



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATION OF
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Monday, 11 December 1995

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am happy *to welcome this Delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* on the occasion of your visit to this City where the Apostles Peter and Paul bore witness to Christ and gave their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Continuing a series of such visits, your days in Rome are aimed at increasing mutual knowledge and establishing an even closer relationship between us.

Our ecumenical efforts must be marked with a deep sense of hope, for it is the Lord who calls us to unity. It is his grace which achieves results when human efforts fall short. A very significant stage in the Lutheran–Catholic dialogue was reached when it became possible to consider the doctrine of justification. It must be our shared prayer that a common understanding of this central theme of our faith will be attained.

We must trust that the obstacles still preventing Lutherans and Catholics from expressing the full visible unity, which is the Lord's intention, will eventually give way before "the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). May the coming Jubilee of the Year 2000 inspire us to new efforts to respond to Jesus' prayer for his disciples: "That they may all be one... so that the world may believe" (Jn. 17:21).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you" (1 Cor. 16:23).

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