

Pope Francis' dialogue with Eastern Christians and Protestants

**Author:**Przemysław Sawa¹ **Affiliation:**¹Faculty of Theology, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland**Corresponding author:**

Przemysław Sawa, przemyslaw.sawa@us.edu.pl

Dates:

Received: 19 Nov. 2024

Accepted: 27 May 2025

Published: 23 July 2025

How to cite this article:Sawa, P., 2025, 'Pope Francis' dialogue with Eastern Christians and Protestants', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 46(1), a3388. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v46i1.3388>**Copyright:**

© 2025. The Author. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

The article addresses Francis' involvement in ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox Churches, Oriental Churches and communities arising from the Reformation, including both historical denominations (Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Methodism) and contemporary evangelical movements, particularly Pentecostalism. Francis' pontificate has been characterised by a strong emphasis on the search for unity among Christians, which is supported by both theological and practical justifications, such as the challenges of modern times and the need for a unified testimony. This article synthesises an analysis of Francis' individual statements and activities. The research indicates that in his dialogue with Eastern Christians, Francis focused on their spiritual heritage, the relationship between synodality and the Primacy of Peter and the manner in which the papal office is exercised. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of church collaboration in addressing contemporary issues, including peace, ecological concerns and support for those persecuted for their faith. In dialogue with Protestant communities, Francis emphasised the significance of the word of God, spirituality, unity in diversity, a fresh interpretation of the Reformation and its aftermath, the importance of witnessing faith and the role of service in addressing global challenges.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: A key focus was interaction with Evangelicals, particularly Pentecostals, who are the fastest-growing branch of Christianity. This area emphasises the importance of baptism in the Holy Spirit, evangelisation and the pursuit of unity. Catholic charismatic renewal groups can assist in this mission.

Keywords: Francis; ecumenism; Orthodox; Protestants; unity in diversity.

Introduction

For Francis, ecumenism was not merely a matter of courtesy or pragmatism; it was a strictly theological reality – the fulfilment of God's will. In this regard, the Pope was a realist; after all, the differences between Christians still cause pain. Nevertheless, they can already experience a genuine, albeit imperfect, unity through a shared journey, respecting their differences while focusing on what unites them, being spiritually rooted, and serving one another and the world. This applies to all branches of Christianity, including Eastern (Orthodox and ancient Oriental Churches) and Western (Protestants and Old Catholics) traditions.¹ Analysing Francis' ecumenical statements leads to a preliminary conclusion: ecumenism involves Christians walking together on the paths of the Gospel while acknowledging doctrinal differences and the importance of theological dialogue. The emphasis should be on what unites us: the experience of God, the kerygma, testimony, evangelisation and outreach to those in need. Ultimately, it is about life.

In the context of Francis' outreach to the Eastern and Western Churches,² specific questions arise: What is most important in the dialogue with Eastern Christianity? How to build unity and cooperation with the Orthodox and Oriental Churches? On what basis should we seek deeper unity with communities referencing the Reformation, including both historic churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist) and thriving denominations within the Evangelical movement? Answers to these questions can be found by reading and analysing Francis' statements, which vary in significance, and then by constructing a synthesis that highlights the key pillars of his commitment to ecumenism.

The article is structured to align with existing research on Francis' ecumenism. Among the available literature, it is important to highlight the publication by Madrigal Terraraz (2019) entitled *L'unità prevale*

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

1.The article does not discuss Francis' dialogue with Old Catholics because of less key material.

2.According to Catholic theology, the term Church can be used to describe communities based on the sacramental ministry of bishops with apostolic succession. This applies to the Orthodox, Oriental and Old Catholic Churches. Regarding communities that grew out of the Reformation, the term *ecclesial communities* is used. As most of these communities use the term *Church* to refer to themselves, in this text this will be respected.

sul conflitto. Papa Francesco e l'ecumenismo. This work outlines the interpretative keys of the current pontificate's ecumenism, including Francis' initial gestures and words, the culture of encounter, the journey towards full unity, the ecumenical programme in *Evangelii gaudium* (Francis 2013e:no. 244–246) and the significance of time. These elements are connected to the unique nature of Francis' ministry, which emphasises unity and closeness (Kasper 2015, *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love. Theological & Pastoral Perspectives*) and is deeply rooted in his personal experiences (Ivereich 2015, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*).³

Dialogue with the Orthodox (Byzantine) and Oriental churches

Francis continued the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, which has lasted for more than 50 years now,⁴ with the added advantage of his personal relationship with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I.⁵ Contacts with bishops of other Churches were also important. For Francis, the spiritual roots of Church unity, the heritage of faith, theology (ecclesiology, papal primacy and unity in diversity) and engagement with the world were most important in building unity with the East.

The context for Francis' action was the achievements of the official dialogues to date. The epochal beginning of a new phase of Catholic-Orthodox relations was the participation as observers of representatives of the Eastern Churches in the Second Vatican Council and then the meeting of Paul VI with the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras I and other Eastern hierarchs (the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Benediktos, the Armenian Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian) in Jerusalem in 1964. Subsequent events, meetings and dialogues have served to bring the Churches closer to each other, with more understanding, cooperation and recognition of each other as sister Churches. The dialogue that has taken place has resulted in documents expressing a greater awareness of what unites the Churches. This is also true of the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Churches.⁶ The list of all the dialogues coordinated by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity shows that Francis' pontificate was a time of continuity and dynamic development of the ministry of unity.

Spiritual foundation and perspective: Spirituality, testimony and Eucharist

On 24–26 May 2014, in commemoration of Paul VI's meeting with Patriarch Athenagoras and other Eastern hierarchs,

3. About Francis' ecumenism, see Wood (2018:3–16), Xavier (2017:357–372) and Mayer (2017:156–172).

4. Special work is being done by the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue. In mutual contacts, it is important to get to know the other side (Francis 2014a).

5. '...we have shared the desire to walk together, to do all that we can do from this day forward: pray together, work together for God's flock, seek peace, take care of creation...' (Francis 2014d).

6. For a list of all ecumenical dialogues held by the Catholic Church and the texts of official documents, see Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity (2024).

Francis made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. At the Holy Sepulcher, he prayed together with Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Patriarch Theophilus III of Jerusalem and Armenian Apostolic Patriarch Nourhan Monoughian. During the meeting, the Pope apologised for the sin of division and encouraged prayer for the Holy Spirit, who can heal the wounds inflicted on the brothers. At the same time, he pointed to one of the gifts of the empty tomb: the call to unity and fraternity.⁷ In contrast, Francis' joint declaration with Bartholomew I included a call to testimony of a lived love for God and people, which should translate into working together for the challenges facing the world (including peace, helping the suffering, sharing resources and building more just societies). Ecumenism, however, is to move towards a common celebration of the Eucharist. Efforts now, therefore, should focus on the search for one faith, prayer, conversion, renewal of life, mutual dialogue (Francis–Bartholomew I 2014:no. 3.5)⁸ and openness to the Holy Spirit, guiding the Church by the richness of traditions and expressions of faith (Francis 2014i). At the same time, it is necessary to see a common experience of God's mercy. Mercy, therefore, should be the measure of the relationship between Christians. Preaching and showing mercy is an antidote to rivalry, distrust and resentment. At the same time, it frees people from a difficult past and allows for the opening of the Holy Spirit (Francis 2016e).

