



CENTRO PRO UNIONE

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UT OMNES UNUM SINT



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

► *James Loughran, SA*

Warm greetings to all our readers, benefactors and friends. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Fr. James F. Loughran, SA, a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, and the recently appointed Director of Centro Pro Unione, our Friars' ecumenical ministry in Rome. I simply go by the name Fr. Jim. I came to Rome on a semi-permanent basis in February, 2024 to fill in for our previous interim director, Fr. Timothy MacDonald, SA, who was asked to help prepare for the Friars' General Chapter in May. Fr. Tim has since been assigned to our Morherhouse of Graymoor in Garrison, NY, USA. I thank Fr. Tim for his work and leading the programs of Centro Pro Unione in which he was engaged.

I made my first vows as a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement in 1983 and was ordained to the priesthood at Graymoor in 1989. In preparation for ordination, I received an M.Div. degree from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. During my time at Catholic University, I was able to expand my interests in ecumenical education by taking courses at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC (United Methodist Church) and Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA (The Episcopal Church). From 1986-1987 I also matriculated at General Theological Seminary in New York, NY (The Episcopal Church) under the mentorship of the late Rev. Dr. Robert J. Wright.

After parish ministries in Jamaica, at a church jointly shared by Catholics and Anglicans, and in Northern Virginia, I became Ecumenical Officer of the Archdiocese of New York in late 1994.

Thus began my formal period of ecumenical ministry. In the summer of 1995, I was privileged to take the Summer Course offered in ecumenism at Centro Pro Unione and started to become familiar with Rome.

After serving under the late John Cardinal O'Connor and Edward Cardinal Egan until the end of 2002, I was assigned as Director of Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute in New York. GEII is the publisher of the journal *Ecumenical Trends*, of which I was editor for 15 years. My experiences as an ecumenical officer in New York helped me build wonderful relationships with other Christians, particularly ELCA Lutherans and Episcopalians. On an interreligious level, I was blessed with the company of rabbis from the variety of Jewish experience and mentored by several of them as I was welcomed to join the Bishops' Conference Dialogue with the Jewish community. Those days also brought September 11, 2001 and two Papal visits.

Now, after 21 years at GEII, and having been a member of the faculty of Centro Pro Unione's summer course since 2004, I find myself assigned as CPU's Director.

CENTRO PRO UNIONE BULLETIN

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, is an ecumenical research and action center. Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual. The Bulletin has been published since 1968 and is released in Spring and Fall.

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I look forward to working with all of you in the causes of reconciliation, unity, solidarity and fellowship.

As to the task at hand, I welcome you to some exciting reading in this issue of the *CPU Bulletin*. At the outset, I offer apologies to all for the tardiness of the publication and the need for a double issue. Transition to a new working format for Centro Pro Unione has been a challenge, as we also needed to maintain our regular programming and relationships.

I am glad to say that we are now in a more balanced position moving forward.

Many of the articles written and conferences given took place before my full time arrival in February 2024, but I'm happy to say that my experiences of visits from dear friends such as Bishop Brian Farrell, retired Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, who was also kind enough to assist us during the 2024 summer course, the leadership of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, friends from the ecumenical agencies based in Rome and others, show longstanding affection and respect for the presence and work of Centro Pro Unione.

Highlights of my time here covered in this issue are the conference given by Fr. Richard Gribble in honor of the 125th Anniversary of the Society of the Atonement event on October 17, 2024 and the Paul Wattson-Lurana White Lecture offered by Sister Nathalie Bequart on December 17, 2024.

Another great occasion was the completion of *MAD for Ecumenism III*, focusing on the synodal process of the Synod on Synodality of the Catholic Church and the very competent work of Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, our Associate Director.

We have also been graced several times with the presence of Archbishop Flavio Pace, who is now the present Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, and continue to work closely with the Dicastery in all that we do.

The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement remain committed to our founder's vision of overcoming divisions among Christians and among all peoples. Centro Pro Unione is a steadfast sign of that vision.



Rev. James Loughran, SA

DAVIDE CARBONARO, OMD ◀ | |||||

Conferenza tenuta presso il Centro Pro Unione

Arcivescovo metropolitano di Potenza-Muro Lucano-Marsico Nuovo
già Coordinatore del Processo sinodale per la città di Roma

Giovedì · 26 ottobre 2023

Il cammino sinodale della Chiesa di Roma: una esperienza in corso

L'immagine sinodale ed ecumenica di Piazza
San Pietro Sabato 30 settembre 2023

Vorrei partire da una immagine che è davanti agli occhi di tutti e che manifesta la visibilità del nesso tra sinodalità ed ecumenismo: la Veglia di Preghiera *Together* il 30 settembre 2023 in Piazza San Pietro, animata dalla Comunità di Taizé. Icona visiva del nostro camminare insieme e di come le diverse assisi sinodali che la Chiesa ha messo in atto – quelle locali (chiese diocesane e nazionali) e quella universale – manifestano il segno della comunione della partecipazione e della missione. La presenza dei fratelli delle altre confessioni religiose ha dato il senso della pienezza di questo cammino. In quel luogo speciale e significativo, è

 **MEDIA**

 **Lecture video**

www.prounione.it/webtv/live/26-oct-2023

 **Audio podcast**

bit.ly/Carbonaro-Podcast-Lecture-Oct-2023

stato possibile percepire come i diversi cammini con le loro tensioni, trovino la convergenza nella preghiera e nell'invocazione dello Spirito che parla alla Chiesa. Papa Francesco lo ha sottolineato nell'omelia: un Silenzio che genera e dialoga nel cuore di ognuno, perché possa raggiungere l'altro.



Il Cammino della Diocesi di Roma in questi anni

Le fasi del cammino sinodale voluto da papa Francesco come un processo, uno stile di vita ecclesiale. La Chiesa di Roma che presiede la Carità con il suo Vescovo papa Francesco, cammina in comunione con tutte le altre Chiese (locale, nazionale, universale). Nell'udienza offerta ai fedeli della Diocesi il 18 settembre 2021 ha affermato che: "La sinodalità non è il capitolo di un trattato di ecclesiologia, e tanto meno uno slogan. La sinodalità esprime la natura della Chiesa, la sua forma, il suo stile e la sua missione"¹.



 **S.E. Davide Carbonaro**

 **Crediti foto**
Archivio Centro Pro Unione

¹ FRANCESCO, *Udienza ai fedeli della Diocesi di Roma*, 18 settembre 2021, in  <https://bit.ly/4iC61Pz>
 URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

Dal 2021 al 2023 la Chiesa Italiana e la nostra Diocesi hanno percorso nella *fase narrativa* il primo passo del cammino sinodale. Il suo cuore è stato l'ascolto. L'obiettivo quello di: "avviare una nuova esperienza di Chiesa che pratichi la sinodalità e irrobustisca il nostro camminare insieme". I frutti sono confluiti nella "Sintesi diocesana", che ha raccolto dei punti nodali caldi, delle tensioni e delle proposte "germinative", apparse come costanti. Veniva chiesto all'Équipe sinodale diocesana, costituita dal Cardinale

stata ancora quella dell'ascolto e della narrazione di esperienze, soprattutto attraverso la voce del territorio e dei diversi mondi. Ha aiutato questo cammino l'icona biblica di Betania con le sue immagini: la strada e il villaggio, la casa e l'ospitalità, la diaconia e la formazione spirituale. I "Gruppi Cantiere", lì dove si sono costituiti, hanno proseguito l'ascolto attraverso la conversazione spirituale, accompagnata da schede bibliche tratte da episodi degli Atti degli Apostoli. Con la pubblicazione della Costituzione Apostolica

"In ecclesiarum communione" del 6 gennaio 2023 il nostro Vescovo Papa Francesco, ha chiesto alla Chiesa di Roma di essere esemplare nella collegialità e nella sinodalità, indicando espressamente di lavorare sul ripristino degli organismi di partecipazione (Consigli pastorali) in stile sinodale. "Alla Chiesa di Roma è affidata la particolare responsabilità di accogliere la fede e la carità di Cristo trasmesse dagli Apostoli e di testimoniarle in modo esemplare. È quindi primaria preoccupazione del suo Vescovo provvedere a quanto è

necessario perché questa Chiesa corrisponda a ciò che le dice lo Spirito del Signore Gesù Cristo..."².

La Sintesi diocesana frutto della fase narrativa



È un testo nato dall'ascolto delle comunità e che ora è riconsegnato alla comunità Diocesana perché possa essere oggetto della *fase sapienziale*.



Partecipanti alla conferenza

📷 Crediti foto
Archivio Centro Pro Unione

Vicario nel novembre 2021, di mettersi in ascolto orante delle voci provenienti dai pastori e dai fedeli della nostra Diocesi. Le voci raccolte sono a noi giunte dalle "Conversazioni nello Spirito" attivate in Diocesi. La fase narrativa è proseguita con l'anno pastorale 2023 attraverso la costituzione dei "Cantieri di Betania", secondo le indicazioni della Conferenza episcopale italiana (CEI) per tutte le Chiese d'Italia. L'intenzione è

2 FRANCESCO, *Costituzione Apostolica In Ecclesiarum Communionem circa l'ordinamento del Vicariato di Roma*, n.1, in *Costituzione Apostolica In Ecclesiarum Communionem circa l'ordinamento del Vicariato di Roma* (6 gennaio 2023) - Francesco  <https://bit.ly/4c5AToZ>
 URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

Cosa è emerso di più evidente? La sintesi è nata dall'ascolto delle voci giunte alla Équipe sinodale della Diocesi. Ha coinvolto il 50% delle parrocchie, circa 80 scuole, le comunità etniche, le carceri. Abbiamo potuto ascoltare il cuore vivo e familiare della nostra gente. Uno spaccato della voce del popolo di Dio che è in Roma. Dai contenuti variegati, emerge un materiale grezzo di vissuto

linguaggi per esprimere e comunicare la fede; e di liturgie che siano comunicative del mistero di Dio e dell'uomo. Dagli anziani il grido della solitudine ed il desiderio di essere riconosciuti. Dalle comunità etniche il desiderio di essere non solo ospitati, ma integrati. Infine, è emersa la richiesta di una coraggiosa formazione umana e cristiana, a partire da un rinnovato desiderio di ascolto della Parola di Dio. Questi elementi nodali con le loro tensioni, sono riconoscibili anche nella sintesi che la CEI ha preparato ascoltando tutte le sintesi delle diocesi italiane e consegnandola per la fase continentale del Sinodo della Chiesa universale.

Il cammino continua: la fase sapienziale

La fase sapienziale occuperà l'anno 2023-2024. Sarà il tempo nel quale la Chiesa di Roma rileggerà la voce delle diverse narrazioni, soprattutto il contributo della Sintesi diocesana. Sarà un tempo in cui apprendere insieme, pastori e fedeli, l'arte del discernimento. Una fase orante, e di confronto dunque, che ci chiamerà intorno alla Parola di Dio. L'icona biblica che accompagnerà questo processo, sarà quella dei Discepoli di Emmaus. Anche le nostre Comunità come i due che scappano da Gerusalemme, percepiscono delusioni e resistenze. Occorre ritornare a camminare con il Risorto, che spiega le Scritture e fa ardere il cuore. Le Comunità continueranno attraverso il metodo delle "Conversazioni nello Spirito", ad alimentare il cammino comune del discernimento.



Introduzione all'incontro celebrativo

 **Crediti foto**
Archivio Centro Pro Unione

ancora intra ecclesiale, con dei tentativi di ascolto delle realtà più complesse come il mondo giovanile della scuola, la povertà e le carceri. Una voce che si presenta spesso con un linguaggio graffiante, ma assetato di verità, desideroso di ascoltare la voce della Chiesa su questioni calde, come temi di morale rimasti sospesi. Soprattutto dal mondo giovanile è emerso che non si vuole rinunciare ai testimoni e che c'è bisogno di compagni di viaggio. Dalle parrocchie è emersa la richiesta del superamento del clericalismo e l'inaugurazione della corresponsabilità. L'attivazione di nuovi

I passaggi dalla fase narrativa a quella sapienziale, mettono in luce quanto sia importante la partecipazione di tutti. Già dalla Sintesi diocesana emergeva un desiderio di maggiore partecipazione e comunione di tutto il popolo di Dio: Pastori e Fedeli. Anche il lavoro intrapreso con i Cantieri di Betania ha visto le Comunità interrogarsi sulla qualità della nostra corresponsabilità ecclesiale. Infine, la Costituzione Apostolica di Papa Francesco, ha sostenuto la scelta di indirizzare il discernimento diocesano sulla riformulazione degli organismi di partecipazione in stile sinodale.

In questi mesi il Consiglio Episcopale, il Consiglio dei Prefetti, l'Équipe Sinodale Diocesana, hanno lavorato perché le comunità parrocchiali potessero avere uno degli strumenti che aiuterà il discernimento. Si tratta dello *Statuto del Consiglio Pastorale*, approvato in questi giorni da Papa Francesco. Così nell'introduzione: "La costituzione del Consiglio pastorale parrocchiale quale organo primario di partecipazione, strumento di comunione e corresponsabilità, è uno dei punti d'arrivo e di partenza dell'esperienza di ascolto vissuta dal popolo di Dio della Chiesa di Roma negli ultimi anni"³.



In conclusione

Il Cammino sinodale come anche gli organismi di partecipazione rappresentano un impegno che richiede fede, umiltà, pazienza, assiduità agli incontri e suppone che siano formati da persone interiormente libere, dedite all'ascolto della Parola di Dio e fiduciose nel prossimo. Non si tratta infatti di far prevalere le proprie idee, o di portare avanti campagne particolari, mosse magari da intuizioni generose. Siamo piuttosto chiamati ad apprendere l'arte di lasciare a Dio la guida della sua Comunità: lui solo ha parole di Vita. Per tutti si tratterà di mettere al centro la Parola, perché la fede nasce dall'ascolto. Dalla fede e solo dalla fede può nascere la missione della Chiesa e la capacità di realizzarla.

 Schermata diretta streaming · WebTv

 *Crediti foto*
Archivio Centro Pro Unione



3 FRANCESCO, *Diocesi di Roma, Consiglio
Pastorale Parrocchiale. Statuto, premessa, in*
 [https://https://bit.ly/441HdvR](https://bit.ly/441HdvR)  URL Retrieved: 7 February
2025

VASILE OCTAVIAN MIHOC ◀ |

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

World Council of Churches Program Executive for Ecumenical Relations and
for Faith and Order Commission. Professor at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

Thursday · 26 October 2023

Embarking on a Path of Transformation: WCC's Vision of the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity

A fellowship of churches

In an era characterized by global crises and profound societal shifts, the World Council of Churches (WCC) stands as a light of hope, advocating tirelessly for unity, justice, and reconciliation within the global Christian community. With a distinguished history spanning over seven decades, the WCC has emerged as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and collective action among diverse Christian traditions worldwide.

At its core, the WCC is driven by the vision to promote visible unity in faith and Eucharistic fellowship. This vision finds expression not only in the prayer practices and common life of member churches but also in their collective witness and service to the world. With a membership encompassing 352 churches from more than 120 countries, representing an estimated 600 million Christians, the WCC has become a truly global force for positive change.

One of the hallmarks of the WCC's approach is its commitment to inclusivity and collaboration. Over the years, the Council has forged strong partnerships with national councils of churches, regional ecumenical organizations, Christian world communions, specialized ministries, and international ecumenical organizations.

MEDIA

Lecture video

www.prounione.it/webtv/live/26-oct-2023

Audio podcast

bit.ly/Mihoc-Podcast-Lecture-Oct-2023



◻ Dr. Vasile Octavian Mihoc

📷 Photo Credits

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Additionally, the WCC has cultivated relationships with churches outside its membership, including the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal, and Evangelical denominations. This spirit of cooperation extends beyond the Church realm to encompass civil society and international partners, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the International Labour Organization.

Contextual imperatives and signs of hope

In recent years, the WCC has recognized the need to adapt to an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The current global context, often described as a “poly-crisis,” is characterized by the convergence of multiple threats and challenges, ranging from environmental degradation and economic inequality to wars, political instability and religious extremism. Amidst these challenges, the WCC remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering *metanoia*, or transformation, in the hearts, minds, and actions of individuals and communities worldwide. The values of the WCC are rooted in a common understanding and vision

that includes: convening churches, ecumenical and interfaith partners for dialogue and encounter; creating safe spaces for differing perspectives; encouraging mutual accountability; shaping discourse on critical issues in the pursuit of expressing a common voice; fostering shared decision-making that strengthens the ethos and practice of consensus as well as providing coherence; promoting justice, reconciliation, and unity at all levels within the fellowship and across the *oikoumene*; building life-affirming and life-enhancing relationships to ensure the fullness of life for all creation.



Icon depicting the First Nicaea Council

Resolutions from the WCC Karlsruhe assembly

The resolutions of the WCC Karlsruhe assembly reflect the commitment to unmasking and resisting marginalization, recognizing the urgent need to combat oppressive forces such as neo-colonialism, war, greed economies, xenophobia, and the unjust religious justifications that perpetuate injustice. Furthermore, the assembly emphasizes the development of models and methods for mission and unity, with a particular focus on repairing the damage inflicted by colonization, tending to the wounds of history, and healing from its enduring legacies. Decolonization is recognized as a vital aspect of the ecumenical movement, with a call for systemic transformation and reparations to repair historical injustices and foster unity and common witness efforts. Moreover, the assembly acknowledges the vital role of indigenous communities in challenging colonial mindsets within Christianity and calls for the embodiment of pilgrimage principles, including respect for sacred territories and the recognition of indigenous wisdom and spirituality. The assembly underscores the spirituality of rising and ascending, urging individuals to live a Christ-connected life characterized by a commitment to confronting injustice and testifying to God's counter life. This spirituality is grounded in faith, solidarity, and a deep sense of commitment to God's Spirit and

marginalized communities. Lastly, the assembly emphasizes the importance of witnessing across asymmetries, encouraging spirituality that enables individuals to learn and transform historical, social, and relational asymmetries.

Pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity

Central to the WCC's approach is the concept of pilgrimage – a journey towards justice, reconciliation, and unity. This pilgrimage paradigm, which has evolved from the WCC Busan assembly (2013) to the WCC Karlsruhe assembly (2022) and will lead the council until next assembly, signifies a commitment to continual learning, dialogue, and engagement with diverse perspectives. It challenges Churches and individuals to step out of their comfort zones, embrace risk-taking, and confront the systemic injustices that plague our world. Walking, praying, and working together, this pilgrimage embodies a collective commitment to confront systemic injustices and cultivate a more just and reconciled world for all. The assembly affirmation of an "ecumenism of the heart" provokes conversation on the relational commitment to ecumenism, which has been understood as God's presence in the whole inhabited earth.

