

## **Christian Unity is Our Calling**

During this week in Pittsburgh at the National Workshop on Christian Unity, May 9-12, 2011, we the participants from across Christian communions in the United States gathered and heard voices around this country about the deep longing for a stronger commitment to visible Christian unity today.

We met in the spirit of thanksgiving to God for the years of commitment by communions to Christian unity. In gratitude we commended the efforts toward unity by sisters and brothers throughout this nation.

We share with you, leaders in our various communions, an awareness that Christian disunity is a scandal before the world, jeopardizes our shared mission, and is a source of confusion to interfaith neighbors and friends. In short, our disunity today is an obstacle both for ourselves and for our emerging interfaith relationships.

Many of our ministries today have finite resources and increasing need. There are numerous cases where separate ministries no longer make sense. Our shared future requires greater discernment about how we will be Christian in this country, where disunity is simply not an option. We call upon you, our leaders, to name and claim unity as a priority for the church today.

2012 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, which directly impacted relationships among our communions, and our commitments to Christian unity. We have arrived at a crucial moment for the communal assessment of our ecumenical commitments that will require clear and emerging discernment as we look to the future.

In this spirit, we offer our commitment to work for the unity and cooperation among Christians and we invite all Christian communions throughout this country to meet next April 16-19, 2012 in Oklahoma City for the next National Workshop on Christian Unity, where we will together assess, affirm and renew our dedication to the future of Christian unity. God is inviting us all to this moment.

The theme for the 2012 Gathering is drawn from 1 Corinthians 15: 51-58: "We will be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul wrote these words to the church in Corinth amidst internal tensions. Paul's message is that Christians are already the one church wherein the victory of Christ is the gift of unity itself. In this way, unity is not the ground to be tilled, but is already the garden which we inhabit. Our divided life as churches inhibits the witness of Christ's gospel to a fractured world.

Let us gather together in the gift of Christian unity, demonstrating our shared commitment and hope.