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## A Half-Century of Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue (1967-2017)

*Only the way of love is able to lead to clear ecumenical dialogue and, consequently, to the unity that we desire.<sup>1</sup>*

The pursuit of the unity in the Church is the primary task of all believers in Christ. This pursuit should take place on every level: spiritual (through prayer), practical (through concrete actions), and doctrinal (through dialogue about the main truths of faith). In the past 50 years (1967–2017), many common positions between Catholics and Lutherans have been worked out and recorded in the 2013 document *From Conflict to Communion*. October 31, 2016, which marked the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation as well as the 50-year anniversary of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, has changed the way that Catholics and Evangelicals view each other. Pope Francis, as a representative of the Catholic Church, Bishop Munib Younan, and Fr. Martin Junge, who represented the Lutheran World Federation, co-hosted an ecumenical celebration that took place in Lund, Sweden, inaugurating the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation. After the service, a joint document entitled *Joint Declaration on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation* was published. The document concluded with the following message: “We call upon all Lutheran and Catholic parishes and communities to be bold and creative, joyful and hopeful in their commitment to continue the great journey ahead of us. Rather than conflicts of the past, God’s gift of unity among us shall guide cooperation and deepen our solidarity. By drawing close in faith to Christ, by praying together, by listening to one another, by living Christ’s love in our relationships, we, Catholics and Lutherans,

<sup>1</sup> J. Budniak, *Jednoczeni w różnorodności. Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska jako paradygmat pojednania Kościołów, kultur i narodów* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2009), 47.

open ourselves to the power of the Triune God. Rooted in Christ and witnessing to him, we renew our determination to be faithful heralds of God's boundless love for all humanity"<sup>2</sup>

The 50-year Catholic-Lutheran dialogue should be an encouragement for Christians to testify together to a wounded and the divided world, to more passionately pursue further dialogue in order to overcome existing differences, and to be open to unity, which is the source of our common hope.

**Key words:** Catholics, Lutherans, dialogue, ecumenism, Reformation.

## Introduction

Striving for Christian unity, through which Christ's words from the prayer of the High Priest "*Ut unum sint* – so that they may all be one" (John 17:21) are realized, is the fundamental call of each baptized person. This unity should be achieved in three areas: spiritual (through prayer), practical (through concrete action), and doctrinal (through dialogue about the main truths of faith). Since October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther publicly posted his 95 theses, a deep and profound change took place in ecclesial, societal, political, and economic life. Since this event, the centennial anniversary of the Reformation has been a source of debate and confrontation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church. October 31, 2016, which marked the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation, changed the way that Catholics and Evangelicals have viewed each other for years. Pope Francis, representing the Catholic Church, and Bishop Munib Younan, the President of the Lutheran World Federation, and Fr. Martin Junge, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, representing the communion of the 145 Churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), co-hosted a joint memorial in Lund, Sweden to inaugurate the celebration of the Reformation. After the service, a document entitled *Joint Declaration on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation* was published. In this document, the authors stressed that "our common faith in Jesus Christ and our baptism demand of us a daily conversion, by which we cast off the historical disagreements and conflicts that impede the ministry of reconciliation." The declaration

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis and Munib Younan, *Joint Catholic Lutheran Declaration on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation* (Lund: October 31, 2016), <http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/full-text-joint-declaration-for-the-500th-anniversary-of-reformation/> (Accessed 09.25.2017).

encourages those who profess Christ to “pray for the healing of our wounds and of the memories that cloud our view of one another [...] God summons us to be close to all those who yearn for dignity, justice, peace and reconciliation.” The document also expresses that Catholics and Lutherans put all conflicts aside and accept the truth that “we are freed by grace to move towards the communion to which God continually calls us.”<sup>3</sup>

Ecumenism

For Christians, the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation was an opportunity for Catholic and Lutheran Christians to jointly summarize the official 50-year international dialogue between them and rededicate themselves to continued cooperation. In this way, Christians, Lutherans and Catholics demonstrate what it looks like to seek and find that which connects two groups, not that which divides them. If religious communities are seeking to avoid conflict, then they should work together toward reconciliation among Christians. In Christ we are called to cooperate in the world in a spirit of respect, love, and truth.

## The Beginning of Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue

Although delicate, sensitive, difficult, and demanding, ecumenical efforts are beginning to bear fruit that should strengthen the hope of those who strive for unity in the Church. A living awareness of this fact gives rise to confidence, a sense of closeness, and mutual belonging because ecumenism is process through which Christians can grow spiritually, learn from each other, correct errors, and enrich each other in the experience of faith. Ecumenism conveys the experience of “others” because it allows one to encounter the concrete reality of the religious life of other Christians. Direct contact “imprints an indelible mark on the spiritual face of the believer.”<sup>4</sup>

Ecumenical dialogue, which gives rise to the hope of seeing “another” in truth, sincerity, and the sense of mutual understanding, holds an important place in the work of uniting the Church. Dialogue thrives on the hope of reconciliation. This hope, like love, is patient, benevolent, bears all things, and endures all things (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-7). According to St. Paul, “hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Dialogue between Christian Churches

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See W. H. Hryniewicz, *Ekumenia żyje nadzieją* (Poznan: Wydawnictwo Świętego Wojciecha, 2011), 23.

and Communities is a “distant and imperfect anticipation of the feast of unity and reconciliation. It is an expression of a celebration of friendship and brotherhood.”<sup>5</sup>

## Ecumenism

For the first time in history, Catholics and Lutherans jointly commemorated the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation on a global level from October 31, 2016 to October 31, 2017. This commemoration included: gratitude for the gifts of the Reformation; penance for the disunity that it caused and the suffering that has resulted from the politicization of the theological disputes; and gratitude for 50 years of Catholic and Lutheran dialogue. The 500-year anniversary of the Reformation was an occasion for Lutherans and Catholics to jointly witness to Christ. At the same time, the commemoration was a milestone that reflected the unification process between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation that began with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), to which religious leaders of other denominations were invited.

In his speech at the commencement of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII pointed out that “...it is evident, as always, that the truth of the Lord will remain forever. We see, in fact, as one age succeeds another, that the opinions of men follow one another and exclude each other. And often errors vanish as quickly as they arise, like fog before the sun. The Church has always opposed these errors. Frequently she has condemned them with the greatest severity. Nowadays however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.”<sup>6</sup>

During the beginning of the second session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI greeted the representatives of other Christian Churches and Communities with the following words: We express our cordial greetings [...] We thank you for being here [...] Our voice trembles and our heart is deeply moved because your presence here is an unspeakable consolation and a source of great hope, and because the long separation between us has been equally painful. If we are in any way to blame for that separation we humbly beg God’s forgiveness and ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. For our part we willingly forgive the injuries which the

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>6</sup> John XXIII, *Opening Speech of the Second Vatican Council* (October 11, 1962), <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/god-man-and-the-universe-week-two/gaudet-mater-ecclesia> (Accessed: 09.25.2017).

Catholic Church has suffered and forget the grief endured during the long series of dissensions and separations. May our Heavenly Father graciously accept our testimony and establish true fraternal peace among us.”<sup>7</sup> In this way, the Pope proposed that Christians enter into a mutual dialogue in order to establish peace and accord. Moreover, Pope Paul VI joined in on reconciliation efforts. During his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Pope Paul VI met with the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras I on January 6, 1964. During their meeting, a deeply symbolic reconciliation between the Western and Eastern Churches took place. Following this first meeting, more steps have been taken to break down the wall of alienation that has separated Catholic and Orthodox Churches for more than 900 years. As a result of this meeting, on December 7, 1965, Pope Paul VI in Rome and Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul lifted the Churches’ mutual excommunication of 1054.<sup>8</sup>

Since the Second Vatican Council, ecumenical activity has become a permanent part of the life of Christian Churches and Communities that, despite various obstacles, strive to rebuild their mutual friendship. Division among Christians is more clearly understood as a challenge that all Christians must address out of fidelity to Christ and responsibility for His Testament. This attitude has made it possible for ecumenism to move forward because the Council Fathers’ did not wish to condemn those who reject the teaching of the Catholic Church, but rather show them respect. This work clearly demonstrates what it means to live by the Gospel, the effect of which was the *Decree on Ecumenism: Unitatis redintegratio* (November 21, 1964), which defined what ecumenism is and how it is to be implemented and, subsequently, gave rise to the beginning of ecumenical dialogue. Since then, ecumenism has developed its charitable activity, prayer, martyrdom for the faith, and theological dialogue. Each of these dimensions is important when striving for unity because they imbue each day with a spirit of respect, love, truth, and service.

The 50-year international dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans has contributed to a mutual understanding of their respective teachings and a better knowledge of their doctrines in order to achieve unity in truth. This dialogue began in 1967 and was run by the international

<sup>7</sup> A. Skowronek, *Odkrywanie jedności* (Warsaw: Instytut Prasy i Wydawnictw “Novum,” 1988), 26. Translator’s translation. See [https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1963/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19630929\\_concilio-vaticano-ii.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1963/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19630929_concilio-vaticano-ii.html) for Pope Paul VI’s complete opening address in Italian.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–27.

Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.<sup>9</sup> The first phase of dialogue took place from 1967 to 1972, the content of which is contained in the document *The Gospel and the Church* (1971).<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, Catholics and Lutherans took part in publishing the document *Baptism, the Eucharist, and Ministry* (BEM), known more as the Lima Document, which holds a special place on the list of interfaith reconciliation. This document was the fruit of the more than 50-year work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, which was received in Lima in 1982. This document addresses key issues related to Baptism, the Eucharist, and spiritual ministry (office), and, to a great degree, approached the positions of the main Christian traditions.<sup>11</sup> The ecumenical Lima Document also recalled important truths about the Holy Spirit, which can give rise to new energy and possibilities “far more than all we ask or imagine” (cf. Eph. 3:20). Through mutual openness, the Holy Spirit can speak to one Church through the views of another.

From 1973 to 1984, the second phase of ecumenical dialogue took place. The fruit of this dialogue was six documents: *The Eucharist* (1978), *Ways to Community* (1980), *All Under One Christ* (1980), *The Ministry in the Church* (1981), and *Martin Luther – Witness to Jesus Christ* (1983), which was published on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s birthday, and *Facing Unity: Models, Forms, and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Fellowship* (1984).<sup>12</sup>

The third phase of ecumenical dialogue, which took place from 1986 to 1993, ended with the announcement of the report entitled *The Church and Justification: Understanding the Church in Light of the Doctrine of Justification* (1993). This document was the foundation of the future document *Joint Declaration on Teaching on Justification*, which was edited from 1997-1999. The Catholic Church and the World Lutheran Federation solemnly signed this document in Augsburg on Reformation Day, October 31, 1999; this is the greatest achievement in the Catholic Lutheran theological dialogue to date and the first to be

<sup>9</sup> A. A. Napiórkowski, *Teologia jedności chrześcijan* (Cracow: Salvator, 2011), *sic passim*.

<sup>10</sup> K. Karski, “Luteranizm w dialogu,” *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, no. 1 (2000): 9-29.

<sup>11</sup> See M. Składanowski and S. Pawłowski, *Chrzest. Eucharystia. Posługiwanie duchowne. Dokumenty z Limy 1982. Tekst i komentarze*, eds. S. Pawłowski and M. Składanowski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2012), *sic passim*.

<sup>12</sup> K. Karski, *Luteranizm w dialogu*, 9-29.



formally confirmed by the Apostolic See.<sup>13</sup> The significance of the *Joint Declaration on Teaching on Justification* made it possible for Catholics and Lutherans to overcome divisions that arose from the main controversy of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This milestone in Catholic-Lutheran ecumenical relations was the theological foundation of the Common Commemoration of the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation, which made it possible for Catholics and Lutherans to make a public commitment to turn away from past conflicts and to be open to the unity to which the Church is called. Through this event, Churches jointly proclaimed that only God is the ultimate goal of human hope and the giver of salvation. In 2006, the Methodist Church signed the *Joint Declaration on the Teaching of Justification*. During the 500-year anniversary celebration, the World Communion of Reformed Churches joined the declaration of justification and signed the document on July 5, 2017 in Wittenberg, Germany. This event took place in the presence of Lutheran and Methodist representatives and the Catholic Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Advancement of Christian Unity, Bishop Brian Farrell. This event was the fruit of ecumenical dialogue, which is not only the work of theologians, but has a positive and practical effect on how Christians of different denominations live and work together in solidarity and jointly witness to the Gospel in society.<sup>14</sup> Needless to say, it was another step toward ecumenical unity between the different denominations.

Irrespective of the work on the *Joint Declaration*, the fourth phase of dialogue took place between 1995 and 2006, which resulted in the *Apostolicity of the Church* (2005). The fifth phase of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue has been taking place since 2009. The main topic of this dialogue is *Baptism and Growing Communion*. Work on this document was suspended for some time so that the joint document of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for the Advancement of Christian Unity entitled *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran and Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* (2013) could be prepared.<sup>15</sup> In this document, both parties emphasize that commemorating the anniversary of Luther's reforms is based on three strong

<sup>13</sup> A. A. Napiórkowski, *Teologia jedności*, 190.

