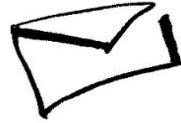




BISHOP'S
Dec 15 POST Jan 16



“And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God” Luke 13,29

To some extent our Synod in Kroondal was like a foretaste of this promise of Jesus. Eight very different congregations from east and west, north and south, introduced themselves. What a diversity. There are hardly any similarities between a small, deep rural congregation and the similar sized congregation in Hillbrow. But still, similarities were evident. Apart from the fact that all belong to the same ELCSA (N-T), each of them conveyed the message: We are congregation of Jesus Christ. He has called us, and we want to be his witnesses where he has placed us. The way in which this witnessing happens, however, is very different - a huge diversity growing from the unity in Christ.

During the coming two months we are celebrating two major “Christ festivals” in the Church.

Christmas, although celebrated all over the world, all too often has hardly any reference to Christ. For many it combines beautiful cultural traditions, but nothing more. My prayer is that once again, wherever we celebrate Christmas, the joy of this central message will be evident: God came to us in Christ, into our world, into our reality. We celebrate the coming of the One who unites us all. In him the foundation of our unity was laid.

And then, on 6 January, we celebrate Epiphany. At least, the eastern Churches celebrate it. In the west it is often overlooked. Yet for centuries it was more important than Christmas. The message of this Christ Festival is well captured in the song: “Jesus has come, and brings joy as our Saviour, Alpha and Omega, see he is here!...”

Epiphany is in a sense the beginning of the diversity - the one Christ should be made known to all the world, to each nation, in each culture, in all languages. And that happens in many, sometimes very different ways. It has to, so that all can hear this gospel and get to know Jesus Christ.

It is wonderful that we as Church can be part of this wonderful movement. I wish you a very blessed Christmas, and then also a joyful start of 2016!

Yours in Christ

Host Müller