



Red de Mujeres y Justicia de Género de las Iglesias Luteranas de América Latina y el Caribe - FLM
Rede de Mulheres e Justiça de Gênero das Igrejas Luteranas da América Latina e Caribe - FLM
Women and Gender Justice Network of the Lutheran Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean - LWF

Bible Study 22

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Translation: Marcia Blasi.

Text: Matthew 10.32

We confess our faith in Christ

Argula von Grumbach was born in 1492, in the city of Beratzhausen, Germany. She was the daughter of Katharina von Toerring zu Seefeld and Bernhard von Stauff, an impoverished noble family. Her parents highly valued the children's education and took care that their daughters also had a good education - which was exceptional for that context. At 10 years old Argula already knew how to read. Proof of this is that she received a Bible from her father as a gift accompanied by a request: "study it with dedication".

When Argula turned 16, she moved to the Bavarian court in Munich. There, she became advisor to Duchess Kunigunde, married to Duke Albert IV. Because she lived with the couple's daughters, "she received training that, at the time, only sons and daughters of noble families with good financial conditions had access to."

After their marriage, Argula left the court with her husband. Faith in Christ made her a free woman to participate actively in the Reformation movement. Like Luther, she went from place to place, bearing witness that salvation is by grace through faith. She participated in the Augsburg Diet, which resulted in the Augsburg Confession (1530). Soon after the Assembly she went to Coburg, to talk to Luther about the decisions of the assembly and the direction of the Reformation movement.

At the end of her life, she moved to Zeilitzheim, where she died in 1554. Argula, among so many other women, was an example of bravery and courage. She fought against injustice and for gender equality, standing out for her outstanding personality. In 2009, the territorial Church of Bavaria created the Argula von



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Grumbach Foundation in order to lift up works that promote gender equality in the church and society. In Schweinfurt is a monument in her honor with the inscription "Streitbare Reformatorin" (Militant Reformer).

The text above, written by theologian Josiane Velten, shows us that Argula von Grumbach was an active theologian of the Reformation movement. She theologically and publicly questioned religious and academic authorities about the obligations passed on to women by the church, based on the teachings of Jesus. Through reading the Bible, she argues that "both men and women are called to confess Christ".

Argula quotes in one of her letters the text of Matthew 10.32: "Whoever confesses me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven." There was no doubt for Argula, nor should there be for us, that women are also included in Jesus' words. She grounded her faith only on the real rock, Christ himself. Inspired by the same passage, we can also say that we are very beloved daughters of God, justified by Christ in the event of the cross and constantly inspired and animated by the Divine Ruah, the breath of life. We confess this because we believe in the importance of Christ's centrality in the Bible and we are thankful for those who propagate the love and justice taught by Christ.

So today, more than 500 years after the witness of this important woman who encourages us to raise our voices, I ask: How can we, sisters from different places, ages, ethnicities and backgrounds, confess our faith in Jesus Christ?

Jesus came to promote justice, love, solidarity, mercy and salvation. In this way, we can confess our faith in Jesus Christ by being his followers on this path. We can show solidarity with women who are experiencing difficulties, help them to seek their spaces and their rights. We can assist with gender justice discussions in our community when the practice is not in line with Jesus' project. We can be a blessing in each other's lives when everything outside (often inside the house)



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is difficult and scary. We can be like a reminder of Christ to our sisters, signaling love and mercy through our testimonies.

Like Argula, we can strengthen ourselves spiritually through Scripture, which is liberation when it points to the centrality of Christ. And, through this reading key, we must remember that we have authority to combat any practice, discourse and behavior justified with Bible passages, but that do not have Christ at the center of it.

Inspired by Argula von Grumbach's role in the Reformation movement, I wrote this confession of faith and I invite you to confess with me:

We believe in Jesus who suffers with our pains
We believe in Jesus who heals us through our faith
We believe in Jesus who believes in our word
We believe in Jesus who does not condemn us
We believe in Jesus who forgives us and gives us a new chance
We believe in Jesus who drinks from the fountain of the water of life
We believe in Jesus who hears our heart and our cry
We believe in Jesus who comforts us and reminds us of eternal life
We believe in Jesus who includes us and values us
We believe in Jesus who accepts our perfume
We believe in Jesus who gives us food and drink
We believe in Jesus who takes care of us and our sisters
We believe that Jesus Christ is just, merciful and good
We believe that Jesus Christ wants us to be alive and persevering in the struggle for justice so that all our sisters may have life in abundance.
Amen.

To reflect together:

- What can I do to confess my faith in Jesus Christ?
- How can our community be a sign of love and mercy?
- In this time of pandemic, where / how / in whom do we see Christ?
- More than 500 years after the Reformation, what still needs to be reformed in our church and in our society?