

**WELCOMING ADDRESS**  
**BY BISHOP DR. VIKTOR JOSEF DAMMERTZ**  
BISHOP OF AUGSBURG

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and all of you who will celebrate with us by means of radio and television!

After many years of discussions and consultations, today authorized representatives of the Holy See and the Lutheran World Federation will sign a document in which is stated that there has been a „consensus“ found „in fundamental questions“ on a central point of the 16th century schism: the justification of man in his sinfulness. This consensus does not nearly mean that unity we all are longing for, however, it is an important step on the arduous way to an ever-increasing unity between those who believe in Christ.

For this celebration, I want to welcome you all cordially. In a special way, my welcome is meant for the representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and of the Holy See who have come to Augsburg in order to sign, in the name of their respective Churches, the „Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification“. I welcome the President of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Christian Krause, together with the Vice-Presidents who have come from all continents and the General Secretary of the World Federation, Dr. Ishmael Noko, as well as Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, together with the Secretary of this Council, Bishop Walter Kasper.

Augsburg was chosen as the place for this ceremonial act of signing: Augsburg being the city of the *Confessio Augustana* (1530), the city of the conclusion of religious peace (1555), the city of parity regarding the co-existence of Protestants

and Catholics (1648) and the city, where every year, since 1650, the Festival of Peace is celebrated.

It is not without reason that our celebration starts in the Cathedral. On the edge of the cathedral square is the house of Konrad Peutinger, a humanist, with whom Martin Luther stayed on October 9th, 1518. - Only a few metres away, a plague reminds us of an incident that happened in October 1518, when Martin Luther put up on the Cathedral's portal a bill protesting against the opening of the trial of heretics in Rome. - And on the western side of the Cathedral we can read an inscription on a plague: „Here was situated the Bishop's palace...: in whose chapter hall, on June 25th, 1530, the *Confessio Augustana* was proclaimed“. - Finally, the Cathedral's pulpit reminds us of the Jesuit Petrus Canisius, the most important exponent of Catholic Reform and renewal of the Church in Germany. Here, in the city of the Fugger dynasty, Canisius worked from 1559 to 1566 as a cathedral preacher who was firmly resolved to defend the catholic doctrine against the teachings of Luther and his preachers.

Just here, from this place, brimming with history, where in the 16th century the break up as well as efforts for agreement have become rather intense, will today begin the common path of reflection and conversion that together we wish to follow.

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