

September 9, 2008

A message for Holy Cross Sunday

I have been thinking so much about this week as we come again to recall the tragedy of September 11, 2001. It struck me that, as was the case then, so now, the coincidence of the lectionary with the still-real need we all feel at this time is striking. For this coming Sunday is Holy Cross Sunday, and that is really what our ministry is all about.

Rather than writing new words to you, I will recall words that I said when bishops from across our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America visited this synod the weekend of April 6, 2002. At the opening Eucharist on that day, it was my great privilege to preach.

“Easter is the confirmation of hope, the mightiest act of God in history, beyond our common experience, inscrutable to scientific inquiry, and astonishing to non-believer and believer alike. Jesus lives, and moves, and speaks again. But how do we recognize him?”

“Christ is risen with his scars. The Christ who could not come down from the cross to save himself, God could not raise up without the marks of that death. The marks convict us still, for by the authority of those marks, he speaks a message of hope, of triumph: ‘Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last and the living one: for I was dead and now I am alive forevermore.’”

“Against all reason and natural law, Jesus rose from the tomb, scars and all, by the power of God. And we believe it! Jesus is alive. Alive now. More alive than you and I have ever been. Alive for us, for you and me with amazing new life. Alive, scars and all.”

That message is what we are called to proclaim on this Holy Cross Day, on every day. It is our hope.

Bishop Robert A. Rimbo

September 16, 2008

Dear Friends in Christ:

With this e-newsletter I communicate the resignation of Pastor A. David Anglada from our synod staff, effective October 31, 2008. Pastor Anglada will be taking a new position with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York as Hospice Spiritual Chaplain.

The Rev. A. David Anglada has served the Metropolitan New York Synod for nine and a half years, first as Assistant to the Bishop for Latino/Hispanic Ministries (until June 2003) and then as Assistant to the Bishop for Outreach in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor Anglada has done remarkable work in seeking additional mission partnership grants from our churchwide office for the continuing mission of congregations in this synod. He worked closely with staff and various leaders to help form our present synod mission support funding process. We will miss him but are grateful for his leadership and his continuing presence as a pastor of our synod. I invite you to give thanks to God for Pastor Anglada's ministry and to extend your best wishes to him.

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo

September 30, 2008

Living history

On Sunday, September 28, I was privileged to preach and preside at Christ, Staten Island. Even with the rain, it was a bright morning!

At the conclusion of the Eucharist, the congregation gathered for lunch to celebrate the 95th birthday of Mrs. Billy Duft, and I was blessed by the opportunity to sit with her and hear her story. She is a part of the living history of the Metropolitan New York Synod, having moved from Queens to Manhattan to Staten Island and having been involved in various congregations along the way.

It made me think: have you been listening to the elders in your congregation? It might be a good thing for us to do as we look forward to the mission to which God has called us, so that we never neglect the roots from which we all grow.

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo

“Vital Congregations, Just Communities” November 6-8

I write to invite you to what promises to be an enriching and enlightening event. I know you have already received a letter from me [dated September 5], but a helpful reminder is in order.

The Conference of Bishops of the ELCA has provided a grant through the Ministry Among People in Poverty Committee to train leaders in 18 synods in the arts of community organizing and public leadership. We are one of those synods. We want to train 100 leaders: 35 pastors and 2 or 3 of their congregational lay leaders.

And I am especially pleased that the facilitator for this event will be Pastor Dennis Jacobsen, the Director of the Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus; he did similar training for the Conference of Bishops. Please be sure to sign up for this event by contacting Pastor Dianne Loufman at the synod office, 212-665-0732 x 231, dloufman@mnys.org.

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo