

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

In the Light of Scripture

by

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE EUCHARIST (II)

NOT ONLY IN THE MEANING of the Eucharist is Rome in radical error, but she is wrong also in the manner of it, setting aside the example as well as the command of our Lord.

1. She insists that communion must be taken fasting, so that, by present regulations, nothing solid must have passed the lips within three hours before communicating, the time being reduced to one hour for liquids (Modifications of this rule have been made at various times and places). This, we are told, is out of reverence to our Lord. St. Augustine is quoted as saying:

It has pleased the Holy Spirit that in honor of so great a Sacrament, the body of the Lord should pass the lips of the Christian before any other food; for this reason this custom is observed throughout the whole world.

But how and when did the Lord institute Holy Communion? There is no commandment as to time, and undoubtedly our Lord did not intend to trammel His disciples in this matter, but the fact remains that He instituted the Feast in the evening—for it was in the night in which He was betrayed that He took bread (I Corinthians 11: 23).

All the accounts in the Gospels and in I Corinthians 11 give clear evidence that it was after they had supped the Lord Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread. So it quite certain that the disciples did not take the bread and wine fasting. The whole idea of taking the communion fasting is based upon the false doctrine of transubstantiation, that the real body and blood are involved. St. Augustine and church councils notwithstanding communion fasting is a Roman superstition.

2. Only the celebrating priest takes the wine. Lay believers, and even non-celebrating priests take the sacrament in only one kind; that is, they receive only bread. Several reasons are given for this, but they are puerile that they have to be classed rather as excuses than reasons, and very poor excuses at that.

a. First we are told that no command was given ordinary Christians to take the wine, and that only apostles were present when our Lord instituted the service. Quite true: but only the apostles were there when He broke the bread and said, "**Take, eat, this is body.**" So none but the celebrating priests should the bread either! What is logic for one is logic for the other. But even Rome does not suggest that the bread should be withheld. It is quite evident in the Scriptures that the apostles were there not in their official capacity as apostles, but in their private capacity as disciples, representing us. The command concerning the cup; "**Drink ye all of it,**" is the charter of every true Christian to take both the bread and the wine in remembrance of our Lord's broken body and shed blood.

b. A second reason put forward is that it is not necessary for laymen to drink the wine, since after the blessing the whole Christ, His body and His blood, His humanity and His Deity are in both, and having taken in one we have partaken of the whole Christ, and that suffices. We can only ask, If that is true for the layman, why is it not true for the priest?! If the body and blood are both in the bread, why did our Lord use both bread and wine? Rome is not consistent with herself, for on the one hand she claims that the bread has become actual flesh, while on the other she says it is both body and blood.

Laymen or clerics where not celebrating, are not obliged by any divine precept to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist under both kinds, neither can it be by any means doubted without injury to faith that Communion under either kind is sufficient for them unto salvation.—Council of Trent.

Shall we accept the dictum of the Council of Trent or shall we obey the precept of the Lord and take both the bread and the wine?

c. A third reason given is that there is danger of the blood being spilled. There is no such danger, for there is no blood there, but only wine. If indeed the bread did become the Lord's body, there would be danger of some crumbs falling upon the ground also.

d. The fourth reason is that the wine is not easily preserved. We can only ask why this should be so, and also why it should be preserved? The answer of course to the second inquiry is that after consecration, some of the bread is reserved for emergency use in extreme unction, which as we have already seen, has no foundation in the Scriptures. The practice of reservation led to the worship of the host.

e. Drinking from the same chalice might tend to spread disease. Possibly so; therefore many churches use separate communion cups. But it is rather astonishing to find Rome advancing an argument based on modern hygiene when she herself confirmed the single chalice procedure at the Council of Constance in 1414.

3. There is a third departure by the Roman Catholic Church from the sacrament as instituted by our Lord. It is absolutely certain that as the communion service was instituted at the close of the Passover feast, the bread He used was the ordinary Passover cake. Yet Rome, which in some things places so much emphasis on correctness in externals, prepares special wafers which must be of specified size and shape for the communion bread. Our Lord, we are told, "**break the bread,**" which certainly indicates that the Passover bread was of some size—not a mere wafer.

4. The communicant must not touch the bread. It is put on his tongue by the priests, and he is instructed not, to bite the wafer, but to let it dissolve in his mouth. Our Lord said, "**Take,**" which certainly indicated handling, and He said, "**Eat,**" which certainly indicated mastication.

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