



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM

13 September 2019

Catholic Bishops' Conferences

Bishops, Presidents and Leaders of the Lutheran World Federation member churches

Re.: Liturgy and resources for the 20th anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

Respected Bishops, Presidents and Leaders,

We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Twenty years ago, on Reformation Day (October 31, 1999) the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) in Augsburg, Germany.

With the JDDJ originally signed in German

(<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/luterani/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/1999-dichiarazione-congiunta-sulla-dottrina-della-justificazion/en/de.html>) and English language

(<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/luterani/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/1999-dichiarazione-congiunta-sulla-dottrina-della-justificazion/en.html>), Catholics and Lutherans were able to identify a differentiated consensus on the question that had so deeply divided the Church in the West. Furthermore, they were able to declare that because of this consensus, the condemnations expressed in the past do not apply anymore.

Those signing the JDDJ could hardly have imagined the powerful traction this document developed in the following years. Drawn by a common urgency to present the message of God's liberating grace and hope for this world, it brought together not only Catholics and Lutherans, but also Methodists, Anglicans and Reformed. Representatives from these five communions met in March 2019 at a consultation in Notre Dame University (South Bend, Indiana, USA) and committed to strengthen their common witness in worship and service while continuing their journey together towards visible unity.

The JDDJ was the theological cornerstone that enabled Catholics and Lutherans to develop the document "From Conflict to Communion" (2013) and to jointly commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2016 (Lund/Malmö – Sweden).

We are pleased to share with this letter a 20th anniversary edition of the JDDJ

(<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-joint-declaration-doctrine-justification-20th-anniversary-edition>). It brings together:

- The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification with the Official Common Statement and its Annex (1999)
- The World Methodist Council Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (2006)
- Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 16.17: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (2016)
- Association of the World Communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (2017)
- The Notre Dame Consultation Statement (2019).

We are working actively to publish this anniversary edition in French, German and Spanish versions and will inform you once they are available.

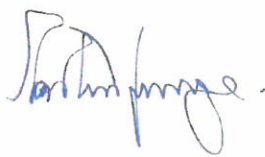
We are also sharing a liturgy to mark the 20th anniversary of the JDDJ

(<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-liturgy-20th-anniversary-joint-declaration-doctrine-justification>). It was first used during a joint worship on Trinity Sunday (June 16, 2019) in St. Pierre Protestant Cathedral in Geneva in the presence of representatives from the Catholic Church, and the Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed communions. This liturgy is available in English, French, German and Spanish.

We are proposing that these resources may be used at the local, diocesan and national levels, perhaps in the context of Reformation Day (October 31) or later, and preferably including all five communions associated with the JDDJ.

There is much more that unites us than divides us. Moved by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we are invited to give witness to God's action in this world, who in Christ came to offer salvation as a gift of grace to humankind. We cannot think of a better time boldly and jointly to offer this message.

In Christ, our Savior,



Rev. Dr Martin Junge
General Secretary
The Lutheran World Federation



Kurt Cardinal Koch
President
Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity