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FREQUENT COMMUNION

A COURSE
OF
SIX LENTEN SERMONS

BY
REV. ADOLF CHWALA, O.M.I.

NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER



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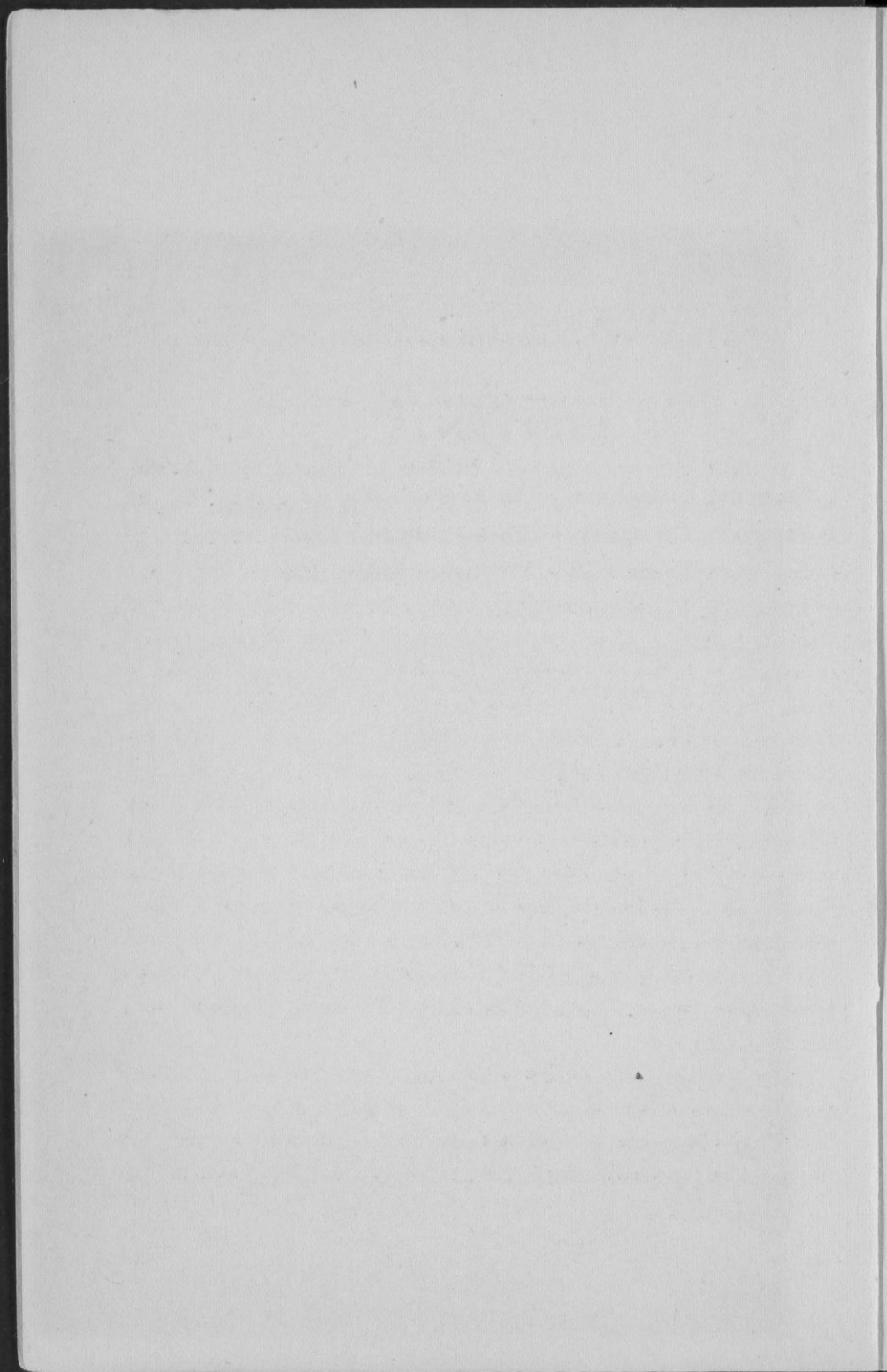
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FREQUENT COMMUNION

I.—FREQUENT COMMUNION—OUR SAVIOUR'S WISH

“Not by bread alone doth man live.”—Matt. iv, 4.

For thirty years our Saviour lived in retirement at Nazareth, until the moment came for Him to enter upon His public life. At the suggestion of the Holy Ghost He withdrew into the desert, in order by prayer and fasting to prepare for His glorious work, and, after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was, as the Evangelist tells us, hungry. Then the tempter assailed Him, urging Him to order stones to become bread. The devil was uncertain what to think about our Lord; not long before, John the Baptist, seeing Him approaching, had exclaimed: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world” (John i, 29), and at His baptism a voice from heaven had proclaimed: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. iii, 17). But now the evil spirit perceived that He, who had been revealed as the Son of God, was hungry, like an ordinary man. Coming to Him, therefore, the tempter said: “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,” and received the reply: “Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.”

Some time elapsed, during which our Lord told His followers much concerning the kingdom of God, although a great deal was unintelligible to them as well as to the Jews, and then one day He uttered some emphatic words that astonished all His hearers. “I

am the bread of life. . . . If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John vi, 48, 52).

It is of this bread, of the most holy Sacrament of the altar, that I wish to speak to you to-day. My purpose is to show you how necessary it is to receive it frequently, that we may live by it.

To-day I intend to explain to you how much our Saviour desires us to receive Him often in this Sacrament, and I will base my argument on two things:—(1) Our Lord's own words; (2) the forms chosen by Christ for this Sacrament.

I.

Near Capharnaum our Lord fed a vast multitude with five loaves, and this miracle filled the Jews with such enthusiasm for Him that they actually wished to make Him their king, and said: "This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world" (John vi, 14). Jesus frustrated their design by withdrawing to a mountain, and when the Jews sought Him out on the following day, He reproached them with doing so merely because they had eaten of the bread and been satisfied, and now desired to witness another miracle. He knew that they had no real love of Him or His doctrines, and said: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. For Him hath God, the Father, sealed." Then the Jews inquired: "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" and Jesus replied: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent" (John vi, 27-29).

This stimulated the curiosity of the Jews, and they asked Him what miracle He would work to enable them to believe. The miracle of the previous day seemed not to have convinced them that Christ was the Messias. Moses, too, had given them bread from

heaven, not once only, but for forty years, and had supplied not only 5,000 persons, but the whole people of the Israelites with food. Christ promised now to give a far more wonderful kind of bread than Moses had given in the Wilderness, bread that would be to them the means of obtaining eternal life. Let us stop to consider this comparison.

We may ask in the first place: Why did our Lord compare the most holy Sacrament of the Altar with the manna given to the Jews in the Wilderness? The point of the comparison lies in the fact that the Holy Eucharist was intended to be the daily food of Christians, just as manna had been the daily food of the Israelites in the desert. Our Saviour did not refer to the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice, since the whole episode, as recorded in the Gospel, gave Him no opportunity for so doing. Nor did He speak of it as a future sacrificial feast, to be eaten once or on rare occasions, for He did not compare it with the miraculous bread given by the angel to Elias, although this bread possessed more wonderful properties than the manna of the Israelites, nor did He refer to the shew bread or loaves of proposition in the Temple, considered so sacred that only the priests might eat it.

No, our Lord spoke of manna, because, like it, the bread that He intended to give, was to be eaten every day. Hence St. Thomas Aquinas says: "In as far as this Sacrament is food, it can be received daily. Thus it is figuratively represented by manna, that was supplied daily to the people in the desert" (S. Th. iii. qu. 80 a. 10. ad. 2). The Roman Catechism, too (p. ii, c. 4. qu. 58), refers to manna when exhorting the faithful to communicate daily.

The wonderful bread promised by our Lord to the Jews, was given us on the eve of His Passion, when He changed the bread in His hands into His sacred Body, and the wine into His most holy

Blood. This was the first transubstantiation, and after it He said: "Do this for a commemoration of me" (Luke xxii, 19). What are we required to do? To change bread and wine into His Body and Blood? Yes, but we ought also to do what was done after this change was effected, and receive this holy food. How often? Our Saviour laid down no rule; He only said that we were to change bread and wine into His holy Body and Blood, and then receive this wonderful food.

Let us see how the early Christians acted in this respect; how often did they communicate? Daily; for we read in Acts (ii, 46): "They continued *daily* . . . in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house," wherever the Sacred Mysteries were celebrated, and "they were persevering . . . in the communication of the breaking of bread" (ii, 42).

Like the Christians in the apostolic age, those living in the immediately succeeding centuries approached the Lord's table daily. We read in the writings of the Fathers that it was the custom in churches of Rome, Africa, Milan and Spain for the faithful to communicate every day. To assist at Holy Mass and to receive Holy Communion were at that time identical. Every church resembled the cenacle, and the example of the Apostles was followed closely. Just as they, at the first Mass, received our Saviour's Body from His own Divine hands, so in the infant Church participation in the Eucharistic feast was inseparable from the liturgical Sacrifice of the New Testament. Thus, for instance, St. Justin, who died about 165 A. D., writes: "After the priest has given thanks and blessed the whole people, those whom we call deacons give each person present some of the consecrated bread, wine and water, and carry the same to the absent. This food is called Eucharist, of which none may partake unless he believe in the truth of our doctrine, and be

washed in the laver for the remission of sins, and live according to Christ's teaching" (Apol i, 65-67).

We can learn more from these words than the fact that in early times the faithful always communicated whenever they were present at Mass; we can see how intensely eager they were for Holy Communion. All their thoughts seemed to centre upon the Blessed Sacrament. The deacons carried it even to the absent, that they too might share in the Eucharistic banquet. The Fathers tell us, moreover, that the faithful used to take the consecrated Bread to their homes, so as to be able daily to receive our Lord's Body, although they lived under circumstances that made it impossible for the holy Sacrifice to be offered every day.

