

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 will meet at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh are teaching a catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a catechesis class for teenagers (and others interested).

- ◆ Members of Emmaus are invited to the wedding of Ms. Margaret Rhein and Mr. Jonathan Casey this Saturday (23 May) at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne. The service will begin at 2:00 p.m.

- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 10 MAY 2015: \$ 2,735.00
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:
(ELDER) Dave Smith; (USHERS) Martin Horner & Caleb Smith;
(ACOLYTE) Benjamin Horner; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein;
(GREETERS) Robert & Herta Johnston.

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

From the Lutheran Confessions

“Article XXVII. Monastic Vows: They insult Christ when they say that by a monastic life men merit eternal life. God does not even give His own law the honor of meriting eternal life, as He clearly says in Ezekiel (20:25), ‘I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life.’ In the first place, it is sure that the monastic life does not merit the forgiveness of sins but that we receive this freely by faith, as has been said.

“In the second place, eternal life is given by mercy for Christ’s sake to those who accept forgiveness by faith and do not set their merits against the judgment of God. As Bernard also says very powerfully, ‘First of all, you must believe that you cannot have the forgiveness of sins except by God’s indulgence; secondly, that you cannot have any good work at all unless He has given this, too; finally, that by no works can you merit eternal life, but that this is freely given as well.’ We have quoted earlier the other things that follow this sentence, but at the end Bernard adds: “Let nobody deceive himself; for if he considers carefully, he will undoubtedly discover that even with ten thousand soldiers he cannot stand up against the Lord who comes at him with twenty thousand.’ Since we do not merit the forgiveness of sins or eternal life even by the works of the divine law, but must seek the mercy promised in Christ, much less do monastic observances, mere human traditions, deserve the credit for meriting the forgiveness of sins or eternal life.

“Thus those who teach that the monastic life merits the forgiveness of sins or eternal life are simply crushing the Gospel about the free forgiveness of sins and the promised mercy available in Christ and are transferring to their own foolish observances the trust that is due Christ. Instead of Christ they worship their own cowls and their own filth. Although they need mercy themselves, they wickedly fabricate works of supererogation and sell them to others.

“We have discussed this briefly, for on the basis of what we said earlier about justification, penance, and human traditions, it is quite clear that monastic vows are not a price for which the forgiveness of sins and eternal life are granted. And since Christ calls [human] traditions ‘useless services,’ they are not evangelical perfection at all.

“But our opponents slyly seek to give the impression that they are modifying the common notion about perfection. They deny that the monastic life is perfection, but they say that it is a state for acquiring perfection. Well said! We remember that this correction is found in Gerson. It seems that wise men were offended by the immoderate praises of the monastic life; but since they did not dare to deny it the claim of perfection altogether, they added this correction, that it is a state for acquiring perfection. If we follow this, the monastic life will be no more a state of perfection than the life of a farmer or an artisan. These, too, are states for acquiring perfection. All men, whatever their calling, ought to seek perfection, that is, growth in the fear of God, in faith, in the love of their neighbor, and similar spiritual virtues.

“In the histories of the hermits there are stories of Anthony and of others which put various ways of life on the same level. It is written that when Anthony asked God to show him what progress he was making in his way of life, God pointed in a dream to a certain shoemaker in the city of Alexandria as a basis

for comparison. The next day Anthony went into the city and came to the shoemaker to find out about his exercises and gifts. In his conversation with the man he did not hear anything, except that in the morning he prayed in a few words for the whole city and then paid attention to his business. Thus Anthony came to understand that justification was not to be attributed to the way of life he had undertaken.

“Although our opponents are now modifying their praises about perfection, they really believe otherwise. They sell merits and transfer them to others under the pretext that they observe both precepts and counsels. Therefore they really believe that they have merits left over. If this is not arrogating perfection to oneself, what is? In the Confutation itself they say that monks try to pattern their lives more closely with the Gospel. They are ascribing perfection to human traditions if they say that monks pattern their lives more closely after the Gospel because they do not have property, are unmarried, and obey the rule in trifles like clothing and food.

“Again, the Confutation says that monks merit a more abundant eternal life, and it quotes the passage (Matt. 19:29), ‘Every one who has left houses,’ etc. That is to say, here, too, it claims perfection for artificial religious acts. But this passage of Scripture has nothing to do with the monastic life. Christ does not mean to say that leaving parents or wife or brothers is a work we should do because it merits the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Indeed, such leaving is accursed; for if someone leaves his parents or his wife in order by this act to merit the forgiveness of sins or eternal life, he is insulting Christ.

“There are two kinds of leaving. One happens without a call, without a command of God; this Christ does not approve, for works which we have chosen are ‘vain worship’ (Matt. 15:9). The fact that Christ speaks of leaving wife and children makes it even clearer that He does not approve this kind of flight, since we know that the command of God forbids deserting wife and children. The other kind of leaving is that which happens by a command of God, when a government or a tyrant forces us either to leave or to deny the Gospel. Here we have the command rather to bear the injury, to let property, wife, and children, even life itself, be taken from us. This kind of leaving Christ approves. He adds the phrase ‘for the Gospel’ (Mark 10:29) to show that He is talking not about those who do injury to wife and children but about those who bear injury because of the confession of the Gospel. We should leave our body, too, for the Gospel. But it would be silly to conclude from this that it is a service to God to commit suicide and to leave our body without the command of God. So it is silly to maintain that it is a service to God to leave possessions, friends, wife, and children without the command of God.”

(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1530)

