Cardinal Kurt Koch

President of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians

Message for the “Ecumenical Week” in Castel Gandolfo (9-13th May 2017)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The purpose of your gathering at the Mariapolis Centre for the ecumenical week is to deepen unity through your faith in Jesus Christ.  I would very much have liked to be with you today at the beginning of this week.  Unfortunately, it is not possible since I am currently in Namibia to attend the General Assembly of the World Lutheran Federation for this year's commemoration of the Reformation. However, I would like to send you my warmest greetings. I am grateful to the Focolare Movement for organizing this 59th "ecumenical week" and promoting the all-important “ecumenism of life”. Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for being part of this week and for sharing your experiences of ecumenical co-existence and common efforts for unity-that unity which has been lost in history.

This week focuses on the theme "Journeying together - Christians on the road to unity". This is a very promising title. In fact, communion among Christians is essentially a communion of faithful who journey together. Christians living in different ecclesial communities are all on the way to unity and live in communion united in everything they can do together. The experience of an ecumenism of life shows us that unity grows "journeying together" and that journeying together means already living and achieving unity. This attitude is particularly in the heart of Pope Francis, who expressed his ecumenical conviction with incisive words: "Unity will not come about as a miracle at the end: unity comes about during the journey, on the road.  The Holy Spirit brings it about during the journey."

To be on the road, together: this is essentially what ecumenism today is about. However, this journey is not a journey without a goal; the goal has a clear end in sight and a concrete name: Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are marching towards Him and above all to the place where He will give us unity, under the cross: the "Forsaken Jesus" is the "key to unity". The more we progress together on the path towards Him, the more we approach unity with one another.

Dear brothers and sisters, may these days that you will spend in Castel Gandolfo deepen this experience and be lived as an ecumenical communion of faithful journeying together. In prayerful union, I send to all of you my most cordial greeting.