

CONFESSING CHRIST -- DAILY LECTIONARY AND PRAYERS

Pentecost-Trinity Seasons, 2009 (Part 1)

Frederick R. Trost and Colleen Darling, Co-Editors

"More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord."

(Psalm 93:4)

Sunday, 5/31 The Festival of Pentecost	Acts 1:1-21 +1680, Joachim Neander 1934, Barmen Declaration	Jean T. Whitcomb Paxton, MA
Monday, 6/01	Romans 8:22-27 +1971, Reinhold Niebuhr	Cody Williams New York, NY
Tuesday, 6/02	Psalm 118:1-9 +1944, Hildegard Jacobi 1924, Native Americans granted U.S. citizenship	Leonard Zecchini Lyndeborough, NH
Wednesday, 6/03	John 14:18-27 +1963, Pope John XXIII	Reynold Ziegler Camp Hill, PA
Thursday, 6/04	Psalm 93:1-4	Lowell Zuck St. Louis, MO
Friday, 6/05	Psalm 95:1-7	Clifford B. Anderson Cranbury, NY
Saturday, 6/06	1 Corinthians 12:12-23	F. Christopher Anderson York, PA
Sunday, 6/07 The Festival of the Trinity	Romans 11:33-36	Franklin Anderson E. Waterboro, ME
Monday, 6/08	John 3:1-10 +1727, August Hermann Francke	Ralph Anderson West Seneca
Tuesday, 6/09	John 3:11-22 +1870 Charles Dickens	Rupert E. Annis Topsfield, MA
Wednesday, 6/10	Psalm 29	Sally S. Bailey Raleigh, NC
Thursday, 6/11	John 4:7-15	William Baran Kittery Point, ME
Friday, 6/12	John 4:16-26 *1929, Anne Frank	Linda Barnes Colchester, CT
Saturday, 6/13	John 4:39-42 +1965, Martin Buber	Jane Y. Bartholomew Newton, NC
Sunday, 6/14 2 Pentecost/1 Trinity	Mark 4:1-9	Martha Ann Baumer Belleville, IL
Monday, 6/15	Mark 4:10-20	Helen Benz New Haven, MO
Tuesday, 6/16	Psalm 20 1976, Soweto Massacre South Africa	Gerald & Cynthia Bertsch Sheboygan, WI
Wednesday, 6/17	Hebrews 2:1-4 *1703, John Welsey	David Biebighauser Ipswich, SD

Thursday, 6/18	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 1934, Native American self-government 1979, Salt II Agreement	Eugene Birmingham Bensenville, IL
Friday, 6/19	Jeremiah 17:9-11	Cathie Fisher Braman Fredericksburg, VA
Saturday, 6/20	Isaiah 55:6-9	Charles Brizius Elkhorn, WI
Sunday, 6/21 3 Pentecost/ 2 Trinity	Psalms 30:1-5	Robert F. Broeder Le Sueur, MN
Monday, 6/22	Mark 4:35-41	Martin Bupp Chalfont, PA
Tuesday, 6/23	Philippians 4:8-9	John Burgess Pittsburgh, PA
Wednesday, 6/24	1 Corinthians 12:1-3	Michael Caldwell Wolcott, VT
Thursday, 6/25	Ephesians 1:3-14 52 nd Anniversary of the UCC 1530, Augsburg Confession 1945, United Nations Charter	John Cedarleaf Fairport, NY
Friday, 6/26	Philippians 1:3-11 27 th General Synod +1988, Hans Urs von Balthasar	Richard L. Christensen Sheboygan, WI
Saturday, 6/27	Philippians 1:12=18 27 th General Synod *1880, Helen Keller	Richard & Ruthie Coleman Pembroke, MA
Sunday, 6/28 4 Pentecost/3 Trinity	27 th General Synod +202, Irenaeus	Herbert Davis Dedham, MA
Monday, 6/29	Mark 5:21-43 27 th General Synod	James G. Deitz Amherst, OH
Tuesday, 6/30	Galatians 5:13-15 27 th General Synod *1939, Dorothy Kazal	Vernon Dolde Wausau, WI
Wednesday, 7/01	Luke 15:11-24 1968, Non-Proliferation Treaty	Pam Doore Delaware, OH
Thursday, 7/02	Luke 15:25-32 1964, Civil Rights Act	Chet Dzikczek Clinton, MA
Friday, 7/03	Ephesians 3:14-21	Willis Elliott Kearny, NE
Saturday, 7/04 (Independence Day)	Ephesians 4:1-6 *1983, Witness for Peace	Marion Ellis Newmarket, NH
Sunday, 7/05 5 Pentecost/4 Trinity	Mark 6:1-6	John Esbenshade Lancaster, PA
Monday, 7/06	Mark 6:7-13 +1415, John Hus	Gabriel & Dorothy Fackre West Hyannisport, MA
Tuesday, 7/07	Mark 6:14-29	Ralph Faisst West Bend, WI
Wednesday, 7/08	Mark 6:30-44 *1867, Kathe Kollwitz	William Falla Whitehall, PA

Thursday, 7/09	Mark 6:45-52	David Fisher Brooklyn, NY
Friday, 7/10	Mark 6:53-56 *1509, John Calvin	Richard & Martha Floyd Pittsfield, MA
Saturday, 7/11	Psalms 101:1-3	Jerry Folk Madison, WI
Sunday, 7/12 6 Pentecost/5 Trinity	Luke 4:18-21 +1536, Erasmus *1817, Henry David Thoreau	Ron K. Freyer-Nicholas Wildwood, FL
Monday, 7/13	Romans 6:1-5	Theodore Fritsch North Chatham, MA
Tuesday, 7/14	Romans 6:6-11	Michael Frost Kresgeville, PA
Wednesday, 7/15	Romans 6:12-14	Richard Glatfelter Monroe, OH
Thursday, 7/16	Romans 6:15-19	Milton E. Gockley, Jr. Lancaster, PA
Friday, 7/17	Romans 6:20-23	Peter Goguts Wernersville, PA
Saturday, 7/18	Psalms 108:1-4 1868, African Americans granted U.S. citizenship +1939, Paul Schneider	Charlotte P. Gosselink Kennett Square, PA
Sunday, 7/19 7 Pentecost/6 Trinity	Psalms 23	Stephen Gould Sheboygan, WI
Monday, 7/20	Colossians 1:3-8 1954, Geneva Agreements	Kathryn Greene-McCreight New Haven, Ct
Tuesday, 7/21	Colossians 1:9-14	Ruben Grosshuesch Sheboygan, WI
Wednesday, 7/22	Colossians 1:15-20	Linda Gruber Phoenixville, PA
Thursday, 7/23	Colossians 1:21-23	Robert C. Hamilton Davenport, IA
Friday, 7/24	Colossians 1:24-29	Esther A. Haskell Claremont, MA
Saturday, 7/25	Psalms 105:1-6	Philip Haslanger Madison, WI
Sunday, 7/26 8 Pentecost/7 Trinity	John 6:1-14 1960, Americans with Disability Act	Steven Hecky Southgate, KY
Monday, 7/27	2 Timothy 2:8-13	Kristin Herzog Durham, NC
Tuesday, 7/28	Hebrews 4:12-13 +1750, Johann Sebastian Bach	Hans Holznagel Cleveland, OH
Wednesday, 7/29	Psalms 119:33-40 +1890, Vincent van Gogh	Robert E. Howell Walnut Creek, CA
Thursday, 7/30	Proverbs 11:1-4	Robert G. Hunsicker Lancaster, PA

Friday, 7/31

Isaiah 61:10-11

Nancy Gottshall
Collegeville, PA

Saturday, 8/01

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Walter Ziegenhals
Georgetown, KY

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RESOURCES FOR USE IN THE PENTECOST/TRINITY SEASONS, 2009 (Part 1)

The Sacrament of Fire:

Kneel always when you light a fire!
 Kneel reverently, and thankful be
 For God's unfailing charity,
 And on the ascending flame inspire
 A little prayer, that shall upbear
 The incense of your thankfulness
 For this sweet grace
 Of warmth and light!
 For here again is sacrifice
 For your delight...

Kneel always when you light a fire!
 Kneel reverently,
 And grateful be
 To God for His unfailing charity!

(John Oxenham, 1852-1941)

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God of Life:

God of life, do not darken your light to us,
 O God of life, do not close your joy to us,
 O God of life, do not shut your door to us,
 O God of life, do not refuse your mercy to us,
 And, O God of life, crown us with your gladness.

(Iona Community)

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O God, You Who Are the Great Redeemer of Humankind:

O God, You who are the great Redeemer of humankind,
 our hearts are tender in the thought of You,
 for in all the afflictions of our time You have been afflicted,
 and in the sufferings of Your people it was Your body that was crucified.
 You have been wounded by our transgressions and bruised by our iniquities,
 and all our sins are laid at last upon You.
 Amid the groaning of creation we behold Your spirit in travail
 till we, Your sons and daughters of every time and place,
 shall be born in freedom and holiness...
 Fill us now with hunger and thirst for justice
 That we, who are recipients of glad tidings to the poor,
 may seek to set at liberty all who are in the prison-house of want..
 Lay Your spirit upon us and inspire us with a passion of Christ-like love,
 that we may, with all the weak and oppressed of this world,
 be strengthened as we bear one another's sorrows..
 Help us in patience to bear the eternal cross of Your Christ,
 counting it joy if we, too, are sown as grains of wheat in the furrows of the world,
 for we know that through Him, the agony of the righteous promises redemption.

(Walter Rauschenbusch, adapted)

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A Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit:

I thank you, my dear God, that I have learned not to begin faith by my own efforts, nor to attempt to destroy my transgressions with my own repentance. I might do this before others and be acceptable to the world... But with You, O God, such effort would bring despair. Therefore, I thank you that Another has seized and carried my sins and has made atonement for them. With joy, I wish to believe this. It seems so very right and comforting to me. But, I cannot believe this by myself, and I find no power in me to convince myself. Therefore, send me Your Holy Spirit to lead me and help me that I might come to believe. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, for without You, I can do nothing. I cannot create the sun and moon and make them rise and shine brightly in the heavens,... and I cannot make my heart clean and give myself a right spirit; a strong and firm frame of mind that is unbending and unwavering. Come to my aid, and assist the whole Church daily to increase in faith. Though the world should topple and all conspire against us,... grant that we might not fall. By Your divine help, let us remain in the Gospel. (Martin Luther, adapted)

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We Are All Called to be Saints:

Saint Francis said each one of us is what he or she is in the eyes of God; nothing more, nothing less. We are all called to be saints. There is nothing extraordinary about this call. We all have been created in the image of God to love and to be loved...

When our sisters were in Ceylon, a minister of state once told me something very surprising. He said, "You know, Mother, I love Christ but I hate Christians." So I asked him how that could be. He answered, "Because Christians do not give us Christ; they do not live their Christian lives to the fullest." Gandhi said something very similar: "If Christians were to live their Christian lives to the fullest, there would not be one Hindu left in India." Isn't it very true? This love of Christ should urge us to spend ourselves without ceasing.

(Mother Teresa in "No Greater Love," Novato, California, New World Library, 1997)

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"The Elderberry Blossom":

Johannes Bobrowski has written a poem entitled "The Elderberry Blossom." With its disks composed of starry blossoms, the elderberry is a symbol of fruitfulness and happiness. The poem deals with the persecution of Jews in czarist Russia and recalls the childhood experiences of Isaac Babel. Only when the poet turns his attention to the young people of a new generation does the motif of the elderberry reemerge:

"People, you say: 'Forget—
Young people are coming.
Their laughter like elderberry bushes.'
People, the elderberry
Might die
Of your forgetfulness."

... genocide, biocide, aerocide, perfected to the highest level of technology, used to annihilate a few million rice farmers; "antipersonnel bombs," which don't damage buildings but are made expressly for people; plastic bombs, whose fragments don't show up on X rays, making it impossible to operate... Vietnam (as also Iraq) carries on the story of Auschwitz. For here, as there, people saw, but did not see, heard, but did not hear. (Dorothee Soelle, in "Suffering," Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1975)

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What is this Pentecost?

What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest and the fruits to be gathered. Look at the reality now, how the time has come to ply the sickle of the Word. The Spirit, keen-edged, came down in place of the sickle. For hear the words of Christ, "Lift up your eyes and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting." And again, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." He himself, taking (our nature) as the first fruits, lifted it up high and he was himself the first to ply the sickle. For this reason he calls (the Word) also the Seed.

(John Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles," in "Ancient Commentary on Scripture," New Testament Vol. V, Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006)

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Theology as a Kind of Giant and Intricate Poetry:

... theology is always a kind of giant and intricate poetry, like epic or saga. It is written for those who know the tale already, the urgent messages and the dying words, and who attend to its retelling with a special alertness, because the story has a claim on them and they on it. Theology is also close to the spoken voice. It evokes sermon, sacrament, and liturgy, and, of course, Scripture itself, with all its echoes of song and legend and prayer. It earns its authority by winning assent and recognition, in the manner of poetry but with the difference that the assent seems to be to ultimate truth, however oblique or fragmentary the suggestion of it. Theology is written for the small community of those

who would think of reading it. So it need not define freighted words like "faith" or "grace" but may instead reveal what they contain. To the degree that it does them any justice, its community of readers will say yes, enjoying the insight as their own and affirming it in that way...