<sup>14</sup> tm/rv, *Kościół reformowane przystąpili do deklaracji o usprawiedliwieniu*, pl.radiovaticana.va (05.07.2017).

<sup>15</sup> Lutheran-Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict to Communion: Common Commemoration of the Reformation 2017* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2017), [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/lutheran-fed\\_docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_2013\\_dal-conflitto-alla-comunione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/lutheran-fed_docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_2013_dal-conflitto-alla-comunione_en.html) (09.25.2017).

points. The first point is that the commemoration is an expression of gratitude for all that we have discovered throughout the past half-century of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, which first began in 1967 in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. The second point is the hope that this common commemoration will bear good fruit in the future. The third point recalls that Martin Luther did not want to create division or new churches; rather, he wanted to reform the Catholic Church. This desire to renew the Church has led to division and even to such conflicts as the Thirty Years' War. Summing up the 50-year Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, the document *From Conflict to Communion* marked the "growing communion" between Catholics and Lutherans.

Besides the dialogue led by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, a bilateral dialogue on both local and regional levels has and continues to take place. The oldest official Lutheran-Catholic theological dialogue that took place on the local level occurred in the USA in 1965. This dialogue led to the publication of the following documents: *Justification by Faith* (1983) and *Declaration on the Way: The Church, Service, and the Eucharist* (2016).<sup>16</sup> In the second part of the document entitled "Statement of Agreements," the Catholic-Lutheran group expressed their common position on the place of the Church in God's work of salvation:

- Catholics and Lutherans agree that the church on earth has been assembled by the triune God, who grants to its members their sharing in the triune divine life as God's own people, as the body of the risen Christ, and as the temple of the Holy Spirit, while they are also called to give witness to these gifts so that others may come to share in them.
- They agree as well that the church on earth arose from the whole event of Jesus Christ, who remains its sole foundation (1Corinthians 3:11).
- [T]hey hold in common that the church on earth is gathered by the proclamation of the gospel of God's saving mercy in Christ, so that the gospel, proclaimed in the Holy Spirit by the apostles, remains the church's normative origin and abiding foundation.
- An agreement follows that the church on earth is in every age apostolic, because it is founded upon the apostles' witness to the gospel and it continuously professes the apostolic and evangelical

<sup>16</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016, [http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/lutheran/upload/Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Way-for-Website.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/lutheran/upload/Declaration_on_the_Way-for-Website.pdf)). (Accessed: 09.25.2017).



faith while living by mandated practices handed on from the apostles.<sup>17</sup>

The *Declaration on the Way* document summarized the 50-year dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans in the USA and was their joint contribution to the Reformations' 2017 jubilee.

In Germany, the document "The Condemnations of the Reformation Era—Do They Still Divide?" was published by a group of Catholic and Evangelical theologians in 1986.<sup>18</sup>

On October 11, 2016, Cardinal Kurt Koch, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Fr. Martin Junge, the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, published a joint letter entitled "Together in Hope," which was intended to prepare the Catholic and Lutheran Churches for the Joint Commemoration of 500-year anniversary of the Reformation. The text points to areas that require further theological discussions and agreement, including primarily how the two groups understand the Church, ministry, and the Eucharist. This letter also points out that the Joint Commemoration should include thanksgiving, penance, and the duty to give a joint witness:

1. **Thanksgiving:** because of the gift of the Word of God, and the ways it spoke anew to the church and to the world and continues to speak until now. But also for the particular gifts of the Reformation, as well as the gifts that Lutherans and Catholics recognize in each other.
- 2.. **Repentance:** because while dealing with difference, the unity of the church was lost. But also in view of the immense suffering imposed on ordinary people due to a theological dispute, which became aligned to and instrumentalized by hegemonic political interests. As a consequence, long 'religious wars' were fought in Europe in the 16th and 17th century.
- 3.. **Commitment to joint witness:** because while Lutherans and Catholics continue to search for unity, nothing impedes their joint witness to the joy, beauty and transformative power of faith, notably by serving the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. The Joint Commemoration invites Catholics and Lutherans to give, because of the mercy they receive in and through Christ.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; see J. Budniak, "Kościół katolicki i Kościół ewangelicko –Złączeni w nadziei," *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 168, no. 2 (2017): 258.

<sup>18</sup> A. A. Napiórkowski, *Teologia jedności*, 190.

<sup>19</sup> Kurt Koch and Martin Junge, *Together in Hope: The Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the 500 Years of Reformation*, [https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/junge\\_koch\\_article\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/junge_koch_article_-_final.pdf) (Accessed: 09.25.2017).

The authors of the letter “Together in Hope” address Catholics and Lutherans and request that they participate in the so that together they give “joint witness in a wounded and broken world” and enter into “even more passionate dialogue so that remaining differences are overcome and the unity that is hoped for can be received and celebrated.”<sup>20</sup>

The preamble to the *Joint Declaration on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation*, which was signed by Pope Francis and the President of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Munib Younan, on October 31, 2016 in Lund, Sweden, expresses gratitude to the Lord God for the communal prayer in Lund and emphasized that “Fifty years of sustained and fruitful ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans have helped us to overcome many differences, and have deepened our mutual understanding and trust.”<sup>21</sup>

## Doctrinal Dialogue in Poland

Dialogue on doctrine among Christian churches plays a key role in the Church’s quest for visible unity. These dialogues make it possible for different Christian communities to explain their teachings and come to a mutually better understanding of other communities’ doctrines. Common declarations and agreements on doctrinal matters, such as the *Joint Declaration*, are the fruits of such bi- and multilateral dialogues. This type of ecumenical activity has included Christians of different denominations in Poland. The fruit of their dialogues is evident in their joint documents on baptism, marriages between persons of different denominations, creation, the celebration of the Lord’s Day, and matters pertaining to refugees.

Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and Churches affiliated with the Polish Ecumenical Council (except for the Baptist Christian Church, which refused to sign a joint declaration on doctrinal grounds) signed a joint declaration entitled *Sakrament chrztu znakiem jedności* (*The Sacrament of Baptism as a Sign of Unity*) on January 23, 2000 in the Evangelical church of the Holy Trinity in Warsaw.<sup>22</sup> The entire document includes an introduction and three substantively

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Z. Glaeser, “Uleczyć rany: przez nawrócenie do pełnej wspólnoty. W obliczu 500. lecia Reformacji,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 216, no. 2[648] (2017), 216.

<sup>22</sup> The document was signed by the leaders of the six Churches that belong to the Polska Rada Ekumeniczna (Polish Ecumenical Council): the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland, the Evangelical-Methodist Church in Poland, the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Poland, the Polish Catholic Church in Poland,

coherent points in which the Churches confirm their baptismal ministry and affirm the following:

1. According to the Bible, particularly St. Paul's letters, the mission statements of Matthew and Mark's Gospels, and St. John's Gospel: baptism is a sacrament directly established by Jesus Christ, which He commanded to confer on others. Baptism is a sign of new life; for, through baptism, man is freed from slavery to sin, becomes the embodiment of Christ crucified and risen, and is introduced into the New Covenant. Baptism also wipes away sin; illumines the soul through Christ; is a rebirth in Christ; vests the soul in Christ; renews the soul in the Holy Spirit; and is an address to God, asking him for a clear conscience as well as liberation, which leads to unity in Jesus Christ, where there is no division, race, or gender.
2. Baptism by water and the Holy Spirit is conferred in the name of the Triune God. Such baptism unites the baptized with Christ and with each other. It is an initiation into the Church and the beginning of a life lived in Christ.
3. Referring to the *Lima Document* (BEM, 9), the Churches focus on the testimony to Jesus Christ and the Gospel that the baptized give. For, they should live for Christ, the Church, and the world, while awaiting the ultimate fulfillment of their hope in God at the end of time, when God will be "all in all." "Baptism in Christ is a call to all the Churches to overcome their divisions and to visibly manifest their communion."<sup>23</sup>

The next fruit of ecumenical dialogue that has taken place in Poland is the document *Małżeństwo chrześcijańskie osób o różnej przynależności wyznaniowej. Deklaracja Kościołów w Polsce na początku trzeciego tysiąclecia* (*The Christian Marriage of those of Different Denominations: A Declaration of the Churches of Poland at the Beginning of the Third Millennium*), which was issued on May 10, 2011. The document consists of an introduction and five chapters that respectively present:

1. Common Teaching on Marriage;
2. Differing Teaching on Marriage;
3. Common Teaching on the Marriage of Two People from Different Denominations;

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the Mariavite Church in Poland, and the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, as well as the Roman Catholic Church.

