

manner of administering Holy Communion to the Faithful should not be changed. The Apostolic See therefore strongly urges bishops, priests and people to observe zealously this law."

A SIMULTANEOUS RED LIGHT AND GREEN LIGHT

It must be asked, then, if this Instruction is on the books, why is Communion in the hand so prevalent? Sadly, this was the age of compromise, and the document was (intentionally?) destined for futility. The Instruction went on to say that where the abuse had already become firmly established, it could be legalized by a two-thirds majority in a secret ballot of the national bishops' conference (providing the Holy See confirmed their decision). And this played right into the liberals' hands.

Again it must be noted, the Instruction specified that the application of such permission was limited to places "where the abuse had already become firmly established." So, countries in which the practice had not developed were obviously excluded from the concession — *and all English-speaking countries*, including the United States, fell into this category.

But naturally, liberal clergy in other countries realized that if this practice could be legitimized in Holland, it could be legalized anywhere. They figured that if they ignored *Memorale Domini* and defied the liturgical law of the Church, this rebellion would not only be tolerated, but eventually legalized. This is exactly what happened, and this is why we have Communion in the hand today.

STARTED IN DEFIANCE, PERPETUATED BY DECEPTION

Not only was Communion in the hand started in disobedience, it was propagated by deceit. In the 1970s, a campaign of calculated half-truths was launched to propagandize an unsuspecting laity to accept the new practice. Examples of this can be found in the writings of the notorious Monsignor Joseph Champlin, who:

- gave his readers the false impression that Vatican II provided a mandate for the abuse, when in fact it is *not even hinted at* in any Council document;

- did not tell his readers that the practice was started by clergymen in defiance of established liturgical law, but made it sound as if it came about in response to the desires of the laity;
- did not make clear to his readers that the world's bishops, when polled, voted overwhelmingly against Communion in the hand;
- did not mention that permission was extended only as a *toleration* of the abuse *where it had already been established by 1969*, not as a green light for it to spread to other countries, like the United States.

(Editor's Note: When one learns that the history of 'Communion in the hand' was actively promoted via *disobedience* and *deceit*, one realizes how blasphemous it is to claim this irreverent and untraditional practice was 'guided by the Holy Ghost.'

THE SENSE OF THE SACRED

How sad it is to hear our priests and bishops complain that "we have lost the sense of the sacred"! This is an astounding lament, as if it were some sort of mystery. The sense of the sacred has not been lost — it has been deliberately thrown away, run out of town on a rail, by the arrogant agents of the New Paganism of Modernism masquerading as Catholic reformers, who have introduced novel practices into the Church that demean the Eucharist, show contempt for tradition and for what our fathers taught us, and have led to a worldwide crisis of faith of unprecedented proportions.

But for us, through the grace of God, it is no puzzle. We know exactly where "the sense of the sacred" is found, and we cling to it with a fierce tenacity. It is found in the celebration of the Tridentine Mass where profound reverence for the Blessed Sacrament is deeply ingrained into every moment of the Liturgy, and where Communion in the hand and "Eucharistic Ministers" are looked upon with horror, and are clearly recognized as the out-of-place, sacrilegious, non-Catholic practices that they are.

Source: This article was printed in *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 74. It has been edited and shortened for this reprinting. The original document can be found in the "articles" section of our website.

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Printed in Canada



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The Truth about Communion in the Hand



*"Out of reverence for this Sacrament,
nothing touches It but what is consecrated."*

- St. Thomas Aquinas

by John Vennari

Throughout the Church's history, our fathers in the Faith have taught that the Holy Eucharist is truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, out of reverence for which the touching and administering of this Sacrament belong only to priests. And this truth, that it would be sacrilegious for anyone but a priest to touch the Sacred Host, was communicated to generation after generation of the faithful not so much by words as by the tremendously powerful daily example of good priests, by the manner in which they celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where profound reverence for the Blessed Sacrament was found in every move the priest made.

But then came the New Mass, and with it the practice of Communion in the hand, in blatant contradiction to what the Church has always taught about the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. And although this practice was introduced in the United States under the guise of being an "authentic" liturgical development mandated by the Second Vatican Council, the truth is just the opposite. It was borrowed from Protestant communities by liberal-minded Dutch priests *in defiance of* Catholic liturgical norms and tradition, and then surreptitiously spread throughout the Church by outright *deceit and disobedience*. Nowhere in any of the Council's documents is there any mention of Communion in the hand.

In fact, Communion in the hand is one of the poisonous 'fruits' of the modern craze for "ecumenism." It was allowed to fester through the negligence of Church authorities until being approved after the fact through compromise and a false sense of toleration. In the meantime, this abuse has led to countless disastrous evils, including indifference and irreverence toward the Blessed Sacrament, loss of faith in the Real Presence, and innumerable instances of profanation and desecration, whether through negligence or malice. It is a sacrilege in itself, and the disgrace of our age.

THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

As Saint Thomas Aquinas explains:

"The dispensing of Christ's Body belongs to the priest for three reasons. First, because he consecrates in the person of Christ. But as Christ consecrated His Body at the [Last] 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.

"Second, 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

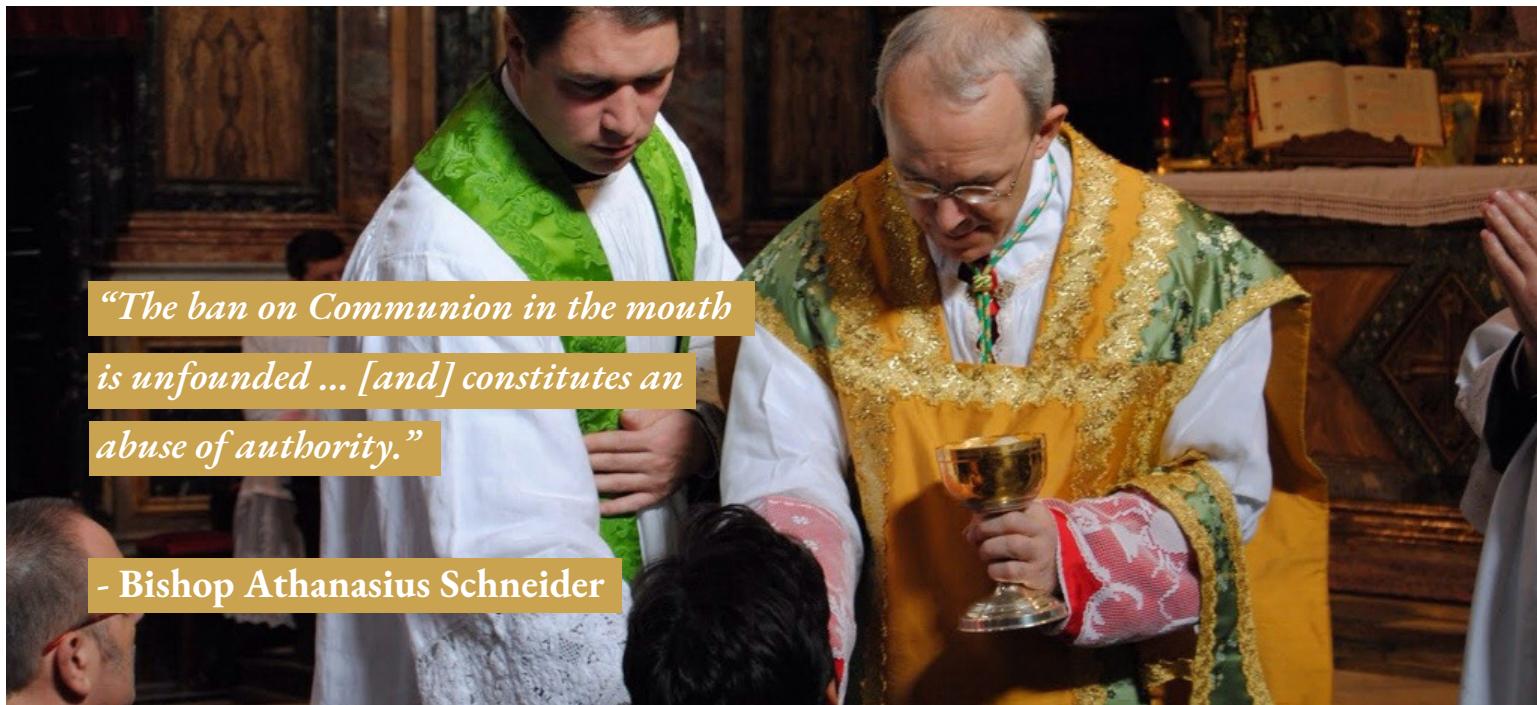
to the people.

"Third, because out of reverence for 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." (S.T., III, Q. 82, Art. 13)

Saint Thomas, the prince of theologians in the Catholic Church, whose teaching Saint Pius X said was *the remedy* for Modernism, clearly teaches that it belongs to the priest and only to the priest to touch and administer the Sacred Host, and that "only that which is consecrated" (the hands of the priest) "should touch the Consecrated" (the Sacred Host).

"RESTORATION" OF A PRIMITIVE PRACTICE?

There are some who argue from a passage attributed to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem that Communion in the hand was practiced in the early Church. Others maintain that it was never a Catholic custom, but was institutionalized and made widespread by the Arian heretics as a sign of their disbelief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ. They maintain that the quotation attributed to Saint Cyril is apocryphal; that is, an Arian author passed it off as the work of a holy bishop to claim legitimacy. Whatever the case may be, it is certain that Communion *on the tongue* is of Apostolic origin (that is, taught by Christ Himself), and that Communion in the hand was *condemned*



as an abuse at the Synod of Rouen in 650 A.D. Moreover, the practice of Communion in the hand has never been reflected in the artwork of any period in either the Eastern or Western Church ... that is, until *after* the Second Vatican Council.

REVERENCE TOWARD MINUTE PARTICLES OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT INCORPORATED INTO THE TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS

The teachings that only the priest may touch the Sacred Host, since his hands have been consecrated for this purpose, and that every precaution should be taken to safeguard the Sacred Species from desecration have been incorporated into the traditional Liturgy of the Church — that is, in the *Traditional Latin Mass*.

Traditional priests are trained to celebrate Mass with precise rubrics that ensure the reverence which the Blessed Sacrament deserves. Some of these rubrics are as follows:

- From the moment the words of consecration are uttered by the priest until the ablution, whenever he is not holding the Sacred Host, he keeps the tips of his forefinger and thumb together. Whether he elevates the chalice, turns the pages of the Missal, or opens the tabernacle, his thumb and forefinger touch nothing but the Sacred Host. (It goes without saying that there is no leaving the Sacred Host upon the altar to walk up and down the aisles shaking peoples' hands!)

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- After the Communion of the faithful, the priest uses the paten to scrape the corporal (on which the Sacred Host was placed during the Canon), and deposits the gathered Particles into the chalice so he can consume Them. The corporal is then folded in a precise manner to ensure that any remaining Particles are not susceptible to desecration.
- Finally, the priest holds the tips of his thumbs and forefingers above the chalice as wine and water are poured over them, collecting any Particles which may have adhered there. The contents of the chalice are then reverently consumed.

Now, when it comes to showing reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, would it be possible to improve upon these rubrics? A *true* Catholic renewal would either leave these gestures intact, or enhance them. But to obliterate them without apology or explanation (as has been the case with the introduction of the New Mass) is not the mark of a genuine Catholic renewal. Rather, such arrogant contempt for tradition resembles the New Paganism famously warned of by Hilaire Belloc.

HOW DID TODAY'S COMMUNION IN THE HAND COME ABOUT?

Some 400 years ago, Communion in the hand was introduced into "Christian" worship by men whose motives were rooted in defiance of Catholicism. The 16th-century Protestant revolutionaries (falsely called "reformers") introduced Communion in the hand as a means of showing two things:

- Their belief that the bread used at Communion time was just ordinary bread which could be handled by anyone.
- Their belief that the minister of Communion was fundamentally the same as any layman.

Now, it is absolutely true that Protestant Communion bread is just ordinary bread, and that Protestant ministers are mere laymen — powerless to forgive sins, to offer Christ's Sacrifice, or to teach and govern in the name of Holy Mother Church.

But these revolutionaries' intention was to attack the Catholic Church's teachings — to destroy people's faith in the Real Presence and in the Sacrament of Holy Orders as perpetuated in the Catholic Church, which gives a man a spiritual, sacramental power, imprinting an indelible priestly mark on his soul and making him fundamentally different



from laymen — in short, to show their rejection of Catholicism altogether.

After Vatican II, some ecumenically-minded Catholic priests in Holland started giving Communion in the hand, in a monkey-see, monkey-do imitation of the Protestant practice.

But the bishops, rather than doing their duty to condemn the abuse, *tolerated* it. And because Church leaders allowed the abuse to go unchecked, it soon spread to Germany, Belgium, and France.

But if the bishops seemed indifferent to this scandal, the laity were outraged. It was the indignation of large numbers of the faithful which prompted Pope Paul VI to take some action. He polled the bishops of the world on this issue, and they voted overwhelmingly to *retain* the traditional practice of receiving Holy Communion *only on the tongue*. And it must be noted that at this time, the abuse was limited to a few European countries. It had not yet spread to the United States.

"MEMORIALE DOMINI"

The Pope then promulgated the May 28, 1969 Instruction *Memoriale Domini*. In summary, this document stated:

- The bishops of the world were overwhelmingly *against* Communion in the hand.
- "This manner of distributing Holy Communion [i.e., the priest placing the Host on the tongue of the communicant] must be observed."
- Communion on the tongue in no way detracts from the dignity of the communicant.
- "Any innovation could lead to irreverence and profanation of the Eucharist, as well as gradual erosion of correct doctrine."
- "The Supreme Pontiff judged that the long received