

# Concordia Lutheran Conference

## Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

**Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity**

– **Thursday** –

*The day of death (is better) than the day of one's birth.* – Ecclesiastes 7:1

To the children of this world this statement of Holy Writ is utter nonsense. And that should not surprise us, for *“the natural man receiveth not [does not comprehend] the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (I Corinthians 2:14). It is true that you, as a child of God, gratefully recognize the day of your birth as significant and worthy of your praise and thanksgiving to Him, as David confesses: *“I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well”* (Psalm 139:14). God Himself created you and gave you your body and soul, eyes, ears, and all your bodily members, your reason and all your senses, and still preserves them (Luther, 1<sup>st</sup> Article). Nevertheless, because of Adam's transgression (Genesis 3), you and all mankind were conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5), which is certainly not God's fault; and, because of sin, you were born unto hard work and tedious labor here in this world which the Lord cursed according to His justice (Genesis 3:17-19; cf. 5:29b). Moreover we speak of and recognize as the result of sin all the spiritual and bodily misery into which we have been born (Ecclesiastes 8:6), the end of which is death (Romans 6:21). But, O child of God, He created you and gave you this temporal life that you might obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ. What a blessing to His elect is the assurance given to the prophet: *“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee”* (Jeremiah 1:5; cf. also Isaiah 44:2 and Romans 8:29) and in Acts 13:48 – *“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”* You are God's beloved child by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26). And when the day of your departure from this vale of tears draws nigh and death comes your way, you may rejoice and say with the Apostle Paul: *“I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better”* (Philippians 1:23). *“In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore”* (Psalm 16:11b) -- no more sin, no more battles with the flesh, no more work and toil, no more misery, nothing but righteousness, nothing but blessing, nothing but comfort and rest, nothing but bliss. Dr. Walther once said concerning his own departure: *“The day of my death? Oh, I can scarcely await it; I rejoice at the approach of it; it will be the best day of my life!”* The day of death is better than the day of one's birth. For then our true life will begin, everlasting life in the mansions prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34).

**PRAYER** – Dear Heavenly Father, I thank Thee that, in eternity already, Thou didst in Christ Jesus choose me to be Thine own dear child and heir, and that, in time, Thou didst bring me to saving faith in Him through the Gospel. Grant that now I look forward in confidence to the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul, when I depart this life and enter into the glory which He purchased and won for me. Keep me Thy child even unto the end by the power of Thy Gospel, that through Jesus Christ I may overcome all terrors of death and look forward with pleasure to the day of my departure in Him. Amen.

Ah, who would not then depart with gladness to inherit heaven for earthly sadness? Who here would languish longer in bewailing and in anguish?? Come, O Christ, and loose the chains that bind us! Lead us forth and cast this world behind us! With Thee, th' Anointed, finds our soul its joy and rest appointed!

Hymn 589, 5-6