

A DOXOLOGICAL AFFIRMATION¹

THE HOLY TRINITY

- Blessing and honour, glory and power be to you, our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and always.
- Father, by Word and Spirit you are the maker of all things; and all creation, in its beauty and variety, praises you and reflects your beauty and power. And you have created humankind in your own image to praise and love you.
- In Christ your Son you came to be one of us, to share our human life, and in dying for us to share our death. Because Jesus called you 'Abba', Father, we too, in him, are bold to call you our Father, and to rejoice that we are members of your family.
- Through the Holy Spirit, you continue to come to us in the risen Christ, through your word and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Let the same Spirit also unite us with Christ so that in him we become a new creation.

Response: Blessing and honour, glory and power be to you, our God, for ever and ever!
(Rev 5:13)

THE CHURCH

- We thank you, our God, that you called Abraham and sent him out into an unknown future, trusting that you would keep your promise to bless all peoples in him.
- We thank you that Jesus called ordinary people to be his followers, and that today we belong to that community.
- We thank you that all those who met the Lord found in him forgiveness, new life, salvation, and a new relationship² with him, and with one another in him.
- We thank you that Jesus formed them into a community³ of his friends, walking in the way of discipleship.
- We thank you that the risen Lord sent his followers, and sends us, into all the world, to share the good news of that new life which springs from his incarnation, life, death and resurrection – a life which begins now and never ends.
- We thank you that the Holy Spirit empowered the early followers of Jesus to be his witnesses and the same Spirit enables us to continue the ministry and mission of Jesus in our time.
- And so we praise and thank you for that glorious company, the one, holy, catholic⁴ and apostolic Church which you sustain and to which you call us to be faithful members.

Response: Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! (Rev 7:12)

OUR REFORMATION HERITAGE

- We thank you, our God, for the great tradition which the church of ancient and medieval days preserved and handed on to the churches of the Reformation, especially the authoritative statements on the person of Christ.
- We thank you too for the common heritage which we share in the Reformation and the Methodist Revival:
 - ◆ for Martin Luther's passionate advocacy of justification by grace, through faith in the all-sufficient saving work of Christ; for his insistence on the centrality of Scripture, and for his gift to people of the Scriptures in their own language;
 - ◆ for John Calvin's single-minded proclamation of your sovereign grace in Christ; and for the clarity of his teaching that all things needed for our salvation have been completed in him.
 - ◆ for the warm-hearted witness of John and Charles Wesley to the love of the Triune God for the whole world, 'immense, unfathomed, unconfined'.⁵
- We thank you that you have brought us to this land of Australia, from among whose first inhabitants you have raised up followers of Christ to join with us as brothers and sisters in Christ living to your glory.

Response: Salvation and glory and power to our God! (Rev 19:1)

MISSION AND UNITY

- You have sent us into a world which rejects Christ's way, and which has turned to false gods of selfishness, power and violence; of greed and the exploitation of the vulnerable; of blind trust in human ability and fitness to control the created world. We share in this sin, and yet –
- You have given us the task of witnessing to the good news of Jesus Christ. You call us to be one, as you and Christ are one, so that the world may believe that you have sent him.
- You have given us your word to guide us on our journey. We affirm that Christ, the living Word, is present for us in his word and sacraments.
- You have given us baptism, as a means of grace – the grace of the presence of Christ – and as a sign and seal that Christ died and rose from the dead, and that we are made members of his body.
- You have given us the Eucharist, in which Christ comes to us; Christ who died for our sin and lives for our salvation: Christ who gives himself to us as the bread of life to nourish us for his mission into the world.
- We are called by you, our God, to love and serve you through worship and witness, through showing your compassion to all people, and by seeking your peace and justice in the world.
- Bind us together, loving God, as you will and when you will, so that the gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed everywhere as a witness to all people; and that your goal for creation may be fulfilled.
- As we now rejoice in our union with Christ our crucified, risen Brother, give us grace to know that in him we are sisters and brothers in one family.

Response: Blessing and honour, glory and power be to you our God, for ever and ever!
(Rev 5:13)

CONFESSION⁶

- Loving God, in your mercy, your glory and your love is our delight. As we joyfully praise and adore you we recall our own sinfulness. Without you we can do nothing, and our greatest need is for your forgiveness.
- Have mercy upon us, O God;
- forgive our sins;
- fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Leader: Kyrie eleison.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Christe eleison.

People: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader-. Kyrie eleison.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

ABSOLUTION

Leader: If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins,
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

COMMISSIONING

- Triune God, send us out together to praise your name, to proclaim the good news, to work for justice and peace, and to love and serve all those whom you have made.

Response: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22: 20).

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¹ This affirmation was used by the bilateral dialogue representing the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia in a joint service at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Horsham, Victoria, on 8 May 1997 for the commissioning of the members of the dialogue. The service marked the beginning of a new phase after a painful interlude due to misunderstanding on both sides.

² The word 'relationship' here is a way of expressing the Greek *koinonia* (communion, community, fellowship).

³ 'Community' here also represents the Greek *koinonia*.

⁴ The word 'catholic' means 'universal', 'belonging to the whole'. It comes from the Greek phrase *kath holou*, which literally means 'throughout the whole' (see Acts 9: 31, 'through all Judaea', which is *kath holes Ioudaias*). In pre-Reformation times, the word 'allgemeine' was used, as the German language did not have the word 'catholic' at that time. Luther thought that 'Christian' was a better term than

'allgemeine', which simply means 'general', 'universal. Many English-speaking churches, including the Uniting Church, now use the word 'catholic' in their version of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

⁵ From Charles Wesley, 'Father, whose everlasting love', *Australian Hymn Book*, 142, *Together in Song*, 213

⁶ 'Confession' (the Greek verb is *exomologeîn* and *exomologeisthai*) is used in three senses in Scripture:

1. confession of faith (eg Phil 2:11)
2. confession of sins (eg Matt 3:6)
3. praise of God (eg Rom 14:11)

These three senses belong inseparably together. So in the confession of our sins we are actually giving glory to God. Therefore, confession, paradoxically, has a place in doxology.