

FORM FOR READMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Announcement

Beloved in the Lord, in the year ... N. was excommunicated from the church of Christ.

The consistory may now inform you with gratitude that this remedy has borne fruit. The Lord has blessed our admonitions and prayers, so that N. repented and has requested to be again received into the communion of the church.

It is the gracious will of God that we receive penitent sinners with joy.

I Cor.14:40 Since all things have to be done in good order, we inform you that at the next celebration of the holy supper we shall again loose this brother from the bond of excommunication and re-admit him to the fellowship of the saints.

If any of you should have valid reason against such readmission, he should give notice to the consistory within a week.

Meanwhile let us thank the Lord who showed favour to this lost sheep and let us beseech Him to perfect His work of conversion to eternal salvation.

(If no lawful objection has been brought forward, the readmission shall take place with the following Form.)

Readmission according to the Scriptures.

Beloved christians, we have recently informed you of the conversion of our fellow-brother N. to the end that, with your approbation, he might be again received into the church of God.

No one has put forward any objection against this readmission, and therefore we will now receive him into the communion of saints.

Mat.18:15-18 The Lord Christ instructed His church to excommunicate impenitent sinners and said, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. But He immediately added, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Ezek.33:11 He taught us that excommunication does not take away all hope of salvation. God has sworn by Himself, As I live, says the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but

that the wicked turn from his way and live.

Therefore the church <sup>of</sup> keeps always hoping and praying for the repentance and return/the lost sinner, always eager to receive the penitent.

II Cor. 2:5-7 The apostle Paul commanded the congregation at Corinth to forgive and comfort the brother who had been reprov<sup>d</sup> and came to repentance. *He exhorted them* ~~to~~ reaffirm their love for him lest he should be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

Mat. 16:19 Christ also teaches us that the sentence of absolution, passed upon a repentant sinner according to the Word of God, is counted binding by the Lord. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

John 20:23 For this reason no one who truly repents needs to doubt in the least that he is certainly received by God in grace, as Christ has declared, If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.

### Questions.

Before we proceed to the act of loosing the bond of excommunication and readmit you, brother N., to the church of Christ we request you to answer the following questions.

N. , do you declare with all your heart, here before God and His church, that you are sincerely sorry for the sin and stubbornness on account of which you were justly excluded from the church?

Do you also truly believe that God has forgiven all your sins for the sake of Christ's blood and now receives you in grace?

Do you, therefore, desire to be readmitted to the church of Christ and do you promise, by the grace of the Lord, to live from now on in all godliness according to the Word of God?

Answer: I do.

### Readmission

Assembled in the name and authority of Christ Jesus, we elders and overseers, absolve ~~declare that~~ you, N. , ~~are absolved~~ from the bond of excommunication.

We receive you again into the church of the Lord with joy and gratitude and declare that you share in the fellowship of Christ, of the holy sacraments and of all spiritual gifts and blessings of our Saviour, which God promises to and bestoweth upon His church.

May the eternal God preserve you in this grace to the end, through His only Son Jesus Christ.

I Thess. 5:24 He who calls you is faithful and He will do it. Amen.

#### Charge

Beloved brother, be assured in your heart that the Lord Himself has received you in grace.

Be ~~from now on~~ diligent to guard yourself against the subtleties of Satan, and the wickedness of the world and the fallacies of the flesh lest you *again* become ~~again~~ entangled in sin. The love of Christ brought you back, love Him much for He forgave you much.

Do not again grieve the Holy Spirit ~~who~~ has promised in your baptism to dwell in you and to sanctify you to be a member of Christ, ~~and to abide in you.~~

Lk. 15:32 Beloved christians, receive this brother in love. Make merry and be glad, for this brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found.

Lk. 15:7 Rejoice with the angels as Christ said, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Eph. 2:19 Count him no longer as a stranger but as a fellow citizen with the saints and a member of the household of God.

#### Prayer.

Whereas there is no good in ourselves, let us, with praise and thanksgiving, implore the Lord Almighty for His grace.

Gracious God and Father, we thank and praise Thee through Jesus Christ that Thou hast granted this brother godly grief and repentance to life and hast caused us to rejoice in this. We beseech Thee, show him Thy grace that he may become more and more assured of the complete remission of all sins, and may derive from that assurance unspeakable joy and delight to serve Thee.

Since for a time he has grieved many by his sins, grant that he now may edify many by his conversion.

Grant ~~us all together~~ that we may steadfastly walk in Thy ways till the end.

Teach us, Father, from ~~this~~ example that with Thee there is grace, that Thou mayest be feared by us.

May we jointly serve Thee with childlike fear and obedience all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ~~who~~ with Thee and the Holy Spirit <sup>is</sup> ~~art~~ the one only true God, Amen.

or: Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we conclude our prayer: Our Father who art in heaven.

*L all of us*