

Ecumenical movement

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SECRETARIAT FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN UNITY

DIRECTORY FOR THE
APPLICATION OF THE
DECISIONS OF THE
SECOND VATICAN
COUNCIL CONCERNING
ECUMENICAL MATTERS

ECUMENISM IN HIGHER
EDUCATION

April 16, 1970

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PART II

ECUMENISM IN HIGHER
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INTRODUCTION

The Spirit of the Lord is at work in the present-day ecumenical movement in order that, when the obstacles hindering perfect ecclesiastical communion have been surmounted,¹ the unity of all Christians may at last be restored and shine forth,² for all peoples are called to be a single new people, confessing one Jesus, Saviour and

Lord, professing one faith, celebrating one eucharistic mystery:³ “that the world may believe that Thou has sent me,” as the Lord said (Jn. 17:21).

All Christians should be of an ecumenical mind, but especially those entrusted with particular duties and responsibilities in the world and in society; hence the principles of ecumenism sanctioned by the Second Vatican Council should be appropriately introduced in all institutions of advanced learning.⁴ In fact many have asked for some principles and lines of action which would help everybody to cooperate for the common good of the Catholic Church and the other Churches and ecclesial communities.

Bishops have a special responsibility for promoting the ecumenical movement and it is for them to lay down the required guiding principles. But because of the great variety of institutions of advanced learning it is far from easy to prescribe such guiding principles; there are differences between various nations and regions, differences deriving from varying individual maturity and experience; differences also resulting from the varying state of relationships whether in the ecclesiological sphere or in that of cooperation between the Catholic Church and other Churches or ecclesial communities. It belongs therefore to bishops and episcopal conferences both to translate general principles into practice⁵ and to adjust undertakings already on foot to existing conditions as these affect man and matters – and even, as occasion offers, to start new undertakings. It is strongly suggested that episcopal authorities should associate with themselves in this task an appropriate number of religious superiors, men and women, as well as rectors and administrators, specialists in religious education and practising teachers – and should bring representatives of the students into consultation when necessary.

Since moreover all ecumenical work is conditioned by the abnormal situation that the Churches and ecclesial communities involved in it are divided and at the same time their efforts are directed to restoring unity, the principles set out below will sometimes, because of changed circumstances, be newly applied in practice by competent authority, and the lines of policy will be adapted so as always to go on serving the purpose for which they were put out.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND AIDS TO ECUMENICAL EDUCATION

1. Though some undertakings for fostering ecumenical education mainly concern theological faculties and colleges – which will be treated further on – there are some forms of ecumenical action which are applicable to all higher education. Students and teachers who take part in this kind of undertaking are reminded that they must willingly and generously equip themselves with that solid religious training, maturity of mind and real skill which the nature of the project demands.

2. *The purpose of ecumenical programs.*

The purpose of programs of this type is to increase among students a deeper knowledge of the faith, the spirituality and the entire life and doctrine of the Catholic Church, so that they may wisely and fruitfully take part in ecumenical dialogue, each according to his capabilities,⁶ to direct their attention both to that inward renewal of the Catholic Church itself which will help so much to promote unity among Christians, and to those things in their own lives or in the life of the Church which hinder or slow down progress towards unity;⁷ a further purpose is that teachers and students should learn more about other Churches and communities, and so understand better and assess more correctly what unites Christians and what divides them;⁸ finally, since these efforts are not to be mere intellectual exercises, the aim is that those taking part in them should better realize the obligation of fostering unity between Christians and so be led to apply themselves more effectively to achieving it. They will also be led to do what is in their power to give joint Christian witness to the contemporary world.

3. *Aids to achieving this purpose.*

a) Since various academic subjects may have a connection with ecumenism, the following points, which may serve as examples, should be borne in mind:

Where courses or lectures on religion are given in various forms to students, whether as part of the syllabus or occasionally, those who give

them should take note of what is said below about the ecumenical aspects of theological teaching.⁹

Courses in philosophy, while providing a solid and coherent understanding of man, of the world and of God based on a philosophical heritage of lasting value, should also take account of contemporary philosophical investigations, and pupils should properly be made aware of the principles which govern these¹⁰. This because they ought to know and assess properly the philosophical principles which often underlie existing theological and exegetical views among the various Churches and Christian communities.

