

2nd Partner's Consultation
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
São Paulo, Brazil, September 6-12, 2013

Sunday – 08 of September of 2013

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Opening liturgy

Prelude

Greeting

L “Blessed are those who work for peace for God will call them his children!”

(Mt 5: 9).

Welcome to this worship service to celebrate the faith in the God who motivates us to work for peace and against all types of violence.

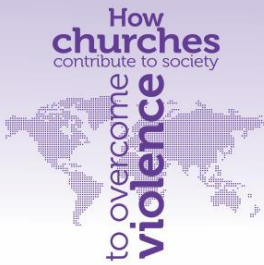
Apostolic greeting

L The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you!

C (sing) *Onde dois ou três me invocam a orar com eles estarei. Ali estarei, ali estarei. Onde dois ou três me invocam a orar, com eles estarei.*

[Where two or three call on me in prayer I will be with them there. I will be there, I will be there. Where two or three call on me in prayer I will be with them there.]



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Confession of sins

L This worship service takes place in the company of representatives of churches who are concerned with overcoming violence. For violence is in the world, in society and in us. This diabolical evil has many facets and many ways of installing itself in us, among us and in the social structures. As persons and as the church, where have we omitted ourselves? Where did we not assume our responsibility? In silence, let us confess to God our sins, our contribution to violence and our indifference toward it.
(Silence)

L I was raped. What did you do?

*...In the elevator, they looked me up and down. I felt like garbage.
Who supported me?*

...Without home, family, affection. Who hugged me?

...I left prison. Who believed in me?

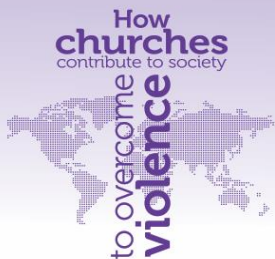
...At home, I feel as if I don't exist... I am noone!

...I am different ... I am despised!

...At the end of life, my company is solitude....

L God of mercy! Heal us of indifference, individualism, relational coldness, lack of a sense of community and of social and political involvement. Forgive us, o Lord and give us the conditions to begin again a new day, a new life, a new society, a new world. With an open heart we cry to you:

C **(sing)** *Perdão, Senhor, perdão* (2x) [Forgive, o Lord, forgive (2x)]



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Announcement of Grace

L God hears us, perceives our supplication and forgives us because he loved the world in such a way that he gave his only Son, so that all who believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Amen.

Kyrie

L As forgiven persons, freed from ourselves, let us look to the world and identify the pains of people suffering violence.

C (sing) *Pelas dores deste mundo, ó Senhor, imploramos piedade*
[For the troubles of this world, o Lord, we call upon your mercy]

Pelas dores deste mundo, ó Senhor, imploramos piedade. A um só tempo geme a criação.

Teus ouvidos se inclinem ao clamor desta gente oprimida. Apressate com tua salvação!

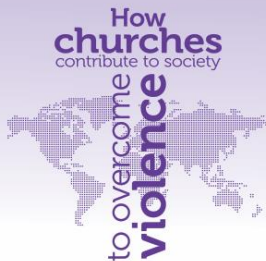
A tua paz, bendita e irmanada co'a justiça, abraça o mundo inteiro. Tem compaixão!

O teu poder sustente o testemunho do teu povo. Teu Reino venha a nós! Kyrie eleison!

For the troubles and the sufferings of the world, God, we call upon your mercy: the whole creation's laboring in pain!

Lend an ear to the rising cry for help from oppressed and hopeless people. Come! Hasten your salvation, healing love!

We pray for peace, the blessed peace that comes from making justice, to cover and embrace us. Have mercy, Lord! We pray for



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power, the power that will sustain your people's witness: until your Kingdom come, kyrie eleison!

Prayer of the Day

L God of goodness and mercy, we give you thanks because you show us paths of overcoming violence, of flourishing of peace and of rest. You lead us in the path of life with meekness. Come, o God, and give us your Word of light and truth and gladden us with your presence in the Holy Communion. Open our minds and our hearts to receive and accept what you, today, offer us. Through Jesus, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns today and always. Amen.

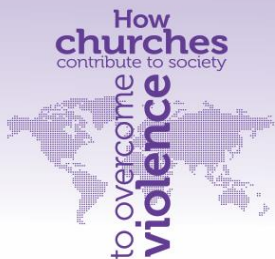
C (sing) *Quando o povo se reúne [When the people gather together] HPD 336*

1. When the people gather to praise God together, they do not close in on themselves, they do not forget to love. Many suffer on the streets and can no longer struggle. //: The praise of God teaches us to share his grace. ://

2. When the people gather to pray in silence, they do not only pray for themselves: they wish to remember the little ones. God gave us his life but in the world it suffers. //: Creation which is destroyed is brought in our prayer. ://

3. When the people gather together to attentively hear the Gospel, they perceive that in the world there are thousands of voices that elude. The Word challenges, it doesn't let us be accommodated. //: The message which brings life wants to reach the afflicted. ://

Liturgy of the Word



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Bible readings

First reading

L The first reading is from the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 30:
15-20

C (sing) *Senhor, que a tua palavra transforme a nossa vida.
Queremos caminhar com retidão na tua luz.
[Lord, may your Word transform our life.
We want to walk in righteousness in your light.]*

L The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 14:
25-33,

ALELUIA!

C (sing) *Aleluia, aleluia, aleluia!*

L Reading of the Gospel

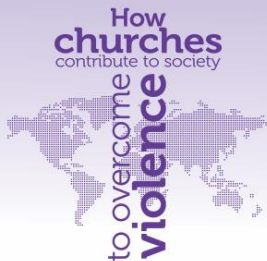
L The Word of the Lord!

C *Let us give thanks to God.*

Sermon

C (sing) *Nós cremos todos num só Deus (HPD 88) [We all believe
in one God]*

1. *We all believe in one true God, who created earth and
heaven, The Father who to us in love has the right of
children given. He in soul and body feeds us; all we need his
hand provides us; through all snares and perils leads us.
Watching that no harm betide us, He care for us by day and
night. All things are governed by his might.*



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2. *We all believe in Jesus Christ, His own Son, our Lord, possessing an equal Godhead, throne, and might, Source of every grace and blessing; Born of Mary, virgin mother, by the power of the spirit, Word made flesh, our elder brother; that the lost might life inherit, was put to death upon the cross, and raised by God victorious.*
3. *We all confess the Holy Ghost who, in highest heaven dwelling with God the Father and the Son, comforts us beyond all telling; Who the Church, his own creation, keeps in unity of spirit. Here forgiveness and salvation daily come through Jesus' merit. All flesh shall rise, and we shall be in bliss with God eternally. Amen.*

Gathering of offerings

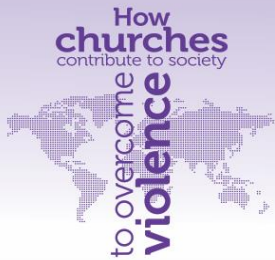
- National destiny: accompaniment of theological students

General prayer

L God of love,

We thank you for this community gathered here and for the faith that unites people of different regions and contexts of the world. In this unity, we pray for all people who struggle with much courage to overcome violence against women, children, adolescents, youth, elderly, ethnic and sexual groups. We pray for all people who denounce the violence and struggle for it to be overcome.

We pray for those people who give testimony of a life transformed by the divine grace and love and who spare no efforts to place themselves at the side of people who suffer,



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offering their ears to listen to their pains and extending their hands to heal their wounds.

C (sing) *Oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum. Oculi nostri ad Dominum nostrum.*

Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam. Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam.

[Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God. Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God.]

We pray for all the institutions and shelters which take in victims and survivors of violence and for the NGOs which fight for the defense of the rights of impoverished people. We pray for the authorities that they may carry out their role in favor of justice for all people.

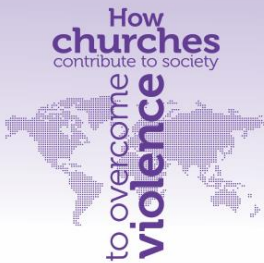
We pray for your church represented here and spread throughout the world and for this congregation. That they may be proclaimers of the full and abundant life offered by Jesus for all people.

C (sing) *Oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum. Oculi nostri ad Dominum nostrum.*

Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam. Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam.

[Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God. Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God.]

We pray for those who are ill...; for those grieving....; for those who are depressed...; for those who are forgotten in their pain...



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and for those whose voice is smothered in the family, in the churches and in society.

We also pray for us, so that we may have courage and audacity in the quest for a new world of peace, justice and the overcoming of all types of violence.

C (sing) *Oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum. Oculi nostri ad Dominum nostrum.*

Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam. Em ti, ó Deus, nossos olhos esperam.

[Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God. Our eyes are turned to you Lord, o God.]

God of love, you know all that which is kept in the silence of our heart. Accept what we bring to you in prayer, in the name of Jesus, our redeemer. Amen.

Holy Communion liturgy

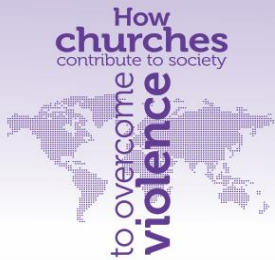
Preparation of the table

L The elements of the Holy Communion and the offerings are brought to the table together with the symbols which represent the struggle for real signs of violence overcome in different contexts. While this takes place, we sing:

C (sing) *Dai louvor ao Senhor. Ele é tão bondoso, sua misericórdia, dura para sempre.*

Danket, danket dem Herrn, denn es ist sehr freundlich, seine Güte und Wahrheit, währet ewiglich.

Praise the Lord, he is so gracious, his mercy endures forever.



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Offertory prayer

L God of tenderness! We give you thanks because you take us in as we are, where we are. In gratefulness to you we bring with us our joy in being able to share our struggles for overcoming violence in our countries and in our societies. From you comes our strength. Without you we would do nothing. With you we are a stronger body to overcome violence. In the Holy Communion which we are going to celebrate, come and give us all that we need to live and proclaim a new world, a new earth. Amen!

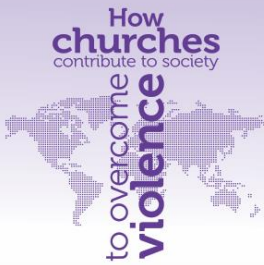
Gesture of peace

L Just as God takes us in, let us mutually welcome each other, wishing the peace of Christ.

Eucharistic prayer

L Let us pray the table prayer of the Lord's Supper:

L We give you thanks, o God, for having mercy on the people who suffer. You hear the cry of the people who smother their pain and you heal their wounds. In your graciousness you came to us in Jesus Christ becoming like us. He, your Son, lived among us, shared our humanity, experienced the violence of this world and taught us the true face of love when he gave himself on the cross unto death for us. However, he resuscitated and gave us back hope of life with the promise of eternal life. In trust we await the day of his return. Meanwhile, we live his presence in us and among us in the Holy Communion. He ordained that we do this. Thus, *on the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread, and giving thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: take and eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of*



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me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to his disciples, saying: drink of this all of you, for this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the remission of sins. Do this every time you drink of it in memory of me.

O God, today we celebrate life in community, and in joy, we anticipate the feast of your Kingdom, where all forms of suffering and pain are overcome. Remember those who have parted and await the day of the definitive gathering, of life abundant, of peace and happiness. Send us your Holy Spirit and grant that we be one body, a community that is committed, in love, to overcoming all forms of violence.

C (Sing) *Por Cristo, com Cristo, em Cristo, seja a ti, Pai-todo poderoso. [Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, be to you all powerful Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor, all glory now and forever, amen, amen, amen]*

L Here we represent the diversity of the Church of Christ. We are different, this is true. But, in Christ, we are one. That is why, holding hands, we pray the Lord's prayer:

C Our Father...

Breaking of bread

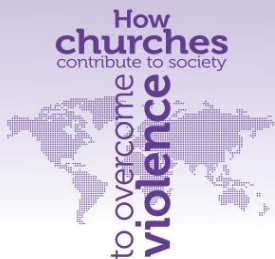
L The cup for which we give thanks is the communion of the blood of Christ;

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ;

C (sing) *Nós embora muito, somos um só corpo! [We, although many, are one body!]*

Communion

L Come, for all is ready... It is Christ who invites us.



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Distribution

C (*canta*) *Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz.*

A fé nos inunda de paz; a fé nos conduz para a paz; a fé edifica a paz; a fé cria um mundo de paz.

Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz, Deus é a paz.

(repete)

[God is peace, God is peace, God is peace, God is peace.
Faith floods us with peace; Faith leads us to peace; faith edifies peace; faith creates a world of peace. God is peace, God is peace, God is peace, God is peace. (repeat)]

Post communion prayer

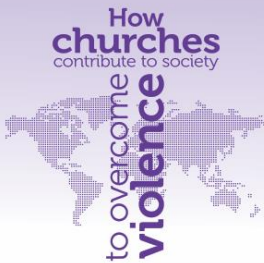
L Let us pray: Beloved God, in your Grace we receive the nourishment which strengthens, animates and move us to witness peace in our families, churches and societies, seeking to overcome all forms of violence. We give you thanks for your goodness, your power and your love.

C (*sing*) *Graças, Senhor, graças Senhor, por tua bondade, teu poder, teu amor. Graças, Senhor! [Thank you o Lord, thank you o Lord, for your goodness, your power and your love. Thank you o Lord!]*

Sending liturgy

Blessing

L May the God of all compassion and tenderness accompany you and strengthen you in the quest for a world of peace. May God bless you, envelop you with his tender embrace and give you peace. (+). Amen.



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Sending

L Go in peace and serve God with joy.

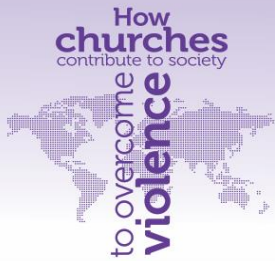
C Let us give thanks to God.

Postlude

Paz, paz de Cristo, paz, paz que vem do amor (Hino 368)

[Peace, peace of Christ, peace, peace which comes from the love which I desire for you, brother (sister)! Peace which is the joy of seeing in you Christ, our brother.

If, someday in life, you need me, know that I am your friend, you can count on me. The world gives so many turns, we will meet again. On these turns of life I want to shake your hand.]



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Sermon

Bishop Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm

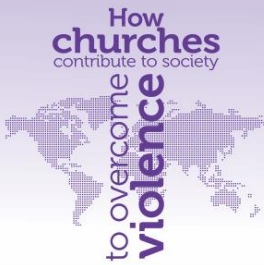
Text: Luke 14:25-33

Dear sisters and brothers

These words from the Gospel of Luke unsettle us, unnerve us, cause us to feel insecure. It would be difficult to describe Christian discipleship in a more radical manner than Jesus does in this passage. Could this really be following Jesus? To hate one's mother, hate one's father, hate one's wife, hate one's children, hate one's sisters and brothers and, beyond this, hate oneself?

If we wanted to take these descriptions of Christian discipleship literally, we would have to lose hope with regard to them, since we would have to accept as programmatic orientation something which today, can only be seen as a description of symptoms of a very severe psychiatric disorder.

From this point of view, our community of partner churches – churches which have made following Jesus the central content of their life – would have to be labeled as an association which constitutes a public danger for calling on people to hate one another and themselves. If this were the case, it would be recommended that the people responsible for the public security of the nation keep very close watch over our consultation, here where are gathered this gang of hate preachers.



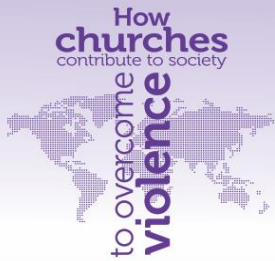
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I do not see here, in any place, men with earphones watching over this meeting. And, fortunately, they are not needed, because those gathered here are not hate preachers, but heralds of love. They are people who are committed to the task of proclaiming to the whole world the message of love. People who struggle for a world in which love defines human words and actions. People who seek their inspiration in Jesus. People who wish to testify with their life today the discipleship which Jesus requires of his disciples with such incisive words.

The discipleship of Christ today is not the same thing as the following of Jesus of that time. Jesus lived as an itinerant preacher. He gathered around him people who decided totally for him and because of this, left their families of origin. And he was very frank with them: You must know what you are getting involved in. Whoever wants to follow me needs to make a cut in his life. And whoever takes on this commitment must count on all possibilities, of persecution, of the cross, even of death. Who is the king, when going into combat with another king, does not first sit down to calculate if with 10 thousand men he will be able to face who comes against him with 20 thousand? If he cannot, the other still being far away, he will send out an emissary asking for the conditions of peace. The same applies to everyone among you who does not renounce all that they have. Therefore, think well about what you are getting involved in!

Today we know how much this warning of Jesus was justified. Jesus followed the path of the cross. And some of his disciples were killed for being his followers.

But Jesus resurrected! This good news has spread throughout the whole world. And, 2 thousand years later, we know of various ways



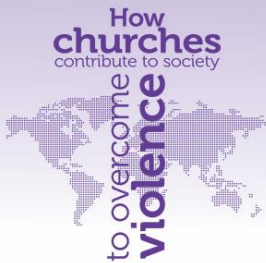
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of following Jesus in the most diverse contexts of the world. In any case, no one who can be taken seriously can affirm today that the only way to be a Christian would be to live as an itinerant preacher.

