

The below article—published in October of 1911 by Fr. Herbert Thurston (d. 1939)—explains all about this intriguing rubric, where each member of the faithful drinks water and/or wine immediately after receiving the SANCTISSIMUM. By the way, Fr. Thurston contributed (in a rather small way) to the *Saint Jean de Brébeuf Hymnal*: cf. p. 470.

The Laity and the unconsecrated Chalice.

THE lively discussion which has recently been carried on in the columns of two influential journals, regarding the danger of infection from the use of the Chalice in Holy Communion, suggests the publication of a few notes upon an Eucharistic practice long adhered to by English Catholics, even if not peculiar to this country. Certainly, it cannot be pretended that in withdrawing the Cup from the laity, the Catholic Church was influenced by any considerations of hygiene. She had excellent reasons for her change of practice, but the fear of disseminating contagious diseases was not of the number. And the proof lies in the fact that for centuries she encouraged her faithful children to drink from a common chalice, though the wine, or wine and water, which filled the vessel was now no longer consecrated. This is the custom of which I propose to say a few words in the present article.

And to begin with, it would be hard to find a more striking example of the principle that all written rubrical law is essentially conditioned by circumstances, and that the supreme *jus et norma* rests with usage alone, than in this matter of the unconsecrated chalice. Rubricians of a certain extreme type are fond of telling us of the grave obligation of the ceremonial law of the Church. They seem never to weary in their attempts to surprise us with decisions new and old, quoting decrees of which we have never heard, for which we do not know where to look, and to which we cannot obtain access without considerable trouble and expenditure. Well, I fancy that it will be news to many, even of my ecclesiastical readers, that in the *Missale Romanum*, a book necessarily to be met with in every church and chapel, and one of the primary founts of rubrical law, there stands a direction, even in the very latest editions, which no one, either in Rome or anywhere else, now dreams of observing. Nay more, I will go so far as to say that if any priest did carry out the rubric in question, he would, at an early date, have his

attention called to the matter by his Bishop, and would be reminded that it was not for private individuals to revive obsolete observances, when they have been suffered to fall into desuetude by a Church fully competent to enforce her own enactments if she wishes to do so.

The rubric to which I refer is to be found in the *Ritus Celebrandi Missam*, and is concerned with the administration of Holy Communion to the laity during Mass. It is to the following effect :

The server, holding in his right hand a vessel with wine and water, and in his left a towel, following after the priest, offers a purification to them (the communicants) and presents them with the towel, that they may wipe their lips with it.¹

Neither is this an isolated direction. The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, which is of not less authority than the Missal as a rubrical code, assumes and indeed prescribes a similar observance at the general Communion on Easter day.

Let the communicants [it says] when they have received Communion withdraw on the side of the celebrant's left hand, and there in the Epistle corner let them receive the purification from the hand of the sacrist or of a server, who administers a chalice with wine, a towel being also provided to wipe their lips.²

At the present day this purification is observed only at an Ordination Mass and on one or two other rare occasions, but no change has been made in the rubrical directions just quoted, even though the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* was formally revised in 1886 at the instance of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. How long the practice survived is not quite easy to determine. The period of its retention seems to have varied greatly in different localities. In England it certainly continued long after the Reformation, and the scanty evidence available seems to point to the conclusion that the usage was given up after the reign of King James II. My principal reason for this inference is founded on the earliest editions of the little "Abstract of the

¹ "Minister autem dextra manu tenens vas cum vino et aqua, sinistra vero mappulam, aliquanto post sacerdotem, eis porrigit purificationem et mappulam ad os abstergendum." (*Ritus Celebrandi Missam*, x. n. 7.)

² *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, Lib. ii, cap. 29, § 3 : "et communione sumpta, per latus sinistrum celebrantis discedant et ibi in cornu epistolae accipiant purificationem de manu sacristae vel ministri, calicem cum vino et mappula ad tergendum appensa, ministrantis." Et confer ib. § 4.

Doway Catechism," the ancestor of our present Penny Catechism which contains, as a sort of Appendix, an instruction on "the manner how to serve at Mass." In the first edition, published in the last year of James II.'s reign, the directions given to the server after the *Agnus Dei* read as follows :

Then pausing a little, rise, make adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, give the Pax to the people, observe order of calling and years ; which done, be ready to give wine and water to the priest, *and if there be any communicants prepare a towel and wine, then say the Confiteor. After they have received the holy Host, give them wine.* Which done remove the book to the left hand of the altar, take away the towel and put out the torch or taper.

As these directions are considerably modified in the subsequent editions, *e.g.*, those of 1697 and 1715,¹ we may fairly assume that a change of practice was introduced about this time. This conclusion is borne out by a statement of the Anglican canonist, John Johnson, whose great work was published in 1720, and who was therefore practically speaking a contemporary.

I am informed [he says] that the Romish priests in England did no longer ago than the reigns of King Charles and James II. continue this practice of giving unconsecrated wine to the people, without cautioning them in the manner here prescribed [by Archbishop Peckham²], and that an old woman of that communion did swear that a priest of the Romish church, then dead, did always administer the cup as well as the Host to the people ; whereupon the plaintiff, who sued for an estate in lands given him by deed by the said popish priest, carried his cause at the assizes in Kent. For the judge and jury agreed that if he did give the cup he could not be a popish priest, and might therefore inherit and dispose of lands, but at another trial at the same place it was made to appear that the cup given by the said priest contained only unconsecrated wine, and that it was the usual practice of such priests here to give an unconsecrated draught to the people ; and so the estate went to the heir at law.³

This testimony, even if apocryphal, as it may possibly be, is none the less of value as substantiating the evidence of the

¹ The words "prepare a towel and wine" are still retained, but all mention of giving the Pax to the people and the explicit injunction "after they have received the holy Host, give them wine" disappears.

² This will be referred to below.

³ J. Johnson, *Laws and Canons of the Church of England*, 1720 (Reprint 1850), ii. p. 275.

1688 *Abstract*. It is, of course, always liable to happen with rubrical directions of any kind that they may be copied heedlessly from one edition into another, and that they often appear on the printed page long after they have in practice fallen into abeyance. Still, when this occurs we generally find the same form of words perpetuated without change, whereas it is to be noted that the "Manner how to serve at Mass" as printed in seventeenth century Catholic prayer-books varies continually in the different copies. I may take for illustration's sake, the directions given for this same matter in a rare little edition of the *Primer* printed at Douay by John Heigham in 1623.

If any be to communicate in Masse, the Servitour after the Priest hath taken the Chalice and before he purifieth it, spreadeth a towel or a white vele before them and then sayeth *Confiteor Deo* in their name. And when the Priest reacheth the Sacrament to each one of them, the Servitour holding a cuppe of wine watered in his right hand and a hand-towel in his left, a little after the Priest hath given the Sacrament, giveth them the cuppe to purify and the hand-towel to wipe their mouthes. Afterward when the Priest reacheth out the Chalice, the Servitour poureth in wine and then wine and water, as above.

Another edition of 1613, simply tells the server: "after they (the communicants) have received the Host give them wine." But perhaps the most direct and convincing testimony I have found is contained in a certain brief instruction on "The Composition of Bodie in receiving the Blessed Sacrament," from the *Manual of Prayers*, printed at Rouen in 1614. The fifth, seventh, and eighth paragraphs of this document have all a bearing on the point before us.

5. Let the tongue touch the side of the lippe (not too much put forth) that it may receave the Host and bring it into the mouth, and that being reverentlie held so long that it be moistened it may be let downe into the bodie. For it is not to bee chewed with the teeth, nor to be brought to the rooffe of the mouth, but to bee swallowed, if it may be, *before the Ablution; which is the taking of a little wine.* . . .

