



Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Walking Together

by Anne Mulqueen, OFS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

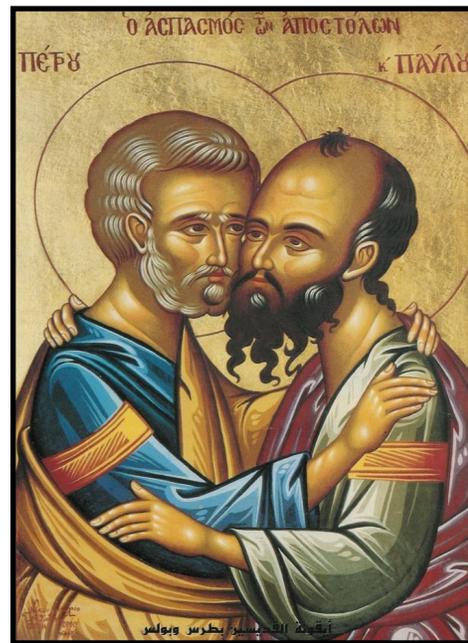
At the Chapter of Elections, October 2012, the newly elected National Executive Council appointed me – Anne Mulqueen – as Chair of the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee. My predecessor was our beloved Franciscan Troubadour, Dr. Edward L. Shirley, OFS. Sister Death called Ed home suddenly on the Feast of the Assumption, and a great and loving son of Saints Francis and Clare was united with his Blessed Trinity. He is now part of the divine dance, and we miss his presence and his wisdom. To honor Ed and to honor you, the committee promises to continue the work of unity Ed and others before him have begun.

To understand the Catholic Church's position on ecumenism, it is best to begin by restating the introduction to *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR), the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "**The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principle concerns of the Second Vatican Council.**" Two further concepts regarding ecumenism we will be exploring in future articles are:

•**Spiritual Ecumenism:** From UR n. 8 "This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism.' "

•**Growing in Communion:** From UR n. 3 "Those who believe in Christ and have been and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church – whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the

Church – do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. **The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles.**" Reminding us of Jesus' call to unity, "... so that [we] may all be one." John 17:21



The icon of the Apostles Peter and Paul embracing is a sign of the early Church overcoming its differences and affirming its Christian unity—a reminder for us all.

We must keep in mind that divisions are contrary to God's will and impede our common witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Can we continue to live beside our separated brothers and sisters and treat them like strangers? We must pray that our common God and Father will satisfy the longing of our hearts and unite us one day into one Holy Church in Jesus Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Peace and all good to all God's children,

Your sister Anne Mulqueen, OFS

On behalf of the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee