

(Address given by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at Valparaiso University Convocation, Valparaiso, Indiana, November 1, 1967)

## THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE CATHOLIC VIEW OF LUTHER

My remarks today will have as their theme an historical review of the attitude of Catholics towards Martin Luther. Since this has not been my special field of study, I must say from the outset that I am deeply indebted to both Valparaiso University and your distinguished President, Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, for your great generosity in asking me to address you on this occasion, especially since it has opened to me a vista of which I was heretofore largely ignorant. Like most Catholics, my personal view of Martin Luther was largely shrouded in myths, many of which were about four hundred years old. Moreover, I must publicly admit my personal indebtedness to many people for all that follows, particularly to Dr. Richard Stauffer, Professor in the Protestant Faculty of Theology, Paris, and in the Ecole des Hautes Etudes at the Sorbonne.<sup>(1)</sup> He reassembled many of the tangled skeins of history and criticism that I could only find piecemeal elsewhere. Much of what follows is due to his painstaking scholarship which is reflected in his book: "Le Catholicisme à la decouverte de Luther", the 1967 English edition of which was sent to me recently by a good Lutheran friend, Dr. Oscar Cullmann.

If I were speaking on the Catholic view of Martin Luther fifty years ago, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his historic act, what I could have said then would have been quite depressing both to you and to me. All that has happened since the 400th anniversary in 1917 is, as history goes, of fairly recent vintage, but of highest importance to you as Protestants and to us Catholics, too, since the last fifty years of Catholic Luther studies have, in fact, reversed the total trend of the 400 years preceding 1917.

A few preliminary remarks are in order. The heart center of Luther scholarship and research, both Protestant and Catholic, has quite naturally been in Germany, the homeland of Luther's original Reformation. There have, of course, been important scholarly counterparts in the French and English-speaking world. Protestant and Catholic Reformation scholarship have not in recent years followed exactly parallel paths. Protestant scholars have tended to separate the Reformation from the figure of Luther, either in reaction to earlier hero-worship or because of the infinitely complex figure of the Reformer who is not easy to understand or comprehend. Catholic students of the Sixteenth Century on the other hand tend to interrelate

their interpretation of the Reformation and their judgment of the person of the Reformer. There has, of course, been the normal intellectual interaction between these two approaches. Protestant scholars have reacted strongly to what they felt was unfair Catholic criticism of Luther, and Catholics have questioned Luther legends and what they felt was inadequate understanding of Luther's Catholic background and origin on the part of Protestants.

The present Catholic attitude in this ecumenical age is well expressed by Father Yves Congar, "I know that nothing really worthwhile will be achieved with regard to Protestantism as long as we take no steps truly to understand Luther, and to do him historical justice, instead of simply condemning him." (2)

I would submit as the main thrust of this presentation that, after 400 years of rather harsh and often unfair condemnation of Luther on the part of Catholic writers, there has been in the past fifty years or so a sincere and conscientious effort on the part of Catholic scholars truly to understand Martin Luther and to do him historic justice. Before studying this new process in detail, it might be helpful to sketch some highlights

of the 400 years that preceded this reappraisal. It is only against this historical background that the recent Catholic reappraisal of Luther can be fully understood and appreciated.

It seems generally agreed that for the better part of 400 years the font of Catholic misunderstanding regarding Luther was a book written in 1549, three years after Luther's death, by a Canon of Breslau, John Cochläus, entitled "Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Luther". At first, this priest was sympathetic to Luther, but later, with John Eck, became his worst enemy. Cochläus' slanderous account was an attempt to disabuse any Catholics of his time who might think Luther to be upright or virtuous in any way. The following quotation sums up the tenor of his polemic: "Luther is a child of the devil, possessed of the devil, full of falsehood and pride. His protests were made because of his jealousy for Tetzl, a fellow Dominican. Luther lusted after wine and women; he had no conscience and every means was good in his eyes ..... He was a liar, a hypocrite, a coward, and a quarreler." (3)

Adolph Herte, in a book of which we shall speak later, shows how the Catholics, Denifle, Grisar, Cristiani, Pasquier, and Maritain, were

influenced by Cochläus in their subsequent writings. They wrote, following the lead of Cochläus, that Luther was a heretic who by his false teaching had plunged countless souls into ruin. He destroyed the Church's unity; he was a demagogue who brought misery and destitution to Germany from the Peasants war onwards.

