DICASTERIUM
AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM

E Civitate Vaticana, die

PROT. N. 826/2026/g

GREETING

on the occasion of the Ecumenical Prayer on October 31, 2026, in the Cathedral of Lund (read by Cardinal Anders Arborelius OCD, Bishop of Stockholm)

Dear brothers and sisters in the communion of all the baptized,

I extend my warm greetings to all of you who have gathered for common prayer in the Lund Cathedral. I fondly recall the moving moment, exactly ten years ago, when Pope Francis and the then-President of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Munib Younan, stood before the altar of this cathedral as witnesses to unity, surrounded by a great multitude of the faithful from various Churches and Church Communions.

Together, the pain of separation, but also the hope for reconciliation were voiced, both before one another and before God. While we are united in gratitude for the faithfulness of a merciful God who, despite our human failings and weaknesses, has not abandoned us and wants to lead us toward an ever-deeper unity, our shared sense of wonder at the "miracle of Lund" finds here its unique space.

"The history of separation cannot be undone, but it can become part of our history of reconciliation" (a key theme from the preface to the 2021 Italian translation of the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification"). The spiritual experience of reconciliation is truly an ecumenical gift. We receive reconciliation with God – justification – "through baptism as hearers of the word and believers in it" (Joint Declaration, 27). Once reconciled with God, we can, in turn, become messengers of reconciliation for one another.

Wherever Christians follow this calling, the "miracle of Lund" can happen once again: divided Christians discover their unity. The very fact that the congregations of the Lutheran cathedral and of St. Thomas Catholic parish in Lund now regularly gather for common evening prayer (Vespers) is, in a sense, a continuation of the ecumenical worship service that was celebrated here ten years ago in such an impressive way. We are all invited to share in this experience of spiritual ecumenism – not only in Lund, not only in Sweden, but throughout the world, in every place.

./..

You, dear brothers and sisters, have gathered to commemorate a special moment on the journey from conflict to communion. Yet the journey continues, and the year 2030 already invites us to look ahead to the 500th anniversary of the "Confessio Augustana". In the course of the confessionalization process, the Augsburg Confession has become an expression of Lutheran identity and the confessional document of a confessional Church. In 1530, however, it was the final attempt to profess the common Catholic faith in the face of a looming – but not yet fully realized – division. It was a reform-Catholic witness of faith that sought to preserve unity. This pre-confessional aspiration remains valid to this day. The International Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue has therefore set itself the task of publishing a joint statement in 2030 regarding the enduring ecumenical importance of the Augsburg Confession.

The journey from the commemoration of the Reformation in Lund leads onward to the commemoration of the Augsburg Confession in Augsburg. Can we also hope for a "miracle of Augsburg"? May the Risen Lord, whose image is presented to us so impressively and invitingly in the apse mosaic of this cathedral here in Lund, bestow His blessing upon this endeavour.

In unity of prayers.

Yours,

+ Kt Card. Koch

Kurt Cardinal Koch
Prefect