

Series on the Mass, Part 75: Purification of the Fingers of the Priest

Sept. 5, 2021

The priest will purify his fingers once the wine has been consumed from the chalice along with any particles that were gathered from the paten and ciborium. Until this is done, the priest holds his thumb and index finger together lest any particles that may be on them are lost. The priest takes the chalice – or the ciborium if there is one to be purified – and holds it with his thumbs and index fingers held over the chalice so that the wine and water that is poured on his fingers by the altar server will wash these particles into the cup of the chalice. While doing this, the priest recites the following prayer: “May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my inmost parts, and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, whom these pure and holy sacraments have refreshed.”

As our body has received the Body and Blood of our Savior and He cleaves to our inmost parts, so should our intellect and will cleave to our Savior. If we sin, we separate ourselves from Him and so, with the reception of this sacrament, we should desire that all trace of sin be removed and our nature be restored. This prayer dates from the 7th century in Gaul. In earlier times, there existed rites for the purification of the faithful, which disappeared when communion was only given under one species on the tongue.

After consuming the water and wine in the chalice, the priest uses the purificator to dry the chalice and ciborium, then builds up the chalice like it was at the beginning of Mass. The purificator is placed over the chalice, then the paten followed by the pall. The corporal is folded and placed in the burse, the chalice veil is placed over the chalice, and the burse is placed on top.

In the meantime, the altar servers have transferred the missal back to the epistle side of the altar where the priest will read the communion antiphon.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP

Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish