

## **Reception Statement of the Nordic Bishops' Conference** *on Communion in Growth between Lutherans and Catholics: Towards a Joint Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry*

The Nordic Bishops' Conference gratefully receives the document *Communion in Growth between Lutherans and Catholics: Towards a Joint Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry*, prepared by the Lutheran–Catholic Dialogue Commission for Finland. We recognize in this text a significant step forward on the path of ecumenical understanding and reconciliation between our communions.

This document demonstrates that, after the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999), the Catholic Church in Finland and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland are ready to take further steps toward deeper convergence on the nature of the Church, the Eucharist, and the ordained ministry. By grounding itself in baptismal communion and by listening carefully to both traditions, it provides not only a theological framework but also a pastoral and spiritual foundation for shared witness.

We believe that this text constitutes a promising basis for a future global agreement. It provides a common theological language that can be received and further developed by Christians beyond Finland, fostering a broadening consensus that is truly catholic in scope. In this sense, the report offers a foundation on which the universal Church may continue to grow in communion and to discern, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the concrete forms of visible unity that Christ wills for his disciples.

We also recognize the courage of the document in engaging not only convergences but also the sensitive questions that remain. Differences in doctrinal formulation, and even more in daily ecclesial practice, continue to challenge us. Yet we receive this text as an invitation to face such differences with hope rather than resignation, with openness rather



than fear. Its method of differentiated consensus allows us to perceive how unity in essentials can coexist with diversity in expression, without necessarily threatening the integrity of faith.

This dialogue text is also a call to renewed ecumenical responsibility. It reminds us that communion is not merely an intellectual construct but a lived reality, nurtured through common prayer, shared service, and joint mission. In this way, the document lays a ground level from which Christians can continue to build relationships of trust, deepen mutual respect, and offer to the world a credible witness of reconciliation in Christ.

Therefore, we commend *Communion in Growth* as a valuable milestone on the ecumenical journey. We encourage its careful study and reception in our dioceses, seminaries, and congregations. We also express our hope that it may serve as a reference point for the broader international dialogues of the Catholic Church with the Lutheran World Federation and with other Christian communions.

On behalf of the Nordic Bishops' Conference

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