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Pope John Paul II greets Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at the Vatican Oct. 17. In their meeting the pope and queen expressed hopes for Christian unity and the alleviation of poverty.

Pope, queen aspire for unity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II and Queen Elizabeth II of England, meeting at the Vatican, expressed their hopes that the jubilee year would bring progress in Christian unity and in assistance to the world's poorest people.

The pope welcomed the queen to the Vatican Oct. 17, 20 years to the day after Queen Elizabeth's first meeting with the pope at the Vatican.

After a 20-minute private meeting and the introduction of the queen's entourage, the pope and the queen exchanged envelopes containing the texts of their speeches written for the occasion, but not read.

The 80-year-old Polish pope wrote to the 74-year-old queen, "You and I have personally lived through one of Europe's most terrible wars, and we see clearly the need to build a deep and enduring European unity, firmly rooted in the genuine human and spiritual genius of Europe's peoples."

Within Europe and throughout the world, he said, the 54-nation British Commonwealth and the Catholic

Church must place their resources at the service of justice and peace.

Queen Elizabeth wrote in her speech to the pope, "I welcome and admire your personal commitment" to the cause of alleviating poverty.

"For my government, helping the world's poor is a major priority, and we are actively supporting faster debt relief for the most heavily indebted countries, many of them in Africa," she said.

"The new millennium reminds us all how Christianity has shaped so much of our world," the queen said. "As Christians of the 21st century, we are called anew to follow our Lord's teaching and, by standing with those in suffering, need and distress, to build a world more worthy of its Creator."

Pope John Paul told the queen, who is head of the Church of England, that the "sad years of division" between Catholics and Anglicans and between the Vatican and the United Kingdom have ended, but more must be done to move toward Christian unity.



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Critics seek document's saving grace

On Sept. 5 the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a declaration officials say broke no new ground but made clear that the Catholic Church is necessary for salvation.

The document was said to have been directed particularly toward theologians in Asia who accept religious pluralism, the idea that other religions offer valid paths to salvation. Yet it made an impact around the world, with leaders of various religions issuing response after response — some dismayed, some unsurprised and some defensive — in the ensuing weeks. In the Rochester Diocese, Protestants in particular were offended, according to various Catholics involved in ecumenism.

The document, presented in a news conference by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, is titled "Dominus Iesus: On

the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church."

To the Rev. Ellen Wondra, a professor and Rochester Episcopal priest involved in national dialogue between the two churches, the document said, "There's one church and you're not it."

To the Rev. J. Paul Womack of Rochester it said his church, the United Methodist Church, is not a "proper" church and its essence is "deficient."

To Lutherans it was a step backward and a disappointment, according to the Rev. Richard Barbour, senior pastor of Rochester's Messiah Lutheran Church. On second glance, he said, it poses a challenge for the Christian church as a whole to work on its understanding of church.

Even among diocesan Catholics there were audible sighs.

STORY BY
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