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Positio N. 17

THE RECEPTION OF COMMUNION
UNDER THE SPECIES OF BREAD ALONE
IN THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

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From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical traditions’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

The Reception of Communion Under the Species of Bread Alone in the Extraordinary Form: Abstract

Under the liturgical laws pertaining to the Extraordinary Form, the Faithful may not receive the Precious Blood, but only the Host, by contrast with the widespread practice, at least in Europe and North America, in the Ordinary Form. Historically, the Faithful received the Precious Blood in the West through a tube or *fistula*, until this died out in about the 12th century, with certain exceptions. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* proposed a revival of a practice exceptional reception of the Precious Blood, although permission soon became more general. The practice of the Extraordinary Form has certain advantages. It underlines the sacrificial nature of the Mass, for which the Priest’s reception from the Chalice is ritually necessary, but the Faithful’s is not. It safeguards the respect for the Sacred Vessels characteristics of the Extraordinary Form, which is incompatible with the usual practice of the Ordinary Form. It avoids a number of practical difficulties and liturgical abuses which have sometimes arisen in the Ordinary Form. And it guards against certain dangers to public health.

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FIUV Positio 17: THE RECEPTION OF COMMUNION UNDER THE SPECIES OF BREAD ALONE IN THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

1. The reception of Holy Communion under the Species of Bread alone is a notable feature of the Extraordinary Form; this paper seeks to articulate a rationale of the current law and practice.¹ This will also provide a principled defence of the restrictions on receiving under both kinds in the Ordinary Form.

The Historical Question

2. To generalise, communion is received under both kinds, using intinction, in the Eastern Churches. In the Latin West, the method used in the earliest centuries is unknown,² but from the 7th century the Roman *Ordines* prescribe that some of the Precious Blood be poured into a separate chalice of unconsecrated wine; the Faithful then received using a *fistula* (tube);³ later, the *fistula* continued to be used with the undiluted Precious Blood. In northern Europe the spread of the *fistula* seems to have replaced intinction.⁴ Reception of the Chalice by the Faithful began to disappear in the West in the 12th century; the *fistula* continued to be used on special occasions, and in certain religious communities, up to the 14th century, and even later: for example, by a monarch at his coronation, and in some places by the Deacon and Subdeacon at Solemn Mass,⁵ and by the Pope in Papal Masses up to the time of the Second Vatican Council.

¹ The extension of permission for the distribution of the Chalice to the Extraordinary Form is proposed by Fr Aidan Nichols: *Looking at the Liturgy: a critical view of its contemporary form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) p121

² Joseph Jungmann refers to Joseph Braun, but neither are able to present useful evidence of the methods used before the 7th century. See Jungman *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1955: English Edition, trans Francis Brunner C.S.S.R.) Volume II p 382 and note s 58-60; Braun *Das christliche Altargeräet* (Munich: Max Hueber, 1932) (Jungmann's references) pp79 and 247 and Plate X. Figure 28 of Plate X shows a mosaic from Mount Athos depicting the Apostles receiving directly from a large Chalice at (presumably) the Last Supper, but while this may reflect contemporary practice of the clergy it cannot be extrapolated to the laity. Widespread reception from the Chalice, using some method, in the early centuries is nevertheless sufficiently established by, for example, Pope Leo the Great (d.461) remarking that avoiding the Chalice might be an indication of Manicheism (since the Manicheans refused to drink wine). *Sermo 4, de Quadr.* (PL, 54, 279f.): '[The Manicheans], whenever they dare to attend our assemblies for the purpose of masking their infidelity, comport themselves in the communion of the Sacraments in such a way that sometimes, in order not to be unable to hide altogether, they receive the body of Christ with their unworthy mouths, yet entirely avoid drinking in the blood of our redemption. I bring this to your pious attention for this reason: so that this sort of people may both be made manifest to you on this evidence and, when their sacrilegious pretence has been detected, be driven out of the company of the Saints by the priests' authority.' ('Cumque ad tegendam infidelitatem suam nostris audeant interesse conventibus, ita in sacramentorum communione se temperant, ut interdum, ne penitus latere non possint, ore indigno Christi corpus accipiant, sanguinem autem redemptionis nostrae haurire omnino declinant. Quod ideo vestrae notum facimus sanctitati, ut vobis hujuscemodi homines et his manifestantur indiciis, et quorum deprehensa fuerit sacrilega simulatio, a sanctorum societate sacerdotali auctoritate pellantur.')

³ Also called a *calamus*, *pugillaris*, and a variety of other names.

⁴ For example by the Council of Braga in 675 and the Council of Clermont in 1096.

⁵ For this paragraph see Jungman *op. cit.* Volume II p382-387. Braun *op. cit.* pp. 249-265 covers the spread and usage of the *fistula* in some detail, and the terms used for it.

