

Message of the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland on supporting people on the border with Belarus.

„Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” Matthew 25:40

As Lutheran Christians, we feel a commitment to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who left his followers a clear instruction to care of the weakest and to stand up for those who have no voice. Among these, migrants and refugees have a particular place in the biblical message. Lutheran Churches understand service to those people as an important and integral part of their mission and testimony to the world. In addition, our Polish tradition of celebrating Christmas, requires that we pay special attention to the experience of a family in need, a family who had been refused hospitality.

Therefore, as representatives of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, we do not want to remain indifferent to the latest situation on the eastern border of our country. Recent weeks have brought more and more new information about the tragic conditions of children, women and men who have been forced to suffer in the forests on the Belarusian-Polish border. As Christians, we feel responsible to seek ways of showing them mercy and providing the necessary help, calling on everyone involved to seek solutions that will support and prioritize the human being in need. As a Synod of the Church, we are aware that we have only recognized the crisis situation of refugees when they reached our borders. We wish to acknowledge this as our sin of negligence.

The vocation of the Church in our earthly homeland is not to establish universal laws and to define the practices required to respect it and to ensure the safety of everyone on its territory. For this, the Church can and will support with prayer those who are called to do this work. We therefore extend our prayers to those who provide security at our borders, guarding the sovereignty of our homeland and peace within its borders. However, the nature of being the Church includes consistently giving witness to God's mercy by standing on the side of those in need. This means being committed to human rights and insisting that everyone, regardless of their origin, status or religion, must be treated humanely and in accordance with the standards of international law. It means providing the necessary care and the opportunity to benefit from international protection procedures. It also requires a responsible public discourse, which should seek to allay the fears of fellow citizens, rather than stoking fears of those who are different from ourselves. We see the cost of such fear-mongering is paid by our neighbours who are the most vulnerable.

As a Synod of the Church, we wish to support all initiatives in our Church that bring help to those in need on the Belarusian-Polish border. We call on our parishioners not to remain indifferent to the victims of this crisis and, as much as possible, to engage in helping those who are now in particular need. We believe that such commitment and support, given in cooperation with all those who are not indifferent to the situation of migrants, is the practical fulfillment of the Gospel. We are called to give a practical witness to Gospel as the Church of Jesus Christ.

Warsaw, 17 October 2021.