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A Church in Dialogue: Toward the Restoration of Unity Among Christians

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Although the road to Christian unity “has proved to be longer, more circuitous and more multifaceted than many had anticipated,” much progress has been made and the Holy Spirit will “lead us past what seem to be intractable barriers,” says a new document from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Prepared in conjunction with its Episcopal Commission for Christian

“To be committed to reconciliation with other Christians goes hand in hand with a deep faithfulness to Christ.”

Unity, Religious Relations with the Jews and Interfaith Dialogue, the document marks the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism “Unitatis Redintegratio,” promulgated Nov. 21, 1964. It provides an overview of Catholic principles in the work of Christian unity, gives a brief account of what has been achieved in the field of ecumenism over the past 50 years both internationally and in Canada, and looks ahead toward the resolution of continuing challenges. Describing patience and perseverance as “the twin virtues of ecumenism,” the document praises several recent popes for their “passionate leadership at the service of unity.” It says the “dialogue of life” takes place in seven areas of ecclesial life: prayer and worship, communication, common witness, mission at the service of the common good, formation, interchurch families, ecclesial learning and what St. John Paul II called the “exchange of gifts” in dialogue. The full text follows, copyright © 2014 Concacan Inc.

pope Francis recently noted, “When leaders in various fields ask me for advice, my response is always the same: dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.”¹ From Paul VI to Francis, successive popes have actively called the people of God to be a church in dialogue: with other Christian communities, with other world religions and with the cultural worlds in which we live.

The universal church has fostered dialogue through diverse means, espe

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