

# New Millennium

January 1, 2000

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Now we stand at the dawn of the third millennium of the Christian Movement and quite possibly a new era in the history of the church. As we, the small Christian faith communities of The Ecumenical Old Catholic Church, begin this first year of the twenty-first century we stand poised and ready to continue in the noble endeavor that has been entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit.

Up to the present time the Old Catholic Movement has been small and, to some, insignificant. Yet, I am convinced that this will change in the coming century. The power of ideas has been known to change the course of human history. We possess sacred ideals like a bright torch of hope. These very same ideals that we have embraced will ultimately have a lasting impact upon the entire Church of Jesus Christ. This is so because they are rooted in the very teachings of Jesus himself. These ideals are nothing less than the ripening fruit of the Gospel of Christ in our time.

We labor for the living reform of the Catholic Church. Although our efforts for the most part have gone unnoticed by the vast majority of our contemporaries in the larger church of today, I remain convinced that our day is yet to come, and that we are indeed practicing the Catholicism of the future.

We have undertaken to work for justice within the walls of the Church. We are committed to the reform of the Church. We are working for the positive transformation of the Catholic Church. What kind of Church are we looking for?

We believe that the Catholic Church of the future needs to become a compassionate church, fully embracing the truth of the Gospel of Jesus.

We believe that we must become a truly "catholic" church where all are welcome, where the dignity of each is honored, and where everyone is invited to share in the saving work of Christ.

We believe that we must become a truly united church, where the barriers of sectarianism are broken down and the bridges of understanding and cooperation are built.

We believe that we must become a truly ecumenical church, where all the baptized are embraced as one and where common ground is diligently sought with the non-Christian.

Someday, this is what will define what being Catholic really is rather than what organization one officially belongs to; where one is a Catholic by what is within one's heart rather than by what religious group he is a member of; where one is a Catholic by virtue of following the teachings of Jesus, not by the degree of one's conformity to the dictates of a particular church leader.

Let us begin this new millennium with renewed commitment and courage as we together continue in our noble endeavor for the reform and renewal of Christ's church!

May the blessing of the Father's grace and the love of Jesus and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit continue to be upon you in this new year of 2000!

The Most Reverend Peter E. Hickman  
Bishop