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day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the Evil Foe may have no power over me. AMEN.

### Large Catechism

#### Sacrament of the Altar

<sup>61</sup> Therefore such people must learn that it is the highest art to know that our Sacrament does not depend upon our worthiness. For we are not baptized because we are worthy and holy, nor do we go to confession because we are pure and without sin, but the contrary, because we are poor miserable men, and just because we are unworthy; unless it be some one who desires no grace and absolution nor intends to reform.

<sup>62</sup> But whoever would gladly obtain grace and consolation should impel himself, and allow no one to frighten him away, but say: I, indeed, would like to be worthy; but I come, not upon any worthiness, but upon Thy Word, because Thou hast commanded it, as one who would gladly be Thy disciple, no matter what becomes of my worthiness. <sup>63</sup> But this is difficult; for we always have this obstacle and hindrance to encounter, that we look more upon ourselves than upon the Word and lips of Christ. For nature desires so to act that it can stand and rest firmly on itself, otherwise it refuses to make the approach. Let this suffice concerning the first point.

<sup>64</sup> In the second place, there is besides this command also a promise, as we heard above, which ought most strongly to incite and encourage us. For here stand the kind and precious words: This is My body, given for you. This is My blood, shed for you, for the remission of sins. <sup>65</sup> These words, I have said, are not preached to wood and stone, but to me and you; else He might just as well be silent and not institute a Sacrament. Therefore consider, and put yourself into this You, that He may not speak to you in vain.

<sup>66</sup> For here He offers to us the entire treasure which He has brought for us from heaven, and to which He invites us also in other places with the greatest kindness, as when He says in St. Matthew 11:28: Come

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unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>67</sup> Now it is surely a sin and a shame that He so cordially and faithfully summons and exhorts us to our highest and greatest good, and we act so distantly with regard to it, and permit so long a time to pass [without partaking of the Sacrament] that we grow quite cold and hardened, so that we have no inclination or love for it. <sup>68</sup> We must never regard the Sacrament as something injurious from which we had better flee, but as a pure, wholesome, comforting remedy imparting salvation and comfort, which will cure you and give you life both in soul and body. For where the soul has recovered, the body also is relieved. Why, then, is it that we act as if it were a poison, the eating of which would bring death?

<sup>69</sup> To be sure, it is true that those who despise it and live in an unchristian manner receive it to their hurt and damnation; for nothing shall be good or wholesome to them, just as with a sick person who from caprice eats and drinks what is forbidden him by the physician. <sup>70</sup> But those who are sensible of their weakness, desire to be rid of it and long for help, should regard and use it only as a precious antidote against the poison which they have in them. For here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin, which contains and brings with it the grace of God and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.

<sup>71</sup> Thus you have, on the part of God, both the command and the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides this, on your part, your own distress which is about your neck, and because of which this command, invitation, and promise are given, ought to impel you. For He Himself says: They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that be sick; that is, those who are weary and heavy-laden with their sins, with the fear of death, temptations of the flesh and of the devil. <sup>72</sup> If, therefore, you are heavy-laden and feel your weakness, then go joyfully to this Sacrament and obtain refreshment, consolation, and strength.