

Bishop's Office Message for October, 2004

Dear Partners in Ministry,

October is the month we set aside specific time to give thanks. It is often a harvest theme, which identifies with our rural roots. This year, while there has been much more rain than in previous years, many of our farmers are now affected by delayed and degraded harvests because of rain. Those of us in urban settings take our food for granted in many ways, so please keep our farmers in your prayers as they labour to produce the abundant food that Canada provides worldwide.

Another reason for which to give thanks this year is the marking of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) by the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation. Justification by grace through faith was one of the fundamental issues of the Lutheran Reformation, and the mutual condemnations that existed between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church in the centuries since the reformation have been a dark mark in the Christian community worldwide. With the signing of the JDDJ, these mutual condemnations have been set aside, opening the way for future conversations and work together that we could not have imagined a generation ago. The Sandstone Valley Ecumenical Centre, which houses our Mt. Calvary congregation and Ascension Catholic Parish in Calgary, is hosting a week-long event October 24-30 commemorating the JDDJ. Check with them for details. I encourage all of you who are near a Roman Catholic parish to consider finding a way to celebrate this dramatic convergence between our church bodies, and praying to find ways to cooperate more fully in the future, so that we might live out Jesus' prayer that we all be one. Happy Thanksgiving!

In Christ, +Steve

+Stephen P. Kristenson, Bishop
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