

Martin reflected on what God had accomplished through his sin. "But behold how much good God (whose mercies are without number and whose wisdom is without end) has made to come out of all these errors and sins!" (333). He added,

But it was the Lord's will, as I now see, that the wisdom of the schools and the sanctity of the monasteries should become known to me by my own actual experience, that is, through many sins and impieties, so that wicked men might not have a chance, when I became their adversary, to boast that I condemned something about which I knew nothing. (333)

Martin rejoiced that God had taken him out of the monastery. "My conscience has been freed, and that is the most complete liberation. . . I am a new creature, not of the pope but of Christ" (335). And furthermore, he wrote to his father, God, "who has taken me out of the monastery, has an authority over me that is greater than yours; you see that he has placed me now not in a pretended monastic service but in the true service of God. Who can doubt that I am in the ministry of the Word?" (335).

#### **FUTURE DATES (see [wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org) for information)**

Feb. 11-12: TTGN AJ Convocation, Ramkota, Casper (registration materials available at [www.wylcms.org/2022ttgnaj](http://www.wylcms.org/2022ttgnaj))

Feb. 18-20: Youth Breakaway, St. Andrew's, Laramie

Feb. 27: Panhandle Family Gathering, Immanuel, Alliance @ 3 PM

#### **THE NEXT ROUNDUP**

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around February 20 (March 2022 issue).



## ***Wyoming District Round-Up*** February 2022

*District Website: [www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org)*

### **"...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS..." (Eph. 1:16)**

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health

For our active-duty chaplains, **Rev. Lynn Christensen (Japan)**, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**, **Rev. Scott Shields (Alaska)** (who is finishing his time of chaplaincy service); and national guard chaplain **Rev. Gerald Heinecke (Prince of Peace, Buffalo)**.

### **PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS**

**St. Paul's, Sidney, St. Paul's, Potter, and Salem, Gurley** each of which has now approved a multi-point parish agreement. St Paul's, Sidney, will hold a call meeting to call **Rev. Ted Bourret** to serve as their pastor along with their two partner congregations.

**Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon)** is serving **Grace, Merriman, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

**Trinity, Gillette** served by **Rev. John Christensen (emeritus, Thermopolis)** has scheduled a call meeting for February 13.

**Trinity, Cheyenne (Rev. John Preus)** has called **Rev. Travis Berg** (St. Paul, Latimer, Iowa) as headmaster-pastor.

**Rev. Peter Bertram (Our Savior's, Chadron)** has announced his retirement at the end of May.

**Rev. Shawn Kumm (Christ the King, Cody)** on January 16 announced his resignation from the congregation and the ministry due to multiple health issues. **Rev. Dr. Ron Garwood** will serve the congregation as the congregation enters into the call process.

### **The Christian in Community: "Let us Make Man in Our Image"**

A boy cannot fully understand his relationship with his father and mother until he has grown up, gotten married, begotten a child, and held his child in his own arms. A great mystery is worked out here. The new father holds the child in awe, knowing that this child is his own flesh and blood, but also the mother's flesh and blood. Here is a bond of three persons, a bond of marriage, of begetting and bearing, of being begotten and being born. The wonder and the mystery is that this divine work is written into our very being, deeper yet than bones and blood and DNA. The bonds of community are written into our souls.

The account of man's creation in Genesis 1 reveals this mystery to us. It begins not with man but with God. God is one. This is the revelation of all Scriptures: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). And yet in the creation history the one God is revealed to have Persons. "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." God sent forth the Word (God the Son) from Himself in speaking, "Let there be light." In the fullness of time, the three Persons of the Godhead who created all things are revealed in the words of our Baptism, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

This community of Persons in God created our first father and mother: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Here is "the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity" whom we worship, as we confess in the Athanasian Creed. God the Father has begotten the Son from eternity; God the Son is begotten of the Father from eternity; God the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son from eternity. The Trinity in Unity made man at the beginning of the creation to be in His divine image: "Let Us make man in Our image."

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." We bear the holy image of God. We were made bearing God's own perfect righteousness. And with that image we were also made for community, for fellowship, first with God and then with one another.

We see God's original fellowship with Adam and Eve in His meeting with them in the cool of the day to teach them His Word and receive their praise (Genesis 3:8). God designed this original fellowship to be mirrored in our everyday communities: "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." He made man and woman to share themselves and their common life with each other in community. The Trinitarian image of God bears fruit in the communities formed in family and church and society as we multiply upon the earth.

Of course, we shattered the holiness of God's image in us by our sin. We forfeited our original righteousness before God. Likewise, our communion with God was destroyed. As a result, our community with one another also suffers. But the Father in His mercy sent Jesus His Son to restore our communion with Him. Jesus came in our flesh and blood. He is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). He restored God's image in us by atoning for our sin and restoring God's righteousness and holiness to us. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10).

So also He has begun the work of healing our sin-sickened communities, our families, our relationships with others. He ends our conflicts in confession and forgiveness. He places the lonely, the forsaken, the solitary in homes and families (Psalm 68:5–6). He joins us to His church and cares for us there. This restoration will reach its fulfillment in heaven, where together we will dwell with the Triune God in His love and peace forever.

### **REFORMATION 500**

While at the Wartburg Luther wrote a treatise against something that was personal to him: the vows required of monks. "The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows" (AE 44.251–400) was published in February 1522. The occasion for the booklet was the fact that monks were leaving the monasteries, getting married, and were being threatened with punishment for breaking their vows. They were appealing to the theologians in Wittenberg.

Although the topic of monks seems rather obscure to us, the treatise still has much to teach us about making promises, about God's Word and man's conscience, about faith, and about the fruits of faith in our hearts and lives. Monastic vows and life were regarded as superior to Baptism in making a person righteous before God. Upon entering the monastery, monks (and nuns) were compelled to make vows of obedience to their superior and of sexual continence and chastity. In his argument, Luther gives five arguments against monastic vows.

First, "Vows do not rest on the Word of God: they run counter to the Word of God." Here he is addressing vows that do not have God's command and blessing and that are not freely given. Second, "Vows are against faith." He speaks frequently of "faith alone" as he teaches the justification of the sinner through faith in Christ alone. Third, "Vows are against evangelical freedom." Freedom here is first the freedom of the conscience from self-justification and the condemnation of the law. Fourth, "Vows are contrary to the commandments of God." And fifth, "Monasticism is contrary to common sense and reason."

At the beginning of Luther's "Judgment" on monastic vows is a dedicatory letter to his father, John Luther (AE 48.329–336). Luther had entered the monastery against his father's will, and here he confesses the wrong of his action. He had owed obedience to his father. They had since then become reconciled. But Martin used his personal history to demonstrate the evils of monastic vows and the papal tyranny that accompanied it.