

## MISSION OF THE ATONEMENT: AT FIFTEEN, WHAT?

I often describe Atonement as a community that is intentional and traditional. By intentional I mean that you don't come to Atonement because it is convenient. Atonement is not consistent with any experience of church you have had hitherto. So one senses immediately that there is a certain depth of connection that people are forming with one another, and, that there is a significant degree of participation on everyone's part. I feel that one must like that or they would not come back. That is what I mean when I say we are an intentional community.

Although many — myself included — may be drawn primarily because of the attraction to this form of small, intentional community, nevertheless, from outset, one recognizes the ecumenical reality of being a community of Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Yet, even that has a particular attractiveness for those who are drawn to just such a small, intentional community experience of Church life. For ours is not a heady form of ecumenical dialogue, but rather a grassroots form of ecumenical sharing.

From the start, we have seen ourselves as a mission of the Oregon Synod and the Portland Archdioceses. That is why I say that we are not just intentional, we are also traditional. For that relationship is seen as essential to who we are, and central to all that we do.

In the beginning of July we entered our fifteenth year. I would like to have this fifteenth year bring us to reflect on the nature of our experience, and on the course of our future. To say that you are too new to really contribute to that reflection, I would say you are selling yourself and us short. Your fresh perspective is very much needed.

It seems to me that by the very nature

of ecumenism our future is limited. Since the goal of ecumenism is not to supplant either of our traditions, but rather to become a communion of churches, our purpose is then specific and limited. In a grassroots way through our relationships and community life together, we are to come to a new found respect for each other's traditions. Which, I must say, has certainly been my experience.

I would like to suggest what I think is a further aspect of our future, and that is bringing some of our grassroots ecumenical experience to other Lutheran and Catholic congregations. That is why I am excited about the prospect of our housing at Atonement a day-long program entitled: LUTHERAN AND CATHOLICS TOGETHER ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE. We are in the process of planning this event, which is scheduled for Saturday, October 7th. Archbishop Vlazny has been very supportive and has given us the good offices of the Chancellor, Mary Jo Tully, who is helping us get the word out through a mailing from the Archdiocese. She will also participate in the day. Unfortunately, Bishop Swanson will be at a meeting in Chicago. But his assistant, Rev. Darrell Lundby will be part of the day. We hope to have a forum about it soon and elicit your suggestions and feedback as we share agenda with you. And, of course, we will be inviting your participation in making this happen, and in helping to host the event.

May our fifteenth year be a banner one. One in which together we are articulating and entering into what our future is to be.

Matt Tumulty  
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