

The FRIENDS of the **HOLY FATHER**

Christian
Unity is a
Journey

Pope Francis



Pope Francis revealed that the search for Christian unity is one of his principal concerns, one that he prays may be shared by every baptised person.

The Pope's words came as he met in the Vatican with participants at a plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The meeting, 8th to 11th November 2016, is exploring the theme "What model of full communion?"

In his words to the group of ecumenical experts from across the globe, the Pope recalled the many important encounters he has had this year with leaders of other Christian communities. In particular he recalled his recent visit to Lund in Sweden jointly to preside at a Catholic – Lutheran commemoration of the start of the Protestant Reformation. That visit, he said, reminded him of the so called 'Lund Principle', formulated by the World Council of Churches back in 1952, which states 'churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately'.

Pope Francis, seen above with Archbishop Antje Jackelén in Sweden, stressed that Christian unity is an essential requirement of our faith, a journey of personal and community conversion to the will of Christ. He warned against three false models of communion, starting with the belief that we can achieve unity through diplomatic manoeuvres or human efforts alone.

Unity, he insisted, is a gift from God and our task is to welcome that gift and make it visible to others. Rather than just a goal to be achieved, he said, we should see the search for unity as a journey that we undertake together with patience, determination, effort and commitment, knowing that all of us are sinners for whom God has infinite mercy. Remember, he said, that when we work, pray and serve the needy together, we are already united.

The second false model that he warned against was the model of uniformity. When theological, liturgical, spiritual and canonical differences are genuinely rooted in the apostolic tradition, he said, they are not a threat, but rather a treasure for the unity of the Church. Trying to suppress such differences, he warned, as happened in the past, goes against the Holy Spirit who enriches different Christians with a variety of gifts.

Finally Pope Francis cautioned against the idea of unity as 'going back in time' to incorporate one church into another. No one should deny their own faith history, he said, and no-one should tolerate the practice of proselytism which he called 'a poison for the ecumenical journey'. True ecumenism, the Pope concluded, is when we focus not on our own reasons and regulations, but rather on the Word of God which requires us to listen, to receive and to witness to the world.

Napoleon Plundered the Papal States

In the summer of 1812 there occurred one of the great sacrileges of history – Napoleon dragged Pope Pius VII, whom he had imprisoned in Savona near Genoa, across the Alps, in poor health, to Fontainbleau. The pope was drugged with doses of morphine to induce him to bow to the Emperor's demands.

Napoleon plundered at will from the Papal States. Pope Pius VI had been obliged to sign the Treaty of Tolentino in June 1796, yielding his lands to the Napoleonic army. In addition to the payment of 21 million livres (around \$60 million today), Article 8 of the Treaty stated that the pope was to give Napoleon "A hundred pictures, busts, vases, or statues to be selected by the commissioners and sent to Rome, including in particular the bronze bust of Junius Brutus and the marble bust of Marcus Brutus, both on the Capitol, also five-hundred manuscripts at the choice of the said commissions." Eighty-three sculptures were taken as

well, including the Laocoon and the Apollo Belvedere, and paintings taken included Raphael's Transfiguration.

As if that were not enough, he insisted that the pope pay for the shipping to Paris of the art stolen from him, a bill of another 800,000 livres (or \$2.3 million today). Forty paintings were taken from papal lands in Bologna and ten from Ferrara. Looted art from Bologna alone required eighty-six wagons to transport. Of this, Napoleon enthusiastically wrote: "The Commission of experts has made a fine haul in Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Ancona, Loretto, and Perugia. The whole lot will be forwarded to Paris without delay. There is also the consignment from Rome itself. We have stripped Italy of everything of artistic worth, with the exception of a few objects in Turin"

Following Napoleon's defeat much of the Vatican treasures were returned to Rome through the generous project organised by George, Prince Regent for King George III.

Christianity's early Share in the Development of Medical Science



As long as the cruel persecution of the Church lasted throughout the Roman Empire, it was impossible for Christians to take direct part in the development of medical science. But provision had been made for medical aid within the community, because the priest, like the rabbi of small Jewish communities in the late

Middle Ages, was also a physician. This is clear from the story of the two brothers, Saints Cosmas and Damian, who studied medicine in Syria and were martyred under the Emperor Diocletian (c. 300). The mosaic in the apse of their Basilica in Rome shows Cosmas with St Peter on the left, and Damian with St Paul on the right.

The exercise of practical charity under the direction of deacons of the churches gave rise to systematic nursing and hospitals. Nobody denies that the nursing of the sick, especially during epidemics, had never before been so widespread, so well organised, so self-sacrificing as in the early Christian communities. Christianity tended the sick and devised and executed extensive schemes for the care of deserted children (foundlings, orphans), of the feeble and infirm, of those out of work, and of pilgrims. When the era of persecution ended, we find large alms-houses and hospitals like that of St Basilus in Caesarea (370), those of the Roman Lady Fabiola in Rome and Ostia (400), that of St Samson adjoining the church of St Sofia in Constantinople in the sixth century; the foundling asylum of Archbishop Datheus of Milan in 787, and many others.

In 1198 Pope Innocent III rebuilt the pilgrims' shelter in Rome, which had been founded in 726 by a British king, but had been repeatedly destroyed by fire. He turned it into a refuge for travellers and a hospital, and entrusted it to the Brothers of the Holy Ghost established by Guy de Montpellier in southern France. Mention must also be made here of the religious orders of knights and the houses for lepers of later times. The great hospitals of the Arabs in Dschondisapor and Bagdad were built after Christian models. The celebrated ecclesiastical writer

Tertullian (born A.D. 160) possessed a wide knowledge of medicine, which, following the custom of his time, he calls a "sister of philosophy". Clement of Alexandria, about the middle of the century, lays down valuable hygienic laws in his *Paedaogus*. Lactantius in the fourth century speaks in his work *De Opificio Dei* about the structure of the human body. One of the most learned priests of his time, St Isidore of Seville (d. 636), treats of medicine in the fourth book of his *Origins S. Etymologizae*. St Benedict of Nursia (480) made it a duty for the brothers of his order to study the sciences, and among them medicine, as aids to the exercise of hospitality. Cassiodorus gave his monks direct instructions in the study of medicine. Bertharius, Abbot of Monte Cassino in the ninth century, was famous as a physician. Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), Abbot of Reichenau, the oldest medical writer on German soil, describes in a poem (*Hortulus*) the value of native medicinal plants, and also the method of teaching medicine in monasteries. We must mention, furthermore, the "Physica", a description of drugs from the three kingdoms of nature, written by St Hildegard (1099-1179), abbess of a monastery near Bingen-on-the-Rhine. The curative properties of minerals are described by Marbodius of Angers, Bishop of Rennes (d. 1123), in his *Lapidarius*.

Reception for Her Excellency Sally Axworthy Her Majesty's new Ambassador to the Holy See

The Council of the Friends organised a small reception in her honour in London before leaving to take up her new post as Her Majesty's new Ambassador to the Holy See.

The picture shows
(left to right)

HE David Lane CMG and
Mrs Sara Lane.(1985-88)

HE Mark Pellew CVO ;
(1997-2002)

Mrs Sally Axworthy MVO,
in succession to HE Nigel
Baker OBE MVO; John
Dean and Michael Straiton.



POPE BENEDICT XV – 'the Forgotten Pope' – Peace Note of 1917

In August 1914 a strange excitement swept over Europe: there a war and many thought it was a good thing.

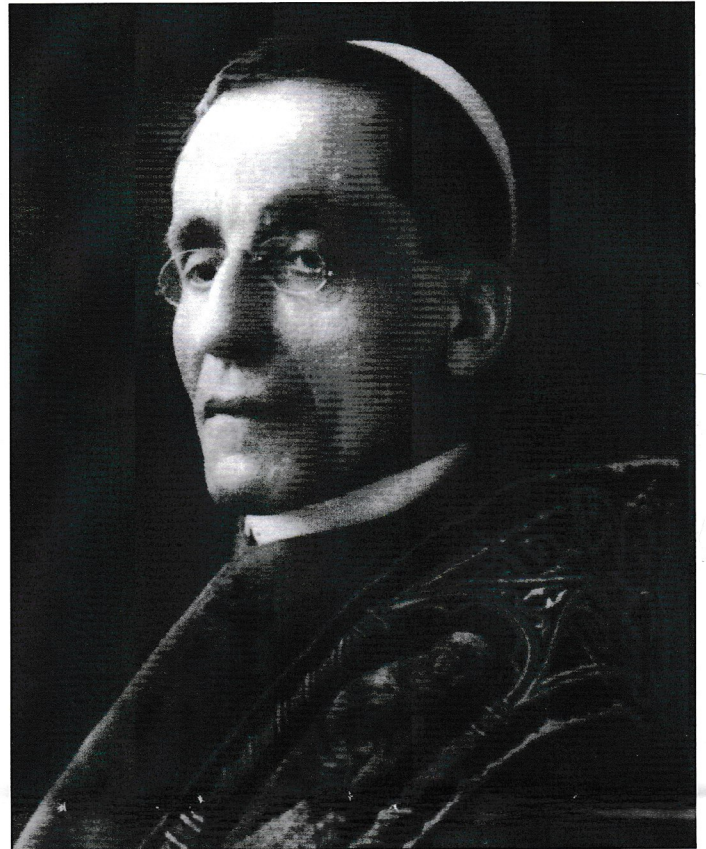
Two men, perhaps the wisest of their age, looked on with dismay. One of these was Marshal Lyautey, the creator of French Morocco, one of the greatest soldiers and administrators that European civilization had produced. "They are mad!, he said when news of the outbreak of war reached him. They are mad! A war among Europeans; it is civil war ... it is the greatest piece of idiocy the world has so far committed". The other was Pope Pius X, and he died soon after, a broken-hearted man having vainly tried to bring the rulers of Europe to their senses. The Emperor Franz Josef had asked the aged Pope for a blessing on his armies, but was quickly put in his place: "We bless peace", was the retort "not war!"

Pope Pius X was succeeded on 3rd September 1914 by the heir to an Italian marquisate, Cardinal Giacomo della Chiesa who took the name of Benedict XV. He was a small man who was to have a short and sad pontificate, striving for peace and the preservation of civilization, but was defeated in his aims by the dull wits and selfish ambitions of the men who controlled the world at that time. Eight years later he died, surrounded by the ruin and misery which those in power had brought on the peoples entrusted to their care.

Benedict XV faced great difficulties but had no intention of being silenced. To delve into particular rights and wrongs would only lead to injustice and inaccuracies, but there was another way open, the way of impartiality, warning the leaders of each side of their terrible responsibility, and of their duty to aim for peace, not war.

The First World War was triggered by the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo when Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia on the 28th July 1914, that was soon followed by the participation of all the Great Powers. The opening months of the war caused profound shock due to the huge casualties caused by modern weapons. The wounded on all fronts for the year 1914 alone topped five million, with a million men killed. This was a scale of violence unknown in any previous war.

On September 8th 1914, five days after his coronation, Pope Benedict XV issued a letter in which he "implored the rulers of the peoples to be satisfied with the ruin already wrought", a request that was widely resented. On November 1st he wrote an encyclical "... There is no limit to the measure of ruin and of slaughter ... who would imagine as we see them thus filled with hatred of one another, that they are all of one common stock ... all members of one human society".



In 1915 a secret Treaty of London was signed and in this was a clause by which Great Britain, France and Russia pledged themselves to support Italy and "in not allowing the representatives of the Holy See to undertake any diplomatic steps having for their object the conclusion of peace".

In the summer of 1917 Cardinal Gasparri, the Secretary of State, sent Mgr Eugenio Pacelli to Germany to see if they would be prepared to ensure the independence of Belgium that they had occupied and the Reichstag seemed to confirm this agreement.

Pope Benedict issued a Peace Note in 1917 with concrete and practical proposals and to invite the governments of the belligerent nations to agree seven Points: Right instead of Force; Lessening of Armaments; Arbitration; Freedom of the Seas; Overlook Damages and Cost of War; Evacuation of Occupied Territories; and the Fair Settlement of Territorial Questions. These terms were not what the Allies wanted; only the King of the Belgians, among the heads of the Allied States, sent a friendly reply to the Vatican.

Through bishoprics and nunciatures the Pope made every effort to relieve the suffering where the war, directly or indirectly, was causing ruin. He sent money to Russian

peasants who were victims of famine in the first years of the Bolshevik revolution as well as to the Chinese peasants hit by great calamities in 1921. He personally handed over more than eighty million Lire for all his welfare works. He had proclaimed that: "It is the duty of every person to run to help another human being who is in danger of death".

Under Pius X Vatican diplomacy had languished; however, Benedict XV, assisted by his secretary of state Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, revived it together with the ending of the isolation of the Holy See, they created the foundations of the international work and profile of Benedict's successors.

In 1920 the Muslim Turks paid the Pope a great compliment by erecting a statue of him in the forecourt of the St Esprit Cathedral in Istanbul, with truly appropriate words of praise: "The great Pope of the world tragedy ... the benefactor of all people, irrespective of nationality or religion." Benedict died relatively young; his death on 22nd January

1922 was unexpected. Despite his delicate health in childhood he had been of a robust constitution all of his life. His death was caused by catching a chill while waiting in the cold to say Mass for the nuns of the Vatican's Santa Marta Hospice. He took little care of the illness which eventually went to the lungs and gave him pneumonia. Without antibiotics there was little his doctors could do for him. There was unprecedented public mourning in Italy and for the first time since 1870 flags were flown at half-mast on all government buildings.

On 27 April 2005, at his first General Audience in St Peter's Square, Pope Benedict XVI explained one of the reasons for his choice of Benedict as his new name:

Filled with sentiments of awe and thanksgiving, I wish to speak of why I chose the name Benedict. Firstly, I remember Pope Benedict XV, that courageous prophet of peace, who guided the Church through turbulent times of war. In his footsteps I place my ministry in the service of reconciliation and harmony between peoples.

POPES AND WORLD PEACE

Pope Anastasius IV (1153-54)

During his short pontificate he played the part of a peacemaker. He came to terms with the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa in the vexed question of the see of Magdeburg. He also closed the long quarrel that had raged through four pontificates, about the appointment of William Fitzherbert (d. 1154) commonly known as St William of York, to the see of York by sending him the pallium, in spite of the continued opposition of the powerful Cistercian order. Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503)

The early 1400's saw great advances in exploration. In order to make trade more efficient Portugal attempted to find a direct route by sea to India and China. By using such a direct water route the European traders would avoid the Arab traders who controlled the land routes. After Columbus discovered the New World in 1492 it was clear that conflict would soon arise over land claims by Spain and Portugal. The Portuguese also wanted to protect their monopoly of the trade routes to Africa, and felt threatened. It was only after the realisation that Columbus had discovered something big that land became an important issue. The newly discovered territory held great potential wealth which could benefit European nations.

Their Catholic Majesties invited the mediation of the Spanish pope. On 4th May 1493, Pope Alexander VI drew on a map a line from pole to pole, from north to south – an imaginary line through the mid-Atlantic, 100 leagues (480 km) from the Cape Verde islands. Spain would have possession of any unclaimed territory to the west of the line and Portugal would have any unclaimed land to the east of the line. His decision was formulated in three edicts that were ratified by both governments.

After further exploration the Portuguese grew dissatisfied with the agreement when they realised how much more land the Spanish had been given. In June 1494 the agreement was re-negotiated and was officially ratified at a meeting in the Spanish town of Tordesillas which re-established the line 370 leagues (1770 km) west of the Cape Verde Islands. As little exploration had taken place at the time that the treaty was signed Spain gained by far larger portion – the Portuguese only took possession of Brazil. Over the following few hundred years the Portuguese slowly pushed the line over with little resistance from the Spanish authorities.

Pope Francis's Favourite Film – *Babette's Feast*

The Pope has recommended us to see this 1987 Danish drama film

When Babette, a beautiful and mysterious French refugee arrives in a remote Danish village the tight-knit puritanical community begrudgingly let her in providing her with shelter and work. While working as a housekeeper Babette discovers that she has won a lottery in Paris. After the town patriarch died, Babette decided that rather than taking the money and running home she would spend the

money on a true French feast in his memory. At first the villagers were sceptical but soon realised that the flavours and colours of the feast were pure joy.

Pope Francis wrote in the encyclical *Amoris laetitia*: “The most intense joys in life arise when we are able to elicit joy in others, as a foretaste of heaven. We can think of the lovely scene in the film *Babette's Feast*, when the generous cook receives a grateful hug and praise: ‘Ah, how you will delight the angels!’ It is a joy and a great consolation to bring delight to others, to see them enjoying themselves.

