

**ADIAPHORA (THINGS INDIFFERENT) drawn from Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, X. Ceremonies and church rites which are**

- A. neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God but
- B. which have been introduced into the church with good intentions **for the sake of good order and decorum or else to preserve Christian discipline.**
- C. **The precepts of men (Matt. 15:9) are in and of themselves no worship of God or even a part of it.**

**The Community of God**

- A. **has the right, authority, and power** to change, to reduce, or to increase ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it does so without frivolity and offense
- B. but in an orderly and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most profitable, **beneficial, and salutary for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the edification of the church.**
- C. Paul instructs us how we can with a good conscience **give in and yield to the weak in faith in such external matters of indifference** (Rom. 14) and demonstrates it by his own example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:10).
- D. **Churches will not condemn each other because of a difference in ceremonies**, when in Christian liberty one uses fewer or more of them, as long as they are otherwise agreed in doctrine and in all its articles and are also agreed concerning the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known axiom, “Disagreement in fasting should not destroy agreement in faith.”

**AC XXVIII. Ecclesiastical Power** -<sup>53</sup> What are we to say, then, about Sunday and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies? **To this our teachers reply that bishops or pastors may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order**, but not as a means of obtaining God’s grace or making satisfaction for sins, nor in order to bind men’s consciences by considering these things necessary services of God and counting it a sin to omit their observance even when this is done without offense....

<sup>55</sup> **It is proper for the Christian assembly to keep such ordinances for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to the bishops and parish ministers in such matters, and to observe the regulations in such a way that one does not give offense to another and so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church.** <sup>56</sup> However, consciences should not be burdened by contending that such things are necessary for salvation or that it is a sin to omit them, even when no offense is given to others, just as no one would say that a woman commits a sin if without offense to others she goes out with uncovered head. (1 Cor 11:5)

**AC XXVI The Distinction of Foods** <sup>40</sup> We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church.

**AC XXIV. The Mass** <sup>1</sup> We are unjustly accused of having abolished the Mass. Without boasting, it is manifest that the Mass is observed among us with greater devotion and more earnestness than among our opponents. Moreover, the people are instructed often and with great diligence concerning the holy sacrament, why it was instituted, and how it is to be used (namely, as a comfort for terrified consciences) in order that the people may be drawn to the Communion and Mass. The people are also given instruction about other false teachings concerning the sacrament. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile no conspicuous changes have been made in **the public ceremonies** of the Mass, except that in certain places German hymns are sung in addition to the Latin responses for the instruction and exercise of the people. <sup>3</sup> **After all, the chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ.**

**Ap XV Human Traditions** <sup>38</sup> **We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquillity,** and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. <sup>39</sup> Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are.... **But the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel.**

**Ap XXIV (XII): Of the Mass.** At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we **1]** do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. **And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things.**

**2]** The adversaries have a long declamation concerning the use of the Latin language in the Mass, in which they absurdly trifle as to **how it profits [what a great merit is achieved by] an unlearned hearer to hear in the faith of the Church a Mass which he does not understand.** They evidently imagine that the mere work of hearing is a service, that it profits without being understood. **3]** We are unwilling to malignantly pursue these things, but we leave them to the judgment of the reader. We mention them only for the purpose of stating, in passing, that also among us the Latin lessons and prayers are retained.

**Since ceremonies, however, ought to be observed both to teach men Scripture, and that those admonished by the Word may conceive faith and fear [of God, and obtain comfort], and thus also may pray (for these are the designs of ceremonies),** we retain the Latin language on account of those who are learning and understand Latin, and we mingle with it German hymns, in order that the people also may have something to learn, and by which faith and fear **4]** may be called forth. This custom has always existed in the churches. For although some more frequently, and others more rarely, introduced German hymns, nevertheless the people almost everywhere sang something in their own **5]** tongue. [Therefore, this is not such a new departure.] **It has, however, nowhere been written or represented that the act of hearing lessons not understood profits men, or that ceremonies profit, not because they teach or admonish, but *ex opere operato*, because they are thus performed or are looked upon.** Away with such pharisaic opinions! [Ye sophists ought to be heartily ashamed of such dreams!]