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# „You set us free in the open“

## An ecumenical pilgrimage service under the motto of the 97<sup>th</sup> Catholics' Day 2008 in Osnabrück (Psalm 18:20)<sup>1</sup>

*The service was prepared and celebrated by the participants of the annual ecumenical conference of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover "You set us free in the open" – Liturgy in Ecumenical Perspective" on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 in the St Michaelis Monastery in Hildesheim. Based on a structure created by Pastor Fritz Baltruweit (St Michaelis Monastery Hildesheim, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover), Pastor Marc Blessing (Ökumenische Stiftung Kloster Frenswegen), Canon Dr Heinrich Plock (Diocese of Osnabrück), Dr Dagmar Stoltmann-Lukas (Diocese of Hildesheim) and Pastor Dirk Stelter (Arbeitsfeld Ökumene, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover). The texts have been made available by the steering group as well as by Pastor Klaus Haasis, Pastor Andreas Schulz and Pastor Maria Schulze-Bosshard; compiled by Dirk Stelter.*

### 1. The Genesis

**The first step:** An ecumenical steering group determined the structure for the service before the conference and made the following basic decisions:

- The topic of the service was the motto of the Catholics' Day 2008 in Osnabrück: „You set us free in the open“, Psalm 18:20 slightly modified.
- The message of the Psalm was implemented by following the structure of a pilgrimage with five stations. The first four stations took the pilgrims through the St Michaelis monastery, the fifth station took them out of the church.
- As an ecumenical pilgrimage, it involved the Evangelical Lutheran St Michaelis Church and Roman Catholic Crypt, both in the same location.
- Psalm 18 was to be read in the service.
- The celebrating community should be accompanied on their pilgrimage by the pilgrim's staff, given by the Diocese of Osnabrück in preparation of the Catholics' Day, as well as a candle and a Bible.

**The second step:** The conference split into five groups, each of which prepared a station of the pilgrimage under the direction of a member of the steering group. The groups first took in the atmosphere of the room and then, following the framework given, decided on the order of service for their station. Each group was provided with a Bible and the Evangelical Hymn Book (Evangelisches Gesangbuch; EG) and the Catholic Hymn Book (Gotteslob, GL).

**The third step:** All celebrated the pilgrimage service. The service was led at each station by the respective preparation group. Every participant was handed a copy of the songs and texts selected for the service.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation by Astrid Quick (All Bible quotations were taken from the NRSV version). Source: Dirk Stelter / Arbeitsfeld Ökumene im Haus kirchlicher Dienste der Evangelisch-lutherischen Landeskirche Hannovers, Ökumenische Akzente 2008, Hannover 2008, p. 16-21.

## 2. The Order of Service

### 1st Station – In the Cloisters next to the Church: Introduction, Confession of Sins, Kyrie

(1) *One strikes the gong.*

(2) One:                   The God of life has drawn us together and will lead us out into the open.  
Let us set out on our journey in the Name of the living God.  
In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
All:                        Amen.

(3) *Candle bearer lights the candle<sup>2</sup> and lifts it up.*  
Candle bearer:       Many questions are on our minds.  
We are looking for answers to make our lives successful.  
We come from a world full of darkness.  
But Jesus Christ says, "I am the light of the world."  
Indeed, our God lights up our darkness (Psalm 18:28b).  
We pray to you, oh Lord:  
Light up our hearts and our minds  
With the light of your presence.  
Together, we call out to you:

All: Kyrie Eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)

(4) *Bible bearer lifts up the Bible.*  
Bible bearer:       Sometimes we do not have a clue what to do.  
Or else we insist  
that we are the ones who know best.  
We need guidance.  
We need your Word.  
Indeed, your Word is a lamp to our feet  
And a light to our path (Psalm 119:105)  
We pray to you, oh Lord,  
Let us hear your Word.  
Together, we call out to you.  
All:                        Kyrie Eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)

(5) *The Staff bearer lifts up the pilgrim's staff.*  
Staff bearer:       There are difficult parts of the journey -  
some are stony, steep, slippery, full of detritus.  
We seem to have nothing to hold on to;  
we seem to find nothing to hold on to.  
And then we hear:  
He will not let your foot be moved;  
He who keeps you will not slumber. (Psalm 121:3)  
You gave me a wide place for my steps under me,  
and my feet did not slip (Psalm 18:37)  
We pray to you, oh Lord,  
Direct our path towards you  
and give us the strength to walk it.  
Together, we call out to you:

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<sup>2</sup> As a symbol of our connection with the breadth of the European ecumenical movement, we went through the liturgy with the candle used during the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, in September 2007 (s. *Ökumenische Akzente* 2007, S. 5-19).

All: Kyrie Eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)

(6) *All pray Psalm 18 (GL 712 [= Psalm 18 in extracts] with antiphon)*

(7) One: And so we start out on our journey –  
holding the things that make our feet tarry.  
But upheld by his word.  
Filled with his song in us.

(8) *Singing the song „Bewahre uns, Gott“ (EG 171,1-4) and following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, all make their way into the church to the baptismal font.*

### **2nd Station – In the Church at the Baptismal Font: Gloria, Commemoration of Baptism**

(1) *Reading from Psalm 18 (v.16.19):*

He reached down from on high  
he took me;  
he drew me out of mighty waters.  
he brought me out into a broad place;  
he delivered me,  
because he delighted in me.

(2) *While the first verse of the song "Baptized into Thy Name..." (EG 200) is spoken, the first participants walk up to the baptismal font and use water to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads in commemoration of their baptism.*

Baptized into Thy name most holy,  
O Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,  
Among Thy seed, Thy chosen host;  
Buried with Christ, and dead to sin,  
Thy Spirit now shall live within.

