baptism in a credible way?

There was, then, no lack of ecumenical questions for the participants at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910.

#### THE EDINBURGH MISSION CONFERENCE OF 1910

The official delegates of Protestant mission societies from the different branches of Protestantism and Anglicanism, joined by an Orthodox guest, met during the summer of 1910 in the Scottish capital. The Conference which was not a decision-making gathering had no other aim than to help missionaries to forge a common spirit and coordinate their work.

Only those missionary societies working to announce the gospel in new places where Christ had

not yet been made known were present. Thus those societies working in Latin America or the Middle East where the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches had already been for a long time, were not invited.

In 1910 the Scottish ecclesial landscape was beginning to diversify and the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches once more enjoyed a more important role. Edinburgh was chosen as the place for the meeting because of its intellectual and cultural vitality. The fame of its theologians and church leaders also encouraged this choice. Scottish Protestant churches were also particularly active in mission and had a reputation for paying attention to local cultures.

#### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN SCOTLAND TODAY

To honour this important stage in the history of the ecumenical movement it was natural for the promoters of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – The Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity – to invite the Scottish churches to prepare the 2010 Week of Prayer at the same time as they were actively involved in preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the 1910 Conference on the theme “Witnessing to Christ today”. In response these churches suggested as the theme “You are witnesses of these things” (*Luke 24.48*).

#### THE BIBLICAL THEME: YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS

In the ecumenical movement we have often meditated on Jesus' final discourse before his death. In this final testament the importance of the unity of Christ's disciples is emphasized: “That all may be one ... so that the world may believe” (*John 17.21*).

This year the churches of Scotland have made the original choice of inviting us to listen to Christ's final discourse before his ascension, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (*Luke 24.46-48*). It is on these final words of Christ that we shall reflect each day.

During the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we are invited to follow the whole of chapter 24 of Luke's gospel. Whether it be the terrified women at the tomb, the two discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus or the eleven disciples overtaken by doubt and fear, all who together encounter the Risen Christ are sent on mission: “You are witness of these things”. This mission of the Church is given by Christ and cannot be appropriated by anyone. It is the community of those who have been reconciled with God and in God, and who can witness to the truth of the power of salvation in Jesus Christ.

We sense that Mary Magdalene, Peter or the two Emmaus disciples will not witness in the same way.

Yet it will be the victory of Jesus over death that all will place at the heart of their witness. The personal encounter with the risen One has radically changed their lives and in its uniqueness for each one of them one thing becomes imperative: "You are witnesses of these things". Their story will accentuate different things, sometimes dissent may arise between them about what faithfulness to Christ requires, and yet all will work to announce the Good News.

#### THE EIGHT DAYS

During the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we will reflect each day on chapter 24 of Luke's gospel stopping at the questions which it asks: Jesus' questions to his disciples; the questions the apostles ask of Christ.

Each of these questions allows us to highlight a particular way of witnessing to the Risen One. Each of them invites us to think about our situation of church division and about how, concretely, we can remedy that. We are already witnesses and we need to become better witnesses. How?

by praising the One who gives us the gift of life and resurrection (Day 1)

by knowing how to share the story of our faith with others (Day 2)

by recognizing that God is at work in our lives (Day 3)

by giving thanks for the faith we have received (Day 4)

by confessing Christ's victory over all suffering (Day 5)

by seeking to always be more faithful to the Word of God (Day 6)

by growing in faith, hope and love (Day 7)

by offering hospitality and knowing how to receive it when it is offered to us (Day 8)

Would our witness not be more faithful to the gospel of Christ in each of these eight aspects if we witnessed together?

#### EDINBURGH 2010

The one hundredth anniversary of the Mission Conference which took place in the City a century earlier will be marked in June 2010 ([www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)). The organisers want this meeting to be a time of thanksgiving for the progress in mission God has made possible. They have also given an important place to prayer, to offering to Christ the witness which churches will have to bear together during the 21st century.

This meeting should also allow those working in the mission field for a long time and representatives from more recent currents to share their perspectives. Members of different church traditions will also be able to discuss their mission practice.

The world has changed a lot since 1910 and once more mission must be thought about anew. Secularisation and de-Christianization, new means of communication, interconfessional relations, interreli-

gious dialogue ... there are many issues to discuss. While everyone may agree on the need for Christ's disciples to witness to him, it is still difficult to arrive at a common understanding of what mission needs to be today. Within individual churches there is no lack of discussion. Would this discussion not benefit from being held by all of the churches together?

1910 ... 2010: Christians have at heart a similar sense of urgency: for our humanity wounded by division the gospel is not a luxury; the gospel cannot be proclaimed by discordant voices.

In Christ, those filled with hatred can find the path of reconciliation. In Christ those whom everything divides can find the joy of living as brothers and sisters ... You are witnesses of these things.

#### THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2010

The initial work leading to the publication of this booklet was done by a Scottish ecumenical group brought together by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) at the invitation of the Catholic Bishops' conference. We particularly want to thank all of those who contributed:

Mr Andrew Barr (Episcopal Church of Scotland)  
Major Alan Dixon (Salvation Army)  
Rev. Carol Ford (Church of Scotland)  
Rev. Willie McFadden (Roman Catholic Church)  
Rev. Lindsay Sanderson (ACTS, United Reformed Church)

The texts proposed here were finalized during the meeting of the international preparatory group nominated by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The group met at Scotus College in Glasgow, Scotland's national Roman Catholic seminary. We are particularly grateful to the seminary's Rector the very Rev. William McFadden, to the seminarians and the whole staff for their warm welcome, their availability and the prayerful way in which they accompanied our work. Finally a special word of thanks to the Rev. Lindsay Sanderson (ACTS Assistant General Secretary) for having revised the texts together with the Rev. McFadden, for the times of common prayer and the exchanges organized with representatives of the various Christian churches of Scotland, as well as the overall preparation of the meeting.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

*"You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24, 48)*

The theme for the 2010 week of prayer for Christian Unity is "*You are witnesses of these things*". It comes from chapter 24 of Luke's gospel which is the central focus of this service. This is also the theme which Scottish Christians have chosen to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference.

In 1910 members of the meeting in Edinburgh heard prophetic witness as to how divisions between Christians not only weaken missionary effectiveness, but also the Church and body of Christ and its mission.

In 2010 the Christians of Scotland invite ecumenical gatherings to read aloud the whole of this chapter of Luke. Thus preaching, thanksgiving, intercession and the celebration of being sent out in the name of the gospel can all be fully developed. This will lead to an appreciation of the resurrection of Christ as the source of ecclesial communion, of being sent out in mission, of the intrinsic link between mission and unity and, therefore, of the continual need to renew our commitment to Christian unity.

