

Pope Francis Visit to Geneva, update

The French Catholic magazine La Croix International published an interview of a World Council of Churches (WCC) leader on May 31, to update their readers on Pope Francis' June 21 visit. Pastor Martin Robra, co-secretary of the mixed working group between the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church, "credits Pope Francis with ushering in a new springtime for ecumenism." This working group, set up in 1965, is the answer to the continually discussed challenge of the Catholic Church formally joining the WCC.

One of the main problems of Catholic membership is the size of the Catholic Church. It outnumbers all the other 348 members of the World Council of Churches. This is one of the several reasons the Catholic Church has not formally joined.

However, there is membership by Catholics on the Faith and Order Commission, and the Mission and Evangelism Commission. The Catholic Church is considered an "Observer" in the entire structure of the WCC.

Robra also contrasted the upcoming visit of Pope Francis, with previous visits to the WCC headquarters in Geneva by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. When they visited Geneva, they did not concentrate so much on going to the WCC headquarters. And he said "Pope Francis comes first of all as head of the Catholic Church. ..We hope that together we can continue a pilgrimage of justice and peace to those at the margins of societies, those yearning for justice and peace in this violence-stricken world and its unjust political and economic relationships."

A summary of the entire interview can be found on the La Croix International website, English version.