3. The liturgical scholar Joseph Jungmann suggests that the reception of the Chalice was discontinued in the West because of ‘a clearer understanding that *per concomitantiam* the entire Christ is present under both species’,⁶ along with long-standing concerns about the danger of spillage of the Precious Blood. It is natural to link this to increasing reverence for the Blessed Sacrament,⁷ and the growing practice of reception of Holy Communion outside Mass.
4. Following the adoption of the reception of Communion under both kinds by Hussites, and then Lutherans and others, permission for the practice was given for certain regions, between 1433⁸ and 1621.⁹ The *fistula* had continued to be used in late Medieval Germany for the reception of unconsecrated ‘*Ablutionswein*’ after Mass, and it was restored for Communion in both Lutheran and Catholic contexts,¹⁰ although the *fistula* was later forbidden in Lutheran churches.¹¹
5. The Hussite ‘Utraquists’ claimed that Our Lord commanded reception under both kinds,¹² that this was necessary for salvation, that Our Lord is not present entire under each Form, and that the Church lacked good reasons for reception under one kind only. These claims were condemned infallibly by the Council of Trent.¹³

⁶ Jungmann *op. cit.* p385

⁷ This was also manifested in lengthening Eucharistic fasts and the growing infrequency of Communion: see Positio 9: *The Eucharistic Fast*, §§2-3

⁸ First by the Council of Basle in 1433. The Council of Trent left it to the Pope to regulate the matter (Session XXII Ch XI); Pope Pius IV did so in a *Breve* of 29th July 1564.

⁹ Permission was withdrawn for Bavaria in 1571, for Austria in 1584, and for Bohemia, and in general, in 1621: see Jungmann *op. cit.* Vol II p286. The possibility of a similar dispensation for former Anglicans, in case of a large-scale reconciliation, was again raised in the 1630s, but the project came to nothing.

¹⁰ Braun *op. cit.* p257: ‘the decree issued by the Salzburg Provincial Synod of 1564 on lay reception of the Chalice, after the Pope had granted such reception under certain limited conditions, explicitly specifies that the Sacred Blood must be received [literally: ‘enjoyed’] through a “small straw”.’

¹¹ *Ibid.* p258: ‘At the Lutheran Eucharist, the straw was used well into the 18th Century. While Reformed theologians and synods fought the practice, Lutherans on the whole defended it for practical reasons as well as for reasons of decorum. In Altona in 1705 an edict of the Danish King Fredric ended the use of straws, in Brandenburg Royal Prussian decrees forbade them a short time later.’

¹² The Utraquists’ proof texts included: ‘Bibite ex hoc omnes’ (‘Drink ye all of this.’ Mat 26:27, and parallels) ‘Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.’ (‘except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.’ John 6:54; and the Bread of Life Discourse in general). The Council of Trent comments (Session XXI, Chapter I): ‘He who said: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you (v. 54), also said: He that eateth this bread shall live for ever (v. 59); and He who said: He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life (v. 55), also said: The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world (v. 52); and, in fine, He who said: He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him (v. 57), said, nevertheless: He that eateth this bread shall live for ever (v. 59.)’

¹³ The Council of Trent, Session XIII (1551), Canon III. ‘If any one denieth, that, in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist, the whole Christ is contained under each species, and under every part of each species, when separated; let him be anathema.’ Session XXI (1562): Canon I. ‘If any one saith, that, by the precept of God, or, by necessity of salvation, all and each of the faithful of Christ ought to receive both species of the most holy sacrament not consecrating; let him be anathema.’ Canon II. ‘If any one saith, that the holy Catholic Church was not induced, by just causes and reasons, to communicate, under the species of bread only, laymen, and also clerics when not consecrating; let him be anathema.’ Canon III. ‘If any one denieth, that Christ whole and entire, the fountain and author of all graces, is received

6. The question of the Chalice was raised in the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 55:

The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact, communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See, as, for instance, to the newly ordained in the Mass of their sacred ordination, to the newly professed in the Mass of their religious profession, and to the newly baptized in the Mass which follows their baptism.¹⁴

7. The Instruction *Sacramentali Communionem* (1970) stated that, with the permission of the Holy See,

Ordinaries may designate the particular instances, but on condition that they grant permission not indiscriminately but for clearly defined celebrations and that they point out matters for caution. They are also to exclude occasions when there will be a large number of communicants. The groups receiving this permission must also be specific, well ordered, and homogeneous.

8. The Instruction warns of the dangers of 'misunderstanding', and of profanation. The former was to be guarded against by 'the necessary catechesis' (§5); the latter (§6) by:

its being done with dignity, devotion, propriety, and the avoidance of the danger of irreverence.

9. These general principles were reiterated in further Instructions, *Inaestimabile donum* (1980)¹⁵ and *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004).¹⁶ In 1984, however, the Congregation

under the one species of bread; because that, as some falsely assert, He is not received, according to the institution of Christ himself, under both species; let him be anathema.'

¹⁴ Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 55: 'Communio sub utraque specie, firmis principiis dogmaticis a Concilio Tridentino statutis, in casibus ab Apostolica Sede definiendis, tum clericis et religiosis, tum laicis concedi potest, de iudicio Episcoporum, veluti ordinatis in Missa sacrae suae ordinationis, professis in Missa religiosae suae professionis, neophytis in Missa quae Baptismum subsequitur.'

¹⁵ The Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Inaestimabile donum* (1980) 12: 'Episcopal conferences and ordinaries also are not to go beyond what is laid down in the present discipline: the granting of permission for Communion under both kinds is not to be indiscriminate, and the celebrations in question are to be specified precisely; the groups that use this faculty are to be clearly defined, well disciplined, and homogeneous.'

¹⁶ The Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004) 101: 'In order for Holy Communion under both kinds to be administered to the lay members of Christ's faithful, due consideration should be given to the circumstances, as judged first of all by the diocesan Bishop.' ('Ut christifidelibus laicis sacra Communio sub utraque specie ministretur, congruenter aestimanda erunt adiuncta, de quibus iudicent praepriis Episcopi dioecesiani.') 102: 'The chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ's faithful where there is such a large number of communicants that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist and there is a danger that "more than a reasonable quantity of the Blood of Christ remain to be consumed at the end of the celebration".' ('Ne ministretur calix christifidelibus laicis ubi tantus adsit communicandorum numerus, ut difficile evadat quantitatem vini ad Eucharistiam aestimare, et periculum exstet, ut «copia Sanguinis Christi plus aequo remaneat in fine celebrationis sumenda»') The internal quotation is from *the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* n285 a.

for Divine Worship allowed the Bishops of the United States to extend permission for the use of the Chalice by the Faithful to Sundays and Holydays,¹⁷ and this practice is now very widespread in Europe and North America.

10. As clarified by the Instruction *Universae Ecclesiae*,¹⁸ practice at the Extraordinary Form is governed by the liturgical law in use in 1962: the Chalice is received only by the celebrant.

The Value of the 1962 Discipline

11. A number of related issues must be noted before the situation can be assessed.
12. First, the current practice of the Ordinary Form cannot with precision be regarded as the restoration of the ancient practice. The historic methods of intinction, and the use of a *fistula*, which avoid the need for the Chalice to be handled by the Communicant, though permitted today in the Ordinary Form, are almost unknown.¹⁹ The modern method conforms more closely to the practice of Protestant groups,²⁰ and indeed the ecumenical aspect of the new practice has often been noted.²¹
13. Again, the reception of the Chalice in the Early Middle Ages, and indeed amongst the Hussites and early Protestants,²² took place in the context of the infrequent reception of Communion, which lessened its consequences either for reverence or hygiene.

¹⁷ Protocol CD 1297/78. This followed widespread use of the Chalice beyond the guidelines given by earlier documents.

¹⁸ Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, Instruction *Universae Ecclesiae* (2011) 28: 'Furthermore, since it is of course dealt with by special law, in respect of its own subject matter, the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* derogates from all liturgical laws that belong to the sacred rites, promulgated from the year 1962 onwards, and not coinciding with the rubrics of the liturgical books of the year 1962.' ('Praeterea, cum sane de lege speciali agitur, quoad materiam propriam, Litterae Apostolicae Summorum Pontificum derogant omnibus legibus liturgicis, sacrorum rituum propriis, exinde ab anno 1962 promulgatis, et cum rubricis librorum liturgicorum anni 1962 non congruentibus.')

¹⁹ See *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 103: 'The norms of the Roman Missal admit the principle that in cases where Communion is administered under both kinds, "the Blood of the Lord may be received either by drinking from the chalice directly, or by intinction, or by means of a tube or a spoon". As regards the administering of Communion to lay members of Christ's faithful, the Bishops may exclude Communion with the tube or the spoon where this is not the local custom, though the option of administering Communion by intinction always remains.' ('Normae Missalis Romani admittunt principium quo, in casibus ubi Communio sub utraque specie ministretur, «sanguis Domini sumi potest vel ex ipso calice directe bibendo, vel per intinctionem, vel cum calamo, vel cum cochleari». Quoad Communionis christifidelibus laicis ministrationem, Episcopi Communionem cum calamo vel cum cochleari excludi possunt, ubi usus loci non sit, manente tamen semper optione Communionis per intinctionem ministrandae.')

²⁰ It is worth noting that among Anglicans the general practice is for the Eucharistic Minister to hold onto the Chalice and tilt it to allow the Communicant to receive; the Communicant does not touch the Chalice with his hands, but only with his lips. This practice, which is compatible with existing liturgical law, has been carried over into the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

²¹ There is a parallel here with the reception of the Host in the hand: see Positio 3: *The Manner of Receiving Communion*.