One should add here that the Reformation in Germany was indeed reflective of Luther's personality and thought and, therefore, we should try sincerely to attain a true historical picture of the man. The initial portrayal of Cochläus poisoned all such efforts, even two of the most prominent and scholarly, those of Deniflé and Grisar, of which we must now speak.

In 1904, there appeared a veritable bomb in the midst of the Luther cult emanating from the Fourth Centenary of Luther's birth in 1883. The author was Fr. Heinrich Deniflé, a Tyrolean Dominican, sub-Archivist of the Vatican Library, a world renowned scholar in Mediaeval Studies. His work was "Luther und Luthertum in der ersten Entwicklung quellenmassig dargestellt". ("Luther and Lutheranism in the Earliest Period of Development, Presented on the Basis of the Source Materials") It was the most

violent attack against the Reformer since that of Johannes Pistorius, "Anatomiae Lutheri", at the end of the Sixteenth Century.

Denifle makes two points in his study of Luther and his work:

1) Luther was a vile man who could not possibly be an instrument of God because of his moral decadence. Under this heading, Luther is accused of "buffoonery, hypocrisy, pride, ignorance, forgery, slander, pornography, vice, debauchery, drunkenness, seduction, and corruption". 2) Luther was no theologian who completely misunderstood "Justitia Dei". He claimed that Luther was contaminated by the nominalism of William of Occam, which vitiated his conception of justification.

Needless to say, this work of Denifle stimulated a scholarly reaction from such Protestant theologians as Otto Scheel in 1917 and Karl Holl later. If the delayed reaction bothers you, just remember that Church history was a more leisurely endeavor at the turn of the century than it is now with instant communication and repudiation.

Because of Denifle's excesses, it was fitting that another Catholic historian would approach Luther with more objectivity and less passion. This was done by Father Hartmann Grisar, a Jesuit professor at the University

of Innsbruck, in a three volume, 2600 page study entitled, "Luther", in 1911-12. This was recapitulated in 1926 under the title, "Martin Luthers Leben und sein Werk". ("Martin Luther's Life and Work (or Achievement)").

Grisar avoided the crudities of Denifle. He could report good sides of Luther's character and did clear away a few legends on both sides with a coolness of tone that is in stark contrast with Denifle.

However, he does agree with Denifle's interpretation of Luther's theory of Justification, regarding it as originating in Luther's espousing salvation without works to justify his loose life and his renunciation of the monastic ideal. Grisar's particular originality was in proposing a psycho-pathological interpretation of Luther's life and work. Grisar traces Luther's difficulties to bad heredity, maladjusted by nature, with an incurable shock from the thunderbolt striking near him at Stotternheim on July 2, 1505, when he was 22. Grisar concludes that Luther, as he entered the monastery, was "a young religious burdened with a neurosis, and throughout the following years an unhappy man whose suffering was a sad and pitiful cross".<sup>(4)</sup>

This interpretation continues to reappear from time to time in Catholic writers, although the best of them, such as Hubert Jedin, Adolf

Herte, Johannes Hessen, and Yves Congar, have for good and scholarly reasons declared it faulty. Grisar was also at fault in predicting in 1925 that Luther and his doctrine were losing ground and that in general Luther "is finished". One should say in conclusion, as the Catholic professor, Dr. Erwin Iserloh of Munster said last year, "that despite his cold objectivity, Grisar did not come to grips with what is peculiar to Luther: the religious motivation, Luther the 'homo religiosus' and man of prayer who was to appear later in the work of Joseph Lortz." If you would like to see the repercussions of these German writings on Luther in the English-speaking world, check the long article on "Martin Luther" in The Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910 - now revised, thank God; also Hilaire Belloc's chapter, "What Was Reformation?" in Europe and the Faith of 1912; or P. F. O'Hare's, "The Facts About Luther" of 1916 which rests heavily on the writings of Denifle and Grisar.

This brief exposition should be sufficient to give the tone of much of the Catholic attitude towards Luther during the first four centuries following his historic act. There were exceptions, of course, but nothing like the tidal wave of exceptions that followed our bench mark year of 1917.