Gradually, however, this ardent zeal for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament disappeared, and people began to communicate less frequently. At first they did so every Sunday, then only a few times in the year, but at once voices were raised in protest, urging all to return to the original custom of the Church, and to communicate frequently or even daily.

Origen, who died in 251 A.D., addresses careless communicants in the following words: "You tell me that you come to church only on feast days;—are not the other days festivals, too? Are they not also days belonging to the Lord? Among the Jews it is the practice to observe only a few days as festivals . . . but Christians receive the flesh of the Incarnate Word of God every day. . . . You, too, are invited daily to come to the waters of God's word, and to draw of His fountain, as did Rebecca of old" (in Genes. Hom. x, 3).

In spite of protests, negligence in receiving Holy Communion steadily increased, until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 was forced to order all, under pain of mortal sin and exclusion from

Christian burial, to communicate at least once in the year, and that at Easter.

No one, however, ought to suppose that he is acting in accordance with the spirit of the Church if he goes to the Sacraments only once a year. One Communion at Easter is the minimum required by the Church of the most lukewarm and indifferent of her children, but her desire is for everyone to communicate often. The Council of Trent declared it to be the express wish of the Church that all assisting at Mass should approach the Lord's table. Now the Church strictly obliges us to hear Mass every Sunday, therefore she wishes us to receive Holy Communion at least on that day. The Roman catechism impresses upon all priests the duty of admonishing the faithful to receive this holy Sacrament still more often, and adds (p. ii, c. 4, v. 58): "Just as men deem it necessary to supply their bodies with food every day, so they ought to take care to nourish and feed their souls, since obviously the soul has no less need of spiritual than the body of material nourishment." The Church, therefore, most earnestly desires us to communicate daily if possible.

The rulers of the Church are unwearied in admonishing and encouraging us all to go frequently to Communion. I need refer only to two recent instances. In 1902 Leo XIII. addressed an encyclical to the bishops of the whole world, dealing particularly with the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, and begging them to do their utmost to revive the practice of frequent Communion. The late Holy Father Pius X., on December 20th, 1905, issued a decree urging all the faithful to go to Holy Communion daily, provided that they are in a state of grace and approach the altar with a right and pious intention.

Those, therefore, possess very little of the spirit of the Church

who go to Holy Communion only once or twice in the year. They can hardly claim to be good, loyal children of the Church, if they do the minimum that she requires, and do it, moreover, under threats of grievous sin and punishment. How far are they from complying with our Lord's command: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting." "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life" (John vi, 27, 57).

II.

The forms of the Sacrament also serve to encourage us to communicate frequently. Man naturally rises to a knowledge of spiritual things through his sense-perceptions. As St. Thomas Aquinas says (S. Th. iii, qu. 60, a. 4): "The holy things signified by the Sacraments being spiritual and comprehensible only to the understanding, it follows that the signification of the Sacraments is represented by things perceptible to the senses." Hence we have, in the case of the Sacraments, outward signs or forms suggestive of the graces conferred through the Sacraments. For instance, the use of water in Baptism represents the purification of the soul from original sin and even from actual sin. The most holy Sacrament of the Altar is given us under the form of food, in order that we may perceive it to be really nourishment. Now these outward forms show us unmistakably our Saviour's desire that we should receive Holy Communion often, or even daily.

What is food? Certainly nothing unusual, for we take it every day. It is something quite ordinary, quite indispensable. We must eat if we are to live. We can do without many things,—kinsfolk, home, property and even health, but we cannot live without food; it is absolutely necessary to our existence. Now when our

Lord said: "My flesh is meat indeed" (John vi, 56), He was referring to a means of grace as necessary and as indispensable as bodily food. My sacred Body, He said, is indeed (*i. e.*, not figuratively) meat, and therefore you ought to receive it daily as your food, not only once or twice in the course of the year.

St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "The Holy Eucharist is spiritual food, and just as bodily food is eaten daily, so is it praiseworthy to receive this Sacrament daily" (S. Th., p. iii, qu. 80, a. 10, ad. 1).

There are some kinds of material food that are not eaten every day by everybody. A poor man has common fare and a rich man partakes of choice and dainty dishes. Now if our Lord had left it to man to determine the kind of food to be used in the Sacrament of the Altar, the dignity of this Sacrament would probably have led him to choose something very costly. But our Saviour desired the faithful to receive His Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine. Does not this show that He wishes us to receive Him often in Holy Communion? Bread is found on every table; it is the staple food of the poor, and the rich eat it with other things. It is eaten by young and old, by the sick and the healthy. Other kinds of food may vary, but bread is always the same, yet no one dislikes it or grows weary of it. In the same way we ought always to relish our supernatural bread and receive it often, if not daily. Such seems to have been our Lord's intention when He ordered bread to be the outward form of this Sacrament.

In the "Our Father," Christ taught us to say: "Give us this day our daily bread," and almost all the Fathers of the Church understand these words to refer to Holy Communion. St. Augustine, addressing the catechumens, says (Serm. 57, 7): "The faithful possess a spiritual food, that you too will possess and receive at God's altar. It will be your daily bread, indispensable in this life."

If we carefully consider the various petitions in the "Our Father," we shall see that we can hardly avoid understanding "our daily bread" as a reference to Holy Communion. We begin the prayer with the words: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come." That is to say, we pray that God's name may everywhere be sanctified and held in honor, and that His grace and love may rule in the hearts of all men. But how is this to be accomplished? "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." May everything be done that God desires and as He desires it. This, however, is too hard for frail, sinful man, whose self-will and self-love rebel against all self-denial, all bearing of the Cross, and so Christ reveals to us a means whereby it will become easier for us to serve God,—viz., Holy Communion. "Give us this day our daily bread."

We ought to go often to Communion. "I would gladly do so," some one will say, "if only I had time." My answer is, first, your excuse is a bad one; you have no time, because you do not wish to have time. Whoever has the good will, finds time for Holy Communion. I wish, however, to remark at once that I am far from wishing to urge anyone to go to Holy Communion, if thereby he would be obliged to neglect the duties of his calling and position in life; but, at the same time, I should like to point out that anyone who divides his time properly and makes a conscientious use of it, will always find that he can go to Holy Communion. It does not occupy much time! We waste hours in idle conversations, in eating and drinking; we even find time unhappily for sin; have we none at all for God? What we lack is not time, but good will. Anyone who is in the habit of going to Mass on week days can make his preparation during Mass, and need spend only a quarter of an hour in thanksgiving, and even this quarter of an hour is not time

wasted from his work, for it is a matter of common experience that we work better and with greater industry after going to Holy Communion. If, however, a person is able to hear Mass only on Sunday, it surely is not too much for him to devote a quarter of an hour on Saturday evening to examining his conscience and making acts of contrition, and on Sunday morning to spend another quarter of an hour in going to confession.

You say you have no time. I reply, secondly, that you ought to make time, just as you do for your meals. Your soul has to live, as well as your body, and will you do all that is necessary for the latter, and nothing at all for the former? Which is more important,—what is earthly or what is eternal?—the body that will soon crumble into dust, or the soul, that will live forever? What then is our chief business here on earth,—to serve the world or to secure the salvation of our souls? The fact that all day long we are busy about worldly affairs should be the precise reason why we ought to make time to go often to Holy Communion. We are in danger of altogether losing sight of what tends to the welfare of our souls, and consequently we run the risk of perishing eternally.

Possibly you refrain from going to Holy Communion because you fancy it necessary, both before and after Communion, to repeat in church a great number of prayers printed in your prayer-book and to make many acts of virtue. You may really not have time for all this, and so I answer, thirdly, that what you suppose necessary is no reason for staying away from the Sacrament. Of course we receive more grace in Holy Communion if we cooperate with it; but what does this involve? The least thing done with reference to Holy Communion, simply a pure desire to receive it, is enough to cause the Sacrament to take effect in your soul, and to preserve and increase sanctifying grace.

You will in any case act more prudently if, being in the state of grace, you communicate with a good intention, than if you neglect to do so because you have no time to say long prayers in church before and after Communion.

If you think about it, you will see that, by staying away, you lose a two-fold grace; first that which you might have merited by ever so short a preparation and thanksgiving, and, secondly, the eucharistic grace conferred in Holy Communion. Go, therefore, often to the Sacrament, even if you have very little time at your disposal, and believe that Christ will reward your desire for the Bread of heaven, by giving you graces in ever-increasing abundance.

Finally, consider whether it is not possible for you to begin your preparation at home, if you really have no time to make it in church. There is no law requiring it to be made there. Have you ever been told that your preparation must invariably consist of vocal prayers? You need only remain recollected on your Communion morning, offering up your ordinary work to our Lord, and, on your way to church, uttering short ejaculations, and I can assure you that you will have made an excellent and adequate preparation. If your circumstances do not allow you to stay long in the church after receiving Holy Communion, to thank our dear Saviour for His kindness in coming to you, then be content to lay your petitions very briefly before Him, and to offer up your daily work in thanksgiving. During the day lift up your heart often to God, and offer Him little acts of self-denial, and our Lord will be quite satisfied with this thanksgiving. You should never, however, intentionally and without good reason omit or shorten your preparation and thanksgiving, or make them deliberately in a bad and careless manner.

The excuse therefore of having no time for Holy Communion is often worthless. Do not grudge the time that it takes you; even if it costs you some trouble and sacrifice, is Holy Communion not worth it? Cannot our Saviour compensate you a thousandfold for the time devoted to Him? Remember our Lord's words: "Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God"; and also, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John vi, 52). Amen.

II.—FREQUENT COMMUNION—A SOURCE OF GREAT GRACES

"Lord, it is good for us to be here."—Matt. xvii, 4.

Our Saviour had foretold His sufferings and death to the Apostles, and had said that they must follow on the same path, if they wished really to be His disciples. "Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv, 27).

Knowing, however, their want of steadfastness, which was the outcome of the weakness of their faith, He wished to bind them more closely to Himself, and so He led them up Mount Tabor in order to reveal Himself to them as being indeed the Son of the Father in heaven. "He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. . . . And, lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii, 2, 5). The sight of our Saviour in glory filled St. Peter with such intense joy that, scarcely knowing what he was doing, he cried: "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

Our Lord's transfiguration is a symbol of the transfiguration of our souls in Holy Communion, when wonderful things take place within them, and they are, as it were, transformed into God.

St. Augustine once heard the voice of God speaking within him and saying: "I am the food of the strong; grow, and thou shalt partake of Me; but thou wilt not transform Me into thyself, as is the case with ordinary food, but thou wilt be transformed into Me" (Conf. iv, c. 18). We may apply to the soul at the moment of Holy Communion the words addressed by St. Paul to the Philip-
pians (iii, 21): "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory." The soul is then most closely united to the Divinity and the glorious humanity of our Redeemer, and shares here on earth in the glory of the God-Man. This thought should encourage us to communicate frequently. Therefore, let us consider to-day:

1. The wonderful effects of frequent Communion.
2. The inadequacy of the excuse made by some people that they communicate seldom because of their unworthiness.

I.

When our Saviour was speaking of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, He said: "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (John vi, 52). The life afforded to the world by this bread is not temporal but eternal and spiritual, it is in fact grace, which proceeds from Christ's merits in effecting our redemption. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i, 17). How abundant is this grace! It was poured out even in Paradise to reconcile fallen man with God; it permeated the ancient world, maintaining in mankind faith in the true God; it inundated the Chosen People, preparing them for their Redeemer's coming; but never was it given so lavishly as after the first Good Friday, when our Lord had died on the Cross. Grace overthrew the force of paganism and brought new life into the world, recalling millions to God and leading them to the greatest sanctity. Who can enu-

merate the works of mercy that owe their origin to grace? Who can assign limits to the boundless ocean of grace? It makes itself felt in prisons as well as in monastic cells; it overwhelms a sinner on the very scene of his transgression, and stimulates the just to greater perfection; it penetrates to the garrets of the poor as well as to the mansions of the wealthy. All this grace came by Jesus Christ; He is the source whence it flows. Consider this fact attentively, for it will help you to realize the supreme importance of Holy Communion.

“God at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers through the prophets” (Heb. i, 1), and we may say the same of the grace by means of which He speaks to the hearts of men. Grace comes to us in divers manners, but what is any other grace in comparison with that of Holy Communion? In it we receive Jesus Christ Himself, not a share of His grace, but our Redeemer, with all the wealth of His merits accumulated from the first moment of His life on earth to His last breath drawn upon the Cross; it is He who saves and sanctifies mankind. We may compare this wonderful Sacrament with the sun, whilst all the other graces bestowed upon men since the creation are but rays of this sun; or we may say that Holy Communion is like an ever-flowing stream, and all other graces, even the other Sacraments, resemble drops of water from this stream.

How great is this Sacrament in itself! But how marvellous a thing is its reception! Our Saviour called the Holy Eucharist food: “My flesh is meat indeed” (John vi, 56). All food becomes part of the person consuming it, and hence with reference to the bread of heaven He said: “He that eateth My flesh . . . abideth in Me and I in him” (*ibid.* v. 57). In Holy Communion man is united in the most intimate manner conceivable with the God-Man,

as intimately as with the food that he eats, yet with this difference, as St. Augustine says, that we do not assimilate the food, but it assimilates us, and makes us like God, as is stated also in the Roman Catechism (P. ii, c. 4, qu. 46). It is impossible to understand such a union, or to describe the dignity of a man who is rendered, we may say, almost divine in consequence of Holy Communion.

On Holy Saturday when, in token of our Lord's resurrection and of the reunion of His body with His sacred soul, the Paschal candle is lighted, the Church exclaims: "O truly blessed night . . . in which heavenly things are united to those of earth, and things Divine to those which are human." These words are applicable also to a soul at the moment of Holy Communion. God is united with man, eternity with time, infinite sanctity with pitiable frailty—what a marvellous union!

Why does Jesus Christ come to us? Not for His own sake, but for ours. He comes primarily to maintain in us sanctifying grace, which is the life of the soul. Just as bodily food supports our natural life, so Holy Communion, being a spiritual food, sustains our supernatural life. Hence when the priest gives us the consecrated Host, he says: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto everlasting life."

The reception of Holy Communion assumes that life is present; it does not give, but preserves life. Christ said: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same shall also live by Me" (*ibid.* v. 58). Our Lord's meaning is this: As I am one with the Father, and live by His life, so the man who is united with My divinity and humanity in Holy Communion is one with Me, and lives by My life. How indispensable, therefore, is Holy Communion if we are to preserve the

life of the soul! Our Lord told us this most emphatically, saying: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (*ibid.* v. 54).

Surely we ought to be anxious to go to the Lord's table, in order not to lose life everlasting. This is the greatest loss possible, for the smallest degree of sanctifying grace is worth more than anything that the world can offer. A stroke of good luck delights us all, and a man is delighted if he suddenly becomes rich; he thinks himself exceedingly fortunate, and takes all sorts of precautions to avoid being robbed of his money and reduced to the same state of poverty as before. But what is the greatest earthly happiness in comparison with that of possessing sanctifying grace, and eternal life in God? Should we not often receive Holy Communion, in order to preserve this happiness and to live forever in God?

Holy Communion does not, however, merely sustain the life of the soul, but nourishes and increases it. In the Roman Catechism we read: "Just as the body is not only supported by means of natural food, but increases in strength, so the food of the Holy Eucharist does not only sustain the soul but adds to its powers (p. ii, c. 4, qu. 49).

It could not possibly be otherwise. The prophet Isaias referred to this food, when he said: "The Lord of Hosts shall make unto all the people in this mountain (*i. e.*, in the Messianic Kingdom) a feast of fat things, . . . of fat things full of marrow" (Is. xxv, 6). What vigor must it afford to those partaking of it! The other Sacraments give or augment sanctifying grace for some definite end, attaching to it some special or sacramental grace, thus Baptism gives grace to lead a Christian life, and Confirmation courage and strength boldly to confess the faith. But Holy Communion is

intended to preserve and increase within us grace for every purpose for which grace is bestowed, and together with sanctifying grace it preserves and increases all the graces that have their origin in that grace. No flowers can flourish in a bad soil; no physical faculties can attain their full development in an unhealthy body, and the same may be said of the soul. It cannot preserve its spiritual vigor without frequent Communion, and by means of Holy Communion this vigor is supplied to the other sacramental graces and virtues. We possess, therefore, no better means of preserving and strengthening the grace of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Matrimony than the frequent reception of Holy Communion, for this Sacrament both preserves and increases life.

This is not all, however. By communicating frequently we not only preserve and increase sanctifying grace and the various sacramental graces, but we strengthen also the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are bestowed upon the soul together with sanctifying grace. Hence Pope Innocent III. says: "By means of this Sacrament all virtues are strengthened" (*de myst. altaris* 4, 44). So whoever communicates often, by increasing the theological virtues, enters into closer union with God, and by strengthening the moral virtues regulates better his whole attitude towards God, his neighbor and himself, whilst by rendering the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost more abundant, he makes his understanding and will more accessible to the inspirations and prompting of the same Spirit.

This partially explains another effect of Holy Communion, viz., that an increase of sanctifying grace and of the graces, virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost connected with it, produces a diminution of the low and sensual appetites in man, and of the domination and influence of the body, for "as the Sacrament inflames

our minds more and more with the fire of love, it must inevitably allay the heat of evil desires" (Cat. Rom. II., c. 4, qu. 51). St. Augustine puts it very shortly thus: "The nourishment of love is the diminution of desire" (*de quaest.* 83, qu. 36, a. 1). Hence all spiritual directors advise those to communicate often who are tempted to break the sixth commandment, for "they go forth from the Lord's table like lions breathing out fire, a source of alarm even to the devil" (*St. John Chrysostom. hom. 46 in Joan. n. 3*). Holy Communion is the daily remedy for our sinful nature, and, as the Council of Trent stated: "It frees us from our frequent venial sins and preserves us from mortal sin." Both the inward and outward enemies of our salvation are conquered or at least repelled by it, but one who goes seldom to Holy Communion need feel no surprise if he falls into many sins.

Christ assures you that by receiving His holy Body, you abide in Him and He in you; He tells you that He is the bread that cometh down from heaven, in order that whosoever eateth of it may not die, *i. e.*, may not die the spiritual death through mortal sin; will you not believe His words? You have no excuse if temptation causes you to plunge into one sin after another, nor if you feel too weak to serve our dear Lord with an upright heart. You should ascribe all your misery and frailty to your neglect of Holy Communion. You are a man who refuses to take advice; a sick person, who, though anxious to recover health, will not employ the remedy that he knows would soon put an end to his wretched condition. Do not try to lay the blame on the devil, the world and your own evil nature, if you perceive yourself to be so full of sins and imperfections. It is your own fault if you wilfully continue in your sins, and reject stubbornly the remedy that alone could restore health to your soul.

II.

I have said enough to show how futile an excuse for neglect of Holy Communion it is to say, as some people do, "We should often go to Holy Communion, if only we were worthy."

We must never forget that, like all the other Sacraments, Holy Communion is not a reward for virtue, nor designed exclusively for the good, but it is a means of perfection. A sinner should receive it in order to be strengthened to resist evil, that he may go forward valiantly on the right path, and not sink down exhausted by the wayside. How foolish it is to say: "I should communicate often, but I feel myself not quite worthy to do so." Do you suppose that any creature ever could be truly worthy to receive God in Holy Communion?

