



In 1898, the Spirit of God inspired Sister Lurana White and Father Paul Wattson to establish a religious community to be called the **Society of the Atonement**.

The Founders had the vision of a religious congregation dedicated to the unity of Christians and to reconciliation in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. Since the Founders were Episcopalians, the roots of the Society were implanted in that ecclesial communion until 1909, the year in which the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. This was the first time that a corporate reunion with Rome took place since the Reformation.

Among the various activities of the Society of the Atonement, special mention needs to be made of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begun by Fr. Paul in 1908 and celebrated today throughout the world.

From the humble beginnings in an abandoned church, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, in an area called Graymoor (New York), the Society of the Atonement has dedicated its efforts for the unity of the Christians and reconciliation in several countries: the United States, Canada, Japan, England, Ireland, Brazil, Peru and Italy.

Yearly conferences honoring the memory of Fr. Paul Wattson were begun in 1974 at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, then, in 1980, at the University of San Francisco. To these were added in 1995, the Paul Wattson Lectures at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, in 1996 at the Toronto School of Theology and in 2017 at the Chicago Theological Union. The *Paul Wattson Lectures* are given by international experts in the field of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

In 2013 the cause for the canonization of Fr. Paul of Graymoor was introduced in the Archdiocese of New York.

Since 1998, the Centro Pro Unione organizes lectures each year in December to honor Fr. Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White, co-founders of the Society of the Atonement. Earlier lecturers were Enzo Bianchi, Sarah Anne Coakley, Archbishop Bruno Forte, Anna Marie Aagaard, Robert Taft, SJ, Dame Mary Tanner, Angelo Maffei, Msgr. Eleuterio Francesco Fortino, Gillian Kingston, Timothy Radcliff, OP, Dr. Jane Williams, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, M. Afr., Turid Karlsen Seim, Kurt Cardinal Koch, Hervé Legrand, OP, William Henn, OFM Cap, Walter Cardinal Kasper, Petros Vassiliadis, Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Michael Calabria, ofm, Muhammad Shafiq, Adam Afterman, Giovanni Maria Vian, and Teresa Berger.



The Centro Pro Unione invites you to
the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference
in Honor of the

Servant of God Father **PAUL WATTSON** and Mother
LURANA WHITE

Thursday · 15 December 2022
6:00 pm (Rome Time)

(In Case You Missed It)
The Ecumenical Winter is Over

Lecturer

Revd Dr Thomas F. BEST
Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Executive Secretary, Commission on Faith and Order
of the World Council of Churches (1984-2004)
and Director (2004-2007)

Lecture Place · Centro Pro Unione
via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30 · Rome / 1st floor



Revd Dr Thomas F. BEST

Lecturer



Revd Dr **Thomas F. Best**, a pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), was seconded by his church to the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches in 1984, retiring as Director at the end of 2007. In addition to writing, producing and editing many Faith and Order and other texts, he is a former editor and book review editor of *The Ecumenical Review* (WCC) and *Growth in Agreement III* (WCC / Eerdmans).

In retirement he has edited *Baptism Today* (WCC/Liturgical Press) and *Growth in Agreement IV* (WCC) as well as contributing to the *Oxford Handbook of Ecumenical Studies*, serving as President and Board

In-Presence & Streaming Web **Registration**

www.prounione.it/en/events/15-dec-2022

Member of the North American Academy of Ecumenists, and co-teaching a course on the history of the ecumenical movement at Boston University. He is currently a member of the International Dialogue between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Catholic Church.

Reflecting a career-long commitment, he last spoke at the Centro Pro Unione in early 2017 on The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as faithful witness – and challenge – to the ecumenical movement.

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