

ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM

(Ephesians 4:5)

A COVENANT AMONG

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES,
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA –
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WEST SYNOD

&

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

NOVEMBER 21, 1993



INTRODUCTION

In our time we are witness to two great movements of the Holy Spirit: the Ecumenical Movement and the Second Vatican Council. These graced events have challenged us towards a vision of unity as we approach the third millennium.

Today, the word 'church' has come to mean something larger than previously employed. While each denomination refers to themselves as "the Church", there is now an accepted understanding that it includes all the faithful who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God.

However, this is only the first step towards any form of unity. On the international and local levels, major efforts are being made to recognize and understand the reality of our common faith in Jesus Christ and address the differences that divide us. Cooperation in work and prayer already exist on the various levels of the ecumenical encounter.

A Covenant is a recognition of this reality. It is an endorsement of the local efforts of partnership, and a pledge to continue to work, no matter what the obstacles, towards the unity that Jesus himself prayed for on the night before he died.

Unity and a spirit of cooperation takes on a special significance here in the city of Los Angeles. The city is a microcosm of the world-wide community of faith, religion, culture and language. In this diverse community, the common witness of a united format of evangelization and prayer puts us on the threshold of a new era.

It is in this spirit that we joyfully move forward, as brothers and sisters of one Lord, belonging to one Faith through our one Baptism.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are called to be "one body and one Spirit", as there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all" (Eph 4:4-6). This unity, willed by God, desired by Jesus Christ and prompted by the Holy Spirit, leads us to affirm our common faith and common baptism as professed in the Apostles' Creed. Together we profess that:

(We) believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

(We) believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried.

He descended to the dead and on the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

(We) believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Through our rebirth by water and the Spirit into the new life in Christ, and our prayerful acceptance of this Creed, we acknowledge that:

- A. Jesus' prayer that we all may be one is a mandate to all Christians to work towards full unity of His Church.**

The church recognizes that unity is the goal towards which all denominations must grow. Ultimate unity is not simply a "confederation of churches", but is One Body sharing One Eucharist, keeping the integrity of all the charisms of the church intact.

- B. The gifts given by God to each of our traditions, can be shared for the enrichment of the whole Church.**

Historically, each tradition has developed many special gifts particular to themselves, e.g. liturgy, music, spirituality, to name a few. A process of offering and sharing them will enrich the ministry of the whole Body of Christ.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we pledge:

- 1. To pray for each other daily, and to encourage our people to do the same for their local clergy of our three denominations.**

Each bishop pledges to pray for each other by name daily and encourages local pastors to pray for their neighboring colleagues by name as well.

- 2. To ask our local congregations to include in their liturgical petitions, prayers for each other's needs.**

Liturgical worship often includes intercessory prayer. We encourage each congregation of our denominations to pray for the needs, aspirations and problems of each other, where tradition allows. Names, places and dates are encouraged to be included to make each prayer specific.

- 3. To share resources of spirituality of our three traditions, especially in the context of prayer, reflections and times of retreat.**

Each denomination has a wealth of spiritual traditions, e.g. mystical, liturgical, social action. Seminars and common prayer experiences are encouraged so that these gifts may be shared by all.

- 4. To offer and share our facilities and physical resources on the parish and diocesan level.**

To be able to offer the hospitality of each other's facilities: assist in shared stewardship programs, the use of buildings, parking lots, where possible.

- 5. To promote, where possible, appropriate common educational opportunities and programs for the clergy and the laity.**

Each tradition offers many courses for continuing education for their people. They are encouraged to share these resources with each other, e.g. clergy conferences, conventions, campus ministries, seminary programs.

- 6. To work together in our common mission, in areas of evangelization and social justice as essential to Gospel witness.**

While respecting each other's unique liturgical, sacramental, theological and spiritual traditions, we are encouraged to work together in the common mission of evangelization and social justice as essential to Gospel witness.

- 7. To further the purpose of this covenant by encouraging the establishment of similar covenants on the local level.**

We encourage the establishment of similar covenants at the local level.

- 8. To ask our people to join together in prayer on special occasions.**

As an expression of the unity we have thus far through baptism, we continue to encourage our people to worship together more often, where possible, at the local level.

- 9. To continue active study of those documents produced through our respective ecumenical commissions on national and international levels.**

To study diligently and discuss at local levels the various documents promulgated by international, national, and other dialogues in response to our call to full communion.

10. To promote the joint work of our ecumenical leadership, review the goals and achievements of this covenant each year and encourage new avenues of cooperation and continued growth for unity.

The effectiveness of this covenant relies on the bishops, clergy and other leaders of our three jurisdictions. The full support of the respective ecumenical commissions and committees is essential.

11. To renew this pledge each year publicly as a sign of our continued commitment to unity, and encourage recognition of the covenant renewal at the local level.

We recognize that the work of this covenant is a continuing process toward full communion. By annual renewal of this covenant we open ourselves to the on-going work of the Holy Spirit towards healing the Body of Christ.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS PROCEEDING FROM THE COVENANT

DIOCESAN:

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Clergy Conferences
- Invitation to participate in diocesan conferences (the Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Religious Education Congress etc.)
- Training Workshops
- Retreats
- Diocesan Organizations:
 - Cursillo Movement
 - Marriage Encounter
 - Engaged Encounter
- Marriage preparation
- Common Baptism Certificate
- AIDS Ministries
- Ethnic Ministries

LOCAL CLUSTERS:

- Joint Ministries:
 - Youth
 - Women
 - Men
- Common Blessing of Animals
- Ecumenical Media Centers

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS:

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Religious Holidays, e.g.
 - Easter Sunrise Services
 - Pentecost
 - Advent
 - Reformation Day
- Civic Holidays, e.g.
 - Thanksgiving
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Ethnic Festivals
- Social Ministries
- Bible Studies
- Faith Sharing Groups
- Shared Facilities
- Pre-School
- Vacation Bible Schools
- Tutorial Programs
- Spiritual Direction
- Congregational Retreats
- Local Workshop Series
- Pastoral Services
- Support Ministries:
 - Twelve Step Programs
 - Bereavement Ministries