



GREGOREO

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPE ORANGE DIOCESE IN THE LUTHER DECADA- REFORMATION & MUSIC YEAR JANUARY 2012

Dear Reader,

The LORD is my helper, I will not be afraid, what can a human being do to me?
(Heb 13:6)

With this greeting I urge you to confidently enter this year.

I sincerely hope that no anxiety, fear or worry is currently entangling your mind and heart to such an extent, that 2012 looks very bleak for you. These unholy three above and their related gangster friends constantly are on the prowl to destroy our peace of mind. The secret is to spot them from afar and not to allow them to enter our private space.

Shun them by always constantly making an effort to see yourself in the **PRESENCE** and **PROTECTION** of God. May this comfort you that **HE** knows your every move and challenge.

I hope our first input for the year will stimulate you to a higher quality relationship with your God and neighbor.

PREMIER SNIPPETS FROM THE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT OF MARTIN LUTHER

I will praise you: for you have heard me, and has become my salvation (Ps 118:21)

This is a consoling verse, which joyously sings out this message: "Aren't you a wonderful, loving God? You reign over us in such a marvelous and benign way .You hear us when You cause us to lie low. You justify us when You let us become sinners. You lead us to heaven when you cast us into hell. You give us the victory when You

allow us to taste defeat. You bring us to life when You let us be killed. You console us when You let us mourn. You make us sing when You cause us to weep. You make us strong when we suffer. You make us wise when You make us into fools. You make us rich when You send us to poverty. You make us into masters when You let us serve and You continue to do similar innumerable miracles(...)' (Luther's Breviary 2007)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- ❖ The broad vision of ELCSA for 2008 - 2017 is "growing together in Christ". The idea around this slogan is that we should aim to have 5million members by the year 2017. To date we are around 500 000.00 members - which means that each member must attract 10 members. Is that too much to ask for. You be the judge.
- ❖ Ecumenically the Diocese has partnerships with European, American and African Lutheran Dioceses. Ecumenical relations are something that is growing very very slow. There are reasons for this slow growth - chief amongst them is the fact that we do not have a committee that is dedicating quality time to this important ministry of outreach.
In February 21 - 28 we remember the signing of the ELCSA - COD and ELC Tanzania Central Diocese's that took place at St. George Parish, Kimberley. We need to strengthen the South - South relations.
- ❖ Regarding the EU crisis - I personally do not want the economic situation to have any impact on the relationships we have with the Church in Europe or America. The Economic melt down is hurting us all - lest it might appear that we are basing our relationships on economical ties. Regrettably though we know that when America and Europe coughs we catch a serious bout of flu.
- ❖ The history of the ANC is the history of our struggle for the liberation of the masses of our people. The 08/01/2012 was Sunday Epiphany. It was so befitting to celebrate the appearance of our God in our midst as the symbolism of the appearance of our freedom in our life time. The Lutheran church both locally and internationally must pride itself that it has implacable struggle credentials. It is in order for ELCSA to wish the ANC well in retrospect, but it is also proper for

ELCSA to remain prophetic and to hold the ANC accountable as the ruling party for some of the challenges we are facing today. The Church must at all times remain prophetic in its socio-political outlook.

I will reflect more on liturgical transformation in the next edition. It is my respectful submission that we in the COD are not engaging in theological discourse at all. We need to listen more to one another so that through dialogue we could enrich one another. I think the bishop should encourage more of his kind of debate.

Regards

MZ

CROSSING THE (2012) RIVER...(Deut 31: 1-8)


Scared, overwhelmed, discouraged? A daunting task?

Well, we have been here before (cf. the defeat of the Amorites earlier in the campaign of Moses). Depending on your age minus give and take six years so many times you have been in front of this river. When you look back all these years, the Shepherd and Guide has been there -if you had allowed Him!

Our God is unchanging and thus this year will not be different. Challenges will be there-you might perceive it as beyond the ability of God, but we are reminded that what is impossible with humans are still possible with God!

He will go *in front of you*, meaning He will confront the enemy long before you. You can also hide behind Him. He *will go with you* -a companion; by your side speaking words of encouragement. Taking your hand if you so wish. *He will never leave you or forsake you.* He will not get afraid because of the might of the onslaught, the viciousness of the enemy, the determination of the attackers. He will not 'drop' you when you need Him most.

It is my prayer that you fall back on your accumulated successes achieved under the guidance of God. Just recall your previous fixes and His provision. Alternatively start to



trust God, see Him intervene on your behalf and drink this 'faith energy' to move you forward to a higher stage of the game. A Blessed year to you!

SET THE GOALS HIGH IN 2012 WITH ROM 12:9-18

You probably have already set your eyes on some achievements this year. That good and I wish you well. I want you to incorporate the following to the glorification and establishment of the kingdom of God.

Please read this well-known passage for yourself a couple of times. (By the way this can be a good passage for an informal Bible Study or to kick start your league or organization)

This passage challenged me to check on the following:

- The quality of my love (agape) and stance towards good vs. evil.
- The quality of my relationships and how to enable others
- The quality of my discipleship
- Practical assistance to those in need
- A call to alternative lifestyles
- Christian attitudes in our daily walk.

Well now we must just practice it!

ELDERS WHO ARE RETIRING...

On behalf of the Bishop and our Diocese please accept our sincere gratitude for your sacrifice these last six years. We pray that the memories of yours tasks and service to Christ will be sweet.

Fruit in God's kingdom is not immediately visible and tangible, but the seeds never fail to germinate. So every effort and word spoken under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by you will eventually reach God's goal and build His kingdom.

Please continue to share your expertise with those following in your footsteps.

Encourage them; teach them, most of all pray for them!



PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

Election 2012 in ELCSA needs your support and prayers.

29 JANUARY, our official **DAY OF PRAYER (AND FASTING) FOR THE ELECTIONS** is here. Please pray, ask God for able, capable, committed, forgiven, hardworking, patient, trustworthy, teachable, unwearied servants (male and female) who will open themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit for 6 years.

LUTHER DECADE REFORMATION & MUSIC

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD!

I urge you to

Become creative- Compose new songs - write new verses to current hymns and melodies.

Take time to carefully study the words of some hymns (especially of Luther), memorize the words!

Let us start with the Hymn: A mighty fortress is our God –'n Vaste Burg is onse God. Imagine the process of composition of this song. Hear the battle raging in his heart. See the onslaught of the devil. Hear the Word enter the scene. See the transition from despair to hope. The surging of confidence! The faith that well up in Luther! The surety of the victory!

We need to make this our own!

A Challenge


To the Bishop, President & his Council, Deans, Pastors, Laity

Ants are working constantly; bees are busy all the time,
but our website is quiet- no movement, day in and day out.

Let this tool come alive. Open yourself under the direction of the Holy Spirit and feed the diocese and nation!

There is no such thing as I'm too busy, too weak, can't write...all the excuses...

My grace is sufficient for you...



New school, new job, new environment? Your way is not hidden from God! Your cause is not disregarded by God! He is with you! Read Isaiah 40:27-31.

HAVE YOUR SAY >>>

Readers are requested to send comments to the Exec. Secretary, Rev. M. Manong via email ([mjmanong @yahoo.com](mailto:mjmanong@yahoo.com)), Face book or Twitter (use link [@website](#) www.elcsacod.co.za)

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