

## **The Synod of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches (Italian Session) 2015**

### **Letter to Pope Francis**

*The Synod, in responding to the speech made by Pope Francis in the Waldensian Church building in Turin on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, 2015, has sent him the following letter through its President, Marco Borno.*

Dear brother in Christ,

The Synod of the Waldensian Church (Union of the Methodist and Waldensian Churches in Italy) receives with profound respect, and not without being deeply touched, the request for forgiveness which you made, on behalf of your Church, for that which you defined as ‘actions which were unchristian, even inhuman’, carried out in the past against our mothers and fathers in the Evangelical faith.

In the first instance, we wish to unite with you and with the Roman Catholic Church in gratitude to God, whose faithfulness is greater than all our sin, and whose ‘mercies never come to an end’ but which ‘are new every morning’ (Lam. 3:22). The fraternal dialogue which today we conduct is a gift of God’s mercy, which has often forgiven, and continues to forgive, your Church and ours, inviting them to repentance, to conversion and to newness of life, thereby allowing them to take on the task of serving Him each new day.

We welcome your words as a repudiation, not only of many iniquities carried out but also of the way in which the doctrines which inspired such iniquities were lived out. In your request for forgiveness we further perceive the clear wish to begin with our Church a new story, different from that which lies behind us, that we may work towards that ‘reconciled diversity’ which would allow us engage in a common witness to our common Lord Jesus Christ. Our Churches are willing and ready to write this story, which is new also for us.

Our common faith in Jesus Christ renders us brothers in his name, and this already experience and live this fraternity on many occasions with our Catholic brothers and sisters: it is a great gift that is given to us, one which we hope will be shared by an ever growing number of our two Churches.

This new situation does not allow us to substitute ourselves for those who paid with their blood, and with other great sufferings, for their witness to the Evangelical faith, and offer forgiveness on their behalf. However, ‘where sin increased, grace has abounded all the more’ (Rom. 5: 20), and this grace of God we believe and confess, certain that God will want to make real his Word in the construction of new relationships between our Churches, inspired by the evangelical promise: ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (Apo. 21: 5)

We remember you, dear brother Francis, in our intercessions and we ask you to pray for us; we invoke upon you, your service and your Church, the blessing of God.

For the Synod

Marco Borno,

President