

CWNews.com -- The world leader in Catholic news on the Internet

**PRINT THIS STORY**

[Print This Story](#)

## **Mutual prayer is key to Christian unity, Pope repeats**

Rome, Jan. 28, 2008 (CWNews.com)

Rome, Jan. 28 (CWNews.com) - On January 25, as he presided at an ecumenical Vespers service concluding the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Benedict XVI repeated his observation that any real progress toward Christian unity will be built upon prayer.

In his homily at the Friday evening service, which was held at the Roman basilica of St. Paul-outside-the-Walls, the Holy Father said that faithful Christians must recognize that, despite their best efforts, the ultimate goal of restoring Church unity is "infinitely beyond our capacities."

"It is not in our power to decide when and how this unity will be fully achieved," the Pope continued; "Only God can do so." Thus the first imperative for ecumenical work, he said (citing the theme of this year's Week of Prayer), is to "pray without ceasing."

"Our desire for unity should not be confined to sporadic occasions but should become an integral part of our whole life of prayer," the Pope said. He attributed the ecumenical gains of recent years to the action of the Holy Spirit, and urged all Christians to pray for an increase in the Spirit's gifts.

The concluding service of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was attended by a number of prominent officials from other church groups, including Rev. Samuel Kobia, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches. Earlier in the week Rev. Kobia-- the first head of the World Council of Churches ever to participate in the Vatican observance of the Week of prayer-- had told the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, that he hoped to see the restoration of full communion with Rome in this century.

© Copyright 2008 Domus Enterprises. All rights reserved.