

during the Colloquium and Synod. Four papers and presentations were offered at this year's Colloquium: "Contemporary Trials in Proclaiming the Timeless Gospel" (Dcn. Oncken), "The One True God, the Two Kingdoms and the Three Estates" (Bp. Heiser), "Christian Freedom and National Consciousness" (Pr. Rutowicz), and "Theological Issues Pertaining to the Military Chaplaincy" (Pr. Hudson).

Pr. Ahonen updated attendees on preparations for this year's Youth Camp in Wisconsin, which is scheduled to take place July 18–22. (For the latest information, readers can inquire of Pr. Ahonen via e-mail: pastor.ahonen@gmail.com.)

The diocese also unanimously resolved to begin a domestic missions fund. At present, \$2,500 have been allocated for this fund. (Those who wish to make donations to the fund may send them c/o the diocesan treasurer, Rev. Michael Henson, Trinity Lutheran Church, 1000 North Park Avenue, Herrin, IL 62948.)

The diocese also allocated funds to help support a foreign mission trip by Pr. Heimbigner and Pr. Stefanski to Sri Lanka and India. As details regarding this trip are finalized, there will be an update in a later issue of *The Lutheran Herald*.

Between funds previously donated to the seminary fund, and the allocation of \$2,500 from the diocese's general fund, the ELDoNA is now past the half way point collecting the \$50,000 goal established for opening St. Ignatius Theological Seminary. **The decision was made, therefore, to plan to open the seminary in September 2012.** As the remaining arrangements are finalized, they will be published in future issues of *The Lutheran Herald*. (Again, donations toward the seminary fund may be sent to the diocesan treasurer. Men who are interested in studying at St. Ignatius should contact Bishop Heiser: bishopheiser@mac.com.)

By the grace of God, the work of the Church continues. Several pastors updated the diocese on prospects for new missions; we also discussed at length the difficulties which confront the church in this age. (Dcn. Oncken's presentation was particularly helpful in clarifying several key issues.). All in attendance were grateful for the hospitality of the members of Salem Lutheran Church, who added to the joy of our gathering in Malone.

THE LUTHERAN HERALD



JUNE 2011
(EASTER 5—TRINITY 5)

The Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America

Grace and peace to you in Christ Jesus, God Incarnate!

The devotions for this month's issue of *The Lutheran Herald* are a review of the articles of the faith confessed in the chief doctrinal symbol of our age, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. As the Festival of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession is observed this month (June 25), Pastor Ahonen arranged these devotions so that readers of the *Herald* could use this month as an opportunity to review once again this pure confession of the truth drawn from God's Word and confessed by our forefathers in the faith at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. The diocese owes a debt of gratitude to Pr. Ahonen for his labor and thoughtfulness in this service to Christ's Church.

Following the devotions, you will find a very brief summary of the diocesan colloquium and synod, which took place at Salem Lutheran Church in Malone, Texas from May 11 through 13. This joint meeting was a great joy, and we are looking forward to attending the ACLC's synod next January, and our own 2012 colloquium and synod next April.

Following the synod, I had the opportunity conduct my visitation of St. Boniface Lutheran Church in Niles, Michigan. It was, as always, a pleasure to meet with Pr. Rutowicz and the saints entrusted to his care.

In Christ, Bishop Heiser



ordain anything against the Gospel, then the congregations have a commandment of God prohibiting obedience, Matt. 7:15. . . Neither must we submit to Catholic bishops if they chance to err, or hold anything contrary to the Canonical Scriptures of God. . . .