Photo Credits

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Key to the success of this pilgrimage is the quality of relationships. As articulated in the Unity Statement from the Karlsruhe assembly, deepened relationships should lead to radical change. Indeed, the WCC's strategic priorities – visible unity, broadening the table, ecumenical missiology, and formation – underscore its commitment to fostering a community of diverse voices and perspectives. Through its facilitating role in the pilgrimage, the WCC convenes diverse stakeholders, offering space for joint reflection and planning to address pressing issues. It amplifies the public voice of the Christian communities, advocating for justice and peace on a global scale. Moreover, the WCC encourages cooperation by connecting churches, national councils of churches (NCCs), regional ecumenical organizations (REOs), and ecumenical partners, fostering meaningful collaboration. Additionally, the WCC fosters coherence within the ecumenical movement by jointly developing a profile that reflects the shared values and aspirations of its members, ensuring a common approach towards collective goals. The strategic direction of the pilgrimage encompasses three fundamental aspects: 1. Invitation – God invites us and churches invite one another; 2. Direction – continuous learning, ongoing and dynamic journey directed to the reign of God, a journey which churches take together with other companions and in the context of the whole world; 3. Methodology – (a) *via positiva* (celebrating the gifts); (b) *via negativa* (visiting the wounds); (c) *via transformativa* (moving towards transformation). The Pilgrimage is a journey inspired by a “theology of companionship”, which reinforces the idea that we are all sojourners on the way of becoming.



Conference hall, icon on canvas



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The WCC perceives pilgrimage as a dynamic movement imbued with spiritual significance and purpose. Firstly, it acknowledges God's active engagement in the world, seeking to transform injustices, enmities, and inequities. This recognition underscores the divine call to address societal challenges and work towards a more just and equitable world. Secondly, pilgrimage is viewed as an ongoing and intentional journey towards the realization of God's Kingdom – a journey characterized by persistence, dedication, and collective effort. It is a continual striving towards a vision of unity and peace rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, pilgrimage fosters collective reflection, providing a space for meaningful dialogue and exploration of pressing concerns without the pressure to resolve all differences immediately. This inclusive approach encourages participants to raise essential questions and engage in open discourse without fear of fragmenting fellowship. Moreover, pilgrimage encourages embracing change, recognizing the necessity for adaptation and growth. It urges individuals and communities to confront and address forces that marginalize, emphasizing the importance of solidarity with the marginalized and vulnerable. Additionally, pilgrimage advocates for a different approach to ecumenicity – one focuses on leveraging the diverse traditions of various churches to shed new light on shared topics.

Theology of the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity

The theology of pilgrimage reveals its deep roots in the love of the Triune God. This theology recognizes that the Triune God, who



created the world, continues to empower and renew it through the Holy Spirit, with the ultimate goal of reconciling all things in Christ. The pilgrimage has also a strong Christological basis, tracing its origins to the earthly journey of Jesus Christ, from His humble incarnation to His sacrificial crucifixion and glorious resurrection. Furthermore, the theology of pilgrimage is firmly grounded in a pneumatological understanding, acknowledging the active role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the discernment of God's will for the churches and for the world. It is through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that churches are emboldened to engage in prophetic witness and transformative action within their societies.

The theology of pilgrimage encompasses also ecological and social dimensions, recognizing the interconnectedness of every human being and humanity as a whole in the journey towards justice, reconciliation, and unity in Christ. This holistic perspective emphasizes the responsibility of individuals and communities to steward the creation and foster social equity as integral aspects of the pilgrimage. Additionally, pilgrimage underscores the importance of unity in diversity, acknowledging that the collective experience of journeying together can strengthen communion within and between churches. Through this journey, individuals and communities are invited to undergo transformation and build unity with their companions, embracing the richness of diversity as a source of strength and enrichment. Moreover, pilgrimage is inherently about witnessing and transforming – a journey that offers a vision of companionship and solidarity among churches. It is about initiating profound transformation within individuals and communities, fostering deep and meaningful relationships that transcend boundaries and divisions. Finally, common prayer emerges as a transformative experience within the pilgrimage, shaping the way participants engage with the world.

Pilgrimage: an invitation to interreligious openness and solidarity

The concept of pilgrimage serves also as an invitation to interreligious openness and solidarity. Through a shared pilgrimage experience, individuals from diverse religious backgrounds find common ground, embodying interreligious openness and spiritual resonance. This shared journey underscores the interconnectedness of humanity, recognizing that the well-being of the Christian community is intricately linked to the well-being of all – both neighbors and strangers alike. It fosters profound solidarity and companionship, serving as a faithful response to the boundless love of Christ and as a means for, and outcome of, living out God's intentions of abundant life for all. Central to the pilgrimage experience is the creation and maintenance of trust, ensuring that all are served and valued. This trust forms the foundation upon which meaningful relationships are built, fostering resilience and agility in the face of adversity. Together, participants seek true healing for our wounded world, drawing strength from their collective commitment to justice, reconciliation, and unity. In embracing the spirit of pilgrimage, individuals embark on a transformative journey – one that transcends religious boundaries and cultivates a shared vision of peace, harmony, and flourishing for all.

Challenges for the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity

The pilgrimage towards justice, reconciliation, and unity is not without its challenges, each demanding careful consideration and strategic navigation. Foremost among these challenges is the criticism that the concept of pilgrimage carries with it an unjust, damaging, and divisive history and meaning. Confronting this critique requires a nuanced understanding of the past, acknowledging its mix of sacred and profane elements that have shaped our collective consciousness.

Furthermore, navigating theological and doctrinal differences among various Christian traditions poses a significant challenge, requiring open

dialogue and mutual respect. Balancing local and global concerns is also paramount, necessitating a delicate approach that addresses global issues of justice and peace while respecting the diverse contexts and concerns of local communities.

Sustaining the momentum and enthusiasm generated during specific events or periods of heightened activity presents another challenge, requiring ongoing engagement and support. Additionally, ensuring the active participation and representation of different Christian traditions and communities, particularly those from marginalized regions or smaller denominations, is essential for fostering inclusivity and diversity within the pilgrimage.

Engaging in dialogue and collaboration with other faith traditions, non-religious organizations, and broader society is crucial for building bridges and promoting understanding.

Adapting to shifting global dynamics and overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers to ensure effective communication and collaboration are ongoing challenges that demand flexibility, creativity, and a commitment to inclusivity. By addressing these challenges with diligence and resolve, the pilgrimage towards justice, reconciliation, and unity can continue to progress towards its transformative goals.

Celebration of 1700 years from the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea 325

The WCC has dedicated the year of 2025 at the celebration of 1700 years from the first Ecumenical Council (Nicaea 325) to the theme “Living the Apostolic Faith Together Today”. This celebration will provide an opportunity for churches and ecumenical partners to reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing the ecumenical movement in the twenty-first century. The WCC Commission on Faith and Order is planning a world

conference around the theme “Where now for visible unity?” with a focus on the issues of faith, unity, and mission. The conference will take place from 24 to 28 October 2025 at the Logos Papal Center of the Coptic Orthodox Church, close to the St Bishoy Monastery at Wadi El Natrun, near Alexandria, Egypt.

Conclusion

In confronting global challenges, the WCC remains guided by a theology of pilgrimage rooted in the love of the Triune God. Grounded in the journey of Jesus Christ and energized by the Holy Spirit, this theology calls for humility, courage, and resilience in the face of adversity. As we continue on this journey of faith and transformation, we heed the call to pilgrimage with renewed determination, knowing that in our collective striving for justice, reconciliation, and unity, we are indeed walking in the sandals of Jesus Christ, guided by the spirit of companionship and love.

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 *Lecturers, leadership of the CPU
and ecumenical friends*

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Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 14 December 2023

Towards a Contemporary Spirituality of Reconciliation

Thank you for this invitation to speak at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference in honor of Mother Lurana White and Servant of God Father Paul Wattson. It is a great joy to be here with dear friends at the Centro Pro Unione and to know that others have joined us online. I especially acknowledge with gratitude the presence of the Sisters and Friars of the Atonement, who have done so much over the years to promote Christian unity and reconciliation in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

The theme for today's conference is "Towards a Contemporary Spirituality of Reconciliation."

I think we can agree: The world is in desperate need of new and authentic attempts at reconciliation—both in words and in actions—and we as Christians are called to

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draw from Sacred Scripture and the depths of our tradition to promote reconciliation boldly.¹ As we face a world spiraling into ever deeper levels of violence, what resources can Christians offer to those who are suffering?² What words of hope and consolation can we speak? What actions must accompany our words, so we can credibly witness to what we believe?

Dr Donna Orsuto

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Philip Sheldrake notes that "a ruptured Church has little credibility in preaching reconciliation to a divided world. There is no point in speaking reconciliation unless we are manifestly committed to trying to live it ourselves in all its pain, ambiguity

¹ As Philip Sheldrake notes in "A Spirituality of Reconciliation: Encouragement for Anglicans from a Roman Catholic Perspective," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 6,1 (2008), 108. "The world at large desperately needs to hear a new word about reconciliation. Christianity is called to speak such a word—precisely and unashamedly a theological-spiritual one."

² Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), 41.



and incompleteness.”³ The “Ut Unum Sint” banner here in the Centro Pro Unione library is a reminder that working and praying for Christian unity are not optional activities for Christians. Unity among Christians is the solemn will of Christ and it is more urgent than ever, for it is part of the work of reconciliation.

The purpose of this reflection is to attempt to offer a theological and spiritual reflection on reconciliation and to propose concrete steps for committing ourselves to live it, notwithstanding the challenges. From a Christian perspective, reconciliation is not merely conflict resolution, accommodation or tolerance, even though these are positive because, as Sheldrake notes, they allow for “pragmatic arrangements” and “compromise.”⁴ Reconciliation is not conciliation either. Conciliation, too, is positive because it is associated with pacifying or placating. It may “lower the temperature but it does not necessarily promote deep change.”⁵ However, Christian reconciliation is something more, something much deeper.

Sheldrake notes the *Oxford English Dictionary* does not define reconciliation “merely as the restoration of harmony but also as ‘the reconsecration of desecrated places.’ If you like, all those people whose lives are marginalized by what we do or say in times of conflict are ‘desecrated places’ because their unique value and identity as images of God is denied.”⁶

In my modest attempt to build on Sheldrake’s reflection on reconciliation, I will focus on three points.

I shall begin with St. Paul, using a passage much loved by Servant of God Father Paul Wattson, namely Romans 5:11. In the context of this verse, I will ask the question: What theological and spiritual insights does St. Paul offer about reconciliation with God and with each another?

Then I will briefly consider a few ideas from the writings of St. Francis of Assisi on reconciliation and ask: Can we deepen this understanding of a Christian spirituality of reconciliation through the lens of the Franciscan tradition?

Finally, referring to the seventh chapter of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* that focuses on reconciliation and peace, I will ask: What are some practical ways to put into action today the theological and spiritual insights developed in St. Paul’s writings and in the Franciscan tradition?

I would like to highlight immediately four insights that will be developed in this reflection. First, from a Christian perspective, reconciliation is above all a reconciliation with God, who has given us the gift of reconciliation in Christ. A Christian understanding of reconciliation begins with God reaching out to us in our weakness, vulnerability, and sinfulness. Second, our reconciliation with God has implications for our relationships with others, for in Christ, we are called to live as brothers and sisters in unity and to become “ambassadors for Christ,” imploring others on behalf of Christ “to be reconciled with God” (see 2 Cor 5:20). Third, because reconciliation is both gift and responsibility, as Christians we are called to pray and work assiduously for reconciliation and peace, especially in conflict situations. Both are important: work and prayer, prayer and work. Fourth, paradoxically, oftentimes in conflict situations, it is through the vulnerability of forgiveness and love that reconciliation is achieved.

1. A spirituality of reconciliation grounded in St. Paul’s writings

Servant of God Father Paul Wattson loved the Word of God and he was convinced that God spoke to him through that Word. When, as a 30-year-old Anglican priest, he sought inspiration for founding a new religious community on July 9, 1893, he prayed for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and then opened his Bible three times.

3 Sheldrake, “A Spirituality of Reconciliation,” 108.

4 Sheldrake, “A Spirituality of Reconciliation,” 108-109.

5 Sheldrake, “A Spirituality of Reconciliation,” 109.

6 Sheldrake, “A Spirituality of Reconciliation,” 109.

One of the texts he read was St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 11: "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."⁷

This passage from the King James Version of the Bible gave him the name of the society he founded together with Mother Lurana White: the Society of the Atonement. As Charles Angell and Charles LaFontaine note in their 1975 book:

"In modern versions of the Bible the word 'atonement' is translated as 'reconciliation,' because the original meaning of the word 'atonement' was 'at-one-ment.' To make at one, to reconcile all men with God, was the fruit of Christ's redeeming sacrifice at Calvary. Gradually the English word, 'atonement,' the only original contribution of the English language to the theological lexicon, shifted in its meaning from the effect of Christ's sacrifice, reconciliation, to the means by which it was attained, satisfaction for the sins of mankind. In common English parlance, 'at-one-ment' meaning reconciliation became atonement signifying satisfaction, but Father Wattson was primarily inspired and motivated by the name 'atonement' in the context of Romans V:11 – as reconciliation."⁸

Can we find inspiration for a contemporary "spirituality of reconciliation" by revisiting this passage in the context of St. Paul's other writings on the theme?

I think we can.

The scholarly literature on reconciliation in St. Paul's writings and in the Deuteropauline corpus is vast, even though some form of the verb

"to reconcile," *katallassein*, appears in these texts only ten times.⁹

In this brief reflection, I cannot go into detail about the interpretation of all these passages. Also, I am aware that among Christians we have diverged on how to interpret reconciliation and atonement.¹⁰ Although most recent ecumenical dialogue has shown steps toward convergence, this is not the topic I wish to discuss today.

What I would like to do instead is to highlight a few ideas from one helpful source, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology: Narrative Readings in Romans*, by Romanian Scripture scholar Corneliu Constantineanu, who suggests that:

"(T)he social dimension of reconciliation in Paul could be properly understood within his larger vision of reconciliation of all things in Christ. ... (T)here is in Paul an understanding of reconciliation that is linked to a vision of reality that is transcendent and which offers a different set of values from those of this world, and produces different results. This vision inspired him throughout his life and ministry and gave him the impetus to be permanently engaged in *reconciling practices*—between Jews and Gentiles, between various individuals and groups

9 Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation,'" *Novum Testamentum*, 39, 4 (1997) 360-384, especially 361.

10 Sheldrake summarizes well Protestant and Catholic approaches to reconciliation: "Protestantism tends to emphasize reconciliation between God and humanity as a result of the Cross (cf. Rom 5:6-11) and Catholicism tends to emphasize how the love of God poured out upon us as a result of the divine-human reconciliation creates a new humanity in which the walls of division between people are broken down (cf. 2 Cor 5:17-20 and 6:1)." One might say, as Sheldrake does, that "both dimensions need to be held in tension. Inter-human reconciliation is not simply a matter of giving each person their due but is really to give God God's due, by building a world and a Church that God's all-embracing forgiveness demands." See Sheldrake, "A Spirituality of Reconciliation," 113.

7 Charles Angell and Charles LaFontaine, *Prophet of Reunion. The Life of Paul of Graymoor* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 27. The first was John 7:37-39, see p. 27. See also Joseph Scerbo, *Un fuoco nella notte. La vita e l'eredità di P. Paolo di Graymoor* (Eckbolshein: Éditions du Signe, 2003), 20-22.

8 Angell and LaFontaine, *Prophet of Reunion*, 27-28.

within the churches, between Christians and outsiders. It was the same vision worked out in Paul's life that offered an incentive for his congregations to think and act likewise and, indeed, it also inspires us to continue to build on that vision."¹¹

St. Paul's radical experience of reconciliation began on the road to Damascus with his conversion, which created a radical shift in his life because he came to understand the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. "Paul's emerging vision of reconciliation is thus radically shaped by, and grounded on, the Christ event: a world of new possibilities and radical innovations is opened up now 'in Christ', with serious implications for all those living within this new reality."¹² Both in Paul's Damascus Road experience and as expressed in theological terms in Romans 5:10-11, it is clear that reconciliation is, above all, God's work:

"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."¹³

Although Paul's conversion story is complex and contains many elements, certainly on

one level it seems fair to say that he, the once "enemy of Christ" and persecutor of the Church, experienced the gift of reconciliation with God. He was made "at-one" with God through his encounter with the Risen Lord, and he communicated the Good News of reconciliation through his letters.¹⁴ In other words, "to reflect on the theme of reconciliation means reflecting on the very centre of the Good News."¹⁵

Another key Pauline passage, echoing his Damascus road experience and focusing on reconciliation, is 2 Cor 5:14-6:10. Here is an excerpt:

"For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

14 Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 71.

15 Christophe Chalamet, "Reconciliation: Divine and Human," *The Ecumenical Review* 76 (2021), 375-376.

11 Corneliu Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology: Narrative Readings in Romans* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 64.

12 Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 207.

13 Cf. Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation. Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 14. Schreiter would emphasize that this is one of the five key points in Paul's teaching on reconciliation.



✦ **Fr. Tim MacDonald, SA, opening the conference**

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"From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

In commenting on this passage, Constantineanu suggests five key points:

First, Paul understood that "reconciliation is purely *God's gift of grace*" and grace is its starting point. In his experience of God's forgiveness, grace, and reconciliation, Paul understood that reconciliation originates from the victim who extends it to his enemy. In other words, "the victim takes initiative"¹⁶ in bringing about reconciliation by extending grace.

Second, for Paul, it is an objective reality that "God has reconciled the world to himself." Therefore, everything he says about reconciliation must be seen in this light. He states this point more forcefully in Colossians 1:19-20: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."¹⁷



Dr Orsuto presented a visual keynote to the audience

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Third, Paul focuses his attention on "Christ, the reconciler," since it is "through Christ's death and resurrection that the objective reconciliation is accomplished" and therefore only "around Christ that any thought of reconciliation should be based."¹⁸ Reconciliation in Christ has both political and social implications.

Fourth, Paul encourages the Corinthians to recall their own experiences of reconciliation, so they will relate to each other and treat each other—including their enemies—differently (see 2 Cor 6:1-10). This echoes Paul's own experience of reconciliation with God. Indeed, the whole point of 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 is to illustrate that "the gospel message, to be the gospel message, must be embodied, not just spoken."¹⁹

Lastly—and this is significant in Paul's eyes—reconciliation is costly. Constantineanu refers especially to 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, where Paul catalogues his afflictions and sufferings. For Paul, for the Corinthians, for us today:

¹⁸ Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 72.

¹⁹ Kraftchick, 'Death's parsing,' 151, as quoted by Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 72.

¹⁶ Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 71.

¹⁷ Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 72.

The journey to reconciliation may bring sacrifice and hardship. The good news though is that the costly path of reconciliation also brings new life.²⁰

This new life, brought to us from the Risen Lord, implies that we also are empowered to “embody in our everyday life the reconciliation we have received from God.” Indeed, “the presence of the resurrected Christ, through the Spirit, makes the practice of reconciliation possible.”²¹

2. Some Insights from St. Francis of Assisi on Reconciliation

Having explored some key insights from the Apostle Paul that contribute to a spirituality of reconciliation, I now turn to my second point, framed as a question: Can reflection on the life and writings of St. Francis of Assisi help to deepen a spirituality of reconciliation? I think it can.

I will highlight three points, likely already quite familiar to you all.

First, we know that a pivotal moment of St. Francis’ conversion was when he encountered Christ in the lepers.