It was precisely this reciprocal demand for evangelism and for ecumenism that the pioneers of the ecumenical movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century emphasized with such faith, strength and clarity.

#### ORDER OF SERVICE

The order of service is deliberately very simple. This choice was made in order to help with adapting it to local situations and to allow Christians from all traditions to come together without difficulty to pray while respecting their diversity. It is quite possible to expand a part of the service. The simplicity of the structure – (I) gathering, (II) celebration of the Word of God, (III) intercessions, (IV) sending – means that congregations which prefer freer forms of worship and spontaneous prayer should also be able to use the material.

#### 1. *Gathering*

*Opening hymn.* During the singing of this hymn, the Bible or the book of the gospels is brought forwards and placed either on the lectern, table or altar depending on local custom.

In the *words of welcome* the person presiding welcomes all communities and leaders who are attending.

The assembly is then invited to give thanks to God for the resurrection of his son Jesus Christ and to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit to renew Christian mission and unity in the spirit of the Edinburgh call of 1910 (see also the general introduction and the passage above).

The *opening prayer* can also be chosen from the anthology in the appendix.

#### 2. *Proclamation of Luke 24*

The *Gospel hymn of praise.* There are a variety to choose from: hymns to the risen Christ, a gloria, an alleluia in a more developed form, a chant or responsive paschal Psalm or one which evokes the sending out of the witnesses of the resurrection.

Reading Luke 24 in full is recommended for the proclamation of the gospel.

This can be done by one reader or by several: the narrator, the voice of Christ, the angels, the Emmaus disciples and the Jerusalem disciples.

At verse 34 a dialogue with the congregation is possible:

Reader: It's true the Lord is risen and he appeared to Simon.

Congregation: It's true ! Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!

– Another possibility is to sing a verse of praise between the reading of the three sections of the chapter : The Easter message at the tomb (v. 1-12); appearing to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (v. 13-35); appearing to the eleven (v. 36-53). Other expressions of praise are also possible, such as applauding after each appearance by the risen one as done in the Chaldean church.

– In particular with children or young people mime or other forms of theatre could be used.

– It might also be possible to use icons, pictures or video ...

Before and following the sermon the time given to singing, music and silence needs to be defined.

#### 3. *Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession*

These are inspired by the material prepared for each day of the week of prayer. They invoke the name of the Lord and celebrate God in his generosity and hospitality towards us manifested in Jesus Christ. They are at once prayers of supplication and a request for God's consecration of witnesses to the Gospel, united by one faith and one baptism, and by the common witness of the church which is undivided in its hope.

#### 4. *Sending*

A prayer by a Scottish Christian is proposed as a prayer of commitment. It expresses our desire to ask for God's blessing for the present and future, both of the ecumenical movement and of evangelism. In the year 2010 as we approach a new "Edinburgh commitment", may our gatherings for prayer hear the more than ever contemporary call to evangelize in unity: "May we be one, that the world may believe", and may our response to Christ's call to bear united witness to his resurrection be strengthened.

#### USING THE MATERIAL FOR PRAYER IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

This service outline could also be used for a joint service to mark Easter in 2010 or in those coming years when Christians celebrate Easter on the same date (4 April 2010, 24 April 2011, 20 April 2014, 16 April 2017). The material can also be used for worship in local congregations.

## ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

### 1. GATHERING

#### OPENING HYMN

#### OPENING RESPONSES

L. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling..."

A. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all".

L. "It is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem..."

A. "We are the witnesses of these things".

#### WORDS OF WELCOME

#### OPENING PRAYER

O risen Christ,  
On the road to Emmaus you were the disciples' companion.

Be at our side on the journey of faith on life's pathways and at every encounter, engender our compassion so that we may welcome others and listen to their stories.

Kindle anew the desire to proclaim your Word.

May it illumine us and may our hearts burn to bear witness to it.

May your Holy Spirit teach us the art of explaining scripture and open our eyes to recognize you.

Grant us the courage to become vulnerable so that our sisters and brothers may know you through us and that we may know you through them  
Amen.

### 2. CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Sung acclamation of the gospel

Reading of the whole of chapter 24 of the Gospel of *Luke*

Sermon

Hymn

The peace

L. Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you". Do not look upon our sin but on the faith of your church. To fulfil your will, grant this peace to your church and lead it to perfect

unity, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

A. Amen.

L. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

A. And also with you.

*Or*

L. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

A. The risen Christ is indeed among us.

*Or*

L. Christ is risen.

A. Christ is risen indeed ! Alleluia.

The Nicene-Constantinople creed (without the filioque)

Offering and hymn

### 3. INTERCESSIONS

Creator and saviour God, we praise you for all our different communities who together want to confess, through word and deed, their faith in the risen Christ, who brings us life.

May we so progress in our ecumenical commitment that we become more united both in our thanksgiving for creation and in our concerted action to uphold life.

*Kyrie eleison (or an alternative sung response)*

God, you have made yourself known to us in our story, we give you thanks for being with us and for having given us your Son to reveal your love and share your glory.

Guide the steps of all who bear witness to the gospel towards perfect unity, in careful and patient listening to cultures and people's history.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, you who never abandon us, we give you thanks for the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus with the risen Christ.

Grant that we may feel Christ's presence with us on our journey. Warm our hearts and open our understanding, that we may bear witness to your active presence in the power of his resurrection.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, from whom every perfect gift comes, we give you thanks that from the dawn of time from generation to generation you have never ceased to awaken that cloud of witnesses which transmitted the faith of the apostles. (Saint Ninian, Saint Columbus ... - *at this point each congregation can mention local evangelists and martyrs*).

We pray that we may be faithful to this faith we have been entrusted with, and creative, so as together to open up new paths of the gospel.

*Kyrie eleison*

God of compassion, we give you thanks because you have reconciled the world through the cross of your Son.

Increase our faith, that it may give our churches and each of us, with Christ and following his example, the strength always to stand more effectively alongside people in their lives, suffering and death.

*Kyrie eleison*

God, we put our hope in you and praise you for Jesus' promise, "See, I am with you always even unto the end of time".

You see the doubts which beset our hearts on the path to Christian unity. Following the example of the ecumenical pioneers of the Edinburgh conference of 1910, give us courage to denounce together our current fears and clarity to regain trust in 2010 on the path to the fulfilment of your will.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

4. SENDING

Prayer of commitment

L. Let us pray.

A. Take us from where we are, to where you want us to be;

make us not merely guardians of a heritage,  
but living signs of your coming Kingdom;

fire us with passion for justice and peace between  
all people;

fill us with that faith, hope and love which embody  
the Gospel;

and through the power of the Holy Spirit make us one.

That the world may believe, that your name may be enthroned in our nation,

that your church may more effectively be your body,

we commit ourselves to love you, serve you, and follow you as pilgrims not strangers.

