

CONFESSING CHRIST

March 25, 2009

Dear Friends,

With this issue for Eastertide 2009, the Confessing Christ Lectionary and Resources (as we have known them for the past 15 years) come to a close. They will not be published again in this form.

The Lectionary and Resources, as well as the Confessing Christ newsletter "Joy in the Word", will continue however beginning with the Season of Pentecost.

There will be three available formats:

- 1) By accessing the Confessing Christ website (www.confessingchrist.net) and clicking on the Publications tab located to the right after which you will be guided to the lectionary site.
- 2) By e-mail (if you have provided us with your e-mail address)
- 3) By re-formatted "hard copy" that will be sent "snail mail" (if you have provided us with your name and address by May 8, 2009)

E-mail and "snail mail" addresses should be sent (by May 8) to:

Colleen Darling
Lakeland College/Mission
House Center
P.O. Box 359
Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53082-0359

It has been an honor, a privilege and a delight to send these resources to you for the past 15 years and to encourage the Church with its prayers. To all who have taken an interest in the Confessing Christ Lectionary and Resources, the members of the Steering Committee and I say... thank you!

We look forward to remaining in conversation and communion with you, in a new and what we hope will be an acceptable form.

"Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"



Frederick R. Trost, Editor
1 Cedar Lane
Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin 53020

*"For no one can lay foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ."
(1 Cor. 3:11, NRSV)*

CONFESSING CHRIST -
DAILY LECTIONARY AND PRAYERS EASTERTIDE 2009

Frederick R. Trost, Editor

"For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life,... nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

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Easter Sunday, 4/12	Mark 16:1-8	John Westhaver, Jr. Penacook, NH
Monday, 4/13	Luke 24:1-12	Rudolf Weth Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany
Tuesday, 4/14	1 Corinthians 15:1-11 1972, Pax Christi, USA	Donald Wetzel Harrisburg, PA
Wednesday, 4/15	John 20:1-9	David Wheeler Rochester, MI
Thursday, 4/16	Luke 24:13-35	Gregory Whelton Sheboygan, WI
Friday, 4/17	Colossians 3:1-4 1521, Luther at Worms	Mark J. Whinery Wabash, IN
Saturday, 4/18	Psalms 118: 1-2, 14-24	Jean T. Whitcomb Paxton, MA
Second Sunday of Easter, 4/19 (Quasimodogeniti)	John 20:19-31 1529, Protest of Speyer +1560, Philip Melanchton	Martha W. Whitehead Plainville, CT
Monday, 4/20	1 John 1:1-2:2	Bennie Whiten Chicago, IL
Tuesday, 4/21	Psalms 133 +1109, Anselm of Canterbury	Ken Whitwer Grand Rapids, MI
Wednesday, 4/22	Isaiah 25:6-9 +1945, Kaethe Kollwitz	Lillian Wilhelm Lancaster, PA
Thursday, 4/23	Psalms 116:1-12 1529, Luther's Large Catechism *1940, Ita M. Ford +1960, Toyohiko Kagawa +1993, Cesar Chavez	Barry Willbanks Redwood City, CA
Friday, 4/24	Psalms 116:13-19	Arthur Wille Appleton, WI
Saturday, 4/25	1 John 5:1-6	Cody Williams New York, NY
Third Sunday of Easter, 4/26 (Misericordias Domini)	Psalms 4	Kenneth C. Williams Golden, CO

