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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV
TO MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES
(CCEE), THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES
(CEC), AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES OF EUROPE**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 6 november 2025*

[Multimedia]

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (1 Tim 1:2). I welcome you – members of the Joint Committee of the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) – with these words of the Apostle to the Gentiles, near whose place of martyrdom you have chosen to sign your new *Charta Oecumenica*.

Certainly, the challenges Christians face on the ecumenical journey are constantly evolving. Thus, twenty-five years after the *Charta* was first signed, it has been necessary to revisit the document’s context, to look again at the situation in Europe, and to contemporary common concerns for the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. Indeed, constant and careful discernment is needed in order to fulfil the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).

While there are indeed positive and encouraging signs of growth in some parts of Europe, at the same time many Christian communities sense themselves increasingly to be in a minority. Moreover, the present situation includes new generations and newly arrived peoples with highly varied histories and cultural expressions. There are, therefore, many new voices to be heard and stories that must be welcomed through daily encounters and closer relationships, not to mention the urgency of promoting dialogue, concord, and fraternity amidst the din of violence and war, whose echoes are heard across the continent. In all these situations, the grace, mercy, and peace of the Lord are indeed vital, for only divine help will show us the most convincing way to proclaim Christ in these most challenging contexts.

We believe that Almighty God speaks to and through his holy people. He loves them and enriches them with his divine gifts so that they may grow and attain the fullness of God (cf. *Eph.* 3:19). For its part, the new *Charta Oecumenica* is a testimony to the willingness of the Churches in Europe to look at our history through the eyes of Christ. Moreover, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to understand where we have succeeded, where we have fallen short, and where we must go in order to proclaim the Gospel anew. The *Charta* not only suggests methods but also insists on companions for the journey and possible ways forward. In doing so, let us always remain open to the promptings and the surprises of the Holy Spirit!

In the Catholic Church, the synodal journey is ecumenical, just as the ecumenical journey is synodal (cf. Francis, Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, 23). In this regard, the new *Charta Oecumenica* highlights the common journey undertaken by Christians from different traditions in Europe, capable of listening to one another and of discerning together in order to preach the Gospel more effectively.

One of the notable achievements of the process of revising the *Charta* has been the ability to take a shared view on contemporary challenges and draw up priorities for the future of the continent, while maintaining a firm belief in the unending relevance of the Gospel. In some ways, this can be described as a “synodal” effort of walking together.

As you know, I am preparing to travel to the site where the Council of Nicaea took place, in order to meet and pray with Heads of Churches and leaders of Christian Communities, celebrating together Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. It is also my desire, in this *Jubilee Year*, to proclaim to all the people of Europe that “Jesus Christ is our Hope”, for he is both the path we are to follow, and the ultimate destination of our spiritual journey.

With these thoughts and sentiments, I renew my cordial good wishes for your efforts, and I give each of you and your loved ones my heartfelt blessing. Thank you very much.

Let us pray. Our Father...

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The HOLY SEE