



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STUDENTS OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

Monday, 8 February, 1988

Dear Friends from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you today to the Vatican during your pilgrimage to Rome. I greet you with the words of the Apostle Paul: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Phil.* 1,2).

For the past five months in your Graduate School you have been studying the theme of "The Unity and Mission of the Church". You have done so by reflecting on the various efforts being made by the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communions in the quest for the unity that Christ intended for his followers.

You will have realized that there exists an essential and profound relationship between Christian unity and the proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, Christian unity and mission are inseparable, as can be seen in Jesus' own prayer for unity: "That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (*Jo.* 17, 21).

The task of working towards full communion is therefore an urgent one, for it is the means to an ever fuller witness to Christ before the world. Our common Baptism is already a call and an incentive to work together in every way possible, overcoming divisions and expressing that which already unites us in Christ Jesus.

May your visit to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul be a spiritual enriching experience and an inspiration for your ecumenical work when you return to your own countries. I pray that the Lord

will keep alive in your hearts the renewed vision and desire for Christian unity that you have acquired, so that you may make an effective contribution to the unity that Christ wills.

Together we can express our ecumenical hope in the words of the Letter to the Ephesians: “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen” (*Eph.* 3, 20-21).

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