



DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

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September 26, 2017

Dear Parishioners of St. Peter Cathedral,

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

I invite you to join with me in welcoming our Lutheran brothers and sisters to the cathedral on October 21 when they will be celebrating the installation of their new bishop. According to the ecumenical norms of the Church, I am able to give permission for such celebrations.

As followers of Jesus we have much in common with Lutherans, and what unites us is greater than what divides us. Pope Francis, during his visit to Sweden to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, said that dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans, "has helped us to grow in mutual understanding; it has fostered reciprocal trust and confirmed our desire to advance towards full communion." As we strive toward unity, it would be a mistake to pretend that there are no divisions between us or sweep them under a rug. In this light, we have an important witness to give to our neighbors and our country.

It is no secret that the United States is experiencing bitter divisions. The expressions of animosity among differing groups that we hear about in the news is very saddening. It seems that we Americans can at times forget how to love each other when there are divisions and disagreements among us.

We Christians are called to manifest the love of Jesus and show that we love each other even though there are divisions among us. This witness to the love of Christ is the healing balm that our nation needs. Let the warm hospitality that we show our Lutheran brothers and sisters be a public witness of how people can and should love each other even when we are divided.

With prayers that your heart be filled with the *Joy of the Gospel*, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL
Bishop of Marquette