

## The Augsburg Confession *Talking About Faith with Family and Friends*



### Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages (see Article XIV too)

**Discussion:** Is worship necessary for one's salvation? If your answer is yes, then should it be taught as an obligation or an opportunity to honor Jesus Christ? Is the difference between the Roman Catholic teaching of making satisfaction for sins through human behaviors and the Lutheran and Protestant teaching that the satisfaction for sins has been completed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ an opportunity for discussion or a truth that cannot be compromised?

"Of Usages in the Church they (our Lutheran churches) teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquility and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like.

Nevertheless, concerning such things men are admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation.

They are admonished also that human traditions instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel."

**Importance:** This statement specifically challenges one of the major teachings of the Roman Catholic faith regarding good works and making satisfaction for one's sins. In the second and third paragraphs, the Lutheran Church will oppose all practices with the purpose of doing penance or earning salvation. Lutherans will teach that salvation is freely, completely, and unconditionally given for all people through the death of Jesus Christ. In the Roman Catholic Church, Sunday worship is always a Mass and considered an obligation. In many Protestant churches, Sunday worship is to honor Jesus Christ and to hear the Word of God, but generally considered a decision of faith or the heart.

However, Article 15 does not reject all human customs and traditions! For example, the observation of Lent, the dates for designated holy and secular days of worship (Lent, Epiphany, Ascension, Reformation, New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving, etc.) are based on human decisions for the purpose of deepening spiritual growth.