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SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE AI MEMBRI DELLA COMMISSIONE MISTA INTERNAZIONALE DI DIALOGO TRA CATTOLICI E LA "WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES"

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Alle 11.20, nella Sala dei Papi del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto in Udienza i Membri della Commissione Mista Internazionale di Dialogo tra Cattolici e la "World Alliance of Reformed Churches" ed ha loro rivolto le parole di saluto che pubblichiamo di seguito:

• SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to greet you during these days of your meeting here in Rome. You are now in the third phase of the International Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Catholic Church, a dialogue which began shortly after the Second Vatican Council and which has already led to significant results.

Within the ecumenical movement, theological dialogue is the proper setting for us to face together the issues over which Christians have been divided and to build together the unity to which Christ calls his disciples (cf. *Jn* 17:21). In this dialogue we clarify our respective positions and explore the reasons for our differences. Our dialogue then becomes an examination of conscience, a call to conversion, in which both sides examine before God their responsibility to do all that they can to put behind them the conflicts of the past. At that point, the Spirit fills us with a yearning to confess together that "there is one body and one Spirit, . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (*Eph* 4:4-6). And we feel this as a duty, as something that must be done so that "the world may believe" (*Jn* 17:21). For this reason the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenical dialogue is irrevocable.

In this third phase, your dialogue has as its theme "Church and the Kingdom of God". In recent history we have seen the agony caused by ideologies which have sought to displace God and his reign. How important it is, at the beginning of the new millennium, for all Christians, long separated from one another, to feel deeply challenged by the Lord's exhortation: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and

believe in the gospel" (*Mk* 1:15). May your dialogue embody the spirit of fraternal love and esteem needed to embrace these words of our Savior.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*1 Cor* 1:3).

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