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**Greetings presented at the celebrations for the consecration  
of Rev. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka as Bishop of Espoo  
Espoo, Finland, 10 February 2019**

Respected Archbishop Luoma;  
honourable Bishops and dignitaries from church and society,  
honourable ecumenical representatives;  
dear friends, sisters and brothers;  
and of course – and let me learn it now: respected Bishop Kaisamari

What a great day for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland and for the Diocese of Espoo and for you, dear Bishop Kaisamari.

I bring greetings to you all from the Lutheran World Federation, a communion of 148 churches in 99 countries in the world, of which your church is a longstanding, active and faithful member. Together with other Lutheran churches in the world, you are living into the call of deepened relationships, grounded in Christ, to become God's witnesses while living and working together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.

We in the LWF are grateful for your great leadership, Bishop Kaisamari as you led the theological and ecumenical work of the LWF during these past years. Because of your work, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reformation truly became what we envisaged it to be: a commemoration that would emphasize on the global nature of the reformation, commemorated with a deep sense of ecumenical accountability, and with a focus on our world today. The results are known to all and are powerful.

Because we have known Kaisa as a colleague, we rejoice with the Diocese of Espoo for the capable leader you have called into the episcopal office. Oh yes, dear friends, let me state this strongly and boldly: against many prevailing narratives, they do exist, these capable women, ready to take responsibility. It's just a matter of seeing them. You spotted her in our offices in Geneva, we couldn't hide her, and we didn't want to. Because not for a single moment is the staff in the LWF Communion Office "our staff". We will always understand it as staff from our member churches, generously offered by them to support the ministry of the global communion of churches.

We are happy that by appointing Kaisa as your Bishop, you have identified such a leader. By electing a capable woman into this position, your church is becoming a powerful pointer to the beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Christ, there is no Jew nor Greek, no slave nor free, nor women nor men – as the apostle Paul puts it. You are pointing at the world as it may one day become, because of how God intends it to be.

Today, Kaisa, I want to encourage you so that this overall sense of direction that points at what is still to come shapes your leadership, and the overall witness of the church in this country. This is indeed a time of many uncertainties, including also for the church. I hope you may always recall, while leading, that while we may not know what the future holds for us, we know well, by faith, who holds it. And that is more than enough to go and do so strongly.

The mission of the church is not to worry about the future, nor is it to dwell in nostalgic memories of the past. The mission of the church is to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, here and now. It is about announcing freedom from human self-centeredness, about inviting to compassion, caring for justice, embracing peace, working for reconciliation.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, when referring to what will eventually prevail: “<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

“Faith, hope and love” – that’s what it is all about. That’s it in a nutshell, and this is your script for your new responsibility as the Bishop of the Diocese of Espoo. Go with that script, always ground yourself in it, Kaisa: it is powerful, it carries, it lasts, it prevails.

God bless your ministry, Bishop Kaisamari! God bless the Diocese of Espoo, which by its election of its new Bishop has made the Bishops’ Conference whole again: by filling a vacant position, and by adding a capable woman into the episcopal office.

Thank you!

Rev. Dr Martin Junge  
General Secretary