Monday, 4/27	1 John 3:1-7 *1947, Taize Community	John Williams Penney Farms, FL
Tuesday, 4/28	Psalm 23	Melvin G. Williams Wilbraham, MA
Wednesday, 4/29	John 10:11-16 +1380, Catherine of Siena	Richard S. Zuch St. Charles, MO
Thursday, 4/30	1 Peter 2:21b-25 1975, End of the Vietnam War	Stoddard B. Williams South Dennis, MA
Friday, 5/01	Psalm 119:4-5 *1830, Mother Jones	Orval Willimann Manitou Beach, MI
Saturday, 5/02	Psalm 111:1-4 +373, Athanasius +1519, Leonardo da Vinci	James M. Willis Port Orange, FL
Fourth Sunday of Easter, 5/03 (Jubilate)	1 John 3:16-24	Daniel Wilson Wildwood, MO
Monday, 5/04	Psalm 19 1521, Luther at the Wartburg	Gary Wilson Mansfield, OH
Tuesday, 5/05	Psalm 107:1-3 *1813, Soren Kierkegaard	Neil Wilson Cherryfield, ME
Wednesday, 5/06	John 15:9-10 *1870, Maria Montessori	Carol Wilson-Braun Watertown, MA
Thursday, 5/07	Ephesians 5:1-2	Travis Winckler Sioux Falls, SD
Friday, 5/08	Isaiah 61:1-3 *1816, American Bible Society 1945, End of World War II in Europe	Vera Wingate Hollis, NH
Saturday, 5/09	Psalm 100	Craig Witcher Greenley, CO
Fifth Sunday of Easter, 5/10 (Cantate)	Psalm 98 *1886, Karl Barth	Ulrich Wolf-Barnett Bielefeld, Germany
Monday, 5/11	Romans 12:1-2	Charles Wolfe Madison, WI
Tuesday, 5/12	John 15:1-8	Larry Wood Royal Oak, MI
Wednesday, 5/13	Acts 1:1-5	Margaret Woodruff West Townsend, VT
Thursday, 5/14	Acts 1:6-8	Jeremiah Wright Chicago, IL
Friday, 5/15	1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 *1828, Florence Nightingale	Richard Wyanski Edgewater, FL
Saturday, 5/16	1 Thessalonians 2:13	David Yochum Whitewater, WI

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 5/17 (Rogate)	Psalm 30:1-3 1954, Brown vs. Board of Education	Nathaniel Yordon Norwalk, CT
Monday, 5/18	Psalm 30:4-5	Irwin R. Young St. Joseph, MI
Tuesday, 5/19	Psalm 30:6-12 *1925, Malcolm Little (Malcom X)	Mark K. Young Fort Thomas, KY
Wednesday, 5/20	James 5:16-18 *1974, Bread for the World	Mark Yurs Verona, WI
Thursday, 5/21 (Ascension Day)	Acts 1:9-11 +1935, Jane Addams	Elka Zachau Bochum, Germany
Friday, 5/22	Psalm 47:5-9	Benjamin Zandstra Lake City, CA
Saturday, 5/23	Proverbs 3:13-20	Leonard Zecchini Lyndeborough, NH
Seventh Sunday of Easter, 5/24 (Exaudi)	Psalm 1	Lowell Zuck St. Louis, MO
Monday, 5/25 (Memorial Day)	Psalm 34:1-6	Walter Ziegenhals Georgetown, KY
Tuesday, 5/26	Psalm 34:7-10	Timothy Ziegenhals Essex, MA
Wednesday, 5/27	Psalm 61:1-4 +1564, John Calvin +1676, Paul Gerhardt	Reynold Ziegler Camp Hill, PA
Thursday, 5/28	Romans 8:26-30 *1962, Amnesty International	Barbara Brown Zikmund Washington, DC
Friday, 5/29	Ephesians 1:3-10 Confessing Synod of Barmen	Thomas Zoelzer Mokena, IL
Saturday, 5/30	Psalm 117	Lee Zortman Columbus, WI

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[Please note that the names of persons for whom intercession is made are taken from several sources: 1) the Confessing Christ mailing list (not all have attended Confessing Christ gatherings, though most have expressed interest and support for this project of joyous and sincere theological work, in service to our life together and the Church's mission, 2) the listing of Conference Ministers currently serving in the United Church of Christ, 3) a listing of national officers of the Church.]