The style and ways of teaching history should be reviewed so that in dealing with Christian society due consideration is given to the different Christian communities and their whole way of life understood. The events and personalities involved in the various religious divisions should be dealt with fairly and the many attempts to restore unity and bring about renewal in the Church should not be overlooked.

In the other subjects, attention can be paid to those spiritual elements which are part of the common Christian inheritance and are to be found among various Christian communities, e.g., in the field of literature, the arts, music.

b) As far as possible, properly instructed Catholics, so long as they firmly maintain their Catholic heritage, should be encouraged to support undertakings in the field of religious studies proposed by non-confessional universities.

c) Among the various types of activities usually associated with academic institutions, some are more specially suited to promoting the ecumenical movement. These are some examples:

Conferences or study-days dealing with specifically ecumenical themes.

Meetings or associations for study, for joint work or for social welfare work which may provide occasion for ecumenical discussion, or for examining Christian principles of this social action and aids to putting those principles into practice. Those meetings and associations, whether confined to Catholics or including other Christians, should do all they can to cooperate with existing student societies.

In halls of residence attached to academic establishments circumstances may suggest exchanges between Catholics, faithfully witnessing to their own belief, and other Christian students, by means of which both, with suitable guidance, may live their lives together in a deeper ecumenical spirit.

In university journals and reviews, space may be assigned for ecumenical news and at least occasionally for more serious articles on ecumenical subjects.

d) Among activities to which special attention should be paid, we should include prayer for unity not only during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity but at other appropriate times during the year.¹¹ Subject to local and personal circumstances, and to the rules laid down about liturgical worship in common, joint retreats may well be organized for one or more days under a reliable retreat master.¹²

e) There is a wider field for joint witness in social and welfare work. Students should be prepared for this kind of cooperation and exhorted to take part in it. This will have greater and more precise effect if students not only of theology but of other faculties (e.g., law, sociology, political economy) join forces to promote and carry out the work.

f) Priests engaged in some ministry in these various institutions (chaplains, teachers, student advisors) have a special duty in the matter of ecumenical relations. This duty demands of them both a deeper knowledge of the Church's doctrine and a particular qualification and experience in academic subjects, as well as steady prudence and moderation, if they are to be useful guides to students who want to combine full and genuine loyalty to their own Christian community with a positive and open bearing towards their fellow-students.

II. THE ECUMENICAL DIMENSION OF RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

1. *Spiritual Formation.*

Since the Holy Spirit must be regarded as a work in the ecumenical movement, the first thing to be attended to in ecumenical education is conversion of heart — spiritual life and its renewal, for “from newness of mind, from self-denial and from the freest outpouring of charity, desires for unity proceed and mature.”¹³ This renewal should be rooted in the life of the Church itself, in its liturgy and sacraments; it should be directed to prayer for the unity of all Christians and to the fulfilling of the Church’s function in the world. The spiritual life of Catholics must be genuine: centered on Christ the Saviour and looking to the glory of God the Father it will assign to the whole range of religious acts and exercises their due and proper importance.

To give adequate emphasis to the Catholic and apostolic character of the Church,¹⁴ the ecumenical spiritual life of Catholics should also be nourished from the treasures of the many traditions, past and present, which are alive in other Churches and ecclesial communities; such are the treasures found in the liturgy, monasticism and mystical tradition of the Christian East; in Anglican worship and piety; in the evangelical prayer and spirituality of Protestants.

But this linking with other spiritual traditions, if it is not to remain in the realm of theory, should be perfected by practical acquaintance with them where circumstances favor this. Hence some prayer in common and sharing in public worship are to be promoted, in harmony with the rules laid down by competent authority.¹⁵

2. *Doctrinal Education*

Ecumenism should bear on all theological discipline as one of its necessary determining factors,¹⁶ making for the richer manifestation of the fullness of Christ. Nevertheless ecumenism as a separate question may either provide the material of a special course of lectures, if opportunity offers, or at least be the theme of some lectures given in the chief dogma courses.

3. *The ecumenical aspect in all theological teaching.*

Ecumenism should embrace these aspects:

a) those elements of the Christian heritage both of truth and of holiness which are found in common in all Churches and Christian communities,¹⁷ though they are sometimes given different theological expression;¹⁸

b) the spiritual treasury and wealth of doctrine which each Christian community has as its own, and which can lead all Christians to a deeper understanding of the nature of the Church;¹⁹

c) whatever in matters of faith causes dissension and division, yet can stimulate a profounder examination of the word of God aimed at manifesting what in proclaiming truth are real contradictions and what only seem to be.

4. *The ecumenical aspect in the separate branches of theology.*

In every branch of theology the ecumenical standpoint should make for consideration of the link between the subject and the existing mystery of the unity of the Church. Moreover, when the subject is expounded, pupils should be given a sense of the fullness of Christian tradition in doctrine, spirituality and Church discipline. They will become aware of this when their own tradition is related to the riches of other Christian traditions of East and West, both in their classical forms and in their modern expressions.

This way of paying attention to the patrimonies of other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities is undoubtedly important: in studying Scripture, the common source of the faith of all Christians; in studying apostolic tradition as it is to be found in the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the Eastern and Western Church; in liturgical teaching which presents a scholarly comparison of various forms of divine worship and of their doctrinal and spiritual significance; in expounding dogmatic and moral theology with particular regard for questions raised by the ecumenical movement; in Church history, when it carefully traces the unity of the Church itself through the changes brought about by time, and the causes of division among Christians; in teaching canon law, where elements of divine law are to be diligently distinguished from elements of merely ecclesiastical law which can be

exposed to change by reason of the passage of time or because of temperament, culture or tradition;²⁰ finally in pastoral and missionary training and in social studies, in which particularly careful attention is due to the situation in which all Christians find themselves when facing the requirements of the contemporary world. In this way the fullness of divine revelation is expressed better and more completely and the task which Christ entrusted his Church to fulfill in the world is carried out.²¹

5. *Conditions of a genuine ecumenical mind in theology.*

Ecumenical action "cannot but be fully and sincerely Catholic — faithful that is to the truth which we have received from the Apostles and Fathers, and in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always confessed."²² But we should always preserve the sense of an order based on degree, or of an "hierarchy" in the truths of Catholic doctrine which, although they all demand a due assent of faith, do not all occupy the same principal or central place in the mystery revealed in Jesus Christ, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith.²³

Students should learn to distinguish between revealed truths, which all require the same assent of faith, and theological doctrines. Hence they should be taught to distinguish between "the deposit of faith itself, or the truths which are contained in our venerable doctrine," and the way in which they are enuntiated,²⁴ between the truth to be enuntiated and the various ways of perceiving and more clearly illustrating it,²⁵ between apostolic tradition and merely ecclesiastical traditions. Already from the time of their philosophical training students should be put in a frame of mind to recognize that different ways of stating things in theology too are legitimate and reasonable, because of the diversity of methods or ways by which theologians understand and express divine revelation. Thus it is that these various theological formulae are often complementary rather than conflicting.²⁶

6. *Ecumenism as a special branch of study.*

Even though all theological training has an ecumenical aspect, courses on ecumenism are not therefore superfluous. The following may be regarded as elements for such courses, leaving room for development as circumstances and time suggest:

a) "Oecumene," "ecumenism" – their historical origins and present meaning.

b) The doctrinal foundations of ecumenism, with special reference to the bonds of communion still holding between Churches and ecclesial communities.

c) The aim and method of ecumenism, the various forms of union and cooperation, the hope of restoring unity, the conditions for unity, full and perfect unity, the practice of ecumenism especially in the sphere of social action.

d) The history of ecumenism, especially of the various attempts made in the course of time to restore unity, and a consideration of their positive and negative features.

e) An account of the "institutional" aspect and present life of the different Christian communions: their doctrinal tendencies, the true causes of divisions, missionary effort, spirituality, forms of divine worship.

f) A number of questions to do with ecumenism: special questions which the ecumenical movement gives rise to about hermeneutics, ministry, divine worship, "intercommunion," tradition, "proselytism" and true evangelization, false irenicism, the laity, the ministry of women in the Church and so on.

g) The spiritual approach to ecumenism, especially the significance of prayer for unity and the various forms of spiritual ecumenism.

h) Existing relations between the Catholic Church and other Churches and ecclesial communities or federations of Churches, as well as the relations which all these have with each other.

i) The importance of the special role which the World Council of Churches has in the ecumenical movement, and the relationships which exist between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

III. PARTICULAR GUIDELINES FOR ECUMENICAL EDUCATION

1. *Dialogue between Christians in higher education.*

Careful examination of the general principles governing dialogue between Christians makes it very clear that seminaries, theological faculties and the other institutions of higher education have their own particular role to play in ecumenical dialogue, and that dialogue itself in these institutions is a help towards their fulfilling their function regarding the education of the young.

But dialogue as an element of education demands:

a) sincere and firm fidelity to one's own faith, without which dialogue is reduced to a conversation in which neither side is genuinely engaged;

b) a mind open and ready to base life more deeply on one's own faith because of the fuller knowledge derived from dialogue with others, who are to be reckoned as sharing with us the true name of Christian;

c) investigation of ways and means of concerted effort to establish relations and restore a unity which will not rest on indifference or false irenicism or facile accommodation to the demands of the age, but on a greater fidelity to the Gospel and an authentic profession of the Christian religion which satisfies the demands both of truth and of charity;

d) consultation and cooperation with the pastors of the Church and a due deference for their directions and advice, for dialogue is never a mere exchange between persons and institutions, but of its very nature engages the whole Church;²⁷

e) readiness to acknowledge that the members of the various Churches and ecclesial communities are generally best equipped to expound properly the doctrine and life of their own communion;

f) respect for conscience and for the convictions of others in explaining the outlook and doctrine of one's own Church or one's own way of understanding divine revelation;

g) readiness to acknowledge that not everyone is equally equipped for dialogue – there are differences of intellectual training, maturity of mind, spiritual development; hence syllabuses and lectures should be revised so as to correspond to the real needs of the students.

2. *Those who have special ecumenical tasks.*

To fulfill her ecumenical responsibility, the Church must have at her disposal an adequate number of experts in ecumenical matters – clergy and religious, laymen and women. They are needed everywhere – even in regions where Catholics form the greater part of the population.

Among the tasks that may be assigned to them are these: to help bishop and clergy and regional authorities to prepare the faithful to acquire a truly ecumenical mentality; to assist or direct the various diocesan and regional ecumenical commissions; to establish suitable relations with other Christian communities; to give special lectures on ecumenism in seminaries and other educational establishments; to organize ecumenical activity in Catholic schools and institutions; to foster the training of missionaries for their own special kind of ecumenical work.²⁸

Besides their solid general theological training, it is desirable that these experts:

a) should have special advanced training in some branch of study – such as theology, exegesis, history, philosophy, religious sociology;

b) should be properly instructed in the principles of the present-day ecumenical movement, in the questions which occupy it, in what it has achieved and has still to achieve. Over and above what they can learn from lectures and research, they should be strongly urged to take every possible part in ecumenical relationships, which they can do by means of meetings, conferences, centers or institutes for ecumenical studies and so on;

c) should be properly instructed in the traditions of those Christians, side by side with whom they live and work. Studies of this sort should as far as possible be done by regular contact with those who know and live such traditions.

3. *Those already working in a pastoral ministry.*

In carrying out the established policy of pastoral training for the clergy through clergy councils, special institutes, retreats, days of recollection or pastoral discussion, bishops and religious superiors are earnestly exhorted to make sure that the necessary care is devoted to ecumenism, and also to bear in mind these particular points.²⁹

As opportunity offers, special instruction should be provided for priests, religious and laity on the present state of the ecumenical movement, so that they may learn to bring an ecumenical point of view into preaching, into divine worship, into catechism and into Christian life at large. Further, as far as it is possible and prudent, a minister of another Church or community should be invited to explain his own tradition or talk on pastoral problems, which are very often common to all Christian ministers.

Where it seems advisable and the Ordinary agrees, the Catholic clergy should be invited to attend special meetings with ministers of other Churches and communities – for the purpose of getting to know each other better and of solving pastoral problems by a joint Christian effort. This sort of activity often goes best when associations are set up, such as local or regional clergy councils, ministerial associations, etc., or when people join existing associations of the kind.

Theology faculties, seminaries and other seats of learning can make a great contribution to ecumenical effort both by arranging courses of study for clergy doing pastoral work and by urging their own teaching staff to take a ready share in studies and courses organized by others.

4. *Concerning Superiors and teaching staff in institutions for theological education.*

The general principles set out in Chapter II should shape, guide and give stimulus to the training of all those who are intended to teach theology and related subjects, so that they will be adequately learned and fitted for the office of educating younger priests, students of the sacred sciences, religious and laity.