See *Sakrament chrztu znakiem jedności. Deklaracja Kościołów w Polsce na progu trzeciego tysiąclecia* (Warsaw: January 23, 2001), in *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (2000): 143–144.

<sup>23</sup>

See *Ibid.*

4. Common Establishment of the Norms for Dealing with Marriages of Persons of Different Denominations;
5. Common Establishment of Norms for Filing the Marriage Contract by the Newlyweds.

After the signatories and the Polish Conference of Catholic Bishops accepted the document, it was sent to the Holy See, where it now awaits *recognitio*.<sup>24</sup>

On January 16, 2013, a common document entitled *Apel Kościołów w Polsce o ochronę stworzenia* (*The Churches of Poland's Appeal to Protect Creation*) was signed. This document emphasize that “protection of the environment is not only a technical problem of keeping an ecological balance, but also a moral and spiritual program of modern man who forgets that he and the world surrounding him are God’s creation.”<sup>25</sup> It is clear from the appeal that the Churches identify the ecological problem primarily as a spiritual problem and then as a material problem. They point to the spiritual condition of man and call for action to strengthen it. The leaders of these Churches treat the problem of preserving creation primarily as a spiritual and moral one. For this reason, they have called on state leaders and administrators to establish appropriate procedures and to create pro-ecological social policies: “Living for today, let us think about tomorrow. [...] Even little but consequential actions bring huge effects in the work of protecting all of creation.”<sup>26</sup>

In the interest of keeping Sundays holy, the Churches of Poland signed the document *Apel Kościołów w Polsce o poszanowanie i świętowanie niedzieli* (*The Churches of Poland's Appeal to Respect and Keep Sundays Holy*) on January 20, 2015. The authors of this appeal stressed that “Sunday—the day of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—should be a day of prayer and celebration. Such observance fulfills the spiritual truth of God’s commandment to keep holy the Sabbath.” The authors emphasized need for people to rediscover the value of the “communal celebration [of Sunday] in a spirit of faith

<sup>24</sup> Komisja Teologiczna Polskiej Rady Ekumenicznej, Komisja ds. Dialogu między Polską Radą Ekumeniczną a Konferencją Episkopatu Polski, Kościół Rzymskokatolicki, “Małżeństwo chrześcijańskie osób o różnej przynależności wyznaniowej. Deklaracja Kościołów w Polsce na początku trzeciego tysiąclecia,” in *Encyklopedia ekumenizmu w Polsce (1964-2014)*, eds. J. Budniak, Z. Glaeser, T. Kałużny, and Z.J. Kijas (Cracow: Oikoumene, 2016), 516-520.

<sup>25</sup> Przewodniczący Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i Zwierzchnicy Kościołów zrzeszonych w Polskiej Radzie Ekumenicznej, *Apel Kościołów w Polsce o ochronę stworzenia* (Warsaw: Oikoumene, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

that is essentially expressed in the prayer of gathering around the gift of the Word of God and the Sacrament.” They also pointed out that “Sunday has lost its unique character and has become the same day as the rest of the week” and that Christians are increasingly forced to give up their right to rest and to celebrate Sunday, which opposes their faith. The signatories support all social initiatives “that aim to preserve the festive dimension of Sunday, restore its solemn character within society, and promote Sunday rest, which is in keeping with the Christian spirit.” The document also appealed to those on whom keeping Sunday holy in Polish society depends, including employees, employers, parliamentarians, authorities, and all people of good will “to respect Sundays and holy days out of consideration for the social benefit and good of societies, peoples, and families that rest and the celebration of Sundays makes possible.”<sup>27</sup>

At the beginning of the third millennium, the peoples of Europe and Churches are faced with the immense challenge of the immigration crisis. Around three million people from Africa and Asia have crossed into the European Union. Some of these people are escaping war and religious persecution, while others are seeking a better life. Hence, on June 30, 2016, the Churches associated with the Polish Ecumenical Council and the Polish Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a special statement entitled *Przesłanie Kościołów w Polsce w sprawie uchodźców* (*The Churches of Poland’s Message on Refugees*).<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that much has been achieved since 1967, there remain many points for Catholics and Lutherans to discuss. The challenges still facing Catholic-Lutheran dialogue continue to be: the sacraments, Mary’s place in the saving mediation of Christ, the essence of the Church (its sacramentality, the relationship between its visible and invisible dimension, and the relationship between the local and universal Church), and clerical ministry (including its sacramental character, female ordination, apostolic succession, and papal primacy).

