

COMMENTARY ON THE JOINT DECLARATION  
ON THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION  
(JDDJ)

*by Raymond G. Munroe, Elder*

2000

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LC-MS president, Dr. A.L. Barry placed this ad in USA Today and in 15 major metropolitan daily newspapers which aroused some quite adverse responses. Those from the Roman Catholic and the ELCA side are, to be realistic, not unexpected. The response from the former or ex-president (emeritus) Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, also in the form of a newspaper ad, was shocking to say the least. It follows immediately after Dr. Barry's ad.

**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH- MISSOURI SYNOD**

Toward True Reconciliation.

A Comment on Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations.

You may have heard that a declaration was signed that claims to resolve a key difference between the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church. What you may not have heard is that more than 45 percent of the Lutheran church-bodies in the world did not support the declaration.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is the oldest and second-largest Lutheran church-body in the United States. We would like to explain why we could not support the declaration.

We rejoice that we have much in common with our fellow Christians in the Roman Catholic Church. Because of what we have in common, we are committed to working toward true reconciliation of our important differences. We could not support the declaration because it does not actually reconcile the difference between us concerning the most important truth of Christianity.

What is that truth? God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life in our place and to die for our sins. God declares us to be totally righteous and completely forgiven because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God gives us eternal life as a free gift through trust in Christ alone.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that something more than trust in Christ is necessary for us to be saved. It teaches that we are able to merit, through our works, eternal life for ourselves and others. We believe this teaching obscures the work of Jesus Christ and clouds the central message of the Bible.

Therefore, despite what has been reported in the public media about the Lutheran-Roman Catholic declaration, very significant differences remain in regard to how we understand salvation, a fact that the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges.

We pray for genuine reconciliation of differences among Christians. Our church is intent on working for the day when the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed with one voice. We will continue to work toward true reconciliation.

A Statement from The Office of the President  
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
1333 South Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, Missouri 63122

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*Letter to the Editor, St. Louis Post-Dispatch*  
[Ed. By Dr. Ralph Bohlman]

LUTHERAN AD WAS A PERSONAL OPINION

A large ad in the Dec. 9 Post-Dispatch and other major newspapers criticizing the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic agreement on the doctrine of justification appeared to speak for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

As the immediate past president of that church body, I want to assure readers that the ad does not present the official position of the church body on that agreement, nor was its content or placement authorized or approved by any official board, commission, council, agency or convention of the church body. In reality, the ad represents the personal opinion of the current president, and it was paid for by a private contribution, not church body funds.

I know of no one in our church body who would disagree with the ad's statement on the Gospel of Jesus Christ or its promise to work toward reconciliation among Christians. However, the fact is that thousands of members and congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are chagrined by the ad, not only because of its misleading statements about the joint agreement as well as the position of the Roman Catholic Church, but also because ads in the public media are not a helpful way for church bodies to deal with their differences.

To all who may have been offended by this ad, I offer this unofficial but very profound apology and assure you that the vast majority of the 2.6 million members of our church body continue to regard all fellow Christians with friendship and good will, and to rejoice whenever there is progress in resolving the doctrinal differences that have divided us over the years.

Dr. Ralph A. Bohlmann  
President Emeritus  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Kirkwood

Isn't it interesting that Dr. Bohlmann, a former president of Concordia Seminary and a theologian, surprisingly provides not one passage from Scripture in support of his position

Regarding Dr. Bohlmann's status, awarded following the 1992 Synod Convention at which he was defeated in his bid for reelection, an explanation of the term "Emeritus" is in order. According to the *Lutheran Cyclopedia* it is from the Latin *emere*, "to serve one's time" and is "One retired from professional life or free of its duties, usually because of age or disability, but holding the rank of his last office." In our synod a pastor who has retired from his call holds "Emeritus" status. If he leaves his congregation not in acceptance of another call he holds no such status; it would be CRM status at best. Just thought you might like to know.

I think this whole controversy has a very positive aspect. Lutheranism, that is The

Reformation, has been the opponent of Rome for nearly five centuries now. It seems that many Lutherans, today and in the past, have not a real understanding and grasp of the primary issues that divide us. This controversy, less some points offered here, has been given widespread newspaper coverage nation wide, courtesy of the opponents. Now for some responses to Dr. Barry's advertisement.

The following letter was published on the opinion page of the Des Moines Register

*Thursday December 30, 1999:*

**CATHOLIC POSITION MISSTATED**

I was disappointed to read the Dec. 9 statement from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed by leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation ("Toward True Reconciliation," Dec. 9 advertisement). The Missouri Synod's message said, in part: "The Roman Catholic Church teaches that more than trust in Christ is necessary for us to be saved. It teaches that we are able to merit, through our works, eternal life for ourselves and others."

This statement is in error. The Catholic Church believes that justification is a free gift from God. From the Joint Declaration, "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."

In short, Catholics believe we are saved only by God's love and not by any human goodness.

One of the most important tenets of ecumenical work is that you accurately portray another denomination's faith stance. I am sorry that the message from the president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod did not do that and disregarded careful and fruitful dialogue that involved both churches at the highest levels of leadership.

Bishop Joseph Charron,  
Catholic Diocese of Des Moines  
601 Grand Ave., Des Moines.

Did everyone notice "Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" in the first line of his letter? This could be taken in either of two ways: He, and Rome, do not accept the (*true*) Evangelical Lutheran Church to *be* a church in the same sense as Rome considers itself, or he has picked up on the disparaging term "E?CA" and is throwing back in our faces.

The following, quoted in part, is by Gene Edward Veith.

ON EARTH PEACE?

Despite media reports, Roman Catholics were faithful to their beliefs, some Lutherans were not

"Asked by a reporter whether there was **anything in the official common statement contrary to the Council of Trent** (The Roman Catholic Church's 16th-century response to the Reformation), Cardinal Cassidy said, '**Absolutely not, otherwise how could we do it? We cannot do something contrary to an ecumenical council. There's nothing there that the Council of Trent condemns.**'"

Gene Edward Veith, a Missouri-Synod Lutheran, teaches at Concordia University, Mequon, Wis.

The above quote, in part, I think constitutes a full rebuttal to Bishop Charron's public statement. If Cardinal Cassidy's statement does not truly reflect the official (if otherwise silent) position of the Roman Catholic church, then what does? As far as I know, "otherwise silent" seems to include the pope!

Could one ask for more? Veith then quotes Canons IX & XII of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

But there *is* more:

From the catechism of the Catholic Church (1995): "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation"; "Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life"; "Merit is to be ascribed in the first place to the grace of God, and secondly to man's collaboration"; "Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life."

As if we needed more!

Lastly, the true Lutheran position, in fact *Confession*, in the issue of *Works*, is stated below. I have taken the liberty of deleting some excess commas, a result of old style punctuation, to make it easier to read.

APOLOGY OF AUGSBURG CONFESSION (TRIGLOTTA)

WORKS

ARTICLE III: OF LOVE AND THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

Par. 123-279, p. 189-227

*Reply to the Arguments of the Adversaries.*

[Excerpts]

**123]** From **James 2, 24** they cite: ***Ye see, then, how by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone.*** Nor is any other passage supposed to be more contrary to our belief. But the reply is easy and plain. If the adversaries do not attach their own opinions concerning the merits of works, the words of James have in them nothing that is of disadvantage. But wherever there is mention of works, the adversaries add falsely their own godless opinions, that by means of good works we merit the remission of sins; that good works are a propitiation and price on account of which God is reconciled to us; that good works overcome the terrors of sin and of death; that good works are accepted in God's sight on account of their goodness, and that they do not need mercy and Christ as Propitiator. None of all these things came into the mind of James, which the adversaries nevertheless, defend under the pretext of this passage of James.