On the occasion of the Reformation celebrations in 1917, F. X. Kiefl, Catholic professor of Theology at the University of Wurzburg, published an article in the Catholic review, Hochland, entitled, "Martin Luthers Religiöse Psyche". ("Martin Luther's Religious Psyche") Kiefl made a clean break with the notions of Denifle and Grisar, besides anticipating many of the future conclusions of Lortz and Hessen. He held that Luther's viewpoint can only be explained by theological causes, and he was prepared to concede the religious motivation of the Reformer. Kiefl explained that Luther was so impressed by the biblical concept of the almightiness of God that he made this almightiness unilateral: God acts alone in Redemption, man is not free, depravity is total, righteousness is imputed and a church that claims to mediate salvation should be rejected. Contrary to what had been proclaimed earlier, Kiefl declared that Luther had no desire to replace dogma by religious feeling. Kiefl also showed respect for Luther's profound piety, his indomitable will, his literary genius. In a word, Kiefl opened a new path for Catholic understanding of Luther by putting him back in a religious context, and by seeing him as "the powerful instrument chosen by Providence to purify the Church".

A few years later (1929), two Catholic articles furthered this understanding of Luther. They appeared in a collection of Protestant and Catholic essays published by Alfred von Martin under the title: "Luther in ökumenischer Sicht". ("Luther in the Light of Ecumenism")

Sebastian Merkle, professor of History at Wurzburg, wrote, "Gutes an Luther und Übles an seinen Tadeln", ("The Good in Luther and the Evil in His Captious Critics") in which he gives some advice to Catholic historians of the Reformation. They should recognize the religious motives of Luther's actions, refrain from belittling and detracting from him, not call him the father of free-thinkers and admit that the movement he started was uniquely spiritual.

The second article by Anton Fischer, "Was der betende Luther der ganzen Christenheit zu sagen hat", ("What Luther at Prayer Has to Say to the whole of Christendom") declares that Luther has much to teach all Christians, including Catholics, about prayer.

The Bible was the total inspiration for Luther's prayer, Fischer wrote, and the Our Father was for him the very heart of Christian life.

Fischer concludes his article by saying that, if the Lord's Prayer is said in the spirit of the great masters of prayer, like St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, and Martin Luther, it can bridge the gap which separates Catholics and Protestants.

In 1931, Father Hubert Jedin, now Professor at Bonn University, published, "Die Erforschung der Kirchlichen Reformations - Geschichte seit 1876", ("Research Done Since 1876 in the History of the Reformation") reviewing works from Janssen to 1910. He openly criticized Denifle and Grisar and the harmful effects of such writing on ecumenical dialogue. He repeats some points made by Kiefl and even says that any Catholic who wants to understand Luther's thought and motives should first forget the past image of Luther as portrayed by most Catholics.

The ground was now prepared for two epoch-making Catholic historical studies of Luther: those of Lortz and Herte. At the beginning of the Second World War, 1939-40, Joseph Lortz, then Professor at Munster (now Director of the Institut für Europäische Geschichte, University of Mainz), published the two-volume work, "Die Reformation in Deutschland". ("The Reformation in Germany") Lortz admits that the Church in Luther's time

was in need of Reformation and that this was not easily come by. There were manifold abuses, widespread theological confusion, and general religious decline at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. When opportunities for reform were ignored, the Reformation became inevitable. Lortz later wrote in 1948: "The Reformation is a Catholic concern in the sense that Catholics had a share in causing it and in the guilt for it ... this blame we must accept".<sup>(5)</sup> And more recently (1965), he said that we are called on "to bring Luther's riches back into the Catholic Church".<sup>(6)</sup> These statements are milleniums distant from Denifle and Grisar, but reflective of Vatican Council II's Decrees on Ecumenism where the fact is emphasized that the division of the Church came about with guilt on both sides (Paragraph 3), and that Catholics are asked to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of their separated brethren (Paragraph 4).

To return for a moment to Lortz's epochal work of 1939-40, "Die Reformation in Deutschland", he says that Luther underwent a great inner struggle in the sight of God before he unintentionally left the Catholic Church. He brought down in himself a Catholicism that was no more Catholic,

even though reflective of the times (I, p. 76). He then found a central Catholic possession in a heretical manner (I, p. 434).