Imagine for a moment that Holy Communion had been instituted by God only as our viaticum, to be our preparation for the approaching union of our soul with Him in the next life. Do you think one of the saints, such as St. Francis of Sales, St. Charles Borromeo or St. Francis Xavier would have been worthy to receive Holy Communion on his death bed? No, indeed, no one would ever have been worthy to receive it, not even if he had lived as long as Mathusala in the innocence of St. Aloysius, the penance of St. Augustine or the zeal of St. Paul in the service of God.

If any one aimed at being really worthy to receive God in this holy Sacrament, he would have to equal God in sanctity. The difference between Creator and creature is so vast that the collective sanctity of all the saints in heaven and on earth would never suffice to make a soul really worthy to receive Holy Communion; and as no one can possibly offer this to God, He does not require it of us.

What do you mean by saying that you are not worthy? Are

you in a state of mortal sin? If so, I should certainly be the very last person to advise you even to make in this state your Easter Communion, not to speak of communicating frequently. If this is what makes you unworthy, you can and ought to get rid of this burden at once, and then the obstacle will be removed, and frequent Communion will be the best means of avoiding this unworthiness in future.

But perhaps you mean that you are full of faults, slow to do right, and careless in performing your various duties. If this is the case, your excuse is worthless; and unless you go often to Holy Communion, your plea will serve only to secure your condemnation. As demonstrated in our previous sermon, Holy Communion is intended to be our daily bread, of which we partake as a remedy against our daily failings. One of the Fathers of the Church says: "If whenever the Blood of Christ is shed, it is shed for the remission of sins, I should always receive it, because I am always sinning and in need of a remedy" (Ps. Ambrose. 4 de sacr. 6).

If you know that you are weak, why do you go so seldom to Holy Communion? The more you stay away, the fewer graces will you receive, and so you will grow still weaker and still more unworthy to receive this holy Sacrament. Why do you feel worthy to communicate at Easter or any other festival? Is it because it happens to be Easter or Christmas? No, it is because you have been to Confession and believe yourself to be in a state of grace. That is quite right; whenever you make a good Confession, you are fit to go to Holy Communion, and, strictly speaking, it is not necessary, though it is certainly desirable, to go to Confession, provided that you have no grievous sins upon your conscience.

Every time we go to Holy Communion we gain strength to do right, and become more pleasing to God; therefore, any one con-

scious of his own unworthiness, should make himself worthier by communicating frequently. The longer he stays away, the more unworthy he becomes. You yourself can bear witness to this truth. How have you lived after a truly good Confession and Communion? Have you not been careful to do right and to serve God? Do you not see that God's grace was influencing your soul? You avoided immediate occasions of sin; you boldly withstood violent temptations, and even began to practise certain virtues and to correct certain faults. Was not all this due to the grace of Holy Communion? And if in time you grew lukewarm in God's service, voluntarily giving way to little sins, until at last you again offended God grievously, was this not the result of your communicating so seldom? Is it not necessary for you to receive the Holy Eucharist more often, if you were to persevere in your good resolutions?

Our Saviour said: "My flesh is meat indeed." We have to take food frequently in order to restore the bodily strength consumed in the process of life. The strength of your soul, too, is exhausted in the struggle for eternal life, and will you not go to Holy Communion to secure the preservation of the sanctifying grace that you possess? Has not Christ told you that He is the food of your soul? Is it not unreasonable to suppose that by waiting you will become more worthy to receive the Lord's Body? To make your unworthiness an excuse for putting off Holy Communion is as foolish as it would be to reject all food, and yet desire to live. It is as senseless as it would be for a person in a high fever to say: "I will send for the doctor when I am well again." Gerson says that whoever acts in this way is like a man suffering from cold, who waits until he is warm before going near to the fire.

If you are conscious of being weak, go often to Holy Communion, remembering our Lord's words: "He that eateth Me, the same also

shall live by Me." If you want to be worthy to communicate often receive the Body of Christ more frequently. The greater the danger that you are in of losing sanctifying grace, the more urgent is your need of frequent Communion. If any one of you is keenly desirous of being freed from small defects and of living a life of true virtue, he should miss no opportunity of strengthening his soul with the graces of the Holy Eucharist; so let him approach the Lord's table daily, if he can possibly do so. No one who really is careful about saving his soul will stay away from Holy Communion, and when any one receives this Sacrament very seldom, he has only himself to blame, if his soul is weak and sickly, or even dead in sins.

The Church has made it very easy to go to Holy Communion. In the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, dated December 20th, 1905, Pius X. declares that the daily reception of Holy Communion is to be permitted to all who are in the state of grace and approach the Sacrament with the intention of pleasing God and of growing in virtue. You see that the Holy Father lays down no particular standard of perfection; we are required simply to be in the state of grace and to have the will to aim at perfection and to attain to closer union with Christ by means of Holy Communion. The Church, therefore, makes it an easy matter for us to communicate frequently, and she is quite right in so doing. When a man is in the state of grace, he is a child of God, and entitled as such to associate with His Father and welcome Him daily. Who could forbid a child to do this? What do we mean by aiming at perfection? A man aims at it who is firmly resolved to suffer anything, even a painful death, rather than offend God by grievous sin, though it were only a sin of thought. Must not such a soul be worthy to receive God every day?

