

SACRIFICE IN THE MASS

Augsburg Confession, Article IV: Of Justification.

1] Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for 2] Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. 3] This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

Article X: Of the Lord's Supper.

1] *Of the Supper of the Lord* they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed 2] to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments.

1] *Of the Use of the Sacraments* they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God 2] toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

3] They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

Article XXIV: Of the Mass.

1] Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing *the Mass*; for the Mass is retained among 2] 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 3] to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned 4] 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. 5] 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 6] worship. For none are admitted 7] 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. 8] [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament.] This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion 9] toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.

10] 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. 11] For it is not unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches by what manner of

men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. **12]** 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.* **13]** When, therefore our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake.

14] Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, **15]** by their own connivance, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain **16]** of the troubles of the Church, while this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer. There have been great **17]** dissensions concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. **18]** Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries by the very men who **19]** were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For in the Ten Commandments it is written, *Ex. 20, 7: The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.* But since **20]** the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

21] 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, 22] venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass 23] takes away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. [With this work men wished to obtain from God all that they needed, and in the mean time faith in Christ and the true worship were forgotten.]

24] 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 25] 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: 26] We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all. Also, *10, 14: 27] 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.]

28] 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. **29]** 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.

30] 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, **31]** and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. **32]** Nor is it enough only to remember the history; for this also the Jews and the ungodly can remember. **33]** 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.]

34] 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. **35]** 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 **36]** *that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some* **37]** *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 he Lord; for thus **38]** 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.* **39]** And Paul, **1 Cor. 11, 33**, commands concerning the Communion: *Tarry one for another*, so that there may be a common participation.

40] Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since public ceremonies, for the most part like those hither to in use, are retained; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses doubtless might be profitably reduced. **41]** For in olden times, even in churches most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the *Tripartite History* (Book 9, chap. 33) testifies: *Again 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.*

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 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....

9] Moreover, although the adversaries collect many testimonies on this topic to prove that the Mass is a sacrifice, yet this great tumult of words will be quieted when the single reply is advanced that this line of authorities, reasons and testimonies, however long, does not prove that the Mass confers grace *ex opere operato*, or that, when applied on behalf of others, it merits for them the remission of venial and mortal sins, of guilt and punishment. This one reply overthrows all objections of the adversaries, not only in this Confutation, but in all writings which they have published concerning the Mass.

...**15]** Already for an entire period of ten years the adversaries have published almost infinite volumes concerning sacrifice, and yet not one of them thus far has given a definition of sacrifice. They only seize upon the name "sacrifices" either from the Scriptures or the Fathers [and where they find it in the dances of the Bible, apply it here, whether it fits or not]. Afterward they append their own dreams, as though indeed a sacrifice signifies whatever pleases them.

What a Sacrifice Is, and What Are the Species of Sacrifice.

...**17]** Theologians are rightly accustomed to distinguish between a Sacrament and a sacrifice. Therefore let the genus comprehending both of these be either **18]** a ceremony or a sacred work. A Sacrament is a ceremony or work in which God presents to us that which the promise annexed to the ceremony offers; as, Baptism is a work, not which we offer to God, but in which God baptizes us, *i.e.*, a minister in the place of God; and God here offers and presents the remission of sins, etc., according to the promise, **Mark 16, 16:** *He that believeth and is*

baptized shall be saved. A sacrifice, on the contrary, is a ceremony or work which we render God in order to afford Him honor.

19] Moreover, the proximate species of sacrifice are two, and there are no more. One is the *propitiatory sacrifice*, *i.e.*, a work which makes satisfaction for guilt and punishment, *i.e.*, one that reconciles God, or appeases God's wrath, or which merits the remission of sins for others. The other species is the *eucharistic sacrifice*, which does not merit the remission of sins or reconciliation, but is rendered by those who have been reconciled, in order that we may give thanks or return gratitude for the remission of sins that has been received, or for other benefits received....

22] [Thus there have been in the Law emblems of the true sacrifice.] But in fact there has been only one propitiatory sacrifice in the world, namely, the death of Christ,....

25] Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise, Lev. 3, 1f.; 7, 11f.; Ps. 56, 12f., namely, the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of saints, yea, all good works of saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those making them, or applicable on behalf of others, so as to merit for these, *ex opere operato*, the remission of sins or reconciliation. For they are made by those who have been reconciled. **26]** And such are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches, **1 Pet. 2, 5:** *An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.*

33] And if any one would have this term embrace the ceremony [of the Mass], we readily concede it, provided he neither understands the ceremony alone, nor teaches that the ceremony profits *ex opere operato*. For just as among the sacrifices of praise, *i.e.*, among the praises of God, we include the preaching of the Word, so the reception itself of the Lord's Supper can be praise or thanksgiving; but it does not justify *ex opere operato*; neither is it to be applied to others so as to merit for them the remission of sins. But after a while we shall explain how even a ceremony is a sacrifice. Yet, as Malachi speaks of all the services of the New Testament, and not only of the Lord's Supper; likewise, as he does not favor the pharisaic opinion of the *opus operatum*, he is not against us, but rather aids us. For he requires services of the heart, through which the name of the Lord becomes truly great.

What the Fathers Thought concerning Sacrifice.

66] And since we have explained the passages of Scripture which are cited against us, we must reply also concerning the Fathers. We are not ignorant that the Mass is called by the Fathers a sacrifice; but they do not mean that the Mass confers grace *ex opere operato*, and that, when applied on behalf of others, it merits for them the remission of sins, of guilt and punishment. Where are such monstrous stories to be found in the Fathers? But they openly testify that they are speaking of thanksgiving. Accordingly they call it a eucharist. **67]** We have said above, however, that a eucharistic sacrifice does not merit reconciliation, but is made by those who have been reconciled, just as afflictions do not merit reconciliation, but are eucharistic sacrifices when those who have been reconciled endure them.

And this reply, in general, to the sayings of the Fathers defends us sufficiently against the adversaries. For it is certain that these figments concerning the merit of the *opus operatum* are found nowhere in the Fathers. But in order that the whole case may be the better understood, we also shall state those things concerning the use of the Sacrament which actually harmonize with the Fathers and Scripture.

Of the Use of the Sacrament, and of Sacrifice.

68] Some clever men imagine that the Lord's Supper was instituted for two reasons. First, that it might be a mark and testimony of profession, just as a particular shape of hood is the sign of a particular profession. Then they think that such a mark was especially pleasing to Christ, namely, a feast to signify mutual union and friendship among Christians, because banquets are signs of covenant and friendship. But this is a secular view; neither does it show the chief use of the things delivered by God; it speaks only of the exercise of love, which men, however profane and worldly, understand; it does not speak of faith, the nature of which few understand.

69] The Sacraments are signs of God's will toward us, and not merely signs of men among each other; and they are right in defining that Sacraments in the New Testament are signs of grace. And because in a sacrament there are two things, a sign and the Word, the Word, in the New Testament, is the promise of grace added. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the remission of sins, as the text, [Luke 22, 19](#), says: *This is My body, which is given for you. This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* **70]** Therefore the Word offers the remission of sins. And a ceremony is, as it were, a picture or seal, as Paul, [Rom. 4, 11](#), calls it, of the Word, making known the promise. Therefore, just as the promise is useless unless it is received by faith, so a ceremony is useless unless such faith is added as is truly confident that the remission of sins is here offered. And this faith encourages contrite minds. And just as the Word has been given in order to excite this faith, so the Sacrament has been instituted in order that the outward appearance meeting the eyes might move the heart to believe [and strengthen faith]. For through these, namely, through Word and Sacrament, the Holy Ghost works....

74] The sacrifice [thankoffering or thanksgiving] also is added. For there are several ends for one object. After conscience encouraged by faith has perceived from what terrors it is freed, then indeed it fervently gives thanks for the benefit and passion of Christ, and uses the ceremony itself to the praise of God, in order by this obedience to show its gratitude; and testifies that it holds in high esteem the gifts of God. Thus the ceremony becomes a sacrifice of praise.

75] And the Fathers, indeed, speak of a two-fold effect, of the comfort of consciences, and of thanksgiving, or praise. The former of these effects pertains to the nature [the right use] of the Sacrament; the latter pertains to the sacrifice.

The Smalcald Articles, II. 5.

7] Fifthly. But since the Mass is nothing else and can be nothing else (as the Canon and all books declare), than a work of men (even of wicked scoundrels), by which one attempts to reconcile himself and others to God, and to obtain and merit the remission of sins and grace (for thus the Mass is observed when it is observed at the very best; otherwise what purpose would it serve?), for this very reason it must and should [certainly] be condemned and rejected. For this directly conflicts with the chief article, which says that it is not a wicked or a godly hireling of the Mass with his own work, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God, that taketh away our sins.¹

¹Lutheran Church. Missouri Synod. (1997). Concordia Triglotta - English : The symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Includes Historical Introductions by F. Bente and indexes of subjects. (electronic ed.) (Pages 463-465). Milwaukee WI: Northwestern Publishing House.

Luther's works, vol. 53 : Liturgy and Hymns²

Introduction to Volume 53, xvii

In this and many other practices Luther simply built on existing traditions. At the same time, he did not hesitate to discard traditional forms and usages that obscured rather than expressed the gospel. Much offense has been taken at his complete excision of the canon of the mass, but this ruthless operation freed the Words of Institution from the rank growth around them and placed the gospel squarely in the center of the eucharistic rite.

An order of mass and Communion for the church at Wittenberg, 1523

Now the additions of the early fathers who, it is reported, softly prayed one or two Psalms before blessing the bread and wine are commendable. Athanasius⁵ and Cyprian⁶ are supposed to be some of these. Those who added the Kyrie eleison also did well. We read that under Basil the Great,⁷ the Kyrie eleison was in common use by all the people. The reading of the Epistles and Gospels is necessary, too. Only it is wrong to read them in a language the common people do not understand. Later, when chanting began, the Psalms were changed into the introit; the Angelic Hymn *Gloria in Excelsis: et in terra pax*,⁸ the graduals, the alleluias, the Nicene Creed, the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, and the *communio*⁹ were added. All of these are unobjectionable, especially the ones that are sung *de tempore*¹⁰ or on Sundays. For these days by themselves testify to ancient purity, the canon excepted.

But when everyone felt free to add or change at will and when the tyranny of priestly greed and pride entered in, then our wicked kings, i.e., the bishops and pastors, began to erect those altars to the images of Baal and all gods in the Lord's temple. Then it was that wicked King Ahaz removed the brazen altar and erected another copied from one in Damascus.¹¹ What I am speaking of is the canon, that abominable concoction drawn from everyone's sewer and cesspool. The mass became a sacrifice. Offertories¹² and mercenary¹³ collects were added. Sequences and proses¹⁴ were inserted in the Sanctus and the Gloria in Excelsis. Whereupon the mass began to be a priestly monopoly devouring the wealth of the whole world and engulfing it—as with an apocalyptic plague—with a host of rich, lazy, powerful, lascivious, and corrupt celibates. Thus came the masses for the departed, for journeys, for prosperity—but who can even name the causes for which the mass was made a sacrifice?

Nor do they cease to enlarge the canon even today: now it is for these feasts, then for others; now these *actiones* then other *communicantes*¹⁵ are adopted—not to mention the commemoration of the living and the dead.¹⁶ And there is no end of it yet. And what shall I say of the external additions of vestments, vessels, candles, and palls, of organs and all the music, and of images? There was scarcely a craft in all the world that did not depend on the mass for a large part of its business.

...Eighth, that utter abomination follows which forces all that precedes in the mass into its service and is, therefore, called the offertory. From here on almost everything smacks and savors of sacrifice. And the words of life and salvation [the Words of Institution] are imbedded in the midst of it all, just as the ark of the Lord once stood in the idol's temple next to Dagon.³⁸ And there was no Israelite who could approach or bring back the ark until it “smote his enemies in the

²Luther, M. (1999, c1965). Vol. 53: Luther's works, vol. 53 : Liturgy and Hymns (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 53). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

hinder parts, putting them to a perpetual reproach,”³⁹ and forced them to return it—which is a parable of the present time. Let us, therefore, repudiate everything that smacks of sacrifice, together with the entire canon and retain only that which is pure and holy, and so order our mass.⁴⁰

I. After the Creed or after the sermon⁴¹ let bread and wine be made ready for blessing⁴² in the customary manner. I have not yet decided whether or not water should be mixed with the wine. I rather incline, however, to favor pure wine without water; for the passage, “Thy wine is mixed with water,” in *Isaiah 1* [:22] gives the mixture a bad connotation.

