



THANKSGIVING APPEAL ENVELOPE INSIDE THIS ISSUE

As our partners in mission, you walk with us as we witness to the Gospel overseas and in Canada. Please remember us with your prayers and financial support so that we may continue the vital work of mission. Thank you!



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COVER: Pope John Paul II with representatives of other Christian Churches and world religions in Assisi at the 1986 World Day of Prayer for Peace. This event was repeated and surpassed in January 2002 when Pope John Paul invited over 200 leaders of world religions again to Assisi to pray for peace.
Credit: L'Osservatore Romano/Arturo Mari

**"LET US PROMOTE A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE.
WE MUST DEMONSTRATE HOW RELIGIOUS BELIEF
INSPIRES PEACE, ENCOURAGES SOLIDARITY,
PROMOTES JUSTICE AND UPHOLDS FREEDOM."**

POPE JOHN PAUL II



By Paul McKenna

Counting interfaith miracles

I spend a lot of my time counting interfaith miracles. Let me explain what I mean. For some years now, I have been studying developments within the international, interfaith movement. I call these developments interfaith miracles.

However, keeping track of interfaith miracles in various parts of the world is, indeed, an impossible task. The God of all wonders is blessing the world with such an abundance of inter-religious miracles that no researcher can possibly keep on top of it. Even the Internet, with its thousands of interfaith websites, cannot keep up with God's all-important business of unity and reconciliation.

Today we are witnessing levels of conversation and cooperation among the world faiths that are strikingly new to history. Our shrinking global village is now a multi-religious society.

I also spend a good deal of time counting interfaith miracles within the international Catholic community. But here again, the task is daunting. Who can keep abreast of the interfaith miracles that continue to abound within the global Catholic population?

Since the Second Vatican Council, an explosion of interfaith activity has reverberated across the global Catholic Church, and at all levels of the Church. Joining the Pope in this venture are bishops and priests, parishes, lay people, theologians, teachers, social activists, monks, missionaries, religious orders,

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE
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and many others.

In his encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, Pope John Paul II declares, "Each member of the faithful and all Christian communities are called to practice interfaith dialogue." The Church also invites us to study other religions and to commit ourselves to interracial, intercultural and interreligious cooperation.

This edition of *Scarboro Missions* reports upon a multitude of interfaith miracles. Chief among these is the January 24, 2002, multifaith prayer summit in Assisi, Italy. In the shadow of September 11, the Pope decided to bring the religions together to pray for peace, just as he did in 1986. This interfaith pilgrim seems to be virtually unstoppable. In convening these Assisi events, Pope John Paul managed to assemble two of the largest gatherings of religious leaders in history.

God continues to bless the interfaith work of Scarboro Mis-

sions. We, too, find ourselves being called into new, challenging and wonderful dimensions of interfaith cooperation. This issue of the magazine reports on some of these. We are particularly encouraged by interfaith activity in our overseas missions. Our many interreligious encounters are helping us to understand the Church's teaching that interfaith dialogue is a vital function of Christian mission.

We have every reason to believe that interfaith miracles will continue to abound around the globe. Unfortunately, interreligious conflict and interreligious abuse will continue. Despite this, the interfaith impulse is alive and well. More and more people of various religions are joining the interfaith conversation. More and more people are experiencing this conversation as an occasion of faith. More and more people are seeing interreligious sharing as a path to cooperative ethical action and harmonious community living. For this, we thank the Maker of all miracles!∞

Paul McKenna, Associate Coordinator of the Scarboro Missions Interfaith Desk, teaches, writes and consults in the fields of world religions and interfaith dialogue.