²² Frequent Communion is an exception throughout the history of Protestantism, generally attributable to (20th century) Catholic influence. It is worth noting also that, at least in England and Wales, Anglican congregations are significantly smaller than Catholic ones (because of the larger number of Anglican

14. Finally, the modern practice in the Ordinary Form takes place in the context of the almost universal practice of Communion in the Hand, and the very widespread use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. The former militates against the use of intinction;²³ the distribution of the Chalice to large congregations serves in turn as a putative justification for the use of Extraordinary Ministers.²⁴
15. A casual attitude towards the reception of Holy Communion has been lamented by Blessed Pope John Paul II and by Pope Benedict XVI.²⁵ The exclusion of the Faithful from the Chalice reinforces an attitude of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament in two immediate ways: by reducing the danger of spillage of the Precious Blood, and by avoiding the necessity of Communicants taking the Chalice into their own hands. The reverence due to the Sacred Vessels is considered in more detail in Appendix A.
16. Less directly, the practice of the Extraordinary Form avoids a host of practical difficulties, and the possibility of a series of liturgical abuses, to which the distribution of the Chalice in the Ordinary Form has sometimes given rise, under modern conditions, and which have had to be dealt with by the Congregation for Divine Worship.²⁶

places of worship), making the typical Eucharistic service a more intimate affair, as well as usually a less frequent one.

²³ Michael Davies quotes Fr Tom Maher, writing in 1979 at the height of the controversy over the introduction of the practice of reception under both kinds in the United States, where Fr Maher was Executive Director of Cardinal Bernadin's 'Liturgy Office': 'It might be mentioned that we do not recommend receiving the bread and wine by intinction, that is by dipping the bread into the wine. Such a practice minimizes the sign of eating and drinking and, furthermore, would inhibit people from receiving Communion in the hand.' Michael Davies *Communion Under Both Kinds* (Long Prairie: The Neumann Press, revised edition 1989) p28.

²⁴ The standard advice of Bishops' Conferences is that two ministers be provided for the Chalice for every minister provided for the Host. This makes the distribution of Holy Communion under Both Kinds exclusively by priests and deacons, unlikely. On the other hand, the use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is very restricted under liturgical law, and it seems a paradox to claim that they are justified by the length of time the Communion of the Faithful would otherwise take, if it would only take an excessively long time because the Chalice is being offered, in the context of the general rule that the Chalice should not be offered to large congregations.

²⁵ See Positio 3: *The Manner of the Reception of Communion*; Positio 10: *The Eucharistic Fast*. See Blessed Pope John Paul II in *Dominicae Cena* (1980): 'Sometimes, indeed quite frequently, everybody participating in the Eucharistic assembly goes to Communion; and on some such occasions, as experienced pastors confirm, there has not been due care to approach the sacrament of Penance so as to purify one's conscience.' ('Interdum scilicet, immo compluribus in casibus, cuncti eucharisticae celebrationis participes ad communionem accedunt, tametsi nonnumquam - ut comprobant periti rerum pastores - habita non est debita cura, ut prius Paenitentiae Sacramentum reciperent propriam ad conscientiam mundandam.') Pope Benedict XVI Post-Synodal Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007) 55: 'Clearly, full participation in the Eucharist takes place when the faithful approach the altar in person to receive communion. Yet true as this is, care must be taken lest they conclude that the mere fact of their being present in church during the liturgy gives them a right or even an obligation to approach the table of the Eucharist.' ('Sine dubio plena participatio Eucharistiae habetur cum quis accedit etiam personaliter ad altare Communionis recipiendae gratia.(169) Attamen cavendum est ne haec iusta affirmatio forsitan introducat inter fideles quendam automatismum, quasi quispiam ob solam praesentiam in ecclesia, liturgiae tempore, ius habeat, vel forsitan etiam officium, ad Mensam eucharisticam accedendi.')

²⁶ The Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* responds to problems associated with the distribution of the Precious Blood to the Faithful with clarifications, permissions, and prohibitions, as follows. First, '[o]nly out of true necessity is there to be recourse to the assistance of extraordinary ministers in the celebration of the Liturgy.' ('Solummodo ex vera necessitate recurrendum erit ad auxilium ministrorum

17. Furthermore, by creating a contrast between the Priest's reception under both kinds, and the Faithful's reception of the Host alone, the sacrificial nature of the Mass is illustrated and emphasised. The double consecration of bread and wine, symbolising the separation of Our Lord's body from the blood shed in His Passion, and also the reception by the celebrant of the Precious Blood as well as the Host, is necessary to the completion of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, considered in its ritual aspect. The Communion of the Faithful is an additional aspect of the rite, which adds nothing to the validity of the sacrifice, offered by both priest and Faithful, and can be done completely by the Faithful's reception of the Host alone.

18. The two-fold nature of the Mass, as Sacrifice and Sacrament, is a commonplace of traditional catechesis and spirituality;²⁷ the clear distinction between them is designed to do justice to each. As Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger observed, this aspect of the Extraordinary Form is a useful antidote to a one-sided emphasis on the Mass as a shared meal.²⁸

19. A final issue is one of hygiene. This caused particular concern in the context of the world-wide 'Swine Flu' (H1N1) epidemic of 2009, when many dioceses prohibited the reception of the Chalice by the Faithful. This will be discussed in more detail in Appendix B.

extraordinarium in Liturgiae celebratione.') (151). Second, as noted above, the distribution of the Chalice where the large numbers of potential Communicants make it difficult to estimate the quantity of wine which should be consecrated (102). Third, the related problem of a large quantity of the Precious Blood being consecrated leads the Instruction to condemn the practice of pouring it from one container into another after consecration (106). Fourth, the possibility that a large quantity of the Precious Blood will be left over after the Communion of the Faithful requires the seriousness of the abuse (leading to *latae sententiae* excommunication) of casting away the Sacred Species, to be reiterated (107); the same paragraph reminds readers, fifth, that the Precious Blood left over must be consumed by a priest, and not an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Sixth, self-intinction is condemned, as is, seventh, intinction using non-consecrated bread (104). Eighth, intinction also requires the use of hosts of appropriate dimensions (103). Ninth, and finally, the distribution of the Chalice is forbidden not only when there is a risk of profanation, but 'where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.' (102) ('ubi pars notabilis populi ad calicem variis ex causis perseveranter nolit accedere, ablato igitur quodammodo signo unitatis.')

²⁷ For example, the *Baltimore Catechism* (Q872): 'The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament when we receive it in Holy Communion and when it remains in the Tabernacle of the Altar. It is a sacrifice when it is offered up at Mass by the separate Consecration of the bread and wine, which signifies the separation of Our Lord's blood from His body when He died on the Cross.' *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine Prepared and Enjoined by order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* No.3 (London: Baronius Press, 2006) (reprinted from the 1921 edition) p164

²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger) 'The Theology of the Liturgy' in *Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger: proceedings of the July 2001 Fontgombault Conference* ed. Alcuin Reid, pp18-31, p20: 'A sizable party of catholic liturgists seems to have practically arrived at the conclusion that Luther, rather than Trent, was substantially right in the sixteenth century debate; one can detect much the same position in the post conciliar discussions on the Priesthood. ... It is only against this background of the effective denial of the authority of Trent, that the bitterness of the struggle against allowing the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal, after the liturgical reform, can be understood. The possibility of so celebrating constitutes the strongest, and thus (for them) the most intolerable contradiction of the opinion of those who believe that the faith in the Eucharist formulated by Trent has lost its value.'

Conclusion

20. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* proposed a revival and extension of the late Medieval tradition, which survived into modern times, of certain persons receiving from the Chalice on a very occasional basis, such as a monarch at his coronation. In the Medieval context we read of such concessions being for the ‘augmenting of grace’:²⁹ given the teaching of Trent, this must be understood not as sacramental grace, but as the stimulation of a special devotion.
21. This devotion was stimulated in part because of the symbolism of the Chalice, and in part because it was a special privilege; it was only the exceptional reception of the Chalice by non-clerics which was envisaged by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Were it to be extended to the Extraordinary Form today, however, the sense of privilege could not be generated, because of the spread of the practice in the Ordinary Form to the point of routine. On the other hand, a heightened devotion in receiving Holy Communion may be stimulated by the distinctive manner of reception employed in the Extraordinary Form: kneeling, on the tongue, with a Communion Plate, and invariably from a priest or (exceptionally) a deacon.
22. The introduction into the Extraordinary Form of the distribution of the Chalice to the Faithful would create both a practical and theological dissonance in this Form of the Roman Rite.³⁰ Practically, it would be difficult to undertake without the use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and would introduce an unavoidable risk of spillage which would contrast with the careful precautions, in the Extraordinary Form, taken to avoid the loss of the smallest fragment of the consecrated Host. Theologically, it would be at odds with the general emphasis on the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Vessels, and to the emphasis placed on the sacrificial nature of the Mass. The features of the Extraordinary Form at odds with the distribution of the Chalice are, in fact, some of those of most value as a witness to the Church as a whole, to the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

²⁹ De Lugo (*Disputationes*, 1869, Vol IV pp39ff), refers to the permission granted by Pope Clement VI to the King of France to receive the Chalice ‘ad maius gratiae augmentum’. Quoted, with other similar references, by Charles Harris ‘The Communion of the Sick, Viaticum, and Reservation’ in W.K. Lowther Clarke and Charles Harris: *Liturgy and Worship: A companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1932), pp541-615, p614.

