



A blessed New Year to all of you. It is 2017! It is 500th Anniversary of the Reformation! Towards this I had been asked again and again, "How are the Lutherans in Singapore going to celebrate this Anniversary?" and each time I had to explain that we will certainly commemorate this occasion but we are hesitant to call it celebration because it is hard to celebrate a church split.

However, there is something we can certainly celebrate. For the first time in 500 years, Catholic and Lutheran church leaders came together in a historic commemoration prayer service in Lund, Sweden on Reformation Day, 31 October 2016.

His Holiness Pope Francis, together with President Bishop Dr. Munib Younan of the LWF committed themselves to lead their churches to move away from conflict and to journey towards communion and to strengthen their common witness.

Bishop Henderson of the Lutheran Church of Australia, in his interview with ABC radio after the prayer service said, "The Reformation for us has always been a mixed sort of celebration. In one sense, we celebrate that the gospel was reclaimed or rediscovered in the church, but we also mourn it, because it represents the fracturing of the body of Christ on earth... It's always for us a very bad thing when the body of Christ is divided, especially when there's antipathy or animosity between the branches of Christianity, and so we see this as a major step forward."

It is heartening for me as a Lutheran Christian to hear the Pope acknowledging that Luther is a witness of the Gospel and in his message in Lund, quoting Luther, and grace alone, that the Gospel shows us that God always takes the initiative. He said, "The doctrine of Justification thus expresses the essences of human existence before God." He further said, "Now, in the context of the commemoration of the Reformation of 1517, we have a new opportunity to accept a common path, one that has taken shape over the past 50 years in dialogue. We have the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond controversies and disagreements that have often prevented us from understanding one

another." It is towards this that I am happy to announce that the Lutheran Church in Singapore has initiative dialogue with the Catholic Church in Singapore to promote mutual understanding as well as in discussion with them about a joint commemoration of the Reformation this year. I trust this is pleasing to our Lord who desires that we are one as He and His Father is One.



会督的话

祝大家有个蒙福的新年。今年是2017年！是宗教改革500周年的纪念！为此事我被问了一次又一次，“新加坡的信义会要如何庆祝这个纪念日？”而每一次我的解释是，我们肯定会纪念这个节日，但我们不愿称这是一个庆祝会，因为我们无法庆祝一个教会的分裂。

但是，有一些事情却是我们可以欢庆的。500年来的第一次，天主教和信义宗教会的领袖们在2016年10月31日，假瑞典南部的伦德市举行了一个历史性的纪念祷告会。

教皇圣法兰西斯，与世界信义宗联会的会长友南会督互相承诺要带领教会远离冲突，走向团结并加强彼此间的共同见证。

澳洲信义会的会督，在祷告聚会结束后接受ABC电台的专访时说道：“改教的庆祝对我们而言是一种五味杂陈的感受，一方面，我们庆贺福音被正确宣讲或重新发现教会，但同时我们也哀悼基督肢体在地上的破裂。。。对我们而言，基督肢体的破裂是一件不好的事情，特别是当基督教的分支之间产生反感或敌意时，所以我们看此祷告会是一个很大的跃进。”

身为一位信义宗的信徒，当我听到天主教的教皇确认路德是福音的见证人，和他在信息中引用路德、唯独恩典，就是福音向我们显示上帝对我们的主动性时，我是何等受到鼓舞。他说：“因信称义的教义表达在上帝面前人存在的本质。”他更进一步说：“现在，为纪念1517年的宗教改革日，我们有一个新的机会去接受一个共同的步伐，就是50年来我们进行了一次对话。我们有一个机会修补我们历史的重要时刻，放下时常使到我们争议和意见不合的事，向了解彼此的方向迈进。”

也因着这样，我很高兴地宣布：新加坡基督教信义会主动与新加坡天主教会进行对话，除了促进彼此的了解也讨论在今年一起举行一个宗教改革的纪念日。我相信这是一件讨上帝喜悦的事，因为我们与祂原为一，正如祂与父神原为一一样。

