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THE LIMA PROCESS ON BAPTISM, EUCHARIST
AND MINISTRY : POINTS OF ORIENTATION
AND CHANCES FOR REALISATION AFTER 30 YEARS*

Abstract

After 30 years of the event of Lima, there are still many important points of orientation and exciting chances for realisation of proposals from the past for ecumenism. The presentation examines what are chances and possibilities of the ecumenical circles regarding Lima Process after 30 years. Author states that the best thing for Churches is to sit together in ecumenical circles at many levels of Church life re-reading the actual Lima texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and asking each other in the light of the developments already accomplished in the last thirty years, which points of orientation might be especially relevant and which chances for realisation are realistic for us now in our given situation of today.

Key words: Lima Process, Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry, ecumenism.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you very much indeed, — especially Prof. PRZEMYSŁAW KANTYKA, — for your invitation to speak on the first day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity about such important ecumenical themes as Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. When I look up in my “Evangelical Church Calendar” the date of January 12th then I read amongst other events: “1982 Lima Docu-

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Wystąpienie wygłoszone na konferencji „Kiedy sakramenty nas połączą? 30 lat ekumenicznego uzgodnienia w Limie o chrzcie, Eucharystii i posługiwaniu duchownym”, zorganizowanej w Instytucie Ekumenicznym KUL 18 stycznia 2012 r.

ments". That is to say: The date January 12th 1982 already has a historical dimension. Having been at that time one of the three international secretaries of the Commission on Faith and Order I was privileged to take part in this Plenary Commission meeting from the 2nd to the 16th of January 1982. Today I will try to explain to you under three headlines what the name *Lima* stood for and still stands for: I. The Event, II. The Process afterwards and especially III. Points of Orientation and Chances for Realisation today.

1. THE EVENT IN LIMA AND ITS IMPORTANCE

On Tuesday, January 12th, from 9.00 to about 13.00, the final discussion and vote on the Convergence documents took place in the conference hall of the Oasis de los Santos Apostolos, close to Lima. One week before the 120 members of the Commission, including Orthodox and Roman Catholic ones, had their last chance to bring forward arguments and wishes for alterations in the text. All together 192 proposals were made, which had to be dealt with in the following days by a small group of experts. Then on January 12th the final version of the text was handed out to all Commission members. Again there was an opportunity for comments and final changes. The texts on Baptism and Eucharist passed without difficulties. The longest period of time was spent with the Ministry text.

After a focussed and intensive discussion the Vice-moderator Prof. *John Deschner* from the US moved the following motion before the Commission: "The Commission considers the revised text on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry to have been brought to such a stage of maturity that it is now ready for transmission to the Churches..." In fact, no one of the Commission members could have given his/her approval to *every* phrase of the entire text with regard to its content. Instead the meaning of this motion was that the Commission on Faith and Order had brought its theological work on these texts to such a degree of convergence, that the Churches themselves had now to be asked for their approval.

And then the so called "wonder of Lima" took place. The motion was passed unanimously, without negative votes, even without abstentions. After a moment of surprised silence the plenary broke out in a longstanding frenetic applause, the members embraced each other, a few tears were also seen, and only after some minutes the orthodox moderator *Nikos Nissiotis* was able to offer a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to God for this unique

event. When we left the conference hall a Commission member said to me: “This was a historical moment.” Indeed, so it was!

Three days later, at the closing evening of the conference, we celebrated in the chapel of the oasis for the first time what later became well known as the “Lima Liturgy,” the Eucharistic service, which had been prepared for this event by the Taizé brother frère *Max Thurian*, who himself was not present at the Lima conference. Almost all Commission members: Anglican, Old- and Roman-Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, United, Free Churches, even some Orthodox, received communion, with the Episcopalian priest *Robert Wright* from New York being the presiding minister. The ones, who were privileged to take part in this celebration, will never forget for it for the rest of their lives.

What then makes the 12th of January 1982 *a historical day*? With this motion at noon on that day a process came to an end that had lasted more than half a century, 55 years, going back to the First World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne 1927. Already at that conference two sections had dealt with the Sacraments and the spiritual Ministry of the Church. The amendments to the written texts had taken 15 years since 1967, when the first draft on ecumenical questions of the Eucharist was written down.

