

Announcements

◆ A warm welcome to all our visitors and guests, friends both old and new. We pray that God has blessed your time among us with His Word and Holy Spirit. We cordially invite you to join us this morning for coffee and other refreshments downstairs following the Divine Service; and we ask that you please sign the guest book at the back of the church.

◆ Following coffee & refreshments, our Family Bible Class continues our study of Genesis, relying especially on Dr. Luther's extensive commentary on that sacred text. Parents and children, youth and adults are welcome.

Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh are teaching a catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelve years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a catechesis class for teenagers (and others interested).

◆ Throughout Lent, there will be Vespers each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., as well as a brief, spoken Divine Service each Friday at 9:00 a.m.

As in past years, there will be soup supper served prior to the Wednesday evening Vespers, from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. One and all are welcome to enjoy the good soup and to share that opportunity for fraternal fellowship.

◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 15 FEBRUARY 2015: \$ 1,232.30

In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2240 is needed each week.

◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:

(ELDERS) Robert Rhein & Dave Smith; (USHERS) Matthew Horner & Tobias Tribble; (ACOLYTE) Benjamin Horner; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein; (GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.

◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

From the Lutheran Confessions

“Article XXIV. The Mass: There has really been only one propitiatory sacrifice in the world, the death of Christ, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches, ‘It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins’ (Heb. 10:4). A little later it says about the will of Christ, ‘By that will we have been sanctified

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Heb. 10:10). Isaiah interprets the law to mean that the death of Christ is a real satisfaction or expiation for our sins, as the ceremonies of the law were not; therefore he says, 'When He makes Himself an offering for sin, He shall see His offspring, He shall prolong His days' (Is. 53:10). The word he uses here ('*asam*') means a victim sacrificed for transgression. In the Old Testament this meant that a victim was to come to reconcile God and make satisfaction for our sins, so that men might know that God does not want our own righteousness but the merits of another (namely, of Christ) to reconcile Him to us. Paul interprets the same word as 'sin' in Romans (8:3), 'As a sin offering He condemned sin,' that is, through an offering for sin. We can understand the meaning of the word more readily if we look at the customs which the heathen adopted from their misinterpretation of the patriarchal tradition. The Latins offered a sacrificial victim to placate the wrath of God when, amid great calamities, it seemed to be unusually severe; this they call a trespass offering. Sometimes they offered up human sacrifices, perhaps because they had heard that a human victim was going to placate God for the whole human race. The Greeks called them either 'refuse' or 'offscouring.' Isaiah and Paul mean that Christ became a sacrificial victim or trespass offering to reconcile God by His merits instead of ours.

"Let this stand in this issue, then, that the death of Christ is the only real propitiatory sacrifice. The Levitical propitiatory sacrifices were so called only as symbols of a future offering. By analogy they were satisfactions since they gained the righteousness of the ceremonial law and prevented the exclusion of the sinner from the commonwealth. But after the revelation of the Gospel they had to stop; therefore they were not really propitiations, since the Gospel was promised in order to set forth a propitiation.

"The rest are eucharistic sacrifices, called 'sacrifices of praise': the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, yes, all the good works of the saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions on behalf of those who bring them, nor can they be transferred to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation for others *ex opere operato*. Those who bring them are already reconciled. The sacrifices of the New Testament are of this type, as Peter teaches in his first epistle (2:5), 'A holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices.' Spiritual sacrifices are contrasted not only with the sacrifices of cattle but also with human works offered *ex opere operato*, for 'spiritual' refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit within us. Paul teaches the same in Romans (12:1), 'Present your spiritual worship.' 'Spiritual worship' is a worship in which the spirit knows and takes hold of God, as it does when it fears and trusts Him. Therefore the contrast is not only with Levitical worship, where cattle were slaughtered, but with any worship where men suppose they are offering God a work *ex opere operato*. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches

the same (13:15): ‘Through Him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,’ with the interpretation, ‘that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.’ He commands them to offer praises, that is, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and the like. These are valid, not *ex opere operato* but because of faith. As it says, ‘Through Him let us offer,’ namely, through faith in Christ.

“In short, the worship of the New Testament is spiritual; it is the righteousness of faith in the heart and the fruits of faith. Thus it abrogates Levitical worship. Christ says, ‘The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth’ (John 4:23–24). This passage clearly condemns the notion that the sacrifices are valid *ex opere operato*, and it teaches that worship should be in spirit, in faith, and with the heart. The Old Testament prophets also condemn the popular notion of worship *ex opere operato* and teach spiritual righteousness and sacrifice. ‘I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, Obey My voice, and I will be your God’ (Jer. 7:22–23). How are we to think that Jews accepted this declaration, which seems to contradict Moses directly? Clearly God had commanded the fathers concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices, but what Jeremiah is condemning is an idea of sacrifices that did not come from God, namely, that such worship pleased him *ex opere operato*. He adds that God had commanded faith. ‘Obey Me,’ that is, ‘Believe that I am your God and that this is the way I want you to know Me when I show mercy and help you, for I do not need your sacrifices. Believe that I want to be God, the one who justifies and saves, because of My Word and promise, not because of works. Truly and wholeheartedly seek and expect help from Me.’

“Psa.lm 50:13, 15 also condemns the idea of sacrifices *ex opere operato*. It rejects sacrificial victims and requires prayer: ‘Do I eat the flesh of bulls? Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.’ It declares that calling upon God is really worshiping and honoring Him. Psalm 40:6 says, ‘Sacrifice and offering Thou dost not desire; but Thou hast given me an open ear.’ That is, ‘Thou hast offered me Thy Word to hear, and dost require me to believe it and Thy promises of willingness to show mercy and to help.’ Psalm 51:16, 17 says. ‘Thou hast no delight in burnt offering. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.’ So also Psalm 4:5, ‘Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.’ He commands us to trust and says that this is a right sacrifice, indicating that other sacrifices are not true and right. And Psalm 116:17, ‘I will offer to Thee sacrifices of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.’ Prayer is called a sacrifice of thanksgiving.”

(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1530)

