

Daniel A. Velez-Acevedo- Statement of Faith

I believe in the One triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit revealed in the Holy Scripture both Old Testament and New Testament. This God revealed in Scripture is the author of all creation and is the active Ruler God over all time, past, present, and future. God created the heavens, the earth and everything in it by the action of God's Word which can be still heard today. God set humanity apart by intimately forming us, breathing life into us, and setting us as caretakers of creation. However, we turned away from God and sinning against God we came to know death.

I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, revealed through the Holy Spirit, in written form. Scripture must be read and interpreted with wisdom through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Scripture gives life, renews strength to the weary, and can be used to instruct. We must be careful interpreting and preaching from Scripture since in the past it has been used to justify abuse, hate, racism, bigotry, sexism, and lies. For this reason, we must understand the time, culture, historical context and humbly pray for the Holy Spirit to help us rightfully interpret Scripture. We study, pray, and devote our time to God, so that we can give the church and the world a truthful and genuine interpretation of Scripture which points to Christ. The Scriptures is alive, active and speaks to us today. Through Scripture we learn that God wanted all of creation to be reconciled to God's self. God sent the Messiah, Jesus Christ, true human, and true God. While on earth Jesus Christ proclaimed the good news and freedom from sin, gave sight to the blind, set the oppressed free and declared the favor of the Lord and the Kingdom of God. Christ revealed himself to humanity but was rejected and sentenced to death. Jesus Christ paid the price of our sin which was death. However, Christ did not remain captive to death. On the third day, Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Christ promised to come back to judge the living and the dead and to establish a new world and a new kingdom that will know no end. Through Christ's death we are offered grace and forgiveness of sin. God through Christ established a new covenant with humanity and established the Church.

Waiting for Christ's return we try to keep Christ's commandments as the Church, although this is difficult at times due to our differences and living in the world but not being of the world. However, Christ has sent us a Helper and a Comforter in troubled times. The Holy Spirit supports us with the difficulty of not being like Christ, while helping us in becoming Christ like. With the help of the Holy Spirit we are invited into fellowship, discipleship, and mission. The Holy Spirit helps us to obey Jesus Christ's command to preach the gospel to a broken world. The Holy Spirit helps the Church speak to this brokenness and against its prejudices by pointing to the Truth and the Light.

The Sacraments of Baptism and of Communion, instituted by Christ, defines who we are as Christians. We are baptized because Christ told us that if we are his disciples we must be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit¹ and through baptism we are sealed into grace as we die to ourselves and are born in Christ². In Communion, the Holy Spirit draws us to the Risen Christ to be fed for the journey to follow Christ in the world. We partake in Communion in remembrance of Christ and as a sign of the new covenant of God through Jesus Christ. Communion helps us remember that Christ will return. Our hope is in the knowledge that Christ will return for his bride, the Church. On that day there will be no more crying, suffering or pain because Christ will make all things new. By reading scripture, partaking in the Sacraments,

¹ Matt 28:19

² Romans 6:4

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and obeying Christ's commandments we live a life of discipleship for the world to see. Jesus Christ instructed us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul and love you neighbor as yourself. Following these commandments, the Church is stirred up to do mission. First, the church's mission is to evangelize, through word and deed, the grace of God. Second, to disciple others in becoming leaders who serve God and those in need. Third, reconcile communities who have been neglected and marginalized by being advocates for justice.

I believe that as time progresses, I will come to learn more about God, Scripture, and my faith. I will learn new things and change because I am clay in the Potter's hands, ever changing and reshaped by God. To God be all honor, dominion, and glory forever and ever, Amen.