



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER
JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY**

*To my Venerable Brother
Cardinal EDWARD IDRIS CASSIDY
President of the Pontifical Council
for Promoting Christian Unity*

I send you cordial greetings, and through you I greet all our Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant brothers and sisters who are taking part in the Conference: «Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday and Today and For Ever (*Heb: 13:8*) - Christianity on the Threshold of the Third Millennium».

I am greatly encouraged by this initiative of the Christian Interconfessional Consultative Committee, since it is the result of a shared decision of the Churches and Ecclesial Communions which have traditionally carried out their pastoral activities in the territory of the Community of Independent States and in the Baltic Countries. Having as its aim the promotion of growing cooperation between Christians in the region, I pray that the Conference will inspire all involved to bear an ever more convincing and effective witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Conference is taking place on the threshold of the Great Jubilee of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of the Son of God, whom the Father sent into the world to be its Redeemer. He who «is the same yesterday and today and for ever», is the centre of the Christian faith and of the truth which his Church, in fidelity to the commandment that he himself has given to her, proclaims to every generation.

It is important in this context to reflect on the relationship that exists between the Lord and Master Jesus Christ and each and every individual Christian and each Christian community, on the mission that Christians are called to carry out in the world today, on the challenges which they have to face, on the need to find strength in the One who said: «I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life» (*Jn 14:6*).

The meeting in which you are taking part will bring together representatives of Churches and Ecclesial Communions which, through the incorporation of their members by baptism into Christ, already share a real, though yet imperfect, communion. The rediscovery of this brotherhood in the Lord will make it possible for Christians to deepen their relations, intensify their cooperation, and strive towards that perfect unity in the faith which is expressed in full and visible ecclesial communion, and to which Christ the Lord calls his disciples.

May God bless all who, during these days, are involved in the Conference. «To him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think» (*Eph 3:20*) I entrust the success of your efforts to strengthen Christian cooperation and communion.

From the Vatican, 18 November 1999