

Forde, "Is Invocation of the Saints an Adiaphoron?" in *The One Mediator, The Saints, and Mary. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 8*. Edited by H. George Anderson, J. Francis Stafford, and Joseph A. Burgess. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992, pp. 327-38; here 336.

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how it is granted. In what we called in the previous round of dialogue a "transformationist" model, one could think of Christ as mediating transforming grace and saints as the evidence of the effectiveness of such mediation. It could then be held that asking such saints to intercede in the hereafter is simply an indication of one's faith and confidence in the grace of Christ.

Lutheran and Catholic Views of Mediation

Lutheran difficulties with such a view of mediation stem, as in the previous round of dialogue on justification, from difficulties with the model itself. Where justification is by faith alone, creating the situation in which one is simultaneously just and sinner, what is mediated is not some intermediate thing or power but Christ himself through the word of the cross and the sacraments. The only mediation that occurs happens in the event itself and the proclamation of it. Christ becomes sin for us and bears the curse even until death. If there is no resurrection and consequently no proclamation, there is no mediation. Since he is raised, he is now our life. The mediation, if one is to use the word, occurs through what Luther called "the happy exchange and struggle." Christ takes our sin and gives us the righteousness that emerges from his struggle with that sin and death. Thus he alone is the "Mediator." As such, he is not a go-between, he is God for us. Subsequent mediation takes place through the word of this victory in which he gives himself to us. The "real presence" of Christ is mediated through word and sacrament. What takes place for the sinner is not, therefore, a transformation as such, but a death and a resurrection in Christ. In this life we are simultaneously just and sinner, dead and alive, in faith, until the end.

Given this view, Lutherans find it difficult to understand why it is necessary or advantageous to appeal to someone other than Christ to intercede for us or to grant favor of any sort. The idea that someone other than Christ may, due to the merit gained by cooperation with grace, be so placed as to be such an intercessor is simply foreign if not inimical to a piety nourished on justification by faith alone. Such piety is grasped and shaped by what is revealed rather than what is hidden and thus not open to speculation. Moreover, speculation about saints in the hereafter can create problems for the conscience if it suggests that to become a "real" saint one must somehow attain such status—even if with the aid of grace.