Pictured left to right: Rev. Eric Stefanski (AR-ELDoNA), Rev. John Rutowicz (MI-ELDoNA), Rev. Bob Lawson, Sr. (MN-ACLC), Rev. Kurt Hering (UT-LCMS), Rev. Karl Heck (IA-ACLC), Rev. Tony Oncken (IL-ELDoNA), Rev. Jerald Dulas (MN-ELDoNA), Rev. Gary Harroun (IL-ELDoNA), Rev. Rob Lawson, Jr. (CA-ACLC), Rt. Rev. James Heiser (TX-ELDoNA), Rev. Steve Brockdorf (OR-ACLC), Rev. Tim Tolar (AK-ELDoNA), Rev. C.D. Hudson (MO-ELDoNA), Rev. Michael Henson (IL-ELDoNA), Rev. Josh Sullivan (TX-LCMS), Rev. Mark Mueller (MN-ELDoNA), Rev. Steve Schmidt (IL-ACLC), Rev. Doug Handrich (IL-ELDoNA), Mr. John Heiser, Rev. Kent Heimbigner (TX-ELDoNA) [Rev. Jeffrey Ahonen (WI-ELDoNA) not pictured]

A Joyous Synod!

The headline is necessary because many of the pastors of the ELDoNA and ACLC remember that in their previous affiliations, such a description of a synod would have been virtually impossible. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1 NKJV) Bishop Heiser, Superintendent Lawson, Pastors Ahonen, Henson and Stefanski and Deacon Dulas preached

EPILOGUE

As a final word on the Augsburg Confession for this month, we add an excerpt from the final article of this confession. It is rather fitting that this article is set off in this distinctive manner within this publication of our diocese, since AC XVIII speaks to one of the most distinguishing features of our diocese – the office of the bishop – which sets us apart from the majority of Lutheran churches in North America. We present this final word with thanksgiving to God for all of the blessings received from Him by the pastors of our diocese and her affiliated congregations of saints on account of the restoration of the office of Evangelical Lutheran Bishop among us.

Article XXVIII: Of Ecclesiastical Power

There has been great controversy concerning the Power of Bishops, in which some have awkwardly confounded the power of the Church and the power of the sword. . . . Therefore our teachers, for the comforting of men's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the power of the Church and the power of the sword, and taught that both of them, because of God's commandment, are to be held in reverence and honor, as the chief blessings of God on earth. But this is their opinion, that the power of the Keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. . . .

When, therefore, the question is concerning the jurisdiction of bishops, civil authority must be distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again, according to the Gospel or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, simply by the Word. Herein the congregations of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to Luke 10:16: He that heareth you heareth Me. But when they teach or

FROM THE PROPER FOR ROGATE (EASTER 5)

THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. John 16:23-30 (NKJV)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.”

The COLLECT

O God, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, Thy humble servants, that by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be right and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

In commemoration of the Festival of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession on the 25th of this month, our daily devotions for the month feature excerpts from this bedrock confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. — Ed.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

Article I: Of God

Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term “person” they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself. They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans, who assumed two principles, one Good and the other Evil: also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who, contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that “Word” signifies a spoken word, and “Spirit” signifies motion created in things.

“But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.”

Article XXVII: Of Monastic Vows

What is taught on our part concerning Monastic Vows, will be better understood if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine’s time they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison. . . . They taught that vows were equal to Baptism; they taught that by this kind of life they merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. Yea, they added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God but even greater things, because it kept not only the precepts, but also the so-called “evangelical counsels.” Thus they made men believe that the profession of monasticism was far better than Baptism, and that the monastic life was more meritorious than that of magistrates, than the life of pastors, and such like, who serve their calling in accordance with God’s commands, without any man-made services. . . . So many wicked opinions are inherent in the vows, namely, that they justify, that they constitute Christian perfection, that they keep the counsels and commandments, that they have works of supererogation. All these things, since they are false and empty, make vows null and void.

“And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ “

Article XXVI: Of the Distinction of Meats

It has been the general persuasion, not of the people alone, but also of those teaching in the churches, that making Distinctions of Meats, and like traditions of men, are works profitable to merit grace, and able to make satisfactions for sins. . . . First, the doctrine of grace and of the righteousness of faith has been obscured by it, which is the chief part of the Gospel, and ought to stand out as the most prominent in the Church, in order that the merit of Christ may be well known, and faith, which believes that sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake be exalted far above works. . . . Secondly, these traditions have obscured the commandments of God, because traditions were placed far above the commandments of God. Christianity was thought to consist wholly in the observance of certain holy-days, rites, fasts, and vestures. . . . Thirdly, traditions brought great danger to consciences; for it was impossible to keep all traditions, and yet men judged these observances to be necessary acts of worship. . . . There was great need to warn the churches of these errors, which had arisen from misunderstanding the traditions. For the Gospel compels us to insist in the churches upon the doctrine of grace, and of the righteousness of faith; which, however, cannot be understood, if men think that they merit grace by observances of their own choice.