³⁰ See the Instruction *Il Padre, incomprendibile* (1996) 53, addressed to the Oriental Churches, on the importance of maintaining the manner of receiving Holy Communion traditional to those Churches: ‘Even if this excludes enhancing the value of other criteria, also legitimate, and implies renouncing some convenience, a change of the traditional usage risks incurring a non-organic intrusion with respect to the spiritual framework to which it refers.’

Appendix A: The Reverence due to the Sacred Vessels

It is no exaggeration to say that the attitude of Catholics to the Chalice, Ciborium, and Paten, and to the Purificator, has undergone a revolution since 1962, a revolution manifested both in practice and in liturgical law. The practice of Communion under both Kinds is not the only factor in this revolution, but it is a sufficient one. The way that the Chalice is distributed in the Ordinary Form is simply incompatible with the traditional norms for the treatment of the Sacred Vessels.

These norms reflected a tradition already witnessed by St Gregory Nazianzen (d. 389/390): he took it for granted that the Sacred Vessels should not be touched by the laity.³¹ The Roman Catechism explains:

To safeguard in every possible way the dignity of so august a sacrament, not only is the power of its administration entrusted exclusively to priests, but the Church has also prohibited by law any but consecrated persons, unless some case of great necessity intervene, to dare handle or touch the sacred vessels, the linen, or other instruments necessary to its completion.³²

The prohibition on non-clerics touching the Sacred Vessels entered the *Codex Juris Canonici* through Gratian's *Decretals* (compiled in the 12th century), which cites a false decretal of Pope Soter (d. 174);³³ similarly, the *Liber Pontificalis* (c. 500) records that Pope Sixtus I (d. c.124) laid down that only sacred ministers should touch the Sacred Vessels.

This is reiterated by the 1917 Code of Canon Law (1306.1):

Care should be taken lest a chalice, paten, or, before cleansing, purificators, palls, and corporals that were used in the sacrifice of the Mass are touched by any other than by clerics or those who have custody of these things.

The careful enforcement of this attitude was characteristic of pre-Conciliar liturgical formation.³⁴ Its effect on the piety of the Faithful was pervasive, and the cultural aspects of this are underlined by the novelist Martin Mosebach.³⁵ It created a powerful sense of

³¹ St Gregory Nazianzen wrote (translated literally): 'What liturgical vessels, even though not-to-be-touched (ἄψωστα) by the many, did I give over to the hands of the lawless?' From the context he is reproaching the Arians for inciting tumults in the churches of the orthodox, during which even women of the lowest stamp made sport of sacred things. (*Oration* 33.3 (NPNF 2nd ser. 7.329); PG 36.217B).

³² *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (trans John A. McHugh O.P. and Charles J. Callan O.P., 1923) reprinted by Roman Catholic Books, p. 254.

³³ Which is to say, a canon law text falsely attributed to Pope Soter.

³⁴ Fr William O'Brien *A Handbook for the Sacristan: a detailed guide to prepare for liturgical functions* (Imprimatur 1932; reprinted by Veritas Press, Santa Monica CA) p12: 'The chalice and paten may not be handled by lay people or by one not in Major Orders. Permission may, however, be granted to those who have charge of such things to handle and prepare them.'

³⁵ Martin Mosebach *The Heresy of Formlessness* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006): recalling the circumstances of his local church when he was a child, he writes (p176): 'The sacristan enjoyed a significant privilege for a layman: he was allowed to touch the sacred vessels; the bishop himself had given permission. His son, however, was not allowed. If his son had to fetch the chalice, he had to put on white gloves, as he did when he brought the heavy monstrance from the cupboard (his father could no longer lift it).'

the sacredness of those things most closely associated with the Blessed Sacrament, and, *a fortiori*, of the Blessed Sacrament Itself. The attitude encapsulated in this legislation is still very much at work in the Extraordinary Form today.³⁶

By contrast, we find in the 1983 Code of Canon Law (Canon 1171):

Sacred objects, which are designated for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated reverently and are not to be employed for profane or inappropriate use even if they are owned by private persons.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states, similarly (327):

Among the requisites for the celebration of Mass, the sacred vessels are held in special honour, especially the chalice and paten, in which the bread and wine are offered and consecrated, and from which they are consumed.

The Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004), reiterating the General Instruction,³⁷ specifies that it is a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte, who purifies the vessels and puts them away.³⁸ The purification of Sacred Vessels by Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion remains, however, a very widespread abuse.

As has been noted, the distribution of the Chalice to the Faithful, when there is a congregation of any size, generally necessitates the use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Even if it did not, distribution in the manner almost invariably employed, using neither intinction nor the historically dominant practice of the West, the *fistula*, makes it necessary for the Communicant to handle the Chalice.

The concern, so often expressed by the Papal magisterium, that the reverence of the Faithful for the Blessed Sacrament is too often deficient, has an obvious relevance here.

