

## The Augsburg Confession

*Talking About Faith with Family and Friends*



### Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments

**Discussion:** How is your baptism a daily reminder of God's presence in your life? Does receiving Holy Communion nurture your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? In the Roman Catholic church, Holy Communion is offered at every mass and at Protestant churches it is generally offered frequently but not at every worship service. How often would you want to receive Holy Communion based on Luther's comment below that it is "to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them."

"Of the Use of the Sacraments they (our Lutheran churches) teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises, which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required."

**Importance:** This doctrinal statement explains the means of grace. God strengthens each of us through the means of grace. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Confession forgive our sins. Christians understand the daily need for repentance as a means of developing a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

Notice the words Luther uses regarding the "will of God toward us", *instituted to awaken and confirm*", and "that faith be added to believe the promises." This is why the sacraments are not symbolic but necessary for spiritual growth. In this way they are profoundly intimate and personal.