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Article II: Of Original Sin.

Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost. They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.

Article III: Of the Son of God

Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did assume the human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men. He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort, and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin. . . .

“Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.”

Article IV: Of Justification.

Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

“Because, therefore, men by their own strength cannot fulfill the Law of God, and all are under sin, and subject to eternal wrath and death, on this account we cannot be freed by the Law from sin and be justified, but the promise of the remission of sins and of justification has been given us for Christ’s sake, who was given for us in order that He might make satisfaction for the sins of the world, and has been appointed as the [only] Mediator and Propitiator. And this promise has not the condition of our merits [it does not read thus: Through Christ you have grace, salvation etc., if you merit it], but freely offers the remission of sins and justification as Paul says Rom. 11:6: If it be of works, then is it no more grace. And in another place, Rom. 3:21: The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, i.e., the remission of sins is freely offered. . . . (Apol. IV.40-41).

“To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Article XXV: Of Confession

Confession in the churches is not abolished among us; for it is not usual to give the body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved. And the people are most carefully taught concerning faith in the absolution, about which formerly there was profound silence. Our people are taught that they should highly prize the absolution, as being the voice of God, and pronounced by God’s command. The power of the Keys is set forth in its beauty and they are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences, also, that God requires faith to believe such absolution as a voice sounding from heaven, and that such faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins. Aforetime satisfactions were immoderately extolled; of faith and the merit of Christ and the righteousness of faith no mention was made; wherefore, on this point, our churches are by no means to be blamed. For this even our adversaries must needs concede to us that the doctrine concerning repentance has been most diligently treated and laid open by our teachers. But of Confession they teach that an enumeration of sins is not necessary, and that consciences be not burdened with anxiety to enumerate all sins, for it is impossible to recount all sins. . . .

“. . . [H]e arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened.”

Article XXIV: Of the Mass

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned be taught [what they need to know of Christ]. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people 1 Cor. 14:2-9, but it has also been so ordained by man's law. The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament.] This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us. . . . Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since public ceremonies, for the most part like those hither to in use, are retained. . . .

“And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

Article V: Of the Ministry.

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

“But how necessary the knowledge of this faith is, can be easily judged, because in this alone the office of Christ is recognized, by this alone we receive the benefits of Christ; this alone brings sure and firm consolation to pious minds. And in the Church it is necessary that there should be the doctrine from which the pious may receive the sure hope of salvation. . . . [I]t is necessary that in the Church of Christ the Gospel be retained, i.e., the promise that for Christ's sake sins are freely remitted.” (Apol. IV.118-120)

EXAUDI, THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

THE HOLY GOSPEL St. John 15:26–16:4 (NKJV)

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”

The Collect

Almighty, everlasting God, make us to have always a devout will toward Thee and to serve Thy Majesty with a pure heart, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, every one God, world without end.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE HOLY GOSPEL St. Luke 5:1-11 (NKJV)

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.”

And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.”

So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

The COLLECT

O God, who has prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love toward Thee that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

(Note: We jump to Trinity 5 today, so that this Gospel may precede the Festival Day of SS. Peter and Paul, which is observed this week.)

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”

Article XXIII: Of the Marriage of Priests

There has been common complaint concerning the examples of priests who were not chaste. For that reason also Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were certain causes why marriage was taken away from priests, but that there were far weightier ones why it ought to be given back; for so Platina writes. Since, therefore, our priests were desirous to avoid these open scandals, they married wives, and taught that it was lawful for them to contract matrimony. First, because Paul says, 1 Cor. 7:2,9: To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. Also: It is better to marry than to burn. Secondly Christ says, Matt. 19:11: All men cannot receive this saying, where He teaches that not all men are fit to lead a single life; for God created man for procreation, Gen. 1:28. Nor is it in man's power, without a singular gift and work of God, to alter this creation. [For it is manifest, and many have confessed that no good, honest, chaste life, no Christian, sincere, upright conduct has resulted (from the attempt), but a horrible, fearful unrest and torment of conscience has been felt by many until the end.] Therefore, those who are not fit to lead a single life ought to contract matrimony. For no man's law, no vow, can annul the commandment and ordinance of God. For these reasons the priests teach that it is lawful for them to marry wives. . . .

