



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO AN ECUMENICAL DELEGATION FROM FINLAND

Monday, 20 January 2003

Your Excellency,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With affection I greet the members of the ecumenical delegation from Finland who have come to Rome for the celebration of the feast of your patron Saint Henrik. It is with gratitude that I recall the various visits of your delegations to Rome, meetings that have significantly contributed to strengthening relations between Lutherans and Catholics.

The Second Vatican Council committed the Catholic Church "irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture, thus heeding the Spirit of the Lord who teaches people to interpret carefully the 'signs of the times'" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 3). This is an invitation that I have embraced throughout my Pontificate. At this time, we recognize a new ecumenical moment in which we can acknowledge a real, if still incomplete, communion. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is a concrete sign of this new situation as a "brotherhood rediscovered" (ibid., Chapter II, subtitle to nos. 41-42).

It is my fervent prayer that by building on this brotherhood we can further promote a shared spirituality which will assist us in our pilgrimage towards full communion.

Upon you and all those in your pastoral care I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.