

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday February 18, 2007

Martin Luther was called Home to his Savior and Lord on this day in 1546. Let us join with him in praying words he wrote and prayed in the 16th century. Our Father, who hears all his children in His Eternal Present, is awaiting us. Let us pray.

“Almighty God: In Your boundless mercy, You have not only granted us permission but by Your only beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You have bidden and taught us through His merit and mediation to look to You as Father and to call You Father, while You might in all justice be a stern Judge of us sinners, who have so often and so grievously offended Your divine and most blessed will.

“We beseech You, put into our hearts, by this Your mercy, a comforting confidence in Your fatherly love, and let us feel and taste the sweetness of childlike security that we may joyfully call You ‘Father’, may love You and call upon You in every time of need. Watch over us that we may remain Your children and not be guilty of turning You, dearest Father, into a terrible Judge and ourselves from children into enemies.

“It is also Your will that we not only call You ‘Father’ but that all of us together call You ‘our Father’ and thus offer our prayers with one accord. Grant us, therefore, brotherly love and unity, that all of us may know and regard one another as true brothers and sisters and pray to You, our one common Father, for all people and for each and every person, even as one child prays for the other to its father.

“Let no one among us seek only his own interests, forgetting those of others before You. But laying aside all hatred, envy, and dissension, may we love one another as true and good children of God, and thus be able to say with one accord, ‘our Father’.

“And You are not an earthly father; but You are in heaven, a spiritual Father, who is not mortal and uncertain like an earthly and ordinary father. Thereby You show us how immeasurably better a Father You are and teach us to hold all earthly fatherhood, fatherland, friends, goods, flesh and blood as nothing compared with You.”

So, our Father, hear these words of our brother Martin, made our prayer this morning, in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught all his disciples to pray, together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.