Lortz clearly recognizes Luther as a man of prayer, a religious man (I, p. 383). Luther, Lortz says, lived in a spirit of trusting, submission to the Heavenly Father through His crucified Son. "The formal principle was 'sola fide'", (I, p. 385) which led Luther to war against justification by works. These religious concerns received short shrift from Pope and Bishops alike. Professor Erwin Iserloh, to whom I am indebted for much of this Lortz analysis, has demonstrated that Luther did not in fact nail his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, but that he sent them that day to the two Bishops who were most involved in the indulgence question: his local ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg, and the Indulgence Commissioner, Archbishop Albrecht of Magdeburg and Mainz. Iserloh contends that Luther made his theses public only after the Bishops failed to act.<sup>(7)</sup>

For all his irenicism, Lortz does criticize Luther on certain points. He claims that Luther was strongly influenced by his personal experience, was unbridled, immoderate, romantic, and overly passionate.

His trying to be a master of reality, instead of sensibly accepting it, made him fail as a hearer (Vollhörer) of the whole of God's Word as it sounds in Scripture and in the Church. Lortz says that Luther's fundamental approach is strongly subjectivistic (I, p. 162). Lortz finds Luther a complexio oppositorum (I, p. 153) who is easier to oversimplify than to understand. Lastly, Lortz thinks Catholics have found it difficult to be just to Luther because of the paradoxes, the exaggerations, and the vulgarities of Luther's language. In this latter aspect, it should be added in all charity that we are dealing with an age much different than our own, especially insofar as theological writing goes.

On balance, Lortz's study was a great step forward in promoting a better understanding of Luther on the part of Catholics. It was followed, later during World War II (1943), by Adolph Herte's three-volume work: "Das Katholische Lutherbild im Bann der Lutherkommentare des Cochläus". ("The Catholic Image of Luther Under the Influence of Cochläus") Herte, professor at the Archi-episcopal Academy in Paderborn, produced what the Protestant Luther scholar, K. A. Meissinger, called an even more important contribution towards confessional friendship than Lortz's masterful work.

In his own words, Herte strove "to search again for the meaning, to calm the confessional atmosphere, and to bring healing to old wounds" (I, p. xxii). He does this by showing the unhappy past dependence upon Cochläus of so much Catholic biography of Luther. He also demonstrates amply that Cochläus was polemical and untruthful and crude. Herte finally makes the useful suggestion that there ought to be a counterpart to his book on the Protestant side to unveil injustices towards the Catholic Church that go back to the Magdeburg Centuries - as ours go back clearly to Cochläus. Self-criticism on both sides, where needed and justified, is one of the strongest catalysts in the cause of ecumenical understanding. So far, this task which Herte suggests is yet to be done.

It might, at this point, be good to depart from the Catholic historians for a moment, as Stauffer does in his wonderful monograph upon which I have depended so much, to take a look at a Catholic systematic theologian's approach to the whole subject we have been discussing. The most fruitful single article, of only seventy pages, which has not yet appeared in English or French, is "Luther in Katholische Sicht" ("Luther as Catholics See Him") (Bonn, 1947), written twenty years ago by J. Hessen, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Cologne.

Hessen's main thrust is to outline the significance of sola fides as it applies to four essential aspects of the religious life: dogma, works, the sacraments, and the Church. First, Hessen claims that Luther's fundamental experience did not necessitate any break with Catholic dogma, since it was a matter of piety rather than of theology. I believe that one might legitimately question this first point.

Regarding the second point on works, while Luther rejected fides caritate formata - faith informed by charity, or faith with works - as the basic condition of justification, he did not intend by doing so to abolish all morality, as others have claimed, but rather to say that the work of salvation is totally God's.

Thirdly, Hessen denies that Luther rejected the sacraments as means of grace. Luther insisted on the objective character of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and their importance for the Christian life.

Fourthly, Hessen claims that Luther was so impressed with sola fides that he stressed the intimate union between Christ and the believer to the understatement of the importance of the Church. Some Protestants would counter that Luther's insistence on the invisible Church was never envisioned by him to break up the visible Church.



Hessen continues by explaining that these four points were Luther's way of opposing four tendencies in the Church of his day that tended to diminish or supplant the Gospel of Jesus Christ: intellectualism which regarded faith as keeping formulae rather than a living contact with divine revelation; moralism which tended to subordinate the Gospel to the Law by putting man's works ahead of God's mercy; sacramentalism which destroyed the inner life of true religion; and finally, institutionalism which put outward belonging to the Church as a source of salvation.