(ACTS commitment. Taken from the Inaugural Service of Action of Churches Together in Scotland)

BLESSING

L. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God

and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you always.

A. And also with you.

*or*

L. The Lord who conquered darkness with light,  
give peace to you.

The Lord who conquered death with life,  
give peace to you.

The Lord who conquered loneliness with love,  
give peace to you.

*Or another blessing.*

SENDING FORTH

L. Today the risen Christ says to us, "As the Father sent me, so I send you".

A. Amen.

L. We have been told the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus, "We are the witnesses of these things".  
Go then in the peace of Christ. Alleluia!

A. Thanks be to God. Amen, Alleluia!

FINAL HYMN

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE "EIGHT DAYS"

Day 1

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH CELEBRATING LIFE

Text - Why do you look for the living among the dead? (*Luke 24:5*)

Readings

Genesis 1:1. 26-31 God saw all that he had made,  
and indeed, it was very good

Psalms 104:1-24 O Lord, how manifold are your  
works

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 If the dead are not raised, then  
Christ has not been raised

Luke 24:1-5

Why do you look for the living  
among the dead?

COMMENTARY

Our journey of Christian unity is firmly rooted in our common belief that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we celebrate not only the life God has

given us but the offer of new life through Jesus' conquering death once and for all. As we meet together during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we witness to our shared faith by our concern for the life of all. Life is God's gift to us, and the more we support and celebrate life, the more we give witness to the one whose generous love brought us to life initially.

The reading from the book of Genesis reminds us of the creative power and energy of God. It is this power and energy that St Paul encounters in experiencing Jesus' resurrection.

He challenges the people of Corinth to put their total trust in the Risen Lord and his offer of new life.

The psalm continues this theme as it proclaims the glory of God's creation.

Our gospel passage challenges us to look for new life in the face of a culture of death that our world frequently presents to us. It encourages us to trust in Jesus' power, and so to experience life and healing.

Today, we thank God for all that shows God's love for us: for all of creation; for brothers and sisters in

all parts of the world; for communion in love, for forgiveness and healing and for life eternal.

#### PRAYER

God our creator, we praise you for all who give witness to their faith by their words and actions. In living life to the full we encounter your loving presence in the many experiences you offer us. May our common witness of celebrating life unite us in blessing you, the author of all life.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do your own witness and the witness of your church celebrate life?
2. Will others know from your witness that Christ has been raised from the dead?
3. What do you see as the areas of growth in your life?
4. Are there things of the past that the churches cling to which ought to be laid to rest because of a new ecumenical consciousness?

## Day 2

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH SHARING STORIES

Text - What are you discussing with each other while you walk along? (*Luke 24:17*)

#### Readings

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Jeremiah 1:4-8 | Go to all to whom I send you                                  |
| Psalms 98      | Sing to the Lord a new song                                   |
| Acts 14:21-23  | They strengthened the souls of the disciples                  |
| Luke 24:13-17a | What are you discussing with each other while you walk along? |

#### COMMENTARY

Sharing our stories is a powerful way in which we give witness to our faith in God. Listening to one another with respect and consideration allows us to encounter God in the very person with whom we are sharing.

The reading from Jeremiah offers us a powerful witness of God's call to the prophet. He is to share what he has received, and so allow God's Word to be heard and lived out.

This call to proclaim God's Word is also experienced by the disciples in the early Church, as witnessed to in the reading from Acts.

Our psalm allows us to sing to God with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving.

Today's gospel passage presents a Jesus who enlightens our blindness and dispels our disillusionment. He helps us to understand our stories within the one unfolding plan of God.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we listen to the faith stories of other Christians in order to encounter God in the variety of ways God's very self is revealed to us. We are aware also that we can share with others through the virtual reality of technology. Modern means of communication can help us share more widely, and so create a community that is broader and more extensive than the purely physical.

In listening with attentiveness we grow in faith and love. In spite of the diversity of our personal and collective witness, we find ourselves intertwined in the one story of God's love for us revealed in Jesus Christ.

#### PRAYER

God of history, we thank you for all who have shared their story of faith with us and so have given witness to your presence in their lives. We praise you for the variety of our stories both as individuals and churches. In these stories we see the unfolding of the one story of Jesus Christ. We pray for the courage and the conviction to share our faith with those with whom we come into contact, and so allow the message of your Word to spread to all.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Are you "gossiping the Gospel" or just gossiping?  
How open are you or your church to be drawn into the stories of others?

How open are you to share with others your stories of faith, and so give witness to God's presence in your personal experiences of life and of death?

Are you aware of the enormous potential for good that modern means of communication offer the Church today?

### Day 3

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH AWARENESS

Text - Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days? (*Luke 24:18*)

#### Readings

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 Samuel 3:1-10 | Speak, Lord, your servant is listening             |
| Psalms 23       | The Lord is my Shepherd                            |
| Acts 8:26-40    | Philip proclaimed to him the Good News about Jesus |
| Luke 24:13-19a  | ...their eyes were kept from recognizing him       |

#### COMMENTARY

Growing in faith is a complex journey. Many people in our world today lead busy lives and have lots of pressures and responsibilities. It is easy to miss God's revealing love to us in our everyday life and experiences. The more pressure and activity we surround ourselves with, then the greater the possibility of overlooking what is in fact before our very eyes. Like the two disciples in the gospel, we sometimes think we know what is real, and try to explain our view to others, yet we are not aware of the full truth. In our world today we are invited to be aware of God in the surprising and unlikely events of life.

In our Old Testament reading, we hear how God calls and invites Samuel to bear witness. Samuel first of all has to hear this word. Hearing requires an open disposition and a willingness to listen to God.

This desire to hear God's Word is also experienced by both Philip and the Ethiopian in the reading from Acts. They witness to their faith by responding to what is asked of them at that precise moment in time. They listen attentively and respond accordingly.

The psalm of the Good Shepherd reflects the quiet trust of the one who is aware of the tender care of God, Who gathers the flock and leads them to green pastures.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we seek to be aware of God in our everyday events and experiences. We meet people who are familiar and others who are strangers. In these encounters we learn from each other's spiritual experiences and so get a new view of God's reality. This awareness of God's presence challenges us to work for Christian unity.

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd, You encounter us and remain with us in everyday life. We pray for the grace to be aware of all you do for us. We ask that you prepare us to be open to all you offer us and bring us together in one flock.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you been aware of God's presence in your life?

Are you aware of global celebrations and tragedies, and how might our churches together respond to these?

Is being aware enough, or is there something more that you might do in order to give witness to your faith?

How do you make yourself aware of God when the reality of God's presence does not correspond to your expectations?

### Day 4

Theme - BEARING WITNESS THROUGH CELEBRATING THE FAITH WE HAVE RECEIVED

Text - "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth" (*Luke 24:19*)

#### Readings

|                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Deuteronomy 6:3-9 | The Lord is our God, the Lord alone |
| Psalms 34         | I will bless the Lord at all times  |
| Acts 4:32-35      | Of one heart and soul               |
| Luke 24, 17-21    | But we had hoped...                 |

#### COMMENTARY

We have an enormous debt of gratitude to those whose faith has provided the foundation for our Christian lives today. Numerous men and women through their prayer, witness and worship have ensured that the faith is handed down to the next

generations. In Scotland we have an impressive Christian history: Saint Ninian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Columbus in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the many Celtic saints whose faith was rooted in the love of God and wonder at his creation. The faith of Scottish people can also be seen in the very important role played in the diffusion of the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the way in which this spirit has been firmly maintained since then.

Today's readings affirm the importance of supporting the community of faith in order to ensure the dissemination of the Word of God. The passage from Deuteronomy gives us the beautiful prayer of our Jewish sisters and brothers, who every day use these words to praise God. The Psalm invites us to bear witness through praise for what we have received as believers, so that our faith may be shown through glorifying and thanksgiving. The extract from Acts reveals a community united in faith and charity. The gospel passage shows us Jesus as the centre of what we have received in faith.

As we unite with our Christian brothers and sisters in praying for unity during this week, we welcome the rich variety of our Christian heritage. We

pray that awareness of our common heritage may unite us more closely as we progress in faith.

#### PRAYER

Lord God, we give you thanks for all the people and communities who have communicated the message of the Good News to us, and thus given us a solid foundation for our faith today. We pray that we too may together bear witness to our faith, so that others may know you and place their trust in the truth of salvation offered in Jesus Christ for the life of the world.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who inspired you in your faith?
- What are the aspects of faith which inspire you in your everyday life?
- What do you feel were the most important teachings which were passed on to you?
- How can you recognize God at work with you in the transmission of faith to the future generations?

### Day 5

Theme -WITNESS THROUGH SUFFERING

Text - Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory? (*Luke 24.26*)

#### Readings

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Isaiah 50.5-9  | The one who vindicates me is near               |
| Psalms 124     | Our help is in the name of the Lord             |
| Romans 8.35-39 | God's love shown forth in Jesus Christ          |
| Luke 24.25-27  | He interpreted to them the things about himself |

#### COMMENTARY

In recent years two events which took place in Scotland led to this small country suddenly becoming the centre of attention of the world's media. The bomb attack on the plane above Lockerbie and the massacre of children in Dunblane school brought attention to the nation which will always remember these terrible losses of human life. The two events caused suffering and unimaginable anguish to a large number of people and the consequences were felt well beyond the physical borders of the two places. Innocent people met their death in horrifying circumstances.

The reality of suffering is something that the Prophet Isaiah speaks about forcefully in today's text, in which he reminds us that God is never resigned to see-

ing humanity suffer. In response the Psalm proclaims the trust that believers must maintain in their Saviour.

The letter to the Romans proclaims the certainty that love is always strongest and that suffering and sorrow will never prevail. For before offering the resurrection to the world, Christ entered into a terrible death and into the dark depths of the tomb so as to be completely with us at our very lowest ebb.

In the Lord's footsteps, Christians who seek full unity show their solidarity to those amongst them who are confronted in their lives with tragic situations of suffering, by confessing that love is stronger than death. And that it was from the extreme humiliation of the tomb that resurrection came like a new sun for humanity; a clamouring annunciation of life, forgiveness and immortality.

#### PRAYER

God our Father, look with compassion on our situations of poverty, suffering, sin and death, we ask you for forgiveness, healing, comfort and support in our ordeals.

We give you thanks for all who manage to see light in their affliction.

May your divine Spirit teach us the greatness of your compassion and help us stand alongside our sisters and brothers in difficulty. Filled with its bless-

ings, may we in unity proclaim and share with the world the victory of your Son who lives for ever.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can you show empathy to those who suffer and are in difficulties?  
What wisdom and deeper understanding have

you gained through suffering you have known in your own life?

How do you live out solidarity with the suffering and oppression that so many people living in poverty in our world experience, and what is your own experience of it?

How would you bear witness to the mercy of God and to the hope you find in the light of the cross of Christ?

### Day 6

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH FAITHFULNESS TO THE SCRIPTURES

Text - Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us? (*Luke 24:32*)

#### Readings

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Isaiah 55:10-11   | The word that goes forth from my mouth does not return to me empty |
| Psalms 119:17-40  | Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of your Law                |
| 2 Timothy 3:14-17 | All scripture is inspired by God                                   |
| Luke 24:28-35     | Jesus opens the Scriptures to His disciples                        |

#### COMMENTARY

Christians encounter God's Word in a privileged way through reading the Sacred Scriptures and celebrating the sacraments. In faithfully listening to the proclamation of Holy Scripture, and by prayerfully reading the various books of the Bible, they open their hearts and minds to receive the very Word of God. Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to make them understand the Word of God, and to guide them in all truth.

Historically, Christians have been divided in reading and understanding the Word of God. They often used the Bible to emphasize their disagreement rather than to find ways for reconciliation. Fortunately, in recent times, in their search for unity, Sacred Scripture has brought Christians closer to one another. Shared Bible study has become a major means of growing together among them. The Christian journey that we celebrate during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is one that is firmly rooted in our shared listening to God's Word, trying together to understand and to live it.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's Word powerfully proclaimed is indeed effective and operative. It does not return to God empty but succeeds in the purpose for which He sent it. This message is

repeated in the words addressed to Timothy, as he is directed to believe in the efficacy of the Scriptures by which the faithful are equipped for every good work.

Our psalm gives praise for God's words and statutes and implores God to give understanding, that we may keep the Holy Law with our whole heart.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we pray that all Christians may enter more deeply into the mystery of God's wonderful revelation as it comes to us in Holy Scripture. We beseech the Holy Spirit to help us better comprehend the Word of God and to direct us on our common journey of faith until we will all be gathered again around the one table of the Lord.

#### PRAYER

God, we praise and thank you for your saving Word as it reaches out to us through the Sacred Scriptures. We thank you too for the brothers and sisters with whom we share your Word and discover together the abundance of Your love. We pray for the light of the Holy Spirit, so that Your Word may lead and direct us in our quest for greater unity.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are the passages of Scripture that mean most to you?

Who or what in your life makes your heart burn with a passion for the gospel and a desire to give witness to Christ?

Which passages from the Scriptures have helped you to better understand the witness of other Christians?

How may our churches use the Scripture more effectively in their daily life and prayer?