You are invited to refer to the Confessing Christ website at the following address:
<http://www.confessingchrist.org>

Confessing Christ materials are being prepared at the Mission House Center, Lakeland College. Those no longer wishing to receive materials or those with address changes should contact Colleen Darling, Lakeland College, PO Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53082-0359 or e-mail darlingca@lakeland.edu

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RESOURCES FOR EASTERTIDE, 2009

EASTER SUNDAY: O God, who out of love for us and the whole creation, has given your dear Son to the infamy of the cross and by his glorious resurrection has delivered us from the power of death: Grant us grace that we may allow ourselves to be astonished by your love so that we might live with him in the joy and wonder of Easter, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (QUASIMODOGENITI): Almighty and everlasting God, you know us well and the fragile faith that marks our days, yet you abide with us and restore us to life in the power of Easter. Grant us grace that we might be strong to set aside every thought of denial, so we might dwell in your truth and serve you with lives of joy, hope and sacrifice, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (MISERICORDIAS DOMINI): Almighty God, who has come among us in your only Son, your gift of love to the whole world: Grant us grace that we may live by faith in him, trusting in your word and seeking to reflect the gospel in lives of discipleship, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (JUBILATE): Gracious God, who has caused the Church throughout the world to rejoice in the great, good news of Easter: Grant us grace that we may put aside every doubt and fear, living our life together in praise of your astonishing goodness towards us and the whole creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (CANTATE): Gracious God, in whom the angels delight and the disciples of your Word rejoice in every generation: Grant us grace that we may join the chorus of those who, despite the contradictions of your truth that abound in us and in the world around us, sing as those who refuse to lose hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (ROGATE): O God, who has called us to faith and to lives of prayer and discipleship: Grant us grace that we may never grow weary of kneeling down in gratitude for your mighty deeds, seeking by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit to live our lives in the light of Easter through discipleship that proclaims in word and deed the reality of the cross, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (EXAUDI): O God, who summons us with the dawn of each new day to live the new life that is your gift to us in Christ: Grant us grace that we might receive with joy the nurturing truth and the deep, abiding love that are unceasingly inspired among us through the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit, and thus proclaim as our mothers and fathers before us, the great, glad tidings of Easter, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Seven Collects for Eastertide - Frederick R. Trost)

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER ON EASTER:

We stand before Good Friday and Easter, the days of the mighty deeds of God in history, the deeds in which the judgment and grace of God became visible to all the world: judgment in those hours in which Jesus Christ the Lord hung on the cross, grace in that hour in which death was swallowed up in victory. Human beings did nothing here; God did it all alone. He traveled the path to human beings in unending love. He has judged what is human and has given grace beyond all merit (Rom. 11:6) When the old Luther died, they found on his writing table a slip of paper on which in his last hours he had written these words: "We are beggars in the Spirit." And that's the way it will remain, as long as there are human beings. But...the Lord of all life and all grace, lets us know that our hope and our life stand or fall with the

grace of God. His is the deed; his is the way. His is the grace; his is the Spirit. And his is our service and our life. His is the honor above all creation. ("Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika 1928-1931," 460)

For the world the empty tomb is an ambiguous historical fact. For believers it is a historical sign of God that follows necessarily from the miracle of the resurrection and confirms it, a sign from the God +who deals with human beings in history. There is no historical proof for the resurrection... The decision of the historian in this matter, which remains so scientifically puzzling, will be dictated by the presuppositions of one's world-view. In that respect, however, it loses interest and importance for believers who are grounded in God's acting in history. Thus, for the world there remains an unsolvable puzzle, which in no way can compel faith in the resurrection of Jesus. For believers, however, this puzzle is a sign of the reality about which they already know, a mark of divine activity in history. Scholarship can neither prove nor disprove the resurrection of Jesus, for it is a miracle of God. But faith, to which the resurrected One witnesses as the living One, recognizes in the very testimony of the Scripture the historicity of the resurrection as an action of God, which in its miraculous nature can present itself to science only as a puzzle. ("Konspiration und Haft 1940-1945," 473-74)

