

**Greeting address of Jerzy Samiec, Presiding Bishop
of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland**

Eurodiaconia Annual General Meeting

Wrocław, 13th June 2018

On behalf of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, I warmly welcome you to Poland. I am glad that our Diaconia Poland is once again the host of the Eurodiaconia Annual General Meeting. I hope that both the program and the hospitable city of Wrocław will meet your expectations. I hope you will leave the conference full of new ideas but also with the desire to return to our country, maybe as a tourist or student or researcher. We have something to be proud of, here, in this region of Lower Silesia.

The main theme of the first keynote address is “Contemporary Europe in the face of social challenges”. I am looking forward to that presentation and I am going to listen to it with great interest.

I realize that Diaconia has to look at the challenges posed by the present situation from the perspective of seeking practical solutions to help people. However, let me move away a bit from this way of thinking.

I know that before we preach Good News to the people in need, we must first satisfy their physical needs. However, I think, that it is very important not to lose what is the most essential – love for one’s fellow human beings. When we remember why it is that we are helping, we can become creative in finding optimal solutions.

The core reason is the love for the Saviour expressed in our love of neighbour. If there were no love, all actions of the Diaconia would become only social welfare activities, maybe less expensive, maybe not. I think there would not be much difference between us and many of the commercial social care companies.

Let me end this short greeting by quoting well-known Polish singer Robert Brylewski (the guitarist and co-founder of bands Kryzys, Brygada Kryzys and Izrael), who died on 3rd June this year, aged only 57. In January 2018, in an interview he said: “I do not pray and I am not a member of any Church, but I see that the Decalogue is being attacked by the faithful. The most important commandments and messages of Christianity are becoming unfashionable. ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ – who cares today?”.

Dear participants of the Eurodiaconia Annual General Meeting, we should care about the core reason/motive of our service to our neighbour!

I wish you fruitful reflections and a blessed time here.

Bishop Jerzy Samiec