7. After the receiving of the holy Host, let the head not indecentlie be cast down, but remain erected with the hands joined before the breast *until the Ablution, which everie one ought to take.*

8. Finallie for the space of a quarter of an hour after receiving let spitting be avoided. Which if it cannot be, at the least it is decent to spit where it may not be trodden on.

It is quite probable that this document is only a translation

of some Latin or French original, but there is no reason to believe that the Englishmen of that age were more refined either in thought, speech, or behaviour, than their contemporaries on the Continent. In any case, there can be no question that in Italy and France the practice of offering an ablution of wine to the communicants was widely spread. Many of the old French Rituals supply evidence of this, and Martène and other liturgical writers consider it needless to multiply authorities. None the less, an occasional extract is quoted, for which the following passage given by Martène from a Soissons *Rituale*, may serve as a specimen.

The Bishop having communicated, let all the ministers and others for whom Hosts have been consecrated communicate. Nor must it be passed over that all who have communicated ought to come to the table which is prepared in the corner of the altar that each may cleanse his mouth from the offerings and wine.¹

Similarly in 1713 de Vert, while calling attention to the decline of this use of ablutions after Communion, bears witness to the earlier practice.

Some bishops and other ecclesiastics in authority are daily restricting and abolishing the practice on account of the illusion of the people. The order is well known that was issued by a late Archbishop of Paris (F. de Harlay) to a parish priest of St. Denys bidding him for the future not to give wine after Communion because it was looked upon by the people as a Communion in both kinds, and because in point of fact the new converts (Huguenots) used to go to that church in crowds with a view (as they said), of partaking of the second symbol. The memory is still fresh of the stir caused in 1687 at the College of Clugny in Paris by a general Communion of the religious of that college in which after receiving the sacred Host each partook of wine from the chalice, which people look upon as receiving the Cup.²

The Anglican canonist, Dr. J. Johnson, quoted above and other Protestant writers comment severely upon the practice we are discussing, assuming it to be an attempt made to deceive the common people by giving them unconsecrated wine instead of the Eucharistic Cup. There really seems to be very little justification for such criticism. To begin with it is hard to

¹ Martène, *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus*, bk. iv. ch. 24; vol. iii. p. 179. Numerous instances of the use of this ablution are noted by Le Brun, *Cérémonies de la Messe* (1718), vol. i. pp. 650—652.

² De Vert, *Explication des Cérémonies*, iv. 288, c. 1713.

believe that even the most ignorant could suppose that the draught of wine or water presented by a boy server could be indeed the most august of Sacraments. Again, without referring here to Archbishop Peckham's explicit injunction to the clergy to instruct the people carefully in this matter, the fullest and plainest cautions against any misunderstanding meet us almost everywhere and at every period. Thus to take one out of many examples, Dr. Smythe in his *Assertion of the Sacrament of the Altar*, written in 1546, declares that the thing that is contained in the chalice and given to the lay people when they be houselled . . . "is not the Blood of Christ but very pure and unconsecrated wine given unto them only for this purpose that they may the more sooner and the more easier swallow and receive the Host that is consecrate." But the most interesting of all the notices of this practice that I have come across belongs to the very eve of the Reformation, and shows us that many people to avoid any possible danger of misunderstanding used to stand up to receive the draught of wine which followed Communion. Richard Whitford, the Bridgettine monk, who loved to call himself "the wretch of Syon," in a rare tract on Communion admonishes those who intend to receive in the following terms :

Take good heed how ye take in the host. For many don full rudely behave themselfe therein. Some don catch the host and snatch it out of the priest's hand with their teeth hastily and so gnaw and chew it as common meat; but do not you so. Come thereunto reverently and dreadfully and with soberness. When the priest doth put the host into your mouth, open it well and take the host upon your tongue and hold it still awhile and then it will relent, and so you may fold it in your mouth with your tongue and receive it down with as little bruisure of your teeth as you conveniently may. And if by chance the host do stick and cleave unto the roof of your mouth be not troubled therewith, but take patience and suffer it a little while, and then may you lightly remove it with your tongue without any danger.

