We Are Church welcomes Third European Ecumenical Assembly

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Grassroots Catholics Urge a Renewed Commitment to Honest Dialogue As Third European Ecumenical Assembly Opens

As the delegates to the Third European Ecumenical Assembly commence their journey to Rome on the first stop of a "pilgrimage" journey of reconciliation in Rome during meetings January 24-27, the Roman Catholic international reform and renewal movement We Are Church (IMWAC) extends our prayers for a profound movement of God's Spirit manifested through cooperation and genuine dialogue among the official delegations.

"We joyfully express our solidarity with the delegates committed to this historic meeting," said Christian Weisner, chair of the international movement We Are Church. "We reach out from our global grassroots movement and urge all European Christians to participate wherever possible in their local cities during 2006 and 2007, so that together we stir every European Church to recommit themselves to reconciliation, a joyful unity, and deep commitment to address the problems of the world."

We Are Church is encouraged that the first step in the journey will focus upon the despair and plight of immigrants. "We also deeply hope that Rome meeting will result in a real debate that focuses upon the relations between the churches, not only at the top, but at the grassroots. We hope they will recognize the very real difficulty caused by withholding Eucharistic hospitality, thus wounding the whole Christian family," said Weisner. "It would be a real shame if the Rome meeting dries up with the usual threadbare platitudes."

The international movement We Are Church (IMWAC) calls for an "honest debate" about the most vexing troubles in the ecumenical world, including the question of the Church's mission in the world. We also hope that the participants will come away with a greater awareness of the need to heal old divisions, so that all Christians can work together for peace, justice and the safeguarding of the environment on our own continent, and remind the participants of the historical responsibility of the Eastern and Western Churches to safeguard the whole planet, and in particular, to repair the historic sins of the Global North against the Southern Hemisphere.

We pray that the Holy Spirit, who Jesus promised would accompany all his disciples, will bless the European Churches' path towards Sibiu. May all be given the strength and the heart to make the difficult choices necessary for the churches to serve as believable witnesses of Christ's Gospel message.

The International Movement We Are Church, a grassroots church reform movement, was born in Austria and Germany in 1995 and then spread out in Europe and all continents. We Are Church is in touch with other reform movements all over the world. Its goal is to keep continue the process of reform in the Roman Catholic Church, a process which has been opened with Vatican II Council (1962-1965) and in recent years came to a standstill.

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Note for Reporters (see also www.eea3.org):

The first stop on the Ecumenical four stage journey for Christian fellowship will be in Rome within the next few days, from January 24-27, 2006.

The second stage will consist of national and/or regional meetings throughout Europe in the second half of 2006 or at the start of 2007.

The third stage in the pilgrimage will be in Wittenberg, Germany, where Luther, revolted by the sale of indulgences, hung his 95 theses on the Wittenberg Castle Church door in 1517, ultimately leading to the Protestant Reformation, from February 15-18, 2007.

Finally, the forth stop on the journey is the Assembly itself in Sibiu, Romania, where dialogue between the Eastern and Western churches will continue on September 4-8, 2007.

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