



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO A DELEGATION OF
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA***

Paul VI Hall

Wednesday, 10 February 2010

Distinguished Friends,

I am pleased to greet Bishop Mark Hanson and all of you present here today for this ecumenical visit.

Since the beginning of my Pontificate, I have been encouraged that relations between Catholics and Lutherans have continued to grow, especially at the level of practical collaboration in the service of the Gospel. In his Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*, my beloved predecessor Pope John Paul II described our relationship as “brotherhood rediscovered” (No. 41). I deeply hope that the continuing Lutheran-Catholic dialogue both in the United States of America and at the international level will help to build upon the agreements reached so far. An important remaining task will be to harvest the results of the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue that so promisingly started after the Second Vatican Council. To build on what has been achieved together since that time, a spiritual ecumenism should be grounded in ardent prayer and in conversion to Christ, the source of grace and truth. May the Lord help us to treasure what has been accomplished so far, to guard it with care, and to foster its development.

I conclude by renewing the wish expressed by my predecessor, during whose Pontificate so much was accomplished on the road to full visible unity among Christians, when he said to a similar delegation from the Lutheran Church in America: “You are most welcome here. Let us rejoice that an encounter such as this can take place. Let us resolve to be open to the Lord so that he can use this meeting for his purposes, to bring about the unity that he desires. Thank you for the efforts you are making for full unity in faith and charity” (*Address to the Bishops of the Lutheran Church in*

America, 26 September 1985).

Upon you and all those entrusted to your pastoral care, I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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