

LETTER OF REVD PR DR JERRY PILLAY, SECRETARY OF WCC,  
TO BISHOP BRIAN FARRELL  
ON THE CONCLUSION OF HIS MANDATE

Geneva, 26 February 2024

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

*Philippians 1:3-5*

Dear Bishop Farrell,

It is a special joy for me to join the chorus greeting you on your 80th birthday and celebrating your two decades of service in the Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity. I speak for all of us in the WCC fellowship and staff in expressing our deep gratitude for your dedication and our work together.

In those 21 years, you have witnessed several seasons of ecumenical relations. But through it all, you and your colleagues have steadily cultivated the Catholic Church's many ecumenical relationships and expanded the arenas of its engagement and cooperation.

Of course, despite 60 years of ecumenical engagement, as churches we do not yet enjoy the full Eucharistic fellowship we all dream of and work toward. Nonetheless, so much has been accomplished!

Especially in Vatican-WCC relations, we have seen an ever-stronger intertwining of our shared ecumenical roots. Most conspicuously of course, we prize our annual spiritual collaboration in preparing and promoting the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Through that endeavour, we are able yearly to beckon Christians everywhere to unity but also to lift up the situational challenges and biblical wisdom of regional churches in the Christian world.

These shared works also include much shared programming, not just programme monitoring and observing, most intensely in core areas of Faith and Order, World Mission and Evangelism, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, inter-religious engagement, and pre-eminently in the Joint Working Group. And, of course, with you and your DPCU colleagues we have enjoyed the wonderful fellowship and encouragement of Pope Francis, aptly symbolized and celebrated during his 2018 visit to the WCC in Geneva.

We are so grateful for your contributions to this enhanced ecumenical relationship.

Beyond these substantial contributions, Bishop Farrell, we are most appreciative for the genial and generous friendship and fellowship in Christ that you have shown all of us WCC members, staff, and students through the years. May that friendship, which is the foundation of all ecumenical sharing, continue and reverberate for many, many years to come.

As we thank you for your years of excellent service to God and the Roman Catholic Church, we extend our best wishes to you in your retirement. We trust and pray that God will continue to bestow upon you health, wisdom and opportunities to continue to serve Him in the church and the world.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay  
*General Secretary*  
World Council of Churches