
Ecumenical Handbook for the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Kentucky Revised



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On November 21, 2004, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of a significant moment in the work of the Second Vatican Council. On that date the Council issued *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the *Decree on Ecumenism*. A two-part Ecumenical Directory soon followed, with the parts published in 1967 and 1970 respectively. In subsequent decades, the Church has worked more fervently with other fellow Christians to make Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper—"that they all may be one" (John 17:21)—a reality.

In recognition of the ecumenical progress that had been made and desiring to bring together into one resource document an updated Catholic understanding of the fruits of ecumenical dialogue, the Vatican issued its *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (DAPNE) on March 25, 1993.

DAPNE attempts to apply the developments in ecumenical understanding and teaching to the Church's day-to-day life. The Directory envisioned that national Catholic Conferences, regional organizations, and even individual dioceses might compile their own ecumenical directories to assist Catholics with guidance and directives in the local Church's day-to-day life. To this end, the bishops of Kentucky issued their first statewide *Ecumenical Handbook* on June 25, 1995.

It is important to recall that on May 25, 1995, our modern day "apostle" of unity, Pope John Paul II, issued his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, detailing his personal commitment to the work of

ecumenism. The Holy Father describes ecumenism as an organic part of the Church's "life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does" (U.U.S. #20). Because of important developments in the area of ecumenism, Kentucky's bishops have now updated and re-published their *Ecumenical Handbook for the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Kentucky*.

The *Handbook* is written as an aid and guide for Catholic laity and clergy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. It can also assist other Christians who seek greater understanding of the Catholic Church's present teaching and discipline regarding our relations with other Christians.

A brief review of the table of contents demonstrates how valuable the *Handbook* is as a teaching tool as well as a source of guidance in the practical application of our Church's ecumenical principles. Some sections of the *Handbook* describe the history of the ecumenical movement and the unity that we seek. There is also a brief overview of religion in our Commonwealth and the need for ongoing ecumenical formation on the part of all Catholics. Also included is a very practical section that provides guidelines related to our sacraments, particularly Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation and Anointing, and Marriage. One section addresses other forms of ecumenical sharing. Another focuses on practical suggestions for ecumenical involvement at the local level as well as a discussion of ecumenical "etiquette."

Every Christian must work to build up the Body of Christ. One way to do this is to become

more actively involved in ecumenical activities. During the past 40 years, some of the centuries-old barriers to Christian unity have begun to dissolve. Further efforts must continue at the international, national, and local parish level. With the revision of the *Handbook*, Kentucky

bishops pledge their support and encouragement. Catholics should invite other Christians to join in shared prayer, in cooperative efforts to meet human needs, and in educating ourselves regarding the gift of faith that all Christians share. And we should also accept their invitations to do the same.

The four bishops of Kentucky conclude their cover letter for the *Handbook*, "It is our sincerest hope that this *Ecumenical Handbook* will not only provide useful guidance and information, but also motivate Christians in Kentucky to work for the unity that Christ wants for His Church." Contact your diocesan Ecumenical Office for information about the efforts in your diocese to foster Christian unity.

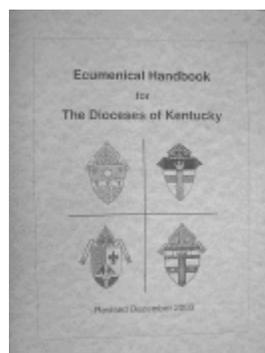
Search for Christian Unity is Irreversible

In the very first days of my Pontificate I stated that my "primary task is the duty to work tirelessly to rebuild the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers." This requires, in addition to good intentions, "concrete gestures which enter hearts and stir consciences... inspiring in everyone that inner conversion that is the prerequisite for all ecumenical progress."

Pope John Paul II often recalled that the heart of the search for Christian unity is "spiritual ecumenism". He saw its core in terms of being in Christ: "To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: "*Ut unum sint.*"

It is my hope that your visit to the Holy See has been fruitful, strengthening the bonds of understanding and friendship between us. The commitment of the Catholic Church to the search for Christian unity is irreversible. I therefore wish to assure you that she is eager to continue cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to World Council of Churches Delegation
June 16, 2005



This article is the 1st of a series of six written by members of the CCK Ecumenical Committee.

The 27-page Ecumenical Handbook for the Dioceses of KY is available from your diocesan ecumenical office or can be downloaded from the

Catholic Conference of Kentucky website:
www.ccky.org/publications.htm



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The Catholic Conference of KY (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1983. Catholics throughout Kentucky have joined CCK in advocating for government policies that reflect Gospel values. Add your voice in asking legislators to advance the common good of our Commonwealth. Join the CCK legislative advocacy network by signing up as a faithful Citizen Advocate on the CCK web page at: www.ccky.org.

✘ Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P. ✘ Bishop John J. McRaith ✘ Bishop Roger J. Foy ✘ Bishop Ronald W. Gainer