England's Special Relationship with the Papacy

England has always had a special relationship with the Papacy; and this continued to be so throughout the Reformation and for long afterwards. It is as if the English were always aware, even if only subconsciously, that Christianity was restored to them in the sixth century through the initiative of a Pope – Gregory the Great. As we all know, he sent St Augustine, the Benedictine abbot of the monastery of St Andrew on the Coelian Hill, to Britain from Rome in 596 to re-convert the country. Pilgrimages to Rome became an immediate tradition – you could have called it mass travel. As the Venerable Bede described it, ‘Noble and simple men and women, soldiers and private persons, moved by the instinct of divine love ‘made the rome journey; or, as St Boniface put it they ‘left their country's shores and trusted themselves to the ways of the seas and sought the shrines of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul’ and they had to have a lot of trust; it was as uncomfortable as modern travel, but rather more dangerous. If they were not seasick or harassed by ships’ crews or drowned at sea, they might be murdered by Saracens in the Alps as happened in 923 as the chronicler Frodoard tells us, a great number of English ‘on their way to the threshold of the Apostles for the sake of prayer’ were slain. And only about thirty years later, one of our early Archbishops of Canterbury, by the name of Elfsy, was frozen to death, probably on the Great St Bernard Pass, which was the usual route, when on his way to Rome to receive the Pallium. Yet numbers steadily increased; many went several times and it was considered an act of great virtue to go to Rome. Though, alas, there were others who were not seeking virtue. There were

dishonest traders who batted on the pilgrims; and there was the extraordinary but apparently short-lived phenomenon of numbers of English women, including nuns, setting off for Rome on their own and getting into trouble. St Boniface recorded in the middle of the eighth century that there was scarcely a city in Lombardy, Frankland or Gaul in which there was not an English woman leading a notoriously bad life. But it was our English kings who took up the tradition of pilgrimage and went to Rome to be baptised and sometimes to die there.

From Rosemary Rendel's pamphlet *Peter's Pence*.

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The St Peter Project



A competition for children to write an essay on the subject:

Why did Jesus choose St Peter from among His Twelve Apostles to lead His Church?

The purpose of the Essay is for senior school children, pre-GCSE from 11 – 15, to become better acquainted with the foundation and early spread of Christ's Church and to see their own place in it.

The secret of the project is its simplicity. A leaflet will be sent to RE Teachers in a selection of schools, giving some background information, inviting their children to write a short essay on this subject to show their understanding of

it. The essay would be hand-written on a single A4 page; at the top of the page the child writes his or her name and the name and address of the school in capital letters. Prizes would be available for the winning essayists.

Anyone wishing to help this initiative is invited to write to the Hon. Secretary FHF,

Dr Michael Straiton The Old Place, Lower Church Street, Cuddington, Bucks HP18 0AS

Dates for your Diary:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2016

This will take place on at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 7th June 2017 at Vaughan House in Francis Street, behind Westminster Cathedral. It will be preceded by Mass in the Cathedral at which the chief celebrant will be Bishop John Sherrington, Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Westminster, who will attend the AGM and reception afterwards.

PILGRIMAGE

This focusses on places associated with the life, work and death of St Peter in Rome. Visits are planned to the Lateran Basilica where the heads of St Peter and Paul are preserved; The Church of St Peter in Chains where the chains that shackled St Peter in the prison in Jerusalem are displayed;



Church of Saint Peter in Chains © Sailko/Creative Commons

The Mamertine Prison where the two were incarcerated before their martyrdom; The Church of Domine Quo Vadis, where St Peter fleeing from Rome encountered a vision of



The Church of Domine Quo Vadis
© LPLT/Creative Commons

Jesus who bid him to return to the city; The Catacomb of St Callixtus where nine of the first Popes were interred; The Clementine Chapel in the Grottoes of St Peter's next to the spot where St Peter was crucified in the Circus of Nero. The Church

of St Pudenziana, the oldest church in Rome, built over the house of the Senator Pudens where St Peter lodged; The Domus Aurea where part of Nero's second Palace is preserved; St Peter's Basilica for the Pontifical Mass of the east of St Peter and Paul on 29th June. Further information and booking forms can be had from our Pilgrimage Organiser:

Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 2AS
email: arctc@btinternet.com

*We wish you a
Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*



The Nativity, Sandro Botticelli, circa 1473 - 1475, Columbia Museum of Art (Public domain)



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HOLY FATHER

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