The initial hint of conversion from this worldly life seemed to occur when Francis decided to become a knight. It was during an extended period of illness and convalescence after a brief stint in a war between Perugia and Assisi in 1202, when he was captured, imprisoned, and eventually ransomed by his father. Something happened on his journey to southern Italy to join the militia of Pope Innocent III that caused him to change his mind about his calling, although the courtly manners of courtesy and liberality remained an important part of his life.

Francis describes his first steps toward conversion with these simple and unpretentious words at the beginning of his *Testament*, written in 1226 a few months before he died:

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world.²²

Notice the language here: For Francis, everything is gift, even his conversion. Note that he says, “The Lord gave me” and “the Lord himself led me.” Francis remembers this turning away from self and turning toward God as a gift, which once received had practical implications in a changed attitude toward lepers. Some early legends tell of Francis who, while riding a horse, encountered a leper and, instead of avoiding him, gave him alms. Whatever really happened, it is clear that Francis’ conversion led him eventually to serve the most despised and isolated members of society.

In medieval times, strict laws pertaining to lepers required them to live separately from others, avoid contact with people, particularly children, have separate water for drinking and washing, and have their own churches and burial sites. Despite the dread of leprosy, in Christianity there has always been a deeply embedded concern for lepers that derives from the New Testament account of Jesus reaching out to heal lepers (Mt 8:2, Mk 1:41). In Christian spirituality, Jesus’ touch of lepers became a quasi-litmus test for anyone who wanted to follow Christ’s example.

²² Francis of Assisi, *The Testament in Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong et al. (New York: New City Press, 1999), 124. This edition is now considered the standard text in English. The first volume, *The Saint*, is followed by two others: *The Founder* (volume II) and *The Prophet* (volume III). Though there are numerous excellent commentaries on *The Testament*, I have always found it inspiring, in its simplicity, the following commentary by Cajetan Esser, *Rule and Testament of St. Francis. Conferences of Modern Followers of Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977).

²⁰ Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 72.

²¹ Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation*, 130.



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To put it bluntly, “Lepers were a direct challenge to those who took the gospel seriously.”²³

For Francis, this conversion experience was a sign that God led him to the most ostracized members of society, those who were truly the *minores* – whom today we would call the “poorest of the poor.”²⁴ Serving lepers was a way for him and his followers to imitate Christ. Although the word “reconciliation” does not appear in this account, his encounter with lepers led him to an experience of “reconciliation” – of being one with Christ – and to a deeper understanding of “the sacredness of the human person.” In an insightful article entitled, “Francis and the Franciscan Movement,” Michael Cusato remarks:

“The hagiographical accounts tell us that Francis encountered Christ within these

lepers. And this is true. But it is also crucial to point out that Francis also encountered and saw, perhaps for the first time in his life, suffering human beings, cast aside by the city of his birth and left in such misery and isolation. Through the workings of grace, Francis now came to discover the cardinal insight of his life: that all men and women are brothers and sisters, one to another, created equal in dignity and worth by the same Creator God. This is Francis’ discovery of the universal fraternity of all creatures and, most importantly, the sacredness of the human person. Moreover, everything that ruptures the bonds of this sacred fraternity willed by God for human life is what Francis means by ‘sin’.”²⁵

The second example comes from “The Canticle of the Creatures.” Contemporary sources unanimously agree that Francis composed this canticle in various stages. André Vauchez explains that Francis composed the first nine strophes in 1225, after calling out to God for help and receiving consolation, after two months of being in pain and in the dark with an untreatable eye infection. A few weeks later, “while he was bedridden in the episcopal palace of Assisi, he added strophes 10 and 11 to it regarding forgiveness.” It seems that he asked some friars to sing it in front of the house of the bishop and the *podestà*, the local governing body, who were in open conflict with one another. It was an urgent call to reconciliation.²⁶ Then, prior to his death in 1226, he dictated the last two strophes about “Sister Death” to a fellow Franciscan brother.

23 Cunningham, *Francis of Assisi, Performing the Gospel Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 11), 9-11.

24 Cf. Cunningham, 12 cites passages from *The Rule of 1221*, where Francis assumes the friars would work with lepers: *The Fioretti*, where an entire chapter is dedicated to Francis’ love of lepers, and *The Mirror of Perfection*, where Francis insists that “whether noble or not” those who enter the order must “serve lepers and live in their houses.”

25 Mark Cusato, “Francis and the Franciscan Movement (1181/2-1226),” in *The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. M. Robson, 15-33. Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19.

26 André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 278.

In the two strophes about forgiveness, verses 10 and 11, Francis prays:

“Praise be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.”²⁷

It is noteworthy that at this point in the Canticle, Francis shifts his focus from creation to humanity. Human beings are called to praise God. It has been rightly noted that “such praise is only achieved through identification with the suffering Servant of God, Jesus, who endured weakness and tribulation in peace. In this way, reconciliation is achieved in light of the Paschal Mystery.”²⁸

What is astounding in these verses is that Francis proposes to the local governing body and to the bishop what Giuseppe Buffon describes as “forgiveness without conditions, without reasons, ... if not those of love, which is unconditional vulnerability.”²⁹

The final example recalls the great crisis between Francis and his brothers, “who often took positions and initiatives far from his own, if not entirely opposed.” Part of the challenge was that some of the “educated friars” insisted on referring to the Rules of other congregations in contrast to the simplicity of what Francis proposed. Buffon explains:

“This is why the Parable of Perfect Joy, in which Francis speaks of his exclusion from fraternity because he is ‘*simple and stupid*,’ portrays in an emblematic way the experience of fraternity put to the test, of fraternity torn in search of reconciliation, of fraternity wounded, which invokes

healing, of fraternity that must welcome its own vulnerability, finding only in it ‘*perfect joy*.’ Accepting vulnerability rather than seeking justice is for Francis the only way to forgiveness, which is above all reconciliation with oneself. It is ... almost madness, evangelical madness. ... The proposal is certainly radical, but it often proves to be the only possible one to start processes of reconciliation, social and even political pacification.”³⁰



Though many would be familiar with the text, “True and Perfect Joy,” it is probably worth recalling it once again. Perfect joy, for Francis, is not a sudden surge of prelates and kings who enter the order. Perfect joy is not that his brothers convert all non-believers. Perfect joy is not that he would perform many miracles. Perfect joy, for Francis, is described in a surprisingly sober way:

“To the question, ‘Then what is true joy?’, Francis replies,

“‘I return from Perugia and arrive here in the dead of night. It’s winter time, muddy, and so cold that icicles have formed on the edge of my habit and keep striking my legs and blood flows from such wounds. Freezing, covered with mud and ice, I come to the gate and, after I’ve knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: “Who are you?” “Brother Francis,” I answer. “Go away!” he says. “This is not a decent hour to be wandering about! You may not come in!” When I insist, he replies: “Go away! You are simple and stupid! Don’t come back to us again! There are many of us here like you—we don’t need you!” I stand again at the door and say: “For the love of God, take me in tonight!” And he replies: “I will not! Go to the Crosiers” place and ask there!’”

27 Francis of Assisi, *Early Documents*, vol. 1, 114.

28 Francis of Assisi, *Early Documents*, vol. 1, 114, note B.

29 Giuseppe Buffon, “Porziuncola: Terra di riconciliazione continua,” OFM, Frati Francescani, see  <https://bit.ly/4gG2T3n>  URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

30 Buffon, “Porziuncola,”  <https://bit.ly/4gG2T3n>  URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

“I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, true joy, as well as true virtue and the salvation of my soul, would consist in this.”³¹

Although there are many other passages from St. Francis that speak directly or indirectly of reconciliation, I have chosen these three because they challenge us to reflect on the radical call to accept each person as brother and sister, especially the most vulnerable. They challenge us with the radicality of a forgiveness and love that knows no bounds. They challenge us to accept our vulnerability and recognize that it leads to perfect joy and union, “at-one-ment” with the Crucified Lord who is the source of our reconciliation.

3. A Spirituality of Reconciliation in Practice

As I come to the third and final part of this presentation, I want to ask the question: What does a spirituality of reconciliation look like in practice? How can one live out this spirituality in daily life? How can Christians make a difference in our troubled world by their words and actions?

In his book, *The Power of Reconciliation*, Justin Welby, states: “Reconciliation is first of all a lived experience. It takes time, develops habits and turns into a way of life and, above all, of relating. It transforms relationships.”³²

As we have seen, both St. Paul and St. Francis of Assisi had a “lived experience” of reconciliation with God. We may not have such dramatic conversion experiences, but there is a sense in which we too must be open to this gift of reconciliation with God that comes to us in various ways, but that is always truly a gracious gift from above. We cannot share with others what we do not have. We cannot be ambassadors of Christ, sharing the message of reconciliation with others unless we have been reconciled with God.

This is a profoundly transformative experience.

The Archbishop of Canterbury also notes that reconciliation includes “developing habits and turns into a way of life.” Robert J. Schreiter, an esteemed professor at Catholic Theological Union who died in June 2021, wrote extensively on this point. Two of his books, *Reconciliation, Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* and *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, explore how reconciliation becomes a way of life.

I would like to mention just a few ideas from his book. Often in the reconciliation process, Schreiter notes: “God initiates the work of reconciliation in the lives of the victims. Ordinarily we would expect reconciliation to begin with the repentance of the wrongdoers, but in fact, that is less likely to happen.”³³

He continues: “God begins with the victim, restoring to the victim the humanity which the wrongdoer has tried to wrest away or to destroy. This restoration of humanity might be considered the very heart of reconciliation. The experience of reconciliation is the experience of grace—the restoration of one’s damaged humanity in a life-giving relationship with God. ... That God would begin with the victim, and not the evildoer, is consistent with divine activity in history. God takes the side of the poor, the widowed and the orphaned, the oppressed and the imprisoned.

31 Francis of Assisi, *Early Documents*, vol. 1, 166-167.

32 Justin Welby, *The Power of Reconciliation* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2022), 32.

33 Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 14; See also Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry*, and his article entitled “Reconciliation,” in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives*, ed. Karl Müller et al. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 379-82. See also Harold Segura, “Spirituality and Reconciliation: Christian Spirituality as an Expression of a God That Has Emptied Himself,” in *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, ed. R. Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen (Minneapolis: 1517 Media Fortress Press, 2013).

It is in the ultimate victim, God's son Jesus Christ, that God begins the process that leads to the reconciliation of the whole world in Christ (Col 1:20)."³⁴

In practice, as we live out a spirituality of reconciliation, we are called to prioritize the poor, the victims, those who are wounded and vulnerable. This involves standing with them, serving them, caring for them. Schreiter's idea that the "restoration of humanity might be considered the heart of reconciliation" brings us back to the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of reconciliation, quoted earlier, as "the reconsecration of desecrated places." Indeed, all those people who are marginalized through violence and evil actions in times of conflict "are 'desecrated places' because their unique value and identity as images of God is denied."³⁵

34 Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 14; See also Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry*, and his article entitled "Reconciliation," in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives*, ed. Karl Müller et al. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 379-82. See also Harold Segura, "Spirituality and Reconciliation: Christian Spirituality as an Expression of a God That Has Emptied Himself," in *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, ed. R. Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen (Minneapolis: 1517 Media Fortress Press, 2013).

35 Sheldrake, "A Spirituality of Reconciliation," 109.

What we are called to offer goes beyond basic necessities, and crosses into the spiritual realm, helping people be open to the ultimate goal of entering into a relationship with Christ the reconciler and through that experience becoming reconcilers themselves. In this way the process of reconciliation, peacebuilding and bridgebuilding advances. In other words, the cycle of violence no longer perpetuates when the victim is reconciled.

In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis mentions the word reconciliation seventeen times and insists that restoring the dignity of all, especially the oppressed, is at the heart of reconciliation. He reminds us also that: "True love for an oppressor means seeking ways to make him cease his oppression; it means stripping him of a power that he does not know how to use and diminishes his own humanity and that of others."³⁶ Living a spirituality of reconciliation must include doing everything possible to stop oppression. Again, it is important to recognize that the oppressor's humanity is diminished by their actions. Thus, a spirituality of reconciliation lived authentically would challenge us to be bold in finding ways to stop the oppressor in their action.

Finally, a spirituality of reconciliation implies a fraternal life—living as brothers and sisters with all, especially the most vulnerable. St. Francis' call to embrace a simple, penitential lifestyle, with a commitment to pray for and serve those on the peripheries has a message for us today. So often, conflicts emerge because people are grasping for power and for riches, rather than aiming to live with purpose and meaningful relationships. Perhaps if we Christians took seriously this call to live as sisters and brothers in simplicity, we could help create oases of reconciliation in our troubled world, where people find a haven, where they can be one with God and one another.



Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement at the conference

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36 *Fratelli Tutti*, 241.



TAMARA GRDZELIDZE

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Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 18 January 2024

Synodality “at your fingertips” – Sinodalità “a portata di mano” Synodality and the recent Synod of the Roman Catholic Church

This is an attempt to consider Synodality through the prism of the recent document “A Synodal Church in Mission: synthesis report” – considerations of XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, First Session (October 4 -29, 2023, Vatican City). The synodal process was inaugurated following the Synod in October 2021. It initiated participation of churches in a listening process globally. Discussion and discernment on the basis of this particular text - “A Synodal Church in Mission: synthesis report” - will continue until the next, in this series final, Synod of Bishops in October 2024.

There is a fourth century anecdote about the term *homousios*, ‘consubstantial’, ‘of being one essence’ in English (*consustenziale/ della stessa sostanza*, in Italian). Amidst the Arian controversy, Athanasius of Alexandria championed the introduction of the term in the Creed/ Symbol of the Christian Faith in 325 at the Council of Nicaea; the term was discussed so widely that even merchants at market were involved in coming to terms with it. *Synodality* has a similar potential. No doubt it has become one of the most debated ecclesiological terms in recent theological reflection, and beyond.

Synodality is related to the experience of faithful who gather under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discuss and discern the truth of their life in Christ. This experience is also a journey, a way, a common path of the People of God whose discernment relies on listening to one another. There is no discussion without a proper listening to all

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who are capable of expressing themselves but also listening to those who, for one reason or another, are deprived of the means of expressing themselves. ‘Listening is a prerequisite for walking together in search of God’s will.’¹ Listening is indispensable to the experience of the synodal church. (Listening to one another today also means taking into account what people say on social media, internet.)

Synodality is about ecclesial unity. It is an ecclesiological topic from the times before ‘ecclesiology’ came into existence. *Synodality* is rooted in the very first days of Christian teaching; it is/was the church’s primordial mode of existence.

The Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church claim without any hesitation that Church Tradition ‘is rooted in the conciliar teaching’.²

There are some important contextual details that make debates on *Synodality* overwhelmingly popular. One of those details is that understanding/interpreting *Synodality* has a direct influence



Dr Tamara Grdzeldze

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1 “A Synodal Church in Mission: synthesis report”, 32.

<https://bit.ly/4hArMyI>

URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

2 *Ibid*, Introduction, 2.

on how/where the People of God, clergy and faithful, see the mission of the Church in its local and universal dimensions.

What is the church's mission then? The missionary task of the church has multiple dimensions and has given ground to multiple interpretations. To pin down a couple of principle features we can say that church's mission is:

- Evangelization: making the saving message of the Gospel accessible to all people
- Redemption: the goal of returning to God His own creation

On page 19 the document says: 'The Church's mission is continually renewed and nourished by the Eucharist'. The indispensable characteristic of the synodal church is sacramental revitalization and sustenance. The tasks/foci of the missionary church never change - bringing the saving message to all people and mediating for the salvation of the divine creation. The ways of their fulfilment, however, request a fresh insight, a continual response.

The document under discussion, like many others reflecting the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, aims at the renewal of synodal practice stemming from the New Testament and updated by the Second Vatican Council. Renewal is a common call throughout the present pontificate, renewal that is not a divergence from the magisterium, rather embracing the traditional practice with a new vigour. Many people have commented that from the very beginning of his days as the Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis' efforts are directed toward recovery of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Certainly, the document in discussion manifests the same determination. With the conviction that the Second Vatican Council is an inspiration for ongoing renewal, I would like to point out three pivotal moments leading to the synodal process inaugurated in 2021: *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), *Laudato si'* (2015), *Fratelli tutti* (2020).

Evangelii Gaudium - 'on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world' - speaks about the joy of evangelization, the joy of being the church, the joy of the People of God while taking steps into Christian life. In his first papal encyclical, Pope Francis writes: "I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, languages and structures can be suitably

channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open..."³ Realization of the Church's mission is seen via inclusivity and openness, through the renewal of structures meant to build the church. Pope Francis' pastoral mission for renewal wishes to reach out to every level of church life.

Walking together, a pilgrimage of the People of God towards God is the task of the church's mission, claims Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. (par111) Church, mystical and social, rooted in the Trinity yet always existing in a certain moment of history, at the same time represents and transcends the institutional structures. "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Mt 6:33) This particular reality of being the Church 'calls for ongoing formation and maturation', that is an ongoing process of growth. (par160)

*Laudato si'*⁴ - is one of the most powerful messages of any religious leader of the modern times. Even though the first steps in defence of environmental crisis were taken at the ecumenical level and then reproduced by the Orthodox Church, namely by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, launching *Laudato si'* gave substantial rise to the concern about the real danger of destruction of 'our common home', the earth. By demonstrating in scientific, as well as spiritual, terms the importance of an immediate unified response on behalf of the humanity to save their home, the encyclical mobilized people of various faiths and convictions, in spite of their belief in whether it is God's creation or not. Undoubtedly, *Laudato si'* surfaced a profound teaching on the intrinsic value of all creatures, underlying interconnectedness of all creatures as the prominence for saving the planet. Today's media constantly speaks about the ongoing crisis, covers the scientific search for solutions; COP 28 confirmed a compensation for victims of Climate Change in geographically vulnerable areas. These compensations, however, although first steps, are not enough to transform or stop Climate Change in

3  <https://bit.ly/3BA89ma>  URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025 par.27.

4  <https://bit.ly/3OP87Ni>  URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

the long run. The long run strategy must address behavioural change regarding the human part. The latter runs close to the position of the Catholic Church: human interference in the environment encouraged by greed is seen as sin, against humanity, against God's creation.

*Fratelli tutti*⁵ – this encyclical is named after the words by St. Francis, addressing a way of life proposed by the Gospel, fraternal love and openness to all. According to Pope Francis, the encyclical is about the importance and joy of 'social friendship'. Here one may notice parallels with some trends in today's social psychology claiming that an active social life is a source of our happiness more than any other factors such as a successful career or family inheritance. People involved in active 'social life', mostly, make that choice based on fraternal relations. Professional interests or even career-based interests may also lead to active social life but they are not necessarily a source of happiness. *Fratelli tutti* – addresses threats to fraternal love in today's world, such as loneliness, insecurity, fear, 'the fading sense of belonging to a single human family' (par30), although the latter was seriously challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic. We belong to a global community! And again, Pope Francis refers to the language of 'renewal', encouraging everyone to renew hope, the joy of being together, and to embrace a stranger. The encyclical gives a lengthy reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), 'a story constantly retold' yet relevant for any contexts today or in the past. Pope Francis' remarkable pastoral gift inspires him to see that love drives us towards 'universal communion' (par95), 'love capable of transcending borders.' (par99)

According to my reading of the synodal process in the Roman Catholic Church, the Pontiff is proposing an authentic way of being the Church that is rooted in the tradition and calls for holiness for all the baptised, all the People of God. Catholic theological heritage in the study of mission, of social teaching, and of the relatively recently revived

interest into the divine creation provide a solid ground for carrying out the Synodal process.

