



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO JAMAICA, MEXICO AND DENVER (COLORADO)
(AUGUST 8-16, 1993)

ECUMENICAL MEETING WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES
OF JAMAICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Holy Cross Church, Kingston
Tuesday, 10 August 1993*

"Be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy" (Phil. 2: 2).

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Dear Friends,

1. These words of Saint Paul, expressing his profound longing for unity among the Lord's disciples, were a cry coming from the depth of his heart. He had become so identified with our Saviour that no longer did he live, but Christ lived in him (Cf. Gal. 2: 20), and so his desire was the same as Christ's: "May they all be one" (Jn. 17: 21). *This appeal from the Apostle, first addressed to the Philippians, has lost none of its urgency, and it finds today an echo in the heart of each of us here. This is the reason why we are gathered to pray for the reconciliation of all Christians.*

With the confidence of sons and daughters we turn to the Father in order *to ask him to heal our divisions. At the same time we thank him for the already existing – although imperfect – communion which binds us together (Cf. Unitatis Redintegratio, 3), and for the climate of*

openness and mutual respect which are its logical consequences (Cf. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 36). This is indeed a moment of grace, a gift of our Redeemer's boundless love. In the peace and love of Christ Jesus I greet you all, the representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities of Jamaica and the Caribbean. I rejoice in being with you to hear Christ's saving word, and to lift up my voice with yours in heartfelt praise and earnest supplication.

2. Christians in Jamaica may fittingly thank God for all that has been achieved in the pursuit of the aims of the ecumenical movement. In particular I wish to single out the results of more than two decades of *common witness and common action for justice and peace through the Jamaican Council of Churches*. The Catholic Bishops of this nation, along with the clergy, Religious and lay faithful, have been active in these initiatives. They look forward to working in the years ahead with all their Christian brothers and sisters in a spirit of solidarity, so that the transforming light of the Good News will shine ever more brightly upon this Island. Your ecumenical initiatives take place in the wider context of *the Caribbean Conference of Churches*. Through this Conference, you strive to defend and to promote the dignity of the human person and to speak out against those things which undermine it: poverty, the breakdown of family life, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, and everything which would obstruct the full development of individuals and of society itself. It is my prayer that your cooperation in the face of such challenges will be ever more effective in setting forth "in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant" and in bearing "witness to our common hope" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 12).

3. Important as it is for Christians to join forces in building up the common good of human society, we should recognize *the need to resist any temptation towards a one-sided "activism"*. Otherwise, ecumenical efforts could soon be guided only by political motives and become barriers, not helps, to unity (Cf. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 211-212). We are called not only to common action but, as Saint Paul says, to a "common mind" (Phil. 2: 2); to be one not only in service, but in "conviction" and "love" (Ibid.) – and, we must pray, to be finally united in the one Eucharist where Christ gives himself in love to his Church. No, we can *never be content with imperfect forms of communion in belief and sacramental life*, for this is not the will of our Lord. His prayer was that his disciples should share in the very unity by which he is one with the Father: "Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you" (Jn. 17: 21).

As I pointed out in a message to the participants in the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order now meeting in Santiago de Compostela, reflection on the nature of *koinonia*, communion – the theme of that gathering – is an especially apt means towards achieving the goal of Christian unity (Cf. John Paul II, *Message on the occasion of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, 21 July 1993). *A deeper appreciation of the mystery of ecclesial communion as a participation in the very life of the Triune God provides the proper basis for fruitful dialogue* on such topics as the relationship between the Universal Church in her visibility and the particular Churches, the

richness of diversity within communion, the Eucharistic nature of the Church, and office – especially the ministry of the Bishop of Rome – in the service of communion. As for those Christians who might not share the Catholic Church's own understanding of the Eucharist as a visible expression of unity in belief and ecclesial life, open and sincere dialogue will help them to appreciate and respect her firm convictions and strict discipline in regard to intercommunion.

In these matters, as in all that concerns our fraternal dialogue, we should not overlook the admonition of the Second Vatican Council, that "nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false conciliatory approach" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11). In a spirit of mutual respect we must always say what we know to be true about ourselves and our beliefs. This is the way for brothers and sisters to deal with one another, and such forthrightness about oneself, coupled with trust about what others say of themselves, will bear the desired fruit in due season (Cf. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 172).

4. I wish at this time to greet *the representatives of other religious traditions present here today*. We who confess the name of Jesus are honoured by your presence. Assuring you of my cordial esteem and affection, I offer you my prayerful good wishes. The members of the Catholic community in Jamaica, as well as the members of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, are eager to work with you in serving the cause of humanity.

To the spiritual leaders and members of the Jewish delegation, I extend a special word of welcome. I have been told of the close relationship between yourselves and Jamaican Catholics. Such respect and friendship, rooted in our common patrimony (Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 4), are sources of great joy and satisfaction.

I pray that in Jamaica all believers will be strengthened by Almighty God to join with each other and with all men and women of good will in building a society free from discrimination and prejudice, a nation committed to protecting the rights of every person, including the right to religious liberty.

5. Ladies and Gentlemen: Saint Paul pointed out to the Christians at Philippi the way for them to be of one mind and one purpose, and in doing so he identified the path which leads to the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement. He says: "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5). When all Christians are completely conformed to Christ, then they will be fully one. This is the task of the Paraclete, the Spirit poured out at Pentecost and given at Baptism. Unity is the work of the Spirit. With confidence we ask the Holy Spirit to work with great power in our midst, so that the prayer of Christ may be fulfilled in us: "May they all be one... so that the love with which you – the Father – loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them" (Jn. 17: 21-26).

I offer to all of you, distinguished Friends, my warm support, and I thank you once more for your lives, your work and your prayers here in Jamaica and throughout the Antilles. May the Lord God always bless and sustain you.