“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

Article VI: Of New Obedience.

Also they teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will, but that we should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants. Luke 17:10. The same is also taught by the Fathers. For Ambrose says: It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone.

“Because, indeed, faith brings the Holy Ghost, and produces in hearts a new life, it is necessary that it should produce spiritual movements in hearts. And what these movements are, the prophet, Jer. 31:33 shows, when he says: I will put My Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Therefore, when we have been justified by faith and regenerated, we begin to fear and love God, to pray to Him, to expect from Him aid, to give thanks and praise Him, and to obey Him in afflictions. We begin also to love our neighbors, because our hearts have spiritual and holy movements.” (Apol. III.3)

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

Article VII: Of the Church.

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5-6.

“And this article has been presented for a necessary reason. We see the infinite dangers which threaten the destruction of the Church. In the Church itself, infinite is the multitude of the wicked who oppress it [despise, bitterly hate, and most violently persecute the Word, as, e.g., the Turks, Mohammedans, other tyrants, heretics, etc. For this reason the true teaching and the Church are often so utterly suppressed and disappear, as if there were no Church, which has happened under the papacy; it often seems that the Church has completely perished]. Therefore, in order that we may not despair, but may know that the Church will nevertheless remain [until the end of the world], likewise that we may know that, however great the multitude of the wicked is, yet the Church [which is Christ’s bride] exists, and that Christ affords those gifts which He has promised to the Church, to forgive sins, to hear prayer, to give the Holy Ghost, this article in the Creed presents us these consolations.” (Apol. VII.10-11)

“Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Article XXII: Of Both Kinds in the Sacrament

To the laity are given Both Kinds in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, because this usage has the commandment of the Lord in Matt. 26:27: Drink ye all of it, where Christ has manifestly commanded concerning the cup that all should drink. And lest any man should craftily say that this refers only to priests, Paul in 1 Cor. 11:27 recites an example from which it appears that the whole congregation did use both kinds. And this usage has long remained in the Church, nor is it known when, or by whose authority, it was changed. . . . But this custom has been received, not only against the Scripture, but also against the old Canons and the example of the Church. Therefore, if any preferred to use both kinds of the Sacrament, they ought not to have been compelled with offense to their consciences to do otherwise. And because the division of the Sacrament does not agree with the ordinance of Christ, we are accustomed to omit the procession, which hitherto has been in use.

“It cannot be doubted that it is godly and in accordance with the institution of Christ and the words of Paul to use both parts in the Lord’s Supper. For Christ instituted both parts, and instituted them not for a part of the Church, but for the entire Church. For not only the presbyters, but the entire Church uses the Sacrament by the authority of Christ, and not by human authority.” (Apol.XXII.1)

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.”

Article XXI: Of the Worship of the Saints

Of the Worship of Saints they teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings. But the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and has promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon, 1 John 2:1: If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, etc.

“Our Confession approves honors to the saints. For here a threefold honor is to be approved. The first is thanksgiving. For we ought to give thanks to God because He has shown examples of mercy; because He has shown that He wishes to save men; because He has given teachers or other gifts to the Church. And these gifts, as they are the greatest, should be amplified, and the saints themselves should be praised, who have faithfully used these gifts, just as Christ praises faithful business-men, Matt. 25:21, 23. The second service is the strengthening of our faith; when we see the denial forgiven Peter, we also are encouraged to believe the more that grace truly superabounds over sin, Rom. 5:20. The third honor is the imitation, first, of faith, then of the other virtues, which every one should imitate according to his calling.” (Apol. XXI.4-6)

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

Article VIII: What the Church Is

Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. Matt. 23:2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men. They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

“The entire Eighth Article has been approved, in which we confess that hypocrites and wicked persons have been mingled with the Church, and that the Sacraments are efficacious even though dispensed by wicked ministers, because the ministers act in the place of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, according to Luke 10:16: He that heareth you heareth Me. Impious teachers are to be deserted, because these do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists. And Christ says Matt. 7:15: Beware of false prophets. And Paul, Gal. 1:9: If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed.” (Apol. VIII.47-48)

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.’”

Article IX: Of Baptism

Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God’s grace. They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.

“And as we condemn quite a number of other errors of the Anabaptists, we condemn this also, that they dispute that the baptism of little children is unprofitable. For it is very certain that the promise of salvation pertains also to little children. It does not, however, pertain to those who are outside of Christ’s Church, where there is neither Word nor Sacraments, because the kingdom of Christ exists only with the Word and Sacraments. Therefore it is necessary to baptize little children, that the promise of salvation may be applied to them, according to Christ’s command, Matt. 28:19: Baptize all nations. Just as here salvation is offered to all, so Baptism is offered to all, to men, women, children, infants. It clearly follows, therefore, that infants are to be baptized, because with Baptism salvation is offered. Secondly, it is manifest that God approves of the baptism of little children. Therefore the Anabaptists, who condemn the baptism of little children, believe wickedly. . . .”
(Apol IX.52-53)

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.”

Article XX: Of Good Works

Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding Good Works. For their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what estates of life and what works in every calling be pleasing to God. . . . Furthermore, it is taught on our part that it is necessary to do good works, not that we should trust to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins is apprehended, and that, for nothing. And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. . . . Hence it may be readily seen that this doctrine is not to be charged with prohibiting good works, but rather the more to be commended, because it shows how we are enabled to do good works. For without faith human nature can in no wise do the works of the First or of the Second Commandment. Without faith it does not call upon God, nor expect anything from God, nor bear the cross, but seeks, and trusts in, man’s help. And thus, when there is no faith and trust in God all manner of lusts and human devices rule in the heart. Wherefore Christ said, John 15:5: Without Me ye can do nothing. . . .

“So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?’”

Article XIX: Of the Cause of Sin

Of the Cause of Sin they teach that, although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says John 8:44: When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.

“For when we had been created by God the Father, and had received from Him all manner of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil, so that we fell under His wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God in His unfathomable goodness had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness, and came from heaven to help us. Those tyrants and jailers, then, are all expelled now, and in their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation, and has delivered us poor lost men from the jaws of hell, has won us, made us free, and brought us again into the favor and grace of the Father, and has taken us as His own property under His shelter and protection, that He may govern us by His righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness.” (LC.III.28-30)

“Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?’”

Article X: Of the Lord’s Supper

Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

“And there is a long exposition of Cyril on John 15, in which he teaches that Christ is corporeally offered us in the Supper. For he says thus: ‘Nevertheless, we do not deny that we are joined spiritually to Christ by true faith and sincere love. But that we have no mode of connection with Him, according to the flesh, this indeed we entirely deny. And this, we say, is altogether foreign to the divine Scriptures. For who has doubted that Christ is in this manner a vine, and we the branches, deriving thence life for ourselves? Hear Paul saying 1 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 12:5; Gal. 3:28: We are all one body in Christ; although we are many, we are, nevertheless, one in Him; for we are, all partakers of that one bread. Does he perhaps think that the virtue of the mystical benediction is unknown to us? Since this is in us, does it not also, by the communication of Christ’s flesh, cause Christ to dwell in us bodily? And a little after: Whence we must consider that Christ is in us not only according to the habit, which we call love, but also by natural participation, etc.’” (Apol. X.56-57)

“And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.”

Article XI: Of Confession

Of Confession they teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible according to the Psalm: Who can understand his errors? Ps. 19:12.

“It is well known that we have so elucidated and extolled [that we have preached, written, and taught in a, manner so Christian, correct, and pure] the benefit of absolution and the power of the keys that many distressed consciences have derived consolation from our doctrine; after they heard that it is the command of God, nay, rather the very voice of the Gospel, that we should believe the absolution, and regard it as certain that the remission of sins is freely granted us for Christ’s sake; and that we should believe that by this faith we are truly reconciled to God [as though we heard a voice from heaven]. This belief has encouraged many godly minds, and, in the beginning, brought Luther the highest commendation from all good men, since it shows consciences sure and firm consolation; because previously the entire power of absolution [entire necessary doctrine of repentance] had been kept suppressed by doctrines concerning works, since the sophists and monks taught nothing of faith and free remission [but pointed men to their own works, from which nothing but despair enters alarmed consciences].” (Apol. XI.59)

“So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? . . . His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”

Article XVIII: Of Free Will

Of Free Will they teach that man’s will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2:14; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. . . . They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching “the substance of the act.” For, although nature is able in a manner to do the outward work, (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder,) yet it cannot produce the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE GOSPEL

St. John 3:1-15 (NKJV)

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

The COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou would keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who lives and reigns, ever one God, world without end.

PENTECOST

THE GOSPEL

St. John 14:23-31 (NKJV)

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.”

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns, ever one God, world without end.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Article XII: Of Repentance

Of Repentance they teach that for those who have fallen after Baptism there is remission of sins whenever they are converted and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance. Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance. They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also those who contend that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin. The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance. They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins comes through faith but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.’”

Article XVII: Of Christ’s Return to Judgment

Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end. They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils. They condemn also others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

“Meanwhile, however, while sanctification has begun and is growing daily, we expect that our flesh will be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness, and will come forth gloriously, and arise to entire and perfect holiness in a new eternal life. For now we are only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost has ever to continue His work in us through the Word, and daily to dispense forgiveness, until we attain to that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people, full of godliness and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body.” (LC.III.57-58)

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Article XVI: Of Civil Affairs

Of Civil Affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage. They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians. They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

“You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.”

Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments

Of the Use of the Sacraments they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments. They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

“The promise is useless unless it is received by faith. But the Sacraments are the signs [and seals] of the promises. Therefore, in the use of the Sacraments faith ought to be added, so that, if any one use the Lord’s Supper, he use it thus. Because this is a Sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says, he ought for this very reason to be confident that what is promised in the New Testament, namely, the free remission of sins, is offered him. And let him receive this by faith, let him comfort his alarmed conscience, and know that these testimonies are not fallacious, but as sure as though [and still surer than if] God by a new miracle would declare from heaven that it was His will to grant forgiveness.” (Apol. XIII.20-22).

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Article XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order

Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.

“The Fourteenth Article, in which we say that in the Church the administration of the Sacraments and Word ought to be allowed no one unless he be rightly called, they receive, but with the proviso that we employ canonical ordination. Concerning this subject we have frequently testified in this assembly that it is our greatest wish to maintain church-polity and the grades in the Church [old church-regulations and the government of bishops], even though they have been made by human authority [provided the bishops allow our doctrine and receive our priests]. For we know that church discipline was instituted by the Fathers, in the manner laid down in the ancient canons, with a good and useful intention. . . . Furthermore, we wish here again to testify that we will gladly maintain ecclesiastical and canonical government, provided the bishops only cease to rage against our Churches. This our desire will clear us both before God and among all nations to all posterity from the imputation against us that the authority of the bishops is being undermined, when men read and hear that, although protesting against the unrighteous cruelty of the bishops, we could not obtain justice.” (Apol. XIV.20-22).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages

Of Usages in the Church they teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquility and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like. Nevertheless, concerning such things men are admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation. They are admonished also that human traditions instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

“However, what need is there of a long discussion? No tradition was instituted by the holy Fathers with the design that it should merit the remission of sins, or righteousness, but they have been instituted for the sake, of good order in the Church and for the sake, of tranquility. And when any one wishes to institute certain works to merit the remission of sins, or righteousness, how will he know that these works please God since he has not the testimony of God’s Word? How, without God’s command and Word, will he render men certain of God’s will? Does He not everywhere in the prophets prohibit men from instituting, without His commandment, peculiar rites of worship?” (Apol. XV.13-14)