



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING
OF THE JOINT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR CATHOLIC-PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE**

*Castel Gandolfo
Friday, 8 September 1989*

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to meet you, the *Commission members* who are now approaching the end of the third phase of a fruitful *dialogue between Classical Pentecostals and Catholics*. In welcoming you here today, I express the hope that your discussions have contributed not only to an increase of mutual understanding about our life and spiritual experiences as Christians, but also to the interior conversion and change of heart which are so fundamental to the ecumenical movement (Cfr. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 7-8).

You have focused on different aspects of the theme of *Koinonia*, of the Church as Communion. The study of this theme, which was highlighted once again at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985, is of great importance to the Catholic Church. "*Communion*" is actually an expression of the Catholic Church's understanding of herself and her life.

All Christians surely agree that it is their responsibility to examine with love for Christ's truth the differences which divide us, and to seek ways in which, despite these divisions, we may yet bear a common witness to the world. Christ himself prayed for the unity of his disciples. He made this prayer to the Father for the sake of the Gospel: "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (*Jo.* 17, 21). It is therefore an essential part of the ecumenical task to grow in knowledge of the truth, to break down the barriers of misunderstanding and prejudice, and to grow in love for one another, in order that we may more faithfully proclaim Christ to a world so much in need of him.

Both Catholics and Pentecostals honor the presence of the Holy Spirit and his spiritual gifts. Saint Paul exhorts us to earnestly desire the higher gifts (Cfr. *1Cor.* 12, 31), and to make love our aim more than anything else (Cfr. *ibid.* 14, 1). Through dialogue, then, may we seek that love which delights in the truth and is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes (Cfr. *ibid.* 13, 6-7).

I assure you of my fervent prayer for an increase of love among all those engaged in ecumenism. May your dialogue contribute to new understanding between Catholics and Pentecostals, for the sake of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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