Then with good deliberacion take the chalice and drink after the custom, which custom is in many places to stand up to drink, which thing surely I do prayse very much for that is done in sign and token that no reverence should be done nor given unto the drink for it is no part of the sacrament. And it is not required that you should drink anything at all thereunto, for that drink is taken only to bring down the host wholly and clean into the stomach and therefore it forseth not [mattereth not] what liquor you drink, but the custom is for the honour of the sacrament to drink wine.

For the love of our Lord, good devout Christians, I beseech you take no heed unto those new heretics that don move the simple people to require to have and to receive the sacrament in both forms and kinds, that is to say of bread and wine as the priest doth. But, good people, I pray you believe steadfastly that in the least part that you may perceive of the host sacred, is the very quick body and soul of our saviour Jesu, God and man. And a quick body, you know well, is not without both quick flesh and quick blood, so that in receiving that sacred host in any part thereof, you verily receive both the body and soul, all the quick flesh and all the quick blood of our saviour Jesu, and the very self same flesh and blood that was offered upon the cross for our redemption. And so done, you receive the same that the priest in the Mass doth receive at the altar, and he none other, neither more nor less, than you do, but that he doth there consecrate and receive in both the forms, because he doth then represent the person of Christ, and doth there minister and make that oblation, sacrifice and offering not for himself alone but for all Christians as Christ did. Notwithstanding, if the same priest should another time out of Mass be communed and houselled as you be, he should receive as you do and none other than you do.

And thus, I pray you, be content for this matter, and forthwith after your Communion do not you, as many don, run forth and make haste unto breakfast or dinner, or unto bodily recreation, but rather give some thanks unto our Lord as becometh a good Christian.¹

It certainly could not be suggested that Richard Whitford was in any sense forgetful of Archbishop Peckham's famous instruction. And this may perhaps be a suitable place to quote its exact terms, premising that the decree occupied a prominent place in the Constitution of the Provincial Council of 1281, was included consequently in Lyndwood's *Provinciale*, and was commented upon by him in detail.

Let priests [says this ordinance] also take care when they give holy Communion to the simple at Easter or at any other time diligently to instruct them that the Body and Blood of our Lord are given to them together (*simul*) under the species of bread, nay, the whole living and true Christ, who is entire under the species of the Sacrament. And let them further instruct them that what is given them to drink at the same time is not the sacrament but mere wine to be drunk for the more easy swallowing of the sacrament which they have received. For it is allowed in such small churches to none but them that celebrate to receive the Blood under the species of consecrated wine.

¹ *A dialogue or communicacion by-twene the curate or ghostly father and the parochian or ghostly chyld. For a due preparacion unto Howselynge.* [by R. Whitford.] John Mayland. 1537. h iii. ro. to h v. ro.

I add an illustration or two to make it clear that Peckham's Constitution had not in any way been suffered to fall into desuetude. The well-known *Instruction for Parish Priests*, composed in English verse by the Augustinian Canon, John Mirk, in the fourteenth century, is noteworthy because from its brevity it contains nothing but points which the author considered as absolutely indispensable. It is clear that in the following lines Mirk is touching upon a matter which he believed to be of primary importance.

I have somewhat modernized the language as well as the spelling.

Teach them, then, with good intent
To believe in that sacrament.
What they receive in form of bread
It is God's Body that suffered dead (death)
Upon the holy rood-tree,
To buy (redeem) our sins and make us free.
Teach them, then, never the later,
That in the chalice is but wine and water
Which they receive for to drink
After that holy houselling.
Therefore warn them thou shall
That they ne chew that host too small,
Lest too small they do it break,
And in their teeth it do stick.
Therefore they shall with water and wine
Cleanse their mouth that naught leve (remain) therein.¹

More than a century and a half later another compendious work for the use of the ordinary parish clergy was in common use, both in Latin and English, under the name of the *Exornatorium Curatorum*. In this also the writer, after definite reference to Peckham's Constitution, speaks as follows :

But ye that be lay-people, when ye receive this blessed Sacrament at Easter, or at other times necessary, ye receive it in form of bread alone. For that which is given you in the chalice is no Sacrament but wine or water to cause the holy Sacrament to go into his place more readily.²

As already pointed out, these last two extracts have reference to the Communion of the laity in parish churches. But an even greater importance attaches to the practice of

¹ Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* (E.E.T.S.), ll. 244—259.

