

Ordination of Ryan Cramer  
St. Andrew Lutheran Church

3 October 2010  
Rockton, ILL

+*Jesu Juva*+

***Christ's Ordination Prayer for You***

John 17:6-18

We are here today in answer to prayer. I know, Ryan, you have prayed for this day as you studied and prepared these past years at the seminary. With the lack of calls last April and the delay it brought about, no doubt the intensity of your praying increased. Certainly others here at St. Andrew's along with parents, family and friends have prayed for you. Indeed the whole church has prayed for you, Sunday after Sunday, imploring the Lord of the harvest to raise up faithful and able men who will count it pure joy to spend and be spent in the service of the Gospel. This service is a testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord as once again He has in mercy heard the prayer of His church.

But there is yet another who has made and continues to make intercession for you, Ryan. It is the Lord Christ Himself. The great Lutheran theologian Hermann Sasse who lived through the ravages of the WW II in Germany comforted his hearers in the midst of that war with the reminder, "Jesus still prays for His church." In the text from John 17, part of Jesus' high priestly prayer on the night of His being handed over to die, we are given to eaves drop on the prayer that Jesus makes for the men who will be His apostles, His sent ones, and by extension His prayer for you, Ryan, as today you are sent as surely as the Lord Jesus Himself would send them on Easter evening.

There is comfort in hearing from the lips of a Christian friend the assuring words, "I will pray for you." How much more comforting it is to know that Jesus Christ, crucified as our Brother and risen from death to give us life in His name, is praying for you. Dr. Sasse says "Here it is not a mere man who is praying – no human being can pray it after Him. Here prays the eternal Son. All other prayers are prayers of men to God, prayers of creatures to their Creator. But this one prayer is prayed by the eternal Son to the Father" (*We Confess the Church*, 13-14). Jesus includes you in His prayer. That is the confidence you are given as today the Lord puts you into the preaching office.

In view of the enormity of the tasks God lays on those who are called into His service as ministers of the Gospel, the Apostle Paul raises the question in II Corinthians 2: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Then he goes on to assert in the next chapter that we are not in ourselves sufficient to claim anything as coming from us "but our sufficiency is from God" who made us competent to be ministers of the New Testament. Our sufficiency, your sufficiency is from God. How abundant this sufficiency is we hear in Jesus' prayer and it all hinges on what we have been given by Jesus: God's name and Word!

Called by the Lord's name and signed with that name in Holy Baptism, Ryan belongs to this Lord. Nothing that we would say of Ryan overrides or says more than the fact that He belongs to the Father who created him, the Son who purchased him with His blood,

and the Spirit who hallowed him to be His own in Baptism. It is in that same name- “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” that Ryan will be ordained and consecrated to “the Office of the Holy Ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church” this afternoon. There is nothing here of the granting of a special power or an indelible character. There is no energy bestowed here that who move you into an estate different from that of a baptized sinner. Rather with His name, the Lord God now is sending and authorizing you to speak His words.

Like the apostles, Ryan, you are on the receiving end of the Lord’s giving. Jesus’ prayer for his apostles is more about their need than their capacities or achievements. The ordination service is more about the neediness of the candidate rather than his capability. Our Lord held out no notions of a romanticized life for His apostles. He offers them no prospects of triumphalism in winning the world for the kingdom. Instead He prays for them precisely because He has given them the Father’s word: “I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” Jesus implores His Father to keep His apostles in His name and through that name in the oneness and unity of faith. Such is Jesus’ prayer for you, Ryan. Jesus guards and keeps His own in His name and Word. He consecrated Himself to the death that was His alone to die to purchase and claim sinners as His own possession, alive in righteousness, innocence, and blessedness even as He is risen from the dead. So Jesus prays “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

It is that word, Jesus’ words, words of spirit and life that Ryan is sent to preach. Jesus says in our text that He has given His apostles this word. It’s Jesus’ word; not your own. The ministry is not about making it up as you go along but proclaiming the words of the One who send you. As Martin Franzmann’s hymn puts it we are to preach that word “to men who like or like it not” for this Word shall endure and stand when flow’rs and men shall be forgot” (LSB 586:1). His Word stands. It will not be overcome by the powers of this or any age. It will continue to go forth from God’s mouth and accomplish the purpose for which He sent it. Jesus gives you this Word to preach. You know that this Word is nothing less than the Word of the cross and it is through this preaching that our God will to rescue the lost, to bring salvation to sinners. God backs it up with His promise!

We can’t pray Jesus’ high priestly prayer for that prayer can only be uttered by the Son to His Father as it references the work that is uniquely His. But we can and do pray the prayer that He has taught us, the Lord’s Prayer. And in a few minutes with brother pastors laying hands on Ryan, we will pray it. We will invoke Jesus’ Holy Father who is now our true and dear Father to give Ryan boldness and confidence in his praying for the people committed to his care. We will call upon the Lord to hallow His name as Ryan teaches the Word of God in truth and purity. We will pray that God will give His Holy Spirit so that those who hear the Gospel preached by Christ’s servant will believe and live holy lives in time and eternity. We pray that God’s good and gracious will is done in this new preacher and those who hear him. We pray that the Father would open His hand to give him daily bread-all that he needs for this body and life, and that He lavish on him the same forgiveness of his trespasses that he speaks to others. We pray that the Lord

would guard and keep him from every temptation to false belief, despair and other great shame and vice. And finally we pray that Good Lord would deliver him from every evil and grant him at the end of his days to come into the heavenly kingdom hearing the Father's approval "Well done, you good and faithful servant." Our High Priest has already put His "Amen" to this prayer.

Jesus prays for you, Ryan. The Father has answered His Son's prayer and so we send you on your way to the work and ministry that is yours to do at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Foley, Alabama trusting in nothing other than the name and words of Him who is our life and joy, Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.

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