

Dialogue More Than Political Action, Says Pope

Notes That Christian Unity "Resides in Prayer"

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 18, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Ecumenical dialogue isn't about arriving at political agreements and making compromises, but rather seeking the unity founded in the truth of Christ, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this today upon receiving in audience the participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which ends Friday in Rome.

The plenary, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the institution of the dicastery, is considering the theme: "Toward a New Stage of Ecumenical Dialogue."

Acknowledging the advances of the last 50 years, the Pontiff urged those present to "continue your efforts" and to promote the "path to unity."

The Holy Father added that it is urgent "to revive ecumenical interest and to give new incisiveness to the dialogues," even in the face of new challenges, such as "new anthropological and ethical interpretations, the ecumenical formation of the new generations, the further fragmentation of the ecumenical scene."

"The Catholic Church continues the dialogue with passion," he continued, "seeking to deepen, in a serious and rigorous way, the common theological, liturgical and spiritual patrimony, and to address with serenity and commitment the elements that still divide us."

Benedict XVI then affirmed that the "aim of the ecumenical path remains unchanged, as does the firm commitment in pursuing it."

He noted that, however, dialogue is not the same as the art of politics, "in which the ability to negotiate or the greater capacity to find compromises come into play, from which could be expected, as good mediators, that, after a certain time, one will arrive at agreements acceptable to all."

"Ecumenical action has a twofold movement," the Pope explained. "On one hand there is the convinced, passionate and tenacious search to find full unity in truth, to excavate models of unity, to illumine oppositions and dark points in order to reach unity."

"And this in the necessary theological dialogue, but above all in prayer and in penance, in that spiritual ecumenism which constitutes the throbbing heart of the whole path: The unity of Christians is and remains prayer, it resides in prayer."

On the other hand, the Holy Father continued, is "another operative movement, which arises from the firm awareness that we do not know the hour of the realization of the unity among all the

disciples of Christ and we cannot know it, because unity is not 'made by us,' God 'makes' it: It comes from above, from the unity of the Father with the Son in the dialogue of love which is the Holy Spirit; it is a taking part in the divine unity."

The Pontiff said that this knowledge shouldn't take away from the Church's efforts to work toward unity, but rather "it should make us ever more attentive to receive the signs of the times of the Lord, knowing how to recognize with gratitude that which already unites us and working to consolidate it and make it grow."

"In the end," he added, "it is about leaving to God what is only his and of exploring, with seriousness, constancy and dedication, what is our task, being aware that to our commitment belongs the binomial of acting and suffering, of activity and patience, of effort and joy."

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