**124]** In the first place then we must ponder this, namely, that the passage is more against the adversaries than against us. For the adversaries teach that man is justified by love and works. Of faith, by which we apprehend Christ as Propitiator, they say nothing. Yea, they condemn this faith; nor do they condemn it only in sentences and writings, but also by the sword and capital punishments they endeavor to exterminate it in the Church. How much better does James teach,

who does not omit faith or present love in preference to faith, but retains faith so that in justification Christ may not be excluded as Propitiator! Just as Paul also, when he treats of the sum of the Christian life, includes faith and love, 1 Tim. 1, 5: *The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.*

**125]** Secondly, the subject itself declares that here such works are spoken of as follow faith and show that faith is not dead, but living and efficacious in the heart. James, therefore, did not believe that by good works we merit the remission of sins and grace. For he speaks of the works of those who have been justified, who have already been reconciled and accepted, and have obtained remission of sins. Wherefore the adversaries err when they infer that James teaches that we merit remission of sins and grace by good works, and that by our works we have access to God, without Christ as Propitiator.

**127]** From these things it is clear that James does not contradict us who, when censuring idle and secure minds that imagine that they have faith although they do not have it, made a distinction between dead and living faith.

**128]** He says that that is dead which does not bring forth good works [and fruits of the Spirit, obedience, patience, chastity, love]; he says that that is living which brings forth good works. Furthermore, we have frequently already shown what we term faith. For we do not speak of idle knowledge [that merely the history concerning Christ should be known] such as devils have, but of faith which resists the terrors of conscience, and cheers and consoles terrified hearts [the new light and power which the Holy Ghost works in the heart, through which we overcome the terrors of death, of sin, etc.].

**129]** Such faith is neither an easy matter, as the adversaries dream [as they say: Believe, believe, how easy it is to believe! etc.], nor a human power [thought which I can form for myself], but a divine power by which we are quickened, and by which we overcome the devil and death. Just as Paul says to the Colossians 2, 12 that faith is efficacious through the power of God, and overcomes death: *Wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.* Since this faith is a new life, it necessarily produces new movements and works. [Because it is a new light and life in the heart, whereby we obtain another mind and spirit, it is living, productive and rich in good works.] Accordingly, James is right in denying that we are justified by such a faith as is without works. But when he says that we are justified by faith and works, he certainly does not say that we are born again by works. Neither does he say this, that partly Christ is our Propitiator, and partly our works are our propitiation. Nor does he describe the mode of justification, but only of what nature the just are after they have been already justified and regenerated. [For he is speaking of works which should follow faith. There it is well said: He who has faith and good works is righteous not, indeed, on account of the works, but for Christ's sake, through faith. And as a good tree should bring forth good fruit, and yet the fruit does not make the tree good, so good works must follow the new birth, although they do not make man accepted before God; but as the tree must first be good, so also must man be first accepted before God by faith for Christ's sake. The works are too insignificant to render God gracious to us for their sake, if He were not gracious to us for Christ's sake. Therefore, James does not contradict St. Paul and does not say that by our works we merit, etc.] **131]** And here to be justified does not mean that a righteous man is made from a wicked man, but to be pronounced righteous in a forensic sense, as also in the passage Rom. 2, 13: *The doers of the Law shall be justified.* As, therefore, these words: *The doers of the Law shall be justified,* contain nothing contrary to our doctrine so, too, we believe concerning the words of James: *By works a man is justified, and not by faith alone,* because men having faith and good works are certainly pronounced righteous. For, as we have said, the good works of saints are righteous, and please on account of faith. For James commends only such works as faith produces, as he testifies when he says of Abraham, 2, 22: *Faith wrought with his works.* In this sense it is said: *The doers of the Law are justified, i.e.,*

they are pronounced righteous who from the heart believe God, and afterwards have good fruits, which please Him on account of faith and, accordingly, are the fulfillment of the Law. **132]** These things, simply spoken, contain nothing erroneous, but they are distorted by the adversaries, who attach to them godless opinions out of their mind. For it does not follow hence that works merit the remission of sins; that works regenerate hearts; that works are a propitiation; that works please without Christ as Propitiator; that works do not need Christ as Propitiator. James says nothing of these things, which, nevertheless, the adversaries shamelessly infer from the words of James.

