

## Catholic World News *News Feature*

### Papal primacy not negotiable March 09, 1998

VATICAN (CWN) -- While the Catholic Church longs for Christian unity, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome is not open for negotiation, Cardinal Edward Cassidy told reporters yesterday. The cardinal, who is president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, made his comments as he introduced a new Vatican document regarding the responsibilities of pastors in ecumenical work.

"Regarding primacy, we have no intentions of conceding what is essential," Cardinal Cassidy said. "John Paul II has asked, very clearly, for a study on how it might be exercised. The question of primacy can perhaps be studied, then, in the hope of finding some agreement which would be acceptable to others. In this way the primacy could better serve its own end."

The cardinal emphasized that papal primacy, in fact, should be seen as an ecumenical service, insofar as the Bishop of Rome is the symbol of Christian unity and the servant of all the local churches.

Cardinal Cassidy also stressed that ecumenical work is an essential aspect of the Christian vocation. "It is not a question, then, of whether or not to do ecumenical work," he said. "As the Pope has said, this is part of the mission of the Church... If we wish to be disciples of Christ, we must work toward this unity-- not a unity of compromise or concession, but unity marking by searching together for the truth."

Noting that "there is a great deal of confusion" regarding ecumenical dialogue, the cardinal said that the Catholic church "cannot sacrifice the truth in order to build ourselves a house on a foundation of sand. We must build a house on rock, and on truth."

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