² Wynkyn de Worde's Edition of the *Exornatorium Curatorum* [? 1521], sig. A. vi, v^o.

religious communities, for there can clearly be no question here of any attempt at deception.¹ So far as I have been able to look into the matter, almost all the Religious Orders in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries seem to have regularly administered a purification of wine, or wine and water, to communicants after the reception of the Sacred Host. In illustration we may note the *Ordinarium* of the White Friars, or Carmelites, drawn up in Germany for the use of the whole Order by Sibert de Beka about the year 1312, and recently printed from an English manuscript at Lambeth Palace by Father Benedict Zimmerman. Section 45, which is headed *De modo in Communionem Fratrum Observando*, gives a detailed account of the procedure followed on Maundy Thursday and on other days of general Communion. After prescribing how the celebrant is to hold the Host over the paten, &c., the instruction explains that the community are to come up two and two together to the altar step, while the acolytes hold a cloth under their chins, and it continues :

Meanwhile let the deacon standing at the right of the altar have wine ready in some other chalice of which he is himself to partake first, sipping a small quantity in order to wash his mouth carefully that no particle of the Host may remain in his mouth. After which let him administer it similarly to others keeping hold of the foot of the chalice together with a neat clean towel with which the brethren can wipe their lips after thus rinsing their mouths. And the communicants must be upon their guard not to spit immediately after Communion ; or in any case they must be careful to do so in a fitting place where there will be no danger of people treading.²

Closely akin to this is the instruction given for Communion among the Dominicans. I quote from the Dominican *Ordinarium* of about 1270 in the British Museum (MS. Addit. 23,935), which has been printed in Dr. Wickham Legg's *Tracts on the Mass*.

When he has received the Sacrament, let each brother bow down and then rise to his feet. After consuming the Host let him come to

¹ Johnson says : " In many places, I am assured, they [the Romanists] give the people unconsecrated wine to drink and, if I am not misinformed, do it in such a manner that the people are persuaded that they receive the very Blood of their Redeemer, which, if true, I must call not a pious but most impious fraud." *The Unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar* (1724) ; Reprint, 1847, i. p. 441.

² Zimmerman, *Ordinaire de Sibert de Beka* (in Chevalier's *Bibliothèque Liturgique*), p. 88, 1910.

take the wine, which is to be received standing, sipping a small quantity in order to rinse his mouth carefully that no particle of the Host be left between the teeth.¹

It is curious that much of this rubric is word for word identical with that of the Carmelite Ordo just quoted, and here, too, the deacon is directed to stand on the right of the altar, and to use a chalice different from that employed in the Mass, while he is also to hold a towel for the communicants to wipe their lips. Further, the same caution is given about spitting, but the Dominican rubrics add that if the number of those who receive is considerable, the subdeacon, standing upon the opposite side, to the left, and using yet another chalice, may expedite matters by giving the purification of wine to half the communicants.² Neither can there be any doubt that a similar practice was observed among the Benedictines, for in the *Consuetudines* of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, we are told that the novices, after Communion on their profession day, "are to receive the ablutions (*rinsuras*) in front of the aumbry in which the chalices are kept."³

Assuming, then, that the use of the unconsecrated chalice after Communion was almost universal in the later Middle Ages, we are led to ask whence the custom originated, and it must be admitted at once that it is not possible to answer the question offhand with any degree of confidence.

The principal difficulty lies in the contention of a few liturgists like de Vert, and in our day Scudamore,⁴ that the wine presented to the people after Communion was originally held to be consecrated—not indeed by the direct virtue of the prayers of the Mass, but indirectly by commixture with a fragment of the Sacred Host or with a few drops of the Precious Blood from the celebrant's chalice. Of the existence of such a practice of pouring wine into a second chalice for the use of the people and then adding to it a small portion of the Host

¹ Such clauses as "in modica quantitate ad abluendum os diligenter," "cavendum est ne post communionem spat cito," with other notable parallelisms, occur in both the Carmelite and Dominican rubrics. This evidently cannot be due to mere coincidence.

² Wickham Legg, *Tracts on the Mass*, published for the Henry Bradshaw Society, p. 86.

³ "Postea ibunt ad communionem sanctam et accipient rinsuras ante almare ubi stant calices ab uno de magistris eorum vel subsacrista." *Consuetudines* (Ed. E. M. Thompson), I. p. 386.

⁴ Scudamore, *Notitia Eucharistica* (2nd Edit.), pp. 707—711.

after the fraction, or some drops of the Precious Blood, there can be no reasonable doubt. This observance was distinctly approved and prescribed among the Cistercians in the thirteenth century, and the eminent canonist Sinibaldo del Fiescho, who in 1243 became Pope as Innocent IV., discusses the practice and declares that he can find no fault with it.

We do not [he says] find anything to blame in the custom of the Cistercians and also of some others, who after the priest has consumed the Body and Blood of Christ [in the Mass] allow some portion of the Blood to remain in the chalice with the intention that unconsecrated wine should be added to it, and that communicants should be allowed to drink thereof. This is not unlawful because it (? such an ablution) is even given to healthy people who are not fasting in cases of necessity, and this adding of wine is done for a just reason, seeing that it would not be proper to consecrate so much of the Precious Blood, and indeed no chalice could be found to contain it all at once.¹

It is to be noted that Innocent IV. does not plainly say that he regarded this as receiving the Blessed Sacrament under both species. It may be that after all, he and others looked upon it only as a sort of glorified ablution, a happy compromise between the two alternatives of either consecrating in the Mass an excessive quantity of the Precious Blood, or withdrawing the Cup from the laity altogether. The former would in his opinion have been irreverent, because the use of a chalice of the size of a flagon, even if such could have been procured, was likely to expose the Precious Blood to extreme danger of profanation. The latter was unacceptable because the Church in the thirteenth century had not yet finally come to a decision that, as a matter of principle, the assistants at the Holy Sacrifice must communicate in one species alone.

If I may record my own impression of a rather obscure chapter in the discipline of the Sacraments, the truth of the matter seems to be that devout churchmen realized at an early date, certainly long before the twelfth century, that the giving of Communion under the species of wine, especially among a rude

¹ "Non reprobamus tamen consuetudinem Cisterciensium et etiam quorundam aliorum qui post sumptionem corporis et sanguinis Christi aliquid de sanguine ibi dimittunt ut superponatur vinum purum et postea communicantes inde possint aliquid sumere. Non est illicitum quia etiam non jejunis non infirmis et in causa necessitatis datur et ita ex justa causa fit, quia non esset decens tantum sanguinem conficere nec calix inveniretur qui posset tenere." I quote from the 1515 edition of Innocent's Gloss on the Decretals, fol. 175, but the reading, I must confess, seems a little doubtful, and it is difficult to be quite confident as to the correct translation.

and unspiritual populace, was full of practical difficulties with perpetual risk of gross irreverence.¹ To minimise these difficulties three expedients were tried, which all met with a certain amount of favour. The first was the use of a hollow reed or pipe by which a small quantity of the consecrated wine could be sucked from the chalice. The second was the method of intinction, which obviated the need of consecrating so large a quantity of wine. This was tried in the West as well as in the East, but the Church ultimately condemned it in the West, though in the East it has survived to this day.