Synodality is overloaded with a question of authority. Who or which structures define its final shape? By which seal will it be sealed? Who sets limits to its legitimacy? How can local be fully represented in universal? How does it embrace decentralisation in the Catholic Church, even though the document suggests that the reform of the Roman Curia based on a 'life of communion' and 'healthy decentralisation' will do so? According to the text, 'the authority par excellence is the Word of God' (p35) but this is not a sufficiently clear reference.

There are some fundamental concepts without which synodality will not make sense: search of the Spirit's guidance, hope, healing, reconciliation, trust, participation. On page 6 we read: 'in its broadest sense, synodality can be understood as Christians walking in communion with Christ toward the kingdom along with the whole of humanity. ...It involves reciprocal listening, dialogue, community discernment, and creation of consensus as an expression that renders Christ present in the Holy Spirit, each taking decision in accordance with their responsibilities.' I find this is vital: 'each taking decision in accordance with their responsibilities.' This flexibility requires trust that is



Speaker addressing to the audience

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5 <https://bit.ly/4aZExk4>
URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

necessary for the church united yet diverse at every level of its life, local or global. This is the only solution for Christians in today's societies: synodal decisions are important at every level of church life but equally important is trusting and respecting each other's decisions.

Another theme marking the present pontificate is urgency of dialogue at all levels, not only within the Church but with 'human and social sciences, as well as philosophical and theological reflection'. (p30)

One of the most promising avenues of the synodal process would be continuous openness to 'the diverse expressions of being Church'(p12), listening and learning from multicultural and multi-religious

contexts. In this context the text under discussion emphasizes our ecumenical *Kairos* reminding that ‘what unites us is greater than what divides us’ (p15) followed by a remarkable statement: as Baptism is the core principle of synodality and a foundation for ecumenism, ‘there can be no synodality without an ecumenical dimension’. (ibid) Ecumenism, on its part, requires unceasing processes of repentance, healing of memory, and spiritual renewal. The sacrificial death of our Lord and His glorious resurrection call for unity so ‘that all may be one’ (John 17:21). If the Holy See has resources to convene an ecumenical Synod on common mission in the contemporary world (suggested on page 16), it will be a great act of spiritual wisdom.

As Massimo Faggioli ‘prophetically’ coined it, synodal process is ‘a periodizing event’, a threshold marking ‘before and after’.⁶

6 Massimo Faggioli, 'Synodality as Kairos in the Present Ecclesial and Global Situation', in : Perspectiva Teologica Adere A Uma Licença, Creative Commons Atribuição 4.0 International, Belo Horizonte, v. 54, Jan.-Abr. 89-104, 2022, page 90.



 *Fr. Tim MacDonald, SA, welcoming attendees*

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Thursday · 18 January 2024

Synodality “at your fingertips” – Sinodalità “a portata di mano” Some reflexions from a Lutheran perspective

1. Reflections on the term and concept of “synodality”

I would like to begin my considerations on “synodality” with a comment and reflection on the term itself:¹ first of all, it can be stated that the term “synodality” as such is less common among Lutherans.

¹ For the following cfr. also: Martin JUNGE, *Synodality and Christian Unity. A Lutheran Perspective* (Tillard Chair Lecture given at the Pontifical University St. Thomas Aquinas [Angelicum], Rome, 25 June 2021, unpublished): <https://bit.ly/3DbFGIC> URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025



 **Dr Vanessa Bayha**

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Synods and synodal structures, however, have of course long been established in Lutheran churches as instruments of church leadership and decision-making. When writing about these structures, Luther himself did not name them as “synods”, but rather uses the Latin term “council” (*concilium*), which means “to call together”. Lutherans can therefore also speak of “conciliarity” instead of “synodality”.

If we take the Greek meaning of “synod” (σύν-οδος) as “being on the way together”, then it should be stated that “walking together” (“camminare insieme”) of Christians in God’s Holy Spirit is something that has always characterized the church throughout the ages and in various (visible or also rather invisible) forms. Touched by the message of the Gospel and by God’s redeeming grace, people have been on the way together spiritually in Word and Sacrament.

In the everyday life of the church, “being on the way together”, living out of Word and Sacrament, then also requires discerning what God’s Holy Spirit is saying to Christian congregations here and now. It implies understanding and interpreting the signs of the present in the light of the Gospel.

Synodality therefore is first and foremost characterized by a profoundly spiritual dimension: the discernment that takes place in every faith community, wherever people live their faith together: first and foremost on the level of the local congregation (indeed, if you like, even in every Christian family and home), then on a regional and finally on a national and international level.

On all these levels, the process of discernment in the Holy Spirit over time has taken place in different organizational forms (and with varying participation of clergy and lay members of the church).

This brings a second dimension of synodality into view alongside the spiritual one: the structural, organizational, and political dimension. In Lutheran and Reformed churches, synodal structures have been established as an instrument of decision-making and church leadership at all levels – starting with the local congregation which is at the center of this concept, and is jointly led by the pastor and the parish council, an elected body of lay members.

A comparable structure of church leadership continues at regional and national levels, where synods are in the same way composed of a mixture of church ministers and lay people, in each case with a clearly defined *ratio*. In all these cases, however, lay people not only have equal rights, but also make up the majority of the elected representatives of a synod.



Attendees of the lecture at the CPU

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In addition to the episcopal element, which Lutheran churches have conserved, the synods composed in this way and thus the high authority granted to lay people when it comes to decision-making, represent a central element of church leadership.

Nevertheless, it should be stated that historically speaking, it took quite a long time since the Reformation for this form of synodal structures with such a high level of lay participation to become established. The development took place in different Lutheran churches at different times and speed and sometimes for rather contingent historical reasons.²

² Cfr. Christoph DINKEL, Art. *Synode III/1*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 32 (2001), (571-575) 572-573, 574-575; Reiner PREUL, Art. *Synode III/2*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 32 (2001), 576-579.



Speaker and participants

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It is a truth inherent to Reformation thought that legitimized lay participation in church leadership from the beginning: the idea of a priesthood of all believers or all the baptized developed by Martin Luther in various of his writings.³

Luther's concept implies that baptism and the conferral of the Holy Spirit on the baptized brings about a fundamental, indissoluble unity in spirit and faith by which all believers are indiscriminately one. According to Luther, this in turn means that each individual Christian is able to judge from his or her faith and examine whether a current church's teaching is in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. Every believer is in this sense capable and responsible before God and within the Church.

³ Cfr. e.g. Martin LUTHER, *Concerning the Ministry* (Daß ein christliche Versammlung oder Gemeine Recht und Macht habe, alle Lehre zu urtheilen und Lehrer zu berufen, ein und abzusetzen, Grund und Ursach aus der Schrift [1523]): WA 11:408-416.

That also implies that the synods themselves, in all their democratic forms of decision-making, are profoundly spiritual assemblies. In other words, the spiritual element is also fundamentally important at the structural and organizational level itself. Lutheran synods are not merely church parliaments in which deliberations and decisions are made according to clearly defined rules, where debates and democratic votings take place. Rather, they are assemblies of people who have been commissioned by the members of the church to assess how and where the reality of Christ manifests itself and to take

decisions spiritually. Unlike in a pure democracy, those elected do not merely represent the will of the people of the church, but exercise their office of discernment in the Holy Spirit, which they are empowered to do through their baptism.

The fact that synods are always accompanied by the celebration of services and by prayer is a fundamental expression of this spiritual dimension showing that the ultimate leader of a synod is God himself in his Word. Therefore, one could also say that synods are ultimately meetings of worship.

In summary, it can be said that synodality or the synodal way of the church attempts to combine two elements that the Ancient Church has always tried to keep in balance: the freedom of the Holy Spirit, which must be taken seriously also in its sometimes disruptive power, and a clearly structured form of church organization.

Rev. Dr. Martin Junge, former General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, put it this way in his Tillard Chair Lecture given at the Angelicum in 2021: “synodality holds both, the spiritual realm, and the political realm, in balance”.⁴

2. Synodality and participation

With the invitation to this talk, we were asked a question: “How can synodality be applied in your own local church?”. As a Lutheran, one might answer somewhat flippantly and hastily: “Synodality is already fully realized on a local level as our churches do offer structures of participation for all believers”. However, from what has been said about the two complementary dimensions of synodality it should be clear that neither should Protestants come up with the attitude: “We already have it all”.

Living synodality is a process and a task common to all churches and, particularly in its spiritual dimension, a lasting challenge that unites us as churches.

In a second part, I would like to share a few of my own thoughts and place them under the heading of participation. What does it mean for us today to be a participatory, inclusive and listening church?



First of all, the mission to be a listening church is not automatically and exclusively realized through the establishment of synodal assemblies. Synods and their representatives must constantly listen to what concerns the world and the community of believers.

They have to practice a sensibility to the signs of their time and also to the unsuspected ways in which God’s spirit is at work in his church.

In the reality of our synodal structures today, we primarily encounter highly engaged and particularly committed church members, people with a high degree of churchliness, so to speak. Of course, this is not initially a deficit. However, our church structures are currently quite homogeneous in terms of origin, social status or age of those involved (although there has been some movement on the age issue with synods increasingly introducing higher proportions of youth delegates).

Still, the whole community of believers is far more heterogeneous. For example, where do people who think “out of the box” fit in? It would be desirable to strive for a higher degree of diversity in order to be able to develop our spiritual potential more comprehensively among all the baptized.

This means a change on two levels: on the one hand it means making synodal participation more accessible and encouraging different people to take responsibility. On the other hand it means practicing participation in a broader sense, apart from the structural level: by listening openly and without arrogance and by reaching out to people on a local level (within the congregation), by expressing true interest and concern for people’s needs. That also implies to be open to people’s sometimes critical observations and to be actually prepared to be changed as churches

⁴ Martin JUNGE, *Synodality and Christian Unity. A Lutheran Perspective* (Tillard Chair Lecture given at the Pontifical University St. Thomas Aquinas [Angelicum], Rome, 25 June 2021, unpublished):  <https://bit.ly/3DbFGIC>
 URL Retrieved: 7 February 2025

by their approach to God and the world.⁵ That is definitely not an easy process to undertake, but in that way, we get in touch with the truth of faith that is found in all the baptized.

A serious challenge that our historical churches have to face at the moment is a general decline in trust and commitment to the church, not only in society in general, but also among a large proportion of our baptized church members.

When Martin Luther wrote his ecclesiological statements on the priesthood of all believers, he had a church in mind that is clearly defined by some distinctive marks (such as preaching, baptism, the holy communion, confession, ministry, prayer and thanksgiving and bearing the suffering of the neighbor).⁶ In his image of the church, he quite naturally assumes that all the faithful take participation in these marks.

Within all the practical and spiritual needs and challenges that we face, it is up to us to preserve and strengthen these marks and to keep them accessible to our baptized

5 Gianni GENRE, *Sinodalità per i protestanti*, in: R. Battocchio/G. Genre/B. Petrà (eds.), *Sentieri di sinodalità. Prospettive teologiche interconfessionali*, Cinisello Balsamo 2022, (69-125) 124: "Ci sarebbe urgente necessità di una chiesa sinodale che non sia avvertita come comunità dei forti, dei puri, dei militanti, ma come una chiesa plurale prima ancora che pluralista, dove tutti e tutte possono trovare ascolto e diritto di parola, dove non si avvertano più linee di frattura fra chi è dentro e chi è fuori. Una chiesa che trovi il coraggio dell'accordo, anche laddove questo si presenti come cammino molto faticoso e, magari anche, ogni tanto, che abbia il coraggio del disaccordo, senza però mettere subito in discussione la propria unità."

6 Martin LUTHER, *The Councils and the Church* (Von den Konziliis und Kirchen [1539]): WA 50:628,29-643,5.

church members today through formation and ministry. It is up to us to translate their meaning into our time. This work of translation is, among others, a task that is done by our synods. Instead of modifying traditional doctrines of the Church, they rather apply them in the context of present times and requirements.

The task and challenge of translation, the possibility and need of true participation and at the same time the constant focus on the center of our faith (the common life out of God's Word and Sacrament) are points that deeply unite us as Christians.

In our different churches and denominations, many people are already taking the initiative to work on these spiritual tasks. Let us enter into a fruitful exchange of experiences, especially in the local churches, let us learn from each other and thus live together the practice of spiritual discernment of what God's church needs today.



 *Speakers, leadership of the CPU
and ecumenical friends*

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MAURIZIO MIRILLI

Cappellano del Policlinico Torvergata di Roma

Conferenza tenuta al Centro Pro Unione

Giovedì · 18 gennaio 2024

Synodality “at your fingertips” – Sinodalità “a portata di mano” Immagini sinodali

Il mio intervento non vuole essere tanto una lezione accademica sul significato teologico della sinodalità, quanto un piccolo spunto di riflessione di natura ecclesiale a partire dall’esperienza personale maturata nel corso della mia vita. Mi soffermerò su quattro immagini che mi porto nel cuore e che hanno segnato fortemente il mio cammino umano e di fede. La prima è l’immagine dei “compagni di banco” e riguarda il tempo dello studio della teologia morale durante gli anni vissuti presso l’Accademia Alfonsiana a Roma. La seconda immagine è quella della “missione ai giovani” che per tanti anni ho coordinato quando ero direttore della Pastorale giovanile della Diocesi di Roma.

La terza immagine che voglio consegnarvi la chiamo “casa della gioia” e si riferisce al periodo in cui da parroco sono stato impegnato al servizio della comunità parrocchiale del SS. Sacramento a Tor de Schiavi di Roma. La quarta ed ultima immagine che vi lascio è quella della “camera d’ospedale” che ha a che fare con il mio attuale ministero sacerdotale come assistente spirituale presso il Policlinico Tor Vergata di Roma.

Compagni di banco

Dopo la laurea in Filosofia e Teologia presso la Pontificia Università Lateranense, negli anni a cavallo tra la fine del percorso formativo in seminario e l’ordinazione sacerdotale, frequentai l’Accademia Alfonsiana dove perseguii la licenza in Teologia Morale. In quegli anni ebbi il piacere di conoscere un compagno di studi luterano che veniva dalla Germania e che si stava preparando a diventare pastore. Fu per me la prima volta che mi confrontavo gomito a gomito con un fratello cristiano non cattolico. Lo studio ci aiutò moltissimo ad avvicinarci perché entrambi eravamo interessati ad approfondire le

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nostre conoscenze teologiche in vista del nostro futuro al servizio delle nostre chiese. Eravamo curiosi di capire ciò che ci univa, consapevoli della nostra comune fede in Cristo, e ciò che ci divideva, desiderosi comunque di rispettarci reciprocamente. Camminammo insieme in quei due anni vissuti tra i banchi dell’università, ci



Don Maurizio Mirilli

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conoscemmo personalmente e scoprimmo le ricchezze presenti nelle nostre rispettive tradizioni ecclesiali. Tramite lui rimasi colpito dalla grande considerazione che la Chiesa luterana ha per la Parola di Dio e per il mondo laicale, intuendo la necessità anche per noi cattolici di avere comunità sempre più mature, preparate e aperte al dialogo sinodale. Il mio amico luterano invece rimase colpito soprattutto dal modo con cui noi cattolici viviamo il nostro rapporto con il Papa. Lui partecipò alla mia ordinazione sacerdotale nella Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano nel 2004, presieduta da Papa Giovanni Paolo II, che ordinò me e tanti altri miei compagni del Pontificio Seminario Romano. Il mio compagno di banco mi disse che rimase affascinato dalla celebrazione, soprattutto da quella parte del rito in cui noi ordinandi manifestavamo l'intenzione di essere obbedienti al nostro vescovo, il Papa, e ai suoi successori. Mi disse che avere un forte punto di riferimento come quello che noi abbiamo nel Papa è qualcosa che a lui mancava nella sua esperienza ecclesiale. Cito solo questi due esempi per dire che la nostra esperienza vissuta come compagni di banco ci permise di comprendere che la via principale per il dialogo ecumenico, prima ancora di quella del confronto teologico, è quella del cammino sinodale, cioè quella della conoscenza reciproca e del camminare insieme.

Missione ai giovani

Negli anni in cui sono stato direttore della Pastorale giovanile della Diocesi di Roma ho avuto la grazia di coordinare la missione "Gesù al centro", che ogni anno organizzavamo con la collaborazione di molte realtà giovanili di parrocchie, movimenti, associazioni laicali, istituti religiosi che avevano a cuore l'evangelizzazione dei giovani. Il cammino di



❖ *Tavolo moderatrice e relatrici della conferenza*

📷 *Crediti foto*
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preparazione che l'ufficio della pastorale giovanile realizzava per i giovani missionari durava un anno, con incontri formativi e di preghiera e con *équipe* di lavoro di natura organizzativa per realizzare eventi nelle piazze e nelle zone della "movida", e programmare incontri nelle scuole, negli ospedali e nelle carceri. L'obiettivo della missione era quello che dei giovani innamorati di Gesù potessero incontrare altri giovani nei luoghi di vita durante la prima settimana di ottobre di ogni anno per raccontare la loro esperienza dopo l'incontro con il Signore. Il metodo era fondamentalmente di natura sinodale. Si metteva Gesù al centro, sia durante la preparazione che durante la settimana missionaria, attraverso la preghiera e il Vangelo, e tutti noi intorno a lui collaboravamo con diverse responsabilità affinché anche altri giovani potessero fare l'esperienza dell'incontro con la persona di Gesù, della misericordia di Dio e dalla gioia piena. Era faticoso lavorare in tanti, mettere insieme le diverse anime della chiesa con le varie sensibilità spirituali, far collaborare giovani provenienti da realtà ecclesiali con carismi diversi.

Gran parte del mio lavoro consisteva nel creare i presupposti affinché tutti si sentissero coinvolti ed eliminare gli ostacoli che minavano la comunione. E questo era possibile solo se io, come anche i responsabili delle varie realtà, eravamo disponibili a camminare insieme e non ognuno per conto proprio, rinunciando ad imporre agli altri il proprio stile e trovando un metodo comune nell'annunciare il Vangelo. Furono anni meravigliosi durante i quali sperimentammo il dono dell'unità, e vedemmo tanti frutti dello Spirito Santo nella vita di molti giovani che conobbero il Signore durante quelle missioni. Camminare insieme in modo sinodale, anche in questo caso, fu per me un'esperienza fondamentale per comprendere cosa volesse dire essere chiesa in uscita, aperta e accogliente.

