

## **Week of Cantate (Easter 5)**

*First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.*



***Weekly Catechism section:*** *Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (Luther's Small Catechism)*

***Hymn of the Week:*** *Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice (TLH 387)*

### **Monday - Introit (Psalm 98:1-2, 1, 3, 4)**

#### ***Read Psalm 98.***

*Cantate* means "Sing!" The first words of our *Introit* come from Psalm 98:1-2, "sing to the LORD a new song! His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations." Sing! This is what Christians do. And what do they sing? They sing a new song! And what is that song? "His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations." His righteousness has been revealed. This is the innocence of Jesus, which avails before God for our sake, the righteousness that Jesus earned for us by his dying on the cross. It covers us, just as the Prophet Isaiah says (61:10), "He has covered me with the robe of righteousness." And so we sing about this righteousness. In our hymn of the day we sing the words of Jesus:

Life will from death the vict'ry win;  
My innocence shall bear your sin,  
And you are blest forever.

This is a spiritual song because it is the gospel, which the Spirit declares. Jesus says, "He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." He sends his Holy Spirit to declare to us the righteousness, which he earned for us by shedding his blood, and we receive it by faith (Rom 3:22). This is why the Holy Spirit rebukes unbelief, because unbelief is the root of all unrighteousness. The Spirit therefore declares us righteous through faith because Jesus has gone to the Father where he stands forever as our righteousness (Jer 33:16). Therefore, dear friends in Christ, sing about the righteousness that the Holy Spirit delivers to you through the Word of Christ. And if you feel the judgment of the devil, the world, and your own sinful flesh, then take refuge in the words of the Spirit, because the

ruler of this world -- the devil who accuses your conscience -- has been judged, and he cannot take this song from your heart.

+++

## **Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 12:1-6)**

### ***Read Isaiah 12.***

The devil is always trying to strip the song of the gospel from our hearts. At the center of the gospel is that God's wrath has been turned away by Christ's saving death on the cross. He bore our sins in his own body, paying the penalty for our sins to God. This is our song. It is what God teaches us to sing in Isaiah 12. The devil tries to strip this from our hearts by getting us to sing about salvation without sin and God's wrath against it. Sin is described as our own moral struggle for inner peace, not as that horrible corruption and enmity against God (Rom 8:7). The gospel therefore turns into finding our own ground of being or motivation to exist while having nothing to do with having peace with God who was justly angry at our sins. Death is then seen as just a part of life or some accident, rather than God's punishment against sin. And the call to repentance is replaced with "bridges of compassion," cuddly dogs, and other household gods.

When God's wrath is ignored we are left with a gospel that does not teach that Jesus turned God's wrath away. We are left with a neutered gospel. This is a gospel that might even say a lot about forgiveness, compassion, and mercy. But it is still palatable to our old, sinful nature, because it doesn't require it to drown and die. When your conscience bears witness to the law's revelation that God is justly angry against your sin (Rom 1:18), then what good is this neutered gospel going to do for you? Are you going to assume that God was never actually angry at you as you think positive thoughts while being coddled by a puppy? Isaiah teaches us that God's wrath has been turned away. This was done by Christ's obedience unto death in the place of every sinner. Only those who are terrified of God's wrath can take comfort in the Holy One who turned God's wrath away and remains in our midst as our advocate before the Father (1 John 2:1-2). Therefore, may the Lord of our Salvation keep this at the center of our hymns and liturgy as we declare among the people the wonderful works of God.

+++

## **Wednesday - Gradual**

### ***Read Ephesians 5.***

St. Paul teaches us to be wise and discerning. This is our right as children of God. It comes from knowing Christ, our Lord and head, and enjoying the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation won by him for us. Such wisdom is given to us by his Holy Spirit. Therefore, St. Paul also teaches us to be sober, not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit of God. Being filled with the Spirit isn't some fanatical experience of ecstasy lacking any sound judgment. Neither is it a stoic, emotionless devotion to the law. No, it is a lively, joyful, and sober worship of God. This is what leads to a new song. A new song, recounting the mercies of God, which are new every morning, comes from having the Spirit of God through the Word of Christ.

Thus, Paul directs us to be filled with the Spirit in this way, addressing one another and teaching one another through Psalms, hymns, and songs of the Spirit. Here we see what kinds of songs we sing in worship of God. They are songs that teach God's Word. They teach about Christ's atoning death and glorious resurrection. They teach of true repentance and the comfort of God's mercy in Christ. They teach of all the wondrous acts of God from creation through the entire history of salvation. And such teachings also apply to the Christian life as each submits to one's own station to which one has been called by God. The songs we sing, such as Psalm 127 and 128, teach us how marriage and the domestic estate reflect God and his salvation. The new song of the Spirit is wise, discerning what God's Word says and applying it to one's own daily life.

+++

## **Thursday - Epistle (*James 1:16-21*)**

### ***Read James 1.***

Jesus teaches his disciples that after suffering a little while they would rejoice. This is what every Christian must experience, in one way or another. It is called bearing the cross. The cross in the Christian's life is the affliction given to him by God through the enemies of the church. These enemies are the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh. We must bear such spiritual attacks with patience, whether they are against the body or against the soul. This is God's will, as he teaches us our unworthiness and need for Christ's salvation. St. Peter teaches us the context in which we bear the cross, namely, in doing the duties God has called us to do. As we fight against our sinful lusts, which war against the soul, and as we bear the ridicule of the world, we submit to all earthly

authorities, even when they are corrupt. St. Peter teaches us to bear our cross when he directs us, as free children, to use our liberty as servants of God, not as slaves to vice. To bear the cross is nothing other than to live in the freedom of Christ, who has delivered us from sin by his own cross. It is to live with a good conscience to God.

To avoid ones obligation to authority is to live as a slave. In the same way, to obey authority to the extent of disobeying God is also to live as a slave. St. Peter tells us to honor the king and all people. What does it mean to honor them? It means to honor what God has given them to do. It doesn't mean to fear or trust them. Rather, we are to fear God and love our fellow Christians with whom we trust in Christ. This is what a freed conscience does. In the meantime, we honor all authority as coming from God. So what is it to us that we must, for a little while, submit to authority that has been corrupted? Such authority still comes from God, the same God who has set us free from sin, our Father who gives us reason to rejoice in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the God toward whom we have a good conscience through our baptism into Christ (1 Pet 3:21). If he is our God then we can bear what he gives us to bear by honoring what he would have us honor. We can rejoice in the midst of our burdens, because we know that they have been given by the One in whom we rejoice.

+++

### **Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 118:16; Romans 6:9)**

#### ***Read Psalm 118.***

The right hand of the Lord is exalted and does valiantly. This is what we sing in our *Alleluia verse*, taken from Psalm 118. As we continue into the Easter season, we anticipate the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father. Jesus is the right hand of the Lord who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and who brought salvation for all people through his own blood. He is exalted above all the earth. And so we also sing from Romans 6, "Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over him." The resurrection of Christ includes not only his rising from the dead on Easter Sunday but also his ascending to the right hand of the Father. In Philippians 2:9, Paul combines the resurrection and the ascension into one act: God has highly exalted him and given him the name above every name.

So as we anticipate the completion of our Lord's resurrection in his ascension, we sing of his victory with joy. Christ dies no more. This means that the death he died accomplished what it set out to do. It did

not need to be repeated. God accepted the sacrifice for our sins, satisfied by the offering of his Son's obedience. So having raised Jesus from the dead, he declares that death has no more dominion over him. Now, Paul is continuing his discussion from the previous chapter, Romans 5, in which he describes the dominion or reign of death from Adam through all those who inherited Adam's sin. So when he says in Romans 6 that death no more has dominion over Christ, he is saying this for the sake of all people who inherited Adam's sin. Christ has taken away the dominion of death. And his ascension to the right hand of the Father proves this to be true. We cannot see him, because he has gone to the Father. This is a good thing, because it means that he has accomplished what he set out to do. And if he is with the Father then this means that he also fills the earth. So he is with us here today with his Word and Sacraments as his Spirit declares to us what belongs to Christ: victory over the grave and righteousness before God.

+++

### **Saturday - Gospel (John 16:5-15)**

#### ***Read John 16.***

Jesus going away makes us both lament as well as sing for joy. It makes us lament, because instead of seeing Jesus our Lord we see the wickedness of this world as we struggle against our sinful nature. But it makes us rejoice because Jesus did not go away from us. His going away was him going to the Father. He went to the Father to present before him his own righteousness. He went to the Father to render to him a perfect sacrifice holy and acceptable on our behalf. And because he is with the Father, Jesus is closer to us than our senses could possibly imagine.

So it's good that we cannot see Jesus. This means that his work is done. It does not mean that he is not with us. In fact, it means the opposite. It means that his Word has been fulfilled, which therefore also means that he is with his entire church, hidden under his Word, with his body and blood. Even though you must endure the agony of standing up to this world's deceit, hearing so many people deny Christ, all the while not being able to see Jesus -- even though your heart laments -- through faith your spirit sings for joy. Because the Holy Spirit comforts you by giving to you what belongs to Christ. He exposes your unbelieving sinful nature as he also reveals to you the very righteousness of Christ who stands on your behalf at the Father's right hand. And finally, the Holy Spirit speaks judgment. He declares that all of this is true, despite the fact that the devil mocks it and the world denies it. The Holy Spirit

declares that the seeming triumph of the devil in this world is only a show. The devil has already been judged. And Christ's victory over sin, death, and all evil has already been given to you. Therefore, even though it is difficult to walk by faith without seeing Jesus, do not despair! You are unable to see him not because he isn't with you, but because he is hidden from mortal eyes. He is at the Father's side interceding for you, bearing with you, and comforting you with his Holy Spirit until the day when your faith will turn to sight as you see him face to face.

+++

## 387

## Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

Rom. 3: 23

Nun freut euch, liebe Christen g'mein

Martin Luther, 1523

Tr., Richard Massie, 1854, alt.

S. T. S. T. S. S. T.

Nun freut euch

"Eillick" christliche Lieder"

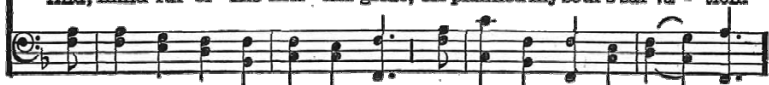
Wittenberg, 1525



1 Dear Chris-tians, one and all, re-joice, With ex-ul-ta-tion spring-ing,  
 2 Fast bound in Sa-tan's chains I lay, Death brooded dark-ly o'er me;  
 3 My own good works a-vailed me naught, No mer-it they at-tain-ing;  
 4 But God be-held my wretch-ed state Be-fore the world's foun-da-tion,



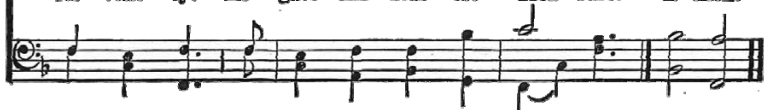
And, with u-nit-ed heart and voice And ho-ly rap-ture sing-ing,  
 Sin was my tor-ment night and day, In sin my moth-er bore me;  
 Free will a-against God's judgment fought, Dead to all good re-main-ing.  
 And, mind-ful of His mer-cies great, He planned my soul's sal-va-tion.



Pro-claim the won-ders God hath done, How His right arm the  
 Yea, deep and deep-er still I fell, Life had be-come a  
 My fears in-creased till sheer de-spair Left naught but death to  
 A fa-ther's heart He turned to me, Sought my re-demp-tion



vic-try won; Right dear-ly it hath cost Him.  
 liv-ing hell, So firm-ly sin pos-sessed me.  
 be my share; The pangs of hell I suf-fered.  
 fer-vent-ly: He gave His dear-est Treas-ure. A-men.



Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

- 5 He spoke to His beloved Son:  
'Tis time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright Jewel of My crown,  
And bring to man salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set him free,  
Slay bitter death for him that he  
May live with Thee forever.
- 6 The Son obeyed His Father's will,  
Was born of virgin mother,  
And God's good pleasure to fulfill,  
He came to be my Brother.  
No garb of pomp or power He wore,  
A servant's form, like mine, He bore,  
To lead the devil captive.
- 7 To me He spake: Hold fast to Me,  
I am thy Rock and Castle;  
Thy Ransom I Myself will be,  
For thee I strive and wrestle;  
For I am with thee, I am thine,  
And evermore thou shalt be Mine:  
The Foe shall not divide us.
- 8 The Foe shall shed My precious blood,  
Me of My life bereaving.  
All this I suffer for thy good;  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life shall from death the victory win,  
My innocence shall bear thy sin;  
So art thou blest forever.
- 9 Now to My Father I depart,  
The Holy Spirit sending  
And, heavenly wisdom to impart,  
My help to thee extending.  
He shall in trouble comfort thee,  
Teach thee to know and follow Me,  
And in all truth shall guide thee.
- 10 What I have done and taught, teach thou,  
My ways forsake thou never;  
So shall My kingdom flourish now  
And God be praised forever.  
Take heed lest men with base alloy  
The heavenly treasure should destroy;  
This counsel I bequeath thee.