The third expedient seems to have met the danger of profanation by making the contents of the Cup less sacred. For the Chalice with the Precious Blood Itself was substituted a "ministerial" cup which contained only a few drops of the Precious Blood diluted with a large quantity of ordinary wine. I think that it was then felt, just as it would be felt now if a portion of the first ablution were spilt, that the irreverence entailed by any such accident was much less than would be the case if the Chalice itself were upset before the Communion. Some doctors, no doubt, contended that the whole contents of the cup were "consecrated" by this commixture, just as some maintained that the wine in the Chalice on Good Friday in the Mass of the Presanctified was consecrated by the fragment of the Host put into it. But beginning with St. Bernard, the larger and saner part of the theologians of the Church came eventually to the conviction that the wine could not in any proper sense be consecrated by anything except the words spoken in the Canon of the Mass. Some time passed before the decision was reached, but once this was clearly realized, it was felt that the administration of the Cup in which only a few drops of the Precious Blood were mingled formed a rather futile expedient. It was then that the practice became general and explicit of administering Holy Communion to the laity under

¹ A somewhat unpleasant episode introduced by Mr. E. Temple Thurston in his novel *Sally Bishop*, illustrates a really serious and practical difficulty which as long as Communion under both kinds is maintained must always be felt in greater or less degree. A clergyman, in view of an episcopal visitation, makes preparation for a quite unusual number of communicants. An accident diverts the expected congregation at the last moment, and the unfortunate man finds himself with a very large quantity of consecrated wine which he can find no suitable person to help him in consuming. He is thus forced to drink the whole himself and ruins his prospects for ever by a display of—well, let us say, ill-timed hilarity, when he meets the Bishop at luncheon an hour later.

one species alone. I am far from putting this forward as a final solution or the only possible view, but it at any rate serves to explain better than any other theory the obscurity which prevails regarding the exact period at which the administration of the Eucharist under one kind was introduced into the Church.

It would take us too far to discuss the early Roman practice, to which the *Ordines Romani* bear witness, of mixing consecrated and seemingly unconsecrated wine for the Communion of the laity, but as a supplement to the passage quoted above from Innocent IV., a few words may be cited in the same sense from the great mediæval liturgist Durandus, at the close of the thirteenth century.

In some places [he says], after the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ, some portion of the Blood (*aliquid de ipso sanguine*), is reserved in the chalice, and ordinary wine is poured upon it in order that the communicants may partake thereof. For it would not be becoming to consecrate the Precious Blood in so great quantity, nor could a chalice be found to hold it.¹

It should be noted that Durandus himself, altogether repudiates the idea that the consecration of the whole could be effected by the mingling with what remains of the Blood, but he also leaves no doubt that what was administered in this way to the people was not regarded as an ablution, but as part of the Eucharist itself. Then comes the question, was the long continued practice of giving wine to the people after Communion simply a survival of the usage just described, or was this draught of wine recognized from the very first as nothing more than a simple ablution?

There can, it seems, be little doubt that our verdict should incline to the second alternative. The practice described by Innocent IV. and Durandus must have continued until the middle of the thirteenth century, and among the Cistercians and some other Religious it lasted much longer. But already at Cologne in 1275 and at Lambeth in 1281 parish priests were directed in the most precise terms to instruct their flock that the wine given after Communion was not part of the Sacrament, but a mere ablution. Moreover, it is quite certain that in several Religious Orders for long years before this date, a simple ablution of wine was given *after* the reception of the

¹ Durandus, *Rationale*, Lib. IV., cap. 42, n. 1. Cf. VI., 75. nn. 11, 12.

wine mixed with the remnants of the Precious Blood in the chalice. I will content myself, for brevity's sake, with one illustration, which I take from the Constitutions of the monks of the Val des Choux (Vallis Caulium) printed a few years ago by Mr. W. de Grey Birch at the expense of the late Marquess of Bute. The Rule must have been compiled in the early years of the thirteenth century, and this copy must be a decade or so later. Now in this Ordinal it is clearly explained that wine is to be added to what remains of the Precious Blood in the chalice so as to supply the quantity required for the Communion of the brethren.¹ On the other hand the section devoted to the manner of Communion of the monks makes it clear that they first received the Host at the altar-step from the hand of the celebrant, then advanced to the altar behind him to drink from the chalice which was standing upon the altar, and finally as they returned to their place they passed before the sacrist, who was posted in the front part of the choir of the novices, and from him received a draught of wine as an ablution.²

Moreover, this belief in the need of something to be drunk or eaten after receiving the Blessed Sacrament to obviate the danger of accidental irreverence by expectoration, &c., was not only very general, but it can be traced back as far as the Rule of St. Benedict itself. "Let the Brother who is reader for the week," says the Rule, "take a little bread and wine before he begins to read on account of the Holy Communion." According to an authoritative exponent—

St. Benedict allows this *mixtum* of bread and wine to the reader before commencing his duty for two distinct reasons: one lest he might find his task too laborious if undertaken fasting; the other to prevent any inconvenience or involuntary irreverence which might be entailed by the effort of reading aloud a short time after communicating. The most ancient commentators are unanimous in this interpretation of the words *propter Communionem sanctam*.³

¹ "Dum autem patres percipiunt, infundatur vinum a sacrista in calicem cum opus fuerit;" (cap. liv. p. 40.)

² "Suscepta eucharistia cum se erexerint inclinent, et sic per retro sacerdotem ad calicem ubi iterum inclinantes hauriant. Regredientibus ab altari sacrista stans in capite sinistri chori noviciorum vinum propinat inclinans singulis" (Cap. lvii. p. 42.)

³ Dom Hunter Blair in the Fort Augustus edition of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, 2nd Edit. p. 202. The editor also calls attention to the *Regula Magistri*, an amplification of the Rule made in the seventh century, which says of the reader: "Ipse suum merum *propter spulum sacramenti* accipiat et tunc incipiat legere."

It will only be necessary to add to this a reference to the English liturgist John Beleth, belonging to the middle of the twelfth century, who writes thus regarding the administration of Communion at Easter in some localities :

It has been ordered [he says] in certain churches, and it ought to be done everywhere, that on that day bread and wine be had in the churches, and when men have communicated there be given immediately to each a morsel before they go away and a little wine, lest by chance any of the Sacrament should have been left in their mouth that might easily be spat out.¹

With this evidence, which might easily be added to, of the custom of administering some form of ablution out of reverence for the Sacrament, it would be most perverse to insist upon regarding the draught of wine, in the teeth of the formal statement of Peckham and many others, as lineally descended from that modified participation of the chalice which was still retained in certain churches during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

One point at least comes out clearly from the facts that we have been reviewing. It is generally insinuated by those who denounce the mediæval Church for withdrawing the Cup from the laity, from "robbing" them, as they say, of half of the Eucharist, that some interested motive, some economy of money, or trouble, or time, lay at the root of the change.

But it is abundantly clear from the accounts we have been reading that no such saving was effected. The wine had to be procured as before, indeed it is probable that while it was permissible and right to show a certain parsimony when the consecrated elements were in question, such parsimony could no longer be decently insisted on when the faithful were partaking of a mere ablution. Again, the ceremony was not shorter, and the trouble of making provision for the communicants remained as before. The only intelligible motive that remains to explain the action of the mediæval Church in prescribing Communion under one kind, is the conviction that there was constant danger of irreverence or profanation, and if they who lived in those rough times and were not likely to be specially fastidious, formed this practical judgment of the conditions, it is not easy to see how we, whose outlook is entirely

¹ Belethus, *De divinis Officiis*, cap. xcix.

different, can pretend to know better than they did. Certainly, in these days of more frequent Communion, when it is a question in some churches of hundreds approaching the Holy Table many times in the week, the practical difficulties which would attend Communion under both kinds, must be patent to the most unimaginative. Neither can it be doubted that when the risks occurred almost daily, the fear of infection would act as a serious deterrent for many who, foolishly or not, may share the prejudices of modern exponents of the laws of hygiene.

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