(3) *In silence all the other participants use water to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads in commemoration of their baptism.*

(4) *When all participants have completed their baptism commemoration, they speak the second verse of the song "Ich bin getauft..." (GL 635):*

From Water and the Holy Spirit  
I have now been born again.  
God, who is love eternal,  
has chosen me as his child.  
He allowed me to call him "My Father".  
He installed me as his heir.  
I have been called by him to join  
the royal banquet of his grace.

(5) *All sing "Amen. Alleluia. Amen." and walk, singing the Kenyan song "Tembea na Yesu" ("Walk with Jesus") and following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, to the crypt.*

### **3rd Station – In the Crypt: Reference to our common Foundation, Proclamation**

(1) *All walk into the crypt, singing "Hagios o theos", and assemble around the grave in a circle.*

(2) *Silence*

- (3) One: We stand at the grave of St Bernward, Bishop of Hildesheim.  
He built this Church.  
He worked to bring new life to his Church.
- (4) *Antiphon, spoken by 4 participants from the 4 corners of the crypt:*  
My God, my rock in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:2b)
- Reading from 1 Peter 2:4-5a:*  
Come to him, a living stone, though rejected from mortals  
yet chosen and precious in God's sight,  
and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.
- Antiphon (as above)*  
*Reading (as above)*  
*Antiphon (as above)*
- (5) *Reading (1 Peter 2:5a):*  
Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.  
Speaker: Living stones.  
All: Living stones. Living stones.  
Speaker: Into a spiritual house.  
All: Into a spiritual house. Into a spiritual house.  
Speaker: Built up.  
All: Built up, built up, built up.
- (6) *Silence*
- (7) *All walk, singing the hymn "If thou but suffer God to guide thee" (EG 369) and following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, from the crypt into the church.*

#### **4th Station – In the High Choir of the Church: Provisions for the Journey**

- (1) *In the church, all walk, following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, into the high choir. (The high choir has been cleared. Only a few steps are left. Hidden in a corner, there are baskets with bread).*
- (2) Speaker 1: (narrates the story in 1 Kings 19:1-4, concluding with:)  
Elijah is exhausted. Burnt out. He can't go on. Tired of faith.  
Tired of God. Tired of life. So he escapes into the desert. Literally.  
He throws himself down under a gorse bush. He says:  
Speaker 2: "It is enough; now, o Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."
- (3) Speaker 1: We ourselves are familiar with such times in the desert.  
When one has given it all. When gloomy thoughts come in.  
When one cannot go on. One has no taste for food, when one is down in  
a hole. One does not want to see or hear anyone. Perhaps one only  
wants to rest. Sleep. Regain one's strength.  
This is what Elijah does. He goes to sleep. How nice. To rest.  
To gather new strength.
- (4) *Silence*

- (5) Speaker 1: We would like to ask you to try out this gesture now. Here, on the floor. You can lie down, kneel down, find a position to express this situation. We will take our time to do this.
- (6) *The participants lie down. – Silence*
- (7) *The members of the steering group do not lie down. When everyone has found their position, the steering group members wait for two or three minutes. Then they quietly "swarm out" with the bread baskets. They walk to every one of the "sleeping ones", touch their shoulder or their head and say, "Get up" – silence – then, when those addressed are standing upright, they say, "Take and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you" (cf. the angel's words in the story of Elijah, 1 Kings 19:5.7).*
- (8) *When all have stood up and have eaten, one begins to sing the Taizé refrain "Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, Deus ibi est". Singing this song, following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, all walk to the church door.*

### **5th Station – Outside of the Church: Intercessions, Blessing and Dismissal**

- (1) *Following the candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff, all step out of the church through the church door into the open. Standing on St Michaelis hill, the view widens over the city of Hildesheim. All assemble in a circle on the meadow in front of the church, thereby including the two angel statues looking down on the city from the church. The candle bearer, Bible bearer and bearer of the pilgrim's staff stand between or next to the two angels. A container holding hot coals is placed in the middle of the circle.*
- (2) *One throws a grain of incense onto the coals, the incense rises up.*  
Let our prayer  
be counted as incense before you. (Psalm 141:2)
- Speaker 1: (topical intercession 1)  
*A grain of incense is thrown onto the coals, the incense rises up.*
- All: Kyrie eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)
- Speaker 2: (topical intercession 2)
- A grain of incense is thrown onto the coals, the incense rises up.*
- All: Kyrie eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)
- Speaker 3: (topical intercession 3)  
*A grain of incense is thrown onto the coals, the incense rises up.*
- All: Kyrie eleison (Taizé – EG 178.12)
- Speaker 4: We pray for unity in Christendom:  
**That** we open our hearts  
to our sisters and brothers  
in the Christian churches in our neighbourhood,  
that we **all** together  
seek and confess Jesus Christ,  
that we **may be one**  
in prayer and in love,  
in our witness and our ministry.<sup>3</sup>
- (3) *All join hands and pray together the Lord's prayer.*

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<sup>3</sup> This prayer for unity was composed for the Catholics' Day in 2008 by the Commission for Ecumenism of the Diocese of Osnabrück, also involving Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed members.

- (4) *All release one another's hands and extend the circle by taking a step back. An Evangelical and a Catholic participant step forward in front of the two angels and in front of candle, Bible and pilgrim's staff.*

1: (Aaronic Blessing)  
2: So go on your way now  
and let God guide you  
out into the open,  
lit up by his light,  
upheld by his word.  
All: Amen.



*The last station of the pilgrimage on the St Michaelis hill, together with two angel statues in front of the St Michaelis church in Hildesheim: Pastor Maria Schulze-Bosshard holding the pilgrim's staff, Canon Heinrich Plock holding the Bible, Pastor Klaus Haasis holding the candle.  
(Photo: Dirk Stelter)*