To Do Versus Done For You!

Rev. Dr. Dean Rothchild
Assistant to the President

Many of us keep a "to do" list of things which need to be accomplished. I keep mine on the right side of my desk. When one task is accomplished it is crossed off the list. Eventually, all of the items are done and you start another "to do" list. When a particular list is finished one can feel that he has accomplished something.

When people are so programed by the "to do" list, it only logically follows that salvation must be something that one "does." In his book, *Has American Christianity Failed?*, Bryan Wolfmueller points out how American Christianity has turned salvation and the Gospel into something one must do. It comes down to a decision to receive Christ or to invite Jesus into your heart. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I have been present when people have died; dead does nothing. I have been out in the field dressing out a deer that I have killed; the dead deer does nothing. Nail a fly with the swatter and the fly does nothing. I know from the Scriptures that "*the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sins shall die.*" Dead does nothing. People apart from Christ Jesus are spiritually dead and can do "nothing" in regard to their salvation. I know that a spiritually dead person needs to be made alive, and that is God's work through His Word. I know that the one who thinks that they have no need for the Savior needs to be killed by the Law, so that the Gospel can make them alive.

God's Word declares that Jesus died and was dead because of our sins. His Word tells us that on the cross, Jesus suffered the wrath of God for those sins in our place and it killed Him. Jesus dies and in Him, death dies. Jesus sheds His blood, on that cross and He atones and covers, and washes our sins away, all sins, your sins, and my sins!

I know from the Gospel that Jesus rises on Easter Sunday. Jesus rises and death is defeated. I am told in Romans 6 that our baptism was into His death and resurrection. They are now ours. "*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*." (Titus 3:5-7).

As we can see, "salvation" has no "to do" list, but is a "done for you" reality. The Gospel declares, "It is all done and it has been done for you." It is "perfectly and completely done for you." As Paul says: *"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*" (Galatians 2:20). May you live each day rejoicing in the "done for you," as given to you in Word and Sacrament.

