

# **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

## **Communion Rite**

### **Purification of the Vessels**

When the distribution of Communion is finished, the priest consumes at the altar any consecrated wine that happens to remain. If consecrated hosts remain, he consumes them at the altar or carries them to the tabernacle where the Eucharist is retained. Then standing at the altar, he purifies the ciborium and the chalice, and dries them with the purificator. The vessels are then carried to the credence table by a minister. If there are several vessels to be purified, they may be left, suitably covered, on the credence table to be purified immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people.

The oldest form of purification after Communion is known as "the ablution of the mouth". St. John Chrysostom (345-407) advocated that his priests drink a little water or eat some bread so that none of the sacred species remained in the mouth after Communion. Ordinary wine was used for this purpose, especially in the West. From the seventh century onward there gradually appeared the custom of washing the chalice and the purification of the priest's fingers.

### **Prayer After Communion**

To bring to completion the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the Prayer After Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. The people make the prayer their own by the acclamation, "Amen". A brief period of silence may precede the prayer. The Prayer after Communion first entered the liturgy in the fifth century.