Hessen says that Luther was correct in opposing these tendencies of his day. One might add that Vatican Council II opposed some of the same tendencies in recent years. Hessen proposes that Protestants and Catholics together should reconsider these relevant positions, that by working together on Luther, both might be led to the una sancta - the one true Church.

Finally, Hessen outlines six topics for the ecumenical consideration of the Churches: original sin, imputed righteousness, sola fides, eucharistic sacrifice, the monastic life, and the power of the Pope. He thinks such an ecumenical conversation could well enrich both sides of this centuries-long discussion and lead to greater understanding and even unity.

One could speak of further theological aspects of our subject, particularly the contributions of Karl Adam's lectures at Stuttgart in 1947, or Hans Küng's remarks in Konzil und Wiedervereinigung ("The Council and Reunion")<sup>(8)</sup>, but it should be clear by now that history must be enriched by a theological development that will in turn help clarify misunderstandings and advance ecumenism.

I should like to conclude this account of German Catholic authors who turned the tide in the Catholic attitude towards Luther by quoting from one of four radio addresses given in 1961 by Father Thomas Satory, a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Nideraltaisch, and Editor of Una Sancta. Father Satory spoke of Luther from the psychological, historical, theological, and ecumenical point of view. He concluded his lectures with these words, which summarize the developments in the Catholic attitude towards Luther that had been taking place since 1917. "Down the centuries, Roman Catholics have regarded Luther as simply a lapsed monk and the enemy of the Church. Down the centuries, we Catholics have been indoctrinated against Luther, to our loss. We shall certainly not fall into the error of taking him more seriously than he wished to take himself, or than the Lutherans themselves take him. Luther is not the Gospel, either for them

or for us. Nevertheless, in spite of our reservations, in spite of the 'no' spoken against him by the Church, we Catholics wish to hear his word insofar as it is a witness to the Gospel, so that we too may be inflamed with the love of God which burns in him".(9)

Karl Rahner, then of the University of Innsbruck, agreed with Satory's remarks and added, "There is no official judgment on Luther to which the Catholic is bound by his Church". He says that since the Council of Trent did not mention Luther by name, one cannot see where such a judgment would come from. Rahner concludes, "The fact that in the Roman Catholic Church opinions differ about Luther proves that in this matter the Catholic is not bound by any norm".

I should like to mention in passing that the conclusions of these German Catholic scholars are finally beginning to appear in English through the efforts of Father George Tavard, A.A., Father Thomas McDonagh, O.P., Father F. M. Quealey of Toronto, Father Leonard Swindler, and John M. Todd who wrote a biography of Martin Luther which appeared in London in 1964. Despite these efforts, it would be dishonest to conclude that the Catholic attitude on Luther is anywhere near as favorable

in the English and French-speaking world as it has become among scholars in Germany.

We in America are a pragmatic people. We get along with growing friendship and understanding across religious lines because it is the thing to do. In Germany, ecumenism was really given a monumental push by Nazism which persecuted Catholics and Lutherans alike. After suffering together, praying together, and dying together in the name of the same Christ, Our Lord, it was inevitable that Catholic and Protestant Christians in Germany would continue working towards a greater understanding, on a scholarly rather than merely pragmatic basis, during the post-war years.

By now, the tide has turned and one might hope that in the light of the current scholarship and the enormous good will following Vatican Council II Protestants and Catholics together may rediscover the meaning of ecclesia semper reformanda - the Church ever in need of renewal. The first Reformation, unfortunately, separated us. Let us hope and pray that this present reformation will unite us as we face together the great modern challenges to Christianity.

Guatemala City  
August 9, 1967

1. R. Stauffer, "Le Catholicisme à la decouverte de Luther", Delachaux et Niestle, Neuchatel, 1966; Trans. "Luther as Seen by Catholics", Lutterworth Press, London, 1967.
2. "The Sufficiency of God", Ed. R. C. Mackie and C. C. West, London, 1963, p. 74.
3. Quoted by Lortz: "Die Reformation in Deutschland", I, pp. 262-3.
4. Grisar, Op. Cit., p. 26.
5. J. Lortz, "Die Reformation als Religiöses Anliegen heute Vier Vorträge im Dienste der Una Sancta" (Trier, 1948), p. 104.
6. J. Lortz, "Martin Luther - Grundzüge seiner Geistigen Struktur" in Reformata Reformanda, Munster, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 216.
7. E. Iserloh, "Luthers Thesenanschlag, Tatsache oder Legende?", (Wiesbaden, 1962).
8. H. Küng, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1960; Trans. "The Council, Reform and Reunion", New York, 1961.
9. T. Satory, "Martin Luther in Katholischer Sicht, in Una Sancta", Mertingen-bei-Augsburg, 1961, p. 54.