## Day 7

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH HOPE AND TRUST

Text - Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (*Luke 24:38*)

### Readings

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Job 19:23-27   | God whom I shall see on my side           |
| Psalms 63      | My soul thirsts for You                   |
| Acts 3:1-10    | What I have, I give you                   |
| Luke 24: 36-40 | The disciples were startled and terrified |

### COMMENTARY

During their journey in life and faith, all Christians experience moments of doubt. When Christians cannot recognise the presence of the risen Christ, being together sometimes makes their doubts even heavier, rather than lighter.

The challenge faced by Christians is to continue to believe that even when they do not see or feel God, God remains with them. The virtues of faith, hope and trust allow them to give witness that their faith goes beyond their own possibilities.

The character Job gives us an example of someone who faced difficult trials and tribulations and even argued with God. In faith and hope however, he believed that God would remain on his side. This reliance and conviction is also shown by the actions of Peter and John in the account with the lame man as told in Acts. Their belief in the Name of Jesus allows them to witness powerfully to all who were present.

Today's psalm is a prayer reflecting our deep desire for God's steadfast love.

Our meeting during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity allows our communities to grow in shared faith, hope and love. We bear witness to God's steadfast love to all people, and God's faithfulness to the one church we are called to be.

The more we witness together, the stronger our message will be.

### PRAYER

God of hope, share Your vision of the one church with us, and overcome our doubts. Increase our faith in your presence, that all who profess belief in you may worship together in spirit and in truth. We especially pray for all who are in doubt right now, or whose lives are spent in the shadow of danger and fear. Be with them and give them your consoling presence.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you deal with your own fears and doubts?

How might you be a cause of fear and anxiety for others by your behaviour?

When have you faced up to your own fears and doubts and so given witness to your faith in Christ by overcoming these difficulties?

How may Christian communities encourage one another in faith and hope?

## Day 8

Theme - WITNESS THROUGH HOSPITALITY

Text - Have you anything here to eat? (*Luke 24:41*)

### Readings

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Genesis 18:1-8  | Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves       |
| Psalms 146      | He who gives justice to the oppressed and gives food to the hungry |
| Romans 14:17-19 | Pursue what makes for peace and mutual edification                 |
| Luke 24:41-48   | Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures            |

### COMMENTARY

Today, electronic communication has made us neighbours in one small and overladed planet. As in

the time of Luke, many peoples and communities have had to leave their homes, wandering and journeying to strange lands. People of the world's great faiths have arrived bringing new beliefs and cultures to our communities.

In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we recognise in our shared journey towards unity the hospitality and companionship of Christians of all churches. Christ also calls us both to offer and to receive the hospitality of the stranger who has become our neighbour. Surely, if we cannot see Christ in the other, then we cannot see Christ at all.

The story in Genesis describes how Abraham receives God in opening his house and offering hospitality to strangers.

The God of all creation also stands with the prisoner, the blind, the stranger. Our psalm is an offering

of praise for God's everlasting faithfulness and all that God has done for us.

The text from Romans reminds us that the kingdom of God comes about through justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The resurrected Christ brings his disciples together, eats with them and they recognise him again. He reminds them of what the scriptures said about him and explains what they did not understand before. Thus, he frees them from their doubts and fears and sends them out to become witnesses of these things. In creating this space for encounter with him he enables them to receive his peace, that implies justice for the oppressed, care for the hungry and the mutual up-building as the gifts of the new world of the resurrection. Christians throughout history have found the risen Lord as they have served others and been served by others in faith, so we too can encounter Christ when we share our lives and our gifts.

#### PRAYER

God of love, You have shown us your hospitality in Christ. We acknowledge that through sharing our gifts with all we meet you. Give us the grace that we may become one on our journey together and recognise you in one another. In welcoming the stranger in your name may we become witnesses to your hospitality and your justice.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

To what extent is the country in which you live hospitable to the stranger?

How in your own neighbourhood can the stranger find hospitality and a space to live?

How might you show gratitude for those who have shown you hospitality by being available?

How does the cross show us that God's hospitality is a hospitality lived out in total self-giving?

#### ADDITIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCES FROM SCOTLAND

##### HOLY SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

As the poor long for abundance shared and injustice ended, and the Church longs for unity;

Challenge us to see these two visions as vital threads in a single tapestry;

Sharpen our wit and imagination to weave the two together in the footsteps of Jesus for the life of the world to the glory of God!

(Carolyn Smyth)

##### RISEN CHRIST,

As you journeyed with the two who travelled the Emmaus Road travel with us on our journey of faith.

In our encounters on the way give us compassion to listen to the other's story,  
patience to explain what may seem obvious to ourselves,  
and courage to make ourselves vulnerable,  
so that others may encounter you through us and we may rediscover you through them.

Amen.

(Lindsey Sanderson)

#### PRAYER/MEDITATION OF WITNESS

This reflective piece uses symbols and movement to support universal understanding in worship gatherings where there is more than one native language/tongue spoken and/or where there is desire to include those with learning difficulties. It may be experienced as a whole or broken up into sections throughout a service of worship.

The symbols: Large stone, story book with pictures/photographs, globe, creed or other statement of faith, cross/crucifix, Bible, large question mark on card, loaf of bread. The symbols are brought forward at the appropriate section of prayer and placed in a prominent position where all can see – this may be on table/altar placed at front or centre of gathering. Symbols could also be projected on to screen/wall using PowerPoint presentation.

#### Action 1

A large stone is carried to the place of display.  
Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'

Voice 2 I know what it is to lose someone.  
I have been in the place of weeping and despair.  
I have felt the weight of the stone that crushes all hope and blocks me from God.

Voice 1 But it is we, and not God, who place stones.  
Little by little the light will come again.  
Christ will reveal Himself in the love of a friend,  
in the hospitality of a neighbour,  
in the kindness of a stranger.

Voice 2 There must be death before there can be resurrection.  
I have seen the dead come to life:  
(list or personal testimonies are heard)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for all who need the stone rolled away.  
We give thanks for all who have experienced resurrection in this life.  
We praise God, for the glory of the risen Christ who gives us the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

### Action 2

A large storybook with pictures or appropriate photographs is/are carried to the place of display.

Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'

Voice 2 I enjoy real conversation. I have outgrown small talk.

I am a true storyteller.

I am a listener even when it is painful.

I play a part in my neighbour's story.

Voice 1 Thank God for the gifts of communication - for face to face talking, for the telephone, for radio, television and the world wide web.

Thank God for all that connects us and enables us to keep in touch.

Thank God for the Holy Spirit.

Voice 2 We are our stories. I have heard stories that have changed lives. (list or personal testimonies are heard)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for all who talk of things that don't matter.

We give thanks for all who have shared experiences of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We praise God, for the transforming power of His love and pray that one day Christ's story and ours are one.

### Action 3

A large globe (perhaps one that lights up) is carried to the place of display.

Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?'

Voice 2 These days I am aware of natural disasters that occur on the other side of the world.

Yet I fail to notice when my neighbour suffers loss and I do not know what they celebrate next door.

I feel like a stranger in my own land.

Voice 1 Sometimes we are called to be still.

If we look and listen, we will find the Christ in the other.

If we look inwards, we will find the Christ in ourselves.

And if we are open to challenge and vulnerability then the Holy Spirit will show us where God wants us.

Voice 2 God is in every situation. No one is a stranger to God.

I have seen God at work in the large and the small.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for all who are in tragic circumstances.

We give thanks for international relief agencies, for emergency services and for individuals who make personal sacrifices to help their neighbours.

Praise God, for the gift and power of prayer - for there is always something we can do - we can pray.

### Action 4

A creed or other statement of faith (could be a banner or other visual representation) is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'What things?'

Voice 2 My faith is precious.

I have clung to it in my times of greatest trial.

I cannot imagine life without it.

I want this faith for my children.

Voice 1 We cannot leave the responsibility to others. We are called to witness to our faith.

Throughout the ages, men and women have spread the Word of God and dark places have become light.

Voice 2 In this place we remember those who who have inspired our faith today: (list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for those who defend the faith of Christ even when they face ridicule, persecution or death.

We give thanks for those who have influenced us.

And in the silence, we give thanks for the things of faith that matter most to each of us. (silence)

We praise God for His faithfulness that endures forever. (Amen)

### Action 5

A large cross or crucifix is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'

Voice 2 I have seen the inhumanity of man to man - in men, in women and in those little more than children.

I have watched the suffering of someone I love and been unable to lift them from their cross.

Sometimes I cry, why O God, why?

Voice 1 There are many kinds of suffering. War, terrorism and human cruelty remind

us that we have the power to make any word incarnate: for Christ's sake, we must make sure it is love.  
We cannot stop the sufferings of illness or loss but we can enter the pain and share it, in love.

Voice 2 From the blood stained Cross of Christ, flowed the harvest of faithfulness, forgiveness and love.  
I have known this harvest.  
(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for all who suffer at the hands of others.  
And we pray for those who inflict suffering.  
We give thanks for those who embody love in action and go where even angels fear to tread.  
We pray for those who are ill, those who care for them, and those who are approaching death.  
We praise God for his promise that there is nothing in life or in death that can ever separate us from the love of God. (Amen)

#### Action 6

A Bible is carried to the place of display.  
Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?'

Voice 2 I do not read my Bible as often as I should. But there are treasured verses and sayings that live deep within me:  
And in unexpected moments, alone or in company, something real happens - now and I understand the words as never before - Is this what is meant by revelation?

Voice 1 God reveals His Word in many ways. We do not need to strive for revelation – the Holy Spirit will open our eyes and minds when the time is right.  
And those God raises to be prophets make sense of today in the light of yesterday and point us towards the future.

Voice 2 Love is at the centre of revelation. I have felt my heart burn with passion.  
(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for all whose hearts are cold.  
We pray for those who think they have seen it all.  
We give thanks for past and present prophets who have shared what God has revealed to them.  
We give thanks for those whose passion for Christ has brought justice and freedom to the oppressed.  
We praise God for all the ordinary people who are living revelations of His Word. (Amen)

#### Action 7

A large question mark on card is carried to the place of display.  
Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'

Voice 2 I envy those who have never doubted. I would like to have such certainty. But things happen to me and to other people that make me question Your power O God. And every funeral I attend invites me to travel the Emmaus road once more.

Voice 1 It takes courage and trust to befriend doubt. You need to be prepared to journey. Apathy, inaction, complacency and self-centredness are the opposites of faith - not doubt.  
Follow the way of Christ.  
Pray, praise God and love Your neighbour as yourself.  
For it is in the acting out that we find the answers.

Voice 2 Only by faith can we live the questions. I have experienced incredible breakthroughs in faith.  
(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for those who live in perpetual fear. We pray for those who are crippled by their insecurities.  
We give thanks for those whose strength of faith upholds and encourages others in the face of adversity.  
We praise God for the reassurance of Jesus, that when we reach out and touch our ghosts<sup>1</sup> we too will discover that Christ is alive. Amen

#### Action 8

A large loaf of bread is carried to the place of display.  
Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Have you anything here to eat?'

Voice 2 I have been hungry.  
I have been fed.  
I cannot live by bread alone.  
But I cannot live without it.

Voice 1 We are stewards of God's world. We share a common loaf.  
There is plenty for everyone.  
It is just hospitality that is needed.  
For everyone born there is a place at the table.

<sup>1</sup> (Luke 24: 37).

Voice 2 Hospitality creates a space where the needs of the other are fed. I have known life-changing acts of hospitality. (list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

All We pray for those living in inhospitable places.  
We give thanks for those who give of their time, their talents, their resources, their very selves to affirm the Christ in the other.  
We praise God for the glory of Christ's cross inviting all who come to Jesus to be united in His feast of life. (Amen)

#### BLESSING

Be the great God between your shoulders  
To protect you in your going and your coming  
Be the Son of Mary near your heart  
And be the perfect Spirit upon you pouring.  
Amen.

(Carol Ford)

### SCOTLAND'S ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

#### FROM 1910 TO 2010

Edinburgh 1910 saw the birth of the modern ecumenical movement, but why did it happen in Edinburgh? Scotland, intellectually and culturally, had a strong tradition of internationalism stretching right back to the Celtic missions. This international perspective was promoted by leading Scots theologians and church leaders. This was coupled with the strong missionary ethos of 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish Protestantism, which in addition to evangelism was concerned with modifying the economic imperial expansion of the British empire. This engagement in mission led to the churches being willing to support a World Mission Conference, rather than leave it to mission agencies. Finally Scotland was experiencing rapid change in both church and society which stimulated a sense of wider vision in the churches.

In 2000, John Pobee (Ghana) visited Scotland and challenged the Christian leaders to mark the centenary of 1910. Over the next few years an ever-widening circle of mission thinkers and activists recognised that 2010 was an occasion for great potential and that collaborative action was required. In 2005 an international gathering was held in Edinburgh from which key themes for mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century emerged. These include foundations for mission; mission in an interfaith context; mission and its relationships to post-modernity and power; forms of missionary engagement; theological education; contemporary Christian communities; mission and unity and mission spirituality.

It was also recognised that a focal point to the centenary was required and this will be held in Edinburgh from 2-6 June 2010. The work of Edinburgh 2010 is co-ordinated through its website [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org).

#### THE INTERVENING YEARS

From the 1940's to the present day three particular threads have developed in the ecumenical landscape of Scotland.

