

*Message of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV
to the Participants in the Ecumenical Week in Stockholm
on the Centenary of the 1925 Ecumenical Meeting
18 – 24 August 2025*

Dear brothers and sisters,

I extend heartfelt greetings to all gathered in Stockholm for the 2025 Ecumenical Week marking the centenary of the 1925 Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, as well as the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, a profound event in the history of Christianity.

In the year 325, bishops from across the known world gathered in Nicaea. In affirming the divinity of Jesus Christ, they formulated our creedal statements that he is “true God from true God” and “consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father.” Thus, they articulated the faith that continues to bind Christians together. That Council stood as a courageous sign of unity amidst difference – an early witness to the conviction that our shared confession can overcome division and foster communion.

A similar desire animated the 1925 Conference in Stockholm, convened by the pioneer of the early ecumenical movement, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, then Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala. The gathering brought together around 600 Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant leaders. Söderblom’s conviction was that “service unites.” He therefore called on his Christian brothers and sisters not to wait for agreement on every point of theology, but to unite in “practical Christianity” – to serve the world together in the pursuit of peace, justice and human dignity.

While the Catholic Church was not represented at that first gathering, I can affirm, with humility and joy, that we stand with you today as fellow disciples of Christ, recognizing that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has wholeheartedly embraced the ecumenical path. Indeed, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Council’s decree on ecumenism, called us to dialogue in humble and loving fraternity, grounded in our common baptism and our shared mission in the world. We believe that the unity Christ wills for his Church must be visible, and that such unity grows through theological dialogue, common worship where possible, and shared witness in the face of humanity’s suffering.

This call to shared witness finds powerful expression in the theme chosen for this Ecumenical Week: “Time for God’s peace.” This message could not be more timely. Our world bears the deep scars of conflict, inequality, environmental degradation and a growing sense of spiritual disconnection. Yet amid these challenges, we recall that peace is not merely a human achievement, but a sign of the Lord’s presence with us. This is both a promise and a task, for the followers of Christ are summoned to become artisans of reconciliation: to confront division with courage, indifference with compassion, and to bring healing where there has been hurt.

This mission has grown stronger through recent ecumenical milestones. In 1989, Pope John Paul II became the first Roman Pontiff to visit Sweden and was warmly welcomed at the Uppsala Cathedral by Archbishop Bertil Werkström, Primate of the Church of Sweden. That moment signaled a new chapter in Catholic-Lutheran

relations. It was followed by the joint commemoration of the Reformation in Lund in 2016, when Pope Francis joined Lutheran leaders in common prayer and repentance. There, we affirmed our shared journey “from conflict to communion.” This week, as you dialogue and celebrate together, I am pleased that my Delegation is able to be present as a sign of the Catholic Church’s commitment to continuing the journey of praying and working together, wherever we can, for peace, justice and the good of all.

May the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Council of Nicaea, and who continues to guide us all, deepen your fellowship this week, and awaken fresh hope for the unity which the Lord so ardently desires among his followers.

With these sentiments, I pray that the peace of Christ be with you all.

[Leo PP. XIV]