



UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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NEWS

NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON--The following statement was issued today (June 30) by Msgr. Bernard Law, Director of the Secretariat of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops:

Some press reports originating at the Lutheran Church in America biennial assembly convey an erroneous impression of the progress of the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in the United States. While I am grateful for the interest shown in this important and encouraging ecumenical consultation, I feel that clarification is necessary in order to avoid misleading some as to the current state of these talks.

To date the Lutheran-Catholic consultation has produced and made public three books, dealing with the Nicene Creed, Baptism and the Eucharist. These documents contain the papers delivered on these subjects along with any consensus statements that may have been reached by the dialogue group.

The same process is now being followed with regard to the consultation's proposed document on ministry. A fourth book is being prepared expressing the views of the theologians who have taken part in the talks. It will contain a consensus statement and the papers that were delivered on the subject. When it is ready it will, like the other three, be shared with the theological community in this

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country and abroad. It will also be sent to the Roman Catholic bishops in the United States for their information.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the work of the Lutheran-Catholic consultation, while representing the serious thought of 20 theologians, must be subjected to examination by the broader theological community as well as by the teaching authority of the churches. It would be unrealistic to expect immediate and dramatic changes in Catholic practice on the basis of the dialogue effort alone.

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