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Words of welcome by Cardinal Philippe Barbarin

The churches here in Lyon are happy to be able to welcome the churches of Europe which are members of CEC, gathered to celebrate CEC's 50th anniversary and to hold its 13th Assembly.

As Archbishop of Lyon, I can only congratulate your President the Revd Jean-Arnold de Clermont on his choice. Lyon is indeed delighted to take up the mantle of Abbé Paul Couturier, who co-founded the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which he referred to as an "invisible monastery" . . .

This spiritual ecumenism goes hand in hand with intensive ecumenical life, involving both regular meetings of church leaders and local groups in which Anglican, Armenian, Baptist, Catholic, Coptic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Protestant Christians pray and read the Bible together, proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel.

You have chosen as the theme for your Assembly a passage from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: "*Called to One Hope in Christ*". This is indeed our common call: to bear witness to our world, which is often near to losing hope, that the light of Christ shines for everyone. The cross of Christ, even if a tragedy, is a door of hope opening into the Kingdom of God. It shows us the way of faith on which we are determined to go forwards together.

Your assembly intends, concretely, to reflect on what it means for Christians to serve Europe today, and to promote a committed ecumenism which can truly serve the poorest on our continent. You are already involved in dialogue between different traditions, you support one another in prayer and you have recognised the *Charta Oecumenica* as the basis for your common life.

As a brother, my wish for you is that these days of work and prayer here in Lyon may help you to move forwards in understanding the mystery of our unity in Christ, for our society presents many challenges, economic, cultural, political and inter-religious . . .

May the Holy Spirit be with you in your work, your conversations and your prayers, that the light of Christ may shine upon all nations, and may the Father guide us in confidence and unity to pursue the way of hope. As we pray: "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."