

COMMUNION IN THE HAND AND SIMILAR FRAUDS

by Michael Davies

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An Artificial Consensus and Mind Manipulators

An Artificial Consensus

A most depressing aspect of contemporary life is the manner in which those who control the media are able to fabricate an artificial consensus. The people of South Vietnam were handed over to a Communist dictatorship principally as a result of the consensus against the war fabricated throughout the West by the Liberal-controlled media. The fundamental axiom of that Liberalism condemned by the Popes for centuries is that each individual has the right to construct his own code of morality. Society at large has already come to accept this concept. Women who murder their unborn babies are exercising their "right to choose". Literature that was once termed pornographic has been re-classified as "adult". Perverts who were once looked upon as sick individuals, and from whom society needed to be protected, are now regarded as minority groups with an "alternate" [but legitimate] lifestyle. Even Catholic bishops treat them with far more sympathy than they do Catholic traditionalists.

I have described and documented in my book, *Pope John's Council*, the manner in which the Fathers of Vatican II were caught up in an artificially created consensus, which resulted in most of them abandoning the attitudes of a lifetime almost overnight. There can have been few more dramatic examples of mass conditioning since Hitler hypnotized the German people. It still seems hard to believe that almost all the three-thousand [almost totally orthodox] Catholic bishops who entered St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 11, 1962, would emerge from it on December 8, 1965, as little more than programmed puppets, men who were happy to abandon the accumulated wisdom and spirituality of 2,000 years in favor of the clichés fabricated by the Liberal "experts", and repeated *ad nauseam* in the media they controlled as 'new insights' in tune with the contemporary mentality. If any proof is needed that the bishops have made themselves the creatures of their own "experts", it can be found in the imposition of Communion in the hand upon the faithful at the command of these "experts".

Once a consensus has been established within any social group, it is very hard for individuals to resist conforming. When an individual does refuse to conform, he is more likely to be rejected by the group than to affect the attitude of an appreciable number of its members. Sometimes this is all to the good, often the opposite is true. Those who cheered Jesus on Palm Sunday and called for His death on Good Friday were just going along with the majority. Two collegial decisions of the episcopal college which took place at the same time are recorded by St. Matthew: "*Peter saith to Him: Yea, though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee. And in like manner said all the disciples* [Matt. XXVI, 35]". But in verse 56 we read: "*Then the disciples, all leaving Him, fled.*" However, one

Apostle did take his place at the foot of the Cross—but it was NOT St. Peter. The principle that “*where Peter is, there is the Church*” applies usually, but not invariably.

Mind Manipulators

This is not the place to discuss in detail the technique of group dynamics employed to brainwash whole groups into submerging their individual intellects and wills into the collective mind of the group. Where any individual puts up significant resistance, the manipulators [correctly] assess that it would be counter-productive to devote excessive effort to winning him over. They realize that it is *control* of the group which matters; the recalcitrant individual, therefore, is simply *isolated*.

Fr. Paul Crane, S.J., has remarked to me that since Vatican II the Church throughout the West has been subjected to a conditioning process on a global scale. He considers that traditionalists have been very effectively isolated from the main group of Catholics and that as long as our ability to influence the conditioned group is minimal, the manipulators are not too worried about us. As I shall show in detail later in this study, the ordinary faithful are being induced to abandon the traditional manner of receiving Holy Communion by propaganda violating the basic norms of natural [let alone Christian] ethics; propaganda which offends acceptable standards of scholarship, semantics, and straightforward honesty. Ethical or not, such techniques can be effective. The Nazis proved that the constant propagation of false or slanted information would eventually convince the ordinary German, who was not able or, more likely, would not trouble, to consult alternative sources of information. Stalin observed that most people do not have critical minds.¹ Most are content to accept that official information is correct information. Thus, in an editorial on May 21, 1976, *The Universe* [Britain’s largest Catholic weekly] informed its readers that:

Pope Paul has given permission for Holy Communion in the hand because he believes, as do the bishops, that it will emphasize the sacred nature of the communicant as a temple of the Holy Spirit, as well as the sacred nature of the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

The ordinary Catholic would not read this and ask himself: “*Is it true?*” He would accept that it was true simply because he had read it in *The Universe*. It would be unrealistic to expect him to react in any other way. He will therefore remain unaware of the fact that the Pope has made it quite clear that he wishes the faithful to adhere to the traditional manner of receiving Holy Communion; that a minority of English bishops fought the innovation tooth and nail; or that the traditional manner of reception did not detract from the dignity of a Baptized Christian as a Temple of the Holy Ghost but was intended to emphasize the nature of the Blessed Sacrament as the Body of Christ. The Protestant Reformers abolished the traditional practice to emphasize their belief that the Eucharist is NOT the Body of Christ, and yet *The Universe* claims, without a word of explanation, that this innovation emphasizes the Real Presence, secure in the knowledge that this gratuitous and nonsensical assertion will remain unchallenged, or that, if a challenge does come, it can be suppressed and kept from the knowledge of its readers.

The example *par excellence* of the manner in which Catholics can be conditioned is found in the case of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. A detailed analysis of his writings and sermons reveals that all

¹ *The Great Terror* (Pelican edition), p. 740.

he is doing is to uphold what was the norm before the Council, and for doing this he has been threatened with excommunication and even described as a renegade.

Yesterday's orthodoxy has become today's heresy. Catholics who would never have set foot inside a Protestant church, because their parish priest told them not to, will now trudge along dutifully to tedious 'unity' services because he tells them that they must. He tells them this because it is what his bishop has ordered; and the bishop in turn is simply passing on directives received from the Vatican. At no level of the pyramid is there any general realization of inconsistent or illogical behavior—anyone who questions the wisdom of contradicting an attitude to heresy dating back to the Apostolic Church is written off as a crank. Much would be explained if only one could learn with certainty who in [or outside] the Vatican initiates the directives and reforms which are destroying the Faith.

The Significance and Practice of Communion in the Hand

The Significance of Communion in the Hand

The particular significance of the imposition of Communion in the hand is that it is the epitomization of the "Spirit of Vatican II", the spirit which pervades the "Conciliar Church" to which Archbishop Lefebvre has been ordered to submit. A careful study of the factual background to this innovation should provide any Catholic still capable of breaking free from his conditioning with the impetus necessary to take this salutary step. This would not make life easier; to recognize the truth incurs the obligation of acting upon it. Life is far less complicated for those who are happy to remain conditioned but, surely, no price can be too high for an individual to pay to regain his personal integrity.

It will be proved in this study that the reception of Communion in the hand never formed part of the program of the papally-approved liturgical movement: it was not mentioned in any official document of Vatican II: it was introduced in the 16th century by the Protestant Reformers specifically to repudiate belief in the Catholic Priesthood and the Real Presence; it was re-introduced after Vatican II by rebel priests in Holland and has spread throughout the world from there; it is being imposed upon the faithful by techniques involving distortion of the truth, outright deceit, and even intimidation. And what will be shown concerning Communion in the hand could also be shown of so many other post-conciliar innovations which Archbishop Lefebvre correctly designates as unacceptable to Catholics:

In effect, all these reforms have contributed and continue to contribute to the destruction of the Church, to the ruin of the priesthood, to the abolition of the Sacrifice and the Sacraments, to the disappearance of the religious life, and to a naturalistic and Teilhardian education in the universities, in the seminaries, in Catechetics: an education deriving from Liberalism and Protestantism which had been condemned many times by the solemn Magisterium of the Church.

No authority, not even the highest in the hierarchy, can compel us to abandon or diminish our Catholic faith, so clearly expressed and professed by the Church's Magisterium for nineteen centuries.²

² *Declaration* of November 21, 1974, available from *The Remnant* at 6 for \$1.

A Process of Deceit

Apologists for the practice of Communion in the hand possess what they consider an unanswerable argument to justify the innovation, namely, that it was the practice in the early Church. Reduced to its simplest terms, their argument reads: “*Because it is older it must be better.*” This argument is totally fallacious and has been most forcefully condemned by Pope Pius XII, as will be shown later. Those concerned to uphold the traditional practice should concentrate on exposing the fallacy of this argument and not be sidetracked into discussions of whether the practice of Communion in the hand was once universal, how long it lasted, how genuine the texts brought forward to prove that it was once the custom are, or even the reasons why it was abandoned in favour of Communion on the tongue for the laity.

Traditionalists are sometimes accused of having a static concept of the Faith, of being opposed to any development. On the contrary, it is the Liberals who wish to ignore developments in liturgy and doctrine which have taken place under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The most effective answer to contemporary liturgical and doctrinal innovators is to be found in Newman’s *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. In this book the great Cardinal shows how it was not only natural but inevitable that there should be development in every aspect of the Church’s life. The first Christians still frequented the synagogues and, in many cases, observed Jewish dietary regulations. Centuries passed before the true nature of the Trinity and the Divine nature of Christ were fully clarified. Forms of worship used in times of persecution were clearly no longer adequate when the Christians emerged from the catacombs and were presented with great basilicas. As with other doctrines, without ever contradicting what had been previously believed, the nature of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist became more and more apparent, and this was reflected in the liturgy. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, the manner in which the Church worships will reflect what she believes.³ Cardinal Newman correctly observed that “*a developed doctrine which reverses the course of development which has preceded it, is no true development but a corruption; also that what is corrupt acts as an element of unhealthiness towards what is sound.*”⁴ There could be no more accurate description of the nature and effect of the reversal of development which has occurred with the introduction of Communion in the hand.

Furthermore, this particular innovation, together with most of the liturgical changes following Vatican II, cannot be reconciled with the belief that the Holy Ghost inhabits and guides the Church. If the arguments in favour of Communion in the hand, and the other liturgical changes are valid, then clearly the Holy Ghost has not been guiding the Church for well over a thousand years. He was evidently either absent or ignored until the Protestant Reformers of the 16th century made the very same changes being imposed by the neo-Protestants within the Church today. It will be proved below that, as the Protestant Reformers introduced Communion in the hand specifically to reject belief in the Catholic priesthood and the Real Presence, the retention of Communion on the tongue had become an embarrassing obstacle to ecumenism since Vatican II. Those who are destroying the Roman Rite today are opposed to virtually every aspect of the manner used by Latin rite Catholics for celebrating Mass before the Council. If they are correct, then it is quite inconceivable that the Holy Ghost was leading the Popes of the past 1,000 years to permit and impose harmful forms of

³ This principle is discussed in detail in my book, *Cranmer’s Godly Order*, p. 57; and my pamphlet *The Roman Rite Destroyed*, pp. 20/21. Both are available from *The Remnant*.

