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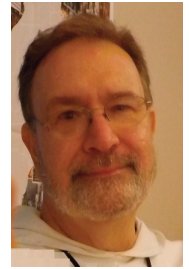
the situation which confronts those outside our bubble of comfort, or even to convince ourselves that the danger and suffering portrayed are imaginary. I was glad to see that +Benedict, newly-enconced in Chicago at the corner of Oakley and Rice, has urged us all to open our hearts to those in need—and not just to those in Ukraine, but also to those in his “new” country on the other side

of the Atlantic. Isolation is fantasy; interdependence is God's reality. Shall we sing along with EWF?

And we will live together, until the twelfth of never

Our voices will ring forever, as one

fr Jim Karepin, OP



The Cup of Salvation

It is with a great deal of respect that the cup in which the Blood of our Lord is held is decorated. Some have pointed out though that the cup of the Last Supper was probably not so ornate. This is probably based more on Indiana Jones than fact. Since our Lord was a simple carpenter the movie suggests that the Cup of the Last Supper was made of wood. Our Lord, though, was a practicing Jew, and for the cups of the Passover meal, porous substances like wood and pottery were forbidden.

It has been suggested that the Upper Room belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who dealt with metals. Since his tomb was going to be one of stone as opposed to a monument, he was probably not wealthy enough to have cups of gold. This is verified, even though he was not in attendance, by St John Chrysostom who wrote in his *Homilies on Matthew* “The table was not of silver, the chalice was not of gold in which Christ gave His blood to His disciples to drink, and yet everything there was precious and truly fit to inspire awe.”

The cup itself must have been large because as legend or tradition has it, the blood of our Lord was collected in the cup itself. Everything concerning this sacred vessel is legend or tradition. The blood was collected either when it poured out when the centurion pierced the side of Jesus as he hung on the cross or when the Body was placed in the tomb.

The cup was considered an important relic and seemingly was kept in Jerusalem. When St Helen came and discovered the True Cross, seemingly the cup was placed in the Church of the Resurrection/Holy Sepulcher. It was venerated there until the seventh century. It also held the sponge that was presented to Christ as He suffered on

the Cross.

Here is where it becomes a mystery novel. Today there are three cups, which are claimed to be the Holy Grail. One is silver with two handles, another is a dish made of green glass (possibly emeralds) and the last is made of agate, a volcanic substance, also with two handles. The Valencia Grail has been dated as having been made between 1 and 50 AD. It sits atop another chalice.

For centuries to follow, chalices may have had handles. These were intended for the distribution of the Sacred Blood to the faithful. They were larger because they were used for special occasions like Easter when many more received. The handles prevented accidents when the communicant put the chalice to their lips. Later, commonly in the West, a straw-like object was used for both the communion of the clergy and laity.

In 1204 when Constantinople was sacked by the Crusaders, many of the treasures of Holy Wisdom and other Churches were brought to Venice and placed in the treasury of St. Mark's. This Church was the private chapel of the Doge (a *duke* not a king). It was only when the political system in Italy changed that it became the Patriarchal Cathedral it is today.

The use of precious metals for chalices goes back to the third century at least. The story of the Saint Deacon Lawrence, in which Pope Sixtus II in 258 was ordered to turn over the riches of the Church entrusted to the deacon. He asked for three days and during that time period he dispersed the goods. Legend has it that the chalice of the Last Supper was brought to Rome by St

Peter and stayed with the Church and Lawrence sent it to Spain where it is known by its location, Valencia.

St Ambrose was able to use the funds from the sale of chalices and other religious goods to redeem captives. He used chalices of glass until they could be replaced. It was during the Pontificate of Adrian I that local Churches determined that precious metals were to be used.

There are numerous chalices found there. The glass chalices up to the 11th century predominate.

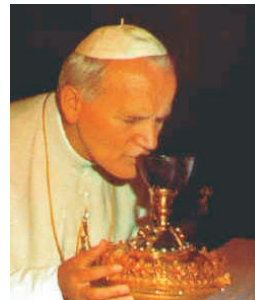
But other chalices of silver were found, especially from smaller churches and churches outside the site. A large collection of twenty-three chalices was found in Syria.

Chalices from Constantinople had large bowls with the diameter of the foot larger than the bowl. Hence even today the bottom is larger than the top—or correctly said, the foot—also known as a flaring base—is wider than the cup and between the two is a small node. Usually Constantinopolitan chalices are decorated with art or words on a band around the top and crosses or other art on the foot, sometimes including the name of the donor.

Antiochian chalices from the sixth century can be seen with ornate scenes: Christ and the Apostles, or our Lord with the lamb and eagle. This would be the forerunner to our contemporary Greek-style chalices with enameled artwork.

In our tradition the Gospel Book is ornately covered, as it contains the Words of our Lord. The chalice, which holds the Real Presence of Christ our God, should be so well-ordained.

Fr Jonathan Morse



Pope St John Paul II venerates the Valencia Chalice.