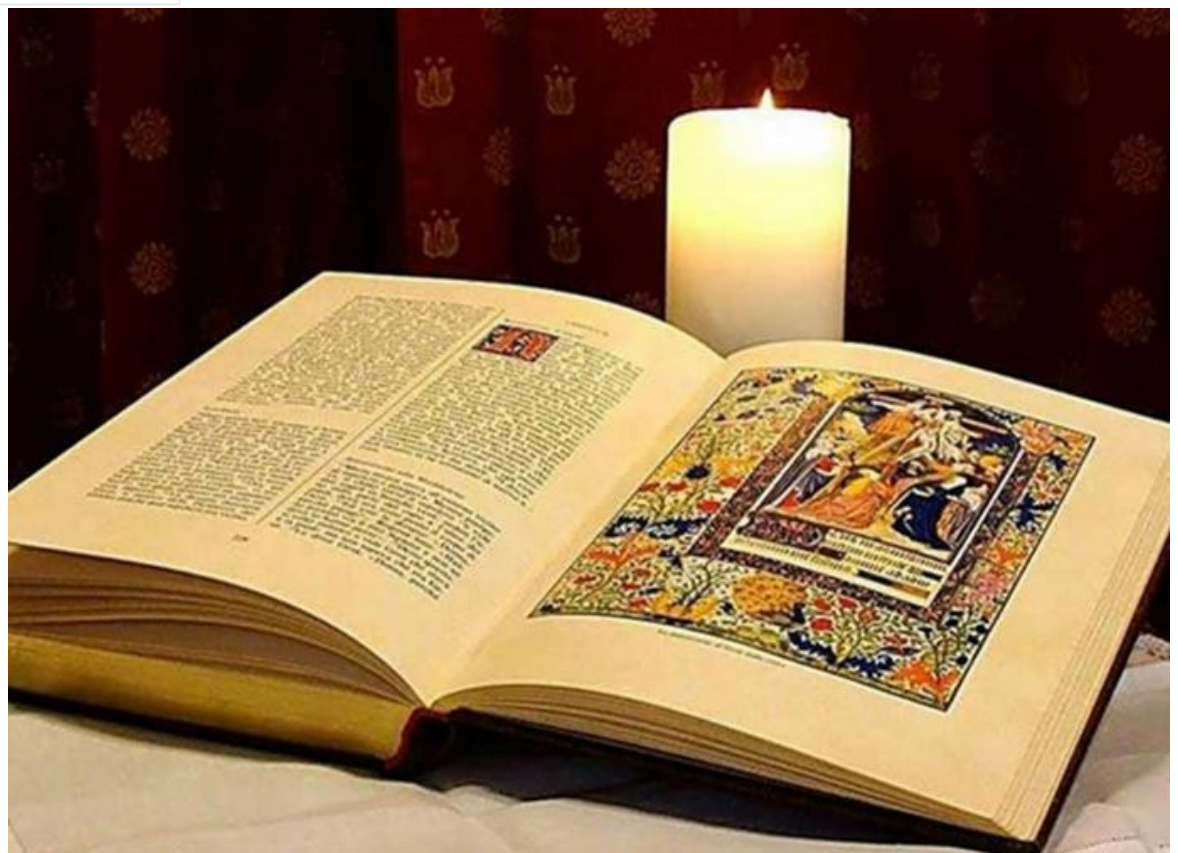


GOSPEL PEARLS

Consecrated hands

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When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had

found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. (Mark 6: 34-44)

Despite not even being necessary, since Almighty Jesus can do anything, Our Lord prefers human collaboration to make us participate in His mission in some way. That is why Jesus has His apostles help Him to materially distribute the miraculously multiplied loaves. The miracle of the Eucharist also requires a sacred minister who lends his voice and hands to Jesus. Following transubstantiation (that this, the substantial transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ), the priest also uses his hands, consecrated with the sacred chrism oil on the day of his ordination, to distribute bread that has come down from heaven. Let us prepare our souls with Confession so that we may approach this important Sacrament in state of grace.