Contrary to what the JDDJ puts forth as agreement, the *Anathemas* are still in place after four and a half centuries. It is merely an *agreement to disagree*.

One fact stands out in the world's religions, whether Christian or non-Christian, and it is that *true* Lutheranism is the *only* religion that does not demand acts (*works*) in order to become reconciled with God, or with *agod*.

We see *Faith* mentioned frequently in these passages from the Apology. The intertwined subjects of *Faith* and *Justification* need to wait for a subsequent column.

"We must not mind insulting men, if by respecting them we offend God." -- St. John Chrysostom

*Sola Scriptura,*

*Sola Fide,*

*Solo Christus †*

## MORE ON THE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION (JDDJ)

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Update: The **JDDJ** is now known, or referred to, as the *Augsburg Accord*. Does one wonder why? One could conclude that it is because the LWF, the ELCA and maybe Rome, found they couldn't stand the heat so "Let's get out of the kitchen" or at least away from the stove.

This stove, *Justification*, kept getting hotter and hotter with all that has been written about the lack of any substance to this declaration over the past four months or more. Presented here are two articles, published in *Christian News* (2/7), from The Lutheran Forum Letter. The first, while blatantly expressing full agreement for the JDDJ/Accord and disagreement with the LC-MS position, is quite lacking in support from either Scripture, with one exception, or the Confessions. This one exception is the citation of John 3:16, but without directly quoting the verse. Instead, "That truth is, 'God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life in our place and to die for our sins.'" whereas both the KJV and NKJV read:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Even the NIV reads: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” The RSV reads substantially the same. Even the Catholic New American Bible is similar, but replaces “should” and “shall” with “*might*” which of course quite tentative by comparison, a “yes, but”. This man *dares* to present this changed and embellished version of the Gospel? St. Paul speaks to this in Galatians 1:7,8.

This *anonymous* author could just as well have been a Roman Catholic bishop! He seems to hew to the party lines of both *those other* Lutherans and Rome! Note this statement under **Stunning Achievement**: “...the Accord is a stunning achievement, Jubilee Year indulgences notwithstanding.”

The second, by an ELCA pastor and Catholic seminary graduate, succinctly cites Roman Catholic dogma as he learned it in that seminary. His comments on *Lumen Gentium 14 and 16* are especially worth noting.

BARRY MISREPRESENTS ROMAN

CATHOLICS ON JUSTIFICATION

*Teaching John 3:16*

FORUM LETTER,

February, 2000

[**RGM**: The author is not named, but since this appears to be an editorial it could very well have been Editor Russ Salzman.]

Oh, my. Now there's that ad. That's the ad Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod President A.L. Barry put out nationally--paid for by independent funds--challenging the *Augsburg Accord* (also known as the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification). Seldom have we seen anything that so badly caricatures Roman teaching. The LCMS, he says, “could not support the declaration because it does not actually reconcile the differences between (Lutherans and Romans) concerning the most important truth of Christianity.” That truth is, “God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life in our place and to die for our sins.” In short, were you curious, the real theological controversy between Lutherans and Romans is that Lutherans teach John 3:16 and the Vatican does not. (Feel free to use that next year in your Reformation Day sermon.) You wonder if Dr. Barry has devoted any serious reading to the document or to the antecedent papers.

### **Disingenuous**

Beyond that, the advertisement was plainly disingenuous about the numbers of Lutherans affiliated with the accord (represented by member churches in the Lutheran World Federation) and the numbers not (represented by the LCMS internal association). Counting just the Lutheran church bodies in the world, the LWF doesn't look so big, which was the impression Barry clearly hoped to make. In absolute numbers, of course, the LCMS is a very unhappy minority on the world stage. Some of the member churches in its international association could hold their conventions in adjoining phone booths. One may also question whether theological differences are best addressed through a one-day media blitz.

### **Stunning Achievement**

The genuine impact of the Augsburg Accord will require a goodly amount of time to make itself felt in both Roman Catholic and LWF circles. Despite some unfortunate bumps on the way to the Augsburg signing, said to have been smoothed by direct papal intervention, the Accord is a stunning achievement, Jubilee Year indulgences notwithstanding. Frankly, we would not have said that a year ago. Come to think, we were saying just the opposite. But reappraisal is always in order, and sometimes salutary. Whatever the limitations of the document, and they are many, it will determine and shape the content of all future conversations. Period.

### **Poetry as Theology.**

There are Roman Catholic critics and Lutheran critics, often with very good credentials, who claim their side has sold out to the other (see, for instance, Kevin Guillory's piece in this issue). More perceptive commentators understand that the Accord tries to match different -- though not altogether incompatible--language of salvation, and tires to do so in a way that both may recognize in the other the truth of God's love for the world. God "sings music in the sinner's ears, brings life and health and peace," as the hymn has it, and Lutherans and Roman Catholics--it seems to be the nature of both that we must write everything down just so -- try to make poetry into theology. It is a sometimes awkward fit. But the effort represented by the Accord cannot help but be of help to both communions in their continuing dialogues.

### **A Living Accord**

During a brief Christmas vacation, we attended the baptism of a cousin. We were the only Lutherans in the building amid a sea of Roman Catholics (the priest had taken courses work at the Gettysburg seminary). If the Accord is to be given a living and breathing place in the life of our churches and our parishioners, then perhaps it is time to speak of a limited eucharistic hospitality that takes into account the passage and celebration of our common.

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### ***Becoming Lutheran:***

### ***A Catholic's Experience***

by Rev. Kevin Guillory

### **Forum Letter**

February, 2000

First, there was Pr. Dan Hoffman's work discouraging pastor from leaving for Rome ("Leaving the ELCA", FL:28:9). Then came Jennifer Ferrara's response, a former ELCA pastor, defining her transition ("Becoming Roman", FL:28:12). Comes now Kevin Guillory. Guillory graduated from St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore in 1986 and received ordination as a Roman Catholic deacon. He then graduated from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg in 1989 and presently serves St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Baltimore, MD.(<revkev@home.com>)

Being one of those who left Rome for Wittenberg, I read Miss Ferrara's piece with absorbed interest. Of particular fascination were her references to *Lumen Gentium 14*, and the critical significance she assigns to that document. When I was still in the Roman seminary this particular dogmatic teaching was a much-studied text. On a gentle, yet less-than-honest note, it was regarded with calculated bemusement. More bluntly, it was generally received with confused embarrassment by both students and faculty. Let me explain.

Miss Ferrara noted that *Lumen Gentium 14*, defending the doctrine of the divine necessity of the Roman Catholic Church, clearly states: “Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would either refuse to enter it, or remain in it.”

Yet I’m sure that many do not know that just two paragraphs later, in *Lumen Gentium 16*, we read the following: “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience -- those too may achieve eternal salvation.”

### **Gnostic Evangelism**

What are we to make of these two statements? Perhaps the best construction is that which we learned in the Roman seminary: Since non-Christians can achieve salvation by good works (#16), *and* because damnation is guaranteed through an explicit rejection of the Roman Catholic Church (#14), the most loving pastoral approach to insuring that the greatest number of souls go to heaven is to keep as quiet as possible about the Roman Catholic Church; a kind of “Gnostic Evangelism.”

### **Living It Up in Heaven**

I am confident, in fact, that Miss Ferrara is well aware of the need to maintain such silence for, as she herself notes: “For me to try to pressure (former colleagues and parishioners) into leaving the ELCA would be improper because, at this point, they do not see the truth of *Lumen Gentium 14*.” God grant they never do! Otherwise they just might reject Rome and so condemn themselves hell, while all the ignorant Protestants, obedient Romans, and well-heeled pagans get to live it up in heaven.

### **Pursuing an Answer**

It is hoped that such a bizarre soteriology would leave one asking, “Where is Christ in all of this?” And as a matter of fact, it was the pursuit of an answer to that very question that eventually led me to Lutheranism. A catalyst in my theological development was a history professor who, being an ex-nun and still Roman, had a number of positive things to say about Martin Luther and his approach to Scripture. Through her encouragement I began to read him and so learned for myself of his gifted genius and passionate love for Christ and His incarnation, His cross, His resurrection, and His Word, the Sacred Scriptures.

