



NEWS

FILE
COPY

DATE: October 23, 1989

FROM: Robert Wonderly

O - 202-541-3200

H - 703-525-6865

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APPRECIATION NOTED FOR CATHOLIC, ANGLICAN 'COMMON DECLARATION'

WASHINGTON--Appreciation for the "Common Declaration" of Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury, issued after their meetings earlier this month in Rome, has been expressed by members of the official Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue group (ARC-USA) in the U.S.

In a letter to the two leaders, the U.S. group said that "following your example, we too recommit ourselves to the quest for visible unity and full ecclesial communion."

The U.S. dialogue group sent its (October 11) letter to the Pope and to Archbishop Runcie following a regular ARC-USA meeting in Florida. It was signed by Archbishop John F. Whealon of Hartford, Catholic co-chairman of the group, and Episcopal Bishop Theodore Eastman of Maryland, co-chairman for the Anglican side.

Father Thaddeus Horgan, S.A., Associate Director of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and staff to the ARC-USA dialogue, said that, in responding to the Common Declaration, the U.S. dialogue group acknowledged ecclesiological differences and noted appreciation for the "context" in which Pope John Paul and Archbishop Runcie offered to consider them in the future.

He explained that a reference to "issues that divide us" in the U.S. letter applies on the Roman Catholic side to ordination of women and on the Episcopal Church side to papal authority.

He also explained that the ARC-USA dialogue was continuing its consideration of Anglican Orders in the Florida meeting just prior to addressing the letter to Archbishop Runcie and the Pope.

**OFFICE FOR MEDIA RELATIONS
UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
3211 4th STREET, N.E. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20017-1194**

/more

Text of the letter:

We, the members of ARC-USA, the dialogue participants of the Episcopal Church and of the Roman Catholic Church in the USA, meeting from October 6-9, 1989, at Delray Beach, Florida, just a few days after your significant meetings in Rome, thank you for the continuing commitment to Christian Unity expressed by your prayerful encounters at the Church of St. Gregory, at the Basilica of St. Peter and in your "Common Declaration" issued at the conclusion of the Archbishop's visit with the Pope.

Following your example we too recommit ourselves to the quest for visible unity and full ecclesial communion even though we recognize in events of the recent past actions which seem to present further challenges to our efforts for full unity.

We are also grateful for your honesty in placing these within the wider horizons of the journey of the Pilgrim People of God. Like you we too are aware of our ecclesiological differences. Nevertheless we persevere in seeking deeper understanding of one another's lives in Christ. Even in this, our most recent meeting, we feel we have made progress in addressing the issues which divide us.

As you have asked, we now pledge ourselves to a renewed search for greater understanding. Ours is an effort carried on in the spirit of thanksgiving for that degree of communion we now share, however imperfect, and for the hope that lies planted within us by Our Lord Jesus Christ. We continue our work joyfully and in full recognition of the many frontiers on which our churches now live.

We shall not despair nor succumb to cynicism; rather we shall search prayerfully and diligently for those pilgrim paths which will lead us to full unity in Christ.

#

X,A,CL