To help teaching staff to satisfy their ecumenical responsibilities, bishops, whether in their own diocese or together with the bishops of the region or country, religious superiors and those in authority in seminaries, universities and similar institutions should take pains to promote the ecumenical movement and spare no effort to see that their teachers keep in touch with advances in ecumenical thought and action. Moreover, care must be taken to maintain an adequate supply of books, reviews, periodicals and similar publications, Catholic and non-Catholic.

In planning studies, the following points should be given the fullest attention:

a) It seems appropriate to give a special course on ecumenism shortly after theological studies have begun: a broad knowledge of ecumenical matters will help students to a deeper understanding of particular subjects.

b) To intensify devotion to ecumenism and promote familiarity with the whole ecumenical movement, it will be useful from the beginning to take opportunities of providing conferences for pupils. Teachers in class may also usefully assign pupils essays and other exercises on ecumenical themes.

c) Textbooks and other teaching aids should be chosen or written with due care. These works should faithfully set out the opinions of other Christians on matters of theology, history and spirituality, which moreover should not be considered in isolation from life but as embodied in a tradition by which men live.

d) It is most important that students who are being trained for the priesthood or the religious life should learn fully how to conduct themselves in future pastoral dealings with other Christians – e.g., how they may help them in some spiritual need and yet at the same time respect their freedom of conscience and the grace of the Holy Spirit in them.

e) The libraries of seminaries and other institutions of higher education should be kept well supplied with books and periodicals, both those which deal with ecumenism in general and those which give particular treatment of questions of local ecumenical concern are important for the special purpose of the institution.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND OTHER CHRISTIANS

1. Subject to conditions which vary from place to place, and to the principles already put forward,³⁰ cooperation between institutions of higher education and relationships on various levels between teachers and students of different Churches and communities can be of the greatest advantage not only to the ecumenical movement at large but to the ecumenical education of teachers and pupils concerned.

2. Such cooperation between Christians in the sphere of higher education can greatly profit the institutions involved; it contributes in fact:

—to fuller knowledge of theology (especially in the matter of useful aids for the science of hermeneutics), and also of other subjects which are treated in institutions of advanced learning;

—to assisting the academic faculty, through the shared use of books and libraries, by providing a greater number of qualified teachers; by cutting down useless or duplicated courses, subject to directions given below;

—to increasing material resources where necessary, e.g., by shared use of buildings, especially libraries and classrooms;

—by multiplying the assistance which the institution can afford to society as a whole: for men will more freely pay attention to the authority and influence of some joint Christian action than to that of single institutions operating in isolation;

—to reinforcing the witness offered to other Christians of the proved worth of the institution - something which men look for from such training over and above the merely academic quality of the teaching.

3. This cooperation and habit of exchanges with their colleagues of other Christian communities continually opens up new paths of scholarly inquiry to teachers, and helps them to fulfill their teaching function better. Furthermore the students can to some degree already be prepared throughout their period of training for future ecumenical work, and with the help of really expert Catholic instructors they can better learn to overcome such intellectual and spiritual difficulties as might perhaps arise from exchanges of this kind.

4. In this cooperation two classes of persons should be distinguished:

1) graduates and those who have completed a general theological training,

2) those who have not yet completed the ordinary curriculum.

5. Episcopal conferences, in drawing up a program of Training for the Priesthood according to the decree *Optatam Totius*, should issue general rules, on lines to be laid down later, about particular cases of cooperation between Catholic seminaries and those of other Christians. But since institutions for training members of religious orders can also take part in this cooperation, major superiors or their delegates should contribute towards drawing up rules in accordance with the decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 35, art. 5 and 6. If particular questions arise about some seminary or institution the Ordinary who has jurisdiction over it must decide, according to the lines laid down by the episcopal conference, which undertakings require his approval and which can be left simply to those in charge of the seminary.

6. *Graduates and others who have finished a general theological training.*

Ecumenical dialogue and action should be advanced by setting up ecumenical institutes and centers in various places and countries and, as circumstances demand, with the approval of lawful authority. These institutes or "centers" as they are called, can be established separately, or as part of some faculty or by cooperation between existing faculties or universities. The structure and aims of these centers can vary. But when they are planned and their programs arranged, it is most desirable to keep in mind the whole ecumenical concern in all its aspects.

7. Of such institutes these types may be distinguished:

A. Centers of ecumenical research in which theological questions on a particular theme are thoroughly thrashed out, and directed towards ecumenical dialogue through inquiry into sources, scholarly exchanges and published writings.

B. Ecumenical theological institutes in which students who have finished their general theological training can be set aside to do specialized work in ecumenical theology by means of special courses and seminars. Such institutes may be either designed for general ecumenical affairs, or they may be devoted to special study in some one subject (e.g., the theology of the Oriental Churches, Protestant theology, Anglican theology, etc.) but this should by no means involve neglecting to keep in view the ecumenical problem as a whole.

C. Associations for the joint study of theological and pastoral questions by ministers of different Churches and communities who meet to discuss the theoretical and practical aspects of their ministry among their own people as well as their common witness to the world.

D. Federations of universities and other institutions to facilitate the shared use of libraries and other resources and to establish closer links between their teachers and students in planning study programs.

8. *Interconfessional Institutes.*

Subject to conditions of time and place, the institutes and centers just referred to may be conducted either by Catholics or by several confessions simultaneously. Joint institutes are particularly useful where churches or ecclesial communities need to examine certain questions together (e.g., mission work, dealings with non-Christian religions, questions about atheism and unbelief, the use of media of social communication, architecture and sacred art and, in the province of theology, explanation of Holy Scripture, salvation history, pastoral theology, etc.) which if they are properly resolved can very much advance Christian unity. The setting up and administration of these institutes should normally be entrusted to those who conduct them, saving the rights of competent ecclesiastical authority.

9. Where it seems advisable, Catholic institutes can, in accordance with n. 5 of the present chapter, become members of associations designed to promote raising the standard of theological education, better training of those intended for the pastoral ministry, better cooperation between religious institutions for advanced learning. Care should however be taken that joining such an association leaves intact the autonomy of the Catholic institute in matters of the program of studies, of the doctrinal content of subjects to be taught, of the spiritual and priestly training of the students insofar as these things are determined by the institutes' own purpose and by rules laid down by legitimate ecclesiastical authority.

10. *Those who have not yet finished general theological training.*

Throughout the whole period of their general theological training, whenever there is question of Catholic students cooperating in their intellectual formation with other Christian students, the principles set out in Chapter III, n. 1, must be especially borne in mind. For these exchanges (arising from joint study, prayer, social action, etc.) will be fruitful insofar as everybody involved is firmly founded in his own faith and tradition and aware of the purposes of ecumenism and the requirements of ecumenical dialogue.

11. Catholic seminaries, theological schools, houses and training colleges for religious men and women can collaborate with other Christian institutions of a similar kind. This cooperation may take various forms according to local conditions and the character of the institutions concerned; for example, occasional exchange of teachers, mutual recognition of certain courses, various kinds of federation, affiliation to a university. In all this care should be taken that the native character of the Catholic institution is preserved, together with its right to train its own students and expound Catholic doctrine, taking account of what is said below, n. 13.

12. Experts in ecumenism from other communities may be invited to hold conferences in Catholic institutions and even to conduct some courses, so long as the proper character of the institution concerned is respected. Catholic teachers should by all means be ready to do the same for others if they are asked.

13. Catholic students may be allowed to attend lectures at institutions, even seminaries, of other Christians, according to the following guiding principles. These things should be kept in view: a) the usefulness of the course and the solid help it will afford in their training as a whole; b) the public reputation, mastery of his subject and ecumenical mind of the teacher; c) the previous preparation of the pupils; d) their spiritual and psychological maturity, and above all e) the very nature of the branches of study concerned; for the more the doctrinal aspect enters into the subject matter, the more caution should be exercised in allowing pupils to attend. Hence, while ordinary or systematic instruction should be given by Catholic teachers, especially where exegesis, dogmatic and moral theology are concerned, Catholic pupils can attend classes dealing with practical subjects, such as biblical languages, communications media, religious sociology insofar as this new science is based on observation of facts, etc. Subject to the judgment of their superiors, who, as was said earlier, should weigh their scientific and spiritual preparedness, students may also attend lectures of common usefulness even though these have a certain doctrinal aspect — examples are church history and patrology. It is the office of superiors to take decisions in these matters, after consulting with the students, according to the general regulations of the seminary and the directions given by the Ordinary who has jurisdiction over it.³¹

It will do much to make such programs really fruitful in practice if Catholic teachers have a fuller knowledge of the writings, opinions, and ecumenical outlook of those teachers from other Christian communities whose classes pupils are allowed to attend. This will be easier if they meet them often and visit their institutions. Further, it is strongly recommended that seminary superiors periodically hold discussions with their staff and spiritual directors, to review the program of studies, suggest changes, and deal with difficulties that may have arisen. Similar meetings and discussions with colleagues from other Christian seminaries are also recommended.

