

Matthew 26:26-29

Sec 3. “The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; to pray, & bless the elements of bread & wine, & thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; & to take & break the bread, to take the cup, & (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.”

A. Sec 3 says gospel ministers are to “declare His word of institution to the people” each time the Lord’s Supper is administered.

1. You may have noticed in the OPC, every time you partake of the Lord’s Supper, there is a reading of Scripture at the onset. One such passage is **Mat 26:26f.**
2. These are called words of institution from Christ. The word “instituted” here means founded, established, or inaugurated.
3. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He commanded that it be done in His Church, saying, “**do this in remembrance of Me**” (**Lu 22:19**).

B. In addition to declaring “His word of institution to the people,” the minister is to “bless the elements of bread & wine, & thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use” (sec 3).

1. When a minister prays to God for such a blessing upon the elements, sec 5 tells us that “in substance & nature, they still remain truly & only bread & wine, as they were before.”
2. According to the OPC *Directory for Worship* (III, C.2), “It is not a resacrificing of Christ, but is a remembrance of the once-for-all sacrifice of himself in His death for our sins. Nor is it a mere memorial to Christ’s sacrifice. It is a means of grace by which God feeds us with the crucified, resurrected, exalted Christ. He does so by His Holy Spirit and through faith” (p151).
 - a. When the minister prays for God to bless the bread & wine for holy use; this is the true spiritual blessing he should pray for.
 - b. We do not believe in transubstantiation; however, we should be convinced the bread & wine of the Lord’s Supper is the most precious, magnificent, blessed bread & wine that we partake of in this life. It can truly nourish our souls.

C. Sec 3 goes on to say that the minister is “to take & break the bread, to take the cup, & (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants;”

1. Not much can be said of this statement; it is rather straight-forward.
2. There is an application that is very weighty for the minister. Using the words of the *Directory for Worship* (III,C.3), if he is “not living penitently & seeking to walk in godliness before the Lord,” he shouldn’t “approach the Holy Table of the Lord.”
 - a. Referring to WCF 29, Sec 3, if he cannot in good conscience communicate the sacrament also to himself, he ought not give it to the other communicants in the church either.
 - b. That would require humility for a minister to admit such a matter of sin to a congregation. If you think about it, it would be far better for the sake of the minister!

D. Sec 3 closes by saying, the minister is to give the bread & wine “to none who are not then present in the congregation.”

1. This speaks of the Roman Catholic practice of receiving the sacrament by a priest or a “eucharistic minister.”
 - a. Often these are lay persons & not ministers in the sense that we would recognize.
 - b. I do believe this is a practice motivated by a good, loving desire but not by Scripture.
 - c. There are 2 passages that teach the Lord’s Supper is to be administered in one set location:
 - 1) Turn to Acts 20:7-12
 - 2) Even though Paul included a rebuke regarding the irreverent & selfish manner in which they partook of the Lord’s Supper, 1 Cor 11:20 says how they would “**meet together**” to do so.
2. What should you do about a totally disabled person who is bed-bound & asks for the Lord’s Supper? Is this impossible?
 - a. In seminary, one of my professors gave a very sound solution. The confession says the minister should give the sacrament “to none who are not then present in the congregation.” Why not bring a representative portion of the congregation to their home & have a worship service which includes the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. I would argue that such worship services are not “private masses” as mentioned in sec 4.
 - b. This sounds like a whole lot of trouble to some; however, I hope most of us would find it highly undesirable to refrain from partaking the Lord’s Supper for some 2-3 years in a row.

Sec 4 discourages: “Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people,

- A. This section again discourages giving the sacrament to individuals apart from a congregation.
- B. Mention of “denial of the cup to the people” refers to the Roman Catholic practice of only getting the wafer of bread year after year without the other element.

Sec 4 also says, “worshiping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about, for adoration, & the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.”

- A. We should not bow down to worship the elements. That is not found anywhere in Scripture. That is a logical yet wrong conclusion from doctrine of transubstantiation.
- B. Mention of “reserving them for any pretended religious use” speaks of the use of what the Roman church calls a tabernacle for the eucharist. According to catholic.com, “The tabernacle is a liturgical furnishing used to house the Eucharist outside of Mass. This provides a location where the Eucharist can be kept for the adoration of the faithful and for later use (e.g., distribution to the sick). It also helps prevent the profanation of the Eucharist.”

Conclusion: