



From the Pastor  
21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in  
Ordinary Time - B  
August 25, 2024

**THE BREAD OF LIFE DISCOURSE.** For three weeks, we sang the same refrain in our **Responsorial Psalm** which is from **Psalm 34:** "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord." and

some of its **23** verses. It is also the last of our five-week consecutive proclamation of the **6<sup>th</sup> Chapter of John's Gospel: the Bread of Life Discourse.** In it, **Jesus** let those who could not accept that the **Eucharist** is His **Real Presence:** His **Sacred Body** and **Precious Blood**, walk away and cease being His disciples. As **Jesus** obviously made clear: this dogma of our **Faith** cannot be diluted, taken figuratively, or dismissed as just a remembrance! All the more reason for us to reflect more deeply on this **Truth.**

When asked if the wine for **holy Mass** is really wine, we explain that it **MUST** be fermented wine, not grape juice. For unlike grape juice, which is created by simply crushing grapes, wine must be 'buried' so it can ferment - just as our **Lord's Body** was buried so He could rise again. What types of wine can be used? The answer may surprise you!

The **Church**, at least in the **United States**, does not require any certain brand or distributor; nor are there many requirements or limitations. It must be truly wine made from grapes, with an alcohol content up to 18%, unadulterated, well preserved without any additives [sulfites are permitted] and not soured, is valid sacramental wine. So, no wines made from strawberries, cherries or other fruit, sparkling wines and champagne, or wine-based liquors as sangria, wine coolers, or wine spritzers.

**Red or White?** There were never rubrics for which color wine must be used, only traditions. Originally, liturgical wine was **red**, to more easily 'connect' it to **Christ's Precious Blood**, while some used white wine to signify **Christ's** sinless purity. What may have made white wine more prevalent for centuries was the development of **Altar Linens.** A white linen **Altar Cloth**, used almost from the start, symbolized the linen cloths that wrapped **Jesus' Body** and were found in the empty tomb. From the **9<sup>th</sup> Century** until recently,

three linens cloths were required to recall His three days in the tomb. Now, only a white top, atop of whatever cloth is on the **Altar** is required. The **Second Vatican Council's** liturgical reform called for sacramental signs to be more 'real' and easily comprehended. So, suppliers began offering thicker **hosts** that needed to be eaten [i.e.: chewed], made from whole wheat, not just beached white, and larger main hosts so that, as the rubrics desire, more people can receive from the same **host** as the **Priest.** With the advent of non-chlorine bleach, laundering linens soiled by red wine used for the **Precious Blood**, without destroying them, was more easily possible.



**Purificators.** This rectangular linen, folded into three equal segments lengthwise and then in half, once had to have an 'M' shaped crevice [seen to the right] on one end. This 'crevice' was used to wipe the rim of the **chalice** to remove all residue of the **Precious Blood.** The **Priest** used any part of it to wipe his lips after receiving from the **chalice** and opened it up to dry the **chalice** after rinsing it with water which he consumed. Currently, some fully open it to wipe the rim of the **chalice.** Soiled **purificators** are then soaked in a **sacrarium:** a sink which does NOT drain into sewer lines or septic tanks but into a special underground container.

There is a humorous side to liturgical 'alterations.' Decades ago, the **Seminary** was all-male with a few **Religious Sisters** in non-academic ministries. In the 1970's, when the **chalice** was first offered to the non-ordained, a **Priest-faculty** member was shocked to see **red lipstick** on a **purificator!** He was relieved to learn it was from a laywoman taking **Seminary** courses! [Ancient Egyptians, both male and female, of all social classes, wore makeup, eyeshadow and lipstick; in our ever-changing society, who knows what situations we will face in the future!] All joking aside: let us have a greater understanding and respect for the Eucharist.

In Christ,

*Father Mark*