The basis of Catholic-Orthodox dialogue is also the mission of Peter and Andrew and by extension the Roman Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. A sign of the search for unity between the two is the visits, since 1967, of the Catholic delegation in Constantinople on St. Andrew's Day and the Orthodox delegation in Rome on Saints Peter and Paul's Day.⁹ The joint prayer, also in a liturgical context, though without concelebration, expresses the anticipation of full unity in the Eucharist. The call to hasten the step is not surprising (Francis 2015e).

Gestures are also an expression of unity. Paul VI received an icon of Saints Peter and Andrew from Athenagoras I. Years later, Francis responded to this gesture by sending Bartholomew I, a fragment of St. Peter's relics. By doing so, he wanted to emphasise that divergences do not exempt the Churches from giving testimony to the faith and striving for full unity (Francis 2019g). This is why Francis, speaking in turn to the Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II, emphasised showing Jesus by way of life and selfless love. Of particular importance here is the testimony of holiness, because it is in its context that the Holy Spirit leads Christians to unity (Francis 2017b). This is also how the ecumenism of relics must be seen.

7. 'We pause [...] before this empty tomb in order to rediscover the grandeur of our Christian vocation: we are men and women of resurrection [...]. And let us not be deaf to the powerful summons to unity which rings out from this very place...' (Francis 2014c).

8. There can be no theological minimalism or compromise in ecumenism; it is necessary to seek the truth. See Francis (2013b) '...think of the morning of Pentecost, when there was a great "division" of different charisms... But then he [Holy Spirit] produced harmony, which is not a "negotiated settlement" ...' (Francis 2023b).

9. To 'sign that the days of distance and indifference, when our divisions were considered irreparable, is long past' (Francis 2022a).

In addition to the aforementioned gift, the Pope, in 2017, gave the Russian Orthodox Christians a fragment of the relics of St. Nicholas and sent a fragment of the relics of St. Philip to Smyrna (Constantinople Patriarchate), and in 2020, he offered the relics of Saints Clement and Potitus to the Bulgarian Patriarch Theophy. Also worth noting is the 2022 donation of fragments of the Parthenon from the Vatican Museums to the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece.

A spiritual perspective is also generated by the fact of persecution of Christians. This dimension is particularly pronounced. The meeting on 11 May 2023 between Francis and Tawadros II, the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, was significant. During this meeting, the Pope announced his decision to include 21 Coptic martyrs from Libya, who were murdered by Islamists on 15 February 2015, in the Roman Martyrology. This was an unprecedented decision, as from this point on the Catholic liturgy celebrates the memory of saints canonised by the Eastern non-Catholic Church. The meeting was complemented by Tawadros II giving the relics of these martyrs to Francis (Francis 2023a). The theme of unifying suffering is extremely important today. It also resounds in dialogue with other Eastern Churches, especially in the Middle East (Francis 2014h, 2015d, 2016b), where the presence of Christians can help preserve the character of the region and the existence of peace (cf. Francis–Mar Gewargis III 2018: no. 3.5–6).

Finally, it is important to live through a common history. With the Oriental Churches, the focus is on the first three Universal Councils, while the Orthodox communities emphasise the experiences of the first millennium. Additionally, it is important to highlight the heritage of prayer, liturgy, monasticism, saints and their perspectives on human life, marriage and global issues (Francis–Tawadros II 2017: no.2–3.7).

Ecclesiology: Primacy of Peter, synodality, unity in diversity and exchange of gifts

The theological dialogue is important, especially in the area of ecclesiology. The work of the various commissions has contributed significantly to the mutual rapprochement and deeper acceptance of the Churches.¹⁰ Therefore, Francis emphasised the Orthodox synodality and collegiality of the bishops and the fact of the joint Catholic-Orthodox study of the relationship between primacy and synodality.¹¹ Although the paths of understanding the place of the Bishop of Rome diverged between East and West in the second millennium, the joint search for mechanisms of unity can overcome

10. Noteworthy is the Holy See's recognition in 2001 of the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, used in the Assyrian Church of the East, in which there are no words of institution. The Vatican act allows eucharistic hospitality between the faithful of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean (Catholic) Church in certain circumstances. A further step was the declaration on sacramental life in both traditions, published in 2017.

11. 'The careful examination of how in the Church the principle of synodality and the service of the one who presides are articulated, will make a significant contribution to the progress of relations between our Churches' (Francis 2015e). '...primacy and synodality are not two competing principles [...], but two realities that establish and sustain one another in the service of communion' (Francis 2021c).

previous mental stereotypes. Francis was not afraid to state that recognition of the primacy of Peter by the Orthodox does not necessarily imply acceptance of the jurisdiction that the Pope has within the Catholic Church.¹²

Francis' decision to return to the use of the title Patriarch of the West, something Benedict XVI abandoned in 2006, must be read in light of this issue. Despite differences in the understanding of the structure of the Church, the use of the term aligns with the ancient structure of patriarchates. Francis' decision, of course, does not mean abandoning the special role of the Bishop of Rome, who in ancient times did not have jurisdiction over the entire universal Church, but was a point of reference for other Churches (patriarchates) and one Eucharistic table did not exclude diversity in theology, spirituality or canons. This experience can be an inspiration for building a contemporary communion of Churches, which is to be unity, not uniformity.¹³ This was made clear by Francis in the context of his pilgrimages to Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Romania. In his view, unity respects diversity and does not mean absorbing each other's Churches (Francis 2019f):

The Holy Spirit, for that matter, is the one who creatively awakens a multiplicity of gifts, harmonizes them and brings them into authentic unity, which is not uniformity but a symphony of many voices in charity. As Bishop of Rome I wish to reaffirm that, for us Catholics, the purpose of dialogue is full communion in legitimate forms of diversity, not a monotonous levelling, much less absorption. (n.p.)

Only in this way is the expected full unity possible. Francis pointed out that this unity is already real but still incomplete (Francis 2021b; see Francis 2017b). This strong statement sets ecumenical dialogue in a whole new perspective: unity must already be seen, and existing differences can be overcome and healed in the course of a common path of love. Such a path is not easy in the context of differing approaches to contentious issues. The dialogue encounters difficulties. An example is the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches formed as a result of the union. This controversy makes itself known especially in the area of influence of Slavic Orthodoxy. In turn, the Vatican's declaration of *Fiducia Supplicans*, which sets norms to issue blessings, including people in irregular situations, not excluding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) people, has led to the suspension of dialogue with the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Such unity in diversity is not possible without the Holy Spirit, who harmonises diversity and allows it to be placed in a broad context (Francis 2023c): 'The Holy Spirit ... disdains uniformity and loves to shape unity from the most beautiful and harmonious diversity' (Francis 2019c). Such unity is

12. '...it cannot be thought that the same prerogatives that the Bishop of Rome enjoys with regard to his own Diocese and the Catholic community should be extended to the Orthodox communities. When [...] we shall be fully united in faith and love, the form in which the Bishop of Rome will exercise his service of communion in the Church at the universal level will have to be the result of an inseparable relationship between primacy and synodality' (Francis 2023c).

13. '...the Church of Rome immediately, spontaneously, became the reference point for all the Churches scattered across the world. It was [...] rather through the mightiness of martyrdom...' (Francis 2013c).

inspired by the legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius. According to Francis, it is a witness to holiness, in which there is already unity, and the need to proclaim the Gospel in contemporary language while overcoming emerging divisions resulting from differences in cultures and traditions (Francis 2018a).¹⁴

Thus, referring to the experience of the first millennium of the Church can inspire the search for reviving unity. The dangerous opposite is to absolutise customs that demand uniformity, as this nullifies unity and contradicts the Gospel. Therefore, it is necessary to overcome the idealisation of cultural paradigms or the unjust interests of particular groups and to take into account different cultural contexts. In this way, inculturation of the faith presupposes in the Church the existence of differences and simultaneous unity. This is only possible by relying on truth and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Not must we be content with a simple common denominator (Francis 2021d; 2018b; 2013b; 2014f).

The unity needs Christians to bestow their own spiritual experience on one another, that is, to discover the good that God gives to others. This is one of the key expressions of a common path, despite the ongoing divisions, containing prayer, evangelisation and diakonia, sincere dialogue, mutual knowledge and sympathy (Francis 2019f). This spiritual exchange demands mutual openness and abandonment of all prejudices and stereotypes.

Mutual openness is necessary primarily because of evangelisation. Francis addressed Patriarch Ilia II in Tbilisi: 'Let us allow the Lord Jesus to look upon us anew, let us once again experience the attraction of his call to leave everything that prevents us from proclaiming together his presence' (Francis 2016f). Only the witness of increasingly united Christians can be recognised and will contribute to the acceptance by modern people of the truth of the Gospel. Therefore, seeking unity is not an alternative but an inalienable imperative for action. It is not, of course, about doctrine alone, although it is important, but about the proclamation of the kerygma and bringing people to Jesus, which is to be performed powerfully and show the relationship of the Gospel to the existential needs of man. Necessary for this is listening to people who, especially the young, are less and less interested in what the churches bring, alienated also by scandals or lack of transparency in the life of the communities (Francis 2013b; 2019c).

Cooperation in the context of world challenges: Migration, ecology and peace

Francis drew attention to the cooperation of Christians in response to the main challenges of modern times. An undeniable problem is migration. An important event was the visit to the island of Lesbos by Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Archbishop of Athens and All

Greece Jerome II on 16 April 2016. They unanimously agreed that the migration crisis, which involves a humanitarian crisis, violence, armed conflicts, persecution of religious and ethnic minorities and violations of human dignity, rights and freedoms, cannot be ignored. The involvement of the churches in this area is invaluable: by seeking to resolve conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation, organising aid to those in need, appealing to the authorities of countries, pleading for respect for human rights and supporting people to stay in their homes. Recalling this visit to the island of Lesbos a few months later, the Pope stressed the importance of Christians' responsibility towards those in need, to restore their dignity and justice. This commitment is linked to the credibility of Christianity. This common service contributes to the creation of a new humanity that will be closer to God's violence (Bartholomew, Ieronymos & Francis 2016; Francis 2016e). It is thus about defending the dignity of every human being – 'contempt for the dignity of the human person, the idolatry of money, the spread of violence, a totalising view of science and technology, the reckless exploitation of natural resources' (Francis 2018c). The Churches' common response is to assert that the future is not so much about having, but about being, sharing, communion and love (Francis 2018c). Opening up to these challenges and overcoming crises, of which the problems connected with the coronavirus pandemic were a major one, will be a sign of hope for the power of brotherhood, mutual respect, healing of wrongs and peace. What is important is not only emergency aid but also culture and education as an investment in the future, as well as the awakening of hope that grows out of faith. On this basis, young people can break down antagonism, misunderstanding and prejudice. This is the path to peace. Therefore, it is necessary to promote dialogue in the struggle with differences and to protect Christians from the manipulation of faith, especially from the fundamentalist use of religion and its justification of hatred, discrimination and violence (Francis 2021b; Francis–Karekin II 2016). Only then will they fulfil their mission to society.

The second important area of Christian cooperation is ecology and climate. The joint stance of Francis and Bartholomew I on the issue of care for creation is significant. In a declaration promulgated on 25 May 2014, they called on Christians to be responsible for the climate, pointing out the spiritual dimension (mistreatment of the earth understood as a sin), the need for the proper education of societies and an integral approach to ecological issues, with concern for people (Francis–Bartholomew I 2014:no. 6). Bartholomew I (1997) pointed out everyone's contribution to the disfigurement or destruction of creation and sin against the Earth (destruction of biological diversity, degradation of the earth by destroying forests or polluting water). He also pointed to a holistic approach to climate issues, for which a more ascetic life for people is important, aided by the testimony of monks and nuns, as well as Orthodox fasting norms.¹⁵ Francis, inspired by the thought of Bartholomew I, wrote the encyclical *Laudato*

14. Unity in diversity needs the following conditions: 'dialogue, sharing, building bridges and breaking down the barriers of mistrust and prejudice' (Francis 2019a).

15. 'By reducing our consumption [...] we come to ensure that sufficient resources are also left for others [...]. As we shift our will and focus of concern, we shall be able to demonstrate a compassion for the poorer nations of our world' (Bartholomew 2003).

si, in which he put forward the postulate of ecological conversion, which entails an integral ecology that puts people in need at the centre. Only such a holistic view of humanity and climate issues can result in appropriate measures to protect the environment (Francis 2015c:no. 137–162).

An important challenge for the world is ultimately peace, and one of the crucial issues of this reality is the Middle East, especially the Holy Land. For this reason, Francis points out that progressive unity among Christian denominations will translate into dialogue with Jews and Muslims, which in turn can result in harmonious coexistence among peoples in the region and support for young people and young families to stem the tide of emigration, end the spiral of evil and build peace. Cooperation between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is crucial in this regard (Francis 2017d).

In the European context, the heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius, carried jointly by Catholics and Orthodox, is a light for the unity of peoples, with respect for diversity. For living together, it is important to preach the Gospel so that people do not succumb to the illusions of consumer mentality, the security of power, the charm of worldliness, the vain conceit of self-sufficiency or the hypocrisy of appearances (Francis 2019b; 2019d).

Final remarks: Dialogue with the Orthodox (Byzantine) and Oriental churches

The dialogue between the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Churches presupposes a shared experience of history and the present, also in the context of the ongoing persecution of Christians in many countries in the East. In the theological sphere, ecclesiological dialogue is crucial, including reflection on the role of the Bishop of Rome, the collegiality of bishops, synodality and the connection between unity and diversity, which is made possible by the Holy Spirit. Authentic dialogue also presupposes the exchange of spiritual gifts between the faithful of the Churches. At the same time, a common voice is needed on issues of human dignity, peace and ecology.

Dialogue with Protestant communities

An important area of Francis' ministry was his contacts with Protestant communities (historical, evangelical and new communities). Pope's actions were part of official inter-church dialogues,¹⁶ and his personal gestures and words

16.The Catholic Church has official dialogues with the ecclesiastical communities of the Protestant branch. Among the denominations of the historical Reformation, it is the cooperation with the Anglican Communion (joint declarations of the Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury, the work of Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, crowned with three reports, the work of Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on the Theology of Marriage, with five reports, the work of International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission and numerous meetings and statements of representatives of both sides), with the Lutheran World Federation (13 documents before the pontificate of Francis, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, from the current pontificate: *From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 and Baptism and Growth in Communion. Report of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*, numerous meetings, joint prayers and speeches) and World Communion of Reformed Churches (the text signed during Francis' pontificate *Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent for Justice* 2015), from World Methodist Council.

motivated a more intensive search for unity between Catholics and the entire Protestant family.

Dialogue with Anglicanism: Together for the world and for evangelisation

Firstly, it is necessary to point out the dialogue with Anglicanism, especially with the Church of England, which is facilitated by intense contacts with Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, especially since the inauguration of the ministry of both of them was in the same week: Francis' on 19 March 2023 and the Archbishop's on 21 March 2023. During their first meeting, Francis pointed towards the spiritual rationale for ecumenism – the source is the unity of the Trinity, and the point of reference is Jesus Christ. For this reason, prayer is crucial, even in the face of ongoing and emerging differences (Francis–Welby 2016). Because a commitment to prayer gives rise to various values, including the promotion of Christian principles, respect for life, respect for the family founded on marriage, social justice, care for the poor and the resolution of conflicts and wars, it is important to recognise that the daily pursuit of unity does not preclude theological research. For instance, the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission plays a key role in addressing controversial issues.¹⁷

As it is widely known, gestures were important to Francis. They mattered in the joint ministry with Justin Welby. How important was the prayer meeting for the civil and political authorities of South Sudan at the Vatican with Francis and Archbishop Welby (11 April 2019)? Secondly, the important sign was Francis' trip to South Sudan, together with the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Church of Scotland Moderator Iain Greenshields (03–05 February 2023). Thirdly, a special, sign was the celebration of Vespers on the Day of the Conversion of St. Paul (25 January 2024), during which the Pope and Archbishop sent 50 Catholic and Anglican bishops together for the advancement of ecumenism, including in the context of evangelisation, to 'be for the world a foretaste of the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ' (Francis 2024). The gesture underlined the mission of the bishop in the service of unity, who is responsible for dialogue in the broadest sense and who presides over and directs ecumenical initiatives (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity 2020:no. 8).

Dialogues with evangelical communities are also important, first with the historical ones: with the Baptist World Alliance, with the Mennonite World Conference and with the Salvation Army. The Catholic Church is also in dialogue with contemporary Evangelicalism, the most rapidly growing branch of Christianity. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the cooperation with the Disciples of Christ and with the World Evangelical Alliance Dialogue with Pentecostal communities is also important. This dimension of the dialogue has gained particular momentum, not least because of the personal contacts, past and present, of Pope Francis. Also, to be included in this trend are the dialogues and contacts with the New Charismatic Churches, which, as new entities, do not yet have a coherent theology developed, but are becoming a dynamic part of Christianity. The fruit of self-reflection in dialogue with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity is a document entitled *The Characteristics of The New Charismatic Churches*. The Catholic-Protestant dialogue is also a multilateral dialogue – with the World Council of Churches, with the Global Christian Forum and with the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe. There is also a Mennonite-Lutheran-Catholic Trilateral Dialogue.

17.An example is the ordinaries for former Anglicans. An existing difficulty Francis tried to alleviate: 'I am sure this will enable the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral traditions that form the Anglican patrimony to be better known and appreciated in the Catholic world' (Francis 2013a).

Dialogue with historical Reformation churches: Testimony, history, perspective and service

What is also important for the Catholic Church is the dialogue with the Lutheran Churches and others originating from the First Reformation. On 21 October 2013, Francis received a delegation from the Lutheran World Federation and the Commission for Lutheran-Catholic Unity. The Pope thanked them for the journey so far, pointing out the importance of the agreements signed, the theological dialogue held and the spiritual ecumenism efforts. He referred to the document *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, issued by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity (Lutheran World Federation, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 2013). He expressed his appreciation for the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue that has progressed over the decades, particularly in the areas of pastoral cooperation and spiritual ecumenism, which are the essence of the common path. Ultimately, the relationship with Jesus Christ serves as the foundation for both life and dialogue.¹⁸ This witness to faith in God and his mercy and the newness brought by Jesus, growing out of the discovery of the common sources of faith, is the common vocation of Christians, as can be seen especially in the context of the various forms of exclusion that afflict contemporary societies (Francis 2017a).

The Pope also noted that research into the historicity of the Reformation and its consequences is needed for both denominations. At the same time, it is necessary to forgive each other's wrongs and patiently wait for unity, despite the differences (Francis 2017a).¹⁹ Aware of the changes in attitudes towards human dignity and sexuality, Francis urges that these issues not undermine the 50-year dialogue between the Catholic and Lutheran Churches (Francis 2014j).

On 15 November 2015, Francis visited an Evangelical Lutheran parish in Rome and spontaneously answered questions from participants. He drew attention to the need for fraternal love and praying together, referring to the same grace of accepted baptism, sharing the pain, especially in mixed-denominational marriages, of not being able to fully participate in the Lord's Supper together. In his prepared homily, he drew attention to the commandment to love and serve those in need, because the attitude of the servant most fully expresses the imitation of Jesus. At the same time, there is a need to develop spiritual unity and discover the richness of praying together and reading and meditating on the word of God, also together (Francis 2015f; cf. Francis 2021a).

Ecclesiology is also an important issue in the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, especially the understanding of the Church as a sign and instrument of salvation, the Eucharist

18. 'In the measure in which we draw closer to our Lord Jesus Christ in humility of spirit, we are certain to draw closer to one another. And, in the measure in which we ask the Lord for the gift of unity, we are sure that he will take us by the hand and be our guide' (Francis 2013d). Benedict XVI (2011), during a meeting with representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany on 23 September 2011, stated: '...Christ is at the heart of our spirituality and that love for him, living in communion with him, is what guides our life.'

19. 'The Holy Spirit will grant us this grace. But in the meantime we need to pray, to love one another and to work together, above all for the poor and the suffering, for peace and for so many other things, against the exploitation of people...' (Francis 2016d).

and the ecclesiastical office (Francis 2015a; 2016a). For a reliable search for truth, it is essential to look at the Reformation from a renewed, unprejudiced perspective. Therefore, Francis' statement regarding Martin Luther was important (Francis 2016d):

I think that Martin Luther's intentions were not mistaken; he was a reformer. Perhaps some of his methods were not right, although at that time [...] the Church was not exactly a model to emulate. There was corruption and worldliness in the Church; there was attachment to money and power. That was the basis of his protest. (n.p.)

