

## **November 4, 2008**

Dear friends in Christ, members of this great synod:

I've been thinking about All Saints Day lately—of course I have! It was my privilege to preach at three different events this past weekend and use the Matthew Beatitudes as the text. While the contexts changed dramatically, the reflection that follows was a constant.

*This past August my friend and colleague, Bishop John Schreiber, died unexpectedly at the age of 47. John was on my staff when I was bishop in Detroit and succeeded me as bishop when I moved to be pastor here. He was a remarkable servant of God with a great sense of humor and an ability not to take himself too seriously. He demonstrated God's grace every day and is sorely missed. When Lois and I returned for his funeral one of the staff members there gave me something I had inadvertently left when I moved east. It's a holy card, which I framed a long time ago and forgot until I was back for Bishop John's funeral. It says; "Why were the saints saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient, and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silence when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. That was all. It was quite simple and always will be." Quite simple, yes. But quite difficult, too.*

As I visit in congregations and with rostered leaders of this synod, I am constantly gratified by the presence of people like those described on that holy card I now have sitting on my desk, people who day by day, guided by the Holy Spirit, live out the world-changing, life-empowering beatitudes of Jesus.

I thank you all for your saintly living and your continuing witness in this synod.

*Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo*

### **Gratitude for the celebration at the installation**

Thank you! Everywhere I go, people keep expressing gratitude for the celebration of my installation on October 12. So it is my turn to express that gratitude in this way.

The planning group did a magnificent job of pulling together a great representation of our synod to celebrate that day. I am very grateful to Pr. Fabian Arias, Cantor Rick Erickson, Ms. Sarah Gioe, Pr. Gary Mills, Pr. Frank Nelson, Pr. Cathy Rosenholtz, Pr. Jared Stahler and Pr. Griffin Thomas for the amazing work they did.

I also thank Bishop Mark Hanson, whose sermon captured the essence of this synod and called us to greater service and witness. The music offered by so many individuals under the careful guidance of Cantor Rick Erickson was extraordinary.

However, the *best* part of the entire event was that it was a celebration not of a pastor who is now serving as bishop, but of who we are together. This is what a synod is supposed to be: people traveling together for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Thank you to all who planned this wonderful event and to all of you who gathered to praise God and pray for God's continuing guidance of the mission in which we are engaged.

*Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo*