

Luther's Trip to Rome-1510

In 1510 Luther was sent to Rome to represent his monastic order in a dispute. Fr. Martin made the journey in devout anticipation of seeing "holy Rome" only to be shocked by the irreverence of the Roman clergy.

He applied himself to obtaining the merit claimed for visiting Rome's various shrines and holy sites. He climbed Pilate's stairs on hands and knees, kissing them and speaking a *Pater noster* to secure the promised release of his grandfather from purgatory.

"At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, not as legend would have it, 'The just shall live by faith!'—he was not yet that far advanced. What he said was, 'Who knows whether it is so?'"

It was the study of the Word over long hours that eventually brought Luther to the hope of Christ. Remembering his journey long afterward he said, "I went to Rome with onions and returned with garlic."¹



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Lutherans in ITALIA

Like oil and vinegar the combination of Lutherans and Italy would strike one as improbable. But there is a winsome story about Lutherans in Italy—including Rome—that is happening right now.

The story for me actually began back in 2015 when I went to Padova (Padua) in northern Italy to meet Mr. Luiz Lange, a Lutheran from Brazil, who was hoping to see faithful Word and sacrament ministry established in Italy. Flash forward to the present and Luiz's prayers are being fulfilled in part by Luiz himself!

This is because of the work of the Luther Academy's "English Stream" of pastoral studies which has gathered a nucleus of students throughout the Italian peninsula—including Luiz—to prepare for Gospel ministry.

Now in his second year of study, Luiz and his colleagues are progressing



toward serving as pastors. The picture above shows *seminarian* Luiz Lange conducting the liturgy.

Moreover, the work has moved beyond the classroom (Zoom-room?): the arrival of LCMS mission-pastor Rev. Tyler McMiller this past fall has led to the formation of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Italy. Online services and in-person visits connect the faithful in worship and Bible study: recently, the confirmation of

Roberto, a brother-in-Christ from Florence was celebrated.

In His parable of the mustard-seed (Mk 4), our Lord speaks about the humble, easily overlooked way the Kingdom shows itself in the world. To the world, the death of Jesus on the cross was a mustard-seed-sized event, easily overlooked and dismissed, but in it is comprehended the redemption



Pr. McMiller, seminarians Joshua, Lorenzo, and Luiz with Roberto after his confirmation.

of the world. Just so, the small beginnings of confessional Lutheran ministry in Italy are easily overlooked or dismissed as insignificant.

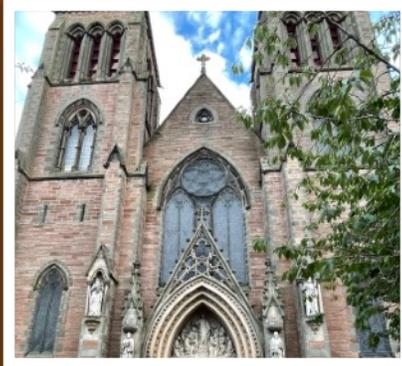
"...yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade" [Mk 4:31,32 ESV].

May the Lord prosper Luiz and the seed which is this new church in Italy!

-Charles ✝



1. Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand* (New York: Abingdon, 1950), 51.



Last month I wrote about the privilege of visiting supporting congregations as we did on our

Petersburg, Russia where we had lived and worked.

New every morning is the love
Our waking and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness
safely brought,
Restored to life and power and
thought.

New mercies each returning day
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins
forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes
of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless
price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect rest above;
And help us this and every day
To live more nearly as we pray.

The Daily Office, 443

WITNESS ALWAYS



Peace Lutheran, Neenah's sanctuary

trip to Hope in Upper Michigan. October has afforded a related opportunity, that of visiting LWML rallies and emphasis Sundays.

Peace Lutheran Church in Neenah, Wisconsin invited us twice in this regard. I was invited to preach for Peace's LWML Sunday on October 1, 2 and to talk about my work in theological education in Eurasia to the Sunday Bible class. In view of the Russian-Ukrainian war the Bible class was especially interested in hearing about the current situation concerning places like Odesa, Ukraine and St.

We're going to return to Peace on October 17 to attend the LWML Zone 11 Rally. This time Connie will be the main speaker as she talks about her experiences as an "accompanying spouse" in mission work.



LWML is very much appreciated by our LCMS mission workers for all the support and prayers our fellow Christians offer for the sake of the Gospel.

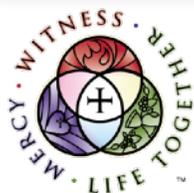
Thank you in the Savior's name...

for your prayers for all our mission workers and their efforts.

for your prayers and support for our little corner of Jesus' kingdom.

for your interest and time in reading about the work.

for keeping Gospel outreach in focus in your congregation.



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