

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



Article XXI: Of the Worship of the Saints.

Discussion: Which saints have an influence on your spiritual life? Does the evidence in *The Augsburg Confession* present a case for continuing or cancelling the excommunication of Reverend Martin Luther?

Of the Worship of Saints they (Lutheran churches) teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings.

But the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and has promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon, **1 John 2:1: *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, etc.***

This is about the Sum of our Doctrine, in which, as can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures, or from the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers. This being the case, they judge harshly who insist that our teachers be regarded as heretics."

Importance: To the surprise of some, Lutherans accept saints; however, they do not pray to saints. Luther clearly states above that the faith and service of Christians are worthy of our memory and recognition but that 1 John 2:1 clearly states that prayers should be in the Name of Jesus Christ, our High priest, Mediator, and Intercessor.

Luther did not insist that statues be removed from churches but warned that they are a distraction from the Word of God and can diminish the honor that Jesus Christ deserves. He also did not support the image of Jesus on the cross (crucifix) because Jesus ascended to the Father and is living in heaven. The Orthodox church has two-dimensional icons in their churches but not three-dimensional statues.

Although our daily blog with discussion questions will continue for a few more days, this is the last of the formal articles presented to Emperor Charles V at Augsburg. Note that Luther and his team state to the emperor that all of their teachings are based on Scripture and consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith before they were changed by human wisdom and interpretation. Luther clearly argues that he and the Lutheran pastors are not

heretics – a subject that needs discussion and debate on the 500th anniversary. The matter of ending the excommunication of Martin Luther is with the authority of the Roman Catholic pope, Francis I.