

THOUGHTS AND A PRAYER FOR THE WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION ONLINE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

From Ireland I greet you all most warmly with the traditional Easter Greeting.

THE LORD IS RISEN ! THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA.

Like many Christians all over the world I have been reading St. John's Gospel during Lent. It comes to us from the heart, the mind and the life experience of the young man, John, whom Jesus loved very particularly. Young John was the only one of the group of Jesus' special friends who joined the three or four Marys close to the foot of the Cross. Young John is the friend to whom Jesus committed the care of his mother. Young John is the friend who won the race to the tomb to confirm the incredible story told by Mary of Magdala that the tomb was empty, the body gone and that she had actually spoken with Jesus. The Gospel comes to us from the one who saw it all. John did take care of Mary as he lived out a long life of faithfulness in Ephesus and John leaves us this record of the signs that make sense that Jesus is Lord.

John originally finished his record with the story of Thomas who needed proof that Jesus was really alive before he could believe. And he got it. Three further stories were then added. They are in Chapter 21 of John's Gospel. It would be really great if you could find time to read that chapter. The first tells the story of the great catch of fish when with the advice of Jesus, whom they were almost afraid to recognise, the expert fishermen, his friends, changed their fishing practice and from catching nothing, caught more than they could ever have imagined even in their wildest dreams. The significance of being able to change.

The next story tells of Peter who had returned to his old job as a fisherman being challenged by Jesus to change job and become a Pastor of Jesus' Friends. He accepts the challenge with his usual robust enthusiasm. The significance of being willing to change.

The final story is about change coming as inevitable and unsought as Peter is required to turn from living towards dying. The significance of accepting the consequences of change.

These three stories together invite us to see change as an essential ingredient of living and dying and in particular to understand Jesus as both the essential and the constant companion on the journey of faith. Here faith is that quality of both being and doing that responds to the

promptings of the Spirit who is the Spirit of Jesus, the Christ and in whom the capacity to change as God wills becomes the dynamic of the Kingdom which all of us together seek? In this year of the 5th., Centenary of the the Lutheran Reformation we remind ourselves that Ecclesia Semper Reformanda Est. The Church is always being reformed. The Federation is always being reformed.

Before, during and after the General Assembly in Bogota I have travelled with the Federation hoping that, in however small a way, I may be able to share in the wonderful work of ensuring that the Federation becomes an even greater vessel for the Glory of God in our time in the pursuit of Justice, of Peace, of Grace, of Truth and of Love. The most complete revelation of these conditions I find in the person of Jesus, the Rabbi Joshua of Nazareth to whom the Young John in his old age bears such awesome and wonderful witness and into whose holy care and keeping through prayer we now commit the life and work, deliberations and decisions of this On-Line General Assembly.

And so wherever we are let us pray together.

God of all Truth and Grace by whom are disclosed the true natures of Justice, Peace and Love grant to this General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation the power of your Spirit that as we come together in many different places, with many different experiences and multiple languages we may become an early Pentecost of shared understanding and common vision of what it means to do your work in our world. Help us to know how best to organise ourselves for the doing of your work. Give us courage to make the necessary and desirable changes to our constitution. Assist us in our hearing and learning from each other. Suppress in us all improper desires for power and prestige and endow us all with the joy of being both the Servants and the Friends of Jesus, our elder brother in whose name and for whose sake we pray. Amen.