

free indeed

DEVOTIONS FOR LENT 2017



AUGSBURG FORTRESS

Minneapolis

FREE INDEED

Devotions for Lent 2017

Copyright © 2016 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from the publisher. Visit <http://www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights> or write to Permissions, Augsburg Fortress, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Daily readings are from *Luther's Small Catechism*, copyright © 2000, 2006, 2016 Augsburg Fortress.

Luther's Flood Prayer is from the service of Holy Baptism, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, copyright © 2006 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Writers: Anne Edison-Albright (March 1–11), Rozella Haydée White (March 12–18), Javier (Jay) Alanís (March 19–28), Philip Ruge-Jones (March 29–April 4), Jennifer Baker-Trinity (April 5–15)

Editors: Suzanne Burke, Laurie J. Hanson

Cover image: Rafael López

Cover design: Laurie Ingram

Interior design: Eileen Engebretson

ISBN 978-1-5064-1609-0

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z329.48-1984.

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

17 16 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



April 5

The Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

To ponder

Our bodies are the most intimate places in which we live out our lives. They are the most intimate places from which we connect ourselves with the world, from which we form relationships. We cannot separate our minds, our spiritual lives, or ourselves from our bodily existence. In that sense, it is really true that we do not have bodies—rather, we are bodies.
—Andrea Bieler and Luise Schottroff, *The Eucharist*

Embodied

Was ist das? What is this? Luther affirmed that when we ask this question of Holy Communion, the answer is simple: it is Jesus, true Jesus. Not cognitively remembering Jesus, not pretending to be with Jesus, not magically Jesus, but Jesus with us. The specifics of “how” were not Luther’s concern, as he could embrace mystery. We, on the other hand, have spent countless words and hours debating how Jesus can be truly present.

In such questioning, we might be led to ask about creation: How does God create touchable, edible things, and why are they good? Or we are led to incarnation: How is Jesus truly human and truly God, and why believe in this Embodied One?

Debates will go on. We are thoughtful creatures and such questioning does not distance us from God. Yet we also are bodies: bodies that feel, touch, see, smell, eat, and love. When we come to the table, we are intimately connected with God; we do not just have thoughts about God, we taste God. We don’t aspire to reach God, but God is poured out, dribbles down our chins. This is very strange, yet by faith, we are assured that this is true.

Prayer

O God, awaken our bodies to your dwelling within us and with all creation. Amen.