

Speech by Pastor Christoph Doll for St Catherine's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018

*Unfortunately, Bishop David had to catch his train back to London, so that not all the speeches could be heard at the celebratory service on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. To emphasize the close relationship between our three churches, the Old Catholics have published the words Pastor Christoph Doll would have said in their church magazine Kontakt, and here is a translation:*

Dear people of the Old Catholic and Anglican congregations,

It is a great pleasure for me as the parish priest of St Leonhard to be able to celebrate this festival with you today and to be able to say a few words. Firstly, I would like to convey the good wishes of the parish council of St Leonhard and convey this message to you: We as your immediate neighbours are delighted that you are able to celebrate this anniversary today. We look back with wonder and gratitude on the history of St Catherine's church and of both congregations which have their homes here. We admire the ecclesiastical profiles which have grown here and sustained themselves, even when the 1944 bombings completely destroyed the old St Catherine's church.

Just like you, at the end of the war St Leonhard was confronted with the enormous task of rebuilding a church in ruins. This posed gigantic challenges in both cases. Therefore, today let us remember with especial gratitude those in positions of responsibility at that time who made wise and forward-looking decisions, and also the many who rolled up their sleeves and with admirable voluntary commitment made their contribution as out of the pitiful ruins Houses of God arose again, which are now a prominent feature of the life of the church in the centre of Stuttgart.

Over the years and decades, the close proximity of St Catherine's and St Leonhard has led to a wonderful ecumenical neighbourliness. We of St Leonhard regard this as a great treasure and would like to give special thanks today to both the Old Catholic and Anglican congregations for their interest in ecumenical cooperation and their openness to joint projects. Examples of this are the joint Easter Eve celebrations, which we have been holding for many years with the first part at St Leonhard and the second part at St Catherine's. Other bonds which unite our congregations have also been the weekday ecumenical evening services: the ecumenical Taizé prayer service and the Thursday liturgical evening prayer. I would further like to emphasise the ecumenical workshops, which next year will already be taking place for the 20<sup>th</sup> time, offering the opportunity to explore a theological topic from a variety of perspectives with keynote speeches and discussions. There are also ecumenical highlights such the Anglican congregation's Gospel Concert which we host in St Leonhard and the traditional Carol Service. These collaborations broaden all our horizons in an exceptionally enriching way and we learn that church is much more than what we each achieve and organize for ourselves. Besides this, church always presents us the miracle of encounters and discussions, which we owe to the work of the Holy Spirit. May that Spirit continue to breathe here in St Catherine's and in the whole Church in Stuttgart and bring us all joy!

Christoph Doll