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Album number: 156509

**The Idea of Divine Mercy  
in the Post-Conciliar Ecumenical Perspective**

*Doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of  
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**Summary**

The doctoral dissertation focuses on the ecclesial dimension of God's mercy and its significance for ecumenical dialogue. The author invokes the biblical metaphor of the shepherd caring for his sheep, relating it to the unity of the Church and its divisions. The fundamental issue of the dissertation is the problem of the "scattering of the sheep" - divisions among Christians - and God's mercy as a response to this reality.

The Catholic Church, in accordance with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, acknowledges that divisions among Christians arose "not without fault on both sides". However, individuals born into different Christian traditions cannot be held responsible for these historical divisions. The Church surrounds them with respect and love, recognizing them as brothers in Christ. At the same time, it acknowledges that the source of divisions is sin, which is contrary to God's will.

The Second Vatican Council and successive popes have emphasized that ecumenism is not only a duty of Christians but also a response to Christ's will, as He prayed for the unity of His disciples. The Church perceives the ecumenical movement as a movement of the grace of the Holy Spirit, leading to repentance and a desire for reconciliation. John Paul II stressed that Christian unity cannot be superficial—it requires healing the deep wounds inflicted by sin.

According to the author, God's mercy is a key concept for ecumenism. From a Christological perspective, it is most fully revealed in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. The

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death and resurrection of Jesus broke down the wall of hostility between humanity and God, as well as among people themselves. In this light, all ecumenical efforts should be based on recognizing the merciful nature of God and on the human response in the form of repentance and a striving for unity.

In the Old Testament understanding, mercy (*rahamim*, *hesed*) signifies both God's maternal care and His faithfulness to the covenant. The New Testament presents the fullness of mercy in the person of Jesus Christ, who, through His life, teachings, and Paschal Mystery, reveals God as a loving Father. The Parable of the Prodigal Son illustrates that God does not seek justice in a human sense but restores the son's dignity through unconditional forgiveness. Such an image of God implies the necessity of ecumenical efforts since mercy excludes an attitude of hardness of heart and division.

The Catholic Church views ecumenism not only as a theological dialogue but also as an act of "performing mercy." The Second Vatican Council emphasized that striving for Christian unity is not optional but arises from the very nature of the Church. Ecumenism is also an expression of responsibility for the history of divisions and a call to repentance for past mistakes.

In the ecumenical context, John Paul II, reflecting on Christ's prayer for unity, highlighted the primacy of mercy over historical divisions. He emphasized that reconciliation among Christian denominations must have a spiritual dimension rather than merely an organizational one. Pope Francis describes ecumenism as "a grace of the Holy Spirit" that mobilizes believers to journey together toward unity.

The dissertation demonstrates that God's mercy is the foundation of ecumenical theology. It is not only a response to the sin of division but also a force that motivates Christians toward reconciliation. Moreover, ecumenism cannot be merely superficial cooperation but must stem from a profound spiritual transformation and an understanding that God desires the unity of His children. The author emphasizes that the ultimate goal of ecumenical efforts is not only reconciliation among people but also the full participation of all Christians in the mystery of salvation, which was revealed in Jesus Christ.

6<sup>th</sup> of March 2025  
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