

The Exhortation

Dear friends in Christ! In order that you may receive this holy Sacrament worthily, it is good that you consider what you must now believe and do. From the words of Christ: “This is My body, which is given for you; this is My blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins,” you should believe that Jesus Christ is Himself present with His body and blood, as the words declare.

If this is the confession of your faith, answer: **I do so believe.**

From Christ’s words “for the remission of sins” you should believe that Jesus Christ bestows upon you His body and blood to confirm unto you the forgiveness of all your sins.

If this is your belief, say: **Amen!**

And finally, you should do as Christ commands you when He says, “Take, eat; drink of it, all of you,” and “this do in remembrance of Me.”

If it is your intent to do as Christ commands, indicate so by saying: **I do so intend.**

Upon your affirmative answers and declared intent, you have rightly examined yourselves and may worthily eat Christ’s body and drink His blood for the forgiveness of all your sins.

You should also unite in giving thanks to Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for so great a gift, and should love one another with a pure heart, and thus with the whole Christian Church have comfort and joy in Christ our Lord. To this end may God the Father grant you His grace; through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, p. 77, adapted)

The Athanasian Creed

The Athanasian Creed was written near the end of the 5th century. It was named after a 4th century church father, Athanasius. He defended the teaching that Jesus is not only true Man, but also true God, equal to the Father and the Spirit. That defense was necessary, because a prominent figure named Arius denied the Biblical teaching of who Jesus is. The Athanasian Creed is confessed by the Church of all times and all places. It clearly confesses not only the Person of Christ, but also the Three in One God, the Trinity.

P: Whoever will be saved shall, above all else, hold the catholic¹ faith.

C: Which faith, except it be kept whole and undefiled, without doubt, one will perish eternally.

P: And the true Christian faith is this,

C: That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.

P: For one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.

C: But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

P: Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit:

C: The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated;

P: The Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite;

C: The Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.

P: And yet there are not three eternal, but one eternal,

C: Just as there are not three uncreated, nor three infinities, but one uncreated and one infinite.

¹ Catholic with small “c” means “universal”.

P: Likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty;

C: And yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

P: So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

C: And yet there are not three gods, but one God.

P: Likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;

C: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.

P: For as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord,

C: So also are we forbidden by the Christian faith to say that there are three gods or lords.

P: The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

Men: The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten.

Women: The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

P: So there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.

Men: And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;

Women: But all three Persons are coeternal together and coequal, so that in all things, as said before, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.

All: Whoever will be saved is compelled thus to think of the Holy Trinity.

P: Furthermore it is necessary for everlasting salvation that one also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

Men: God of the substance of the Father, begotten before all worlds;

Women: And Man, of substance of His mother born in the world:

All: Perfect God and perfect Man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting;

P: Equal to the Father as touching His divinity and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

Men: Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two but one Christ:

Women: One, not by changing of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God;

All: One indeed, not by confusion of substance, but by oneness of person.

P: For just as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ,

C: Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead,

P: He ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, God al-mighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

C: At whose coming all will rise again with their bodies and will give an account of their works.

P: And they who have done good will enter into life everlasting, and those who have done evil into everlasting fire².

C: This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe faithfully and firmly this cannot be saved.

² These words are cited from John 5:29. The Bible says that we are judged according to works. (Revelation 20:12) Works done outside of Jesus are done trusting in self. Works done in Jesus are done trusting Jesus alone for salvation. Faith alone saves. The Bible says that [you] are justified by faith alone apart from the deeds of the law. (Romans 3:28) In other words, works done by believers, are evidence of saving faith. Our confessions state the following about an accounting of works: "All passages about works can be judged according to this rule. When eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to those who have been justified. Only justified people who are led by the Spirit of Christ, can do good works. Without faith and Christ as Mediator, good works do not please, according to Hebrews 11:6, Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Apology V.25)