³⁶ The prohibition on anyone other than the celebrant receiving the Chalice in the 1917 Code of Canon Law has been superseded, but although no longer of canonical force, as a liturgical principle it is still valid in the context of the Extraordinary Form.

³⁷ See the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* nn. 163, 183, 192.

³⁸ Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004) 119: ‘The Priest, once he has returned to the altar after the distribution of Communion, standing at the altar or at the credence table, purifies the paten or ciborium over the chalice, then purifies the chalice in accordance with the prescriptions of the Missal and wipes the chalice with the purificator. Where a Deacon is present, he returns with the Priest to the altar and purifies the vessels. It is permissible, however, especially if there are several vessels to be purified, to leave them, covered as may be appropriate, on a corporal on the altar or on the credence table, and for them to be purified by the Priest or Deacon immediately after Mass once the people have been dismissed. Moreover a duly instituted acolyte assists the Priest or Deacon in purifying and arranging the sacred vessels either at the altar or the credence table. In the absence of a Deacon, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes and arranges them in the usual way.’ (‘Sacerdos, ad altare post distributionem Communionis reversus, stans ad altare vel ad abacum purificat patenam vel pyxidem super calicem, postea purificat calicem, iuxta Missalis praescripta, et calicem purificatorio absterget. Ubi adsit Diaconus, ille cum Sacerdote ad altare revertitur et vasa purificat. Licet tamen vasa purificanda, praesertim si sint plura, opportune cooperta, in altari vel in abaco super corporale relinquere eaque statim post Missam, populo dimisso, a Sacerdote vel Diacono purificari. Item acolythus rite institutus Sacerdotem vel Diaconum in vasis sacris purificandis et componendis sive ad altare sive ad abacum adiuvat. Absente Diacono, acolythus rite institutus vasa sacra ad abacum defert ibique more solito ea purificat, abstergit et componit.’)

The practice of the Extraordinary Form, which naturally conforms to the traditional discipline, can in this respect be a valuable lesson for the whole Church.

Appendix B: The Question of Hygiene

A concern for public health in the distribution of Holy Communion has always been part of the practice of the Latin Church. St Thomas Aquinas expresses it memorably:

If it be discovered that the wine has been poisoned, the priest should neither receive it nor administer it to others on any account, lest the life-giving chalice become one of death.³⁹

This is reiterated by the 1962 *Missale Romanum*'s instructions.⁴⁰

It is not surprising, accordingly, that following medical advice distribution of the Chalice was prohibited in the English dioceses of Plymouth, Brentwood, Lancaster and Portsmouth, and in some parishes in the Archdiocese of Liverpool, in the course of the epidemic of Swine Flu (the H1N1 virus) 2009; in the diocese of Portsmouth Communion on the tongue was also prohibited, as was shaking hands at the kiss of peace.⁴¹ Similar precautions were taken in a number of dioceses in North America and elsewhere, and by a number of Anglican dioceses.⁴²

There have been many studies on the survival of the virus on 'fomites', surfaces which had been infected by a sufferer. For example, one peer-reviewed study found that the H1N1 virus would survive for four hours on such a surface.⁴³ Looking at the more general problem of fomites, a study of the Norovirus, the very common 'vomiting bug', demonstrated the difficulty of disinfecting a surface: the use of a cloth with ordinary detergent only served to infect the cloth, and any previously non-infected surface the cloth subsequently touched.⁴⁴ The norovirus is not affected by detergents since it lacks a

³⁹ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIIa Q83 a.6, ad3: 'Si vero venenum ibi adesse deprehenderit immissum, nullo modo debet sumere nec alii dare ne calix vitae vertatur in mortem.'

⁴⁰ *De Defectibus* X 6: 'If something poisonous falls into the Chalice after the Consecration, or something that would cause vomiting, the consecrated wine is to be poured into another Chalice, with water added until the Chalice is full, so that the species of wine will be dissolved; and this water is to be poured out into the sacrarium. Other wine, together with water, is to be brought and consecrated.' ('Si aliquid venenosum ceciderit in calicem, vel quod provocaret vomitum, vinum consecratum reponendum est in alio calice aqua pleno, ita ut species vini dissolvantur; et huiusmodi aqua in sacrarium proiciatur. Aliud autem vinum cum aqua apponendum est, denuo consecrandum.')

⁴¹ Reported in the *Catholic Herald*, 31st July 2009

⁴² The suspension of the use of the Chalice is provided for in the (British) Anglican context by the Sacrament Act of 1547, which followed an outbreak of the bubonic plague.

⁴³ 'In contrast, live virus—as tested by plaque assay (for seasonal H1N1) or fluorescent focus formation (for pH1N1)—was recovered from most surfaces after 4 hours and from some nonporous materials after 9 hours, but by 24 hours it had fallen below detection levels.' "Survival of Influenza A(H1N1) on Materials Found in Households: Implications for Infection Control", by Jane S. Greatorex, Paul Digard, Martin D. Curran, Robert Moynihan, Harrison Wensley, Tim Wreghitt, Harsha Varsani, Fayna Garcia, Joanne Enstone, Jonathan S. Nguyen-Van-Tam; Published November 22, 2011 by Plos One.

⁴⁴ 'In a study by Barker et al., surfaces cleaned with a detergent solution spread norovirus to uncontaminated surfaces. As a result, the contaminated surface, the cleaning cloth, and the cross-contaminated surface all tested positive for norovirus. However, cleaning with a 5,000 ppm chlorine

lipid viral envelope; it can be destroyed however by dilute bleach. Anti-bacterial agents are recommended for the Swine flu virus.

It is clear enough that the usual practice of wiping the rim of a chalice with a purificator, and turning the chalice a little between communicants, has a merely symbolic value. The sharing of saliva among a large group of people, which the usual practice of reception of the Precious Blood in the Latin West implies, is ideally suited to the passing on of infections of all kinds.

To reiterate points made above, the infrequency of Holy Communion in the Early Middle Ages means that this problem did not have the same importance. Again, the documents permitting the distribution of the Chalice consistently exclude large congregations. The reality in Europe and North America, however, is quite different.

By contrast, there should be no danger of cross-infection in the case of the reception of the Host on the tongue, if it is properly administered, since the priest's fingers should not touch the Communicant's tongue. The same is true of the practice of intinction using a spoon, practiced in the Eastern Churches: the contents on the spoon are simply gently deposited in the communicant's mouth, and the communicant does not close his mouth on the spoon. In these cases a concern about infection would be an argument for ensuring that the practice was being carried out correctly, but not for a suspension of the traditional practice.

While the Swine Flu epidemic caused particular concerns, the hygiene issue is a general one, and one more prominent today than in the 1970s when the current practice was being proposed and spread.⁴⁵ The common practice, in the context of modern levels of frequency of the reception of Communion, and with large congregations, does raise a question of public health.

Appendix C: Celiac Disease

A side-issue in considering the distribution of the Chalice is raised by Celiac Disease, sufferers of which are intolerant of gluten, a protein found in wheat, and therefore in ordinary hosts. The matter has received the attention of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, and Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger, as Prefect, issued norms on the matter in 2003.⁴⁶ The following principles are relevant to lay sufferers:⁴⁷

solution was effective in preventing cross-contamination and eliminating norovirus from environmental surfaces.' "Significance of Fomites in the Spread of Respiratory and Enteric Viral Disease" by Stephanie A. Boone and Charles P. Gerba; published in *Applied Environmental Microbiology* 2007

⁴⁵ The study of viruses and the understanding of how they spread has advanced a great deal since the early 1970s. The norovirus, for example, was first identified in 1972.

⁴⁶ July 24, 2003 Prot. 89/78-174 98

⁴⁷ The document makes equivalent provision for priests who suffer from Celiac disease.

A. 1. Hosts that are completely gluten-free are invalid matter for the celebration of the Eucharist.

A. 2. Low-gluten hosts (partially gluten-free) are valid matter, provided they contain a sufficient amount of gluten to obtain the confection of bread without the addition of foreign materials and without the use of procedures that would alter the nature of bread.

B. 1. A layperson affected by celiac disease, who is not able to receive, Communion under the species of bread, including low-gluten hosts, may receive Communion under the species of wine only.

C. 1. The Ordinary is competent to give permission for an individual priest or layperson to use low-gluten hosts or mustum for the celebration of the Eucharist. Permission can be granted habitually, for as long as the situation continues which occasioned the granting of permission.

It should be noted that the reception of the Chalice alone is not regarded by the (American) Catholic Celiac Society as ideal, for a number of reasons, including the fact that at the Commixtum a portion of the large Host is dropped into the Chalice, contaminating the Precious Blood with traces of gluten; this is exacerbated if previous Communicants have undertaken self-intinction.⁴⁸

Today reduced-gluten hosts are widely available, approved by both the proper Church authorities and associations supporting sufferers, and it is an established practice for priests ministering to celiacs to ensure that such hosts are consecrated, in a separate ciborium.

Those celiacs unable, without damage to their health, to receive even a small portion of a reduced-gluten host, on an occasional basis, are a small minority of what is already a small group. The possibility that, for health reasons, a person may be unable to receive Communion is one not unknown in the history of the Church. The only way to provide a completely gluten-free Communion would be for a separate Chalice to be consecrated, into which no Host is added. Although the number of people for whom this is necessary is tiny, the liceity of this solution in the context of the Extraordinary Form is one which could usefully be clarified.

⁴⁸ Mike & Chris Spreitzer: *Reaching Out To Catholics With Celiac Disease* (Catholic Celiac Society). The practice of self-intinction is, in fact, forbidden by the Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004) 104.