Easter is not a battle between darkness and light that ultimately must end in the victory of light, because darkness is actually a nothing, because death is indeed already life. Easter is not a battle of winter and spring, of ice and sun. Rather, it is a battle of guilty humanity against divine love--or better: of divine love against guilty humanity, a battle in which God seems to be defeated on Good Friday, but in which God, in his very losing, wins on Easter... Good Friday is not the darkness that necessarily has to yield to light... it is the day on which the God who became human, the love that became a person, is killed by the people who want to become gods... And here only one thing can help: the mighty act that the eternal God performs among human beings. Easter is not an immanent--that is, an inner-worldly--event, but a transcendent event that is something above and beyond the world, an intervention of God from eternity, by virtue of which God declares his commitment to his Holy One and awakens him from death. Easter is not about immortality but about resurrection from a death that is a real death with all its frightfulness and horrors, resurrection from a death of the body and the soul, of the whole person, resurrection by the power of God's mighty act. This is the Easter message. ("Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika 1928-1931," 463-464)

God spoke his word of power over death. He annihilated it and raised Jesus Christ. What does that mean? How are we to understand it? This raises a lot of questions for us. What is this bodily resurrection? What is the meaning of the empty tomb? How do we understand the appearances? There is an abundance of questions--of curiosity, of interest in superstitions, of many mysterious things--about which we can gain no pleasure. The questions grow from a hundred to a thousand, and we're still not satisfied. The empty tomb must surely have happened, but only one thing is important: God committed himself to Christ and touched him with his eternal life. Now Christ lives. He lives because God lives and because God's love lives. For us, that is enough. We can brood over the "how," but nothing will change regarding the "that." If God lives--that is, if love now lives in spite of the cross--then we are no longer living in our guilt, for God has indeed forgiven us. He has committed himself to Jesus, and Jesus has committed himself to us. If Jesus lives, then our faith receives new meaning. Then we are the most blessed of human beings. A yes from God to guilty humanity, a new meaning for all our doing--that is Easter. (ibid, 465-66)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's yes to us. Christ died for our sins; he was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Christ's death was the judgment of death on us and our sins. Had Christ remained in death, this judgment of death would still be in force and we would still be in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17). But because Christ was raised from death, the judgment on us has been lifted, and we are resurrected with Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-23). This is so because we are in Jesus Christ by virtue of the adoption of our human nature in the incarnation. What happens to him happens to us, for we are adopted by him. That is not a judgment of experience but a judgment of God that must be acknowledged through faith in God's Word. The resurrection of Jesus Christ requires faith. It is the unanimous witness of all reports--though they are not unified in what they have otherwise recounted about what happened and was experienced--that the resurrected One did not show himself to the world, but only to his own (Acts 10:40-41). Jesus did not present himself to an impartial authority in order to have the miracle of his resurrection certified to the world and thereby to force its recognition. He wants to be believed, preached, and believed again. ("Konspiration und Haft 1940-1945," 472-73)

Those who look at Jesus Christ in actuality see God and the world in one. From now on, they can no longer see God without seeing the world, nor the world without seeing God. Ecce homo—see what a human being! In him the reconciliation of the world with God took place. The world is conquered not through smashing it but through reconciliation. Not ideals, programs, not conscience, duty, responsibility, virtue, but the perfect love of God all alone can meet reality and overcome it. It is not a general idea of love, but the love of God really lived in Jesus Christ, that accomplishes that. This love of God for the world does not withdraw from reality back into noble souls transported away from the world but rather experiences and suffers the reality of the world in the severest way. The world amuses itself with the body of Christ, but the martyred One forgives the world its sin. This is how reconciliation takes place. Ecce homo. ("Ethik," [written 1940-1943] 69)

(These Bonhoeffer texts are part of a book some of you may wish to consider purchasing: "I Want to Live These Days with You: A Year of Daily Devotions" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, translated by O.C. Dean, Jr. and published in 2007 by Westminster John Knox Press, 394 pages.)