<sup>27</sup> Przewodniczący Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i Zwierzchnicy Kościołów zrzeszonych w Polskiej Radzie Ekumenicznej, *Apel Kościołów w Polsce o poszanowanie i świętowanie niedzieli* (Warsaw: January 20, 2015), in *Encyklopedia ekumenizmu w Polsce (1964-2014)*, eds. J. Budniak, Z. Glaeser, T. Kałużny, and Z.J. Kijas (Cracow: Oikoumene, 2016), 528-529.

<sup>28</sup> Przewodniczący Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i Zwierzchnicy Kościołów zrzeszonych w Polskiej Radzie Ekumenicznej, *Przesłanie Kościołów w Polsce w sprawie uchodźców* (Warsaw: Oikoumene, 2016).

Despite the signing of the *Declaration on Justification*, Catholics and Lutherans need to come to a deeper understanding of how they respectively understand the relationship between faith, grace, and good deeds. It is also necessary for Catholics and Lutherans to agree on a common terminology so that the use of different vocabulary does not lead one or the other group to erroneously point out differences in faith itself. It is also necessary to define the goal of their ecumenical efforts—whether it be structural unity or only spiritual communion in “reconciled diversity.” In the Conciliar *Decree on Ecumenism: Unitatis redintegratio*, we read that all Christians, including Catholics, are responsible for division, which means that all are called to rebuild unity.

## PÓŁWIECZE DIALOGU KATOLICKO-LUTERAŃSKIEGO (1967-2017)

Dążenie do jedności Kościoła jest podstawowym zadaniem wszystkich wierzących w Chrystusa. Powinno się to dokonywać na każdej płaszczyźnie: zarówno duchowej (przez modlitwę), jak i praktycznej (konkretne działania) oraz doktrynalnej (dialog o głównych prawdach wiary). W ostatnim półwieczu (1967–2017) wypracowano wiele wspólnych stanowisk, co zostało zaprezentowane w dokumencie *Od konfliktu do komunii*, z 2013 roku. Dzień 31 października 2016 roku – Święto Reformacji i początek obchodów 500. lat Reformacji oraz dziękczynienie za pięćdziesiąt lat wspólnego dialogu – odmienił dawne spojrzenie na siebie katolików i ewangelików. Papież Franciszek, w imieniu Kościoła katolickiego oraz bp Munib Younan i ks. dr Martin Junge, reprezentujący Światową Federację Luterzańską, byli współgospodarzami ekumenicznego nabożeństwa, jakie odbyło się w Lund w Szwecji inaugurujące obchody 500 lat Reformacji. Po nabożeństwie został opublikowany wspólny dokument zatytułowany Deklaracja Wspólna z okazji wspólnego katolicko-luterańskiego upamiętnienia 500-lecia Reformacji, zakończony przesłaniem: „Wzywamy wszystkie parafie i wspólnoty katolickie i luterzańskie do śmiałości i kreatywności, by były radosne i pełne nadziei w swoim zaangażowaniu, by kontynuowały wspaniałą drogę, która jest przed nami. Zamiast konfliktów z przeszłości, Boży dar jedności między nami powinien kierować współpracą i pogłębiać naszą solidarność. Zbliżając się do Chrystusa w wierze, modląc się razem, słuchając siebie nawzajem, żyjąc miłością Chrystusa w naszych relacjach, my, katolicy i luteranie, otwieramy się na moc Trójjedynego Boga. Zakorzenieni w Chrystusie i świadcząc o Nim, ponawiamy nasze postanowienie, by być wiernymi głosicielami bezgranicznej miłości Boga do całej ludzkości”<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Deklaracja Wspólna z okazji wspólnego katolicko-luterańskiego upamiętnienia 500-lecia Reformacji, Lund, 31 października 2016, w: [www/ekai.pl/wydarzenia/](http://www/ekai.pl/wydarzenia/)



Wspólny pięćdziesięcioletni dialog katolicko-luterański powinien być zachętą dla chrześcijan, aby razem dawać świadectwo zranionemu i podzielonemu światu, z większą pasją prowadzić dalszy dialog, aby przełamać istniejące wciąż różnice, otworzyć się na jedność, która jest treścią naszej wspólnej nadziei.

**Słowa kluczowe:** katolicy, luteranie, dialog, ekumenizm, reformacja.

Ecumenism

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