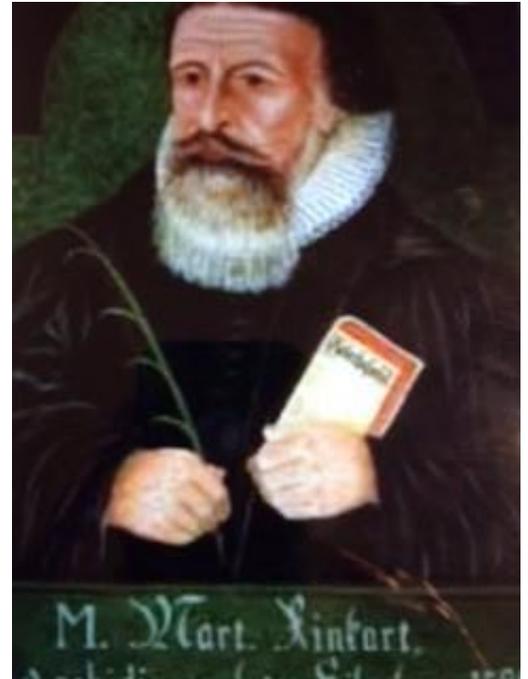


8/21/20

As we applaud heroes who have been such angels in these days of COVID infections, let me introduce to you a similar angel from long ago...

In the 1630's, the 30 Years War was raging in Germany, where Lutheran pastor Martin Rinkart was just beginning his ministry in the village of Eilenberg. As the Swedish army surrounded the city, refugees poured in, seeking safety within the walls. The result? – overcrowding, plague, famine, death...800 homes were destroyed and people died in huge numbers – including the clergy. Soon Martin was the only pastor left standing. Records report that he conducted more than 4,000 funerals in one year, sometimes as many as FIFTY in one day; his wife's was one of them. When the Swedes demanded a huge ransom, he left the security of the city walls to negotiate with the enemy and hostilities were ended!!

His response ??? – penning the magnificent text of this hymn of THANKSGIVING!



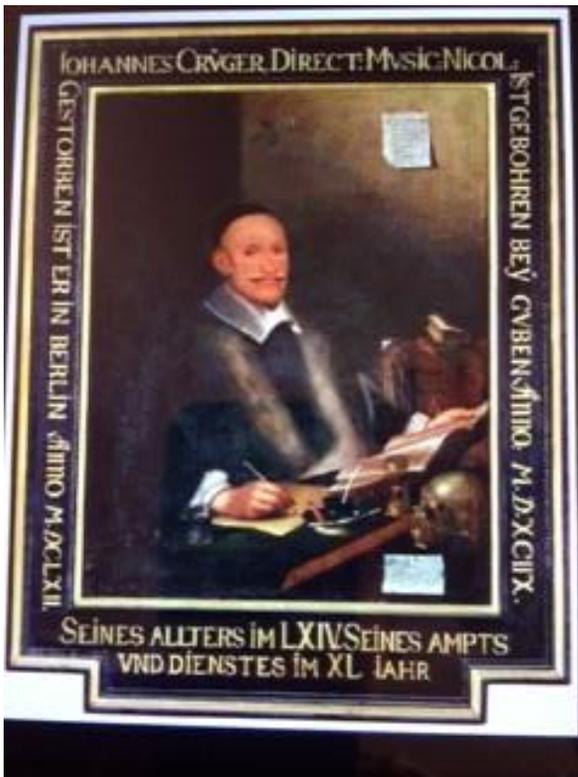
Martin Rinkhart (1586-1649)

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices.
Who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us.
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us.
And keep us in His grace and guide us when perplexed
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God through all our life be given,
The Son and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven.
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore!

-Continued-



Johann Crüger (1598-1662)

At the same time, a few hundred kilometers away in Berlin, lived theologian and musician Johann Crüger who also suffered much in the war. The plague attacked his entire family and while he managed to survive, his wife and 5 children did not.

His response ??? — composing the melody to which we still sing that great hymn of thanksgiving! It wasn't until two centuries later that Felix Mendelssohn composed the 4-part arrangement which is in our hymnal today.

As we endure our own hardships in these stressful times, WE can give thanks for the inspiring depth of faith which comes to us through the creators of this beautiful music and the power of these three verses of gratitude.

Enter the link below into your browser to hear it again for yourself — and sing along in thanksgiving for your own blessings!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7gMDXylzW8>



Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)