

ECUMENICAL CHARTER OF BOLOGNA

BOLOGNA JANUARY 25, 2020

This Charter is intended to be an orientation tool for the reflection, practice and prayer of the Council of Christian Churches in Bologna. It also wishes to help the Council to recognize its areas together with the possibility of making known to other Christian Churches and communities in Bologna the underlying framework of the common ecumenical commitment underlying the Council.

I. We believe "the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church".

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:3-6.

1. Called together in the unity of faith

In conformity with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as is testified to in the Sacred Scripture and as formulated in Nicea's ecumenical confession of faith: "We believe in a only God, almighty Father, creator of all visible and invisible things. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, from the essence of Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, generated, not created, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were created, both in the heaven be those on earth; for us men and for our salvation descended and we are complexion; he died and rose on the third day and rose to heaven; and will come to judge I alive and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit ". I believe confirmed in Constantinople (381) that now several Chalcedonian churches have also recognized it as compatible with their own theology and tradition. We therefore believe in the God Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit we profess the Church "one, holy, catholic and apostolic". Because of this profession of faith our inescapable ecumenical task consists in making visible this unity, which is always a gift from God. Essential differences on the level of faith still prevent visible unity, which we certainly do not mean as complete uniformity, but in a sense compatible with the unity of Church in the New Testament. There are different conceptions especially by the way of the Church and its unity, of the sacraments and ministries. Jesus Christ has revealed to us on the cross his love and the secret of reconciliation: we want to follow him in everything possible to overcome the problems and obstacles that still divide the Churches.

We are committed

- to follow the apostolic exhortation to the unity of the epistle to the Ephesians (Eph 4, 3-6) and to strive perseveringly to achieve a possible common understanding of the salvation message of Christ contained in the Gospel;
- to work, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to seek the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith and in witness and in common service.

II. On the way to the visible unity of the Churches

"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35)

2. Announce the gospel together

The most important task of the Churches is to proclaim the Gospel together through word and action, for the salvation of all human beings. In front of the multifaceted lack of references, to the departure from Christian perspectives, but even in the varied search for meaning, Christians and Christians are particularly urged to testify their faith. For this purpose, at the local level of community, we seek an increased commitment and an exchange of experiences. At the same time, it is important that the whole people of God commit themselves to spreading together the Gospel within the public space of society, and to confer on it value and credibility also through social and political commitment.

We are committed

- to make known to other Churches our initiatives for evangelization and to reach agreements in this regard, in order to avoid harmful competition and the danger of new divisions;
- to recognize that every human being can choose freely and according to conscience, one's own religious and ecclesial belonging. Nobody can be induced to conversion through moral pressure or material incentives. At the time no one himself can be prevented from having a conversion that results from one's free choice.

3. Go to meet each other

In the spirit of the Gospel we must rework the history of the Churches together as Christians, which is characterized not only by many good experiences, but also by divisions, enmities, war and clashes. Human guilt, lack of love, and frequent exploitation of faith and Churches in view of political interests have seriously damaged the credibility of the Christian witness. Ecumenism, for the Christians, therefore begins with the renewal of hearts and with availability to penance and conversion.

We note that reconciliation has already grown within the ecumenical movement. It is important to recognize the spiritual gifts of the different Christian traditions, learn from each other and welcome each other's gifts. For a further development of ecumenism, it is particularly desirable to involve the experiences and expectations of young people and vigorously promote their participation and collaboration.

We are committed

- to overcome self-sufficiency and to put aside prejudices, to seek the encounter reciprocal and to be for each other;
- to promote ecumenical openness and collaboration in the field of education Christian, in theological formation.

4. Work together

Ecumenism is already expressed in many forms of common action. Different Christians and Christians of different Churches live and work together, as friends, neighbors, at work and within your family.

In particular, we are committed to supporting inter-confessional couples in their experience. In the event of conflicts between churches, mediation and peace efforts must be initiated and supported.

We are committed

- to work together, at all levels of ecclesial life, wherever assumptions exist and this is not hindered by reasons of faith or by major important purposes;
- to defend minority rights and to help clear up misunderstandings and prejudices between majority and minority churches in our countries.

5. Pray together

Ecumenism lives on the fact that we listen to the word of God together and allow that the Holy Spirit work in us and through us. By virtue of grace thus received today there are many efforts, through prayers and celebrations, aimed at to deepen the spiritual communion between the Churches, and to pray for the visible unity of the Church of Christ. A particularly painful sign of the division still existing between many Christian Churches lack of Eucharistic sharing. In some churches reservations exist with respect to shared ecumenical prayer. However, numerous ecumenical celebrations, common songs and prayers, especially the Our Father, characterize our Christian spirituality.

We are committed

- to pray for one another and for Christian unity;
- to learn about and appreciate celebrations and other forms of life spiritual of other churches;

6. Continue the dialogues

Our common belonging founded in Christ has a more fundamental meaning of our theological and ethical differences. There is a plurality which is gift and enrichment, but there are also contrasts on doctrine, on ethical questions and on norms of ecclesiastical law which instead led to breakages between the Churches; a role decisive in this sense has also often been played by specific historical circumstances and by different cultural traditions.

Given the importance of this level of dialogue, the ecumenical council of the Churches of Bologna and the various Churches strive to follow with attention and willingness to walk as common as the various higher ecumenical commissions lead. In Bologna we try to make it an object of reflection, with attention to the points that they involve more the pastoral practice of the different churches, and in their relationships.

We are committed

- to continue the dialogue between our Churches conscientiously and intensely.
- to seek forms of dialogue on controversial issues, in particular on issues of faith and ethics and discuss these problems together in the light of the Gospel.

