

## *Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*

*Paderborn, Germany, 12 – 19 July 2012*

### *Communiqué*

The Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity had its fourth meeting from 12 – 19 July 2012 at the “Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institut für Ökumenik” in Paderborn, Germany. This is the fifth round for an official dialogue which began already in 1967.

The dialogue is conducted under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). This year’s meeting was hosted by the PCPCU, with generous assistance from the Archdiocese of Paderborn, Germany.

Looking toward the 500<sup>th</sup> Reformation anniversary in 2017, the Commission noted that this year will mark also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this process of dialogue. Harvesting the results of this ecumenical work, the Commission finalized a document “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017.”

In remembering together the Reformation, Lutheran and Catholic Christians understand their baptism as binding them to one another as members of the body of Christ. Because they belong to one body, Catholics and Lutherans struggle in the face of their division to achieve the full catholicity of the church. On the one side there is joy about the communion they already share and have been able to make more explicit during the 50 years of official ecumenical dialogues. On the other side there is the pain about what is still dividing. The division of Christians stands in the opposition to the will of God.

By harvesting the fruits of the ecumenical dialogue, Catholics and Lutherans today can joyfully celebrate the already achieved communion which is greater than the remaining divisions between them.

Plans for public release of the document and its publication are being made.

Another project of the Commission is a study on “Baptism and Growing Church Communion”. An outline for this topic had been prepared already in previous meetings, and papers received at this meeting will be helpful for future work.

Throughout its meeting, the Commission appreciated the warm hospitality of the Archdiocese of Paderborn and of the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity in their retreat centre “Haus Maria Immaculata”.

The members of the Commission worshipped on Sunday 15 July at a Pontifical Mass at Paderborn Cathedral and then met at the General Vicariate of the Archdiocese with Auxiliary Bishop Matthias König who represented Archbishop Hans-Josef Becker, to learn about life and work of the archdiocese, the opportunities and challenges for the Catholic Church in the local region of Westphalia, and the open ecumenical climate in the country. In the afternoon they enjoyed a guided tour to the historical sites of the City of Paderborn. Afterwards, Landeskirchenrätin Dr. Johanna Will-Armstrong and Ms Christa Kronshage, chairperson of the ecumenical commission of the “Evangelical Church of Westphalia”, led together evening prayer for the Commission in the crypt of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Abdinghofkirche and described the life of their Church in the region during the following dinner reception.

The date selected for the next meeting of the Commission is 12 – 20 August 2013, hosted by the LWF, possibly in Japan.

### ***Members of the Commission***

Co-chair of the Commission is on the Lutheran side Bishop (emeritus) Eero Huovinen from Helsinki, Finland. On the Catholic side, on 3 July 2012, Co-chair Bishop Gerhard Ludwig Müller of Regensburg, Germany, has been nominated new Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and therefore was not able to participate in the meeting. He took the occasion to write a letter of greetings to the members of the Commission gathered in Paderborn, indicating his gratefulness for the good collaboration during the past years and sent his best wishes and blessings for the future work of the Commission as well as his regrets due to the fact that he will not be able to continue his membership because of his manifold new tasks as head of the Congregation.

Lutheran participants at this meeting were Rev. Prof. Dr Wanda Deifelt (Brazil and USA), Prof. Dr Sandra Gintere (Latvia), Rev. Prof. Dr Fidon Mwombeki (Tanzania and Germany), Rev. Prof. Dr. Friederike Nüssel (Germany), Prof. Dr. Turid Karlsen Seim (Norway and Italy), Rev. Prof. Dr. Theodor Dieter (France and Germany) as consultant, and Prof. Dr Kathryn L. Johnson (USA) as co-secretary. Rev. Prof. Dr. Hiroshi Augustine Suzuki (Japan) and Rev. Prof. Dr Ronald Thiemann (USA) sent their regrets.

Catholic participants were Auxiliary Bishop Prof. Dr. Karlheinz Diez (Germany), Rev. Prof. Dr Michel Fédou SJ (France), Rev. Prof. Dr Angelo Maffei (Italy), Prof. Dr Christian D. Washburn (USA), Sr. Prof. Dr Susan K. Wood, SCL (USA), Prof. Dr. Thomas Söding (Germany), as consultants Prof. Dr. Eva-Maria Faber (Switzerland) and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Thönissen (Germany), and Monsignor Dr. Matthias Türk (Vatican City) as co-secretary.

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