##### *Theological Exploration*

From the so-called *Bishops Report*, (an Anglican/Presbyterian report in 1956), through nearly 30 years of *Multilateral Conversations* (1967-1994) involving six Churches in Scotland, to the *Scottish Churches Initiative for Christian Unity (SCIFU - 1996-2003)* many doctrinal issues were addressed. This has resulted in greater understanding of our different traditions and an increasing discovery that there is much theological agreement between the churches. The fact that this has failed to produce a scheme of union, upon which all could agree, is based not on any antagonism between churches as realising that unity is more than creating some grand plan. It lies in recognising unity as possible within difference.

##### *Practical Co-operation*

At national level two bodies emerged in the 1950's producing great energy and vision. By the beginning of 1960 this became enfolded in the opening of *Scottish Churches House* in Dunblane – a Conference and Retreat Centre which “the Churches held in common and where they could begin to learn to grow together to serve Scotland”. By 1962 the *Scottish Churches Council* was established with most non-Roman Catholic Churches as members and a number of associated ecumenical groups and organisations. This led to many nationally sponsored activities – e.g. Lent courses, youth work, outreach work in communities, which soon mushroomed with local councils of Churches throughout Scotland co-operating in joint worship and action. In 1986 a UK-wide Lent course was the catalyst for new ‘instruments of unity’ which for the first time included the Roman Catholic Church. So *Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)* came into being in 1990.

##### *The Prophetic Voice*

This third thread is the one that is the most difficult one for Churches to live with. Yet without it ecumenism would lose its cutting edge. As Churches grew closer together, ecumenism provided its own prophetic action. *Christian Aid* reflected in its work both the practical expression of compassion for the world's hungry, but also, the prophetic words of protest for justice in the world. The *Iona Community*

that has always had a strong ecumenical commitment has openly challenged the Churches and the World on their disunity and injustice. There have been prophetic moments as when in 1982 on his visit to Scotland Pope John Paul II said "Let us walk together as pilgrims hand in hand".

Ecumenism in recent years has widened to an inter-faith context, and to Christian witness in a more secular and multi-cultural society. What its history in Scotland has illustrated is that to meet that challenge we need to hold these three threads in tension. It is not a choice between them. For it is only when they interact with each other that there is created the theology, the co-operation, and the prophetic voice, which lies at the heart of an ecumenical vision.

Tartans are one of Scotland's treasures. Traditionally each pattern was identified with a particular 'clan' or family, but tartans are a living tradition and continue to be designed for many different purposes and organisations. Tartans have a base colour onto which horizontal and vertical stripes are laid. The background text is above, and below we offer a number of horizontal and vertical stripes which share just some of the ways the churches engage between themselves and with wider society.

#### HORIZONTAL STRIPES – CHURCHES SEEKING UNITY TOGETHER

##### *The Joint Commission on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church*

This bilateral dialogue has proved to be a rich source of blessing. Its most recent document is entitled "Baptism: Catholic and Reformed" which summarises progress in understanding common baptism, but which also invites further reflection on what this means for the mission of the Church today. The Joint Commission is an example of positive ecumenical theological dialogue, and shows both individuals and institutions are willing to listen seriously to one another. The Joint Commission is currently studying the healing of historical memories and the doctrine of sanctification.

##### *The EMU strand*

Following the end of the Scottish Churches Initiative For Union, three denominations made the commitment to explore ways of working, serving and witnessing together. Thus the EMU conversations were born. Representatives of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church meet twice a year to discover ways in which nationally and locally we can do those things together that need not be done separately, and are delighted as people with particular responsibilities explore and identify how cooperation can grow, for example in education and training. EMU is a young, living relationship of great potential.

#### *Developing relations with ethnic minority Christians*

In 2007 churches in Scotland marked the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. This became a catalyst in developing closer relationships between the traditional churches and growing number of ethnic minority Christians in Scotland. The Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group now has representatives from African Churches and Asian Christian Fellowships. Minority Ethnic Christians are organising themselves into a body to further relationships amongst themselves and with the traditional churches and ACTS.

#### VERTICAL STRIPES – THE CHURCHES ENGAGING IN SCOTTISH SOCIETY

##### *The Churches and Parliament*

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office was born out of the churches' engagement in the process that brought the Scottish Parliament into being. Having found we could work together on this, churches set up SCPO to enable them to engage as effectively as possible with the Parliament and Government in Scotland – not to set a party line, but to ensure that a conversation takes place and that the voices of the churches are heard. Clearly, we are most effective when we can speak with one voice for our vision for the common good of Scotland, but where there are differing voices we are honest and open about that.

##### *The Churches and the National Conversation*

Leaders/representatives of twelve of Scotland's Churches accepted the invitation of the Scottish Government to contribute to a 'national conversation' on choosing the future of Scotland.

The group produced the following statement:

"We recognise that the Church is on a journey as well as our nation; all of us are going to struggle to get to where we need to be. But for the Church, as well as for our nation and our communities, we aspire towards these Christian values characterising our common life in Scotland:

- A nation that is shaped by the principles of love for God and for all human beings.
- A nation that promotes dignity and justice for all.
- A nation that promotes faithfulness in personal and community relationships.
- A nation that demonstrates compassion and care for the weak and the marginalised.
- A society in which the voices of all can be heard
- A people who are less concerned with their own welfare and more concerned for the well-being of others.
- A nation that strives for excellence and in which all can experience life in all its fullness.

– A nation that welcomes the unique contribution of those who are making the new Scotland.

– A state that promotes the well-being of all its citizens without exceeding its authority.

For us, these values are rooted in Jesus and have distinctively shaped Scotland's story as it has developed over the years; where they are lived and practised, we find they resonate with people of other faiths and of none".

#### *Street Pastors*

Street Pastors is a mission initiative spreading throughout Scotland. Teams of trained volunteer Street Pastors from local churches are available late at night in town centres to offer words of advice and practical support, to people out and about. 'We will meet, talk and engage with the people through listening, supporting and helping in practical ways. This could be walking a girl on her own to a late night taxi; reassuring someone who feels intimidated; or listening to the people who need to know that somebody cares,' said James Duce from the City Church in Aberdeen, the first Scottish city to launch Street Pastors.

### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

#### THEMES 1968-2010

*In 1968, materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used.*

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| 1968 | To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1: 14)<br>Pour la louange de sa gloire   | 1974 | That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2: 1-13)<br>Que tous confessent: Jésus-Christ est Seigneur<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i>                                    |
| 1969 | Called to freedom (Galatians 5: 13)<br>Appelés à la liberté<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)</i>  | 1975 | God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1: 3-10)<br>La volonté du Père: Tout réunir sous un seul chef, le Christ<br><i>(Material from an Australian group. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i> |
| 1970 | We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3: 9)<br>Nous sommes les coopérateurs de Dieu<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich, Federal Republic of Germany)</i> | 1976 | We shall be like him (1 John 3: 2) or, Called to become what we are<br>Appelés à devenir ce que nous sommes<br><i>(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches. Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)</i>        |
| 1971 | ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13: 13)<br>...et la communion du Saint-Esprit<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held in Bari, Italy)</i>                                       | 1977 | Enduring together in hope (Romans 5: 1-5)<br>L'espérance ne déçoit pas<br><i>(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i>                                 |
| 1972 | I give you a new commandment (John 13: 34)<br>Je vous donne un commandement nouveau<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i>  | 1978 | No longer strangers (Ephesians 2: 13-22)<br>Vous n'êtes plus des étrangers<br><i>(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)</i>   |
| 1973 | Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11: 1)<br>Seigneur, apprends-nous à prier<br><i>(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)</i>  | 1979 | Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4: 7-11)<br>Soyez au service les uns des autres pour la gloire de Dieu<br><i>(Material from Argentina. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i>             |
|      |  | 1980 | Your kingdom come (Matthew 6: 10)<br>Que ton règne vienne!<br><i>(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic Republic. Preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)</i>                               |
|      |  | 1981 | One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13)<br>Un seul esprit - des dons divers - un seul corps<br><i>(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)</i>      |
|      |  | 1982 | May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)<br>Que tous trouvent leur demeure en Toi, Seigneur<br><i>(Material from Kenya. Preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)</i>   |
|      |  | 1983 | Jesus Christ - the Life of the World (1 John 1: 1-4)<br>Jesus Christ - La Vie du Monde<br><i>(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland. Preparatory meeting held in Céligny - Bossey, Switzerland)</i>             |

- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Cor 2: 2 and Col 1: 20)  
Appelés à l'unité par la croix de notre Seigneur  
(*Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy*)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2: 4-7)  
De la mort à la vie avec le Christ  
(*Material from Jamaica. Preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp, Switzerland*)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1: 6-8)  
Vous serez mes témoins  
(*Material from Yugoslavia – Slovenia. Preparatory meeting held in Yugoslavia*)
- 1987 United in Christ - a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5: 17-6: 4a)  
Unis dans le Christ - une nouvelle création  
(*Material from England. Preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France*)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4: 18)  
L'Amour de Dieu bannit la Crainte  
(*Material from Italy. Preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy*)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12: 5-6a)  
Bâtir la communauté: Un seul corps en Christ  
(*Material from Canada. Preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England*)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)  
Que tous soient un...Afin que le monde croie  
(*Material from Spain. Preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain*)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15: 5-13)  
Nations, louez toutes le Seigneur  
(*Material from Germany. Preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany*)
- 1992 I am with you always ... Go, therefore (Matthew 28: 16-20)  
Je suis avec vous...allez donc  
(*Material from Belgium. Preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium*)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5: 22-23)  
Pour l'unité: laisser mûrir en nous les fruits de l'Esprit  
(*Material from Zaire. Preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland*)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4: 23-37)  
La maison de Dieu: Appelés à être un dans le coeur et dans l'esprit  
(*Material from Ireland. Preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland*)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15: 1-17)  
La koinonia: communion en Dieu et les uns avec les autres  
(*Material from Faith and Order. Preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England*)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3: 14-22)  
Je me tiens à la porte et je frappe  
(*Preparatory material from Portugal. Meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal*)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5: 20)  
Au nom du Christ, laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu  
(*Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council. Preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden*)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8: 14-27)  
L'Esprit aussi vient en aide à notre faiblesse  
(*Preparatory material from France. Meeting held in Paris, France*)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples (Revelation 21: 1-7)  
Dieu demeurera avec eux. Ils seront ses peuples et lui sera le Dieu qui est avec eux  
(*Preparatory material from Malaysia. Meeting held in Bose, Italy*)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1: 3-14)  
Béni soit Dieu, qui nous a bénis en Christ  
(*Preparatory material from the Middle East Council of Churches. Meeting held in La Verna, Italy*)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14: 1-6)  
Je suis le chemin, et la vérité et la vie  
(*Preparatory material from Romania. Meeting held in Vulcan, Romania*)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36: 5-9)  
Car chez toi est la fontaine de la vie  
(*Preparatory material CEEC and CEC. Meeting held near Augsburg, Germany*)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4: 4-18)  
Car nous avons ce trésor dans des vases d'argile  
(*Preparatory material churches in Argentina. Meeting in Los Rubios, Spain*)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14: 23-31; John 14: 27)  
Je vous donne ma paix  
(*Preparatory material from Aleppo, Syria. Meeting in Palermo, Italy*)

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| 2005 | Christ, the one foundation of the church<br>(1 Corinthians 3 1-23)<br>Le Christ, unique fondement de l'Eglise<br><i>(Preparatory material from Slovakia. Meeting in Piestaň, Slovakia)</i>   | 1926 | The Faith and Order movement began publishing "Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity".   |
| 2006 | Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Matthew 18: 18-20)<br>Là où deux ou trois se trouvent réunis en mon nom, je suis au milieu d'eux.<br><i>(Preparatory material from Ireland. Meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)</i> | 1935 | Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocated the 'Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' on the inclusive basis of prayer for "the unity Christ wills by the means he wills".  |
| 2007 | He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7: 31-37)<br>Il fait entendre les sourds et parler les muets<br><i>(Preparatory material from South Africa. Meeting held in Faverges, France)</i>   | 1958 | Unité Chrétienne (Lyons, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches began co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.   |
| 2008 | Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5: (12a) 13b-18)<br>Priez sans cesse<br><i>(Preparatory material from USA. Meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)</i>  | 1964 | In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one" (John 17).   |
| 2009 | That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37: 15-28)<br>Ils seront unis dans ta main<br><i>(Preparatory material from Korea. Meeting held in Marseilles, France)</i>  | 1964 | The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasized that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.   |
| 2010 | You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24: 48)<br>...De tout cela, c'est vous qui êtes les témoins<br><i>(Preparatory material from Scotland. Meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)</i>  | 1966 | The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] began official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material. |
|      |  | 1968 | First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity].   |

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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|---------|---|------|---|
| c. 1740 | In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches. | 1975 | First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.  |
| 1820    | The Rev. James Haldane Stewart published "Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit".                    | 1988 | Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.  |
| 1840    | The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggested a 'Union of Prayer for Unity'.                                       | 1994 | International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.  |
| 1867    | The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasized prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.                          | 2004 | Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church). |
| 1894    | Pope Leo XIII encouraged the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.   | 2008 | Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).   |
| 1908    | First observance of the 'Church Unity Octave' initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.   |      |   |



