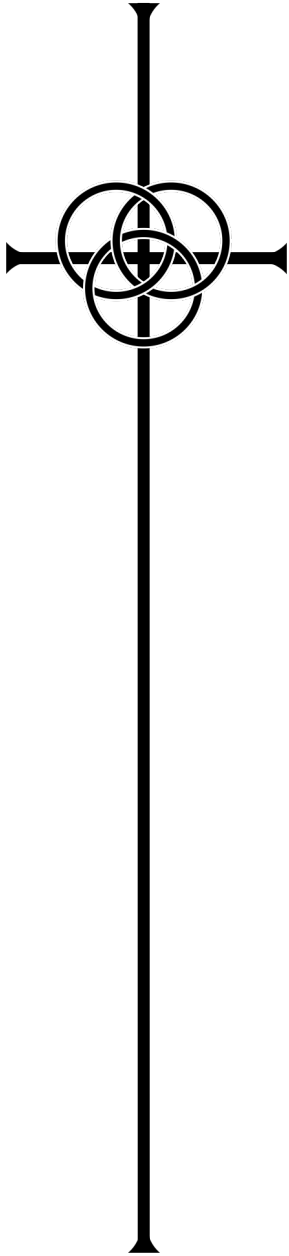


LIFE TOGETHER

RECEIVING GOD'S GIFTS ✝ SHARING GOD'S GIFTS



Dearest Saints of Holy Trinity,

Fall, it seems, is here for good. That means winter draws near, and with it the season of Advent and the start of a new Church Year. Time sure does fly, doesn't it? We've come another year and Christ has not returned. That's ok. He'll come next year, and we can say that with the same confidence with which we said it the year before, and the year before that, and the year before that.

Every generation can rightly say it is more wicked than its predecessor. Every generation can rightly say that the return of Christ is near. In this case, they can, in fact, all be right. Similarly, no one is ever wrong for saying, "The end is near." It always is.

We live in the end times, and every generation before us since the Ascension has as well. The only truths of the end times are that the world is evil and will keep getting more evil, and that Christ is coming soon. Even the martyrs of the first century affirmed that.

Has Christ delayed? World War 3 may very well be at our doorstep. Where is he? Well, right now he's everywhere he promised he would be. He's never delayed there. Wars and rumors of wars don't change where Christ is to be found here and now. The problem of not finding him has always been on man's end, because man is not looking for him in the right places. But as far as his return goes, one day is as a thousand years to him, and one thousand years as one day. He, like Gandalf, is never delayed. He arrives precisely when he means to. So let us begin to pray once again, "Come, Lord Jesus," and live like we believe what we pray for will be granted us.

In Christ,

Pastor Ferguson

The Axis of the Human Heart:

How Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn Can Keep Us from Going Over the Brink

Rod Dreher

*Pastor's Note: This article was originally published on Rod Dreher's Diary on October 28, 2023. (<https://roddreher.substack.com/p/the-axis-of-the-human-heart>) Rod Dreher is an Orthodox Christian living in Hungary. He is a journalist, and the author of *The Benedict Option* and *Live Not By Lies*. I recommend both books quite highly, and commend all of Dreher's articles to you. Given the state of the world and, in particular, events in the Middle East, I wanted to share this particular article with you. I pray that at the least it gives you much to think about.*

Here is the most famous saying of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the great-souled survivor of Soviet prison camps. It appears in *The Gulag Archipelago*:

It was granted me to carry away from my prison years on my bent back, which nearly broke beneath its load, this essential experience: how a human being becomes evil and how good.

In the intoxication of youthful successes I had felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel. In the surfeit of power I was a murderer, and an oppressor. In my most evil moments I was convinced that I was doing good, and I was well supplied with systematic arguments. And it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good.

Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains . . . an un-uprooted small corner of evil.

I think of this every week — and since October 7, every single day. This wisdom, which came to Solzhenitsyn through many years of intense suffering, can save us from surrendering to barbarism. If we take Solzhenitsyn seriously, we will reject the insane belief that Good and Evil inhere in groups, and that we, somehow, are guilty or innocent by virtue of our group identity.

Martin Latsis, a senior officer in the Bolshevik secret police, gave this instruction to his men to carry out the Red Terror:

Do not look in the file of incriminating evidence to see whether or not the accused rose up against the Soviets with arms or words. Ask him instead to which class he belongs, what is his background, his education, his profession. These are the questions that will determine the fate of the accused. That is the meaning and essence of the Red Terror.

The Red Terror lasted from 1918 to 1922. Historians can't determine with certainty how many so-called enemies of the regime the Soviets murdered in that period; estimates range

from 50,000 to 200,000. The point to take here is that the Red Terror had nothing to do with anyone's actual guilt or innocence. For Lenin's henchmen, the line between Good and Evil ran between the classes. To be on the wrong side of the line was to forfeit your right to life; to be on the right side of the line was to have permission to do whatever you desired to the Other.

The Bolsheviks consciously based the Red Terror on the Reign of Terror imposed by the French revolutionaries. It began in 1793 and lasted just under a year, during which time the revolutionary government carried out mass executions. Maximilien Robespierre, the greatest monster of all the revolutionaries, serenely justified it with these words:

If the basis of popular government in peacetime is virtue, the basis of popular government during a revolution is both virtue and terror; virtue, without which terror is baneful; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the fatherland.

Enemies of the revolution ceased to be human. To kill them was social justice, you see. Robespierre began his public life as a human rights lawyer from the provinces, reached ultimate power in revolutionary France, and used it to commit mass murder. He was guillotined too.

One of the most notorious episodes of the Terror was the Drownings of Nantes, carried out under the orders of Jean-Baptiste Carrier, delegated to solve the problem of anti-revolution sentiment supposedly found in the area:

In fact, Carrier took something of a scorched earth approach to the area, declaring that he would leave not one enemy of the revolution alive, a policy that attracted the full support of the Committee of Public Safety.

As night fell on 16th November 1793 Carrier requested that almost 200 Catholic priests who were being held on the prison barge, La Gloire, be assembled on the dock. Here a customised barge waited for them and 90 of the priests were bound and herded onto the vessel. With the prisoners packed tight and helpless, the craft was piloted out into the Loire where it was scuppered. All but three

of the prisoners on board suffered a terrifying death by drowning and for the trio that tried to swim for safety, respite was short-lived. Picked up by a naval ship that had heard the screams of the dying men, the escapees were soon tracked down and returned to custody to be killed in the second wave of executions on the following evening.

This was just the first of a series of executions by that would go on until February 1794 in which men, women and children were drowned without mercy or appeal as Carrier's regime crushed all those seen as resisting the ideals of the Revolution. Judges in the region approved mass lists of names for execution and these terrified unfortunates all perished beneath the dark waters of the Loire. Carrier's soldiers laid waste to large areas of the district in a ceaseless search for the perceived enemies, with a modified barge eventually being engineered that made use of special hatches that allowed the executions to be as efficient as possible.

As his reign continued, Carrier found the people of Nantes turning against him. They watched with increasing fear as their neighbours and friends went to their deaths, towns and farms set ablaze in the tireless search for insurgents, with some of those arrested and drowned as young as five years old.

In 1863, American troops massacred 350 Shoshone Indians in their campsite at Bear River, killing even women and children, to solve the "Indian problem." It was the worst single slaying of American Indians in history—and that's saying something.

Jonathan Deiss, a military historian based in Washington, compared the slaying of Native Americans in the 1800s to mass shootings in the 21st century. "People became numb to them," Deiss said. "People considered Indians not really humans," Deiss added, "so it was easy to justify killing them or mistreating them." Yet lest you think that the line between good and evil passes between Indians and whites, you should understand that the Indians could also be extremely savage. . . .

You see what I'm getting at? Once you decide that other human beings are somehow less than human because they are bearers of an ethnic, political, religious, or national identity, you surrender to your own demons ("And even in the best of all hearts, there remains . . . an un-uprooted small corner of evil").

[The deaths of over 4,000 African Americans in racial terror lynchings between 1877 and 1950] is another form.

How do you, a churchgoing small-town merchant, or farmer, bring yourself to attend these spectacles? You do it by convincing yourself that the black men are not really human, and that killing them like this might be unpleasant to some, but it is necessary to advance the Cause. On July 10, 1941, the Gentile half of the small Polish town of Jedwabne, murdered the other half, all Jews. Their neighbors.

As Hamas was on October 7, 2023, the Gentiles of Jedwabne were on July 10, 1941, the whites were throughout the South of the Jim Crow era, the Soviets were during the Red Terror, the Indians and the Americans were in the 19th century, the French revolutionaries were during the Terror[,] and on and on, back to Cain slaying Abel. This is who we are. You, me, all of us.

I bring all this up simply to say that the skull is always and everywhere just beneath the skin. Any of us could be persuaded, under the right circumstances, to surrender our humanity and kill, or justify killing, innocent people, simply because they are on the wrong side of where we have placed the line between good and evil. In Jedwabne, a Catholic priest emerged to tell his parishioners to knock off the pogrom, to wait till the Germans showed up to finish off the Jews. A Catholic priest. The South was full of white pastors of all kinds who either kept their silence in the face of violent white supremacy, or even justified it with their sermons. Every KKK chapter was supposed to have an ordained Protestant minister as its chaplain, called the "kludd".

Do not ever, *ever*, think that you are incapable of this kind of evil. At the same time, do not ever stay silent when it manifests. It ought to shock you to the depth of your conscience that so many educated people, Muslims and otherwise, in the West have taken to the streets to proclaim solidarity with Hamas after it massacred over 1,000 civilians, and committed grotesque atrocities. This solidarity with evil can only be sustained by moving the line between good and evil, and putting Israeli Jews on the negative side of it. This is how you get left-wing Americans who fall to pieces over misgendering and other stupid "microaggressions" marching in support of those butchers who cut an unborn child out of her mother's body, and worse. The Cause justifies it in their minds. They embrace evil within themselves, and sacralize it.

If you have ever wondered how people ever tolerated the Klan doing what it did, or the Nazis doing what they did, well, now you know. Look at the ordinary people, your neighbors, and what they not only tolerate, but celebrate, for the sake of a cause. If you imagine yourself to be innocent, and incapable of evil, you are simply rationalizing. You may, as happened to Solzhenitsyn, be in your most evil moments, and only constructing systematic arguments to justify your wickedness. We are witnessing that happen now. Indeed, so many US universities have become madrassas of evil that produce exactly these kinds of arguments.

Solzhenitsyn recognized that it is impossible to banish evil from the earth, but if we hold the line down the middle of our hearts, and understand what the line means, we might stay our own hand, and keep the world from spinning off its axis into blood-soaked madness:

Since then I have come to understand the truth of all the religions of the world: They struggle with the evil inside a human being (inside every human being). It is impossible to expel evil from the world in its entirety, but it is possible to constrict it within each person.

Words to live by. Words that might yet save us. The kind of evil that Hamas committed on October 7 is a recurring fact of this mortal life. To keep it in check requires unceasing effort. Every single one of us must know that the moment we allow ourselves to believe that line has passed outside of our hearts, and that we have joined in this life the company of the saints—that is, those who cannot err—then we will have let go of the rope that holds us up over the unfathomable abyss of our hearts.

THIS MONTH AT HOLY TRINITY

Food Pantry Donations

Please help to provide for our hungry neighbors in need by donating goods to the food pantry. This is an easy addition to your regular monthly alms.

Food pantry needs for the month of November include crackers, chili, tuna, canned chicken and hamburger helper.

For more information contact Debbie Ohlensehlen

Ladies Guild Bake Sale

Ladies Guild will be hosting a bake sale Sunday, November 12th.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

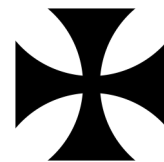
The Ladies Guild will be collecting orders for honey to benefit the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is a Christ-centered residential treatment and educational center for children and their families. We help the most troubled, complicated, and amazing kids by providing best-in-class psychiatric therapy and trauma-informed care, where we look kids in the eye, walk with them, and help them become their best selves. The mission of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is to help at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

Dear Church,

We are newer to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and you have welcomed us with open arms. It is a blessing to be part of this community who takes care of their own. Your prayers and support have been a source of strength for us. God has shown His infinite love in many ways. One such way is Holy Trinity coming together to collect an offering for us during the month of September. These gifts were a tremendous help to pay down our loans for recent cancer treatments performed in Mexico. As with many experiences in life, words fall short in expressing our gratitude for such a loving and generous act. When we were informed that the church was collecting an offering for us, we were speechless. We are so very thankful and humbled by your loving generosity and continue to praise the Lord. We continue to pray for the well-being of all of you. May the Lord honor you and continue the efforts of your hands.

Sincerely,

The Ellis Family



Anniversaries of Baptism

- 2 Greg Biermann
- 3 Ron Ideker
- 11 Kathy Haer
- 12 Letitia Oswald
- 13 Jim Krueger
- 13 Stacey Voltmer
- 14 Karen Voltmer
- 30 Jordan Krueger

Birthdays

- 1 Janice Geib
- 2 Sue Heits
- 2 Grant Kent
- 3 Michael Livengood
- 4 Alisa Geib
- 5 Cindy Karsten
- 5 Shannon Ellis
- 9 Chris Biermann
- 12 Liam Ellis
- 13 Lynne Helfers
- 14 Mike Burnside
- 15 Shane Heits
- 19 Grady Cook
- 20 Jessica Livengood
- 21 Rhonda Krueger
- 21 Billy Paul Sharp
- 22 Marilyn Thurnau
- 26 Carol Sharp
- 28 Brandy White
- 29 Taylor Cook



Saints' Days and Commemorations

- 1 All Saint's' Day
- 8 Johannes von Staupitz, *Luther's Father Confessor*
- 9 Martin Chemnitz (birth), *Pastor and Confessor*
- 11 Martin of Tours, *Pastor*
- 14 Emperor Justinian, *Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ*
- 19 Elizabeth of Hungary
- 23 Clement of Rome, *Pastor*
- 29 Noah

Serving This Month

Worship Preparation: Susan Biermann

Ushers: *Volunteers Needed*

Greeters: Larry & Maria Wright

Acolytes:

- 5 Cameron Biermann
- 12 Lela Wright
- 19 Sadie Biermann
- 26

Refreshments:

- 5 Marla Voltmer
- 12 Brenda Brown
- 19 Jennifer Biermann
- 26 Gail Heitman

NOVEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Driver's License Testing	2 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Council Items due to Secretary's office	3 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Pastor Gone to Conception Abbey	4
5 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Board of Education Meeting	6	7 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	8 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 6:00 p.m.—Midweek	9 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	10 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 2:00-6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open	11 11:00 a.m.—Faith in the Home Conference at First Lutheran in Sabetha
12 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Council Meeting	13	14 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	15 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Driver's License Testing 6:00 p.m.—Midweek	16 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	17 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Pastor Gone to Conception Abbey 2:00-6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open	18
19 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service 12:00 p.m.—Potluck	20	21 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 1:00 p.m.—Ladies Guild 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	22 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 7:00 p.m.—Thanksgiving Eve Divine Service	23 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	24 7:30 a.m.—Matsins	25 10:00 a.m.—Catechumenate
26 9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Board of Elders Meeting 1:00 p.m.—L&C Rehearsal 5:30 p.m.—Youth Group	27	28 7:30 a.m.—Matsins 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	29 7:30 a.m.—Matsins Driver's License Testing 6:00 p.m.—Midweek	30 7:30 a.m.—Matsins		