

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



### Article XXIV The Mass

Article 24 includes additional comments by the Lutherans to Emperor Charles V and not considered as a doctrinal statement

**Discussion:** What do you consider the important parts of a worship service? Is it necessary for people to feel uplifted after a worship service? What would you change in the current worship style where you worship?

"Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned be taught what they need to know of Christ.

And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people [1 Cor. 14:2-9](#), but it has also been so ordained by man's law. The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries (Catholic and Orthodox faith) than among us.

But it is evident that for a long time this also has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. ...But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist when he says, [1 Cor. 11:27](#): "**Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.**" When, therefore our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses (sic) were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake."

**Explanation:** Luther was furious that private masses and many public masses were offered for money when salvation is freely given. The issue of indulgences, masses for those who have died, masses for saints were criticized by the Lutherans on the grounds that fees and stipends were required in addition to offerings.

Although the liturgy and form of worship in the Lutheran church involved hymns, the language of the people, and receiving both Christ's body and blood, Luther presents a solid argument to the emperor (Charles V) that the Lutheran worship is reverent, and focused on the Gospel and Jesus Christ.

## Article XXIV - The Mass (Continued)

**Discussion: Is worship attendance by Roman Catholics in your community stronger or weaker than worship in Lutheran or Protestant churches? What is the purpose of worship?**

"But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass. There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act.

Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ's passion was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all other sins, as it is written to the **Hebrews 10:10: *We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all.*** Also, **Hebrews 10:14: *By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*** [It is an unheard-of innovation in the Church to teach that Christ by His death made satisfaction only for original sin and not likewise for all other sin. Accordingly it is hoped that everybody will understand that this error has not been reprov'd without due reason.]

Scripture also teaches that we are justified before God through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Now if the Mass take away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow."

**Explanation:** Luther speaks directly to the purpose of worship – to honor Jesus Christ and remember the gifts He has generously and freely given to us! Faith in Jesus Christ is the reason why Christians come together for worship. Jesus forgives sins and the act of worshiping is important but in itself does not forgive sins. Christians confess and ask for forgiveness of their trespasses when they pray The Lord's Prayer. They have been doing this since Jesus taught us how to pray. We worship on Sunday instead of Saturday (Sabbath) to remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

The Roman Catholic position is that we are justified by love and faith begins the process of justification. The Roman Catholic theologians cite evidence of less people attending The Mass where it is spoken in the German language than where it is spoken in Latin. They cite evidence from Galatians 5 on the importance of attending worship as an action of love which increases the faith of a person to make satisfaction for one's sins. **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."** (Galatians 5:22) The Lutherans also cite Galatians 5 that Jesus Christ has justified us freely and completely and that good works are not necessary: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." (Galatians 1:6)

## Article XXIV - The Mass (Continued)

**Discussion: What is the meaning of Holy Communion for you? Since Roman Catholic, Lutherans, and Protestants explain the presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament as a mystery of faith, does this increase or decrease its importance?**

"But Christ commands us, **Luke 22:19: *"This do in remembrance of Me"***; therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefits it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For to remember Christ is to remember His benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. Nor is it enough only to remember the history; for this also the Jews and the ungodly can remember. Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament [Communion] may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: *Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine.* [Therefore this Sacrament requires faith, and is used in vain without faith.]

Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holy-day, and, if any desire the Sacrament, also on other days, when it is given to such as ask for it. And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass [the Communion] they speak very much. Chrysostom says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others. And it appears from the ancient Canons that some one celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the body of the Lord; for thus the words of the Nicene Canon say: Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter. And Paul, **1 Cor. 11:33**, commands concerning the Communion: Tarry one for another, so that there may be a common participation."

**Explanation:** The Lutheran position is that people who believe in Jesus Christ should receive Holy Communion regularly and frequently. He calls attention to the practice in private masses of only the clergy receiving the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ. According to Luther, the Sacrament is for all who believe it as the true body and blood of their Savior, Jesus Christ. The sacrament gives us life with Jesus Christ; it is His means of grace for us.