



Lutheran Church, Norway theological statement on green pilgrimage theology

As the majority faith in Norway, the Church of Norway through the Nidaros Diocese is responsible for the reception of pilgrims at Nidaros Cathedral, which is the main destination of the Route of St. Olav Ways¹. Together with the different Christian churches and other faiths represented in Trondheim City, we believe that all life has been created by God and is loved by God.

As Christians we confess together with the Apostolic Faith that says: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth*. As Lutherans we are committed to Luther's Catechism, which states:

"I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul... all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!"
The Small Catechism, the First Article.

Since humanity appeared on Earth we have told stories about the Creation. These stories are part of our faith, our deep conviction and thus the stories are intrinsic to our relation to the Creation. The stories tell us that Creation belongs to God. According to Psalm 8, God has made us to have a special responsibility and role in Creation. As a result of these beliefs, we are committed to walk gently upon His Earth, conscious that Psalm 24 says: *"The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it."* The book of *Genesis* further states that God saw all of Creation to be good.

The Lutheran faith says that the Creator is the Trinitarian God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (CA art



Pilgrims to Nidaros celebrate St Olav

l) and that “He (Christ) was in the beginning with God” (John 1). “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” (Colossians 1; 18) As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ came to restore not just humanity’s relationship with God, but as St. Paul further says of Jesus, “God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth” (Colossians 1; 19-20).

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should walk as pilgrims through this world and life, learning about trust in God’s providence, as St. Matthew’s Gospel tells us, by the example of the flowers of the field and the birds of the air.

Jesus also underlined our responsibility for our neighbours. The way we move upon the Earth will have consequences for the whole human family, present and future generations. To care for the Creation is to care for our neighbours.

The Scripture tells us that we, as humans, are responsible to care for all God’s Creation. As we go on pilgrimages, we must be aware of the vulnerability of the land, the water and all other living creatures that God is placing upon His Earth. We call upon all Christian pilgrims to live out these beliefs when they are walking the way of Christ as pilgrims and guests in the places to which they go.

As a pilgrimage community we commit ourselves to walk on a path that is true to our faith in God, the Creator and the Lord, Jesus Christ, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as well as true to our companions on God’s Earth and true to the entire Creation itself, by:

- building a strong partnership with ecumenical partners, multi-faith partners and the civil society of our city to wake awareness of the challenge of the Creation
- struggling for sustainable development and equitable distribution of our common resources of the Earth
- organising our pilgrimages with as little cost to the planet as possible
- staying, during our pilgrimages, in places where resources are used wisely and carefully

Nidaros Diocese, October 2011

ⁱ The pilgrimage path leading to the Nidaros Cathedral, the Christ Church of Nidaros, which is also the shrine of Norway’s patron saint, St. Olav, received in 2010 the status as European Cultural Route under the name “The Route of St. Olav Ways” leading through various routes through Denmark, Sweden and Norway, to Trondheim.