Casa della gioia

Durante i nove anni del mio mandato di parroco, presso la parrocchia del SS. Sacramento a Tor de Schiavi di Roma, ho avuto la gioia di realizzare quello che inizialmente sembrava solo un sogno per me e per i genitori di alcuni disabili del quartiere nel quale prestai il mio servizio. Il sogno era quello di costruire una casa per disabili orfani. Nei primi mesi dal mio arrivo in parrocchia ebbi modo di conoscere alcune mamme malate terminali, che mi consegnarono il loro disperato bisogno, prima di morire, di trovare una soluzione per non lasciare da soli i loro figli disabili. Ricordo che non riuscivo a dormire la notte pensando al loro dolore e andai agli esercizi spirituali per sacerdoti con il desiderio di cercare una risposta per quelle mamme. Il Vangelo mi venne incontro in quei giorni e mi illuminò. "Scoperchiarono il tetto" fu la frase che mi folgorò. Così come i quattro barellieri (cfr. Mc 2,1-12) che insieme con grande fede accompagnarono il paralitico da Gesù trovando una soluzione fantasiosa, scoperchiando il tetto della casa di

Cafarnao dove Gesù stava operando guarigioni, così compresi che anche io con la collaborazione di altri parrocchiani, insieme, avremmo potuto scoperchiare il tetto della chiesa parrocchiale per realizzare quella che poi chiamammo la "casa della gioia". Sembrava una cosa assurda, ma camminando insieme a quelle mamme moribonde, ad alcuni laici collaboratori, a delle suore disponibili a sposare il progetto, e ai molti parrocchiani pronti a contribuire, in modo provvidenziale, riuscimmo a ricavare nel sottotetto della chiesa una casa che oggi accoglie ben otto disabili orfani. Da solo non avrei mai potuto pensare né tantomeno realizzare tutto ciò. Invece, all'interno di un cammino sinodale vissuto in una comunità pronta a lasciarsi sconvolgere dall'azione dello Spirito Santo, la "casa della gioia" è diventata una bellissima realtà dove al primo piano della chiesa si vive l'Eucarestia che l'assemblea parrocchiale celebra al piano terra, una splendida opera di carità che Dio porta avanti ancora oggi, mentre alla guida della parrocchia c'è un altro parroco.



❖ *L'incontro tenutosi in presenza
e diretta streaming*

📷 *Crediti foto*
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ABBREVIATIONS for Confessional Families Churches and Councils

A	Anglican
AC	Assyrian Church of the East
AIC	African Instituted Churches
B	Baptist
CC	Chaldean Catholic Church
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CCEE	Council of European Episcopal Conferences
CP	Constantinople Patriarchate
CPCE	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (<i>formerly Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i>)
D	Disciples of Christ
DOMBES	Groupe des Dombes
E	Evangelicals
FC	Free Churches
FO	Faith and Order
L	Lutheran (includes German 'Evangelische')
M	Methodist
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
Mn	Mennonite
Mo	Moravian
NCC	New Charismatic Churches
O	Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine)
OC	Old Catholic (includes Polish National)
OO	Oriental Orthodox (Non-Chalcedonian)
Pe	Pentecostal
R	Reformed
RC	Roman Catholic
SA	Salvation Army
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
U	United Churches
W	Waldensian
WCC	World Council of Churches

LIST OF DIALOGUES

A-B: Anglican-Baptist International Forum

A-B / eng: Informal Conversations between the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of England

A-D / aus: Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations

A-L: Anglican-Lutheran International Commission

A-L / africa: All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission

A-L / aus: Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia

A-L / can: Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue

A-L / eng-g: Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England

A-L / eng-nordic regions: Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England

A-L / eur: Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission

A-L / usa: Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

A-L-Mo / can: Trilateral Anglican-Lutheran-Moravian Task Group on Full Communion

A-L-R / eng-f: Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France

A-M: Anglican-Methodist International Commission

A-M / eng: Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain

A-M / ire: Church of Ireland / Methodist Church of Ireland Covenant Council

A-M / usa: United Methodist-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue

A-M-R / eng: Informal Conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

A-Mo: Anglican-Moravian Conversations

A-Mo / usa: Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA

A-O: Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission

A-O / usa: Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA

A-OC: Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations

A-OC / na: Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group

A-OO: Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue

A-OO / copt: Anglican-Coptic Relations

A-Pe / eng: Anglican-Pentecostal Consultation

A-R: Anglican-Reformed International Commission

A-R / eng-scot: Church of England-Church of Scotland Joint Study Group

A-R / usa: Presbyterian-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue

A-RC: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)

A-RC: International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)

A-RC / aus: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia

A-RC / b: Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee

A-RC / br: Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission

A-RC / can: Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission

A-RC / eng: English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee

A-RC / eur: Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe

A-RC / f: Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France

A-RC / nz: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand (ARCCANZ)

A-RC / usa: Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

A-RC / usa (ACNA): Theological Meeting between the Anglican Church in North America and Roman Catholic Church

A-U / aus: Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

AC-CC: Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church

AC-O / rus: Bilateral Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

AC-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church

AC-OO / syr: Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church

AC-RC: Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

AIC-R: Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

B-CPCE / eur: Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation

B-L: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue

B-L / g: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany

B-L / n: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway

B-L / sf: Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland

B-L / usa: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

B-M: Baptist-Methodist International Dialogue

B-M-W / italy: Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy

B-Mn: Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations

B-O: Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue

B-O / georgia: Dialogue between the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Georgia

B-R: Baptist-Reformed Dialogue

B-RC: Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations

B-RC / f: Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France

B-RC / usa (ab): American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue

B-RC / usa (sb): Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue

CEC-CCEE: Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences

CPCE-RC: Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Roman Catholic Church Consultation

D-L / usa: Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

D-O / rus: Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue

D-R: Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue

D-RC: Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue

D-U / aus: Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

D-U / usa: Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA

DOMBES: Dialogues des Dombes

E-RC: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission

E-RC / can: Canadian Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue

E-RC / f: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Conversations in France

E-SDA: Theological Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

FC-O / g: Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany

FO: Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies

L-M: International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission

L-M / n: Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway

L-M / s: Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden

L-M / sf: Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland

L-M / usa: US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue

L-Mn: Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission

L-Mn / f: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France

L-Mn / g: Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)

L-Mn / usa: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA

L-Mn-RC: Lutheran-Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue Commission

L-Mo / usa: Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA

L-O: Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission

L-O / g: Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church in Germany and the Evangelical Church in Germany

L-O / g-cp: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate

L-O / g-rom: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church

L-O / g-rus: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church

L-O / sf: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church

L-O / sf-rus: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

L-O / usa: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA

L-O-R / f: Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France

L-O-R / na: Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America

L-OC / g: Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany

L-OC / s: Commission for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht

L-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church

L-OO / copt-s: Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden

L-OO / g: Consultations between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Evangelical Church in Germany

L-OO / india: Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India

L-Pe: Lutheran-Pentecostal Conversations

L-Pe / s: Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Sweden

L-Pe / sf: Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland

L-Pe-R / f: Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France

L-R: Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission

L-R / arg: Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina

L-R / aus: Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia

L-R / can: Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations

L-R / f: Fédération Protestante de France

L-R / usa: Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA

L-R-RC: Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue

L-R-RC / f: Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France

L-R-SDA / f: Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France

L-R-U / eur: Leuenberg Church Fellowship

L-RC: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity

L-RC / arg: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina

L-RC / aus: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia

L-RC / br: National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil

L-RC / can: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada

L-RC / g: Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)

L-RC / india: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India

L-RC / jap: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan

L-RC / n: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway

L-RC / s: Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

L-RC / sf: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland

L-RC / usa: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

L-SDA: Lutheran-Seventh-day Adventist Consultations

L-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

M-O: Methodist-Orthodox Commission

M-Pe-W / italy: Methodist-Pentecostal-Waldensian Dialogue in Italy

M-R: Methodist-Reformed Dialogue

M-RC: Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council

M-RC / eng: English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee

M-RC / usa: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA

M-SA: International Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the World Methodist Council

Mn-Pe / usa: Dialogue between the Mennonite Church USA and the Church of God (Cleveland, TN)

Mn-R: Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Mn-R / nl: Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue in the Netherlands

Mn-RC: Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue

Mn-RC / latin america: Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue in Latin America

Mn-SDA: Mennonite-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Conversations

NCC-RC: New Charismatic Churches-Roman Catholic Preliminary Conversations

O-OC: Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission

O-OO: Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

O-OO / rus: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

O-OO / rus-armenia: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church

O-OO / rus-copt: Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church

O-Pe: Orthodox-Pentecostal Academic Dialogue

O-R: Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue

O-R / ch: Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland

O-R / na: Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America

O-R / rus: Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church

O-RC: Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church

O-RC / can: Canadian Orthodox and Catholic Bishops' Dialogue

O-RC / ch: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland

O-RC / eng: Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England

O-RC / f: Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France

O-RC / g: Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany

O-RC / pol: Russian Orthodox Church-Catholic Church in Poland Working Group

O-RC / rom: Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)

O-RC / rus: Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church

O-RC / rus-g: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference

O-RC / usa: North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation

O-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

OC-R / india: Old Catholic Church-Malankara Mar Thomas Syrian Church Theological Consultation

OC-R-RC / ch: Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland

OC-RC: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations

OC-RC / ch: Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland

OC-RC / g: Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany

OC-RC / na: Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue

OC-RC / nl: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands

OC-RC / pol: Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland

OO-R: Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue

OO-RC: International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

OO-RC / armenia: Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission

OO-RC / copt: International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church

OO-RC / eritrea: Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

OO-RC / ethiop: Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

OO-RC / india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

OO-RC / syr-india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church

OO-RC / usa: Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation

Pe-R: Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue

Pe-RC: Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue

Pe-WCC: Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals

R-RC: Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission

R-RC / a: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria

R-RC / b: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium

R-RC / ch: Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland

R-RC / nl: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands

R-RC / scot: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland

R-RC / usa: Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA

R-SDA: International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

R-SDA / usa: Presbyterian Church (USA)-Seventh-day Adventist Church Dialogue

RC-SA: Salvation Army - Catholic Informal Conversation

RC-SDA: Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church

RC-U / aus: Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia

RC-U / can: Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada

RC-W / italy: Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy

RC-WCC: Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches

SA-SDA: Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

SDA-WCC: Seventh-day Adventist Church-World Council of Churches Conversations

WCC: World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

PERIODICALS SURVEYED

- A** Acta Ecumenica, AFER-African Ecclesial Review, Anglican Theological Review, Annales theologici, Apulia Theologica
- B** Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology
- C** Calvin Theological Journal, Catholica, Centro Pro Unione Bulletin, Chemins de dialogue, Concilium, Confronti, Contacts, Courier
- E** Ecclesia Mater, Ecclesiology, The Ecumenical Review, Ecumenical Trends, Ecumenismo Quotidiano, Ekklesia
- G/H** Global Christian Forum Newsletter, Herder Korrespondenz
- I** International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, International Review of Mission, Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift, Irénikon, Istina
- J/K** Journal of Anglican Studies, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, Kerygma und Dogma
- L** The Living Church, Lutheran Quarterly
- M** MD-Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim
- O** O Odigos, Ökumenische Rundschau, Oikumene, One in Christ, Oriente cristiano, L'Osservatore Romano, Ostkirchliche Studien
- P** Pneuma, Positions luthériennes, Pro Dialogo, Pro Ecclesia, Protestantesimo
- R** Il Regno, Reseptio, Review of Ecumenical Studies
- S** Sobornost, Studi di Teologia, Studi ecumenici, Studia Liturgica, Studies in Interreligious Dialogue
- T** Theological Studies
- U/V** Una Sancta, Veritas in caritate: informazioni dall'ecumenismo in Italia
- W/Z** The Window, Worship, Zeitzeichen



Key to sub-headings

INFORMATION
REFLECTION AND REACTIONS
TEXTS AND PAPERS

facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports
essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers
documents, reports, statements, official responses

GENERAL

INFORMATION

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Compiled by Loredana Nepi

Report on Visits to the CENTRO

FASTENING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

On Wednesday January 24, 2024 the CPU hosted a meeting of IARCCUM (International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission), which held its plenary meeting in January 22-29, first in Rome and then in Canterbury, on the theme "Our Common Witness, Call and Commitment". About 60 bishops (Anglicans and Catholics) spent the morning at the Centro to discuss various issues, with a particular focus on synodality. After a short presentation of the mission and activities of the CPU by the CPU staff, Prof Paul Avis and Sr Nathalie Bequart introduced the working session on synodality. The meeting took place in a very cordial atmosphere and the whole IARCCUM session marked an important step in Anglican-Catholic dialogue and relations.



On Thursday, March 7, 2024 the CPU received a delegation of Methodist Bishops from the United States, belonging to three Methodist Churches -African Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church- participating in the Pan-Methodist Commission for Dialogue, Mission and Unity. The group was accompanied by Rev. Matthew Laferty, Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome. The visit was an opportunity to reflect on the dynamics of the Second Vatican Council, its reception and ecumenical implications for the Church today, by the Ad Interim Director Rev. Jim Loughran, SA, and Co-Director Prof. Teresa Francesca Rossi, in an atmosphere of friendly cordiality and mutual commitment to unity.

On Wednesday, February 28, 2024 the CPU Staff was pleased to received the visit of Rev Dr Hanns Lessing, Acting Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, accompanied by Rev Tara Curlewis, Director of the Reformed Ecumenical Office in Rome. The visit was an opportunity to exchange information on the activities of the Reformed Ecumenical Office and the Centro Pro Unione, and to discuss current ecumenical trends and priorities.



Cronaca delle visite al CENTRO



Mercoledì 24 gennaio 2024 il CPU ha ospitato una sessione di IARCCUM (Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission) che ha tenuto la sua riunione plenaria dal 22 al 29 gennaio, prima a Roma e poi a Canterbury, per riflettere sul tema: "Our Common Witness, Call and Commitment". Circa 60 vescovi, anglicani e cattolici, hanno trascorso la mattina al CPU per discutere sulla sinodalità. Dopo una breve presentazione del CPU ad opera dello Staff, il Prof. Paul Avis e Suor Nathalie Becquart hanno introdotto i lavori della sessione. L'incontro si è svolto in un clima di grande cordialità e l'intera sessione di IARCCUM ha marcato un importante passo nel dialogo e nelle relazioni cattolico-anglicane.



Mercoledì 28 febbraio 2024 il CPU ha ricevuto la gradita visita del Rev. Dr Hanns Lessing, Segretario esecutivo della Comunione Mondiale delle Chiese Riformate (WCRC Acting Secretary) accompagnato dalla Rev.da Tara Curlewis, Direttore dell'Ufficio Ecumenico delle Chiese Riformate a Roma (Reformed Ecumenical Office in Rome). La visita è stata l'occasione per uno scambio di informazioni sulle attività dell'Ufficio Ecumenico Riformato e del Centro Pro Unione, e per uno scambio di idee sulle traiettorie e le priorità ecumeniche attuali.



TESSENDO LEGAMI ECUMENICI



Giovedì 7 marzo 2024 il CPU ha ricevuto in visita una delegazione di Vescovi Metodisti dagli Stati Uniti, appartenenti a tre Chiese metodiste -African Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church- che partecipano alla Pan-Methodist Commission per il dialogo, la missione e l'unità. Il gruppo era accompagnato dal Rev.do Matthew Laferty, Direttore dell'Ufficio ecumenico metodista di Roma. La visita è stata l'occasione per una riflessione sulle dinamiche del Concilio Vaticano II, la loro recezione e le implicazioni per la Chiesa oggi, da parte del Direttore ad interim Rev. Fr. Jim Loughran, SA, e della condirettrice Prof. Teresa Francesca Rossi, in un clima di amichevole cordialità e di reciproco impegno per l'unità.



Report on Visits to the CENTRO

FASTENING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS



From May 6 to 10, 2024 took place the "Gatherings in the Holy Spirit 2024", a gathering of Catholic Charismatic leaders and leaders of New Charismatic Churches, sponsored and coordinated by Centro Pro Unione since 2001.

This year more than 55 participants from 15 countries, involved in various ministries, reflected together on the theme "Distinct Identities, Common Life,



On Wednesday, September 18, 2024 the Centro Pro Unione hosted a group of young students from the Centro Melantone (Protestant Center for Ecumenical Studies) located in Rome. They were taking a summer course offered by Centro Melantone called "Dogmatic Differences and Ecclesial Koinonia." The pupils were accompanied by Professor Friederike Nüssel, a lecturer in the course, and Pastor Patrick Spitzenberger, the new Director of the Centro Melantone. We wish Pastor Spitzenberger a welcome to this ecumenical ministry in Rome and much success in the days to come.



Shared Mission" during an intense week of prayer and sharing in small groups and plenary sessions.

On May 8, 2024 after a visit to the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity (DPCU), characterized by authentic and cordial sharing, the group visited the Centro Pro Unione for a session to present the mission and activities of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement and of the Center itself, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council; the session ended with a moment of prayer. The next GHS is scheduled for 2026. The GHS was one of the prodromes of the dialogue of life and theological exchange between Charismatic Catholics and New Charismatic Churches, and the framework in which the informal conversations between the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the New Charismatic Churches took place.



**Cronaca delle
visite al CENTRO**

TESSENDO LEGAMI ECUMENICI



Dal 6 al 10 maggio 2024 si è tenuto l'incontro "Gatherings in the Holy Spirit 2024", un incontro tra leader carismatici cattolici e leader delle Nuove Chiese Carismatiche che il Centro Pro Unione ha sponsorizzato e coordinato dal 2001. Quest'anno oltre 55 partecipanti provenienti da 15 paesi e impegnati in vari ministeri hanno riflettuto insieme sul tema: "Identità distinte, vita comune e missione condivisa" in una intensa settimana in cui si sono susseguite sessioni di preghiera comune e di condivisione in piccoli gruppi e in plenarie.



Il giorno 8 maggio 2024, dopo la visita al Dicastero per la promozione dell'unità dei cristiani (DPUC) caratterizzata da una autentica e cordiale condivisione, il gruppo si è recato presso il Centro Pro Unione per una sessione di presentazione della missione e delle attività dei Frati dell'Atonement e del Centro stesso, celebrando, con l'occasione, i 60 anni del Concilio Vaticano II; la sessione si è conclusa con un momento di preghiera. Il prossimo GHS è previsto per il 2026. I GHS hanno costituito uno dei prodromi di dialogo della vita e di scambio teologico tra Cattolici Carismatici e Nuove Chiese Carismatiche, e la cornice all'interno della quale si sono tenute le Conversazioni informali tra il Dicastero per l'unità e le Nuove chiese carismatiche.



Mercoledì 18 settembre 2024 un gruppo di giovani studenti del Centro Melantone di Roma (Centro protestante di studi ecumenici) venuti a Roma per il corso estivo su "Differenze dogmatiche e koinonia ecclesiale" (organizzato dallo stesso Centro Melantone) si sono recati in visita presso il Centro Pro Unione. Il gruppo era accompagnato dalla Professoressa Friederike Nüssel, docente del corso, e dal pastore Patrick Spitzenberger, nuovo Direttore del Centro Melantone, cui va il nostro augurio per un fecondo periodo di ministero a Roma.



Report on Visits to the CENTRO

FASTENING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

On October 7, 2024 the CPU hosted a visiting group of Anglicans, Baptists and Catholics accompanied by the Revd. Christoph Lindner, pastor of Denham Parish Church in the United Kingdom on a visit to Rome. The Director Fr. Jim Loughran presented the Atonement Society and its special charism for ecumenism and reconciliation. The Associate Director Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi presented the Centro and its multiple activities in different areas of ecumenism and dialogue. Dr. Loredana Nepi presented the CPU seat illustrating its historical and artistic heritage. The meeting concluded with a moment of meditation and joint prayer.

A group of Swedish theologians and canonists visited the CPU on October 10, 2024. The group included a number of Catholics, members of the Church of Sweden, other Lutherans, and members of the Uniting and United Church in Sweden. The groups convened in Rome for a Course on the dynamics of decision-making within the various Churches and their relevance for ecumenical dialogues. Accompanying them at the CPU were Dr. Anna Tronet and Lutheran Bishop Rev. Erik Eckerdal.



On October 18, 2024 a group of students from various U.S. universities visited the CPU. They were accompanied by Professor Michael Canaris, Associate Professor of Ecclesiology & Systematic Theology and Co-Director Miguel Pro, S.J. Pastoral Protagonism Initiative of the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago. The visiting group was composed of students particularly interested in ecumenism and was part of a larger group of young people from more than 15 U.S. academic institutions who accepted Pope Francis' invitation to participate in the synod event.



Racconto delle visite al CENTRO



Il 7 ottobre 2024 il CPU ha ricevuto un gruppo di Anglicani, Battisti e Cattolici accompagnati dal Rev. do Christoph Lindner, pastore della Denham Parish Church (Regno Unito) in visita a Roma. Il direttore p. Jim Loughran ha presentato la Society dell'Atonement e il suo particolare carisma per l'ecumenismo e la riconciliazione. La co-direttrice Dott.ssa Teresa Francesca Rossi ha presentato il Centro e le molteplici attività svolte in diversi ambiti per promuovere l'ecumenismo e il dialogo. La Dott.ssa Loredana Nepi ha presentato la sede del CPU illustrandone il patrimonio artistico e la biblioteca. L'incontro si è concluso con un momento di raccoglimento e preghiera congiunta.



Il 10 ottobre 2024 il CPU ha ricevuto in visita un gruppo di teologi e canonisti svedesi (alcuni cattolici altri provenienti da diverse diocesi e parrocchie della Chiesa di Svezia, altri luterani, altri ancora dalla Uniting and United Church in Svezia). I gruppi sono convenuti a Roma per un Corso di approfondimento delle dinamiche decisionali all'interno delle varie Chiese e della loro rilevanza per i dialoghi ecumenici. Ad accompagnarli al CPU la Dott.ssa Anna Tronet e il vescovo luterano Rev. Erik Eckerdal.



TESSENDO LEGAMI ECUMENICI



Il 18 ottobre 2024 un gruppo di studenti provenienti da varie università statunitensi hanno visitato il CPU. Accompagnati dal professor Michael Canaris, Associate Professor of Ecclesiology & Systematic Theology e dal Co-Director Miguel Pro, S.J. Pastoral Protagonism Initiative dell'Institute of Pastoral Studies presso la Loyola University di Chicago. Il gruppo in visita era composto da studenti particolarmente interessati all'ecumenismo, ed era parte di un più ampio gruppo di giovani provenienti da oltre 15 istituzioni accademiche statunitensi che hanno accolto l'invito di papa Francesco a partecipare all'evento sinodale.



Report on Visits to the CENTRO

FASTENING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

On October 11, 2024 the CPU had visiting Ms. Riekie Van Venzel, co-founder of the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas along with 3 members of the Ladies of Bethany Foundation Board.

On November 15, 2024 a group of students from the “Ut Unum Sint” 2024-25 Diploma of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - Angelicum visited the CPU. The students were accompanied by the Institute's Director Rev. Prof. H. Destivelle, Vice-Director Msgr. Juan Usma Gomez and Secretary Prof. D. Keramidas.

On November 19, 2024 the Centro Pro Unione received a very gracious visit of the V. Rev. Emil Tomaskovic, SA, new Minister General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, who was traveling to Rome. It was a cordial afternoon meeting with staff and leadership of the CPU to share insights about the current and future pathways and projects that Centro is called to pursue, under the ministry of the Friars of the Atonement. The Minister General was joined by a long-standing collaborator of the Atonement Friars in Graymoor, Louis Lobardo, and the Procurator General in Italy Bro Paolo Nicosia, SA.



On November 26, 2024 the Assembly of the librarians of the Roman Union of Ecclesiastical Libraries (URBE) took place at the Centro Pro Unione.



Cronaca delle visite al CENTRO



L'11 ottobre 2024 il CPU ha avuto in visita la Sig.ra Riekie Van Venzel, co-fondatrice del Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas insieme a 3 membri del Consiglio della fondazione delle Dame di Betania.



Il 15 novembre 2024 un gruppo di studenti del Diploma "Ut Unum Sint" 2024-25 dell'Istituto di Studi Ecumenici della Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino (Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - Angelicum) hanno visitato il CPU. Gli studenti erano accompagnati dal Direttore dell'Istituto Rev.do Prof. H. Destivelle, dal Vice-Direttore Mons. Juan Usma Gomez e dal Segretario Prof. D. Keramidas.



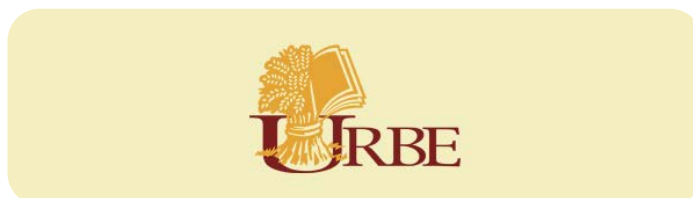
TESSENDO LEGAMI ECUMENICI



Il 19 novembre 2024 il Centro Pro Unione ha ricevuto la graditissima visita del Rev.mo Emil Tomaskovic, SA, nuovo Ministro Generale dei Frati Francescani dell'Atonement che si è recato a Roma. Un cordiale pomeriggio di incontro con lo staff e la leadership del CPU per condividere gli attuali e futuri percorsi e progetti che il Centro è chiamato a intraprendere, sotto la guida dei Frati dell'Atonement. Il Ministro Generale durante la sua visita è stato accompagnato da un collaboratore di lunga data dei Frati dell'Atonement a Graymoor, Louis Lobardo, e dal Procuratore Generale in Italia Fra Paolo Nicosia, SA.



Il 26 novembre 2024 si è tenuto presso il CPU l'assemblea dei bibliotecari dell'Unione Romana Biblioteche Ecclesiastiche (URBE).



DIGITAL EDITION E-BOOK

Logbook of the Project M.A.D. for Ecumenism
**M.A.D. 3: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE
 CENTRO PRO UNIONE TO THE SYNOD**

New **VOLUME**
 October 2024



The full Report of M.A.D. 3, third Edition of the M.A.D. for Ecumenism – Mutual Accountability Desk project that interacted with the Synod process, is now available in electronic format.

The E-book “Synodal Ecumenical Workshop” (462 pages, including photographs) contains the complete documentation of both the process and the final product of M.A.D. 3.

The documentation of the M.A.D. 3 process includes: two theological essays by experts on Synodality and the ancient Synods, the individual reflections of the Catholic faithful invited by the Centro Pro Unione to participate in the M.A.D. 3 project (and affectionately called with the nickname M.A.D.ers) and the individual comments of the Ecumenical Consultants offered as feedback to the M.A.D.ers’ reflections.

The documentation of the final product of M.A.D. 3 includes the two Syntheses of what emerged from the process, which were submitted to the Secretariat of the Synod (Synod.va) as an ecumenical contribution by the Centro Pro Unione. The first Synthesis –a document entitled *Identità cristiana: indagine sui temi emergenti della fede e della società* (Christian Identity: An Enquiry on Emerging Trends in Faith and in Society)– presents the reflections of the M.A.D.ers grouped according to themes related to the challenges and potentials of Christian identity in the current contemporary context as well as the key characteristics of a synodal church for the future.

The second Synthesis –a document entitled *Assidui nell’ascolto: un responso ecumenico sinodale* (Devoted to Listening: An Ecumenical Synodal Response)–

is the fruit of the work of the Ecumenical Consultants (leaders, theologians and pastors from various Christian traditions) invited by the Centro Pro Unione to give their feedback on the reflections of the M.A.D.ers, highlighting some ways of reading the current ecclesial context and offering concrete proposals so that the Catholic Church can best respond to the expectations of the faithful and the ecclesial vision of Pope Francis. The Consultants jointly drafted and signed the document which constitutes a concrete “synodal cameo” that has not only used a synodal methodology but also exercised an ecumenical synodality.

The M.A.D. 3 project has activated a fruitful communal “chain of listening”, in response to Pope Francis’ invitation to a responsible synodal participation with an ecumenical spirit and capacity to listen and act, in order to discern and renew our ecclesial style.



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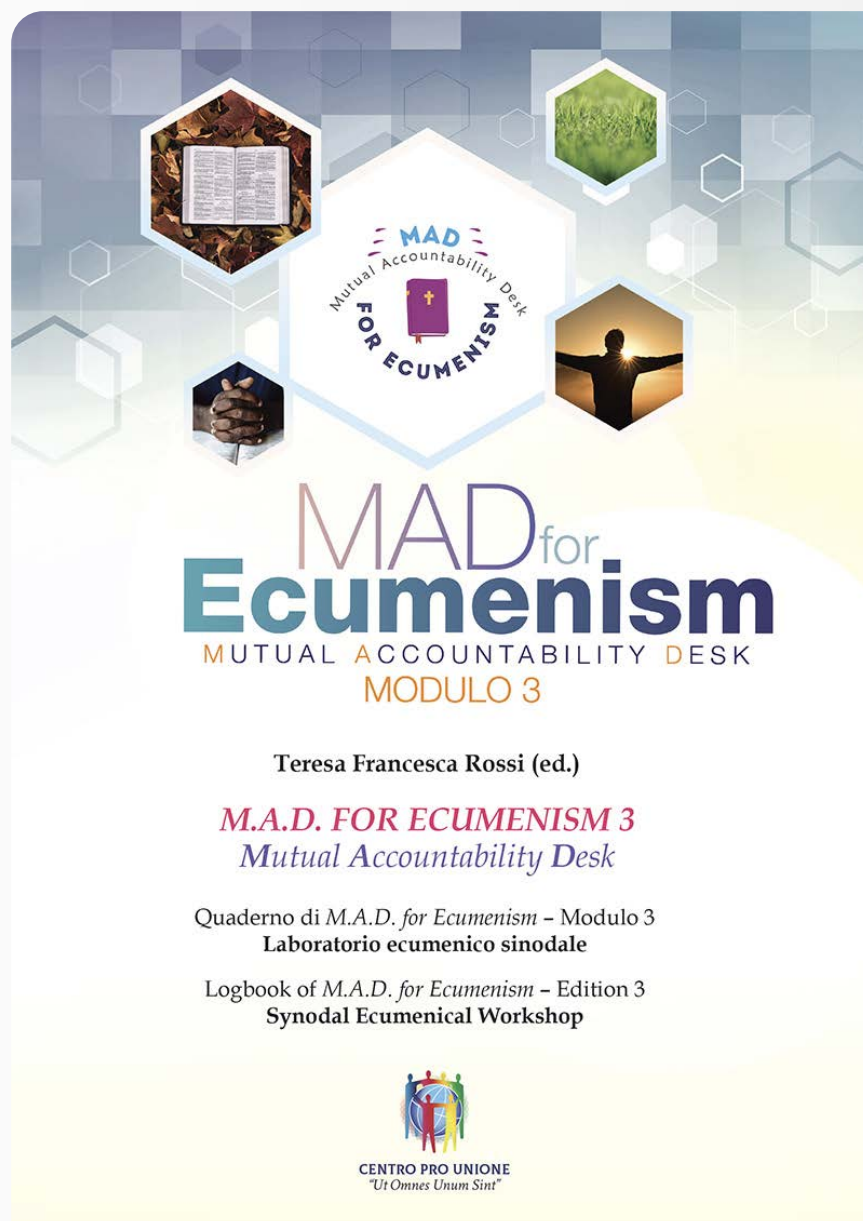
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Mutual Accountability Desk

Edition 3

Synodal Ecumenical Workshop

Teresa Francesca Rossi (ed.)



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CENTRO PRO UNIONE
"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"

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EDIZIONE DIGITALE E-BOOK ◀

Quaderno del progetto M.A.D. for Ecumenism

M.A.D. 3: IL CONTRIBUTO

DEL CENTRO PRO UNIONE AL SINODO

È ora disponibile in versione elettronica l'E-book completo di *M.A.D. 3*, terza edizione del progetto *M.A.D. for Ecumenism – Mutual Accountability Desk*, che ha interagito con l'attuale Sinodo sulla Sinodalità.

L'E-book "Laboratorio ecumenico sinodale" (462 pagine, corredate di materiale fotografico) contiene l'intera documentazione relativa sia al processo che al prodotto finale del progetto *M.A.D. 3*.

La documentazione relativa al processo di M.A.D. 3 include: due saggi teologici di esperti sulla Sinodalità e i Sinodi antichi, le riflessioni individuali dei fedeli cattolici invitati dal Centro Pro Unione a partecipare al progetto M.A.D. 3 (simpaticamente denominati *M.A.D.ers*) e i commenti individuali dei Consulenti ecumenici offerti quale riscontro alle riflessioni dei *M.A.D.ers*.

La documentazione relativa al prodotto di M.A.D. 3 include le due sintesi di quanto emerso dal processo, inviate alla Segreteria del Sinodo (Synod.va) quale contributo ecumenico del Centro Pro Unione. La prima sintesi – il documento *Identità cristiana: indagine sui temi emergenti della fede e della società* – riporta le riflessioni dei *M.A.D.ers*

raggruppate tematicamente attorno alle istanze principali emerse dal loro confronto sulla fede, le sfide all'identità cristiana nel contesto contemporaneo e la Chiesa del futuro. La seconda sintesi –il documento *Assidui nell'ascolto: un responso ecumenico sinodale*– è il frutto del lavoro dei Consulenti ecumenici (leader, teologi e pastori di varie tradizioni cristiane) chiamati dal Centro Pro Unione ad interagire con le

riflessioni dei *M.A.D.ers*

individuando possibili piste di lettura dell'attuale contesto ecclesiale e offrendo proposte concrete affinché la Chiesa cattolica possa rispondere al meglio alle attese dei fedeli e al progetto ecclesiale di papa Francesco. I Consulenti hanno redatto congiuntamente e sottoscritto il documento che si profila, così, quale concreto "cameo sinodale" di attuazione di un metodo sinodale, ma anche *realizzazione* di una vera e propria sinodalità ecumenica già in atto.


Il progetto *M.A.D.* 3 ha così realizzato una “catena di ascolto” comunionale, desiderando rispondere all’invito di papa Francesco ad una partecipazione sinodale responsabile, con spirito ecumenico e con una capacità di ascoltare e intervenire, di esaminarsi e rinnovarsi.

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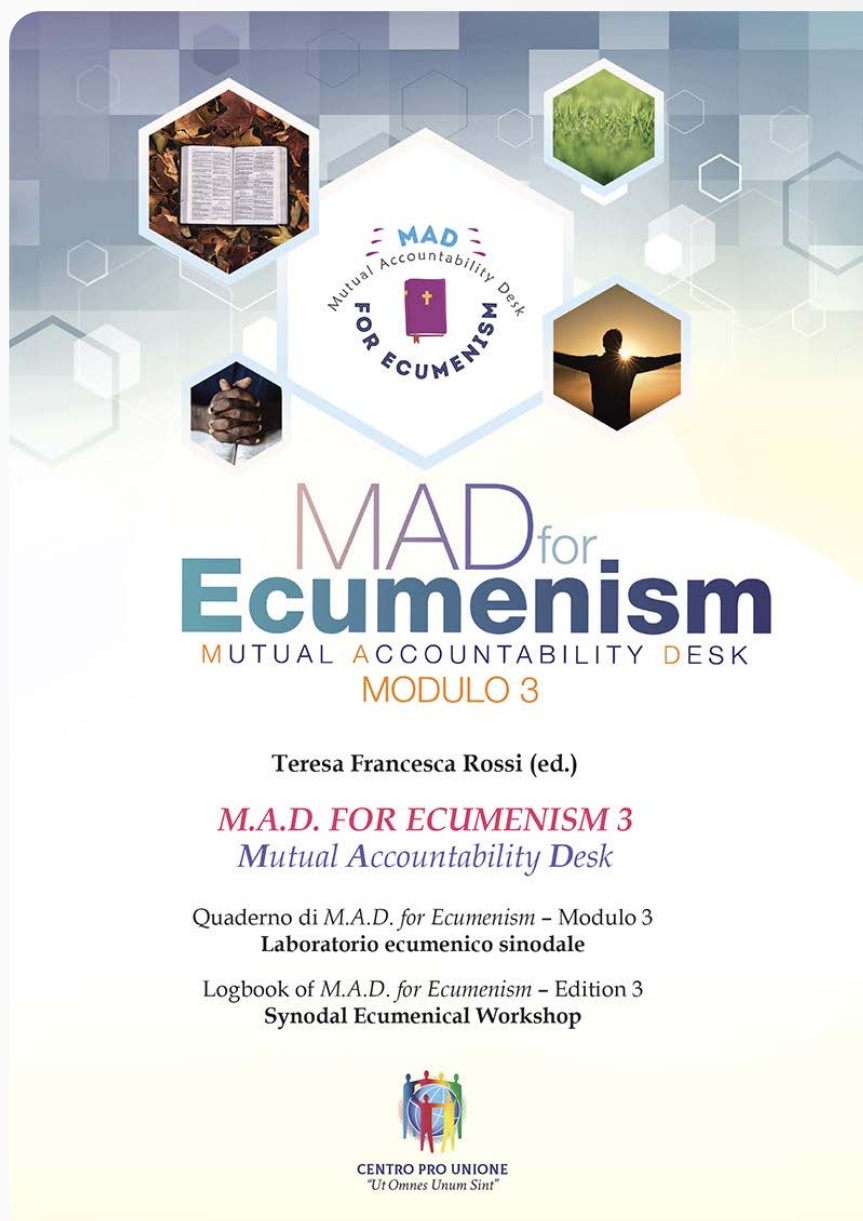
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of the *Servant of God* Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White



 Lecture given on
Thursday,
12 December 2024

**In-Person &
Live Streaming** 

Lecturer 

Sr. Nathalie Becquart

is the Undersecretary
of the General
Secretariat of the Synod
at the Vatican.

As a Xavière sister
from France, her mission
has largely focused on
youth and synodality.

Prior to her current
appointment, she served
as National Director
of the Service for
the Evangelization
of Young People
and Vocations in France
and did research
in ecclesiology
at the School of Theology
and Ministry
at Boston College.
She has also studied
management and
entrepreneurship at HEC,
philosophy and theology
at Centre Sèvres
(Facultés Loyola), as well as
sociology at the EHESS
in Paris.