14. In various parts of the world, the pattern of higher education is very much in a state of transition and many proposals are being put forward for amalgamating the different institutes for the study of religion in public and non-denominational universities. It belongs to episcopal conferences to judge, by appropriate means and with appropriate advice, what part clerical students may take in these schemes. In carefully examining this question, they should pay

particular regard to the right and proper intellectual and spiritual education of students for the priesthood as well as of other pupils under the guidance of Catholic authority; also to the active involvement of Catholic teachers in these programs and finally to the complete and assured freedom of the Church's magisterium to determine genuine Catholic doctrines and traditions.

If these joint enterprises are to give useful results, it is to be wished that the governing bodies of universities and faculties shall have as active members Catholics (laymen, clerics, religious) who are really expert in their own field and in ecumenical dialogue.

15. Other Catholic institutions which offer religious instruction, whether to students working for theology degrees or for those from other faculties, should be guided by these same principles but adapted to their own character and to the condition and requirements of their students. What has been said already about the previous religious training and maturity of mind of pupils, and of the special competence and general ability of teachers, is equally applicable to these institutions.

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In an audience granted to His Eminence Cardinal John Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, April 16, 1970, the Sovereign Pontiff, Paul VI, approved this Directory, confirmed it by his authority and ordered that it be published. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Rome, April 16, 1970.

John Cardinal Willebrands
President of the Secretariat
for Promoting Christian Unity

fr. Jerome Hamer, O.P.
Secretary

NOTE: The Latin text of the Directory is the only official text. This translation is provided as a service to those who consult it.

NOTES

- ¹ Second Vatican Council Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 4
- ² Cf. *ibid.*, n. 1
- ³ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 4
- ⁴ The term "institutions of advanced learning" in this document covers all university faculties, academic institutes, diocesan seminaries, institutes or centers or houses for the training of religious, men and women; it excludes therefore grammar and secondary schools, or (in American usage) high schools.
- ⁵ According to the directives laid down in the *Directorium Ecumenicum*, Pt. I, Nos. 2 and 6-8
- ⁶ Cf. Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, nos. 3 and 5
- ⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 4, 6 and 7
- ⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 3
- ⁹ Cf. pp. 7-9, Chapter II, nos. 2-5
- ¹⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council Decree on the Training of Priests, *Optatam Totius*, no. 15
- ¹¹ Cf. *Directorium Oecumenicum*, Part I, nos. 22 and 32-34
- ¹² According to the directives laid down by competent authority, cf. Introduction, s.f.
- ¹³ Cf. Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 7
- ¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 3
- ¹⁵ Cf. *Directorium Oecumenicum*, Part I, nos. 25-63. Cf. also "A declaration of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on the position of the Catholic Church concerning a common Eucharist between Christians of different Confessions," *Osservatore Romano*, 12-13 January 1970, p. 3
- ¹⁶ Cf. Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, nos. 9, 10
- ¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 3
- ¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 17
- ¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4, cf. also Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* of Paul VI, AAS 66 (1964), pp. 609 sqq.
- ²⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 13; cf. also *Unitatis Redintegratio*, nos. 4 and 16
- ²¹ Cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 12; cf. also Second Vatican Council Decree on the Church's missionary activity, *Ad Gentes*, nos. 12 and 36
- ²² *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 24
- ²³ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 11
- ²⁴ Cf. Pope John XXIII's allocution to the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, in *Constitutiones, Decreta, etc.*, Ed. Polyglotta Vaticana, p. 865; also *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 6 and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 62
- ²⁵ Cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 17
- ²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 17
- ²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4
- ²⁸ Cf. *Directorium Oecumenicum*, Part I, nos. 3-8
- ²⁹ Cf. Second Vatican Council Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, no. 16 and the Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 9
- ³⁰ Cf. supra, Chapter III, no. 1
- ³¹ Cf. supra, Chapter IV, no. 5

