

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1526 - March 10 - Charles V Marries Isabella of Portugal

There is excitement everywhere as Charles has left Bohemia and the battlefield to travel to Seville to marry Isabella. We understand the political and economic implications of this arrangement with the tremendous wealth of the New World controlled by Spain and Portugal. It was only three weeks ago that the armies of Charles V defeated the armies of Francis I at the Battle of Pravia.

Just the year before Charles ended his engagement with Mary, daughter of King Henry VIII of England. She was nine and quite advanced for her age but Charles at age 25 had passions for the bedroom and such an arrangement was not practical. The public displays of affection between Charles and Isabella appear flirtatious and passionate. Isabella, first cousin of Charles, is youthful at age 22.

Martin Luther's marriage to Katherina von Bora was just nine months before on June 13, 1525. There was no papal blessing on his marriage to Katie, a former nun. Their first child (Hans) is expected in a few months.

There is concern among the nobles about the emperor's distance from Bohemia at this critical time when the barbaric armies of Sulemein the Magnificent threaten all of Europe and the survival of the Christian religion. The news of the alliance between Francis I of France and Sulemein of the Muslim state in Turkey is very strange as to the reasons why a Roman Catholic state would come to such an agreement with an Islamic state.

The wedding ceremony was spectacular and Charles is clearly the dominant person in all of Europe. His military skills in strategic planning and leadership give us confidence that Charles V is the leader who will defend us and the Christian faith from persecution and violence from the specialized armies of Sulemein.

(Charles and Isabella will have a son, Philip, in 1527. Philip II will become emperor in 1556)

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1526 - August 29 -Turks Defeat Hungarians at Mohacs

We have been following the march of Sulemein's 100,000 soldiers since March. The Hapsburg army of 50,000 is no match for the Turks. It is likely that all of Europe will be under the new Islamic caliphate before the end of the year. After the victories in Rhodes and Belgrade a few years before, the Turkish plan to dominate all of Europe is clear. This is a clear threat to all of Christianity and the stability of government in central Europe.

Late in the afternoon of August 29, the light cavalry of the Hungarian army led the charge against the canons and crossbows of the disciplined jannisares of the Muslim forces from Turkey. The use of firearms as a new weapon is reported. We do not know what this means for the future of Europe as innocent people are killed in large numbers.

The Hungarian army fought brilliantly for the first hours on the plains of Mohacs but as darkness approached around 7 p.m., the rains came. King Louis II was killed, more than 20,000 Hungarian soldiers died, and 2,000 prisoners, many nobles and government leaders were killed. It was Sulemein's decision to take no prisoners.

Martin Luther personally wrote to Emperor Charles V to take action against the Muslim advances before they seize Vienna and the independent German states. For Luther, this was a serious threat to civilization and the Christian religion. Charles V had been away in Iberia with his new wife, Isabella and was traveling to Austria to handle this crisis which is a threat to Christendom.

The Wittenberg Times

1526 - 1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1526 - October - Persecution of Jews in Hungary

One of the devastating effects of the Battle of Mohacs was the persecution of Jews and their forced removal from the cities of Hungary. With the government dominated by Muslims, the Jews were no longer free to worship and retreated to the countryside. For the first time, there were public burnings of Jews at the stake.

They formed small villages, called shtetls, where they worshiped in secret. The Jews have been in Budapest since 800, the same time the first Christian church was established in Nitra.

In the future it will be the work of Lutheran pastors who revitalized Christianity in Hungary to provide freedom from persecution. Martin Luther made specific statements supporting the right of the Turks to worship God as they chose. The removal of images from Christian churches was supported by the Muslims. In fact, the Ottomans were tolerant of Protestants and opposed to Roman Catholics. Within the year, the Turks will attack Rome, the city of the pope. The beliefs of John Calvin will eventually become more popular with the people of Hungary because of the emphasis on predestination and moral discipline. Protestant ideas found support with the people of Hungary and their conquerors. The Christians and Jews in Hungary lived in constant fear of the Ottoman threat and presence.

In the same year, Babur establishes the Muslim religion in New Delhi giving the Ottomans the largest empire in the world at such a critical time in history.

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1526 - Anabaptists Move to Moravia

Large numbers of Anabaptists are leaving Zurich and Basel for Moravia. This exodus follows the first public adult baptism in Zollikon, near Zurich last year. The Czech nobles appear tolerant of their radical Christian beliefs because of their strong work ethic and skill as craftsmen.

They are living in small communes in this fertile land. The migration is seeing large number of immigrants moving on a daily basis. It is believed their numbers are approaching 10,000.

Although their beliefs were inspired by Ulrich Zwingli, it is their rejection of infant baptism that is the cause of their persecution. Swiss law has now made adult baptisms, or rebaptisms, punishable by death. The Anabaptists require a public confession of faith as the sign they are ready to be baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ.

Although Anabaptists are quoting the *Holy Bible* to support their social changes regarding the common ownership of property, polygamy, interpretation of the *Holy Bible* as being equal to that of trained theologians, and their desire for separation from the laws of the civil government, they lack the support of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli.

Comments: faithmatters@bethlehemchurch.com

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1526 - October - *Luther Preaches the German Mass*

For the past several months, the non-Latin order of service has been tested with the congregation in Wittenberg. It is now ready for publication for all of Europe. The Deutsche Mass is no longer in Latin but has been revised and translated into German. The new worship formula is considered voluntary, although Reverend Luther has stated he would like every congregation to use it.

The participatory nature of worship with singing hymns, readings, prayers, and testimonials by the lay people are for the purpose of evangelizing and strengthening the faith of the baptized members. The biggest change is that the setting for Holy Communion is now an act of thanksgiving for the forgiveness of sins instead of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. As I sit in the congregation and listen to the chants of the choir, the counterpoint of the music and the singing of God's Word by the congregation, I am feeling inspired and uplifted!

After the worship, I interviewed Conrad Rupff, the music master of Saxony, who said,

"Luther himself wrote the music for the lessons and the words of the institution of the true blood and body of Christ, sang them to me, and wanted to hear my opinion of it. He kept me for three weeks to note down properly the chants of the Gospels and the Epistles, until the first mass was sung in Wittenberg. I had to attend it and to take a copy of this first mass with me to Torgau. And one sees, hears, and understands at once how the Holy Ghost has been active not only in the authors who composed the Latin hymns and set them to music, but in Herr Luther himself, who now has invented most of the poetry and melody of the German chants. And it can be seen from the German Sanctus how he arranged all the notes to the text with the right accent and content in masterly fashion."

The Roman Catholic Mass is easily recognized through the powerful words of the liturgy. However, listening to the congregation sing the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) was powerful and moving! The people in Wittenberg are now leading the worship and Father Luther is representing their petitions to God in the sanctuary.

Martin Luther is a tenor and his voice was pleasing to my ears, he also played the flute and lute.