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"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"

Annual Conference
2024

In-Person & Online Streaming 



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Lecturer

Sr. Nathalie Becquart, xmcj
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on the theme

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from the Synod on Synodality**



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Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

Proposed dates

23 June - 11 July 2025

Week One

The Church facing Divisions

1. Biblical foundations
2. Factions and divisions within the Church
3. An overview of the Reformation and Catholic Reform movements, the modern ecumenical movement
4. Vatican II and Catholic principles of ecumenism; World Council of Churches
5. Worldwide ecumenical and interreligious organizations
6. Eastern Christianity
7. On June 29, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, participation in the Papal Mass of the Pallium

Week Two

The Church embracing Unity

1. Exploration of the various dialogues which exist between the churches, their context and results
2. Ecumenical documents
3. Reading of ecumenical texts
4. Concept of reception in the ecumenical movement
5. Visit to the Dicasteries for Promoting Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue

<i>Morning Prayer</i>	🕒 8:45 — 9:00
<i>Class I</i>	🕒 9:00 — 10:00
<i>Class II</i>	🕒 10:15 — 11:15
<i>Class III</i>	🕒 11:30 — 12:30

Week Three

Christians & World Faith Traditions

1. Jewish-Christian relations
2. Christian responses to people of other faiths
3. Fundamentalism as a worldwide phenomenon
4. Catholicism and Islam in dialogue
5. New religious movements
6. Grassroots ecumenism
7. Visit Islamic Center & Mosque



Ecumenical Gatherings

Afternoon Program

- 📍 *St. Peter's Basilica*
- 📍 *St Pauls-outside-the-walls*
- 📍 *St. John Lateran, Baptistry and Basilica of St. Clement*
- 📍 *St. Mary Major's Basilica*
- 📍 *Tour of the "Roman Ghetto", the Synagogue and Museum*
- 📍 *Excavations under St. Peter's*



🎓 Aim

This course is designed to introduce participants to the ecumenical and interreligious movements from a Catholic perspective.

It will offer a historical and theological overview of the issues that divide Christians as

well as the bonds that unite them.

The program will explore relations with other religious traditions. The course, which is in English, is for men and women who are in prepa-

ration for ministry or for a sabbatical experience led by qualified professors and ecumenists.



APPLICATIONS

CAN BE FILLED OUT ONLINE

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION NOW!

www.prounione.it/en/formation/summer-school-rome



🕒 Schedule

The schedule for the three weeks is the same Monday through Friday: morning prayer followed by three 60-minute lecture segments. The afternoons are for on-site excursions and lectures (Roman catacombs, Basilica of St. Peter and ex-cavations, St. Clement, "Roman ghetto", Synagogue and museum, Mosque and Islamic center, and others). Weekends are free.



Centro Pro Unione



Graymoor Ecumenical
& Interreligious Institute



FRANCISCAN FRIARS
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AtonementFriars.org



GEII

CPU FORMATION / STATISTICS



Students from 5 Continents

30 years of Mission in Ecumenical Formation / 1994-2024



Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

summer
course
rome



Summer School Statistics

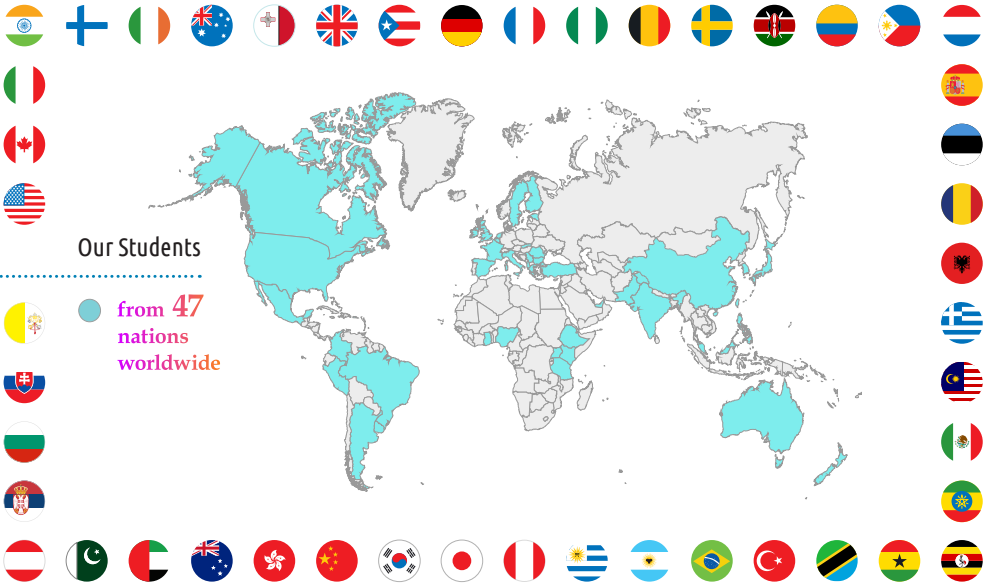
Academic Years from 1994 to 2024

Continent | Students

North America	68,5 %
Europe	18,4 %
Asia	5 %
Latin America	3,4 %
Africa	2,7 %
Oceania	2,1 %

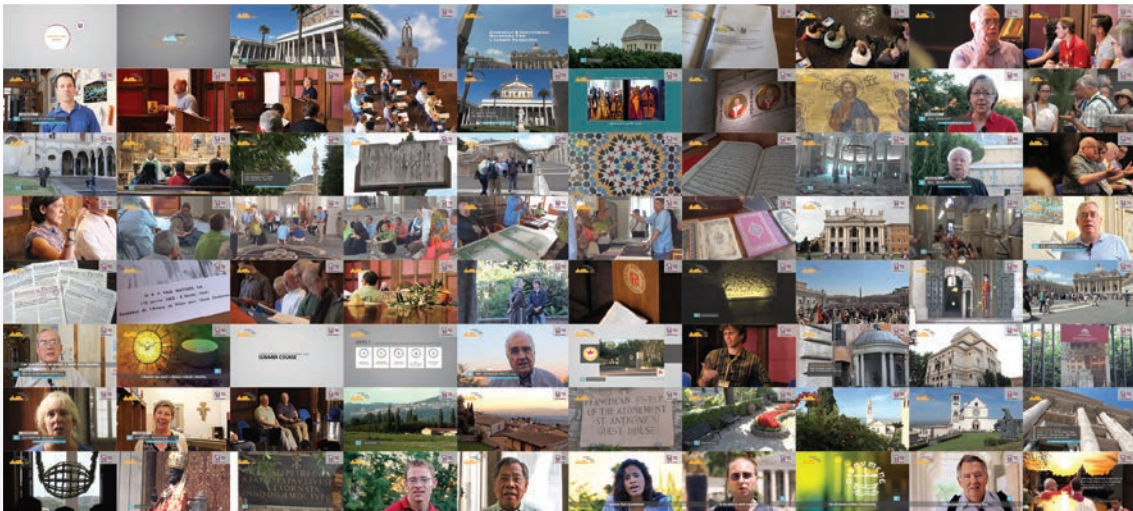
From | Students

USA	289
Canada	39
Italy	21
India	13
Finland	10
Ireland	9
Australia	9
Malta	8
England	7
Puerto Rico	7
Germany	5
France	4
Nigeria	4
Belgium	3
Sweden	3
Kenya	3
Colombia	3
Philippines	3
Netherlands	2
Spain	2
Estonia	2
Romania	2
Albania	2
Greece	2
Malaysia	2
Mexico	2
Ethiopia	2
Uganda	2
Tanzania	1
Ghana	1
Turkey	1
Brazil	1
Argentina	1
Uruguay	1
Peru	1
Japan	1
Korea	1
China	1
Honk Kong	1
New Zealand	1
United Arab Emirates	1
Pakistan	1
Austria	1
Serbia	1
Bulgaria	1
Slovakia	1
Vatican City	1



Watch a Documentary about the Summer School Journey

www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu



Frames from a SHORT FILM about the Summer School Journey




ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE


Co-sponsored **Centro Pro Unione**
and **The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas**



THE LAY CENTRE



 Lecture given on
Thursday,
23 January 2025

**In-Person &
Live Streaming** 

Lecturer 

Dr John Borelli

Special Assistant to the
President for Catholic
Identity and Dialogue,
Georgetown University

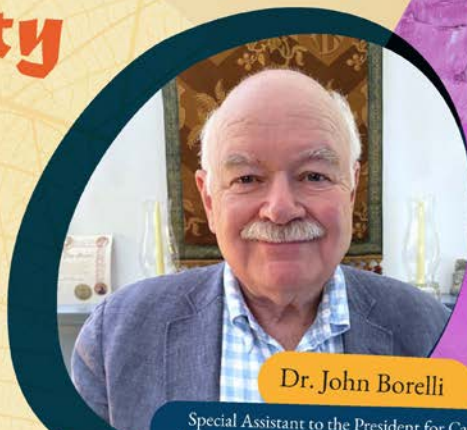
followed by
**an Ecumenical Prayer
Service**

**led by The Lay Centre
at Foyer Unitas**

On the occasion
of the

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

you are
cordially
invited to
an afternoon of
prayer
and
reflection
Thursday,
23 January
at 4:00 PM
(Rome time)



Dr. John Borelli

Special Assistant to the President for Catholic
Identity and Dialogue, Georgetown University

**"The Council of Nicaea
and Current Ecumenical Relations"**

Organized by



CENTRO PRO UNIONE
"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"



THE LAY CENTRE

Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30
1st floor (Piazza Navona) - Rome



**IN-PERSON and
LIVE STREAMING**

followed by

an Ecumenical Prayer Service

Preacher: The Rev. Tara Curlewis
Director, World Communion of Reformed Churches
Rome Office

www.prounione.it/en/events/23-jan-2025



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 **Learn more | Event Page** www.prounione.it/en/events/23-jan-2025

LETTURE BIBLICHE 2025

per ogni giorno della settimana di preghiera


Sui nostri canali digitali  

18 gennaio 2025

#UnitàCristiani

#SPUC

Post


 **Primo Giorno** "Credi tu questo?" (Giovanni 11, 26)

Noi crediamo in un solo Dio, Padre onnipotente...

Lectures bibliche
Isaia 63, 15-17
Salmo 139 (138), 1-3.13.23.24b
1 Corinzi 8, 5-6

Per riflettere

- In quale modo sperimentiamo, nella nostra vita, la cura paterna di Dio e la sua compassione materna?
- Che cosa ci impedisce di riconoscere ogni persona come figlio e figlia di Dio?
- In quale modo riconoscere Dio come Padre di tutti incide sulla nostra percezione degli altri e sul modo in cui ci relazioniamo con loro?



Day 1  "Do you believe this?" (John 11:26)

The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

Scripture Readings
Isaiah 63:15-17
Psalm 139:1-3, 13, 23, 24b
1 Corinthians 8:5-6

For Reflection

- 1 How have you experienced God's fatherly care and motherly compassion in your own life?
- 2 What hinders us from recognising each person as a child of God?
- 3 How does acknowledging God as the Father of all affect our perception of and relationship with others?



18 January 2025

#ChristianUnity

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Post

18 de enero 2025

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#SUC

Post


Día 1  "¿Crees esto?" (Juan 11,26)


La paternidad y el cuidado de Dios que dirige el universo

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Isaías 63,15-17
Salmo 139,1-3.13.23.24b
1 Corintios 8,5-6

Para reflexionar

- 1 ¿Cómo has experimentado el cuidado paternal y la compasión maternal de Dios en tu vida?
- 2 ¿Qué nos impide reconocer a cada persona como hijo de Dios?
- 3 ¿Cómo afecta a la percepción que tenemos de los demás y nuestra relación con ellos el hecho de reconocer a Dios como Padre de todos?




 **Secondo Giorno** "Credi tu questo?" (Giovanni 11, 26)

... Creatore del cielo e della terra

Lectures bibliche
Genesis 1, 1-5
Salmo 148, 1.3.9-14
Romani 8, 19-23

Per riflettere

- Crediamo che Dio è presente in tutta la creazione, anche se la sua presenza a volte è difficile da percepire.
- La creazione è un dono di Dio, che tuttavia patisce sofferenze spesso inflitte dagli esseri umani. Come possiamo riconoscere più chiaramente la nostra responsabilità nel curare e preservare la creazione?
- Se possibile, troviamo del tempo da trascorrere nella natura e contempliamo in quale modo ci mette in relazione con il Creatore.



19 gennaio 2025

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Post

19 gennaio 2025

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Post


Day 2  "Do you believe this?" (John 11:26)


Creation as God's work

Scripture Readings
Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 148:1, 3, 9-14
Romans 8:19-23

For Reflection

- 1 We believe that God is present in all of creation although his presence is sometimes difficult to perceive.
- 2 Creation is a gift of God subjected to suffering, often inflicted by human beings. How can we better recognize our responsibility for its care and preservation?
- 3 If possible, spend some time in nature and contemplate how it connects us with the Creator.




Día 2  "¿Crees esto?" (Juan 11,26)

La creación como obra de Dios

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Génesis 1,1-5
Salmo 148,1.3.9-14
Romanos 8,19-23

Para reflexionar

- 1 Creemos que Dios está presente en toda la creación, aunque su presencia sea a veces difícil de percibir.
- 2 La creación es un don de Dios sujeto al sufrimiento, a menudo infligido por los seres humanos. ¿Cómo podemos tomar conciencia de nuestra responsabilidad por su cuidado y preservación?
- 3 Si es posible, pasa algún tiempo en la naturaleza y contempla cómo nos hace entrar en conexión con el Creador



19 de enero 2025

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Post

20 January 2025

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Post

 **Terzo Giorno** "Credi tu questo?" (Giovanni 11, 26)


Noi crediamo in un solo Signore, Gesù Cristo (...) che si è fatto Uomo

Lectures bibliche
Geremia 33, 14-16
Salmo 72 (71), 7.12.16-17
Giovanni 1, 1-14

Per riflettere

- In quale modo la fede in Gesù, Figlio di Dio Incarnato, ispira e plasma la nostra vita?
- In quali modi sperimentiamo, nella nostra vita, la presenza consolante di Cristo?
- Ogni volta che vediamo qualcuno assetato, affamato, piangente o sofferente, lì c'è Cristo.




Day 3  "Do you believe this?" (John 11:26)

The Incarnation of the Son

Scripture Readings
Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 72:7, 12, 16-17
John 1:1-14

For Reflection

- 1 How does faith in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, inspire and shape our lives?
- 2 How have you experienced Christ's consoling presence in your life?
- 3 Wherever we see someone who is thirsty, hungry, weeping or suffering, Christ is present.



20 gennaio 2025

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Post

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS 2025

For the Eight days of the Week of Prayer

On our digital platforms

20 de enero 2025
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Post


Día 3  **"¿Crees esto?"**
(Juan 11,26)

La encarnación del Hijo


Lecturas de las Escrituras
Jeremías 33,14-16
Salmo 72,7.12.16-17
Juan 1,1-14

Para reflexionar

- 1 ¿De qué manera la fe en Jesús, el Hijo de Dios encarnado, inspira y configura nuestras vidas?
- 2 ¿Cómo has experimentado la presencia consoladora de Cristo en tu vida?
- 3 Dondequiera vemos a un sediento, un hambriento, alguien que llora o sufre, ahí Cristo está presente.






Quarto Giorno  **"Credi tu questo?"**
(Giovanni 11, 26)


Fu crocifisso (...). Morì e fu sepolto (...). Il terzo giorno è risuscitato

Lecture bibliche
Esodo 3, 7-8
Salmo 16 (15), 5.7.10-11
Filippesti 2, 5-11

Per riflettere


- Sappiamo che tutti moriremo: in quale modo la fede in Gesù che ha distrutto la morte cambia il modo di guardare questa realtà?
- "Dio si lascia spingere fuori dal mondo, verso la croce. Egli è debole e senza potere nel mondo e questa è esattamente la via, la sola via, nella quale Egli è con noi e ci aiuta" (D. Bonhoeffer)
- Come Risorto, Gesù è con noi fino alla fine dei tempi. In quale modo traiamo coraggio dalla sua presenza nella vita quotidiana?





21 January 2025
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Post


Day 4  **"Do you believe this?"**
(John 11:26)


The Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus


Scripture Readings
Exodus 3: 7-8
Psalm 16:5, 7, 10, 11
Philippians 2:5-11

For Reflection

- 1 We know that we will all die. How does belief in Jesus destroying death change the way we approach this reality?
- 2 "God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us." (D. Bonhoeffer)
- 3 As the Risen One, Jesus is with us until the end of all time. In what ways does his companionship encourage you in your daily life?






Día 4  **"¿Crees esto?"**
(Juan 11,26)


El misterio pascual: la encarnación, pasión, muerte y resurrección de Jesús

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Éxodo 3,7-8
Salmo 16,5,7.10-11
Filipenses 2,5-11

Para reflexionar

- 1 Sabemos que todos moriremos. ¿Cómo cambia la creencia en Jesús, que destruye la muerte, el modo en que abordamos la realidad de la muerte?
- 2 "Dios se deja empujar fuera del mundo en la cruz. Él es débil e impotente en el mundo, y esa es precisamente la manera, la única manera, en la que está con nosotros y nos ayuda". (D. Bonhoeffer)
- 3 Como Resucitado, Jesús está con nosotros hasta el fin de los tiempos. ¿De qué manera te anima su compañía en tu vida diaria?





21 de enero 2025
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22 gennaio 2025
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#SPUC
Post

Quinto Giorno  **"Credi tu questo?"**
(Giovanni 11, 26)

Crediamo nello Spirito Santo, che (...) dà la vita


Lecture bibliche
Ezechiele 36, 24-28
Salmo 104 (103), 24-25.27.29.33-34
Giovanni 3, 4-8

Per riflettere

- Lo Spirito di Dio rinnova la faccia della terra ogni giorno e ci invita a cooperare con lui.
- Quali sono i motivi di gioia nella vita personale, e in quale relazione sono con lo Spirito Santo?
- Dove vediamo lo Spirito Santo all'opera nel superare le nostre divisioni e condurci verso una più profonda unità? E come possiamo noi collaborare alla sua azione?






Day 5  **"Do you believe this?"**
(John 11:26)


The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy

Scripture Readings
Ezekiel 36:24-28
Psalm 104:24-25, 27-29, 33-34
John 3:4-8

For Reflection


- 1 God's Spirit renews the face of the earth every day, calling us to cooperation.
- 2 What are the sources of joy in your life and how are they related to the Holy Spirit?
- 3 Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work, overcoming our divisions and drawing us into deeper unity, and how can we join in this work?





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Día 5  **"¿Crees esto?"**
(Juan 11,26)


El Espíritu Santo, dador de vida y alegría

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Ezequiel 36,24-28
Salmo 104,24-25.27-29.33-34
Juan 3,4-8

Para reflexionar

- 1 El Espíritu de Dios renueva la faz de la tierra todos los días, nos llama a cooperar con él.
- 2 ¿Cuáles son las fuentes de alegría que hay en tu vida y cómo se relacionan con el Espíritu Santo?
- 3 Donde vemos al Espíritu Santo obrando, superando nuestras divisiones y llevándonos a una unidad más profunda, y cómo podemos unirnos a esta obra?