In the history of the Faith and Order movement—longer than a hundred years—this day was the highlight so far, indeed a shooting star! Also in the history of the modern ecumenical movement it is unique up to now, that theologians of all main church traditions, including Roman Catholic as well as Oriental and Eastern Orthodox ones, agreed unanimously to basic doctrinal questions. It was a *kairos*, that marked the open relations of the churches to each other during these years between 1980 and 1983.

II. THE LIMA PROCESS DURING THE 80IES AND 90IES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The adoption of the Convergence document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry in Lima was the starting point of a long-term process of reception in many churches. The preface of the published text opened this reception process with *four questions to the churches* relating

(1) to the Apostolic Tradition in the text, (2) to the relations between the churches on the basis of this text, (3) to the consequences within each church and (4) to proposals for the subsequent Faith and Order study project on “the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today”. These questions were

meant as an aid to the “spiritual process of receiving this text...at all levels of church life” (Preface X). Thus began the worldwide Lima process, an unprecedented enterprise in the ecumenical movement.

The original *English text* of the Lima document was published in 23 editions within 7 years with all together about a 100 000 copies. The German translation reached 11 editions with about 50 000 copies within the first 5 years. In addition to the text the Faith and Order secretariat provided a *Study Guide* for the document and a volume with *theological Essays* on different aspects of the themes. Most important for the reception process was the *Eucharistic Liturgy of Lima*, which became known worldwide by its celebration at the 6th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) 1983 in the Vancouver worship tent and its live televising into many countries. Later, in 1987, a formula of a service of *Commemoration of Baptism* was also prepared: the so called *Geneva Liturgy*. Thus there was a whole printed set of materials provided by the WCC in Geneva, which enormously helped churches in English speaking areas like North-Western Europe, North America, eastern parts of Africa as well as Australia and New Zealand to receive the Lima document and to deal with its content. Most of the English printed materials were also translated into the German language, some into French, a few into Spanish, and I do not know whether any into Polish or other East European languages.

All churches had not only been asked in the preface to deal with the Lima text at all levels, but also “to prepare an *official response* to this text at the highest appropriate level of authority, whether it be a council, synod, conference, assembly or other body” (*ibid.*). Never before and never afterwards the member churches of the WCC were so boldly addressed. Also a final date was given for the response by the end of 1984, three years time to achieve a result in the process of reception.

Alerted in this way a process of studying, discussing and learning about Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry began and continued during *the 80ies* of the previous century. At the end in the late 80ies all together 186 official responses of churches and ecumenical-bodies had been mailed to the Faith and Order secretariat in Geneva. Most of them were published again by brother *Max Thurian* of Taizé between 1986 and 1988 in a series of 6 volumes, all with the same title: “Churches respond to BEM.” As I said before the majority of these responses came from English speaking areas of the world. The churches involved in the process are mainly those who had and have to struggle with divisions in the history of their region, i.e. again in Europe and North America. But almost one third—55!—responses were given by churches from the southern hemisphere.

Perhaps the most important response of all was prepared by the *Vatican* secretariat (today: Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity and published under the authority of the Holy See. It was the first and so far the only time, that the Vatican took an official stand to a WCC document. To understand this one has to know that since 1968 10% of the ordinary Faith and Order Commission members, that means 10 to 12 persons, are officially delegated by the Vatican. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity had done a great deal in the first place to make the Lima text well known within the Roman-Catholic world. It sent the document to about 110 bishops conferences all over the world, asking them for distribution, study and comment on the text. About 40 of them, more than one third, mailed their response to Rome – I do not know whether the Polish bishops conference belonged to them or not. On the basis of these responses the official Roman-Catholic answer was then prepared by the respective secretariat and published on the 21st of July 1987. This process of reception within the Roman-Catholic Church was a *Novum* in its history, too. Without going into any details of this roman-catholic commentary on the Lima document it is remarkable how many common aspects are underlined in the text on Baptism. Also the list of liturgical elements in the celebration of the Eucharist (P. 27) is in principal endorsed. It is of course no surprise that most problems are indicated in the Ministry text. Nevertheless the official Roman-Catholic response to BEM, which opens the last volume VI of the series “Churches respond to BEM”, is an extremely helpful text for the ongoing dialogue on these matters.

