

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

THE APOSTLES' CREED – THE SECOND ARTICLE

Now this is the article of the Creed that must always be and remain in use. For we have already received creation. Redemption, too, is finished. But the Holy Spirit carries on His work without ceasing to the Last Day. For that purpose He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything. For He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church [*Christenheit*] [John 10:16] or granted all forgiveness. Therefore, we believe in Him who daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church through the Word. Through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins He bestows, increases, and strengthens faith. So when He has done it all, and we abide in this and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make us perfectly and forever holy. Even now we expect this in faith through the Word.

HOLY BAPTISM

But if the “new spirits” say, as they are accustomed, “Still Baptism is itself a work, and you say works are of no use for salvation. What, then, becomes of faith?” Answer, “Yes, our works, indeed, do nothing for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work, but God’s.” For, as was stated, you must completely distinguish Christ’s Baptism from a bathkeeper’s baptism. God’s works are saving and necessary for salvation. They do not exclude, but demand, faith. For without faith they could not be grasped. By allowing the water to be poured upon you, you have not yet received Baptism in a way that benefits you at all. But it becomes beneficial to you if you have yourself baptized with this thought: this is according to God’s command and ordinance, and besides, it is done in God’s name. In this way you may receive the promised salvation in the water. Now, your fist cannot do this, nor your body; but the heart must believe it [Ezekiel 36:25–26; Hebrews 10:22].

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