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To the World Methodist Council: when we serve those in need, our communion grows

Vatican City, 7 April 2016 – This morning the Holy Father received in audience a delegation from the World Methodist Council and expressed his joy for the opening in Rome of the Methodist Ecumenical Office, "a sign of our growing closeness, and particularly of our shared desire to overcome all that stands in the way of our full communion".

The Pope noted that fifty years have passed since the joint Catholic-Methodist theological commission began its work, and although differences remain, the dialogue between the two Churches is "based on respect and fraternity, one which enriches both our communities". He referred to the document currently under preparation which builds on the Methodist acceptance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, on the theme of "The Call to Holiness".

"Catholics and Methodists have much to learn from one another in how we understand holiness and how it can be lived out", Francis observed. "It is true that we do not as yet think alike in all things, and that on issues regarding ordained ministries and ethics, much work remains to be done. However, none of these differences constitute such an obstacle as to prevent us from loving in the same way and offering a common witness to the world. Our lives of holiness must always include a loving service to the world; Catholics and Methodists together are bound to work in different ways in order to give concrete witness to the love of Christ. When we serve those in need, our communion grows".