

## WCC pays tribute to Jan Hus on 600th anniversary of his death



Jan Hus at the Council of Constance, by Carl Friedrich Lessing

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**Jan Hus, a Czech Christian reformer, priest and philosopher of the 14th and 15th centuries and one of the most notable personalities in European history, was the subject of a profound tribute paid by Archbishop Emeritus Anders Wejryd, the World Council of Churches (WCC) president for Europe.**

In his message during the 600th anniversary observances in Prague, 5 to 6 July, Wejryd, said that in “an era of deep divisions in the Church, most obviously between Rome and Avignon but also in the manifold political intrigue of Christendom, Hus called his followers to proclaim the One Church as the mystical body of Christ made up of the chosen people of God.”

Seen as a “founder of his nation” Hus had a strong influence on the states of Europe.

Admiring Hus's ability to "discern between his temporal allegiance to the country of his birth and his eternal calling to the kingdom of God", Wejryd said that church and state were separate realms for Hus and a "confusion of the two could lead to corruption among religious leaders".

"He knew citizenship and patriotism were important qualities in this life, but he taught that the Christian's ultimate devotion is to the Church of Jesus Christ," added Wejryd.

Wejryd noted that with the hope of unity and reconciliation, Jan Hus agreed to engage his most powerful critics in dialogue. Despite an assurance of safe conduct to the Council of Constance, he was arrested upon arrival and "became the victim of judicial murder" in July 1415.

Wejryd commented: "In his dying, Jan Hus brought gross institutional injustice to light." He noted that Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis both expressed, in the words of Saint John Paul II, "deep regret for the cruel death imposed upon him."

"The World Council of Churches pays tribute to the sacrifice of Jan Hus and renews its commitment to the path of renewal, reawakening, dialogue, justice and peace," Wejryd said.

The 600th death anniversary commemorations for Hus are a project of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, two WCC member churches.

The WCC will host an exhibition on the life and legacy of Jan Hus starting on 2 October 2015. The exhibit will be held at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, in coordination with other memorial events throughout the month at the University of Geneva, St Pierre cathedral, l'Auditoire de Calvin, l'Eglise de la Madeleine and the International Museum of the Reformation.

### **[Greetings from the WCC on the 600th anniversary of the death of Jan Hus](#)**

### **[WCC Blog: A centuries-old desire for peace in Europe](#)**

### **[Website of the Jan Hus event in Prague](#)**

### **[WCC member churches in Czech Republic](#)**

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 345 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 550 million Christians in over 120 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

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