

Freed & RENEWED in Christ 500 YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE IN ACTION

Reformation ABCs

J is for Jesuit

Fictional ones include Father Mulcahy from *M*A*S*H** and priests in Shusaku Endo's *Silence*; famous ones, a poet (Gerard Manley Hopkins), a paleontologist (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin), and now—for the first time—a pope (Francis, elected in 2013).

Their story begins with Iñigo, or Ignatius, of Loyola, whose birth and death (1491 – 1556) were each a few years after Luther's. Iñigo, a hotheaded young Basque courtier gravely wounded in a local war, found new direction for his dreams of heroic chivalry in the lives of Christ and the saints. Like Luther, Ignatius agonized over increasingly strenuous efforts in prayer that never felt sufficient until he was overwhelmed by an experience of grace.

Ignatian spirituality seeks to “find God in all things.” Like Luther's, it embraces everyday life—including the movements of our desires—as the arena of God's action. It is rooted in Scripture and Ignatius' own experiences. The rhythm of consolation and desolation that he noticed gives guidance to discern God's will. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* draw people into an intense encounter with God through meditation that involves the imagination and all the senses.

Luther wanted to comfort terrified consciences; Ignatius, to “help souls.” At the University of Paris he and half a dozen companions founded the Society of Jesus. (“Jesuit,” like “Lutheran,” started as a slur.) This new form of religious life was neither confined to a single place nor to praying the monastic liturgy of the hours. It was flexible for the sake of mission.

Mission came to it in requests to set up a new kind of school that was accessible to lay people and fresh with Renaissance learning. Jesuits set out at once for Africa and Asia, and then for the Americas. They were the first order to run universities as their primary ministry, exchanging cultural and scientific knowledge with the peoples they met.

From 1970 to 1981, the Jesuit School of Theology at Chicago shared classrooms and housing with our Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. The letter “J” in LSTC's “JKM (Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick) Library” is an enduring trace of our ministry together.

The Rev. Julie Ryan
Retired in Woodridge, Illinois

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J is for Judensau

St. Mary's, the City Church in Wittenberg, is a living monument to a life-changing movement, the place where Luther preached and the Reformation took hold. A sculpture on the corner of the church also bears witness to another legacy, that of Lutheran participation in a long violent history of Christian anti-Semitism. The notorious Judensau (Jew-Pig) portrays two Jews sucking on the teats of a sow; a rabbi lifts the pig's back leg to peer into its anus. These images were widespread in medieval Germany. This Judensau was placed on the church in 1306, with an inscription added after Luther's time—a quotation from one of his anti-Jewish rants that is a mocking reference to the sacred name of God in Hebrew scriptures. A plaque on the ground below, added in 1988, expresses repentance and grief for those murdered "under the sign of the cross," but with no acknowledgment of how Luther's writings were used to fuel the lethal anti-Semitism of the Third Reich. The Judensau was the subject of renewed controversy as the church prepared for the 500th anniversary; some called for the removal of this offensive image, while others have argued that it serves as a salutary and sobering reminder of Lutheran complicity in anti-Semitism.

Pastor Barbara Melosh
Wilmington, Delaware



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J is for Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

“Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” by Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church

“Together we confess: By grace alone in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.” That single sentence is the heart of the Joint Declaration of Catholics and those Lutherans affiliated with the Lutheran World Federation (not including the Wisconsin or Missouri Synods). This was not a new or novel teaching. It was the rather the result of a long-term ecumenical dialogue begun in the aftermath of Vatican II. The “Joint Declaration” (issued in 1999) made clear that the excommunication of Lutherans at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) no longer applied to the teachings contained in the text, nor did the condemnations set forth in the Lutheran Confessions.

Although major differences between Catholics and Lutherans still remain, both churches have made continuing progress in narrowing those differences. See especially “The Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in the U. S, 2016 and “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation, 2017. (All documents cited in this text can be found on-line).

Gary Kulik
Wilmington, Delaware

Reformation ABCs is a project of the Delmarva North Conference of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We invite you to use, reprint, and circulate these weekly posts as we observe Reformation 500!