

**WELCOMING ADDRESS BY  
OBERKIRCHENRAT DR. ERNST ÖFFNER**  
REGIONAL DEAN OF AUGSBURG AND SCHWABEN

*« ... the path of self-collection and conversion on which we want to embark together today.»*

I welcome you on behalf of the Evangelical Church to the road which we shall walk *together* in this worship service : The worship service begins here in the Cathedral. It continues by the common road through the city and then finally reaches the signing ceremony in St. Anna.

A long road lies behind us and our churches, first together and then separated. The Augsburg Confession, presented here in Augsburg in 1530, attempted to bridge the gap. But in vain. From then on the dividing lines were more important than the agreements in the faith which were still present. When we want to embark upon a new road today, we must remember the common beginning of the road. That is why we celebrate this worship service « in the name of God ; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. »

The worship service makes it clear that the road continues. The will of Jesus is « that they may all be one. » The signing ceremony is not an end point but a colon. The ecumenical dialogue must continue with theological effort in order to achieve better understanding and reconciliation. The Evangelical Church takes the steps today in the expectation that improvements will come in practical common life between Evangelical and Catholic Christians who are joined together in families and congregations - for the sake of people themselves and for the sake of our faith :

- For example, more common worship - why not on a regular basis, more common initiatives in the congregations, more common action in public life.
- Eucharistic sharing remains our goal - first of all the mutual invitation to the Lord's Table, and the mutual recognition connected to this as being Church of Jesus Christ.

All this deepens our faith which – as we officially confirm today – is common in its central elements. Really : There is more that unites us than that separates us.

In 1987 Pope John Paul II here in Augsburg Cathedral spoke the encourageing sentence : « Why should we have separate paths in those areas where we can already walk together ? »

We shall now get started on the road literally. In this worship service we want to walk from one church to the other, from the Catholic Cathedral to the Evangelical Church of St. Anna. We deliberately walk in the street, publicly. Because we are convinced that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of the justification of the sinner, is relevant and seeks to become public. We believe this together. We do this together. For this we pray for God's benediction.

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