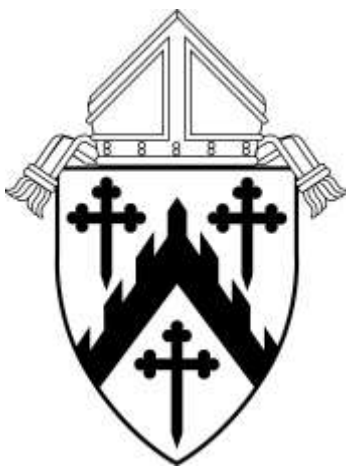


DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT



Resource: Wines for Eucharist

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Very Reverend Kenneth Kuntz
Administrator, Diocese of Davenport

TABLE OF CONTENTS

§IV-246	INTRODUCTION	1
§IV-246.1	IOWA WINES APPROVED FOR LITURGICAL USE	3

§IV-246 RESOURCE: WINES FOR EUCHARIST

Introduction

The question of whether or not it is appropriate to use wine that is not specifically labeled for sacramental use for the Eucharist is often raised, especially as parishes seek to support local agriculture by purchasing Iowa wines for liturgical use as a way to reflect Catholic Social Teaching (e.g., subsidiarity, care for the environment, economic justice).

The requirements for validity and liceity in regards to sacramental wine are spelled out in the GIRM, the CIC, and *Redemptionis sacramentum*. For example, the GIRM states (see also CIC c.924):

322. The wine for the celebration of the Eucharist must be from the fruit of the vine (cf. Lk 22: 18), natural, and unadulterated, that is, without admixture of extraneous substances.

Wine: From the Natural Fermentation of Grapes

By definition, wine is 8-14% alcohol; once you get to 14% alcohol and above it is considered “fortified” wine and not suitable for sacramental use. Otherwise, no specific % alcohol content is required.

Wine for use in the Eucharist must be made from the fermentation of grapes (including raisins), not the fermentation of other fruits or of grains. The resultant wine may be red, rose, blush, or white; but it cannot be “sparkling” (such as champagne).

The fermentation process must be natural; that is, from the action of yeast (wild or commercial) on the grapes themselves. The addition of sugar to speed up the process or increase the alcohol content is not allowed.¹

The use of *mustum* is covered in *Policies Relating to the Eucharist and Those with an Intolerance of Gluten and/or Alcohol* (available on the diocesan website).

Unadulterated: Nothing Added

Canonist John Huels states:

Adding water to the wine in a quantity equal to or greater than that of the wine renders it invalid matter. Adding any other liquids² to the wine renders it invalid if it can no longer be judged to be wine in the common estimation of persons. Likewise, the wine cannot be so sour that, in the common estimation of persons, it would be considered vinegar rather than wine (Huels, 198).

Wines are allowed to pick up extra flavors from being stored in wooden casks, barrels, or new wineskins. Those flavors come naturally as part of the aging process in making the wine.³

The “sulfites” used to preserve the wine are not considered to make the wine illicit or invalid.

¹ A small amount of grape sugar may be added if necessary for proper fermentation. Cane or beet sugar should not be added. The same is true of honey. Wine with such additions would be valid if the resulting product is truly wine, but illicit.

² N.B. Therefore, such beverages as sangria, wine coolers, spritzer, wine cocktail, and the like are invalid matter.

³ But, if the winemaker wanted to give the wine a cherry highlight (for example) and added cherry wine, cherry flavor, or cherry extract to the wine, or cherry juice to the fermentation process, that would be unacceptable. Such a wine cannot be used as sacramental wine, since it would not be 100% grape wine. Watch for “grape wine with natural flavors” or similar notation on the label.

Validity and Liceity

“Validity refers to legal efficacy. An invalid act...is not recognized in canon law as achieving its effects, whether these effects be juridic or spiritual” (Huels, 73). Validity depends on such issues as the identity of the minister and recipient, the “form” (words) used, and the “matter” (materials) used for the sacrament. These are the essentials of a sacrament, and if any are missing then the sacrament does not take place.

“Liceity” refers to whether or not the laws of the Church are being followed. “An act that is valid but illicit is one whose effects have been realized although the agent failed to fulfill one or more requirements of the law or acted contrary to the law in one or more respects” (Huels, 73). The purposeful breaking of laws damages the unity—the communion—of the Church.

Therefore, it is incumbent on pastors to ensure that any wine used in the Diocese of Davenport is both valid and licit.

- The best course of action is to use wine specifically labeled for sacramental use.
- If table wine is used, then due diligence is required. California has stricter labeling laws, so it should be easier to determine if wines from that state are suitable for use at Mass. Contacting the vintner is always recommended.
- The same laws do not apply in Iowa, so greater care must be taken to ensure that they meet canonical requirements. To that end, a list of approved wines (as of 2009) is included in this document.
- This resource does not cover wines from other states or countries. If a community wishes to use such wines, the wine’s provenance and suitability for the liturgy will need to be established.
- Likewise, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission cannot endorse the practice of using “homemade” wine for the liturgy. Issues of taste and appearance, not to mention health and safety, all come into play and may make the wine unsuitable for liturgical use even if the other requirements are met.

Abbreviations used:

CIC	<i>Code of Canon Law (Latin Church)</i>
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i> (third edition, 2002; retranslated 2011)
Huels	<i>Liturgy and Law: Liturgical Law in the System of Roman Catholic Canon Law</i> (John Huels, 2007)

§IV-246.1 Iowa Wines Approved for Liturgical Use

The wineries listed below have determined which of their wines meet the Canonical requirements. They are listed in alphabetical order. Please visit their web sites to find where to buy these wines in your area. This list is current as of July 2009, and was compiled by Jim Carroll of Iowa City. Given that this list is dated, if a parish wishes to use one of these wines, they ought to contact the vintner and ensure that the conditions for liceity and validity are still being met.

BlueStem Winery:

<http://www.bluestemwine.com/>

Dark Side

Red Crescent

Once in a Blue Moon

Jasper Winery:

<http://www.jasperwinery.com>

Norton

Chancellor

Behind the Shed Red

Seyval Blanc

Madison County Winery:

<http://www.madisoncountywinery.com/>

Midnight Rain

Prairie Moon Winery:

<http://prairiemoonwinery.com/>

Bluestem Fume

Seyval Blanc

Halfmoon Red

Marechal Foch

Rosey Acres Winery:

<http://roseyacreswinery.com/>

Rising Sun Red

Runnells Red

Wide River Winery:

<http://www.wideriverwinery.com/>

Felony Red