# SPEAKERS TABLE SEATING ARRANGEMENT

1. Dr. Hubert C. Noble
2. Dr. Richard E. Shearer
3. Father Clarence W. Friedman
4. Dr. William F. Quillian, Jr.
5. Dr. Edward D. Gates
6. Mrs. Godard
7. Dr. Landrum R. Bolling
8. Father Theodore M. Hesburgh \*
9. Dr. Willis M. Tate
10. Dr. James M. Godard
11. Dr. A. Blair Helman
12. Dr. William G. Cole
13. Dr. Edgar M. Carlson
14. Dr. Anne G. Pannell
15. Dr. Albert C. Jacobs
16. Dr. Rufus P. Perry
17. Dr. Raymond S. Hauptert
18. Mr. A. Burns Chalmers

A MEDITATION FOR  
THE FESTIVAL OF THE REFORMATION

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REFORMATION -- A BLESSING

opening praise *The people sit.*

Leader/ LET OUR THANKS ASCEND

TO GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN US ANOTHER SAINT . . .

Chorus/ We praise Thee, O God, for Thy glory displayed in  
all the creatures of the earth,

In the snow, in the rain, in the wind, in the  
storm; in all of Thy creatures, both the hunters  
and the hunted.

For all things exist only as seen by Thee, only as  
known by Thee, all things exist

Only in Thy light, and Thy glory is declared even  
in that which denies Thee; the darkness declares  
the glory of light.

...all things affirm Thee in living; the bird in  
the air, both the hawk and the finch; the beast  
on the earth, both the wolf and the lamb; the  
worm in the soil and the worm in the belly.

Therefore man, whom Thou hast made to be conscious  
of Thee, must consciously praise Thee, in thought  
and in word and in deed...

We thank Thee for Thy mercies of blood, for Thy re-  
demption by blood. For the blood of Thy martyrs  
and saints

Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places.

For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has  
given his blood for the blood of Christ,

There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not de-  
part from it

Though armies trample over it, though sightseers come  
with guide-books looking over it...

All/ LET OUR THANKS ASCEND

TO GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN US ANOTHER SAINT . . .

*from Murder in the Cathedral  
T. S. Eliot*

entrance hymn *The people rise.*

For all the saints who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confest,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;  
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine,  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl, streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Alleluia! Alleluia! (463:1,2,4,7)

psalmody

*The people sit.*

Psalm 148

*The Choir*

*Choir I "alleluia!"*  
*Choir II "allalulia!"*  
Gelineau

remembrances

*The people rise for the remembrances.*

Leader/ LET OUR THANKS ASCEND

TO GOD WHO HAS GIVEN US ANOTHER SAINT . . .

*The people shout in reply:*

Right/ Noah built and sailed a zoo;

Left/ Moses wrecked a golden calf.

Right/ Jeremiah wore a yoke;

Left/ Daniel prayed illegally.

Right/ Disciple Matthew quit his job;

Left/ Mary Magdela quit her job.

Right/ Lawrence fed the church's poor;

Left/ Aquinas wrote a tome on God.

Right/ Michaelangelo worked in stone;

Left/ Johann Sebastian Bach composed.

Right/ Bonhoeffer preached against the Reich;

Left/ O. P. Kretzmann made a school.

All/ LET OUR THANKS ASCEND TO GOD!

reading

*The people sit.*

*The scene is the Diet of Worms. Luther is interrogated before the Emperor, the court, and high ranking churchmen.*

*from Luther*  
*John Osborne*

hymn

*The people rise.*

A mighty Fortress is our God, A trusty Shield and Weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need That hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil Foe Now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight;  
On earth is not his equal.