III. The common responsibility in our city

"Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called children of God" (Mt 5: 9)

7. Contribute to shaping Europe

Over the centuries, a Europe characterized religiously and has developed cultural predominantly from Christianity. At the same time, due to the deficiencies of the Christians, has spread very badly in Europe and beyond its borders. We confess the our co-responsibility in this guilt and we ask for forgiveness from God and people.

Our faith helps us to learn from the past and to commit ourselves to faith Christianity and love of neighbor radiate hope for morals and ethics, for education and culture, for politics and economics.

Churches promote a unification of the European continent. We cannot achieve unity in a lasting form without common values. We are convinced that the legacy spirituality of Christianity represents an enriching inspirational force for our city.

On the basis of our Christian faith, we commit ourselves to a human and social coexistence, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice are asserted, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity. We insist on a respect for life, on the value of marriage and the family, on the priority option for the poor, on the willingness to forgive and in any case on mercy.

We are committed

- to understand each other about the contents and objectives of our responsibility social;
- to defend fundamental values against all attacks;
- to resist any attempt to exploit religion and the Church for ethnic or nationalistic purposes.

8. Reconcile peoples and cultures

We consider it as a wealth of Europe and now of our city multiplicity of regional, national, cultural and religious traditions. In front of numerous conflicts it is the task of the Churches to jointly assume the service of reconciliation also for peoples and cultures. We know that peace between the churches for this purpose, it is an equally important prerequisite.

Our common efforts are directed towards evaluation and problem solving political and social in the spirit of the Gospel. Since we value the person and the dignity of everyone as an image of God, we are committed to the absolute equality of value of every human being.

We are committed to a peaceful order based on the nonviolent solution of the gods conflicts. We therefore condemn all forms of violence against human beings, especially against women, children and those who are in a situation of weakness.

Reconciliation means promoting social justice within a people and between all peoples and in particular to overcome the abyss that separates the rich from the poor, as well as unemployment. We want to

contribute together so that a welcome is granted, humane and dignified, to migrant women and men, refugees and asylum seekers in Europe and in our city.

We are committed

- to counter any form of nationalism that leads to the oppression of others peoples and national minorities and to seek a non violent solution of the conflicts;
- to improve and strengthen the condition and equality of rights of women in all spheres of life and to promote the just communion between women and men within to the Church and society.

9. Safeguarding creation

We gratefully recognize the gift of creation, the value and beauty of nature. We look for this with apprehension that the goods of the earth are being exploited without taking into account their intrinsic value, without considering their limitation and without regard for the good of future generations.

We want to work together to achieve sustainable living conditions for the whole creation. Aware of our responsibility before God, we must assert and further develop common criteria to determine what is ethically illegal, even if it is achievable from a scientific and technological point of view. In any case, the unique dignity of every human being must have the primacy over what is technically achievable.

We are committed

- to further develop a lifestyle in which, as opposed to domination of economic logic and consumer constraint, we grant value to a responsible and sustainable quality of life;
- to support the environmental organizations of the Churches and the ecumenical networks that exist and that take responsibility for safeguarding creation.

10. Deepen communion with Judaism

A special communion binds us to the people of Israel, with whom God has entered into one eternal alliance. We know in faith that our Jewish sisters and brothers "are loved (by God), because of the Fathers, because the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable!" (Rom 11, 28-29). They possess "adoption to children, glory, covenants, legislation, worship, promises, patriarchs; Christ comes from them according to the flesh ... " (Rom 9: 4-5). We deplore and we condemn all manifestations of anti-Semitism and persecutions. For Christian acts of anti-Semitism we ask God for forgiveness. We also ask our Jewish brothers and sisters for the gift of reconciliation. It is urgent and necessary to have a consciousness, in the proclamation and teaching, in the doctrine and in the lives of ours Churches, of the profound link between the Christian faith and Judaism and to support the collaboration between Christians and Jews.

We are committed

- to end all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the Church and in the society;
- to seek and intensify dialogue at all levels with our sisters and ours Jewish brothers.

11. Taking care of relations with Islam

For some time many Muslims have lived in Bologna. We want to step up at all levels the meeting between Christians and Muslims and the Christian-Islamic dialogue. We recommend in particular to reflect together on the theme of faith in the one God and to clarify the understanding of human rights.

We are committed

- to meet Muslims with an attitude of esteem;
- to work together with Muslims on issues of common interest.

12. The encounter with other religions and world views

The plurality of religious beliefs, worldviews and life forms has become a feature that characterizes our culture. Eastern religions are spreading and new religious communities, also arousing the interest of many Christians. There are also more and more men and women who reject the Christian faith, relate to it with indifference or other worldviews follow. We want to take matters seriously criticisms that are addressed to us, and strive to establish a fair confrontation.

We are committed

- to recognize the religious and conscience freedom of people and communities and a make sure that they, individually and in community, in private and in public, they can practice their religion or world view, in respect of current law;
- to be open to dialogue with all people of good will, to pursue with those who have common goals and to testify to them the Christian faith.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith, why you abound in hope for the virtue of the Holy Spirit "(Rom 15:13)

SIGNATURES

- FOR THE VICARIATE OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW FOR THE MOLDAVE PARISHES IN ITALY
- FOR THE ADVENTIST CHURCH
- FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
- FOR THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF ITALY OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX ETROPOLIS OF EUROPE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN (PATRIARCHATE OF ROMANIA)
- FOR THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF RECONCILIATION
- FOR THE SACRED ORTHODOX ARCHIDIOCESE OF ITALY AND MALTA AND EXPORTED FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE (ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE)
- FOR THE VALDESE AND METHODIST CHURCH