



The Holy See

**APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
ON OCCASION OF THE MEETING WITH THE HEADS
OF THE NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

Calcutta (India)

Monday, 3 February 1986

Dear Brothers in Christ,

"Grace be to you and peace from God our Father the Lord Jesus Christ".

1. It is a joy to greet you, my fellow Christians. on this my first visit to your country. I thank God that such a visit is possible with all it implies of fellowship and mutual recognition as followers of the one Lord.

In India you have a tradition of fine initiatives in the cause of unity. You have given leaders to the ecumenical movement not only in India but on the world scene. All of this awakens a sympathetic response in my heart for? as I have said before, "the unity of the Church concerns the Bishop of Rome in a singular way" . That is why I have continued to encourage the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church in their ecumenical responsibility, insisting that it must be a principal pastoral priority for the Catholic Church. I hope it may be possible here in India "to develop our collaboration in order to arrive at a more effective service to the cause of unity" .

2. Such collaboration cannot stand by itself. It must be oriented and given purpose by the theological dialogue which seeks to help resolve all those questions which still divide us in the profession of the faith. In dialogue one speaks the truth in love and engages in a deepening, accomplished in common, of "the faith delivered once for all to the Saints" . It is a task which is indispensable if we take the ecumenical movement seriously. " Unity in the profession of the faith is the fundamental element in the manifestation of ecclesial communion " .

3. Of course this dialogue needs always to be sustained by, and expressed in, efforts of collaboration, common witness wherever possible, and above all fervent prayer and change of

heart. I pray that all the Christians of India may be stirred by the Holy Spirit of God to work for the cause of unity with generosity and wisdom.

Thank you for coming here to greet me. I warmly reciprocate your good wishes and encourage you in your service of Jesus Christ and the world to which he brought God's saving love. May he bless you, your families and loved ones, and all those whom you serve.

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