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 was also to be celebrated in such a climate. Instead of the triumphalism of division, it was about a shared experience of faith and asking for mutual forgiveness of wrongs. At the same time, it was an opportunity to cry out to the Holy Spirit for unity among Christians (Francis 2014j)²⁰ and to look to the future together (Francis 2016g). Francis' visit to Sweden for the commencement of the year of preparation for the Reformation Jubilee fit into this logic. On 31 October 2016, the Pope visited Lund and attended a service presided over by Archbishop Antje Jackelén of Uppsala. At the time, he pointed out the need for forgiveness and mutual understanding.²¹

Speaking of ecumenism, the dialogue with Reformed communities cannot be left out. Francis pointed out the importance of a common witness to faith in Jesus and a response to the challenges of modern times. The starting point is the brotherhood resulting from accepted baptism and undertaking divine office and worship. Also, the decision on 05 July 2017 of the World Communion of Reformed Churches to join the Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification opens a new perspective of cooperation: from justification to acts of love. This is also expressed in the 2015 document of the Catholic-Reformed dialogue entitled *Justification and Sacramentality: the Christian Community as an Agent for Justice*. The parties state that the experience of the grace of justification is not abstract and merely spiritual, but translates into a commitment to making the world increasingly just. The way to do this is to help those in need (see Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, World Communion of Reformed Churches 2015: no. 56–57). This reaching out to people, according to Francis, has many shades: helping those in need, right relationships, testimony of God's merciful love, creating a space of healthy spirituality, which is the opposite of spiritual consumerism, and bringing healing, liberation and peace. What is needed, therefore, is a time of joint evangelisation and service (Francis 2016c). This takes on particular importance in the context of a globalised and confused world. In view of this, only one voice of Christians will make it possible for the light of Christ to reach

20. It is worth noting that the confession of faith is the content of today's Reformation Commemoration.

21. 'Now [...] we have a new opportunity to accept a common path [...]. Nor can we be resigned to the division and distance that our separation has created between us. We have the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond the controversies and disagreements...' (Francis 2016h). The analogy is with the Oriental Churches. Years of dialogue have led to a better understanding of each other, which makes action possible to overcome differences. See Francis (2014b).

human hearts (Francis 2015b). This was also expressed by Reverend Marco Fornerone, pastor of the Waldensians and representative of the World Communion of Reformed Churches during the Synod of Bishops on Young People in 2018 in Rome, as an ecumenical guest, pointing out the need to meet and listen to those who are usually not listened to, of which the Samaritan woman received by Jesus is a biblical icon. This model opens up the Church and helps read the signs of the times. Then even youth can be considered a theological place (*locus theologicus*) (Synod of Bishops on Young People 2018).

The way to do this is reconciliation. Therefore, this is how the request for forgiveness for the persecution by Catholics of the Waldenses should be read. Francis said this in Turin on 22 June 2015, at the Waldensian church (Francis 2016c):

On behalf of the Catholic Church I ask your forgiveness. I ask your forgiveness for unchristian-like and even inhuman attitudes and conduct which, historically, we have had against you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us! (n.p.)

After this meeting, a landmark in inter-church relations, the Synod of Walden Church sent a letter to the Pope in which members expressed gratitude to God for the new phase of relations between Catholics and Waldenses, entrusted God with the path of unity and blessed Francis, but said they were not authorised to take the place of those persecuted in the past for forgiveness (Chiesa Evangelica Valdese. Unione delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi 2015). Many interpreters, especially Catholic integralists, have said that the Waldenses rejected the request for forgiveness. However, the message of the entire letter does not allow such a conclusion. It seems that it is necessary to see this as a new perspective for dialogue: the past (persecutors and the persecuted) cannot be changed, but a new reality can be built together. That is why perhaps more important was the second gesture at the Turin meeting: kissing the Bible published by the Waldenses. It was a sign of shared respect for and following of God's Word, as well as of brotherhood flowing from a relationship with God.

The theme of facing the past and seeking unity was emphasised by Reverend Dr Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, addressing Francis on 10 June 2016. According to the pastor, it is important to serve the world together through the testimony of faith, especially in the context of human suffering and injustice, which must be seen as structural and systemic sin. Christians are therefore to transform their thinking and thus live according to God's will.²² This resonates with Cardinal Kurt Koch's statement in his message to the Reformed Churches (Koch 2019):

Awakening the present and future generations to this salvific message of the Gospel will be the great task for all Christians, since there can be no justice or peace in a society where the love of God and his eternal Word does not burn brightly in the human heart. (n.p.)

22. 'We will seek not to be conformed to this present age but (...) to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we may discern the will of God...' (Ferguson 2016).

It should also be added that in dialogue it is important how it is conducted. Encouraging is the testimony of representatives of Reformed Churches from the United States of America, who were motivated to continue seeking unity with Catholics by Francis' attitude during his visit to the country (Meehan 2015):

As Reformed and Catholic participants in a long-standing official theological dialogue, we have been inspired by the ecumenical promise seen in the recent visit of Pope (...) While the role of the Bishop of Rome has historically been a matter of contention between Reformed and Catholic communions, we affirm the manner in which Pope Francis modelled service of unity for the whole church and its ministry. (n.p.)

Mention should also be made of the symbolic nature of Pope Francis' visit to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva on 21 June 2018. Although this trip was not exclusively dedicated to the Reformed Church, Francis, as another Bishop of Rome – following Paul VI and John Paul II – visited the country where the Reformed Church was born through the efforts of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich and John Calvin in Geneva.

Dialogue with Evangelicals: Experience, charismatic, mission and new perspectives

Francis' focus on evangelical communities, especially Pentecostal, had a special place in his ecumenical journey, which is related to his personal experience from his days in Argentine. As Jorge Mario Bergoglio gradually came to appreciate the charismatic renewal and became familiar with Evangelicals. Initially, however, he was sceptical of charismatic devotion in the Catholic Church; a notable sign of this was his decision, as provincial, to ban Rev. Alberto Ibñez Padilla from involvement in the charismatic movement. The change came during the episcopal ministry of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Although he once saw charismatic spirituality as a 'samba school', he experienced the depth of the path during one of the liturgies with charismatic renewal groups in 1999. One witness recounts this pivotal moment as follows (Ivereich 2015):

He said, 'When I hear the praise as I'm coming to the altar, I feel my heart fill'. As a man of deep prayer, he recognized that this was the Holy Spirit. They asked him if, when he raised the eucharistic host and chalice, he could allow them fifteen seconds of praying in tongues, and he agreed. (p. 291)

At the same time, Francis himself confessed years later when describing his participation in charismatic prayer (Francis 2014e):

Someone must have told today's organizers that I really like the hymn: 'Jesus the Lord lives'. When I would celebrate Mass in the cathedral in Buenos Aires with the charismatic renewal, after the consecration and a few moments of adoration in tongues, we would sing this hymn with great joy and fervor, as you have today. (n.p.)