No one can substitute us in the task of clarifying always and in new ways, for our respective times and our respective context what following means. The actuality of the reference to the cross made by Jesus in this text is shown by the situation of Christian people who suffer persecution today because they give witness to their faith. Some of you know, by your own experience in your country of origin what I am talking about.

Where this does not happen, like, for example, in my country, Germany, we can only be extremely grateful for this. Suffering because of the faith is always a threshold situation. One must never wish for this suffering. No one knows this better than the people who have felt this suffering in their own skin. Whoever ties the unequivocal nature of Christ's discipleship to the measure of suffering and wishes for it to show the strength of the witness of faith, transforms the cross into an end unto itself and thus, perverts its meaning.

Jesus never wished to say something like that. What one aims for in following Jesus is life. What one aims for is giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, not let someone alone who is in prison, visit the ill, welcome in the sojourner. And what one aims for is that violence will be overcome! The violence which takes Jesus to the cross is the expression of human sin. Jesus overcame sin. And that is why all people who follow him get involved so that violence, which is a consequence of sin, can also be overcome.



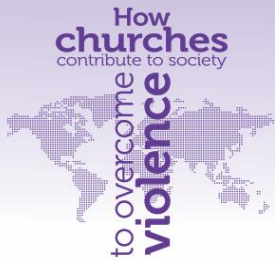
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If there can be situations – for example, mass assassinations such as the genocide which occurred in Rwanda – where, also from the Christian point of view, the use of violence could be seen as inevitable, if there can be situations like these that is a difficult issue. At the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, in the beginning of November we will be discussing this issue intensively. But all agree that overcoming violence is part of the essential dimensions of the mission which the Gospel places on the churches. The world assembly of the churches dealing with overcoming violence which took place in Kingston, Jamaica, two years ago, presented many impressive examples of how the churches can contribute to this with concrete projects.

The involvement of the church in overcoming violence is just one field in which the validity of what Jesus said about discipleship using the image of salt needs to be proven: “Salt is certainly good; however, if it loses its taste how does one restore the flavor? It doesn’t serve for the earth, nor even for the dung heap; throw it out. Whoever has ears to hear, listen;”

How can we be salt today? In any case, it is not simply parroting what the world says, letting go of the theological profile to not demand anything from anyone. Letting go of the truth to remain important. In fact, an insipid salt serves neither for the earth nor the dung heap, but will be thrown out.!

But we also cannot be salt by building a “counter-world”, and, in the end, leaving the world which we want to transform alone. What use is a portion of salt which simply stays with itself? The grains of salt may consider themselves extremely salty, but if they do not enter anything to salt it they serve for nothing. The salt will be thrown there all alone and eventually will end up being ruined.

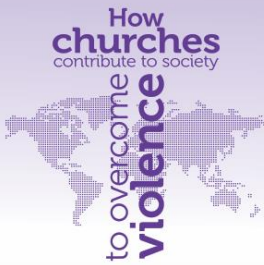


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Moral criteria can be put so high that one can easily escape from them without transforming absolutely anything. And a supposedly prophetic discourse which is lifted above the other people and simply ignores what they are going through in the midst of their dilemmas will end up revealing itself, in the end, as only vanity and self-righteousness disguised with much skill.

To be salt today means something else. It means, before anything else, a deep love for the world in which it intends to be salt. It means to feel one's heart burn for the people who live in this world, regardless of what side they find themselves on. It means to serve the people who are in special need of support, whose dignity is being violated. It means to raise one's voice and speak out clearly if that is what it takes for people to reflect and for transformations to be unleashed.

To constantly receive strength for this task we need communion and congregations. We need the larger communion and congregation of the Church. It connects us with the people throughout time who have been the bearers of the message of the love of God in Jesus Christ ever since that time to this. Without them we would not even have knowledge of this message. And it connects us with the people, who, today, always come back to gather around Christ and who feel his strength among them. It is good to be aware of this communion of the church and feel it, even if the people that are part of it live very distant from each other. And it is good that we can experience directly, through the communion of our partner churches, the unity in Christ which surpasses national and cultural limits. That is why this consultation is a great gift. Through the friendship which we feel together, through the discussions which



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we have with each other, through prayer which unites us with God and also, in the depth of the soul, unites us to each other, Christ is among us.

This is what we can celebrate today. We praise God for having each other. We thank God for, through his Spirit, opening our hearts always to each other and to the world. We ask God to strengthen us in love.

And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.