Pure wine beautifully portrays the purity of gospel teaching. Further, the blood of Christ, whom we here commemorate, has been poured out unmixed with ours. Nor can the fancies of those be upheld who say that this is a sign of our union with Christ; for that is not what we commemorate. In fact, we are not united with Christ until he sheds his blood; or else we would be celebrating the shedding of our own blood together with the blood of Christ shed for us. Nonetheless, I have no intention of cramping anyone’s freedom or of introducing a law that might again lead to superstition. Christ will not care very much about these matters, nor are they worth arguing about. Enough foolish controversies have been fought on these and many other matters by the Roman and Greek churches.⁴³ And though some⁴⁴ direct attention to the water and blood which flowed from the side of Jesus,⁴⁵ they prove nothing. For that water signified something entirely different from what they wish that mixed water to signify. Nor was it mixed with blood. The symbolism does not fit, and the reference is inapplicable. As a human invention, this mixing [of water and wine] cannot, therefore, be considered binding.

II. The bread and wine having been prepared, one may proceed as follows:

The Lord be with you.

Response: And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

Response: Let us lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

Response: It is meet and right.

It is truly meet and right, just and salutary for us to give thanks to Thee always and everywhere, Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, through Christ our Lord ...

III. Then:

... Who the day before he suffered, took bread, and when he had given thanks, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you.

After the same manner also the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; this do, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of me.

I wish these words of Christ—with a brief pause after the preface—to be recited in the same tone in which the Lord’s Prayer is chanted elsewhere in the canon so that those who are present may be able to hear them, although the evangelically minded should be free about all these things and may recite these words either silently or audibly.

IV. The blessing ended, let the choir sing the Sanctus. And while the Benedictus is being sung, let the bread and cup be elevated according to the customary rite for the benefit of the weak in faith who might be offended if such an obvious change in this rite of the mass were suddenly made. This concession can be made especially where through sermons in the vernacular they have been taught what the elevation means.

V. After this, the Lord's Prayer shall be read. Thus, let us pray: "Taught by thy saving precepts..."⁴⁶ The prayer which follows, "Deliver us, we beseech thee ...,"⁴⁷ is to be omitted together with all the signs⁴⁸ they were accustomed to make over the host and with the host over the chalice. Nor shall the host be broken or mixed into the chalice. But immediately after the Lord's Prayer shall be said, "The peace of the Lord," etc., which is, so to speak, a public absolution of the sins of the communicants, the true voice of the gospel announcing remission of sins, and therefore the one and most worthy preparation for the Lord's Table, if faith holds to these words as coming from the mouth of Christ himself. On this account I would like to have it pronounced facing the people, as the bishops are accustomed to do, which is the only custom of the ancient bishops that is left among our bishops.

VI. Then, while the Agnus Dei is sung, let him [the liturgist] communicate, first himself and then the people. But if he should wish to pray the prayer, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who according to the will of the Father," etc.,⁴⁹ before communing, he does not pray wrongly, provided he changes the singular "mine" and "me" to the plural "ours" and "us." The same thing holds for the prayer, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my (or thy) soul unto life eternal," and, "The blood of our Lord preserve thy soul unto life eternal."

VII. If he desires to have the communion sung,⁵⁰ let it be sung. But instead of the *complenda* or final collect,⁵¹ because it sounds almost like a sacrifice, let the following prayer be read in the same tone: "What we have taken with our lips, O Lord..."⁵² The following one may also be read: "May thy body which we have received ... (changing to the plural number) ... who livest and reignest world without end."⁵³ "The Lord be with you," etc. In place of the *Ite missa*⁵⁴ let the *Benedicamus domino*⁵⁵ be said, adding Alleluia according to its own melodies where and when it is desired. Or the *Benedicamus* may be borrowed from Vespers.

VIII. The customary benediction may be given;⁵⁶ or else the one from [Numbers 6 \[:24–27\]](#), which the Lord himself appointed:

"The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace."

Or the one from [Psalm 67 \[:6–7\]](#):

"God, even our own God shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."