CRAIGVILLE XXVI THEOLOGICAL COLLOQUY, JULY 13-17, 2009

You are invited to participate in the 2009 Craigville Colloquy entitled "Spirituality and the Holy Spirit: A New Awakening for the Church."

The colloquy will convene at the Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod and will feature Dr. Mark Burrows, Professor of the History of Christianity and Director of the Program in Worship, Theology, and Arts at Andover Newton Theological School. Other presenters include Dr. Mary Luti, Prof. William Herzog II, Andy Lang ("Lectio Divina: breathing space for the Word of God"), Dr. Elsbeth Hilke, Dave Debick, Gabrielle Chavez, Armand Proulx, George Cairns, Cara Hochhalter, Joe Toritto ("Taize Worship and Chant"), Eric Huenneke and Jurgen Hilke.

Prof. Burrows will speak on "The 'Immediate Theatre' of the Spirit: The Peril and Promise of Christian Spirituality Today." He has written about his presentation this way: "Spirituality has become a familiar catchword these days; indeed, a Google search yields at present some 61 million references on the web. Given such a maze, how are we to authenticate spirituality as properly 'Christian'? How does our faith bind us to tradition (continuity) and make us vulnerable to a genuine experience of the Spirit (authenticity)?"

"This (presentation) will ponder the historical reasons for the dis-ease among liberal Protestants regarding spiritual experience; the apophatic restraint Barth exercised toward pneumatology; and, the surprising resurgence of interest in the Spirit among recent progressive theologians. What might it mean for us to approach spirituality not only in doctrinal but also in experiential terms, and by this I mean as a witness that joins the aesthetic and the prophetic? How, in this post-liberal juncture, is the way ahead one of peril and promise? In such terms, what would it mean to approach the church—in an echo of Nicea—as the 'immediate theatre' of the Spirit?"

For more information go to <http://www.craigvillecolloquy.com> or contact Craigville Conference Center, 39 Prospect Avenue, Craigville, MA 02632-2636, Tel: (508) 775-1265 or by email: craigvillecc@capecod.com

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IN MEMORIAM

+Professor Browne Barr+
1917-2009

It has been said that Mozart, as a very young man turned to those around him and exclaimed after listening to one of the motets of Johann Sebastian Bach: "Now here is something one can learn from!"

A few weeks ago, one of the great teachers of the Church in the United States and a faithful "servant of the Word," Browne Barr, was called to the "Church Triumphant." Browne served on the Steering Committee of "Confessing Christ" for a number of years. His charm, wit, and unfailing insights into the life of the Church and the world were precious gifts to this project and to all who knew him, heard him preach, or read his books.

Born in Colorado, Browne graduated from Grinnell College in Iowa and from Yale Divinity School. He served in the parish ministry in Connecticut and was called to the faculty of Yale in the 1950s where he taught homiletics to many of us. He then served as Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, UCC, in Berkeley, California and later as Dean of San Francisco Theological Seminary. He wrote several books including a volume of sermons called "High Flying Geese," which nurtured many pastors who sought authenticity in preaching.

Browne Barr will be remembered by many of us for his honest, straightforward and eloquent presentation of the gospel and his authentic life, which sought to bring word and deed together. He was capable of calling a "spade a spade" but was devoid of arrogance and pride. He knew the meaning of sin, but far more the vastness of costly grace in his own life and in the life of all of us.

The Steering Committee of "Confessing Christ" gives thanks to God for Browne Barr, his ministry in the Church, his leadership, his friendship, his teaching, and his long life that embodied faith, hope and love, every day lived with his feet firmly planted on the ground. (frt)