⁴ *Development of Christian Doctrine*, Ch. V, Sect. VI, 4.

worship. And if the Holy Ghost has not been guiding the Church for over a millenium, then quite clearly ours is not the one true Church.

Liberals might answer that what was adequate until the second half of this century is no longer adequate today, as we are now in the presence of ‘modern man’, of humanity ‘come of age’, of the ‘adult Catholic’. In his book *The Devastated Vineyard*, Dietrich von Hildebrand shows convincingly that the so-called “modern man” is a myth, invented by the sociologists, that in his essential nature, in his basic needs, desires, and attitudes, contemporary man does not differ from his predecessors of past centuries.⁵ Human nature does not change.

The Practice of Communion in the Hand

The key issue of the debate concerning the escalating imposition of Communion in the hand is not whether it was once widespread in the early Church, but whether it should be introduced in the present day. In order to simplify the debate, let it be conceded, for the sake of argument, that for some centuries it was considered acceptable for the priest to place the host in the hand of the communicant. There is, however, definite evidence that, in at least some regions, the laity were receiving Communion on the tongue by the end of the sixth century.⁶ The Roman Ordo of the ninth century accepts Communion on the tongue as the normal practice.⁷ The Synod of Rouen in the year 650 condemned the reception of Communion in the hand by the laity as an abuse. This indicates that the reception of Holy Communion upon the tongue must have already become the established practice.⁸

Scholars are not clear why the transition took place—differing explanations are given and there is probably some truth in most of them. The precise reason is not important, however. What is important is that the change must have been made for good reason under the influence of the Holy Ghost. The change to unleavened bread is given as one reason; the fear of abuse is another; Fr. Jungmann cites “*growing respect for the Eucharist*” as the decisive reason.⁹

A study of patristic and early medieval sources reveals not only a continually heightened appreciation of the Eucharist as the true Body and Blood of Christ—not simply to be received, but to be adored—but of the nature of the Mass as a solemn Sacrifice, the prime purpose of which is the adoration of Almighty God. The essential sacrificial act required a validly ordained priest, wheaten bread, and wine. It was offered by the priest acting in the person of Christ. The laity had the awesome privilege of being present at the Sacrifice—but the liturgy naturally and logically came to accentuate the primary role of the priest and the solemnity of the Sacrifice. A booklet of propaganda in favor of Communion in the hand, *The Body of Christ*, issued by the American Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, writes of this as if it were something to be condemned:

In the eighth and ninth centuries the laity were almost completely excluded from the celebration. They no longer took the offerings to the altar during Mass, but were required to do so beforehand; the singing was done by the *schola* only; the general intercessions

⁵ *The Devastated Vineyard* (Franciscan Herald Press), p. 41. This important work can be purchased from *Roman Catholic Books*, POB 255, Harrison, NY 10528.

⁶ S. Greg; *Dialog.* iii, 3 (PL, lxxvii, 224).

⁷ PL, lxxvii, 994.

⁸ Some authorities place the Synod of Rouen in the mid-ninth century. Others speak of two Synods. It is the fact that Communion in the hand was condemned as an abuse which matters, not the exact date of the Synod.

⁹ *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (London, 1959), p. 510.

disappeared; the faithful could no longer see what was happening on the altar because the priest was in front of the altar, now sometimes completely surrounded and completely hidden by the *iconostasis*; the canon was said quietly and everything took place in silence or in a language less understood by the people.

This reads like a list of complaints made by a 16th century Protestant Reformer and, in most of the instances given, is a condemnation of the present liturgical practice of the Orthodox and Eastern-rite Catholics. As an example of the shoddy scholarship in this pamphlet, and all the propaganda for Communion in the hand, it needs only to be pointed out that the very idea of the faithful needing to see “*what was happening on the altar*” would have been totally alien to the Christians of this time, as Fr. Charles Napier, Superior of the London Oratory, has pointed out.¹⁰ Similarly, from the time that Christians first had churches, it was the almost invariable custom for Mass to be offered facing the East, and so the priest always stood before the altar with his back to the congregation. I have given sufficient evidence of this elsewhere and will not repeat it here. [See my pamphlets, *The Tridentine Mass* and *The New Mass*]

Once the true nature of the Mass is grasped, once there is a true understanding of what takes place when a priest of God pronounces the awesome words of consecration, it is not hard to understand why the most solemn moments of the Sacrifice take place behind the *Iconostasis* in the Eastern Churches. It is, indeed, a matter for wonder that any priest dares to pronounce these words or that the laity dare to be present when he does. There is a passage in the ancient liturgy of St. James which expresses perfectly the attitude which sinful men should adopt in the presence of this mystery, an attitude epitomized perfectly by the manner in which Mass was celebrated by the close of the ninth century, but which is found totally deplorable by today’s proponents of Communion in the hand. The passage reads:

Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and meditate nothing earthly within itself for the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ our God, comes forward to be sacrificed, and to be given for food to the faithful; and the bands of Angels go before Him with every power and dominion, the many-eyed cherubim, and the six-winged seraphim, covering their faces, and crying aloud the hymn, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

It was the consideration of all the reverence shown to the Blessed Sacrament, coupled with the magnificent and solemn grandeur of the ceremonies of Holy Mass, that drew from Frederick the Great that noble and magnanimous saying:

The Calvinists treat Almighty God as a servant; the Lutherans as an equal; the Catholics as a God.¹¹

The two current methods of distributing Holy Communion can be seen as symbolizing two conflicting attitudes to the Mass—those who consider it primarily as an awesome Sacrifice offered to Almighty God, with all possible solemnity and reverence; and those on the other hand who consider it the convivial gathering of a mutual self-admiration society. The present conflict can, in fact, be seen as a symbol of the struggle within the Church between those who see Christianity as the cult of God and those who consider it to be the cult of man.

¹⁰ *The Clergy Review*, August 1972, p. 628.

¹¹ J. O’Brien, *History of the Mass* (New York, 1888), p. 381.

Dietrich von Hildebrand had noticed the direction the innovations were taking as early as 1966. Writing in the October issue of *Triumph* in that year, he noted:

The basic error of most of the innovations is to imagine that the new liturgy brings the holy sacrifice of the Mass nearer to the faithful, that shorn of its rituals the Mass now enters the substance of our lives. For the question is whether we better meet Christ in the Mass by soaring up to Him, or by dragging Him down into our workaday world. The innovators would replace holy intimacy with Christ by an unbecoming familiarity. The new liturgy actually threatens to frustrate the confrontation with Christ. It discourages reverence in the face of mystery, precludes awe, and all but extinguishes a sense of sacredness.

The final sentence could have been written specifically to describe the effect of Communion in the hand!

What Was the Ancient Practice?

It is worth noting that the practice being imposed by our contemporary liturgical commissars is not that described by St. Cyril, or described for that matter in standard works of reference. Women did not receive the Host directly into their bare hands, but were compelled to cover them with a cloth called the *dominica*, brought with them for the purpose. The innovators cannot, thus, even claim to be reviving an ancient Catholic custom. They are imposing upon the often unsuspecting faithful a manner of receiving Communion invented by the 16th century Protestant Reformers.

A quotation attributed to St. Cyril of Jerusalem is the text most often used to justify the innovation. This text has been carefully edited in a number of the propaganda tracts, articles, and editorials intended to brainwash the faithful. Examples can be found in the editorial from the London *Universe*, which has already been cited, also in a pamphlet produced by the Catholic Truth Society of England & Wales, and in the pamphlet *Take and Eat* produced by the [American] Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. The full text is, however, contained in the pamphlet *The Body of Christ* produced by the United States Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy

St. Cyril was a bishop of Jerusalem in the 4th century and is distinguished chiefly for the great series of lectures [*catecheses*] which he delivered to candidates who were to be Baptized at Easter [probably in the year 350]. The introductory lectures and the eighteen subsequent *catecheses* are classic theological documents, containing an outstandingly clear and well-argued presentation of the main points of the Catholic Faith. Some of the manuscripts in which these lectures have come down to us also contain five further lectures, supposedly delivered to the same audience during Easter week, in which the candidates were introduced to the great Sacramental mysteries of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist [hence these five lectures are called the *Mystagogical Catecheses*]. The manuscripts variously assign the *Mystagogical Catecheses* to authors other than St. Cyril; later writers simply append them to the earlier collection of lectures and regard them as authentic. Modern scholars are divided on their authenticity. [A good summary of the present state of opinion can be found *In Quasten, Patrology III*, 364/5.] In any case, it is one of the doubtful lectures which is so frequently cited today to justify Communion in the hand. Nevertheless, for the purpose of argument, it can be accepted as genuine. Moreover, the features St. Cyril describes are, as will be shown, corroborated by other patristic sources. It will be noted, when the entire quotation is cited, that the author exhibits a clearly defined and cogently argued belief in the essentially *sacrificial nature* of the Mass and in the full substantial reality of Christ's presence in the sacred species—[so much so that he was a great embarrassment to the Protestant Reformers in the 16th century. He even speaks

of a change of substance in the elements in a manner reminiscent of the doctrine of transubstantiation.]

Here is the passage in full [in an original translation]:

Approaching therefore, do not come forward with the palms of the hands outstretched nor with the fingers apart, but making the left [hand] a throne for the right since this hand is about to receive the King. Making the palm hollow, receive the Body of Christ, adding “*Amen*”. Then, carefully sanctifying the eyes by touching them with the holy Body, partake of it, ensuring that you do not mislay any of it. For if you mislay any, you would clearly suffer a loss, as it were, from one of your own limbs. Tell me, if anyone gave you gold-dust, would you not take hold of it with every possible care, ensuring that you do not mislay any of it or sustain any loss? So will you not be much more cautious to ensure that not a crumb falls away from that which is more precious than gold or precious stones?

Then, after you have partaken of the Body of Christ, come forward only for the cup of the Blood. Do not stretch out your hands but bow low as if making an act of obeisance and a profound act of veneration. Say “*Amen*”, and sanctify yourself by partaking of Christ’s Blood also. While the moisture is still on your lips, touch them with your hands and sanctify your eyes, your forehead, and all your other sensory organs. Finally, wait for the prayer and give thanks to God, who has deemed you worthy of such mysteries.¹²

The practice of touching the sensory organs with the Host and smearing them with the precious Blood might be thought harmless, if a trifle odd, but it clearly had inherent dangers. It could lead to an extravagant, perhaps superstitious, devotion to the particular Host received by the communicant and to further extravagant piety. This was indeed what did happen, and the practice of actually kissing the Host became widespread. St. Cyril compared the smearing of the sensory organs with the Blood of the Lamb immolated in the Eucharist, to the smearing of the doorposts of the captive Jews in Egypt with the blood of a slaughtered lamb. He considered that just as this practice protected the Jews, so the smearing of the sensory organs would prevent the destructive evil of sensory temptation entering through them.¹³

Further evidence of the wide geographical extension of this strange practice is provided by another bishop of the first half of the fifth century. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria, who confirms that the excess of kissing the Host was already in use:

One should consider how during the sacred mysteries we take the limbs of the Spouse, kiss them, embrace them and apply them to our eyes.¹⁴

This was no isolated extravagance. The practice of kissing the Host, made possible by its reception in the hand and leading to a distorted theology of the Real Presence, persisted at least down to the end of the 8th century. Our witness is St. John of Damascus [675-749]:

¹² S. Cyrilli, *Catechesis mystagogica* V, xxi-xxii, ed. Touttee-Maran, *S. Cyrilli Hieros. opera omnia*, (Venice, 1763), pp. 331-2; reproduced in Migne, PG 33. On the question of the dubious authorship of this work see: J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. III (Utrecht, Antwerp, 1963), pp. 364-366.

¹³ St. Cyril of Alexandria on Exodus: *Glaphyra in Exodum II*, ed. Aubert, *S. Cyrilli Alexandriae opera* (Paris, 1638), Vol. I, pp. 270-271; reproduced in Migne, PG 69.

¹⁴ Theodoret of Cyrrhus *In Canticum Canticorum interpretatio* I, 1, ed. Schultze-Noesselt, *Theodoreti Cyrrhensis opera* (Halle, 1769-1774), vol 2, pp. 1 ff; reproduced in Migne PG 81, col. 27 ff.

Let us receive the Body of the crucified, and applying it to our eyes, our lips, and forehead, let us partake of the Divine burning coal.¹⁵

It is hardly surprising that, in view of such excesses, the Holy Ghost should have prompted a change, *i.e.*, the placing of the Blessed Sacrament upon the tongue, to ensure proper reverence and decorum.

By the mid-thirteenth century, it was already a firmly established tradition that only what had been consecrated should ever come in contact with the Blessed Sacrament. St. Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274] writes:

The dispensing of Christ's Body belongs to the priest for three reasons. First, because, as was said above, he consecrates in the person of Christ. But as Christ consecrated His Body at the Supper, so also He gave it to others to be partaken of by them. Accordingly, as the consecration of Christ's Body belongs to the priest, so likewise does the dispensing belong to him. Secondly, because the priest is the appointed intermediary between God and the people, hence as it belongs to him to offer the people's gifts to God, so it belongs to him to deliver the consecrated gifts to the people. Thirdly, because out of reverence towards this Sacrament, nothing touches it but what is consecrated, hence the corporal and the chalice are consecrated, and likewise the priest's hands, for touching this sacrament. *Hence it is not lawful for anyone else to touch it, except from necessity, for instance, if it were to fall upon the ground, or else in some other case of urgency.*¹⁶ [Emphasis added by the author]

Propaganda in favour of Communion in the hand contains a number of claims to the effect that ordination confers no special privilege upon priests as regards handling the Blessed Sacrament. Thus it is stated in *Take and Eat* that:

While in recent times great emphasis has been placed on the sacredness of the hands of the priest, it must be noted that the anointing of the hands at ordination cannot be connected with a special privilege of touching the Eucharist.

Well, St. Thomas Aquinas certainly saw such a connection, hundreds of years before the existence of America had ever been imagined—and it was clearly an accepted tradition by his time. It may well be that this was not the precise or the only reason for the origin of this practice, but to state that an action which has been invested with a particular significance for up to 1,000 years does not possess this particular significance is to rob the word 'symbol' of any meaning. It is also worth noting that the traditional ordination rite found in the *Roman Pontifical* [a rite, by the way, that has been Protestantized even more thoroughly than the New Mass] contains the following admonition in the charge delivered by the bishop to the ordinands:

Realize what you are doing, model yourselves on what you handle, and as you celebrate the mystery of the Lord's death, see that your bodies are wholly dead to every vice and carnal impulse.

¹⁵ *De fide orthodoxa* IV, 13, Migne PG 94, col. 1149B.

¹⁶ ST, III, Q. 82, Art. 13.

This is a clear reference to the fact that the ordinands will soon be handling the Body of Christ, which is spoken of as a privilege. If every Catholic were permitted to handle the Blessed Sacrament, there would not be much point in making specific reference to it here.

The booklet *Take and Eat* continues:

The special anointing of the hands symbolizes the priest's public ministry of service to others. [!]

Does it indeed? It would be interesting to have a source cited for this piece of nonsense. Postmen, doctors, garbage collectors, teachers, road-sweepers, and the armed forces all perform a “*public ministry of service to others*”—perhaps they should have their hands anointed?

Further evidence that anointing gives no special title to touching the Eucharist is derived from the reflection on the ministry of deacons, which was always connected with the Eucharist; yet the deacon's hands were never anointed.

It can be pointed out that in some regions at least, the deacon's hands WERE consecrated—as the 6th century *Epistle of Gildas* and the 8th century *Pontifical of Egbert* of York prove. While some instances of deacons administering the Host can be adduced from the early centuries, the connection of the deacon with the Eucharist has traditionally been associated with the *chalice*. This is made clear in the citation from St. Thomas Aquinas, who clearly rules out the possibility of the deacon administering the Host under normal circumstances. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* testifies:

The care of the chalice has remained the deacon's special province down to modern times. Even now in a High Mass the rubrics direct that when the chalice is offered, the deacon is to support the foot of the chalice or the arm of the priest... As a careful study of the first *Ordo Romanus* shows, the archdeacon in the papal Mass seems in a sense to preside over the chalice, and it is he and his fellow-deacons who, after the people have communicated under the form of bread, present to them the *calicem ministerialem* with the precious blood.¹⁷

To return to *Take and Eat*:

More recently, the commissioning of the laity as extraordinary ministers of Communion focuses our attention on the theology of Baptism and the consecration to God therein effected.

This really is so preposterous that it is hard to believe that it is intended to be taken seriously. The scandalous abuse of lay ministers of Holy Communion—who are proliferating here, there, and everywhere, and sometimes administer Communion while the clergy sit in their ‘Presidential’ chairs—is now cited to justify the abuse of Communion in the hand! Presumably, the situation could be reversed, and anyone objecting to lay ministers of Holy Communion [as every Catholic should object] will be silenced by being informed that, as the laity receive Communion in the hand, there can be no objection to the laity administering it.

A more detailed examination of the shallowness and dishonesty of the propaganda produced by the various hierarchies in favour of Communion in the hand will be provided later.

¹⁷ CE (1913) vol. iv, p. 649, col. 2.

The discussion so far can be summarized as follows: it is accepted, for the sake of argument, that a form of Communion in the hand, though not the present form, did exist in the Church for the first seven or eight-hundred years of her history, although the practice of placing the Host on the tongue was known at least as early as the sixth century. Unless we are to believe that the Holy Ghost abandoned the Church for 1,000 years, we must accept the fact that, under His guidance, a tradition evolved that only the consecrated hands of a priest could touch the Host; we have the witness of St. Thomas Aquinas that, by the 13th century, it was firmly established that not even a deacon could do so under normal circumstances. It is noteworthy that those concocting propaganda in favour of Communion in the hand, particularly that published under the auspices of the hierarchy of the U.S.A., take it as established that any liturgical development not in accordance with their own pet theories is an aberration. It must be borne in mind continually that abuses such as lay ministers of Communion, Communion in the hand, standing for Communion, or the vandalization of beautiful sanctuaries, formed no part of the papally approved liturgical movement—or indeed, the *official* reforms envisaged by the Council Fathers of Vatican II.

There is no living priest who can speak with greater authority concerning the liturgical movement and the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II than Fr. Louis Bouyer. He gave the Constitution a rapturous welcome in his book *The Liturgy Revived*, praising it as the culmination of the movement—and yet now he condemns the reform which has been imposed as a deliberate turning of the back upon both. There is, he claims, no liturgy worthy of the name in the Catholic Church today [referring, of course, to the Latin rite].¹⁸ It is being no more than objective to point out that the bureaucrats, the liturgical commissars who are imposing their *diktat* upon us today, are spiritual and intellectual pygmies alongside a theological giant such as Dietrich von Hildebrand, who writes: “*Truly, if one of the devils in C. S. Lewis’ The Screwtape Letters had been entrusted with the ruin of the liturgy, he could not have done it better.*”¹⁹ Indeed, it is impossible not to see the destruction of the Roman Rite as the greatest triumph of Satan since the Protestant Reformation—and it appears that the Father of Lies is running out of ideas as he is making precisely the same changes now as he did then.

In 1947 Pope Pius XII warned us against the very practices which are now universally triumphant throughout the West. In his encyclical *Mediator Dei*, perhaps the most sublime exposition of the nature of the Eucharist as a Sacrifice and Sacrament which has been written since the *Summa Theologica*, he warned us of “*a wicked movement that tends to paralyze the sanctifying and salutary action by which the liturgy leads the children of adoption on the path to their heavenly Father.*” This *wicked movement* was concerned with reviving obsolete liturgical practices on the grounds that they are more primitive. Pope Pius explains:

The liturgy of early ages is worthy of veneration; but an ancient custom is not to be considered better, either in itself or in relation to later times and circumstances, just because it has the flavor of antiquity. More recent liturgical rites are also worthy of reverence and respect, because they too have been introduced under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who is with the Church in all ages even to the consummation of the world . . . the desire to restore everything indiscriminately to its ancient condition is neither wise nor praiseworthy. It would be wrong, for example, to want the altar restored to its ancient form of a table; to want black excluded from the liturgical colors, and pictures and statues excluded from our

¹⁸ *The Decomposition of Catholicism* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1969), p. 99.

¹⁹ *The Devastated Vineyard*, p. 71.

churches... This attitude is an attempt to revive the 'archaeologism' to which the pseudo-synod of Pistoia gave rise; it seeks also to re-introduce the many pernicious errors which led to that synod and resulted from it and which the Church, in her capacity of watchful guardian of 'the deposit of faith' entrusted to her by her Divine Founder has rightly condemned.

But what was rightly condemned in 1947 was wrongly imposed in 1977—Pope Pius XII did not mention such outrages as lay ministers of Communion, or Communion in the hand: even the most extreme Protestantizers of his day had not imagined such success possible!

Protestant Reformers Insist on Communion in the Hand

The Protestant Reformers were particularly sensitive concerning the symbolism of liturgical ceremonies, and particular attention was therefore paid to eliminating anything which could perpetuate belief *in a sacrificing priesthood possessing powers denied to the laity or in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament*. In his 1549 Communion Service, Cranmer allowed the Sacrament to be placed on the tongue of the communicant by the minister. This was severely criticized by Martin Bucer, who demanded that Communion should be given in the hand. Cranmer complied and changed the rubric for his 1552 Prayer Book, to bring it into line with Protestant practice on the Continent. The reasons Bucer gives for insisting on this change are quite unambiguous:

I cannot see how the seventh section requiring the bread of the Lord to be put not in the hand, but in the mouth, of the recipient, can be consistent. Certainly the reason given in this section, namely, lest those who receive the bread of the Lord should not eat it but take it away with them to misuse it for superstition or horrible wickedness, is not, it seems to me, conclusive; for the minister can easily see, when he puts the bread in the hand, whether it is eaten or not. In fact, I have no doubt that this usage of not putting these sacraments in the hands of the faithful has been introduced out of a double superstition; firstly, the false honour they wished to show to this sacrament, and secondly the wicked arrogance of priests claiming greater holiness than that of the people of Christ, by virtue of the oil of consecration. The Lord undoubtedly gave these, His sacred symbols, into the hands of the Apostles, and no one who has read the records of the ancients can be in doubt that this was the usage observed in the churches until the advent of the Roman Antichrist.

As, therefore, every superstition of the Roman AntiChrist is to be detested, and the simplicity of Christ, and the Apostles, and the ancient Churches, is to be recalled, I should wish that pastors and teachers of the people should be commanded that each is faithfully to teach the people that it is superstitious and wicked to think that the hands of those who truly believe in Christ are less pure than their mouths; or that the hands of the ministers are holier than the hands of the laity; so that it would be wicked, or less fitting, as was formerly wrongly believed by the ordinary folk, for the laity to receive these sacraments in the hand: and therefore that the indications of this wicked belief be removed—as that the ministers may handle the sacraments, but not allow the laity to do so, and instead put the sacraments into the mouth—which is not only foreign to what was instituted by the Lord but offensive to human reason.

In that way good men will be easily brought to the point of all receiving the sacred symbols in the hand, conformity in receiving will be kept, and there will be safeguards against all furtive abuse of the sacraments. For, although for a time concession can be made to those whose faith is weak, by giving them the Sacraments in the mouth when they so

desire, if they are carefully taught they will soon conform themselves to the rest of the Church and take the Sacraments in the hand.²⁰

It will be noted here that the consecration of the priest's hands is seen as indicating the privilege of handling the Host, something denied in such propaganda tracts as *Take and Eat*. The fact that the Protestant Reformers introduced Communion in the hand specifically to deny the Catholic doctrines on the priesthood and the Real Presence invested the practice with an anti-Catholic signification from that time onwards. This was a signification it did not possess in the early centuries. This practice is, then, totally unacceptable in Catholic worship, and can never become acceptable. Contemporary Protestants would certainly not change to the reception of Communion on the tongue to accommodate Catholics, and so, in the interests of a spurious ecumenism, Catholics are being made to accept what is now a specifically Protestant practice in order to remove any remaining vestige of external respect for the Blessed Sacrament which those who consider it to be no more than bread would find offensive. This is something which should not surprise us—it is simply a logical continuation of the pattern which began with the destruction of the Mass of St. Pius V.

An Abuse Fostered by Disobedience and Deceit

Communion in the hand was re-introduced into the Catholic Church as an act of rebellion soon after Vatican II. It began in Holland as an arbitrary act of defiance of legitimate authority. Mandatory liturgical norms were defied and Communion was distributed in some Catholic churches in what had been, since the Reformation, the characteristically Protestant manner. It was an abuse and should have been dealt with by the bishops immediately and effectively. Priests who refused to conform to the law of the Church should have been suspended. Such action was not taken, and the practice spread to Germany, Belgium, and France. In these countries the Bishops also betrayed their office and allowed the abuse to go unchecked. Thus a practice which had already been made unacceptable to Catholics because of its adoption by Protestants to symbolize their rejection of Catholic Eucharistic teaching, was made doubly unacceptable when it became a symbol of the rejection of ecclesiastical authority by Liberal clerics.

The consequences of this rebellion became so serious that the Pope consulted the Bishops of the world, and, after obtaining their opinions, promulgated the Instruction *Memoriale Domini*, in 1969. This Instruction is included and will be referred to from time to time. The principal points contained in it are:

1. The Bishops of the world were overwhelmingly against the innovation.
2. The traditional manner of distributing Holy Communion must be retained.
3. It is a sign of reverence which does not detract from the dignity of the communicant.
4. The innovation could lead to irreverence, profanation, and the adulteration of correct doctrine.

Therefore:

The Apostolic See strongly urges bishops, priests, people to observe this law, valid and again confirmed, according to the judgment of the majority of the Catholic episcopate, in

²⁰ This is an original translation but Bucer's *Censura* has now been republished with the Latin text and an English translation on parallel pages: *Martin Bucer and the Book of Common Prayer*, ed. E. C. Whitaker (Mayhew-McCrimmon, Essex, England).

the form which the present rite of the sacred liturgy employs, and out of concern for the common good of the Church.

However, a calamitous error of judgment then followed. It was agreed that wherever the practice “*has already developed in any place*” a two-thirds majority of the episcopal conference could petition the Holy See for permission to legalize the abuse. Quite clearly, the phrase “*has already developed*” meant by that date, May 28, 1969. Countries where the practice had not developed by that date were obviously excluded from the concession—and all the English-speaking countries come into this category. Liberal priests in certain countries had found that if they broke the law then the Holy See would amend the law to conform with their disobedience. Liberals in other countries presumed that, if they followed suit, the Vatican would continue to surrender. Their judgment was correct, and not simply as regards Communion in the hand. However, there was one important difference in the situation before and after *Memoriale Domini*. The Bishops who, since May 1969, first tolerated, then approved, and are now trying to impose the abuse, are acting in explicit defiance of the clear wishes of the Holy Father—and yet these same men have the hypocrisy to cite loyalty to the Pope as an excuse for refusing permission for the celebration of the Mass of St. Pius VI! In fact, a clear and consistent criterion has been applied by the bishops in respecting the wishes of the Pope: where his wishes are ignored in order to destroy the Faith, this is acceptable; where his wishes are ignored in order to defend the Faith, this is unacceptable.

Communion in the hand was thus born in disobedience and the bishops are now fostering it by deceit. The principal instrument for deceiving the American faithful is the booklet, *The Body of Christ*, published by the American Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy. There is a popular saying that those whom the people cease to respect they cease to obey. Any bishop who fails to publicly repudiate this shameful propaganda tract merits neither respect nor obedience. Such bishops merit the appellation of hirelings rather than shepherds. Strong words? Perhaps, but easily justified.

A booklet entitled *Preaching and Teaching About the Eucharist* has been written by one Joseph M. Champlin [presumably a cleric, although he doesn’t bother to say so]. It is published by the *Ave Maria Press* and contains potted sermons intended to popularize the deceptions in *The Body of Christ* at the parish level. This is how Joseph M. Champlin recommends the parish clergy to explain the revival of Communion in the hand to their congregations [p. 15]:

Around the time of the Second Vatican Council, some Catholics, following the liturgical principles approved by the bishops, sought to have the ancient practice of communion in the hand restored as an option. As these desires intensified, Pope Paul surveyed bishops throughout the world about the desirability of reintroducing this as an alternative to communion given directly on the tongue. In response to their views, our Holy Father decreed that the present method would be retained, but that bishops in a particular country might vote to introduce communion in the hand as an option. Within a few years’ time, the bishops of 54 countries have voted in this fashion, with our bishops the most recent hierarchy to do so.

This is propaganda in the direct tradition of the Third Reich. Joseph Goebbels could not have improved upon it. Note that there are no direct lies. Joseph M. Champlin wishes congregations to be told that some Catholics sought to have the ancient practice restored—he omits to add that they took the matter into their own hands without waiting for permission. The Pope did, indeed, “survey” bishops throughout the world, but Joseph M. Champlin deems it unnecessary for congregations to be told that the bishops voted overwhelmingly against the innovation. Is it

conceivable that the ordinary Catholic, without any background information, could react in any other way but to conclude that the bishops had approved it? *Memoriale Domini* did, indeed, concede that bishops in a particular country might vote to legalize the abuse [they could hardly “*introduce communion in the hand*” as it could only be legalized where it was already established illegally]—but Joseph M. Champlin does not think it would be helpful to let congregations know that this concession applied to countries where the abuse had been established by May 1969. He also deemed it prudent not to have them informed that the Holy Father had strongly urged bishops, priests and laity to observe the traditional practice and had warned of the dangers to which the innovation could lead. The nearest Joseph M. Champlin comes to outright untruth is by stating that the rebels who initiated the abuse were “*following the liturgical principles approved by the bishops*” during “*the Second Vatican Council*”. Once again, the layman with no background information will therefore conclude that even if not directly mandated by Vatican II, Communion in the hand is the type of reform for which the bishops voted. There is not one word anywhere in the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II which hints at this or at any similar innovation. The Council Fathers would, for the most part, have been horrified at the thought. Just how far they were from approving it is proved by the large majority of bishops voting AGAINST it as late as 1969. However, in making this allegation, Joseph M. Champlin is adding his testimony to the accuracy of Chapter XVI of my book, *Pope John’s Council*, in which I show that the seeds of all the post-conciliar abuses are contained in the Constitution itself; they are the cunningly contrived ambiguities set to explode after the Council, the “time bombs” introduced by the ‘experts’ who drew up the documents for which the [mostly naive] bishops voted.

At this moment some readers might object that, perhaps, in popularizing *The Body of Christ*, Joseph M. Champlin has misrepresented the case as presented in this booklet, which carries the authority of the bishops. On the contrary, Joseph M. Champlin has popularized their text with complete accuracy. At the risk of being repetitive, the parallel passage will be quoted in full, and for a very good reason. The object of this study is to prove to Catholics that they have been deliberately deceived. It would take several volumes to analyze every example in *The Body of Christ* and similar tracts. But if it is accepted that deceit has been proved conclusively in even one instance, then those readers who have not been completely brainwashed may be able to begin the painful process of overcoming their conditioning.

This is what is stated in *The Body of Christ*, on pages 15 and 16. [Note that even Joseph M. Champlin’s linking of the abuse with the *Constitution on the Liturgy* is paralleled here.]

As we mentioned above, after the *Constitution on the Liturgy* was published, there was a return to the ancient practice of communion in the hand in some countries. When the custom had gained ground bishops and conferences of bishops looked to the Holy See for directives.

The Holy Father put the Consilium for liturgical reforms in charge of the matter. On October 28, 1968, it sent a circular letter to the presidents of the conferences of bishops throughout the world asking them to make known the thought of the individual bishops of their own country on this important subject.

After setting forth the pros and cons, the circular asked that after a careful examination with the conference, a secret vote should be taken on three questions:

1. If it should be permitted, during communion, to receive the host in the hand, in addition to the traditional way.
2. If it were considered opportune that, in the judgment of the bishop, experiments should first be carried out in small communities.
3. If it were considered that the faithful, after a careful catechetical preparation, would receive the rite well.

The *Consilium* study was the source for the Instruction *Memoriale Domini*, of May 29, 1969, and of the response which was to grant the faculty to the conferences that applied.

Having taken note of the methods adopted in *The Body of Christ*, it is far from unlikely that Catholics who cite *Memoriale Domini* to their parish priests or bishops will be told that the Holy Father has changed his mind and now approves of the practice. On the contrary, a clear directive was given in the official publication for the Roman Clergy as recently as 1977 that the abuse of Communion in the hand is strictly forbidden in Rome and throughout Italy.

If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them

To their everlasting shame, the Bishops of such countries as Great Britain, Canada, and the U.S.A. have not simply succumbed to blackmail and obtained permission to legalize an abuse which can lead to a profanation of the very Body of Christ, but they are now engaged in an all-out campaign to impose it as the norm. This is something which no one could possibly deny after reading such official propaganda tracts as *The Reception of Holy Communion in the Hand*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of England and Wales, or such American offerings as *The Body of Christ* or *Take and Eat*.

These publications contain page after page of the most slanted propaganda which is clearly inspired by the belief that most of the laity have already been conditioned beyond the point where they are capable of independent thought. This propaganda consists, in the main, of totally gratuitous assertions. The only appropriate response to these assertions is to ask “How?” — “Why?” — “Who says so?” — “How do you know?” — “Where is your proof?”

Here are just a few examples from page 17 of *The Body of Christ*. It differs in no way from the propaganda utilized in other countries.

Communion in the hand—

Teaches that our entire body, including hand as well as tongue, shares equally in the goodness of God's creation and in the holiness achieved through Christ's entrance into the world as the Word made flesh.

The converse is that the reception of Holy Communion on the tongue teaches the opposite—in which case the Church has been gravely at fault for more than a thousand years, as are the Orthodox Church and the Eastern Catholic rites today, and the Pope himself and the bishops of Italy. The fallacy here is the *implication* that the aim of Communion on the tongue is to prove that the hand is less good than the tongue, a suggestion which has never been made. It is a sign of reverence and respect, intended to show in a most striking manner that what we are receiving is not earthly bread but the Bread of Angels.

Reminds us that through the sacraments of Christian initiation—baptism, confirmation and the eucharist—we have become temples of the living God, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

Does it indeed? How does receiving Communion in the hand remind us of this? Who says that it does? And why doesn't receiving Communion on the tongue remind us of the same thing?

Receiving the Lord into the palm of our hand brings out the truth that we are cleansed and consecrated by these rites, sharers in Jesus' priesthood, and a new creation.

Therefore, receiving Communion on the tongue obscures this truth? Pity the thousands of millions of Catholics, priests and lay [including countless Saints], who have had this truth obscured. Pity the poor Catholics in the diocese of Rome whose bishop is preventing them from realizing this. Pity our unhappy brethren in the Ukrainian rite, whose liturgy fails to bring out this truth.

Requires, as an active gesture [like standing, saying 'Amen'], greater participation by the communicant and thus fulfills the ideals of the Constitution on the Liturgy.

Does it indeed? This bears thinking about.

Forms a positive, human, understandable response to Jesus' invitation 'take and eat'... reflects the giving-receiving dynamic... appears to many a more mature and adult gesture...

And so it continues, *cliché* after *cliché*—the vocabulary of the "Conciliar Church" with a vengeance.

In *Memoriale Domini*, Pope Paul admonished us, bishops especially, that:

In view of the state of the Church as a whole today, this manner of distributing Holy Communion [on the tongue] *must* be observed, not only because it rests on a tradition of many centuries but especially because it is a sign of reverence of the faithful towards the Eucharist. The practice *in no way detracts from the personal dignity* of those who approach this great Sacrament, and it is part of the preparation needed for the most fruitful reception of the Lord's Body. [Author's emphasis]

See the Appendix.

The Cult of Man

I have already referred to the fact that Communion in the hand is probably the most dramatic symbol of the gradual replacement of the cult of God by the cult of man. Prior to Vatican II the prime concern of the Church was the worship and dignity of God. Since the Council the Church has turned in upon itself; it has become preoccupied with an obsessive and unhealthy introspection. It cares little for God, little for the unevangelized mass of mankind. It devotes its energies to changing liturgical minutiae, the hem-lines of nuns, the sanctuaries of churches, the phrasing of prayers. The symbol of this introspection is the turning round of the altars. Prior to Vatican II priest and people celebrated Mass as a united body, facing out towards the East, symbol of Christ the Sun

of Justice, symbol of the Resurrection and the Second Coming. To quote Fr. Jungmann, a favourite author of the Liberals, referring to a custom firmly established by the fourth century:

Now the priest is standing at the altar, generally built of stone, as the leader of his people: the people look up to him and at the altar at the same time, and together with the priest they face towards the east. Now the whole congregation is like a huge procession, being led by the priest and moving east towards the sun, towards Christ the Lord.²¹

Today the worshipping community has turned in upon itself, Priest and People contemplate each other and seem pleased with what they see. And this process of self-contemplation has the effect of increasing the preoccupation with the dignity not of God but of the people. Every—I repeat, every traditional sign of reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament during the distribution of Holy Communion has been abolished. Imagine the reply a potential convert would have received had he approached a Catholic priest before Vatican II, and in most cases for some years after, and asked what special signs of reverence were used by Catholics to indicate their belief that the Blessed Sacrament is God!

The priest would have explained that communicants knelt reverently, received the Host on the tongue, only the consecrated hands of a priest could touch It, or touch the chalice, the corporal, pall, or the purificator which came into contact with the sacred species. [The final three could be washed by religious or lay persons after having first been washed by a cleric in major orders, and the water of the first washing poured into the sacarium, Canon 1306]. From the moment of Consecration until after the Communion of the people the priest would keep the thumb and forefinger of both hands together, to ensure that the smallest particle of a Host was never dropped.

He would then open them over the chalice while the server poured wine and water over them in a series of meticulously prescribed ablutions. Imagine, therefore, the reply of any priest you knew before Vatican II if you had suggested to him that all these signs of reverence should and would be abolished—and yet most of the priests who would have exploded with indignation at such a suggestion have accepted the changes without protest, if without enthusiasm. Can it be seriously denied that the Church is in an advanced stage of brainwashing?

The idea that to kneel is undignified is far from new. It was an important part of Nazi propaganda. Elizabeth Gerstner is a prominent leader of Catholic resistance to the tyranny of the “Conciliar Church” in Germany. During the war her family, like so many of the European traditionalists, were prominent in their opposition to Nazism. She herself was imprisoned at the age of twenty-one. In a recent letter to me she remembered a favourite slogan of Nazi propaganda: *Ein Deutscher kniet nicht vor seinem Herrgott, ein Deutscher steht vor seinem Gott*. [“A German does not kneel before his God, a German stands before his God.”] The National Socialist Propaganda for schools [N.S. *Schulungsbriefe*] issued by Dr. Goebbels’ propaganda-ministry, calumniated “the Jewish corruption” of the Catholic Church [*semitische Verseuchung*]. The slave kneels, claimed Dr. Goebbels; Germans on the contrary are *freie Menschen*, free men. Equally unacceptable to Dr. Goebbels was the failure to worship in German. Well, he would find much to commend in the “Conciliar Church”!

The fact that kneeling is not usual in the Eastern rites, Catholic or Orthodox, is not relevant to the question of kneeling within the Latin rite. Eastern Catholics have their own traditional manners

²¹ J. A. Jungmann, SJ, *The Early Liturgy* (Notre Dame Press, 1959) p. 138.

of expressing reverence, such as very frequent Signs of the Cross. In the West kneeling is a traditional sign of reverence—this point is emphasized in a recent series of textbooks for Protestant children in Britain:

If you have lost something, and you think it might be under your bed, you kneel down to look underneath it. This does not mean anything. It is the natural thing to do. But kneeling can also be a very special symbol. In feudal times a man knelt before his overlord. He put his hands between the hands of his lord and made his oath, promising to be a true and faithful servant. This is called paying homage. It is still done today before a king or queen. When the Queen of England was crowned in 1953, each lord of the realm knelt before her, put his hands between hers, and promised to be a true and loyal subject.

Kneeling down before another person is always a sign of respect for someone greater. The greatest kind of respect is called reverence. That is why it is a very ancient custom for men to kneel down before their God and worship Him. The Moslems, followers of the Arab prophet named Mohammed, do not only kneel down. They also touch the ground with their foreheads when they worship Allah, as they call God.²²

There are many precedents for kneeling in adoration in the Bible—in the New as well as the Old Testament.²³ In Psalm 94 we read:

For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King
...
Come let us adore and fall down:
and weep before the Lord that made us.

What more fitting response could there be than to follow the example of the psalmist, when our very God is offered to us in Holy Communion by the consecrated hands of His priest which have just offered Him in Sacrifice?

Venite, Adoremus, Et Procedamus Ante Deum

In kneeling before our God and allowing Him to be placed upon our tongues by the consecrated hands of a priest we are in good company. We have the consolation of receiving Him as did St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. John Bosco, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Bernadette, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, St. Maria Goretti, St. Thomas More, the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, the children of Fatima—the list is endless! We can unite ourselves with this army of Saints and the countless host of good and faithful Catholics who for more than a millennium have received Communion in the traditional manner. Alternatively, we can join those Catholics who have “come of age”, who are “mature” and “adult”, who stand before the priest, hold out their hands and say:

A Conciliar Catholic does not kneel before his God, a Conciliar Catholic stands before his God.

The truth of the matter may well be that a “Conciliar Catholic” has no God but himself.

²² N. J. Bull, *Symbols*, Part 2, *Actions* (London, 1967).

²³ See, for example, 3 Kings 8: 54; Daniel 6: 10; Luke 22: 41; Acts 9: 40; Acts 20: 36.

Dietrich von Hildebrand was another staunch opponent of the Nazis. Fascists and Communists do not like people who ask questions. They prefer those who submit without question to the Party *diktat*. Dietrich von Hildebrand continued asking questions until death robbed us of the greatest lay defender of the faith in the English [and German] speaking world. In *The Devastated Vineyard* he demands [pp. 67/8]:

Why, one asks oneself, has kneeling been replaced by standing? Is not kneeling the classical expression of adoration? It is in no way limited to being the noble expression of petition, of supplication; it is also the typical expression of reverent submission, of subordination, of looking upwards, and above all it is the expression of humble confrontation with the absolute Lord: adoration. Chesterton said that man does not realize how great he is on his knees. Indeed, man is never more beautiful than in the humble attitude of kneeling, turning towards God. So why replace this by standing? Should kneeling perhaps be prohibited because it evokes associations with feudal times, because it is no longer fitting for 'democratic' modern man? Does religious renewal lie in suffering from an unfortunate case of 'sociologitis', which nonsensically wants to deduce fundamental human phenomena from a particular historical epoch and kind of mentality? And why can the faithful no longer kneel beside one another at the Communion rail—which is after all a great expression of humanity—why must they march up to the altar goose-step fashion? Is this supposed to correspond to the meal character of Holy Communion [which is stressed so frequently [better than kneeling together in a recollected way?

A Decline in Reverence

There is ample testimony to the fact that the liturgical "renewal" has been accompanied not simply by a decline in Mass attendance, but by a decline in reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament. It is not only traditionalists who testify to this. Cardinal Heenan, in common with so many bishops, gave way on the question of allowing lay ministers of Holy Communion. On February 2, 1974, he used the occasion of commissioning a group of these ministers to lament the decline in reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament:

At one time it would have been unthinkable for anyone without anointed hands to touch the Sacred Species. In this century there has been a steady diminution of outward signs of respect for sacred objects. When I was a boy there was a scale of values. It was understood that anyone could handle a ciborium or monstrance, but only the priest could touch the chalice because it was consecrated. Until recent times we priests kissed each sacred vestment as we put it on, we genuflected before and after touching the Sacred Host. The new rubrics abolished the kissing and reduced genuflections to a minimum... the loss of outward marks of respect lead the simple-minded to lose their sense of reverence. Some have begun to ignore the Blessed Sacrament. They do not genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament and do not kneel in adoration when they come into church.

There are... reasons for the changes—diabolic reasons is probably the most accurate description.

In the October 1977 issue of his official diocesan journal, *The Messenger*, Bishop Ackerman of Covington, Ky., took the occasion of informing his priests that they would have to distribute Communion in the hand [whether they liked it or not] to lament the decline in reverence for the Blessed Sacrament:

There is clear evidence that in recent years the reverence which we should have for the Holy Eucharist has diminished among some of our people and especially the young. This is displayed in the manner in which many come to the altar to receive Holy Communion—a tragic result of a dilution of Faith in the Real Presence of Christ caused by some teachers and writers with little or no faith... Many have forgotten, or seem to have forgotten, the law of the Eucharistic Fast. Those who plan to receive Holy Communion must abstain from solid food or liquid refreshment, with the exception of water, for at least one hour before the reception of this Sacrament. This is not simply a request or a pious admonition. This is a discipline of the Church imposed out of reverence for the Holy Eucharist: it is a serious obligation which must be obeyed by all. Only the truly infirm and sick are excused. How shocking it is to see Catholic men and women, boys and girls chewing gum in church and continuing to do so when they come to Holy Communion. Where is their faith? Have they lost all reverence for the Holy Eucharist? The practice of receiving ‘Holy Communion in the hand’ must not become an avenue to continued or even greater irreverence. There is much truth in the proverb: Familiarity breeds contempt.

It might have been hoped that in order to prevent Holy Communion in the hand from leading to greater irreverence, Bishop Ackerman would have forbidden the abuse—which he was quite entitled to do. Instead of doing so, he allowed his “experts” to send out the standard brainwashing material to priests and teachers to initiate the campaign of making the innovation the norm.

Bishop B. D. Stewart, of Sandhurst, Australia, adds his testimony to the decline in reverence, quoting the Vatican in the process:

Doctrinal errors quickly produce practical abuses. The Holy See tells us that the irreverences coming from faulty Eucharistic theology are many in number and spread through many places.

Numerous and widespread abuses have appeared, sometimes so serious that they cast doubt on the very Faith in the Real Presence, on the adoration and reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. [*Instruction on Worship of the Eucharist*, May 15, 1969].

But Cardinal Heenan’s concern at the decline in reverence for the Blessed Sacrament did not result in his refusing to commission lay ministers of Holy Communion; Bishop Ackerman’s concern did not lead him to forbid Communion in the hand in his diocese; and the alleged concern of the Vatican has not prevented its giving official sanction to both abuses whenever so requested.

Bishop Stewart testifies that:

There is ample evidence of consecrated Hosts being discarded into a bin; because, so it is said, ‘the Presence does not remain when the meal is finished’; sometimes these Hosts are re-consecrated. Priests are known to genuflect at the Communion but not at the Consecration; because, they hold, ‘Christ is present only in the meal’. Some have affirmed publicly that they do not genuflect before the Tabernacle, because ‘one does not adore a box’.

Children are known to have fiddled with the Sacred Host placed into their hands at Holy Communion; adults have been seen to pass the Blessed Sacrament from one to the other in a Queue.

Rightly does the Sacred Congregation ask whether people who act like this really believe in the Real Presence of Christ.

One must pass over in appalled silence the unspeakable abominations of demonism when the Sacred Host is sacrilegiously carried off to the satanic rituals of black masses.

Sacrileges have occurred in the past and will occur in the future. But today the Holy See testifies that they are numerous and widespread; it also says that Communion in the traditional manner is a better safeguard against adulteration of doctrine and profanation.

Precisely! The Holy See *says* that the traditional manner is a better safeguard against profanation—but then sanctions an innovation which could well be described as an invitation to sacrilege!

The Meal Obsession

Since the Second Vatican Council a movement to transform the Catholic Mass into a Protestant Lord's Supper has been gaining strength within the Church. The sacrificial nature of the Mass is expressed in very muted tones in even the papally approved text of the new Mass when celebrated with Eucharistic Prayer No. II. The *meal* is emphasized to the detriment of the *sacrifice* in almost all the episcopally approved catechetical texts which have appeared since the Council; in some cases the Mass is presented as nothing more than a jolly party. Altars have been replaced by tables. And now the innovation of Communion in the hand is being used to promote the meal concept to an even greater extent than before.

The official booklet—*The Body of Christ*—provides ample evidence of this. It has been well analyzed by Frank Morris in a series of excellent articles in *The Wanderer*. [This was before the paper became anti-traditionalist and an apologist for whatever nonsense the Vatican issues in the name of upholding the non-dogmatic statements of Vatican II as if they were dogma by ceasing any criticism of imprudent actions of the Holy See—*Ed's note*.] He noted, for example, that the booklet contains about 13 references to the sacrificial nature of the Mass and about 41 to the meal aspect.²⁴ A careful examination of *The Body of Christ* reveals that lip service is paid to orthodoxy, in the form of brief reiterations of traditional teaching [even transubstantiation gets a mention], and expressions of concern to maintain reverence, while its clear objective is to promote attitudes and practices which will undermine reverence and traditional belief. This is precisely what has happened in the majority of the official, papally-approved documents concerned with the Liturgical Reform—beginning with the Liturgy Constitution itself. Lack of space precludes any discussion of this question in detail here. I have dealt with the Liturgy Constitution in my book *Pope John's Council*, and will deal with the subsequent documents in its sequel, *Pope Paul's New Mass*. In order to discover the true intent of these documents the reader must ignore the padding and look for what each document permits that wasn't permitted before. Sadly, when *Memoriale Domini* is examined in this light, it will be discovered that, while most of it is devoted to extolling the merits of the traditional practice, its practical effect is to *legalize the abuse*. This is something to which such columnists as Frank Morris could well devote some research. There are still conservative Catholics who resolutely close their eyes to the fact that the source of liturgical abuses lies in the official reforms, and are no more than a logical extension of these *official* reforms. Those who maintain that anything approved by the Pope is *ipso facto* beyond criticism are living in a fantasy world which renders their no doubt sincere attempts to defend the Faith ineffective. Frank Morris took a welcome step in the right direction in his January 12, 1978 article when he criticized the instruction forbidding us to make a double genuflection when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. He comments that this instruction is

²⁴ *The Wanderer*, January 12, 1978.

disturbing, “no matter what its origin”. Its origin is an official decree of the Congregation for Worship approved by Pope Paul VI. The same instruction *forbids* exposition for the purpose of Benediction!

The Body of Christ is provided with a veneer of scholarship by a large number of references—there are 142 references for 40 pages of text. In a book devoted to the Eucharist it might have been expected that there would be frequent citations from three key sources on this subject—the *Summa Theologica*, the Council of Trent, and *Mediator Dei*. The first two are not even mentioned and the third is referred to in one note [No. 44], which only concerns an exhortation to promote singing during the Mass. Approximately 75% of the references are to the post-conciliar instructions—the very documents which have been instrumental in destroying the Roman Rite. The picture which emerges from the text and the sources of this booklet is of a group determined to cut itself off from its past—the liturgical traditions of a millennium are cast aside and the teaching which these traditions enshrined is ignored in favor of the sociological jargon of the post-conciliar bureaucracy.

Further Examples of Deceit

As has been stated already, it would take several volumes to expose all the fallacies contained in *The Body of Christ*. A few more examples should suffice to prove conclusively that its authors are attempting to deceive the Catholic laity. It claims [p. 11] that:

The option of Communion in the hand does grow organically from procedures already existing, retains sound tradition, results from careful multi-disciplined, scholarly research, opens the way for legitimate progress, fulfills a current need and genuinely serves the good of the Church.

Every statement here is totally false!

Communion in the hand is a complete innovation and did not grow from any procedure already existing in any Catholic rite. A tradition is something which is living today. A long obsolete practice is not a tradition. It resulted from an act of rebellion, an aping of Protestant practice—perhaps this is what the American bishops mean by “*careful, multi-disciplined, scholarly research*”. It opens the way to irreverence, profanation of the Blessed Sacrament, and division and discord within the Church. The American bishops describe this as fulfilling a current need and genuinely serving the good of the Church!

On pages 20 & 21, it is stated that fears about the innovation are unwarranted and that “*Observers from countries that have already introduced the option offer encouraging testimony about the positive acceptance and relatively smooth implementation of communion in the hand.*”

It can be noted here that, at the 1977 Bishops’ Synod in Rome, high praise was given in the official communiqué to the resounding success the catechetical renewal has been throughout the world. Bishops are not likely to admit that policies which have been approved and which involve their prestige have been unsuccessful. The bishops of Great Britain and the U.S.A. will duly send in their reports saying how successful the innovation has been. The impression I have gained from visiting and reading reports from a good number of countries is that the practice has been followed invariably by irreverence and discord.

As part of the meal propaganda, the incident at Emmaus is described on p. 24 as if this was a celebration of the Eucharist. This is a claim which the majority of competent Bible scholars would not accept.²⁵

Irregular Procedures

The clear meaning of *Memoriale Domini* is that the abuse was only to be tolerated where Communion in the hand had become established by May 1969. However, the Vatican gave way and agreed to approve it wherever and whenever the practice might become established. Once again, it is typical of the “Conciliar Church” that no criteria were provided for deciding what was meant by “established”. Did it mean just one priest giving Communion in the hand to one person in the whole of the U.S.A.? Did it mean 50% of the parishes in every diocese?

This most important point was raised by Bishop Blanchette of Joliet, Ill. When the National Conference of Catholic Bishops debated the question in 1977, Bishop Blanchette pointed out that the procedure approved by the Vatican was that permission could be requested from the Holy See if the contrary usage prevailed. He pointed out that the Bishops could hardly take the second step without taking the first.

I said, we are now going to discuss and probably vote on whether we want to petition the Holy See, and we have not established that a contrary usage prevails. I said a simple way to do that would be to ask the Ordinaries to indicate whether in their dioceses the contrary usage prevails. The Ordinary should know, he is the shepherd of the diocese. He has been asked to obey and his priests have been asked to obey, so if anybody knows whether the contrary usage prevails, he should. And so I asked that the agenda be amended so that the first step—finding out whether the contrary usage prevails—could be verified, and if it were verified then we could get on with the rest of the agenda. But if the first step is not verified, how can we logically go on to the second step? That was my motion.²⁶

Bishop Blanchette’s motion was supported in writing by five other bishops and sustained by the president of the conference. According to the rules, there should have been a written vote, but supporters of the innovation objected and voted, on a show of hands, to rule the president out of order. Even Cardinal Krol later condemned the use of a parliamentary device to get rid of a valid motion on a crucially important topic.²⁷ It therefore seems quite reasonable to ask: just how legal this vote was? Then, of course, other extraordinary measures were taken to get the innovation adopted. Retired bishops were prevented from voting, and, when the necessary majority had still not been achieved, bishops who had not been present were polled until the necessary total was arrived at. Those who criticize the innovation are attacked for making a fuss about a ‘trivial’ matter. Well, if the matter is so trivial, the steps taken to force the innovation through are certainly extraordinary.

It is quite certain that the contrary usage prevailed in England and Wales only to the most limited extent. It is unlikely that there were more than a few dozen parishes or centres in the entire country where the practice had been established.

There was certainly no interest in and no desire for the practice among the mass of the Catholic population. However, the English have their own way of doing things. No one knew that the

²⁵ *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London, 1953), pp. 969/70).

²⁶ *National Catholic Register*, June 12, 1977.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

bishops had even discussed the matter, let alone applied for an Indult. It was all done in conditions of the greatest secrecy and even the production of the propaganda material was an undercover operation.

Priests and people were then presented with a *fait accompli*, Catholic papers dutifully filled their pages with propaganda and bookshops and various official centres put all their secretly-produced material on display. To add insult to injury, the Catholic Information Office then stated that there had been widespread consultation among priests and laity!²⁸ This even provoked an adverse comment in the Summer 1976 issue of *Music and Liturgy*, the mouthpiece of some of Britain's most extreme proponents of liturgical innovation. While predictably enthusiastic about Communion in the hand, an editorial stated:

The manner in which it was introduced was unfortunate.... The National Liturgical Commission was obviously prepared for an outcry; there can be no other explanation for the ridiculous secrecy in which the whole thing was shrouded [priests notified only a few days before the starting-date, with strict instructions not to tell a soul couched in terms like 'not for release before co.01 hours on such-and-such a date']. The same sort of thinking must account for the overlooking and, to be honest, rather boring C.T.S. pamphlet: the sheer weight of argument and documentation, ramming home the same point over and over again, must have been intended to take the steam out of the 'opposition' before they had a chance to really get going. A pity, then, that this propaganda should have contained several errors of fact and misquotation which were eagerly seized upon by the antis and which provided some cynical amusement for the pros.

The worst of these errors of fact was the claim that the Eastern Churches have preserved the practice of Holy Communion in the hand. This is complete nonsense, as the practice in the Eastern Churches, Uniate and Orthodox, is for the laity to receive Communion under both kinds placed on the tongue by a priest using a spoon. At the end of the Orthodox Liturgy blessed bread is sometimes distributed to the congregation. This has not been consecrated and is received in the hand. It may be the reason why some non-Orthodox imagine that Communion is given in the hand. The fact that this pamphlet was written by Fr. Anthony Boylan, General Secretary of the Liturgy Commission of England and Wales, is an only too typical example of the crass ignorance of so many of those styling themselves as liturgical experts.

I wrote to a number of influential prelates regarding the false statements made in the C.T.S. pamphlet, including the Apostolic Delegate. A reply from his secretary agreed with me that the statement was incorrect, to be regretted, and that the pamphlet should be withdrawn. This was in August 1976—the same pamphlet with the same falsehood is on sale today!

The manner in which the Protestant practice of Communion in the hand has been introduced in Britain and the U.S.A. certainly illustrates a point made at the beginning of this study: "*The particular significance of the imposition of Communion in the hand is that it is the epitomization of the 'spirit of Vatican II', the spirit which pervades the 'Conciliar Church', to which Archbishop Lefebvre has been ordered to submit.*"²⁹ Indeed, the more one studies the squalid duplicity which has marked every

²⁸ *The Tablet*, May 22, 1976, p. 507.

²⁹ This phrase was used in a letter from Archbishop (now Cardinal) Benelli to Archbishop Lefebvre dated June 25, 1975. Archbishop Benelli demanded not true fidelity to the Catholic but to the Conciliar Church ("*la fidelite veritable a l'Eglise conciliaire*"). The full text of this letter appeared in *Itineraires*, No. 206, September 1976.

stage of the imposition of this Protestant practice, the greater the admiration one must have for the courage, the honesty, and the orthodoxy of this saintly prelate!

Legitimate Resistance

The deceitful propaganda epitomized by such publications as *The Body of Christ* in the U.S.A., or *The Reception of Holy Communion in the Hand* in England, has been reproduced a hundredfold, a thousandfold, in the official Catholic press. A consensus has been established. Communion in the hand is now the mature, adult, Vatican II, People-of-God-on-the-march thing to do. It is a test of our loyalty to the Holy See. Those who oppose it are reactionary, ignorant, not in tune with the “Spirit of Vatican II”, anti-social, disobedient to the Holy Father, etc. etc. etc. They must be treated as intemperate extremists simply because they oppose the prevalent fad. This is not a new phenomenon and was commented upon by Cardinal Newman:

If the multitude of men are ever in the broad way ‘that leadeth to destruction’, there is no ground for maintaining that, in order to be right in our religious views, we must agree with the many; rather, if such as persons are, their opinions are also, it would seem to be certain that those opinions which are popular will ever be mistaken and dangerous as being popular opinions. Those who serve God faithfully must ever look to be accounted, in their generation, singular, intemperate, and extreme. They are not so: they must guard against becoming so; if they are so they are equally wrong as the many, however they may in other respects differ from them; but still it is no proof that they are so, because the many call them so. It is no proof that they are so, because others take it for granted that they are, pass their doctrines over, put their arguments aside without a word,—treat them gravely, or are vexed about them, or fiercely oppose them. No: there are numberless clouds which flit over the sky, there are numberless gusts which agitate the air to and fro: as many, as violent, as far-spreading, as fleeting, as uncertain, as changing, are the clouds and the gales of human opinion; as suddenly, as impetuously, as fruitlessly, do they assail those whose mind is stayed on God. They come and they go; they have no life in them, nor abidance. They agree together in nothing but in this, in threatening like clouds, and sweeping like gusts of wind. They are the voice of the many; they have the strength of the world, and they are directed against the few. Their argument, the sole argument in their behalf, is their prevalence at the moment; not that they existed yesterday, not that they will exist tomorrow; not that they base themselves on reason, or ancient belief, but that they are merely what every one now takes for granted, or, perhaps, supposes to be in Scripture, and therefore not to be disputed:—not that they have the most voices through long periods, but that they happen to be the most numerous professed in the passing hour.³⁰

Now that the practice of Communion in the hand has been established, the Liberals will not encounter much opposition. While the number who favored the innovation was minimal, this is irrelevant to the Liberal campaign. Revolutionaries do not need massive support, they simply require minimal opposition. The number of Catholics who will put themselves out to combat the abuse will be very small indeed, even among those who oppose it. The tendency among most so-called conservatives is to grumble at each abuse as it arrives and then accept it. One thing is certain, priests or laymen who accept this abuse will accept anything. However, those who are prepared to make a stand in defense of the Blessed Sacrament can expect to be assailed by the voice of the many and the strength of the world. But they can take comfort in the fact that they are in good company.

³⁰ *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v, Sermon XVII, Many Called, Few Chosen. Also available in *Newman Against the Liberals*, p. 253 -available from *The Remnant* at \$11.

This study will close with a comment by Dietrich von Hildebrand, from a book which every Catholic should buy, read, and re-read frequently. It is far more reassuring to share his views than those of the many who think that to be right is to adopt the opinion which prevails at the moment—and to hold it only as long as it prevails.

Dietrich von Hildebrand wrote:

Unfortunately, in many places Communion is distributed in the hand. To what extent is this supposed to be a renewal and a deepening of the reception of Holy Communion? Is the trembling reverence with which we receive this incomprehensible gift perhaps increased by re-receiving it in our unconsecrated hands, rather than from the consecrated hand of the priest?

It is not difficult to see that the danger of parts of the consecrated Host falling to the ground is incomparably increased, and the danger of desecrating it or indeed of horrible blasphemy is very great. And what in the world is to be gained by all this? The claim that contact with the hand makes the host more real is certainly pure nonsense. For the theme here is not the reality of the matter of the Host, but rather the consciousness, which is only attainable by faith, that the Host in reality has become the Body of Christ. The reverent reception of the Body of Christ on our tongues, from the consecrated hand of the priest, is much more conducive to the strengthening of this consciousness than reception with our own unconsecrated hands. *Visus, tactus, glistus in te fallitur, sed auditu solo tuto creditur*, says St. Thomas Aquinas in his magnificent hymn *Adora te* [*“Sight, touch, and taste would err about Thee, but through hearing alone are we given certain faith.”*]³¹

Appendix

Communication from the Vicariate of Rome on the Distribution of Holy Communion: The following communication appeared in the *Revista Diocesana di Roma*. n. 7-8, 1977, pp. 691-692, published in conformity with the regulations in force in the whole of Italy:

This Vicariate receives frequent requests for clarification from priests, nuns, and laity concerning some questions about eucharistic Communion.

In particular, they ask:

1. If in our diocese they should consider themselves bound by the rule for the distribution of Holy Communion in the traditional manner which has been in force until now, or is there permission for distribution in the hand, such as was granted to some countries which asked for and obtained the appropriate Indult from the Holy See based on the statement in the Instruction *Memoriale Domini* of 29 May 1969 (*cf. AAS* 61, pp.544- 547).
2. If it is allowed for one receiving Communion to take the consecrated Bread directly with his own hand from the ciborium or the paten, and from the altar the chalice of the Blood of the Lord, as do the celebrant and the competent minister who distribute Communion to the faithful.

To these questions the Vicariate answers:

³¹ *The Devastated Vineyard*, pp. 67/8.

1. As to the giving of Holy Communion in the mouth, it is emphasized that no change has been made in the decision taken by the Italian Episcopal Conference in 1974 to keep the traditional practice (cf. circular letter of the general Secretariate, n. 1197/74, in *Liturgia* n.189, 1975, pp. 67-68). Therefore in Rome also all priests are bound to keep strictly to the rule, in full conformity with what has been authoritatively determined by the Italian bishops.

2. As for the practice adopted by some groups of the faithful and some religious communities, of giving themselves Communion directly, we recall that the action accomplished by Christ in the institution of the Eucharist and confirmed by the tradition of the Church is repeated in a more concordant manner when the eucharistic Bread is actually given or distributed to the faithful (cf. M.26:26; Mk.14:22); L.22:19). For this reason the Rite *De sacra Communione et de Cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam* (cf. *Tip. Poliglotta Vaticana*, 1973) at n.21, para. iv prescribes: 'Holy Communion should be distributed by the competent minister, who shows and gives to the communicant the particle of consecrated Bread'.

—From the Palace of the Vicariate
1 July 1977

MEMORIALE DOMINI
Instruction on the Manner of Administering Holy Communion
The Congregation for Divine Worship on May 29, 1969

When it celebrates the memorial of the Lord, by that rite the Church witnesses to its faith and adoration of Christ, who is present in the sacrifice and who is given as food to those who share in the Eucharistic table.

For this reason it is of great concern that the Eucharist be celebrated and shared in most worthily and fruitfully, by observing unchanged the tradition that has reached us step by step, the tradition whose riches have been poured into the practice and life of the Church. The documents of history demonstrate that the ways of celebrating and receiving the holy Eucharist have been diverse. Even in our time many and important ritual changes have been introduced into the celebration of the Eucharist in order to bring it into accord with the spiritual and psychological needs of men today. Because of circumstances, communion under both kinds, bread and wine, which was once common in the Latin rite but had fallen into disuse little by little, has again been made a part of the discipline governing the faithful's mode of receiving the holy Sacrament. At the time of the Council of Trent a different situation had arisen and was in effect everywhere; the Council approved and defended it as suited to the conditions of that period.¹

With the renewal of the modes of communicating, however, the sign of the Eucharistic meal and the complete fulfillment of Christ's mandate have been effected more clearly and vividly. At the same time a full sharing in the celebration of the Eucharist, expressed through Sacramental communion, has recently stirred up in some places the desire to return to the practice by which the Eucharistic bread is placed in the hand of the faithful who communicates himself by putting it in his mouth.

In some communities and localities this rite has even been performed without obtaining the prior approval of the Apostolic See and occasionally without appropriate preparation for the people.

It is true that, according to ancient usage, it was once permitted for the faithful to take the sacred food in their hands and themselves to place it in their mouths and even, in the earliest period, to carry the holy Sacrament with them from the place of celebration, especially in order to receive it as viaticum if they should have to suffer for the profession of the faith.

Nevertheless the precepts of the Church and the writings of the Fathers give abundant witness to the great reverence and prudence shown to the holy Eucharist. For “*no one... eats this flesh unless first he adores,*”² and each recipient is warned: “*...receive it and take care that none of it be lost to you*”³: “*for it is the body of Christ.*”⁴

In the meantime the care and ministry of the Body and Blood of the Lord was entrusted in a quite special way to sacred ministers or to persons assigned to this function: “*After the president has completed the prayers and all the people have made the acclamation, those among us whom we call deacons distribute a part of the bread and wine and water, in which the thanksgiving has been made, to each one present and bring them to those who are absent.*”⁵

The office of bringing the Eucharist to those who were absent was soon entrusted to sacred ministers alone, for the reason that greater care might be shown for the reverence due to the Body of Christ as well as for the needs of the people. In the following period, after the true meaning of the Eucharistic mystery, its effect, and the presence of Christ in it had been profoundly investigated, from a pressing sense of reverence toward this holy Sacrament and of the humility which its reception demands, the custom was introduced by which the minister himself would place the piece of consecrated bread on the tongue of the communicants.

In view of the state of the Church as a whole today, this manner of distributing Holy Communion must be observed, not only because it rests upon a tradition of many centuries but especially because it is a sign of the reverence of the faithful toward the Eucharist. The practice in no way detracts from the personal dignity of those who approach this great Sacrament and it is a part of the preparation needed for the most fruitful reception of the Lord’s body.⁶

This reverence is a sign of communion not in “*common bread and drink*”⁷ but in the Body and Blood of the Lord. By it “*the people of God shares in the blessings of the paschal sacrifice, renews the new covenant once made by God with man in the Blood of Christ, and in faith and hope prefigures and anticipates the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of the Father.*”⁸

In addition, this manner of communicating, which is now to be considered as prescribed by custom, gives more effective assurance that Holy Communion will be distributed with the appropriate reverence, decorum, and dignity; that any danger of profaning the Eucharistic species, in which “*the whole and entire Christ, God and man, is substantially contained and permanently present in a unique way,*”⁹ will be avoided; and finally that the diligent care which the Church has always commended for the very fragments of the consecrated bread will be maintained: “*If you have allowed anything to be lost, consider this a lessening of your own members.*”¹⁰

On this account, since some few episcopal conferences and individual bishops had asked that the usage of placing the consecrated bread in the hand of the faithful be admitted in their territories, the Supreme Pontiff decreed that each bishop of the entire Latin Church should be asked his opinion concerning the appropriateness of introducing this rite. A change in a matter of such importance, which rests on a very ancient and venerable tradition, besides touching upon discipline can also include dangers. These may be feared from a new manner of administering Holy Communion: they are a lessening of reverence toward the noble Sacrament of the altar, its profanation, or the adulteration of correct doctrine

Three questions were therefore proposed to the bishops. Up to March 12 the following responses had been received:

1. Does it seem that the proposal should be accepted by which, besides the traditional mode, the rite of receiving Holy Communion in the hand would be permitted?

Yes: 567

No: 1,233

Yes, with reservations: 315

Invalid votes: 20

2. Should experiments with this new rite first take place in small communities, with the assent of the local Ordinary?

Yes: 751

No: 1,215

Invalid votes: 70

3. Do you think that the faithful, after a well planned catechetical preparation, would accept this new rite willingly?

Yes: 835

No: 1,185

Invalid votes: 128

From the responses received it is thus clear that by far the greater number of bishops feel that the present discipline should not be changed at all, indeed that if it were changed, this would be offensive to the sensibilities and spiritual appreciation of these bishops and of most of the faithful.

After he had considered the observations and the counsel of those whom "*the Holy Spirit has placed as bishops to rule*"¹¹ the Churches, in view of the seriousness of the matter and the importance of the arguments proposed, the Supreme Pontiff judged that the long received manner of ministering Holy Communion to the faithful should not be changed.

The Apostolic See therefore strongly urges bishops, priests, and people to observe zealously this law, valid and again confirmed, according to the judgment of the majority of the Catholic episcopate, in the form which the present rite of the sacred liturgy employs, and out of concern for the common good of the Church.

If the contrary usage, namely, of placing Holy Communion in the hand, has already developed in any place, in order to help the episcopal conference fulfill their pastoral office in today's often difficult situation, the Apostolic See entrusts to the conferences the duty and function of judging particular circumstances, if any. They may make this judgment provided that any danger is avoided of insufficient reverence or false opinions of the Holy Eucharist arising in the minds of the faithful and that any other improprieties be carefully removed.

In these cases, moreover, in order to govern this usage properly, the episcopal conferences should undertake the appropriate deliberations after prudent study; the decision is to be made by a two-thirds majority by secret ballot.

These deliberations should then be proposed to the Holy See for the necessary confirmation, together with an accurate explanation of the reasons which moved the conferences to take this action. The Holy See will weigh the individual cases with care, remembering the bonds which exist between the several local Churches among themselves and with the entire Church, in order to promote the common good and edification and the increase of faith and piety which flow from mutual good example.

This Instruction, prepared at the special mandate of the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI, was duly approved by him, in virtue of apostolic authority, on May 28, 1969. Pope Paul also decreed that it be brought to the attention of the bishops through the presidents of the episcopal conferences. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Rome, May 29, 1969.
Benno Card. Gut
Prefect
A. Bugnini,
Secretary

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Cf. Council of Trent, session XXI, doctrine concerning communion under both kinds and communion of children: *Denz.* 1726-1717 (930); session XXII, decree on the petition for the concession of the cup: *Denz.* 1760.

² Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 98, 9: PL 37, 1264.

³ Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses Mystagogicae*, V, 21: PG 33, 1126.

⁴ Hippolytus, *Traditio Apostolica*, n. 37; ed. B. Botte, 1963, p. 84.

⁵ Justin, *Apologia I*, 65: PG 6, 427.

⁶ Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 98, 9: PL 37, 1264-1265.

⁷ Cf. Justin, *Apologia I*, 66: PG 6, 427; cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 1.4, c. 18. n. 5: PG 7, 1028-1029.

⁸ S. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, n. 3a: AAS 59 (1967) 541.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.* n. 9, p. 547.

¹⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses Mystagogicae*, V, 21: PG 33, 1126.

¹¹ Cf. Acts 20: 28. and Cf. II Vatican Council, decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 38, 4: AAS 58 (1966) 693.