Sesto Giorno  **"Credi tu questo?"**
(Giovanni 11, 26)

Crediamo la Chiesa

Lecture bibliche
Isaia 2, 2-4
Salmo 133 (132), 1-3
Efesimi 4, 1-6

Per riflettere

- La Chiesa è chiamata a irradiare la luce di Cristo nel mondo. Dove riusciamo a percepire questa realtà nel contesto in cui viviamo?
- Sebbene, in Cristo, la Chiesa sia un solo corpo, storicamente le chiese sono divise. Quanto sentiamo il dolore della divisione?
- La Chiesa come comunità vivificata dallo Spirito Santo, il datore di pace, è inviata a vivere e diffondere il messaggio di pace nel mondo. In quale modo le chiese possono rendere i propri fedeli capaci di rispondere a questa chiamata?





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SETTIMANA DI PREGHIERA · UNITÀ CRISTIANI

LETTURE BIBLICHE 2025

per ogni giorno della settimana di preghiera


Sui nostri canali digitali  

23 gennaio 2025

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Post


Day 6 
**The Church:
Community of Believers**

Scripture Readings
Isaiah 2:2-4
Psalm 133
Ephesians 4:1-6

For Reflection

- 1 The Church is called to shed forth the light of Christ over the world. Where do you perceive this reality in your own context?
- 2 Even though in Christ the Church is one body, historically the churches are divided. How have you experienced the pain of this division?
- 3 The Church as the community of the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, is sent to live and spread the message of peace in the world. In what ways might churches enable their members to fulfil this calling?



Do You Believe?

Día 6 
**La Iglesia:
comunidad de fieles**

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Isaías 2,2-4
Salmo 133
Efesios 4,1-6

Para reflexionar

- 1 La Iglesia está llamada a derramar la luz de Cristo sobre el mundo. ¿Dónde percibes esta realidad en tu propio contexto?
- 2 Aunque en Cristo la Iglesia es un solo cuerpo, históricamente las Iglesias están divididas. ¿Cómo vives el dolor de esta división?
- 3 La Iglesia, como comunidad del Espíritu Santo, el dador de paz, es enviada a vivir y difundir el mensaje de la paz en el mundo. ¿De qué manera podrían las Iglesias capacitar a sus miembros para cumplir con esta vocación?


¿Crees esto?

23 de enero 2025

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Post

24 January 2025

#ChristianUnity

#WPCU


Post


Settimo Giorno 
**Professiamo
un solo battesimo**

Lecture bibliche
Michea 7, 18-19
Salmo 51 (50), 3,9,12,14
Matteo 28, 16-20

Per riflettere

- I cristiani sono battezzati nella morte e risurrezione di Cristo. Che cosa significa per noi oggi il nostro battesimo?
- Il peccato ci deturpa in molti modi, mediante il battesimo Dio ci libera da questa umiliazione.
- Nonostante le differenti tradizioni e prassi cristiane, come risuona in noi la frase "uno solo è il Signore, una sola è la fede, uno solo è il battesimo" (Ef 4, 5) e come incide sulle nostre relazioni con gli altri cristiani?



Do You Believe?

Day 7 
**Baptism into the Death
and Resurrection of the Lord**

Scripture Readings
Micah 7:18-19
Psalm 51:1, 7, 10, 12
Matthew 28:16-20

For Reflection

- 1 Christians are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. What does your baptism mean to you today?
- 2 Sin distorts us in various ways. Through baptism, God liberates us from this humiliation.
- 3 In spite of different church traditions and practices, how does confessing "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5) affect our relationships with other Christians?


Do You Believe?

24 gennaio 2025

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Post

24 de enero 2025

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#SOU


Post


Día 7 
**El bautismo en la muerte
y resurrección del Señor**

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Miqueas 7,18-19
Salmo 85 (84), 9,11-13
Mateo 28,16-20

Para reflexionar

- 1 Los cristianos son bautizados en la muerte y resurrección de Cristo. ¿Qué significa tu bautismo para ti en la actualidad?
- 2 El pecado nos desfigura de varias maneras. A través del bautismo, Dios nos libera de esta humillación.
- 3 A pesar de las diferentes tradiciones y prácticas eclesiales, ¿qué implicaciones tiene para nuestra relación con otros cristianos la confesión de "un solo Señor, una sola fe, un solo bautismo" (Efesios 4,5)?



¿Crees esto?

Ottavo Giorno 
**Aspettiamo la risurrezione dei morti
e la vita del mondo che verrà**

Lecture bibliche
Apocalisse 21, 1-4
Salmo 85 (84), 9,11-13
Luca 12, 35-40

Per riflettere

- L'amore sarà la realtà del Regno di Dio. Le azioni concrete di carità rendono questo Regno già presente nella nostra vita.
- Viviamo nell'attesa del Regno di Dio. In quale modo incarniamo, nel mondo di oggi, i segni del Regno che viene?
- Dobbiamo essere pronti per la seconda venuta del Signore. Come ci prepariamo a questa realtà?


Do You Believe?

25 January 2025

#ChristianUnity

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Post

25 January 2025

#ChristianUnity

#WPCU


Post


Day 8 
**Waiting for the Kingdom
and the life to come**

Scripture Readings
Revelation 21:1-4
Psalm 85:8, 10-12
Luke 12:35-40

For Reflection

- 1 Love will be the reality of the Kingdom of God. Concrete actions of charity make this Kingdom present in our lives.
- 2 Living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, how do we embody signs of the coming Kingdom in the world today?
- 3 We are called to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves for it?



Do You Believe?

Día 8 
**A la espera del Reino
y de la vida futura**

Lecturas de las Escrituras
Apocalipsis 21,1-4
Salmo 85,8,10-12
Lucas 12,35-40

Para reflexionar

- 1 El amor será la realidad del Reino de Dios. Acciones concretas de caridad hacen presente este Reino en nuestras vidas.
- 2 Viviendo en espera del Reino de Dios, ¿cómo encarnamos las señales del Reino venidero en el mundo de hoy?
- 3 Estamos llamados a estar listos para la segunda venida del Señor. ¿Cómo nos preparamos para ello?


¿Crees esto?

25 de enero 2025

#UnidadCristianos

#SOU

Post

TEMA PER L'ANNO 2025



Preghiamo insieme per l'unità dei cristiani

18-25 gennaio 2025 / Iniziativa del fondatore dei Frati Francescani dell'Atonement, il Servo di Dio, P. Paolo Wattson

Tema

"Credi tu questo?"
(Giovanni 11, 26)

Illustrazione locandina



Sussidi e risorse utili in lingua ITALIANA

Libretto Guida · Locandina · Pagellina

www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc/2024-settimana-preghiera-unita-cristiani

Archivio decennale dei sussidi · pubblicati per anno

www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc

WEEK OF PRAYER · CHRISTIAN UNITY

Let's pray together for Christian Unity



THEME FOR THE YEAR 2025

A Franciscan Friars of the Atonement founder's initiative, the Servant of God, Fr. Paul Wattson / 18-25 January 2025

Theme

Do You Believe This?
(John 11:26)

ENGLISH

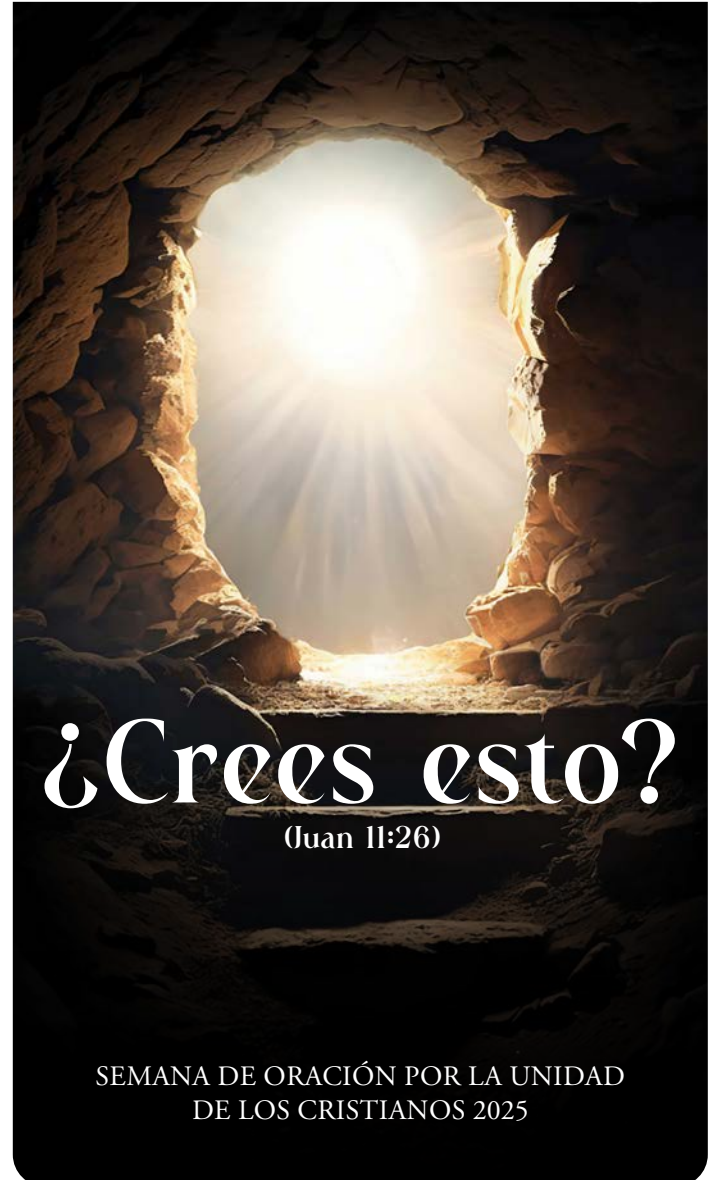
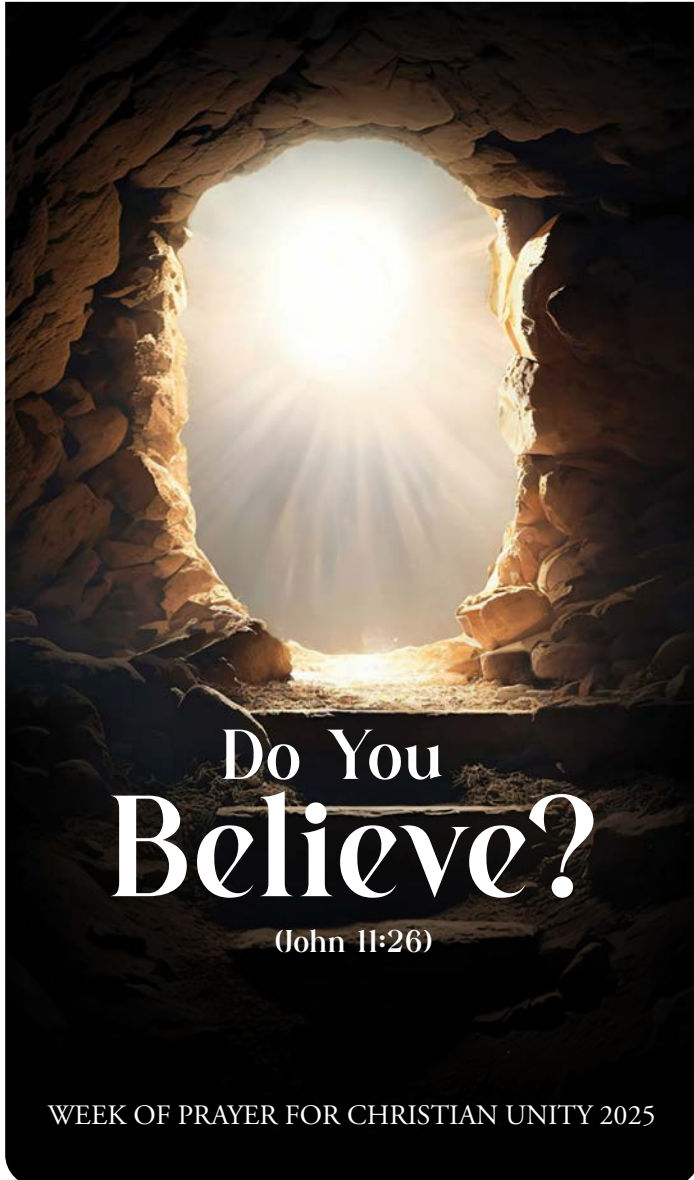
Poster Artwork

Tema

¿Crees esto?
(Juan 11:26)

ESPAÑOL

Ilustración del cartel



Materials and resources in ENGLISH Language

📍 **Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute · NY / GEII**
www.geii.org/resources

📍 **World Council of Churches / WCC**
www.oikoumene.org/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity

📍 **Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity / DPCU**
www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita.html

Latest updates from OUR ONLINE CHANNELS



PORTRAITS

New Media Series

Ecumenism Course «Portraits»

Meet the new Centro Pro Unione media series Ecumenism Course «Portraits».

A story format by students and faculty of the Summer School at the CPU. We wish to thank all the participants who have so generously agreed to take part in this audiovisual series, on air in 12 chapters on our WebTv & Media.



— Post · **Chapter 1** <https://bit.ly/CPU-Portraits-Ch-01> ·
The first interviewee featuring chapter 1 is Benny (from England)



— Post · **Chapter 2** <https://bit.ly/CPU-Portraits-Ch-02> ·
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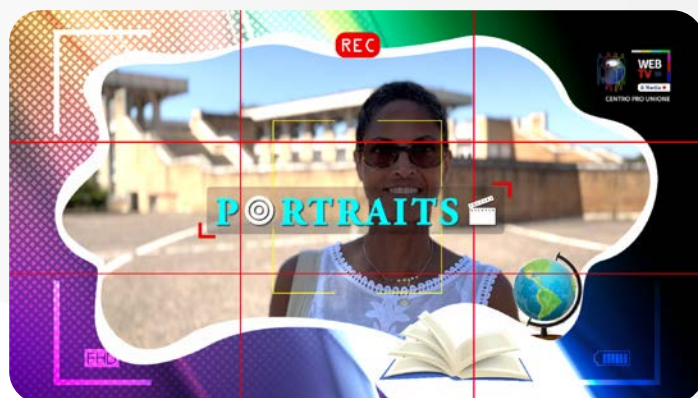
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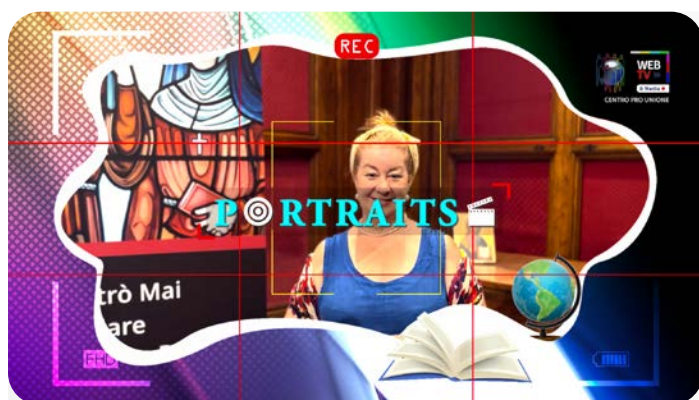
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Save the Date! One week left for the annual conference on the theme “Ecumenical Fruits and Lessons from the Synod on Synodality” given by Sr. Nathalie BECQUART, xmcj (Undersecretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod at the Vatican / @Synod.va) in honor of the Society of the Atonement co-founders, the Servant of God Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White.

The lecture will be hosted at the Centro Pro Unione on December 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM (Rome Time), onsite for in-person attendees and live streamed for remote viewers.

Please, see details in the event page → <https://bit.ly/CPU-WattsonWhite-2024>

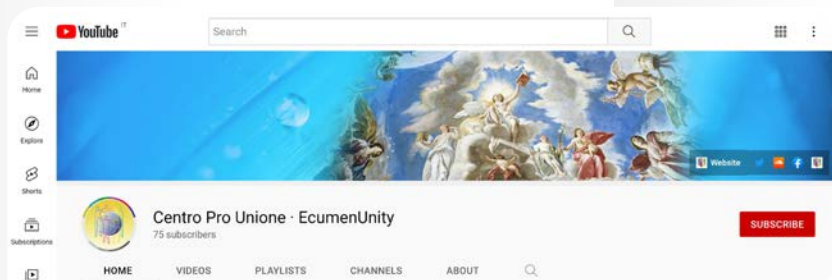
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"Do you believe?" (John 11:26) is the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 (from January 18-25). In preparation for the Week of Prayer is available now the print and digital materials. The Italian version of the text is a co-edition Centro Pro Unione and Paoline Editoriale Libri. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, originally called "Octave for Christian Unity", was first celebrated in 1908 by the initiative of the 'Servant of God' Father Paul Wattson, co-founder, with Mother Lurana White, of the Society of the Atonement. Forthcoming will be published in the Centro Pro Unione's website an additional supplement issued on the Paolinejournal "Parish Catechists - Liturgical and pastoral resources." It includes visual illustrations for the introduction to the Week of Prayer for youngsters, aiding them to participate and follow up daily celebrations and prayers. All materials and text can be utilized throughout the year 2025.

The links for digital download and print orders are:

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- Download Poster → <https://bit.ly/Locn-SPUC-2025>
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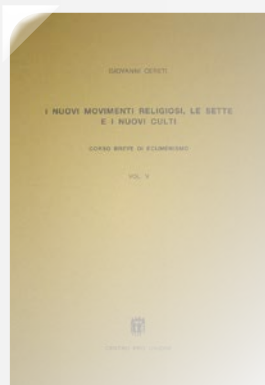
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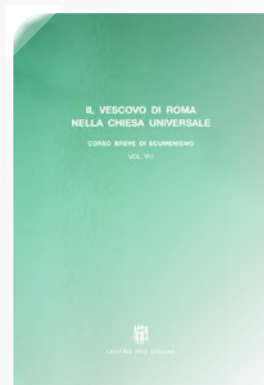
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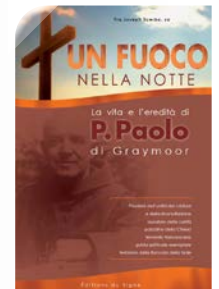
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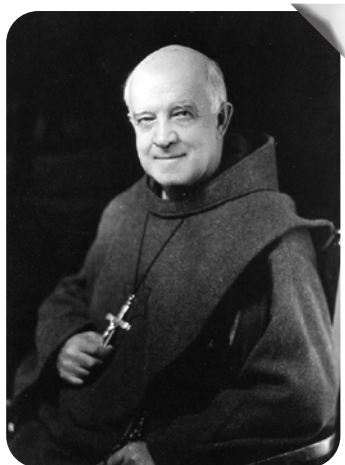
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Pioniere della Settimana di Preghiera per l'Unità dei Cristiani, Profeta di Unità

Lo scopo della vita di **Padre Paolo Wattson** consisteva nel lavorare e pregare per la realizzazione della preghiera pronunciata da Gesù durante l'Ultima Cena:

«perché tutti siano una sola cosa. Come tu, Padre, sei in me e io in te,
siano anch'essi in noi una cosa sola, perché il mondo creda...
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