Are there also any *substantial results* of the Lima reception process? Yes, there are at least three, the Evangelical Church in Germany being involved in all of them:

(1) In 1985 the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Catholic Diocese of the Old-Catholics in Germany signed an “Agreement on a mutual invitation for participation in the Eucharist”.

(2) In 1987 representatives of Protestant and Evangelical-Methodist churches agreed in a “Declaration concerning giving each other communion in preaching and celebrating the Eucharist”.

(3) In 1988 the Church of England and the evangelical churches in the two German states at that time developed “The Meissen Common Statement: “On the Way to Visible Unity”, which leads into “The Meissen Declaration”. There it says under No 1: “We acknowledge one another’s churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God” (No 17 A1).

These are three results of the Lima process in *Germany*. There are also others in other countries. Not immediately belonging to the Lima process, but in connection with the first visit of pope *John Paul II.* to Germany 1980 and with the positive ecumenical atmosphere created by the Lima process are the results in 1985 dealing with *mutual condemnations* between the Roman-Catholic Church and the Churches of the Reformation in the 16th century. In the Final Report after 5 years of common work it says: "The Common Ecumenical Commission asks the leading bodies of the respective churches to declare obligatory that the condemnations of the 16th century do not apply to the partner of today" (*Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* I, S. 195). This statement indicates also the climate of convergence which was created by the Lima Convergence declarations.

In the light of these developments it is obvious, that the passing of the Lima document in 1982 created in many countries between many churches a hopeful attitude towards each other during the years of the 80ies. In *the 90ies* the Lima process weakened. Well, there was an official Faith and Order "Report on the Process and Responses (to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry) 1982-1990," (FOPaper No 149), but the Commission on Faith and Order failed perhaps itself in the early 90ies to give new input to the process and to formulate clear and realistic goals to aim at. At the 5th World Conference on Faith and Order 1993 in Santiago de Compostela the Lima process was one theme amongst others, but this World Conference missed its unique chance to focus, to highlight and to further the Lima process towards mutual recognition of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. So a chance was lost.

But in the 90ies the *Porvoo Common Statement* of 1992 was signed between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches. It goes further than the Meissen Agreement, especially regarding each others ministries: "We acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in all our churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry" (The Porvoo Declaration, a V). A certain echo of Lima can also be heard in the ecumenical Encyclical of pope *John Paul II. Ut Unum Sint* from 1995, when he refers to the positive results of dialogues with other churches and mentions explicitly in footnotes the work of the Commission on Faith and Order (No 64ff).

Summarizing one can say that the Lima process lasted until the midnineties, then other themes came to the ecumenical forefront, e.g. the Joint Declaration on Justification, which was signed by representatives of the Lu-

theran World Federation and the Vatican in 1999—also a unique event. But the Lima process is in no way yet completed; it will come to an end only at that moment when the churches are able to recognize each others' Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and to celebrate these sacraments together. What can the Lima text contribute to this final aim after 30 years? This question brings us to our 3rd and main part:

III. POINTS OF ORIENTATION AND CHANCES FOR REALISATION AFTER 30 YEARS

1. BAPTISM

Baptism belongs together with Eucharist to the two main sacraments in most of the Christian churches. Thirty years ago, when the Lima texts were published, the focus of ecumenical attention was put on the declarations on Eucharist and Ministry. Today we face the opposite situation: Having experienced more difficulties in the field of Eucharistic sharing than expected and even more problems concerning mutual recognition of each others ministries, we go back to the one Baptism in order to find solid ground for our ecumenical endeavours. And indeed, the first Lima text on Baptism contains lots of theological insights and ecumenical aspects, which are worthy of being looked at again with fresh eyes after 30 years.

The text consists of 5 parts, starting with the institution of Baptism, dealing then with the meaning of it, with Baptism and Faith, baptismal Practice and ending with the Celebration of Baptism. There is a huge range of aspects, including historical, theological, ecclesiological, practical as well as liturgical points of view. This holistic approach, which shows from the very beginning a more inclusive than an exclusive attitude, is already the first ecumenical advantage of the declaration on Baptism.

A. Theological points of Orientation

The theological explication of the meaning of Baptism spans a wide arch from Christological over soteriological, pneumatological and ecclesiological up to eschatological perspectives. It is indeed a very concentrated ecumenical Theology of Baptism. I can only highlight one aspect of each section.