(Marilynne Robinson in "From the Death of Adam," Picador, NY, 2005)

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"Come Holy Spirit" (a Translation of Sermons by Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen, prepared from 1920 to 1924):

"... the reader may be disappointed because he (she) does not find (in these sermons) wise sayings or ingenious pronouncements on the things that now disturb and interest men (and women), discussions of the problems of life from the standpoint of common experience and in the light of the highest moral and social values. One looks in vain for sociological or political harangues, for literary masterpieces captivating the cultured reader with their fascinating rhetoric, for subtle theological speculations or philosophical acumen based on recent scientific discoveries,...

"These sermons simply proclaim God, but not as a static absolute far removed from the world, not as an immanent essence entangled with the world; they preach the good news of God 'in action,' of a living person who is wholly other than the world and yet Creator, Upholder of the universe, Savior and Sanctifier of men (and women), as... revealed in the prophets, incarnated in the Christ, working through His spirit in the fellowship of believers, the Church. They proclaim the purpose that has been in God through eternity and is now made manifest in Christ, that in the end His will of justice and love is to prevail as in heaven, so upon the earth..."

(George W. Richards in "The Translators' Preface" to "Come Holy Spirit," translated by George W. Richards, Elmer G. Homrighausen, and Karl J. Ernst, Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978)

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"He Stands in the Midst": (A sermon from Acts 2)

"He stands in the midst. This is what the story of Pentecost tells us. Now if we pleased, we might look upon this story as a beautiful tale born out of literary emotion. But if we have ears to hear we shall hear more than a pretty tale. Here is real knowledge, deep ultimate insights into the existence, which Jesus is. What is told us here is that Jesus not only was, but that He is, and will be. He does not exist here or there in a certain place; for Him there is not only a "once" and a "then," but he is yesterday, today and the same in all eternity; in a word, Jesus is "standing in the midst." That is what we are told here. He "stands in the midst" means that what He says is not only a historical utterance of truth which has validity for, and was understood in, a certain time, but here—and wonderful to say—the eternal appeared in the casual, the Godly has appeared in the human. He "stands in the midst," and that means that around Him the world stands still as a circle around its central point. And just as every point on the circle is equidistant from the centrum, just so it is no farther to Him today than it was in times past.

"Not without reason is there engraved on our communion table, 'Take, eat, this is my body broken for you, my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.' That is as true today as it was a thousand years ago, and it will be as true a thousand years from now as it is today. He stands as the centrum. This story wishes to tell us nothing else..." (Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen in "Come Holy Spirit," *ibid*)

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Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

Some of you will have noted that the great "poet of the Reformed Church," Joachim Neander, is listed in this Pentecost issue of the Confessing Christ lectionary and calendar (May 31). Some words about Neander are appropriate, since he is the author of several of the great hymns of the Church, including the famous "Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation" (which appears in TNCH as "Sing Praise to God, who has shaped and sustains all creation!") and the beloved "Heaven and earth, and sea and air" (based on Psalm 19):

Heaven and earth, and sea and air, All their Maker's praise declare;
Wake, my soul, awake and sing: Now thy grateful praises bring.

Lord, great wonders workest Thou! To Thy sway all creatures bow;
Write Thou deeply in my heart What I am, and what Thou art.

(Heaven and earth, and sea and air all their Maker's praise declare.
Wake, my soul, awake and sing, with creation praises bring!

Waters surge and wind-storms blow, thunder, lightning, hail, and snow:
Through their frenzy, even these, God would praise and God would please.

All these things with curious force, find them drawn to praise their source:
Wake, my soul, awake and sing, to your Maker praises bring." TNCH)

Joachim Neander was born in Bremen, Germany and he received his primary education at the Latin school there. He was converted to the Christian faith by the pastor of the famous St. Martini church in Bremen (where many of the events of the 2009 Kirchentag have just been held). Influenced by German Reformed piety, he studied at Heidelberg, and was called in 1674 by the Reformed congregation in Dusseldorf as rector of their Latin school. In 1679, he began his ministry at St. Martin's church in Bremen. He died the following year. Neander composed at least 56 hymns. Nineteen of the melodies of those hymns are attributed to him. (frt)