

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! The other day I was looking for a good autumn picture in my photos in my cell phone to use as my background picture. The only one I could find was one from two years ago at the Seminary. Then yesterday, I saw an article on msn.com which was about the best times for fall colors. Looking at the article, I learned that the best time for us will be in mid- to late October. While I have a little bit to wait to take a new picture for the background on my cell phone, you don't have to wait for the next part of our study—here it is!



Autumn at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis 2012

Last month, we completed Luther's Preface to the Large (German) Catechism. This month, we hear from the original brief preface he wrote. This preface was based on a sermon from May 18th, 1528 (footnote 17, BoC, p.383). This sermon was "designed and undertaken for the instruction of children and the uneducated (BoC, p.383)." You might think of the Education Service we had last month, but instead of explaining the parts of the Divine Service, it was a review of the basic doctrines of our faith. Like that service last month, or for any of you who might desire to take adult catechism with the ones who have signed up already, review is always a good practice. At the third, one hundred fiftieth anniversary celebration service for St. Paul, Pastor Doug Meyer repeated something I've been striving to teach you myself: that in the Old

Testament and in the New Testament where an important point would be made, it would be repeated, or there would be that statement from Jesus “Amen, Amen,” or “Verily, verily,” or “I say unto you”—meaning we should listen in and take notice.

As Luther writes, this catechism has “what every Christian should know,” and that is why I believe it is important for us to keep taking notice of it, even if we have been Christians for our entire lives. Luther strongly believed that “(a)nyone who does not know it should not be numbered among Christians nor admitted to any sacrament, just as artisans who do not know the rules and practices of their craft are rejected and considered incompetent (BoC, p.383).”

“Therefore” he considered it “the duty of every head of a household at least once a week to examine the children...and ascertain what they know or have learned of (the catechism), and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it (BoC, p.383).” He could recall times of meeting elderly people attending the Sacrament of the Altar who did not know the parts of the catechism—people who should have known much more by the time they were their age! So how were these elderly people to have come to know the catechism and more by their age? By study, study, and more study! That is why I encourage you to do the same. At home, at Bible Class, taking adult catechesis again for review, you should all be not only retaining the parts of the catechism, but growing more and more in your understanding of God’s good Word, “so that (you) who wish to be Christians in fact as well as in name, both young and old, may be well trained(!) (BoC, p.384)” This has been and continues to be my desire for you, friends in Christ. In Jesus’ Name. Amen!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh