

Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV: Of the Mass.

¹ 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.** ⁷ **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. ² 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. ³ After all, the chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ....

³⁴ Inasmuch, then, as the Mass is not a sacrifice to remove the sins of others, whether living or dead, but should be a Communion in which the priest and others receive the sacrament for themselves, it is observed among us in the following manner: **On holy days, and at other times when communicants are present, Mass is held and those who desire it are communicated.** ³⁵ Thus the Mass is preserved among us in its proper use, the use which was formerly observed in the church and which can be proved by St. Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 11:20ff. and by many statements of the Fathers. ³⁶ **For Chrysostom reports how the priest stood every day, inviting some to Communion and forbidding others to approach.** ³⁷ The ancient canons also indicate that one man officiated and communicated the other priests and deacons, ³⁸ for the words of the Nicene canon read, "After the priests the deacons shall receive the sacrament in order from the bishop or priest."

⁴⁰ Since, therefore, no novelty has been introduced which did not exist in the church from ancient times, and since no conspicuous change has been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass except that other unnecessary Masses which were held in addition to the parochial Mass, probably through abuse, have been discontinued, this manner of holding Mass ought not in fairness be condemned as heretical or unchristian. ⁴¹ **In times past, even in large churches where there were many people, Mass was not held on every day that the people assembled, for according to the Tripartite History, Book 9, on Wednesday and Friday the Scriptures were read and expounded in Alexandria, and all these services were held without Mass.**

Apology, Article 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.

6] The fact that we hold only Public or Common Mass [at which the people also commune, not Private Mass] is no offense against the Church catholic. For in the Greek churches even today *private* Masses are not held, but there is only a public Mass, and that on the Lord's Day and festivals. In the monasteries daily Mass is held, but this is only public. These are the traces of former customs. For nowhere do the ancient writers before Gregory make mention **7]** of private Masses. We now omit noticing the nature of their origin. It is evident that after the mendicant monks began to prevail, from most false opinions and on account of gain they were so increased that all good men for a long time desired some limit to this thing. Although St. Francis wished to provide aright for this matter, as he decided that each fraternity should be content with a single common Mass daily, afterwards this was changed, either by superstition or for the sake of gain. Thus, **8]** where it is of advantage, they themselves change the institutions of the Fathers; and afterwards they cite against us the authority of the Fathers. Epiphanius writes that in Asia the Communion was celebrated three times a week, and that there were no daily Masses. And indeed he says that this custom was handed down from the apostles. **For he speaks thus: Assemblies for Communion were appointed by the apostles to be held on the fourth day, on Sabbath eve, and the Lord's Day....**

35] They cite also the *daily sacrifice* (cf. Ex. 29, 38f.; Dan. 8, 11f.; 12, 11), that, just as in the Law there was a daily sacrifice so the Mass ought to be a daily sacrifice of the New Testament. The adversaries have managed well if we permit ourselves to be overcome by allegories. It is evident, however, that allegories do not produce firm proofs [that in matters so highly important before God we must have a sure and clear word of God, and not introduce by force obscure and foreign passages; such uncertain explanations do not stand the test of God's judgment]. **Although we indeed readily suffer the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided that the entire Mass be understood, i.e., the ceremony with the preaching of the Gospel, faith,**

invocation, and thanksgiving. For these joined together are a daily sacrifice of the New Testament, because the ceremony [of the Mass, or the Lord's Supper] was instituted on account of these things; neither is it to be separated from these. Paul says accordingly, 1 Cor. 11, 26: *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.* But it in no way follows from this Levitical type that a ceremony justifying *ex opere operato* is necessary, or ought to be applied on behalf of others, that it may merit for them the remission of sins.

36] And the type aptly represents not only the ceremony, **but also the preaching of the Gospel.** In Num. 28, 4f. three parts of that daily sacrifice are represented, *the burning of the lamb, the libation, and the oblation of wheat flour.* The Law had pictures or shadows of future things. Accordingly, in this spectacle Christ and the entire worship of the New Testament are portrayed. The burning of the lamb signifies the death of Christ. The libation signifies that everywhere in the entire world, by the preaching of the Gospel, believers are sprinkled with the blood of that Lamb, *i.e.*, sanctified, as Peter says, 1 Pet. 1, 2: *Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* The oblation of wheat flour signifies faith, prayer, and thanksgiving in hearts. **37]** **As, therefore, in the Old Testament, the shadow is perceived, so in the New the thing signified should be sought,** and not another type, as sufficient for a sacrifice.

38] Therefore, although a ceremony is a memorial of Christ's death, nevertheless it alone is not the daily sacrifice; but **the memory itself is the daily sacrifice, *i.e.*, preaching and faith, which truly believes that, by the death of Christ, God has been reconciled.** A libation is required, *i.e.*, the effect of preaching, in order that, being sprinkled by the Gospel with the blood of Christ, we may be sanctified, as those put to death and made alive. Oblations also are required, *i.e.*, thanksgiving, confessions, and afflictions.

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23] On this account it is indeed called a food of souls, which nourishes and strengthens the new man. For by Baptism we are first born anew; but (as we said before) there still remains, besides, the old vicious nature of flesh and blood in man, and there are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and of the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes also stumble.

24] Therefore it is given for **a daily pasture and sustenance**, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself so as not to fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger. **25]** For the new life must be so regulated that it continually increase and progress; **26]** but it must suffer much opposition. For the devil is such a furious enemy that when he sees that we oppose him and attack the old man, and that he cannot topple us over by force, he prowls and moves about on all sides, tries all devices, and does not desist, until he finally wearies us, so that we either renounce our faith or yield hands and feet and become listless or impatient. **27]** Now to this end the consolation is here given when the heart feels that the burden is becoming too heavy, that it may here obtain new power and refreshment...

39] In conclusion, since we have now the true understanding and doctrine of the Sacrament, there is indeed need of some admonition and exhortation, **that men may not let so great a treasure which is daily administered and distributed among Christians pass by unheeded**, that is, that those who would be Christians make ready to receive this venerable Sacrament often. **40]** For we see that men seem weary and lazy with respect to it; and there is a great multitude of such as hear the Gospel, and, because the nonsense of the Pope has been abolished, and we are freed from his laws and coercion, go one, two, three years, or even longer without the Sacrament, as though they were such strong Christians that they have no need of it; **41]** and some allow themselves to be prevented and deterred by the pretense that we have taught that no one should approach it except those who feel hunger and thirst, which urge them to it. Some pretend that it is a matter of liberty and not necessary, and that it is sufficient to believe without it; and thus for the most part they go so far that they become quite brutish, and finally despise both the Sacrament and the Word of God.

42] Now, it is true, as we have said, that no one should by any means be coerced or compelled, lest we institute a new murdering of souls. Nevertheless, it must be known that such people as deprive themselves of, and withdraw from, the Sacrament so long a time are not to be considered Christians. For Christ has not instituted it to be treated as a show, but has commanded His Christians to eat and drink it, and thereby remember Him.