

**Objection 1.** It seems that this sacrament ought not to be celebrated in a house and with sacred vessels. For this sacrament is a representation of our Lord's Passion. But Christ did not suffer in a house, but outside the city gate, according to Heb. 1:12: "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate." Therefore, it seems that this sacrament ought not to be celebrated in a house, but rather in the open air.

**Objection 2.** Further, in the celebration of this sacrament the Church ought to imitate the custom of Christ and the apostles. But the house wherein Christ first wrought this sacrament was not consecrated, but merely an ordinary supper-room prepared by the master of the house, as related in Lk. 22:11,12. Moreover, we read (Acts 2:46) that "the apostles were continuing daily with one accord in the temple; and, breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness." Consequently, there is no need for houses, in which this sacrament is celebrated, to be consecrated.

**Objection 3.** Further, nothing that is to no purpose ought to be done in the Church, which is governed by the Holy Ghost. But it seems useless to consecrate a church, or an altar, or such like inanimate things, since they are not capable of receiving grace or spiritual virtue. Therefore it is unbecoming for such consecrations to be performed in the Church.

**Objection 4.** Further, only Divine works ought to be recalled with solemnity, according to Ps. 91:5: "I shall rejoice in the works of Thy hands." Now the consecration of a church or altar, is the work of a man; as is also the consecration of the chalice, and of the ministers, and of other such things. But these latter consecrations are not commemorated in the Church. Therefore neither ought the consecration of a church or of an altar to be commemorated with solemnity.

**Objection 5.** Further, the truth ought to correspond with the figure. But in the Old Testament, which was a figure of the New, the altar was not made of hewn stones: for, it is written (Ex. 20:24): "You shall make an altar of earth unto Me. . . and if thou make an altar of stone unto Me, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones." Again, the altar is commanded to be made of "setimwood," covered "with brass" (Ex. 27:1,2), or "with gold" (Ex. 25). Consequently, it seems unfitting for the Church to make exclusive use of altars made of stone.

**Objection 6.** Further, the chalice with the paten represents Christ's tomb, which was "hewn in a rock," as is narrated in the Gospels. Consequently, the chalice ought to be of stone, and not of gold or of silver or tin.

**Objection 7.** Further, just as gold is the most precious among the materials of the altar vessels, so are cloths of silk the most precious among other cloths. Consequently, since the chalice is of gold, the altar cloths ought to be made of silk and not of linen.

**Objection 8.** Further, the dispensing and ordering

of the sacraments belong to the Church's ministers, just as the ordering of temporal affairs is subject to the ruling of secular princes; hence the Apostle says (1 Cor. 4:1): "Let a man so esteem us as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." But if anything be done against the ordinances of princes it is deemed void. Therefore, if the various items mentioned above are suitably commanded by the Church's prelates, it seems that the body of Christ could not be consecrated unless they be observed; and so it appears to follow that Christ's words are not sufficient of themselves for consecrating this sacrament: which is contrary to the fact. Consequently, it does not seem fitting for such ordinances to be made touching the celebration of this sacrament.

**On the contrary,** The Church's ordinances are Christ's own ordinances; since He said (Mat. 18:20): "Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

**Answer that,** There are two things to be considered regarding the equipment of this sacrament: one of these belongs to the representation of the events connected with our Lord's Passion; while the other is connected with the reverence due to the sacrament, in which Christ is contained verily, and not in figure only.

Hence we consecrate those things which we make use of in this sacrament; both that we may show our reverence for the sacrament, and in order to represent the holiness which is the effect of the Passion of Christ, according to Heb. 13:12: "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood," etc.

**Reply to Objection 1.** This sacrament ought as a rule to be celebrated in a house, whereby the Church is signified, according to 1 Tim. 3:15: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God." Because "outside the Church there is no place for the true sacrifice," as Augustine says (*Liber Sentent. Prosp.* xv). And because the Church was not to be confined within the territories of the Jewish people, but was to be established throughout the whole world, therefore Christ's Passion was not celebrated within the city of the Jews, but in the open country, that so the whole world might serve as a house for Christ's Passion. Nevertheless, as is said in *De Consecr.*, dist. 1, "if a church be not to hand, we permit travelers to celebrate mass in the open air, or in a tent, if there be a consecrated altar-table to hand, and the other requisites belonging to the sacred function."

**Reply to Objection 2.** The house in which this sacrament is celebrated denotes the Church, and is termed a church; and so it is fittingly consecrated, both to represent the holiness which the Church acquired from the Passion, as well as to denote the holiness required of them who have to receive this sacrament. By the altar Christ Himself is signified, of Whom the Apos-

tle says (Heb. 13:15): “Through Him we offer a sacrifice of praise to God.” Hence the consecration of the altar signifies Christ’s holiness, of which it was said (Lk. 1:35): “The Holy one born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Hence we read in De Consecr., dist. 1: “It has seemed pleasing for the altars to be consecrated not merely with the anointing of chrism, but likewise with the priestly blessing.”

And therefore, as a rule, it is not lawful to celebrate this sacrament except in a consecrated house. Hence it is enacted (De Consecr., dist. 1): “Let no priest presume to say mass except in places consecrated by the bishop.” And furthermore because pagans and other unbelievers are not members of the Church, therefore we read (De Consecr., dist. 1): “It is not lawful to bless a church in which the bodies of unbelievers are buried, but if it seem suitable for consecration, then, after removing the corpses and tearing down the walls or beams, let it be rebuilt. If, however, it has been already consecrated, and the faithful lie in it, it is lawful to celebrate mass therein.” Nevertheless in a case of necessity this sacrament can be performed in houses which have not been consecrated, or which have been profaned; but with the bishop’s consent. Hence we read in the same distinction: “We deem that masses are not to be celebrated everywhere, but in places consecrated by the bishop, or where he gives permission.” But not without a portable altar consecrated by the bishop: hence in the same distinction we read: “We permit that, if the churches be devastated or burned, masses may be celebrated in chapels, with a consecrated altar.” For because Christ’s holiness is the fount of all the Church’s holiness, therefore in necessity a consecrated altar suffices for performing this sacrament. And on this account a church is never consecrated without consecrating the altar. Yet sometimes an altar is consecrated apart from the church, with the relics of the saints, “whose lives are hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). Accordingly under the same distinction we read: “It is our pleasure that altars, in which no relics of saints are found enclosed, be thrown down, if possible, by the bishops presiding over such places.”

**Reply to Objection 3.** The church, altar, and other like inanimate things are consecrated, not because they are capable of receiving grace, but because they acquire special spiritual virtue from the consecration, whereby they are rendered fit for the Divine worship, so that man derives devotion therefrom, making him more fitted for Divine functions, unless this be hindered by want of reverence. Hence it is written (2 Macc. 3:38): “There is undoubtedly in that place a certain power of God; for He that hath His dwelling in the heavens is the visitor, and the protector of that place.”

Hence it is that such places are cleansed and exorcised before being consecrated, that the enemy’s power may be driven forth. And for the same reason churches defiled by shedding of blood or seed are reconciled: because some machination of the enemy is apparent on

account of the sin committed there. And for this reason we read in the same distinction: “Wherever you find churches of the Arians, consecrate them as Catholic churches without delay by means of devout prayers and rites.” Hence, too, it is that some say with probability, that by entering a consecrated church one obtains forgiveness of venial sins, just as one does by the sprinkling of holy water; alleging the words of Ps. 84:2,3: “Lord, Thou hast blessed Thy land. . . Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people.” And therefore, in consequence of the virtue acquired by a church’s consecration, the consecration is never repeated. Accordingly we find in the same distinction the following words quoted from the Council of Nicaea: “Churches which have once been consecrated, must not be consecrated again, except they be devastated by fire, or defiled by shedding of blood or of anyone’s seed; because, just as a child once baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, ought not to be baptized again, so neither ought a place, once dedicated to God, to be consecrated again, except owing to the causes mentioned above; provided that the consecrators held faith in the Holy Trinity”: in fact, those outside the Church cannot consecrate. But, as we read in the same distinction: “Churches or altars of doubtful consecration are to be consecrated anew.”

And since they acquire special spiritual virtue from their consecration, we find it laid down in the same distinction that “the beams of a dedicated church ought not to be used for any other purpose, except it be for some other church, or else they are to be burned, or put to the use of brethren in some monastery: but on no account are they to be discarded for works of the laity.” We read there, too, that “the altar covering, chair, candlesticks, and veil, are to be burned when worn out; and their ashes are to be placed in the baptistery, or in the walls, or else cast into the trenches beneath the flagstones, so as not to be defiled by the feet of those that enter.”

**Reply to Objection 4.** Since the consecration of the altar signifies Christ’s holiness, and the consecration of a house the holiness of the entire Church, therefore the consecration of a church or of an altar is more fittingly commemorated. And on this account the solemnity of a church dedication is observed for eight days, in order to signify the happy resurrection of Christ and of the Church’s members. Nor is the consecration of a church or altar man’s doing only, since it has a spiritual virtue. Hence in the same distinction (De Consecr.) it is said: “The solemnities of the dedication of churches are to be solemnly celebrated each year: and that dedications are to be kept up for eight days, you will find in the third book of Kings” (8:66).

**Reply to Objection 5.** As we read in De Consecr., dist. 1, “altars, if not of stone, are not to be consecrated with the anointing of chrism.” And this is in keeping with the signification of this sacrament; both because the altar signifies Christ, for in 1 Cor. 10:3, it is written,

“But the rock was Christ”: and because Christ’s body was laid in a stone sepulchre. This is also in keeping with the use of the sacrament. Because stone is solid, and may be found everywhere. which was not necessary in the old Law, when the altar was made in one place. As to the commandment to make the altar of earth, or of unhewn stones, this was given in order to remove idolatry.

**Reply to Objection 6.** As is laid down in the same distinction, “formerly the priests did not use golden but wooden chalices; but Pope Zephyrinus ordered the mass to be said with glass patens; and subsequently Pope Urban had everything made of silver.” Afterwards it was decided that “the Lord’s chalice with the paten should be made entirely of gold, or of silver or at least of tin. But it is not to be made of brass, or copper, because the action of the wine thereon produces verdigris, and provokes vomiting. But no one is to presume to sing mass with a chalice of wood or of glass,” because as the wood is porous, the consecrated blood would remain in it; while glass is brittle and there might arise danger of breakage; and the same applies to stone. Consequently, out of reverence for the sacrament, it was enacted that the chalice should be made of the aforesaid materials.

**Reply to Objection 7.** Where it could be done without danger, the Church gave order for that thing to be used which more expressively represents Christ’s Passion. But there was not so much danger regarding the

body which is placed on the corporal, as there is with the blood contained in the chalice. And consequently, although the chalice is not made of stone, yet the corporal is made of linen, since Christ’s body was wrapped therein. Hence we read in an Epistle of Pope Silvester, quoted in the same distinction: “By a unanimous decree we command that no one shall presume to celebrate the sacrifice of the altar upon a cloth of silk, or dyed material, but upon linen consecrated by the bishop; as Christ’s body was buried in a clean linen winding-sheet.” Moreover, linen material is becoming, owing to its cleanness, to denote purity of conscience, and, owing to the manifold labor with which it is prepared, to denote Christ’s Passion.

**Reply to Objection 8.** The dispensing of the sacraments belongs to the Church’s ministers; but their consecration is from God Himself. Consequently, the Church’s ministers can make no ordinances regarding the form of the consecration, and the manner of celebrating. And therefore, if the priest pronounces the words of consecration over the proper matter with the intention of consecrating, then, without every one of the things mentioned above—namely, without house, and altar, consecrated chalice and corporal, and the other things instituted by the Church—he consecrates Christ’s body in very truth; yet he is guilty of grave sin, in not following the rite of the Church.