

Monthly Message for September & October 2005
From the Reverend Doctor Anthony T. Padovano

REFORMATION AND RENEWAL

We have no meaningful hope unless two aspects of new life are kept in mind. We must seek both reformation and renewal. Reformation led us to change the context of our lives; renewal leads us to change our hearts. Changing the context of our lives is not enough if we bring into the new situation the personal problems of the past. Changing our hearts leads us to change the context of our lives.

October is a month which gives us strong examples of renewal and reformation. In October we celebrate the feast of Francis of Assisi on October 4. Francis was committed to the renewal of the human heart, its liberation from the demons of greed and narcissism which oppress it. Francis is the patron of our community. We have reserved October 4 as the traditional date for the installation of our pastors. Francis also wanted a reformed Church but his strategy was to do this through the renewal of the heart.

October 31 is the anniversary of Luther's Reformation. Luther saw the urgent need to change the structures and context of the church. He called for reform so that a renewed heart would not be imprisoned in the oppressive confinement of church life. Luther was also focused on the renewal of the heart through attention to the gospel. His strategy, however, emphasized reformation of the institution.

We need both Francis and Luther, renewal and reformation. Both Francis and Luther are the result of Christ's preaching. For Christ called us to change our lives and to change the religious institution of his day. The Inclusive Community is our way of responding to renewal and reformation.

Anthony