

ICCRS CONFERENCE ON RECONCILIATION

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL BASIS

- if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who **reconciled** us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of **reconciliation**: that God was **reconciling** the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of **reconciliation** (τόν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς)... We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be **reconciled** to God. (2 Cor. 5: 17 - 20).

- “and in this one body to **reconcile** both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their **hostility**.” (Eph. 2: 16)
- “God was pleased to have all his fullness reside in him, and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Col. 1: 19 - 20)

RECONCILIATION, UNITY & SALVATION

All three are closely linked. It is impossible to have one without the others.

Sin produces division: in the sinner, in personal relationships, in families, groups, and societies, between nations, and peoples, between humans and the surrounding creation.

- Sin produces division, and leads to death.
- Salvation comes through faith in the saving, reconciling work of Jesus on the cross and in his victory over sin, Satan, and death.
- This faith includes confession of sin, and repentance (change of heart).
- God effects the reconciliation in Christ in the foundational act of baptism.

In the celebration of **baptism** the newly-converted person

- renounces sin, Satan, and death
- professes the faith of the Church in the Triune God;
- is plunged sacramentally into the death of Jesus;
- is born into the life of Christ and marked with the sign of his victory

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN CHURCHES

- Reconciliation between Christians is the most important reconciliation, above all healing the division between separated churches.
- The Church is called to be the sign of restored and healed relationships through the cross.
- John 13: 35; John 17: 21 - 23
- “that the world may believe may know

Christian division contradicts the Gospel we are all called to preach. The Gospel is a message of reconciliation.

Taking our divisions for granted proclaims: we do not fully believe what we preach.

Our divisions undermine the **credibility** of the Gospel and of the Church.

Our divisions weaken evangelization.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Confessing the sins of the churches against the Jewish people belongs to this foundational reconciliation.

- Ephesians 2: 14 - 16

* “When she delves into her own mystery, the Church ... discovers her link with the Jewish people” (Catechism, para. 839)

- Negativity to the Jews is opposition to God's chosen way to save the human race
- It refuses the true identity of Jesus
- It refuses the "two who become one" but who remain two
- First split among God's People is between Jesus-accepting Jews and Jesus-refusing Jews
- Next split between Jewish and Gentile disciples

Elements of Reconciliation

1. Proclamation of the Gospel of reconciliation
2. Confession of sin (of persons, of groups, of nations, of churches)
3. Sorrow proportionate to the sin, at same depth as the human engagement in the sin
4. Firm renunciation of all involved in the sin
5. Explicit forgiveness of the others
6. Willingness to repair (make restitution)

ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

The experience of the Holy Spirit in the Renewal equips Christians to be agents of reconciliation.

1. Hearing the Lord: as to what to confess, as to how to lead reconciliation initiatives, where to begin, how to proceed.
2. Sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit: what to say, when and how to say it.
3. The use of the charisms.

4. Spontaneity in articulation, in speaking, and in acting, especially spontaneous prayer and expressions of sorrow.
5. Use of everyone's gifts, the priesthood of all the baptized; makes possible new relationship between clergy & laity
6. Involvement of the whole person: mind, emotions, spirit; tears, groaning, the prayer of lament

THE SINS OF THE PAST

Are we responsible for what our ancestors did?
Not directly.

BUT

We are responsible for what we receive from our ancestors and from previous generations.

- Our **Memories**
- Our **Histories**
- The **Attitudes and Patterns of Behaviour** we learn and adopt

PURPOSE

The PURIFICATION OF MEMORIES (St John Paul II)

The Purification of Histories

Moving Towards A Shared History

IDENTITY & IDENTIFICATION

Identification is acceptance of your God-given identity.

Identity includes parents, tribe and people, their history, their dealings with God

We are saved by the total identification of Jesus with his own people Israel, and through that with all peoples on the earth

Jesus is “the son of David, the son of Abraham“

Jesus who is sinless receives the baptism of John which is a baptism of repentance.

“it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3: 15)

His identification with his people is total: he identifies with their calling, their glories, their heroes, and with their sins, their disobedience, their blindness.

“But he was pierced for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities. ...
He was cut off from the land of the living,
for the transgression of my people he was
stricken.” (Isaiah 53: 5, 8).

Our identification as Catholics and as citizens of our nations

In following Jesus, we are called to identify ourselves totally with our church families, and with our peoples:

with the **glory**, and with the **shame**.

Only this is a true witness.

Identifying only with the glory = ideology

WE AND OUR FATHERS

“We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our fathers.” (Jer. 3: 25)

“O LORD, we acknowledge our wickedness and the guilt of our fathers.” (Jer. 14: 20)

See Nehemiah 9, esp. vv. 32 - 35

“O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.” (Dan. 9: 8)

SOLIDARITY IN SIN

“Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors.” (Matt. 23: 32)

“Truly, I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.” (Matt. 23: 36). See Gen. 15: 16 and 1 Thess. 2: 16.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.” (Matt. 23: 37).