

UNITY

1) The plan from the beginning

- “Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning” (Unitatis Redintegratio 4)
- Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her.
- This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: *“That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us,... so that the world may know that you have sent me.” John 17:21*

2) Division in the Body of Christ

- contradicts the will of Christ
- scandalizes the world
- damages the cause of preaching the Gospel

3) A call of the Holy Spirit

- The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit (CCC 820)
- Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call: (CCC 821)
 - a permanent *renewal* of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation
 - *conversion of heart* as the faithful ‘try to live holier lives according to the Gospel’
 - *prayer in common*, because ‘change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement...’
 - *fraternal knowledge of each other*
 - *ecumenical formation* of the faithful and especially of priests
 - *dialogue* among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different churches and communities
 - *collaboration* among Christians in various areas of service to mankind