

## In Nomine Iesu

### *Cantate* – The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter 2022

#### **It is to our advantage that Christ is at the right hand of God – John 16:5-15**

“Now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who sends the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to us. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

“It is to your advantage that I go away,” Jesus said to His disciples. Without a doubt they had trouble accepting what He said when they first heard it the night before His death. How could it be better for them that He not be with them anymore? However, He didn’t say that. He didn’t say He would not be with them anymore. Only minutes before in the very same room He had promised them, “**I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.**” (John 14:18) In telling them that He was going away He was not giving them bad news, but good. He was telling them that He would give them more than they had before. Not only would He not leave them orphans, He would also send them the Helper, the Holy Spirit, as well, who would be with them forever in order to enlighten, strengthen, comfort, and guide them to heaven.

These things can be misunderstood and sometimes not taught rightly. In the Apostles Creed we confess that our Lord “ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.” The “ascended into heaven part” is a going away from this world of sin and death. But “seated at the right hand of God” is the opposite. Ask yourself: **Where is the right hand of God?** Then search the Scriptures, both of Old and New Testaments. You might be surprised at the answer God’s Word provides to this question. But let us continue with Jesus’ words here.

Jesus continued, explaining to them, “If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world **of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment**: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” (vv. 7-11)

#### I

The religious leaders of Jesus’ day came to hate Him so much that they plotted to kill Him. Why? Jesus explained, “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘**They hated Me without a cause.**’” (John 15:24-25) By keeping God’s law Jesus showed them to be sinners, and Himself righteous. And they hated Him for it. This is so true of the nature of man, of us.

Consider this example: A teacher leaves the classroom for a few minutes to go to the school office. Before she goes she instructs her students to finish reading the chapter in their textbook and begin writing down answers to the questions she has just handed out. As soon as she leaves the room the paper airplanes fly, things are thrown around the room, and chaos reigns. As soon as she reappears the children are sitting quietly at their desks, working away, looking like angels. She asks, "Who answered all the questions?" One student raises his hand – let's call him Johnny. She takes his work, checks it, commends him, and then asks where the work of the others is. When none is passed forward, she scolds the class. What is the other students' reaction to Johnny? Well, let us just say, they don't like him.

Jesus did all things well. As He stood in the courtyard of the temple near the end of His earthly ministry the Pharisees angrily confronted Him and accused Him of being demon possessed and a Samaritan, He challenged them, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46) Neither then nor later at His trial before Caiaphas or Pilate was anyone able to show that He had sinned against God. He who bore the whole burden of mankind's sin, who faithfully carried out the offices of prophet, priest, and king as no one in Israel had ever been able to do, showed them all to be sinners. And so they hated Him "without a cause." In Christ God Himself has shown man what sin is. The Holy Spirit continues to do so, convicting all of sin, showing us all that the Christ has truly come, and alone has done the Father's will. **He alone is without sin.** All the rest have fallen short of the glory of God. We all stand condemned. **Either we see the sin in ourselves or we hate Him who showed us to be what we really are.**

## II

The Holy Spirit then convicts the world of righteousness, because Christ goes to the Father, and no longer would any sinner see Him. Jesus Himself was guilty of no sin at all. But He took the world's sin upon Himself. As the Lamb of God He carried the sins of the world to judgment, crucifixion, and death. He even descended into hell to proclaim His victory over Satan, and hell could not hold Him. **He paid the debt of all of our sins.** Now He is in the presence of the holy and perfect Father, not only as the Father's Son, **but as the Son of Man.** He was born a man, lived perfectly before the Father among us, became sin for us, suffered for all human sin on the cross, and then rose to heaven as the victor over sin. He showed the world that sin has been overcome and true righteousness attained **by a Man** and, because He was also God, **for all men.** Man could once more be in the presence of the holy and perfect God.

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you.**" (John 14:1-2) When His disciples asked how to follow Him, He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." (John 14:6) With His ascension to God's right hand, Jesus proved His words to be true. It is the Holy Spirit who proclaims this truth to all through the **preaching of the apostles and their successors.** All whom He convicts of sin now hear the far greater and more wonderful truth that righteousness is provided for all in Christ Jesus. The way to heaven lies open to everyone who believes in the Savior Jesus Christ.

## III

And finally the Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary is the focal point of all God's promises to man. The whole of the Old Testament pointed mankind toward this single event. Here all sin was accounted for. Here the ruler of this world, Satan, was defeated and disarmed. Because **if all sin has been atoned for, there is no sin of which Satan can accuse** the children of fallen Adam. For this

reason Jesus cried out, “It is finished.” Jesus was preparing His disciples there in the closed, upper room for His suffering, death, and resurrection. They were eyewitnesses to His ministry. They heard Him **explain the meaning of the Old Testament**. Now they would witness the final work of the Savior, His suffering, death, and resurrection. Once the Holy Spirit convicted them of sin, righteousness, and judgment after Jesus’ resurrection, and so, brought them back to faith, they would go to all nations of the world and bring the Good News to dying mankind. How could they do such an enormous work?

Jesus promised them, “When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27) Dear friends, **apostolic preaching and teaching is exactly this: convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment**. Apostolic preaching is the **Holy Spirit testifying to the heart and mind of every hearer** that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. Through such preaching the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, showing us the only One who has kept the law of God, Jesus Christ, and so enabling us to see our guilt and shame. But through such preaching the Holy Spirit also shows us that the very righteousness God demands from each of us, the righteousness we do not have because of our sins, **He has provided for us in Jesus Christ**, who now sits at His right hand. Through Jesus Christ alone we have access to the Father. Finally, through the preaching of Apostolic doctrine **the Holy Spirit convinces our hearts that Satan is no more a threat to us**. He has no more to accuse us of. He is judged, the deed is done, as Martin Luther once said, “One little word can fell him.” And that word is what Jesus cried out from the cross: “**Tetelestai!**” **It is finished**. God in His grace has done what He promised. The Seed of the woman has crushed the serpent’s head, and the children of men have been freed from sin and death.

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Be of good cheer you who keep and treasure the word of Christ in your hearts. God’s Word is proclaimed among us. The Holy Spirit still convicts us of sin with the Law; still convicts us of righteousness, showing us that Christ is indeed the way, the truth, and the life; and still convicts us of judgment, showing us that we need not fear death and judgment at all, for Christ our Savior has endured both and set us free. In short, the Holy Spirit still does all that Christ promised the apostles. The Holy Spirit still gives to Christ’s church all that is His, still glorifies Him, still leads us onward to life. And Christ, **God and Man**, still rules His beloved Church by grace, unseen but always **present** among us in Word and Sacrament, even as He promised. Her way to heaven He has prepared. **Her guide along the way, the Holy Spirit, He still sends, as He promised**. And for her He waits, as one by one we, who are His disciples by faith, leave this life and follow Him to heaven. Yes, it is to our advantage that Christ our Lord reigns over us from heaven **at the right hand of God**. Amen.

**Soli Deo Gloria**