The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife,  
Let these all be gone, They yet have nothing won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth. (262:1,4)

homily

*The people sit.*

REFORMATION -- A TRAGIC NECESSITY

homily

*Buaze*

confession

Leader/ Let us express our sorrow for the tragic necessity  
of the Reformation and acknowledge our complicity  
in the guilt of history by kneeling in humble confession before God.

*The people kneel.*

Commentators/ --Say, look ... he's prostrating himself.  
Kneeling's bad enough. Prostration is frighteningly degrading, with all these people watching.  
Besides, the pews get in the way. It's strange, though, that that man would prostrate himself ... for me.



POSTRITE

-- Face the Church's excommunication and the emperor's ban? Going to chapel is bad enough. I doubt if it's really necessary these days to take doctrine and morality so seriously. I wonder why Martin Luther bothered to make a stand ... for me.  
-- Life in joyful response to God? Come now ... I only live once. With many modern minds believing that whatever was God is dead, you ask me to live and to die for the truth of this God? Really now ... What I can't understand is why Jesus of Nazareth lived and died for this truth of God ... and for me.

*Silence is kept for a space.*

Leader/ Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type of the common man,  
Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by the fire;  
Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the night of God, the surrender required, the deprivation inflicted;  
Who fear the injustice of men less than the justice of God;  
Who fear the hand at the window, the fire in the thatch, the fist in the tavern, the push into the canal,  
Less than we fear the love of God.  
We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault; we acknowledge  
That the sin of the world is upon our heads; that the blood of the martyrs and the agony of the saints  
Is upon our heads.

*from Murder in the Cathedral*

People/ Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

litany Right/ Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my offence.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt  
And cleanse me from my sin.

All/ Holy God, have mercy! Holy and Mighty One,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

Left/ My offences truly I know them;  
My sin is always before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;  
What is evil in your sight I have done.

All/ Holy God, have mercy! Holy and Mighty One,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

Right/ That you may be justified when you give sentence  
And be without reproach when you judge,  
O see, in guilt I was born,  
A sinner was I conceived.

All/ Holy God, have mercy! Holy and Mighty One,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

Left/ Indeed you love truth in the heart;  
Then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.  
O purify me, then I shall be clean;  
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

All/ Holy God, have mercy! Holy and Mighty One,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

*Motion to sit —  
Sit yourself!*

"Rise" to a kneeling position

KNEEL

Exit

KNEEL

# REFORMATION -- AN IMPERATIVE

opposites    *The people sit.*

*Enter glances  
at beginning of  
"Divine Noise"  
(Motion people to rise  
on last ankle and blast)*

Selections from

*The Hollow Men - T. S. Eliot  
The Sun Also Rises - E. Hemingway  
Four Saints in Three Acts - G. Stein  
The Epistles of Saint Paul and Saint John*

*with response-ability in sight and sound*

psalmody    *The people rise.*

Right/    To God King Creator

Comes praise from his world:

Left/    The orbiting planets,  
The stars beyond sight,  
The tail of the peacock,  
The wing of the fly,  
The salt of the ocean,  
The numb of the cold--

Right/    As each is itself

It says "yes" to its God.

Left/    He calls life into being:

The seasons to dance,  
The flowers to color,  
And people to joy.

Right/    From bondage he leads them,

Gives manna for food,

Left/    And promises always

A kingdom to come,  
Where men might respond  
Both as servants and sons.

All/    O God, we affirm You, Creator of life.

We sing out and dance out our praises with joy.

Right/    No longer a running  
From death and from self;

Left/    From Egypt to Canaan  
The lame men shall dance.

Right/    Since Man, child of Mary,  
Was named son of God,  
And responded completely

In joy to the call,

Left/    Our leprosy cleansed,  
We are heirs to his life.

All/    O God, we affirm You! Our God becomes man!  
We celebrate now that he died, that he lives.

Right/    God's breath merged with soil  
And mankind was born;

Left/    This breath inside water  
Turns babies to saints.

Right/    The Church is a history  
Of Spirit-strong men;

Left/    Renewed by a breath  
They say "yes" to their God  
By finding their joy  
In responsible love.

All/    O God, we affirm You, the Spirit of life.

Make us sons in your freedom, the life of the world.

Right/    We praise You, O God,  
That You govern the world;

Left/    That You join Yourself to it  
By being a man;

*Start  
psalm  
on drum beat*