

The Augsburg Confession of 1530

Article XXIV: The Mass



Article XXIV: The Mass

*Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. The Mass is held among us and celebrated with the highest reverence.



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*“... Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, except that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns. These have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone, that the uneducated be taught <what they need to know about Christ>...”

Tenens ambabus manibus hostiam inter indices et pollices, profert verba consecrationis secrete, distincte, et attente super hostiam, et simul super omnes, si plures sint consecrandæ.

Hoc est enim Corpus meum.

Quibus verbis prolatis, statim hostiam consecratam genuflexus adorat: surgit, ostendit populo, reponit super corporale, et genuflexus iterum adorat: nec amplius pollices et indices disiungit, nisi quando hostia tractanda est, usque ad ablutionem digitorum.

Tunc, detecto calice, dicit:

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*“... Not only has Paul commanded that a language understood by the people be used in church (1 Corinthians 14:2, 9), but human law has also commanded it....”

1 Corinthians 14:2, 9

- * “For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit....⁹So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.”

1 Corinthians 14:16-19

- * “If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.



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*“...All those able to do so partake of the Sacrament together. This also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. No one is admitted to the Sacrament without first being examined...”

1 Corinthians 11:33; 11:28, II Cor. 13:5a

- * **1 Corinthians 11:33** “So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.”
- * **1 Corinthians 11:28** “A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.”
- * **2 Corinthians 13:5a** “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.”

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* “...The people are also advised about the dignity and use of the Sacrament, about how it brings great consolation to anxious consciences, so that they too may learn to believe God and to expect and ask from Him all that is good. This worship pleases God [Colossians 1:9–10]....”

Colossians 1:9-10

- * “Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰ And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”

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*“... Such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. Therefore, it does not appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us....”

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*“... It is clear that for a long time the most public and serious complaint among all good people is that the Mass has been made base and profane by using it to gain filthy wealth [1 Timothy 3:3]. ...”

1 Timothy 3:1-3

* “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.”

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*“... Everyone knows how great this abuse is in all the churches. They know what sort of men say Masses for a fee or an income, and how many celebrate these Masses contrary to canon law....”

A series of private masses being offered simultaneously



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*“... Paul severely threatens those who use the Eucharist in an unworthy manner, “Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:27). ...”

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*“... Therefore, when our priests were warned about this sin, private Masses were discontinued among us, since hardly any private Masses were celebrated except for the sake of filthy gain....”

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* “... The bishops were not ignorant of these abuses. If they had corrected them in time, there would now be less discord. But until now they have been responsible for many corruptions seeping into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain about the Church’s troubles. This disturbance has been caused simply by those abuses that were so open that they could no longer be tolerated....”

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* “... There have been great disagreements about the Mass, that is, the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for profaning the Mass for such a long time and for tolerating this in the churches for so many centuries by the very men who were both able and duty-bound to correct this situation....”

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*“... It is written in the Ten Commandments, “The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7). But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy wealth as the Mass....”

1 Peter 5:2-3

* “Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

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*“...An opinion was added that infinitely increased private Masses. It states that Christ, by His passion, made satisfaction for original sin and instituted the Mass as an offering for daily sins, both venial and mortal...”

Venial vs. Mortal Sins

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:
- [1855] Mortal Sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God... by preferring an inferior good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, though it offends and wounds it.
- [1861] Mortal sin... results in... the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell...
- [1862] One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or complete consent.
- [1863] Venial sin weakens charity... and... merits temporal punishment. Deliberate and unrepented venial sin disposes us little by little to commit mortal sin. However, venial sin does not break the covenant with God. With God's grace, it is humanly reparable. "Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently, eternal happiness."

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- * “... From this opinion has arisen the common belief that the Mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead simply by performing the outward act. Then they began to argue about whether one Mass said for many is worth as much as special Masses for individuals. This resulted in an infinite number of Masses....”

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*“... Our teachers have warned that these opinions depart from the Holy Scripture and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ’s passion was an offering and satisfaction, not only for original guilt, but also for all other sins,...”

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*“... as it is written, “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). Also, “By a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14) ...”

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* “... Scripture 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 takes away the sins of the living and the dead simply by performing it, justification comes by doing Masses, and not of faith. Scripture does not allow this....”

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- * “... But Christ commands us, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). Therefore, the Mass was instituted so that those who use the Sacrament should remember, in faith, the benefits they receive through Christ and how their anxious consciences are cheered and comforted....”

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*“... To remember Christ is to remember His benefits. It means to realize that they are truly offered to us. It is not enough only to remember history. (The Jewish people and the ungodly also remember this.)...”



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*“... Therefore, the Mass is to be used for administering the Sacrament to those that need consolation. Ambrose says, “Because I always sin, I always need to take the medicine.”...”

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* “... Because the Mass is for the purpose of giving the Sacrament, we have Communion every holy day, and if anyone desires the Sacrament, we also offer it on other days, when it is given to all who ask for it. This custom is not new in the Church....”

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*“... The Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but they speak a lot about the common Mass. Chrysostom says “that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others.” ...”

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- * “... It appears from the ancient council decisions that one person celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the body of the Lord. The records of the decisions of the Council of Nicaea state, “Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter.”...”



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*“... Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:33, has this command in regard to Communion: “wait for one another” so that there may be a common participation....”



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- * “... Therefore, since the Mass among us follows the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved. This is especially so because we keep the public ceremonies, which are for the most part similar to those previously in use. Only the number of Masses differs....”

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*“... Without a doubt, these might be reduced in a helpful way, because of very great and clear abuses. For in older times, even in churches attended the most often, the Mass was not celebrated every day,...”

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*“... as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chap. 33) testifies, “In Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except the solemn rite of Communion.”