

January, 2016

Re: Update by Working Group for the Commemoration
of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017

Dear Catholic Bishops of Canada and Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

Last year, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) agreed to enter into a partnership to develop joint material to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and also the 50th anniversary of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue. Our two organizations each appointed four members to be part of a Working Group, with the Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the ELCIC, and the Most Rev. Richard Gagnon, Archbishop of Winnipeg, serving as the co-chairs. The Working Group's first meeting took place December 2-4, 2015, in Mississauga. We wish to provide you the following update on the progress by the Working Group in the hope this will help you in your pastoral planning for the 2017 Commemoration.

The following pastorally orientated material is being prepared by the Working Group to be made available and distributed to our respective ecclesial bodies:

- **Parish Study Guide Material – 5-session course for Lent 2017**
 - Drawing from the document developed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), *From Conflict to Communion* and the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the Working Group is developing a five-session program for parishes for Lent 2017. The sessions aim to bring together Catholic and Lutheran parishes to co-facilitate discussions which will touch on some of the historical and theological questions surrounding the Reformation and the advancements in reconciliation which have occurred, specifically over the past 50 years.
- **Homiletic Material**
 - The Working Group will be putting together homiletic reflection material following five identified Sunday Liturgies during Lent of 2017 with a focus on themes such as: reconciliation, unity, baptism, the Resurrection, compassion, healing encounter, the centrality of Christ.
- **Identifying key cities in Canada where there is a high concentration of Catholic and Lutheran communities. The following have been identified as key geographic areas. Although the material will be sent out to all Catholic dioceses and ELCIC synods, the Working Group proposed contacting the appropriate Ordinary and ecumenical officer for the following cities to help promote the material. If there are other cities we are missing, please do not hesitate to notify us:**
 - Vancouver
 - Edmonton
 - Calgary
 - Saskatoon

- Regina
- Winnipeg
- Kitchener
- Montreal
- Ottawa
- Lunenburg

In addition to the above resources, we have assembled the following documents (attached in PDF) which we have identified as useful resources for your key diocesan staff in preparing the 2017 Commemoration:

- **Common Prayer material developed jointly by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) for the commemoration of the Reformation in 2017.**
- **Electronic versions in French and English of the documents *From Conflict to Communion* and the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*,**

The Working Group's next meeting is scheduled for February 16-18, 2016, when its members will start to develop the parish study guides and homiletic material. The goal of the Working Group is to have the final draft material to our sponsoring bodies for review and feedback by early November 2016.

On behalf of the members of the Working Group we wish to thank our sponsoring bodies for the support and direction in this important pastoral work. We pray ardently that these efforts and yours will contribute to the reconciliation of our communities, a unity for which Christ our Savior himself prayed (Jn 17.21).

Bishop Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Archbishop Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

ELCIC Delegation

Bishop Susan Johnson
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