



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN A COURSE SPONSORED BY THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

*Consistory Hall
Monday, 14 February 1994*

Dear Friends in Christ,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:2).

With this apostolic greeting I extend a cordial welcome to all taking part in the current course sponsored by the Graduate School of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey. I am sure that these days in Rome have been both interesting and informative; and I hope that your prayer and reflection in this city where the Apostles Peter and Paul bore ultimate witness to Christ will produce much fruit in the days ahead.

I understand that the course you have been engaged in over the past five months has focused on a theme taken from the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order held in Santiago de Compostela last year, namely: "Towards Communion in Faith, Life and Witness". Ecclesial communion is a profound mystery, "at the same time both invisible and visible" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Communio in Notio*, 4). It is the work of God (Cf. Eph. 4:12), and is nothing less than "the unity [of the baptized] with the Father, through Christ in the Spirit" (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directorium Oecumenicum noviter compositum*, 1993, n. 13; cf. Jn. 17:21).

This conviction led the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council to place great emphasis on "spiritual ecumenism", calling it "the soul of the whole ecumenical movement" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 8), for the unity of Christians always remains a divine gift, and thus no human endeavour, no matter how successful or well planned, can by itself heal our divisions. Thus, all those who ardently identify

with Christ will also identify with his prayer "that... all may be one". With unshakable confidence we turn to the Father, who gives good gifts "to those who ask him". And we shall never cease to follow the path of repentance, so that, purged of all mistrust, we can receive his grace when it is given.

As you return to your respective countries, it is my hope that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will be valuable co-workers in contributing to further progress towards Christian unity, particularly through prayer and by being true instruments of peace and reconciliation. May God bless you all.

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