### **The Gift of His Death**

Yet until I began to read Luther and examine the Scriptures in light of what he was saying, I had never known of either the magnitude nor the danger of my own sinfulness in the presence of God’s holiness. “Man is radically threatened by guilt” was merely an unexplained phrase I’d encountered in my seminary career. I had heard about, but never completely understood, the incredible gift of His death as the substitution for my own punishment until I encountered Luther.

In time, Robert Jensen and Eric Gritsch introduced me to the Law-Gospel Dialectic that was clearly (though fallibly) sketched out with the “If - Then” and the “Because - Therefore” paradigm. Furthermore, through footnotes and references, I was eventually led to study at the feet of Walther and Pieper.

What I finally discovered was that justification always and absolutely precedes sanctification, that the forensic declaration of “not guilty” for the sake of Christ happens for no

other reason than that His merits have been given to me, a sinner. To put it simply, I discovered the awesome truth that Christology always and absolutely precedes ecclesiology.

### **Wittenberg Inevitability**

From there the move from Rome to Wittenberg, while being very painful and difficult, was an inevitability. And, given my continued study of Scripture and Lutheran dogmatics, so too was my eventual subscription to Scriptural inerrancy and the confessional “quia.” Needless to say, as one who’s rostered with an entity as un-biblical and non-confessional as the ELCA, mine is a somewhat isolated position.

In the meantime, I’ve been asked by various parishioners to explain headlines in secular newspapers declaring that the Reformation is over since (some) Lutherans and Romans have agreed to sign a **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification** (know now as the *Augsburg Accord*). What can one say? Can I tell them that, at my most optimistic and hopeful, the JDDJ is utterly meaningless? After all, a large part of the text is simply the lining up of various contradictory statements and, in the end, declaring a consensus.

### **A Lutheran Sacrifice**

Or maybe I should just be honest with them and, in a straightforward manner, tell them that those Lutherans who signed the document have sacrificed the doctrine of “justification by grace through faith”; *the article by which the church stands or falls* and around which all other elements of the faith revolve. When all is said and done, the article is reduced to being “an indispensable criterion”; one significant theological principle among many. From being the pole star, justification by grace is merely one of a number of points in the Christian constellation.

I rejoice that Miss Ferrara has (hopefully?) found some peace of mind in her new church home. But, as an ex-Roman become confessional Lutheran, I cannot help but note that almost as soon as the JDDJ was signed, a new indulgence was promulgated by the Vatican. The very practice that sparked Luther’s outrage is *still* alive and well in Romanism. Furthermore, it’s openly stated by Rome that not a single sentence of the Council of Trent has been abrogated. I fail to see either consensus or progress.

If the signing of the *Accord* does somehow signal the end of the Reformation, then I can only conclude that the bad guys have won. Hence, the Vatican and the ELCA may do as they wish, but I’ll stick with Scripture and the Confessions.

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A little more commentary here. The *other* Lutherans are certainly consistent in ignoring both that which Scripture clearly teaches, and Rome’s own has said.

Is Scripture not clear enough here? Matthew 5: *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Is Rome not clear enough here?

“Asked by a reporter whether there was **anything in the official common statement contrary to the Council of Trent** (The Roman Catholic Church’s 16th-century response to the Reformation), Cardinal Cassidy said, ‘**Absolutely not, otherwise how could we do it? We cannot do something contrary to an ecumenical council. There’s nothing there that the Council of Trent condemns.**’” [From Feb. 2000 “Word & Witness” Column]

**Galatians 1:7** *Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would*

***pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

We see here that Rome's claim that a council holds authority higher than the Apostle Paul, while at the same time claiming its own absolute authority by *Apostolic Succession!*

"We must not mind insulting men, if by respecting them we offend God." -- St. John Chrysostom

***Sola Scriptura,***

***Sola Fide,***

***Solo Christus †***