



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF FLINT



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Explanation on "From Conflict to Communion" a joint document between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and The Lutheran World Federation.

I have received numerous messages and phone calls regarding the service planned on September 24 at 5:00 p.m. at St. Matthew's between our Church and members of the Lutheran Church (ELCA). Some of these inquiries have been because of confusion and some have just been mean spirited. We were approached by representatives of the Lutheran Church requesting that we pray with them on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. They also recommended that this service would benefit Catholic Charities and Samaritas, organizations that serve those in need. Their approach to us was the direct result of the discussions between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. A prayer service was developed between the two churches. Thus Bishop Boyea of our diocese and Bishop Kreiss from the local Lutheran diocese will be present at this approved service. It is to be noted that the prayer service is a commemoration service. Commemoration means a memorial service. (Some people have accused us of making this a celebration of the Reformation.) The Reformation for us as Catholics is a sad moment in our history. It is time for us to begin to bridge the division between our two churches. (Pontiff which comes from the Latin pontifex means "to bridge.") So rather than ignoring the 500th anniversary the Holy See has determined this is an opportunity to seek reconciliation. You may easily find the document if you go on Goggle.

On a personal note, I grew up in Ida, Michigan a town with six Lutheran churches and one small Catholic Church. I clearly remember during my childhood years when my parents were busy trying to find answers for my father's illness by traveling around the country; it was good Lutherans who were my baby sitters and in whose homes I would stay. They loved me and took care of me and they made sure every Sunday they would take me to the Catholic Church for Mass. One Christmas when I had rheumatic fever and bedridden, I remember Santa Claus coming to me on Christmas Eve. Santa looked somewhat familiar. So my dear parishioners because of people like Katy Domling, Alma and Olivia Metz and Norm and Mildred Capaul, just to name a few, when I was asked by our Lutheran brethren if I would pray with them how could I say no?

The only one who benefits by the division of our two churches is the Devil. May we begin to heal the divisions intelligently and compassionately. Even if some of our Lutheran brethren are celebrating, which some of our detractors are claiming, still how does that hurt me? I hope this clears up questions that are being asked. May Mary Mother of Flint bless us and help us to pray for the Grace of the Reconciling Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. You are all in my prayers and heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tom".

Fr. Tom