



*To the Most Reverend Brian Farrell
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*

“Peace to all of you that are in Christ” (1 Pet 5:14). I extend my greetings and best wishes to you and to all those participating in the Arusha World Mission Conference. You have gathered from many parts of the world, as members of different Christian traditions, in order to pray and work together, so as to move forward in the spirit of the 1910 Edinburgh Mission Conference, which opened a new era in relations between Christian communities, for the sake of mission.

“Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship”. This theme, chosen by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches during the seventieth anniversary of its founding, powerfully reminds us that the Lord’s mandate to bring the Gospel to all people is not a matter of power and influence in the world. Rather, it is a pressing call to discipleship which manifests itself in unflinching love of neighbour, whoever that may be. By transforming people, beginning with each one of us, the Gospel transforms the world. This work of the Holy Spirit within us begins in baptism, that transforming moment which unites all Christians in Christ, a unity that needs to be ever more visible, “so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

I pray that the Holy Spirit will fill your hearts with the joy of the Gospel, the Good News of salvation in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten

Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (*Jn* 3:16). To evangelize is to offer a convincing witness to this extraordinary truth. I pray that the Conference will remind Christians of the magnificent, unique and challenging responsibility we have to share this transforming message. God's word is unimaginable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (cf. *Mk* 4:26-27).

Your Conference is taking place in Tanzania, within the African Continent. Having heard the Good News, Africa proclaims the Word in its own distinctive way: in joyful solidarity with all, especially with those on the peripheries; in the richness of its family values; and in its commitment to the care of creation. In particular, the young people of Africa, moved by the Spirit, can be the "transformed disciples" who in turn can help to "transform the world" in truth, justice and love.

May God grant his abundant blessings to you and to all those gathered for the Conference. I pray that all Christians may truly live in the Spirit and witness to the hope that is ours, with gentleness and reverence (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15). "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (*Gal* 5:25).

Francis

From the Vatican, 6 March 2018