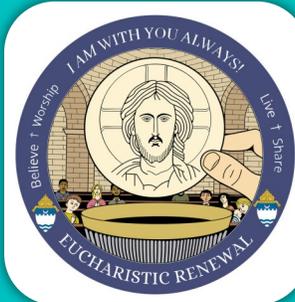


# Encountering the Eucharist

Believe ✦ Worship ✦ Live ✦ Share



Purificators are special linens which pertain to the Eucharist. The purificator (*purificatorium*) is a white linen cloth which is used to wipe the chalice after each communicant partakes. It is also used to wipe the chalice and paten which follow Communion. Before laundering them, they are presoaked to allow all particles and remnants of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ to dissolve into the water. During the presoak and removal of the linens from the presoak water, care must be taken so as not to spill or splash this water around, because it contains the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. Because this is the True Presence of Christ, this water must be handled carefully and disposed of properly by being poured down the sacrarium.

## What We Believe...

### Due Reverence for the Holy Eucharist

There is a rather mysterious and enigmatic exchange in the Easter story in John's Gospel between Our Lord and Mary Magdalene. Mary goes to the tomb and is distressed that she cannot find the Lord's body. Suddenly, seeing a man who she erroneously supposes to be the gardener of the cemetery, she asks: "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." We are told by the gospel writer that Mary Magdalene did not know



that it was Jesus she was speaking to. Similarly to the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke's gospel, Mary's eyes were kept from recognizing this man as Jesus. That is, until Jesus calls her by name. Suddenly, Mary's eyes are opened and she finally realizes who she is talking to! She says the Hebrew word for teacher, "Rabboni!" Next comes the puzzling response by Our Lord: "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father." The Greek implies that Mary is already touching Him and she is to desist. The difficulty with this scene is that we cannot understand why Jesus should forbid Mary

Magdalene to touch Him, when a week later He would invite Thomas to probe His wounds! According to Pope St. Leo the Great, an Early Church Father and Doctor of the Church, this line teaches us that we began to know Jesus better from the moment in which He returned to the glories of the Father by His Resurrection and Ascension. He says, "A better instructed faith then began to draw closer to a conception of the Son's equality with the Father without the necessity of contact with the corporeal substance in Christ, whereby He is less than the Father (cf. Jn 14: 18), since, while the nature of the glorified Body still remained, the faith of believers was called upon to touch not with the hand of flesh, but with the spiritual understanding the Only-Begotten, Who is equal with the Father. Hence comes that which the Lord said after His Resurrection, when Mary Magdalene, representing the Church, hastened to approach and touch Him: 'Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father' (Jn 20: 17). That is, I would not have you come to Me as to a human body, nor yet to recognize Me by carnal perceptions: I set for you higher things, I prepare greater things for you: when I have ascended to My Father, then you shall handle Me more perfectly and truly, for you shall grasp what you cannot touch and believe what you cannot see."<sup>1</sup> In other words, those "higher things" would include His Eucharistic Presence where we do touch Him incorporeally (i.e. sacramentally) and yet see Him not. In one of his homilies on the Gospel of John, St. Chrysostom—an important Early Church Father who served as archbishop of Constantinople and considered the most prominent doctor of the Eastern Church—adds yet another layer of meaning. He explains that Mary Magdalene "wished still to converse with [Jesus] as before, and that in her joy she perceived nothing great in Him, although He had become far more excellent in the flesh. To lead her therefore from this idea, and that she might speak to Him with much awe,

*Continued on the back* ➤

## “Due Reverence for the Eucharist” continued from the front...



“At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed”

-Sacrosanctum Concilium. 47.

(for neither with the disciples does He henceforth appear so familiar as before.) He raises her thoughts, that she should give more reverent heed to Him. To have said, ‘Approach Me not as you did before, for matters are not in the same state, nor shall I henceforth be with you in the same way,’ would have been harsh and high-sounding; but the saying, ‘I am not yet ascended to the Father,’ though not painful to hear, was the saying of [Christ] declaring the same thing.”<sup>2</sup> What both SS. Leo and Chrysostom are attempting to show is that, after His Resurrection, Christ permitted the glories and privileges of His divinity, that He willingly put aside during His life before the Resurrection, (cf. Philippians 2:7), to once again be assumed in a similar fashion to what is described during His Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17:1-9). In this way, Jesus was now calling His disciples to understand that, because of His Resurrection, they were to now show Him more reverence. Thomas Aquinas defines reverence as the virtue that inclines a person to show honor and respect for persons who possess some dignity. Consequentially, because the Eucharist is the resurrected body and blood of Christ, this explains why the Church adores Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Adoration is the supreme act of worship due to God alone: “In the Liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the Real Presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord” (CCC, 1378). Cardinal Arinze explains that we can “show reverence by the way we receive Holy Communion, kneeling, standing, on the tongue or in the hand. Even how we dress, how we walk, and how we share in the congregation’s acts of singing, standing, sitting, listening and kneeling can show our faith.”

<sup>1</sup>St. Leo the Great. *Sermo LXXIV*, c.4: *ML 54*, 398-399. <sup>2</sup>St. John Chrysostom. *Homily LXXXVII*.

## Life in the Eucharist: St. Gemma Galgani

St. Gemma Galgani, also known as the Flower of Lucca, was an Italian mystic often referred to as the “Daughter of Passion,” for her intense replication of the Passion of Christ. She was born on March 12, 1878, in a small Italian town near Lucca. Throughout her life, Gemma had many mystical experiences and special graces. These were often misunderstood by others, causing ridicule. Gemma suffered heartaches in reparation, remembering that Our Lord Himself had been

misunderstood and ridiculed. We can learn so much from Gemma, but perhaps the most important thing is her most passionate love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She once said, “Is it possible that there are souls who do not un-



derstand what the Blessed Eucharist is? Who are insensible to the Divine Presence. Jesus is such a sweet and irresistible Lover; how can one fail to love Him with one’s whole heart and soul? How can one not wish to be wholly united in Him, and consumed in the flames of His holy love?” On another occasion she said, “Come, come, Lord, and help me. I do not wish to receive You thus so ill prepared. Make me worthy of You, at least a little less unworthy. By what means? By Your most precious Blood.”

## Adoro te Devote: The Purification of the Sacred Vessels

Every particle of the host and every drop of the Precious Blood, no matter how small, is equally Jesus Christ. That is why, after the distribution of communion is completed, the priest and/or the deacon return to the altar and purify the sacred vessels. The procedure for purifying the vessels is briefly described in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*: “Upon returning to the altar, the priest collects any fragments that may remain. Then, standing at the altar or at the credence table, he purifies the paten or ciborium over the chalice then purifies the chalice, saying quietly ‘Lord, may I receive,’ and dries the chalice with a purificator. If the vessels are purified at the altar, they are carried to the credence table by a minister. Nevertheless, it is also permitted, especially if there are several vessels to be purified, to leave them suitably covered on a corporal, either at the altar or at the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people” (#163).

