



World Council of Churches

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Bishop Jorge Pina Cabral
President
Conselho Portugues de Igrejas Cristas
(COPIC)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

It is with great sadness that I offer my condolences to the family and to the Portuguese Council of Christian Churches (COPIC) on behalf of the World Council of Churches upon the death of Reverend Jose Manuel Leite. Reverend Leite was greatly beloved in your church and in Portuguese society. His reputation was that of a strong, wise and gentle leader, who freely gave of his wisdom.

He served the church in many different capacities, including as an executive staff member of the Conference of European Churches, as President of COPIC and as representative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the UN Commission on Human Rights, he had a long and rich ministry! It became clear early on in his life that he wanted to work for ecumenism. His studies, which brought him to Montpellier and to the WCC's Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, certainly laid a weighty foundation. Hence, it is not surprising, that he was later conscientiously responsible for the rectory and the disciplines of Ecumenism and Patristics of the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Lisbon. As Mayor of Figueira da Foz, his gifts further enriched the community and the politics beyond your own church.

As a church and spiritual leader, Reverend Leite offered inspiration for our common life together as Christians. The call to unity, 'that all may be one,' is strengthened by those who can build relationships and fellowship between different cultures, theological and liturgical traditions, and people of other faiths or those of none. I believe that who he was and all that he did will have a legacy in your church and society.

Please be assured of our prayers of thanksgiving for Reverend Leite's exemplary service; for comfort for all those who mourn his departure, especially for his family.

Offering you every blessing in this season of upcoming Advent, the season of hope in the coming of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Acting General Secretary
World Council of Churches