First: "Baptism means participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ", so that "the old Adam"—as Martin Luther would put it—is

drowned with Christ and a new person is raised to new life (P. 3). In other words: Baptism is not only a sacramental act, but also with Baptism begins a lifelong dynamic process from the old to the new person.

Secondly by washing the body with pure water, which symbolizes a cleansing of the heart from all sin, baptism is an “act of justification” also giving new ethical orientation (P. 4). That is to say: Baptism is a sacramental expression especially of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith.

Thirdly: “God bestows upon all baptized persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit...” (P. 5). This means that being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit belong together as justification and sanctification of life.

Fourthly the ecclesiological and especially ecumenical aspect: “When baptismal unity is realized in one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, a genuine Christian witness can be made to the healing and reconciling love of God. Therefore, our one Baptism into Christ constitutes a call to the churches to overcome their divisions and visibly manifest their fellowship” (P. 6). In this statement it becomes very clear, that the ecumenical task is not an additional work for Christians or churches, so to say a *donum superadditum*, but that it is sacramentally grounded in the baptismal unity.

Finally “Baptism initiates the reality of the new life given in the midst of the present world” and is a sign of “the life of the world to come”, as the Nicene Creed of 381 says (P. 7). In this perspective Baptism starts a dynamic process which embraces not only the baptized persons, but all nations and anticipates God’s eternal kingdom.

B. Ecumenical chances for realisation

Which chances do these five theological aspects of Baptism present for the improvement of the ecumenical situation of today 30 years later?

(1) The Lima text makes it clear that the improvement has to begin in *each church* by itself and in its own way of handling this initial sacrament. Therefore the Lima statement underlines: “Baptism needs to be constantly reaffirmed” (C 14c). This may be done by the *renewal of baptismal vows* during the annual celebration of the Easter night or during the Baptism of other persons. It is one way of guarding mainline churches themselves “against the practice of apparently indiscriminate Baptism” (P. 16), as some representatives of believers’ Baptism accuse them to do so.

Another way of emphasising the importance of Baptism is to enrich the *liturgy* of one church with elements from others. To such elements belong

e.g. the act of immersion, the laying on of hands, anointing or blessing of water, thus indicating its importance for the whole cosmos – all being practised in the orthodox tradition. “The recovery of such vivid signs may be expected to enrich the liturgy” (P. 19). The Lima text emphasizes especially “a *declaration*, that the persons baptized have acquired a new identity as sons and daughters of God and as members of the Church, called to be witnesses of the Gospel” (P. 20).

(2) On the basis of such a revival of Baptism in the different churches it is then only a minor step to *recognize* one another’s Baptism as the one Baptism into Christ. The Lima baptismal statement encourages movement in this direction: “Wherever possible, mutual recognition should be expressed explicitly by the churches” (P 15).

This was already done in 1996 between the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, which I belong, and the 6 Roman-Catholic dioceses of Aachen, Essen, Köln, Limburg, Münster and Trier. 25 years after Lima 11 member churches of the ecumenical Council in Germany (ACK), including Roman-Catholic and Orthodox churches, celebrated an official service of mutual recognition of Baptism in the protestant cathedral of Magdeburg. In the *Magdeburg declaration* of April 29, 2007 it reads: “In spite of differences in understanding the Church there is amongst us a fundamental agreement concerning Baptism. Therefore we recognize... Baptism and we are glad about every baptized person.”

There are also other ways of *affirming* the one baptism between members of different churches. Five years after Lima on January 24, 1987 at the end of the WCC-Central Committee meeting a “Closing service with Affirmation of Baptism was celebrated in the chapel of the Ecumenical Centre for the first time, the so called “Geneva Liturgy,” worked out again by Frère *Max Thurian* of Taizé and myself. Its title was: “New Creatures through God’s Covenant.” Besides the liturgy of the Entrance and the liturgy of the Word a “Liturgy of baptismal Affirmation” was the focus of this service. It included a meditation on and the blessing of the water, renewal of baptismal vows with renunciation of evil, profession of faith and commitment to our baptismal covenant. Finally all participants were invited to take part in a water procession. The worship leaflet reads here: “As a visible expression of our affirmation and mutual recognition of Baptism everybody is invited to go to the water in front of the altar, to put a hand into the water (making the sign of the cross for example) remembering one’s own Baptism and to light a candle at the Easter candle.”

Over decades this *service of commemorating or affirming common Baptism* has become a new type of ecumenical worship – at least in Germany, celebrated at various occasions. Such a model was published 2004 also in the Archdiocese of Cologne with a preface by Vice-bishop *Rainer Woelki*, who is now Archbishop and Cardinal of Berlin. During the 2nd Ecumenical “Kirchentag” (Church Day) in München 2010 an ecumenical service of commemoration of Baptism was also officially celebrated under my responsibility in the Roman-Catholic church St. Maximilian.

(3) In addition Section III of the 5th World Conference on Faith and Order in Santiago de Compostela 1993 recommends the development of a *common document* about Baptism between different churches and also the *invitation* of members of churches in the neighbourhood, *to take part* in one’s own celebration of Baptism (p. 244). This could be combined with greetings, readings, prayers or even a gift from such representatives. In some German areas it becomes a custom during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity or at other occasions to form an ecumenical *procession* to each others’ baptismal fonts including meditative time at each place. Finally one could think on certain occasions even of *common ecumenical celebration of Baptism*, where the one minister baptizes the candidates of his own church and the other respectively the ones of his church. In Germany a few places already exist with experiences of this kind.

C. Results

Coming back to the initial question: what impact does the Lima text on Baptism provide 30 years later for the improvement of the ecumenical scene of today?, I should give a threefold answer:

Firstly, Baptism is the basic sacrament in almost every church and therefore each church has to begin with the *improvement of its own understanding and practice* of Baptism.

Secondly, the theological part of the Lima statement on Baptism develops an ecumenical theology of Baptism, which has to be incorporated in the understanding and reflections of every church, especially its *ecclesiological and ecumenical perspectives*.

Thirdly, it will not happen from one day to the next that churches will move from disregard to recognition of each others’ Baptism. Instead it is a *long-term process*, a spiritual way, each church will have to take: from affirmation to recognition, from common services in churches to joint proces-

sions on the streets, from recognizing each other to witnessing together in and for the world.

In Germany we have already experienced some of these steps and we have learned through them, to open, to listen and to move towards each other. 30 years ago we had hoped, to reach the goals of the Lima document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry within a few years. Today after 30 years we know that it is after centuries of separation a *long and hard pilgrimage* we have to undertake towards each other step by step. Baptism is today more than ever the door opener. There is no other way to unity, recognizing each other through Baptism is the beginning of the way.

2. EUCHARIST

The Lima text on Eucharist has only 3 parts: Institution, Meaning and Celebration. That is a simple threefold and very clear structure. The explication of the meaning of Eucharist, the main part, follows a Trinitarian pattern: Thanksgiving to the Father, Anamnesis or Memorial of Christ and Invocation of the Spirit. Then comes an ecclesiological section about the communion of the faithful and finally again an eschatological perspective towards the meal of the kingdom. As is the theological explication of Baptism so is this exegesis of what Eucharist means in theological terms even more an ecumenical summary of what can be said together about Eucharist by theologians from most of the churches all over the earth. To my understanding this theological interpretation of the meaning of Eucharist is the masterpiece of the whole Lima text.

A. Theological points of Orientation

In spite of this understanding I shall resist the temptation to give points of theological orientation from all 5 sections as I did for Baptism. Here I will focus only on two very important aspects: the Christological and the ecclesiological one. As you know there were in the past big controversies, especially between the Roman-Catholic Church and the Churches of the Reformation, about the understanding of sacrifice and real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Regarding *sacrifice* the Lima declaration gives this statement: “The Eucharist is the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us” (P 8). The Commentary on this (C 8) makes it even clearer, as it says: “The understanding is that there is only

one expiation, that of the unique sacrifice of the cross, made actual in the Eucharist..."

The other controversy of the past was concerned with the understanding of Christ's *real presence* in the Eucharist. To this the Lima text declares: "The Church confesses Christ's real, living and active presence in the Eucharist" (P. 13). It means that the anamnesis of Christ "is not only a calling to mind of what is past and of its significance", as Zwingli in Zürich interpreted the Eucharist, but *not* Luther in Wittenberg, rather than "representation" of Christ and "anticipation" of God's kingdom (P.7). In regard to this biblical conception of the memorial of Christ in the Eucharist the Lima text recommends, that "all churches might want to review the old controversies..." of the past (C 8). In other words, they are or at least they can be overcome by the way, in which the Eucharist is interpreted in the Lima statement.

The second aspect I would like to underline is once more the ecclesiological, better: the ecumenical one. Here Lima emphasises the *reality of sharing*: "The sharing in the one bread and the common cup in a given place demonstrates and effects the oneness of the sharers with Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places." This has consequences for the ecumenical attitude of each church: "In so far as a church claims to be a manifestation of the whole church, it will take care to order its own life in ways which take seriously the interests and concerns of other churches" (P 19). The Commentary (C 19) to this statement underlines, what is here at stake in terms of catholicity: "As long as the right of the baptized believers and their ministers to participate in and preside over Eucharistic celebration in one church is called into question by those who preside over and are members of other Eucharistic congregations, the catholicity of the Eucharist is less manifest." I remember the same argument in more general terms being used in the Decree of Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council (4,10).

Finally the Lima text also opens an *ethical* perspective of the Eucharistic sharing: "The Eucharistic celebration demands reconciliation and sharing among all those regarded as brothers and sisters in the one family of God and is a constant challenge in the search for appropriate relationships in social, economic and political life" (P. 20). In other words the Eucharistic sharing at the altar and the sharing of appropriate relations in secular life are two sides of the same coin.

It is this crucial point of *sharing*, that is at the very heart of the Lima interpretation of Eucharist in all its dimensions: with God, with one another, with other churches as well as finally with the world. Even after 30 years this

sharing is “the salient point” of understanding Eucharist in ecumenical perspective. I am not sure whether all our churches have already understood this, not to speak about having brought it into practice. Therefore I come now also with regard to the Eucharist to

B. Ecumenical chances for realisation

The Lima text follows here the same strategy as regarding Baptism: it does not blame or make demands to any church by pointing to another one, rather it asks every church to begin with itself in ecumenical perspective to open its understanding and to change its practice of the Eucharist: “The best way towards unity in Eucharistic celebration and communion is the renewal of this Eucharist itself in the different churches in regard to teaching and liturgy” (P 28).

Coming then to the decisive question of *presiding* the Eucharist, the Lima declaration offers an extremely helpful distinction between Christ and his minister. It says: “It is Christ, who invites to the meal and who presides at it... The minister of the Eucharist is the ambassador who represents the divine initiative...” (P. 29). So the distinction is between the living Christ and the ambassador in the name of Christ. If Christ is the one, who invites to his meal, then his ambassador has to deliver this invitation rather than to conceal it.

Therefore the Lima statement on the Eucharist comes at the end to this conclusion: “The increased mutual understanding expressed in the present statement may allow some churches to attain a greater measure of Eucharistic communion among themselves and to bring closer the day when Christ’s divided people will be visibly reunited around the Lord’s Table” (P. 33). It is interesting that this final statement speaks in a comparative way: It looks towards a *greater measure of Eucharistic communion*, neither towards a full, complete, nor even less towards a closed one. With this formulation the ball is played back to the churches putting the question before them, what “greater measure of Eucharistic communion” they may allow or be able to offer.

This is exactly the situation we are living in and we have to respond to also 30 years after Lima. Each church has to find its own answer to the question of a “greater measure of Eucharistic communion”. It may begin with *not rejecting* any person from an other church asking for communion. It can go on with official respect for the *decision of conscience* of every Christian believer to receive communion in one’s own or in any other church. It could include to welcome especially couples and children of *mixed marriages* for taking communion.

Now is not the time for saying a general Yes or a general No to Eucharistic sharing but for finding out appropriate intermediate ways and forms for offering communion to those Christians, who do really desire it or who live in convincing interchurch relationships. There are *ecumenical groups*, which deal theologically and practically with these questions over many years, whose members have been praying and working for church unity for a long time – such as the *International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF)*, Prof. *Kantyka* and myself belong to. These ecumenical groups are mature enough to receive communion from the one church or the other. Finally, the Faith and Order Commission offered with the so called *Lima Liturgy*, as I pointed out earlier, a formula which is suitable for different churches to celebrate the Eucharist together.

Summing up, I have to conclude, in the light of the Lima declaration on the Eucharist, especially in the light of its last paragraph, which I quoted, that there is not *one* answer to the question of *Eucharistic hospitality*, but many different ones according to the specific situations between believers, congregations and churches. There is not *one* way to deal with, but many, which have to be discovered. This is the difficult challenge of today's ecumenical situation we are living in the necessities of such an *intermediate field* between separation and union of churches, we are living in. The Lima key is *Sharing*: beginning with welcoming, opening, offering one's own Eucharistic celebration to those, who desire it, and finally ending up with witnessing together to God's reconciling work in and for our broken world.

3. MINISTRY

As everybody knows, questions of ministry are the most difficult ones in the present ecumenical scene, as they touch the whole realm of nature and structure of churches. This is also the case with the Lima text on Ministry. It is the longest one of the three declarations, dealing with complicated problems and in a way not yet so mature and clear as the other two. One reason for this is also the fact that the Ministry text is the youngest of the three statements. It consists of 6 parts, starting with "the Calling of the whole People of God". The following 5 parts deal then only with the "ordained ministry": its meaning, its forms, succession in the Apostolic Tradition, the act of ordination and finally "towards mutual recognition of the ordained ministries". Most of these parts are subdivided into several sections (from A to D), which indicates already in the table of contents how complex and complicated the matters are

that are here dealt with. Nevertheless it is no question, that this statement on Ministry also contains many points of theological orientation, which are very helpful for our ongoing discussion after 30 years.

A. Theological points of Orientation

The first part of the Lima text gives the frame into which all questions of ministry have to be integrated and that is *the calling of the whole people of God*. This means that the community of the people of God comes first and only within and for its living and witnessing together the various ministries find their appropriate place. Therefore the first part ends with the conclusion: “As they engage in the efforts to overcome these differences (of ministries), the churches need to work from the perspective of the calling of the whole people of God” (P. 6).

This perspective is also leading for the main description of the *ordained ministry*. Its very first function is, according to Lima, to point to the Church’s “fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity” (P. 8). To be ordained means then first of all to receive and to give orientation to Jesus Christ and secondly to focus in his light on the unity of the Church respectively of the congregation and other communities. The aspect of gifts within Christian communities is decisive for the shaping of the ordained ministry: “The ordained ministry which is itself a charisma, must not become a hindrance for the variety of these charismas. On the contrary, it will help the community to discover the gifts bestowed on it by the Holy Spirit” (P. 32).

This refers of course also to gifts being given especially to *women*. The Lima statement is fairly explicit in this regard: “The Church must discover the ministry which can be provided by women as well as that which can be provided by men” (P 18). It is well known that churches draw from this different conclusions for the ordination of women. The Lima text makes it clear, that there are for most churches no biblical or theological reasons against this, but a long tradition of 1900 years. Arguing somewhat in favour of ordination of women, Lima gives a fairly diplomatic ecumenical advice to help for a solution to this question: “Openness to each other holds the possibility, that the spirit may well speak to one church through the insides of another” (P 54).

The other main point of theological orientation refers to the *threefold ministry* of bishop, presbyter and deacon. Starting with the exegetical insight that “the New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry which

might serve as a blueprint or a continuing norm for all future ministry in the Church” the Lima text goes on to the threefold pattern which “during the second and third centuries...became established the pattern of ordained ministry throughout the Church” (P 19). Although it admits that the threefold pattern underwent in subsequent centuries “considerable changes” and “other forms of the ordained ministry have been blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit”, the Lima statement keeps to the threefold structure as an orientation mark also for today: “The threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means for achieving it” (P 22). As a consequence of this churches without the Episcopal succession “though they may not lack the continuity of the apostolic tradition”, are asked to realize, that “this sign will strengthen and deepen that continuity” with the Church of the apostles. “They may need to recover the sign of the Episcopal succession” (P 53 b). It is interesting to see, that here the “Episcopal succession” is not interpreted as a “must”, without which a church could not exist, but rather as an helpful and important sign for the apostolicity and continuity of the church/es today.

