

The Order of Vespers, p.224

Welcome to Trinity

#31 This Fortunate Exchange

By this fortunate exchange with us He took upon Himself our sinful person and granted us His innocent and victorious Person. Clothed and dressed in this, we are freed from the curse of the Law, because Christ Himself voluntarily became a curse for us, saying: “For My own Person of humanity and divinity I am blessed, and I am in need of nothing whatever. But I shall empty Myself (Phil. 2:7); I shall assume your clothing and mask; and in this I shall walk about and suffer death, in order to set you free from death.” Therefore when, inside our mask, He was carrying the sin of the whole world, He was captured, He suffered, He was crucified, He died; and for us He became a curse. But because He was a divine and eternal Person, it was impossible for death to hold Him. Therefore He arose from death on the third day, and now He lives eternally; nor can sin, death, and our mask be found in Him any longer; but there is sheer righteousness, life, and eternal blessing. (Luther’s Works, v.26, p.284)

Faith Battles Unbelief and Doubt

Therefore faith is not a laughable, cold quality that snores and is idle in the heart. No, it is agitated and harassed by horrible trials concerning the nothingness and the vanity of the divine promises. For I believe in Christ, whom I do not see. **But I have His Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and consolation through the Word and Absolution. Yet I see nothing of what He promises. Indeed, I feel the opposite in my flesh. Here, then, one must struggle and do battle against unbelief and doubt.**

But formless faith is powerless and cannot sustain and bear those assaults. True and living faith, however, which overcomes doubt, is in reality an exceedingly lively “quality,” if indeed this is what it should be called; and it is a restless blessing in our heart, which the devil assails and attacks every single moment. **One learns and feels in the agony of death above all whether it is a formless faith or a true and living faith. For a Christian dies, is buried, and is consumed by worms. In short, he is reduced to nothing. This is certainly contrary to all the divine promises. What, then, should he do?** Then he surely finds out that faith is not a meaningless quality, since it overcomes the terrors of death and says: “Even if you were to bear on your neck the burden not
(Continues on back)

- + **Hymn #113** “O Sacred Head Now Wounded”
- + “O Lord, open my lips... p.224
- + Ascription of Praise
- Psalmody Psalm 22 (no Gloria Patri)
- Readings Isaiah 52:13-53:12
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
- John 18:1-19:42
- Responsory for Lent p.226-227
- “We have an advocate with the Father...”
- Hymn #117** “Sing, My Tongue”
- Sermon “The Deeply Despised Shall Be Highly Exalted” Jn 18:8-9
- + Magnificat..... p.228
- “My soul magnifies the Lord...”
- + The Prayers..... p.231
- Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy...”)
- Lord’s Prayer
- Salutation
- Three Collects for Good Friday
- “Prayer in contagious epidemics and plagues”(#427)
- Collect for Vespers & Collect “At this hour”
- Collect for Peace
- + Benedicamus/Blessing p.234
- + **Hymn #121** “Upon the Cross Extended”
- + **Hymn #110** “Go To Dark Gethsemane”

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only of death but also of a thousand devils and of hell itself, yet I will not make God a liar.” For in such agony the hearts of the godly are disposed to say: “Even though hell were to pour out all its flames and spew out every evil on me, yet I remain in that faith. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son. Lord God, preserve me through Christ, lest that blasphemy which says ‘Thou art a liar’ arise. To be sure, I feel the contrary; but I have Thy Word, which does not deceive. Indeed, it is all in all to me.”

In this manner Holy Scripture commends the fathers and sets forth shining examples of their faith, and **there is no other doctrine in the world beside Holy Scripture which teaches that faith alone conquers the world** (cf. 1 John 5:4). This faith consists in having the Word in our hearts and having no doubt about the Word. Meanwhile it simply suffers the opposite, is not crushed, and is not wearied to the end, that is, until the promise comes. Job stoutly endured the reproach of his wife, for he replies (Job 2:10): “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Luther’s Works, vol 5, page 205-206).

Good Friday Collects:

Almighty God, we implore You graciously to behold this Your family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men and to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Merciful and Everlasting God, who has not spared Your only Son, but delivered Him up for us all that He might bear our sins upon the Cross, grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and Everlasting God, who has willed that Your Son should bear for us the pains of the Cross that You might remove from us the power of the adversary, help us so to remember and give thanks for our Lord’s Passion that we may obtain remission of sins and redemption from everlasting death; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.