



**Media Release
October 28, 2009**

Catholic-Lutheran Doctrine of Justification celebrates 10 years

The Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church and the Uniting Church in Australia are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Head of the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations Bishop Michael Putney explained that the statement had been a result of dialogue between the Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church over many years in many countries.

“The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church on 31 October 1999. On 23 July 2006, the World Methodist Council associated themselves with the document”, said Bishop Putney.

“Prior to the signing of this document by the international dialogue, Australian Lutherans and Catholics had discussed the doctrine of justification for three years (October 1995 – October 1998) leading to the publication in November 1998 of *Justification, A Common Statement of the Australian Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue.*”

The main celebration will take place in Adelaide on Thursday 29th October. Archbishop Philip Wilson, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and Reverend Dr Mike Semmler, President, Lutheran Church of Australia, will preside at Vespers in St Francis Xavier Cathedral. Bishop Michael Putney, Chair of the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations, and Reverend John Henderson, Vice-President of the Lutheran Church of Australia, will give presentations.

A second celebration will take place in Brisbane, during the National Conference of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commissions which will be held in Brisbane at the Riverglenn Conference Centre from Friday 30 October to 1 November.

At this conference, Monsignor Juan Usma Gomez, an official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity will give two addresses on Pentecostal and Evangelical Dialogue. Other speakers include Bishop Christopher Prowse (Diocese of Sale) who will speak on interreligious dialogue, and Bishop Issam Darwish (the Melkite eparchy), who will speak on the Orthodox churches. As well as receiving reports from dioceses, participants will listen to reports from National and International Dialogues.

On 31 October, an ecumenical service of Thanksgiving will be held at St Peter’s Lutheran Church, Indooroopilly. Archbishop John Bathersby of Brisbane, Reverend Noel Noack (President, Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District) and Reverend Bruce Johnson (Moderator of the Uniting Church of Australia, Queensland Synod) will preside.

Parishes are encouraged to mark this occasion using the Prayers of the Faithful on the website of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference website. The marking of this anniversary is an acknowledgment and celebration of many years of dialogue.

For Media Enquiries, Please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256