This brings us to a third very elucidating point of orientation in the Lima document on Ministry. It is the differentiation between as well as the coherence of *apostolic tradition* and *apostolic succession*. The headline of part IV reads: “Succession *in* the Apostolic Tradition”. That is to say the Apostolic Tradition is the main and broad point of reference beginning in the Lima text with witnessing to the apostolic faith and ending with the sharing of gifts, including in between many other aspects of churches’ life and tradition (cf. P 34). The Commentary to this underlines the differentiation: “Within this apostolic tradition is an apostolic succession of the ministry” (C 34). To sharpen this differentiation one could say: The big and broad Apostolic Tradition is essential (*esse!*) for every church, the specific way of Apostolic Succession is a good and helpful sign for the *bene esse* of the church (cf. P 38).

B. Ecumenical chances for realisation

There are already churches which recognize each others’ ministries. This is the case between most of the Churches of the Reformation since their signing of the so called *Leuenberg Agreement* from 1973, 40 years ago, already a decade before Lima. There it reads under the heading: “Declaration of Church Fellowship”: “They accord each other table and pulpit fellowship; this includes the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide

for intercelebration” (No 33). So far more than a 100 churches have signed this Agreement and today they form the “Community of Evangelical Churches in Europe” (CECE), and also a few protestant churches from Latin America belong to this Community. Also the earlier mentioned *Meissen Declaration* between Evangelical Churches in Germany and the Church of England from 1988 expresses mutual recognition of ministries: “We acknowledge one another’s ordained ministries as given by God and instruments of his grace, and look forward to the time, when the reconciliation of our churches makes possible the full interchangeability of ministers (17, A 3). This step was then taken in the *Porvoo Declaration* from 1992 between Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Western and Northern Europe. There it says: “We acknowledge that in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are duly administered...We commit ourselves...to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve...”(No 58, a2, b5). Some movement towards the recognition of ministries has already taken place during the 70ies, the 80ies and the 90ies years amongst churches of the Reformation as well as between them and some Anglican Churches. Perhaps the Meissen- and especially the Porvoo-Declarations can become a model for other churches.

What can be done between *Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches*, when such agreements can not be expected in the not-too-distant future? At least churches can invite representatives of other churches to take part in acts of ordination. *Mutual participation* in each others’ liturgical celebrations of ordination and installation helps to a better understanding of each others’ intentions and may change the attitude over against each other. In certain cases it may also be possible between protestant and roman-catholic members to take a small active part in such celebrations with a word of greeting, a Bible reading or a prayer. The direction in this difficult field between the churches is changing by taking part and being changed by being present.

The 5th *World Conference on Faith and Order in Santiago de Compostela* 1993 recommends also such “*participation* of churches in acts of ordination of other churches...by being present or by common prayer or even by laying on of hands” (Section III, No 22.2+4). It also recommends thinking over again the role and meaning of the *diaconate*, in order to enrich the understanding of practising ministry in general terms and to open a new way of dialogue. Thirdly the World Conference recommends continuing work on the

question of *ordination of women* (S III, Rec. No 4). Also structures of *mutual accountability* of episcopal persons to a certain community within and beyond their own churches is regarded as a helpful step towards the recognition of ministries (S III, No 26). The *exchange of letters* according to a custom of the Ancient Church would be an appropriate means of improvement. Finally the World Conference recommends a new Faith and Order study on the question of “a *universal ministry* of Christian unity” (S III, No 31.2). These and other recommendations open the way even more to coming closer step by step in recognizing each others’ ministries.

CONCLUSION

After 30 years, dear sister and brothers, we have good reason to be thankful not only for the event of Lima, but also for the process it initiated and for the results it helped to bring about. As we have seen there are still many important points of orientation and exciting chances for realisation of proposals from the past for us in the future. *The best thing for us to do after 30 years is to sit together in ecumenical circles at many levels of church life re-reading the actual Lima texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry – in French one speaks about relecture – and asking each other in the light of the developments already accomplished in the last thirty years, which points of orientation might be especially relevant and which chances for realisation are realistic for us now in our given situation of today.* Instead of the big Gong like the so called “thick Peter’s” bell in the Cologne Cathedral, which will *not* ring, we need today, urgently, many small groups of ecumenical interest as well as many small areas of ecumenical progress in order to create a climate of listening and enriching each other. The time has come for mutual ecumenical sharing of our God given gifts, as St. Paul says: “I do not mean to imply that we lord over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy” (2 Corinthians 1, 24).