

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Today we celebrate the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession. This is the first basic document of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Let me talk about the historical panorama. The presentation took place on June 25, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany. But this isn't the only date on which we celebrate part of the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, the monk and priest, Martin Luther, nailed 95 Theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. The theses were not a confession but points for public debate. They dealt with false teachings of the Roman church, such as indulgences, purgatory, the merits of the saints and the authority of the Pope.

No one responded to Luther's challenge to a debate. The authorities replied, "Luther, shut up, this is the doctrine of the church." However, Luther continued his study of the Scriptures and wrote and preached against false doctrine. Then, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, called Luther to appear before the Diet of Worms, Germany (diet means panel or council). This diet, which included the emperor and other important people in government and the church, commanded Luther to reject his books. But, Luther told them, no, I can not, because this is what the Holy Scriptures say. If no one can convince me that the Scriptures say something different, I can not reject them.

Let's talk about the politics of Europe at that time. The Holy Roman Empire was a union of the countries of Europe like the European Union today. Its model was the Roman Empire of antiquity, because everyone remembered the "Roman Peace", when almost all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea lived in peace and security. The Holy Roman Emperor was chosen among the princes of these countries to administer the union.

The drive to form a union of countries was the threat of the Muslim army surrounding Europe with a plan of invasion. We are talking about a time with much in common with the world today. The emperor wanted a united Europe before the Muslims, but in the first years of the sixteenth century, he had to deal with power struggles and jealousy with the king of France and the Pope who had much earthly power, more than today. Luther was excommunicated, but he had time to continue his preaching and many people came to believe that Luther was preaching.

In 1530, Charles V resolved his problems with France and the Pope and paid attention to the Lutheran movement. He did not want further dissension in his domain, and so he asked the princes who had taken Luther's part, What is this Lutheranism? Explain what you believe.

Because of the price on his head, Luther could not leave his shelter, but his best friend Philip Melanchthon worked on the confession with Luther's help in the mail. Melanchthon wrote this confession consisting of 28 articles. Twenty-one speak of what we believe about God, justification, faith and many other things. Seven of them deal with doctrines and practices that we reject, such as the veneration of the Virgin and the saints, the mass as a propitiatory sacrifice, celibacy for priests, and more.

A clear point of confession is this is not a new religion. We believe in the Holy Trinity, the salvation by faith in Christ and by the grace of God. We believe in one church, the whole Christian church on earth. We do not have a new revelation, but we believe in the apostolic doctrine.

Good. Who was Charles V? He was also known as Charles I, King of Spain. This man received the Confession of Augsburg in 1530, signed by nine leaders of countries of the north. He had the power to pronounce the death sentence on the signers. However, one said that he would rather kneel for beheading before denying the Word of God. Enough of a history lesson. Let's talk about what this means for us.

Our text for today reads as follows: "Do not fear those who kill the body, but the soul can not kill: fear rather than he who can destroy the soul and body in hell." It is speaking of God. It is more important to obey God than the human authorities. The civil government has its charge, to protect the people and maintain order in this world. But when the government sends us what is against the will of God, we must obey God.

The Word of God must be publicly proclaimed. Our text reads: "What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; And what you hear in the ear, preach it from the rooftops. " Our Old Testament reading (Nehemiah 8: 1-12) says that Ezra the priest stood on a wooden pulpit and read the book of the Law before the square in front of the door of the Waters, from dawn until noon, in the presence of men. And the people heard the word of God with joy.

For us today, it is important to proclaim not only the Law but also the Gospel publicly. Our text also says: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father which is in heaven. And whosoever shall deny me before men, he will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. "

When we speak of confession, we first think of the confession of sins. We are sinners and need to confess and receive absolution. We

begin each divine service with the general confession of our sins. It is not obligatory, but if there are serious sins that weigh upon our hearts, we can confess and be absolved in private with the pastor.

Also, in public worship, it is important to confess that we believe. Our Lord tells us that people can glorify God because of our good works. To show love for our neighbour is to bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. But we must also articulate the content of our faith in words. In the words of the Scriptures, in the three creeds, in the Augsburg Confession and all we find in the Book of Concord, the summary of the teachings of our Lutheran churches.

The signatories of the Augsburg Confession put their lives at risk. What is the risk for us in the confession of faith? The mockery of our friends and family is not equal to the sacrifice of life for the truth. We thank God for the witnesses of the faith, especially those who died singing hymns. What is joy before death? The knowledge that we are children of God, first by the creation in the womb of our mothers, and then by adoption as children of God in the baptism. That is why we live in faith, hope and peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.