Bergoglio also participated in prayer meetings initiated by a group of Catholic leaders and evangelical pastors as part of the Renewed Communion of Evangelicals and Catholics in the Spirit. Through this, he deepened his understanding of charismatic reality, especially glossolalia and prayer

for healing. In 2006, during such a congress at the Estadio Luna Park arena, Evangelical Christian Edgardo Brezovec prayed over Bergoglio during a prayer for baptism in the Spirit. Then, on stage, before the Archbishop was asked to speak, prayer was led over him with a gesture of laying on of hands by the leaders and clergy present. According to available testimonies, the Archbishop's speech on unity in diversity was different in form from previous speeches. He spoke with enthusiasm, freely, passionately and powerfully (Ivereich 2015:292–293). This gradual approach to Evangelical, especially Pentecostal Christians, was reinforced by the Archbishop's monthly meetings with pastors. These experiences of walking together, building relationships and focusing on what is common, set the course for his future endeavours, including in the papal ministry. Owing to the bonds formed, it was possible to organise retreats for Catholic priests and Evangelical pastors in 2010 and 2012.

This openness to Evangelicals (and Pentecostals) is clearly demonstrated in papal ministry. On 04 June 2014, Francis received a group of Evangelical leaders from the United States at the Vatican, including Joel Osteen. Then, on 24 June 2014, he welcomed TV preachers James Robinson and Kenneth Copeland, as well as Geoff Tunnicliffe, the Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance. What a valuable gesture it was also to invite Pentecostal Christian music artists Darlene Zschech (Hillsong Church) and Don Moen to an ecumenical meeting in St. Peter's Square on 03 July 2015.

On 28 July 2014, (Francis 2014g) visiting the Pentecostal Church of Reconciliation in Caserta (Italy), stated that the Spirit creates diversity and unity, and that the Christian life itself should be characterised by courage and parrhesia. Above all, he apologised for the various forms of persecution of Pentecostals in Italy:

Some of those who made this law and some of those who persecuted, denounced Pentecostal brothers for being exuberant, almost crazy, who tarnished the race, some were Catholics.... I am the Pastor of Catholics: I ask your forgiveness for this! (n.p.)

These words brought real healing to the relationship. It should be remembered that Pentecostals in Italy were persecuted by the fascist state apparatus until the fall of Mussolini, and to this injustice, the Catholic Church put its hand by acting to restrict Pentecostal places of worship. Particularly damaging was the report justifying this attitude by Professor Carlo Costantini, head of the National Association for Decency, who, after an investigation, identified three harmful aspects of Pentecostalism: a threat to Catholicism (the Church was to be denigrated at the meetings), to the mental and physical health of the participants and to the integrity of the Italian family. This contributed to a state circular on restricting non-Catholic forms of worship (1935). In this context, Francis' gesture took on special significance.

The Pope also appreciated the importance of Catholic charismatic and Pentecostal communities. Their evangelisation commitment makes it possible for people to experience the

power of God's love, mercy and grace (Francis 2022b). This was said by Francis in a spontaneous video message to participants of the Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference hosted by Kenneth Copeland in the United States (US). The very fact that the message was played and the positive reaction of those gathered, shows the changing Catholic-Evangelical relationship by Copeland and other participants of the meeting (Palmer 2014). It is also worth noting that Francis was appointed as an ecumenical guest to the Synod of Bishops (04–24 October 2015), Thomas Schirrmacher, Chair of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, to highlight common areas of thought and action, including on the issue of the Christian understanding of marriage and family.

Charismatic renewal in the mission of unity with Pentecostal communities

One of the spaces for the search for unity between Catholics and Pentecostals is the Charismatic Renewal, which Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens called a stream of grace, and about which Francis said during a meeting in Rome on 03 June 2017 (Francis 2017c):

It was born ecumenical because it is the Holy Spirit who creates unity, and the same Spirit who granted the inspiration for this. [...] a flood of grace of the Spirit! Why a flood of grace? Because it has no founder, no bylaws, no structure of governance. (n.p.)

Francis, also on other occasions, emphasises that the Charismatic Renewal must be seen as a reality of spiritual stirrings in various areas of the Church. The basis is the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Taking this into account, Francis dissolved the existing global Charismatic Renewal entities and established the Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service Charis (Francis 2019e, 2023d) for coordinating, inspiring and supporting communities in growth and ministry. At the same time, Francis identified ecumenical tasks for the Charismatic Renewal: to promote the ecumenical dimension of the Catholic Renewal; to foster commitment to the unity of all Christians; to promote communion among those involved in the various realities within the Renewal, with other ecclesial movements, as well as with other Christian Churches and Communities; and to serve the poor (Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life 2018:3). Such a mission is understandable in the context of similar forms of prayer and ways of living spirituality (worship, glossolalia, biblicism and openness to charisms), despite doctrinal differences, especially in ecclesiology and sacramentology. With his decision, Francis made a correct diagnosis of the ecumenical situation – contacts between Catholic charismatics and Pentecostal Christians and the interpenetration of experiences (prayer and musical forms) are a fact. At the same time, members of these communities find a similar language, which is a deeper understanding and ultimately giving God glory or undertaking missions. This is particularly important because Evangelicalism, especially Pentecostalism, is the fastest-growing movement within Christianity today. Additionally, there is an increasing number of prayer and evangelisation communities in the

Catholic Church referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and subsequent charismatic experiences.

Final remarks on the dialogue with Protestant communities

The Catholic Church attaches great importance to dialogue with the historical Churches of the Reformation. In relations with Anglicans during the pontificate of Francis, particular emphasis has been placed on the role of prayer and commitment to evangelisation and solving the world's problems (the suffering, those experiencing war). In the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, the importance of a common path through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, testimony to common sources of faith and understanding of the history of the Reformation have been emphasised. Theological dialogue is still ongoing, especially in the areas of ecclesiology and sacramentology (understanding of the Church, ecclesiastical office and the Eucharist). Francis' meetings with other Protestants (including Reformed and Waldensians) emphasised the connection between the truth of justification and the practice of mercy, the necessity of forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as the search for possible paths to unity.

During Francis' pontificate, dialogue with evangelical communities, especially Pentecostal ones, was of particular importance. The communities grew closer through gestures, prayers and messages. The key was the testimony of openness to the Holy Spirit, who enlivens faith and builds unity in diversity. In this context, Francis left the Catholic charismatic renewal with a special service to Christian unity, referring to the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

For the Catholic Church, dialogue with the Orthodox and Oriental Churches is important. Francis' meetings with representatives of these communities, symbolic gestures and joint responses to key world challenges characterised the current stage of ecumenism. There is, of course, no shortage of tensions, especially in the context of ecclesiology, especially on the part of Slavic Orthodoxy or the extremely conservative groups of the Greek tradition. The latest crack in the dialogue is the Coptic Orthodox Church's suspension of dialogue with the Catholic Church because of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's issuance of the declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*.

In dialogue with the Christian East, spirituality is important, including the testimony of the Church Fathers, liturgical and prayer heritage. In terms of theology, the key issues are the search for the form of the Primacy of Peter and the shape of possible unity, without absorbing the Churches and respecting diversity.

Francis had lively contacts with communities that grew out of the Reformation. Of particular importance is the dialogue and cooperation with Anglicanism, despite the difficulties

surrounding the ordination of women. Francis' personal relationship with Archbishop Justin Welby was significant. This has translated into joint engagement on the topic of peace and evangelisation. Equally important was the dialogue with the Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist Churches. The key here was a new look at historical issues (the person of Martin Luther or the events of the Reformation). Francis pointed out the need to clean up the past and look boldly to the future, despite significant doctrinal differences.

Francis also engaged in dialogue with evangelical communities, particularly Pentecostal communities, through both official and unofficial meetings, as well as spontaneous messages directed at specific audiences. The Pope recognised the significance of these communities, especially regarding evangelisation and the importance of grounding life in the word of God. The value of this dialogue with this branch of Christianity was further underscored by the establishment of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service and the assignment of Catholic charismatic communities to promote unity with other Christians, particularly those who emphasise the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Acknowledgements

This article was written as part of research conducted at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. The author thanks the University of Silesia for its support through the 'Freedom of Research' competition.

Competing interests

The author reported that they received funding granted under the Research Excellence Initiative of the University of Silesia in Katowice that may be affected by the research reported in the enclosed publication. They have disclosed those interests fully and have in place an approved plan for managing any potential conflicts that might arise.

Author's contribution

P.S. is the sole author of this research article.

Funding information

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This work was supported by the Research Excellence Initiative of the University of Silesia in Katowice.

Data availability

The author confirms that the data supporting this study and its findings are available within the article.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research. It

does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The author is responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

References

- Bartholomew, 1997, *Address at the environmental symposium in Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://apostolicpilgrimage.org/the-environment/-/asset_publisher/9b1085wk2Klh/content/religion-science-the-environment-symposium-vi-the-amazon-river-source-of-life-statement/3200849a7.html.
- Bartholomew, 2003, *The ascetic corrective. Lecture at the Ustein Monastery*, viewed 15 July 2024, from <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2017/02/the-ascetic-corrective-patriarch.html>.
- Bartholomew, Ieronymos & Francis, 2016, *Joint declaration of his holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, of his beatitude Ieronymos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece and of his holiness Pope Francis*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/april/documents/papa-francesco_20160416_lesvos-dichiarazione-congiunta.html.
- Benedict XVI, 2011, *Address during the meeting with the council of the Evangelical Church on Germany*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110923_evangelical-church-erfurt.html.
- Chiesa Evangelica Valdese. Unione delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi, 2015, *Lettera del Sinodo a Papa Francesco*, viewed 01 September 2024, from https://chiesavalde.org/atto_sinodo/lettera-del-sinodo-a-papa-francesco/.
- Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, 2018, *Catholic charismatic renewal international service*, Statutes, viewed 01 May 2021, from <https://www.charis.international/wp-content/uploads/Statutes-CHARIS.pdf>.
- Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, 2024, *Ecumenical Relations*, viewed 10 October 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacrisciani/en/dialoghi.html>.
- Ferguson, C., 2016, *Address to Pope Francis*, viewed 01 September 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacrisciani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-mondiale-delle-chiese-riformate/relazioni/address-dr-ferguson-to-pope-francis.html>.
- Francis, 2013a, *Address to his grace Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and primate of The Anglican Communion*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/june/documents/papa-francesco_20130614_welby-canterbury.html.
- Francis, 2013b, *Address to the delegation of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/june/documents/papa-francesco_20130628_patriarcato-ecumenico-costantinopoli.html.
- Francis, 2013c, *Angelus*, viewed 02 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2013/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20130629.html.
- Francis, 2013d, *Address to the President and delegation of the Lutheran World Federation*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131021_delegazione-luterana.html.
- Francis, 2013e, *Apostolic Exhortation 'Evangelii gaudium'*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.
- Francis, 2014a, *Address to members of The Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration with Orthodox Churches and Eastern Orthodox Churches*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/january/documents/papa-francesco_20140111_membri-chiese-ortodosse.html.
- Francis, 2014b, *Letter to his holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and patriarch of the see of Saint Mark*, viewed 09 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140505_lettera-tawadros-ii.html.
- Francis, 2014c, *Address during the ecumenical celebration on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem*, viewed 04 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140525_terra-santa-celebrazione-ecumenica.html.
- Francis, 2014d, *General audience*, viewed 20 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140528_udienza-generale.html.
- Francis, 2014e, *Address to participants in the 37th National Convocation of the renewal in the holy spirit*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140601_rinnovamento-spirito-santo.html.
- Francis, 2014f, *Address to the delegation of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 01 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140628_patriarcato-ecumenico-costantinopoli.html.
- Francis, 2014g, *Address during the private visit to Caserta for a meeting with the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140728_caserta-pastore-traettino.html.
- Francis, 2014h, *Address to his holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos patriarch of the Assyrian Church of The East*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141002_patriarca-chiesa-assira.html.
- Francis, 2014i, *General audience*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20141203_udienza-generale.html.
- Francis, 2014j, *Address to a delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141218_chiesa-evangelica-luterana.html.
- Francis, 2015a, *Address to the Finnish Ecumenical delegation on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Henrik*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150121_finlandia-santo-enrico.html.
- Francis, 2015b, *Address to the moderator and representatives of The Church of Scotland*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/february/documents/papa-francesco_20150216_moderatore-chiesa-scopia.html.
- Francis, 2015c, *Encyclical Laudato si'*, viewed 01 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.
- Francis, 2015d, *Address to his holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All The East*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150619_patriarca-siro-ortodosso.html.
- Francis, 2015e, *Address to the delegation of The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150627_patriarcato-costantinopoli.html.
- Francis, 2015f, *Address during the visit to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rome*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151115_chiesa-evangelica-luterana.html.
- Francis, 2016a, *Address to the Finnish Ecumenical Delegation on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Henrik*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/january/documents/papa-francesco_20160118_delegazione-luterana-finlandia.html.
- Francis, 2016b, *Address to His Holiness Pope Abuna Matthias I, Patriarch of The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160229_abuna-matthias-i.html.
- Francis, 2016c, *Address to The World Communion of Reformed Churches*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160610_comunione-mondiale-chiese-riformate.html.
- Francis, 2016d, *In-flight press conference from Armenia to Rome*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160626_armenia-conferenza-stampa.html.
- Francis, 2016e, *Address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160628_patriarcato-ecumenico-costantinopoli.html.
- Francis, 2016f, *Address during the meeting with Beatitude Ilia II, Catholicos and Patriarch of All Georgia and the members of The Holy Synod*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/september/documents/papa-francesco_20160930_georgia-patriarca-tbilisi.html.
- Francis, 2016g, *Address to participants on the pilgrimage of Lutherans*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161013_pellegrinaggio-luterani.html.
- Francis, 2016h, *Homily during common Ecumenical Prayer at The Lutheran Cathedral of Lund*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161031_omelia-svezia-lund.html.
- Francis, 2017a, *Discorso alla delegazione ecumenica della Chiesa Evangelica in Germania*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170206_chiesa-evangelica.html.
- Francis, 2017b, *Address during the courtesy visit to H.H. Pope Tawadros II*, viewed 09 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170428_egitto-tawadros-ii.html.
- Francis, 2017c, *Address during Pentecost vigil of prayer*, viewed 09 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html.
- Francis, 2017d, *Address to His Beatitude Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171023_patriarca-theophilos-iii.html.
- Francis, 2018a, *Discorso a Sua Beatitudine Rastislav, Metropolita eelle Terre Ceche e della Slovacchia, Arcivescovo di Prešov*, viewed 06 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2018/may/documents/papa-francesco_20180511_metropolita-rastislav.html.
- Francis, 2018b, *Address during the ecumenical meeting in The World Council of Churches Centre*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180621_pellegrinaggio-ginevra.html.
- Francis, 2018c, *Address to the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180628_patriarcato-ecumenico-costantinopoli.html.

- Francis, 2019a, *Address to the delegations of Parliamentarians from the Czech Republic and from the Slovak Republic on the occasion of the 1150th anniversary of the death of St. Cyril*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/march/documents/papa-francesco_20190322_parlamentari-sancirilillo.html.
- Francis, 2019b, *Greeting during the visit to the Patriarch and to the Holy Synod in Sofia*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/may/documents/papa-francesco_20190505_bulgaria-patriarca.html.
- Francis, 2019c, *Address during the meeting with the Permanent Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/may/documents/papa-francesco_20190531_romania-chiesa-ortodossaromena.html.
- Francis, 2019d, *The Lord's prayer. Greeting in New Orthodox Cathedral in Bucarest*, viewed 10 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/may/documents/papa-francesco_20190531_romania-padrenostro.html.
- Francis, 2019e, *Address to participants in the international conference of leaders of the Catholic Charismatic renewal international service – Charis*, viewed 15 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190608_charis.html.
- Francis, 2019f, *Address to the delegation of the Ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190628_patriarcato-ecumenico.html.
- Francis, 2019g, *Letter to his holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, accompanying the gift of some relics of Saint Peter*, viewed 06 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190830_lettera-bartolomeo.html.
- Francis, 2021a, *Address to the delegation of The Lutheran World Federation*, viewed 10 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/june/documents/20210625-federazione-luterana.html>.
- Francis, 2021b, *Address to the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/june/documents/20210628-patriarcato-costantinopoli.html>.
- Francis, 2021c, *Address to the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox–Catholic working group*, viewed 15 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/october/documents/20211007-gruppo-ortodossocattolico-santireneo.html>.
- Francis, 2021d, *Address during the meeting with the Holy Synod in Nicosia*, viewed 10 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/december/documents/20211203-cipro-incontro-santosinodo.html>.
- Francis, 2022a, *Address to the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/june/documents/20220630-patriarcato-costantinopoli.html>.
- Francis, 2022b, *Message to the members of the commission for Catholic–Pentecostal dialogue*, viewed 01 September 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2022/documents/20220708-messaggio-dialogopentecostale.html>.
- Francis, 2023a, *Address to his holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the historic meeting of their predecessors, Pope Saint Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III*, viewed 04 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/may/documents/20230511-patriarca-tawadrosii.html>.
- Francis, 2023b, *Address to the international commission for dialogue between The Catholic Church and the disciples of Christ*, viewed 15 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/june/documents/20230628-discepoli-di-cristo.html>.
- Francis, 2023c, *Address to the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*, viewed 05 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/june/documents/20230630-deleg-patriarcato-costantinopoli.html>.
- Francis, 2023d, *Address to the participants in the meeting organized by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service – Charis*, viewed 15 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/november/documents/20231104-charis.html>.
- Francis, 2024, *Homily during the Celebration of Second Vespers 57th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, viewed 10 July 2024, from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2024/documents/20240125-vespri-unita-cristiani.html>.
- Francis–Bartholomew I, 2014, *Common declaration of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, viewed 03 September 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiese-ortodosse-di-tradizione-bizantina/relazioni-bilaterali/patriarcato-ecumenico/dichiarazioni-comuni/en1.html>.
- Francis–Karekin II, 2016, *Common Declaration of His Holiness Francis and His Holiness Karekin II at Holy Etchmiadzin, Republic of Armenia*, viewed 09 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160626_armenia-dichiarazione-congiunta.html.
- Francis–Mar Gewargis III, 2018, *Common Statement of Pope Francis and Catholicos Patriarch Mar Gewargis III*, viewed 20 July 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiesa-assira-dell-oriente/dichiarazioni-comuni/2018-joint-declaration-between-francis-and-gewargis-iii.html>.
- Francis–Tawadros II, 2017, *Common Declaration of His Holiness Francis and His Holiness Tawadros II*, viewed 09 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170428_egitto-tawadros-ii.html#Common_Declaration.
- Francis–Welby, 2016, *Common declaration of his holiness Pope Francis and his Grace Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury*, viewed 12 July 2024, from https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161005-vespri-canterbury.html#COMMON_DECLARATION_.
- Ivereich, A., 2015, *The great reformer: Francis and the making of a radical Pope*, Allen & Unwin, London.
- Kasper, W., 2015, *Pope Francis' revolution of tenderness and love. Theological & Pastoral perspectives*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ.
- Koch, K., 2019, *Message to the reverend Dr. Chris Ferguson, General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches on the occasion of the 2019 executive committee meeting*, viewed 01 September 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-mondiale-delle-chiese-riformate/relazioni/2019-message-to-revd-dr-chris-ferguson-for-2019-executive-commit.html>.
- Lutheran World Federation, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 2013, *From conflict to communion. Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, Leipzig.
- Madrigal Terraraz, S., 2019, *Unity prevails over conflict: Pope Francis' ecumenism*, transl. Salesians of Don Bosco, of the Province of Mary Help of Christians of Australia and The Pacific, Coventry Press, Melbourne.
- Mayer, A.C., 2017, 'The ecumenical vision of Pope Francis: Journeying together as fellow pilgrims – "The mystery of unity has already begun"', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 17(3), 156–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2017.1403840>
- Meehan, C., 2015, *Reformed churches praise Pope's Servant Heart*, viewed 03 July 2024, from <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/reformed-churches-praise-popes-servant-heart>.
- Palmer, T., 2014, *Bishop Tony Palmer and Pope Francis – The miracle of unity has begun: KCM Minister's conference 2014*, viewed 01 September 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrS4IDTLavQ>.
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 2020, *The Bishop and Christian unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano.
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, World Communion of Reformed Churches, 2015, *Justification and sacramentality: The Christian community as an agent for justice*, viewed 24 July 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-mondiale-delle-chiese-riformate/dialogo-internazionale-cattolico-riformato/documenti-di-dialogo/testo-in-inglese.html>.
- Synod of Bishops on Young People, 2018, *Intervento di Marco Fornerone, Rappresentante della Comunione Mondiale delle Chiese riformate*, viewed 01 September 2024, from <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/alleanza-mondiale-delle-chiese-riformate/relazioni/2018-intervento-del-rev-dott-chirs-ferguson-al-sinodo-sui-giov/it.html>.
- Wood, S.K., 2018, 'Pope Francis and Ecumenism', *One in Christ* 52(1), 3–16.
- Xavier, J., 2017, 'Culture of encounter and reconciled diversity: Pope Francis' vision of ecumenism', *Asian Horizons* 11(2), 357–372.