The excuse of not being worthy to go often to Holy Communion

is, therefore, absolutely invalid, as the Church has made it so easy to communicate worthily every day, If, in spite of this facility, you approach the Sacrament very seldom, you show that you either despise it or dislike it, as the Israelites disliked the manna in the wilderness, or else that you are so much attached to your sins as to refuse to be worthy to receive it.

Let us, therefore, go often to Holy Communion, to this abundant source of all graces, just because we are weak and prone to fall. Let us not follow the example of St. Peter when, after the miraculous draught of fishes, he exclaimed: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v, 8).

Gerson (*in canī. Magnif.*) writes: "O great Prince of the Apostles, what do these words signify? If thou art indeed a sinful man, thou canst not beg Christ to depart from thee, but thou shouldst remain close to Him, that He may purify thy soul from sin."

Let us then go often to Holy Communion, for to us the altar is, as it were, Mount Thabor, where our souls may be transfigured, and we too shall realize that it is in very truth "good for us to be here." Amen.

FREQUENT COMMUNION

III. FREQUENT COMMUNION—A PLEDGE OF ETERNAL LIFE

“When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth.”—Luke xi, 21.

Having cured the dumb man possessed by a devil, our Saviour gave the following vivid account of the proceedings of an evil spirit that had gone out of a man: “He walketh through places without water, seeking rest, and, not finding, he saith: ‘I will return into my house whence I came out.’ And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first” (Luke xi, 24-26).

Why was this whole company of evil spirits able to enter the man’s soul? Because they found the house, *i. e.*, the soul, unoccupied, without a master, and consequently unprotected.

Every man, as long as he is in this world, is liable to suffer thus, but one who seldom receives Holy Communion is peculiarly exposed to this danger. If by means of a good Confession and Communion he succeeds in driving the evil one out of his soul, his enemy will return and assail him more violently than ever, and as the soul, undefended by frequent Communion, grows weaker and weaker, it is soon again at the mercy of the devil, and “the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

It is otherwise with one who often receives his Lord in Holy Communion. He resembles the strong man armed against the foe,

and all his possessions are safe, especially sanctifying grace, which constitutes his claim to heaven.

Let us consider to-day two important points:

1. That frequent Communion makes our eternal salvation doubly sure.
2. That those who communicate seldom are in great danger of being lost for ever.

I.

Frequent Communion is the way to heaven, the home that we all desire to reach. But let us not forget our Saviour's words: "How narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it" (Matth. vii, 14). We all feel anxious when we look forward to eternity, for we all have to fight a hard battle before we can obtain the crown of victory. Now, this battle is against three powerful enemies: the world, that is seated in wickedness (I. John v, 19); the flesh, that lusteth against the spirit (Gal. v, 17); and the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning (John viii, 44). But why should we fear? Our Lord has said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. . . . He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (John vi, 57, 59). How can we be afraid if God is with us? The powers of evil may indeed be mighty, but they are never so strong as the grace of Holy Communion.

The prophet Elias fled into the wilderness to avoid the cruelty of Queen Jezebel, who was seeking his life. On his way he felt weary and hungry, and found no refreshment in the desert. So he lay down under a juniper-tree and longed to die. At last he fell into the sleep of exhaustion and slept until an angel touched him, saying: "Arise, eat; for thou hast yet a great way to go" (III. Kings xix, 7). Rising up, he saw bread and water, and having

eaten and drunk, he walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb. We have here a type of Holy Communion. On our way to heaven we are constantly harassed by evil spirits, anxious to destroy the life, not of our bodies, but of our souls. The road often seems rough and tedious, and we should like to rest and to abandon the flight from sin and the effort to do right. But the Church supplies us with miraculous food in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, and says to us, as the angel said to Elias: "Arise, eat, for thou hast yet a great way to go. This is the Bread of Life, and he that eateth thereof shall never die." If, therefore, we persevere in receiving Holy Communion well and frequently, no one will be able to exclude us from heaven.

St. Thomas Aquinas (S. Th. iii, qu. 65, a. 1) explains this very clearly by means of a comparison between the natural and spiritual life of man. He says: With regard to the natural life we must consider a man both as an individual and as a member of the human race—as an individual, inasmuch as he is independent; as a member of the human race, inasmuch as he belongs to it as a whole. Now, as an individual, a man must first be born, then he must grow and develop until he attains his proper size and strength, and in order to do this he requires food.

Something analogous takes place also in the spiritual life. At our Baptism this life is given us, viz., sanctifying grace, which makes us children of God. At Confirmation a man receives a sort of completion of the spirit, and becomes, so to say, a full-grown Christian. But in order that he may continue to live, the most holy Sacrament of the Altar is supplied him as food for his soul. "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shalt not have life in you" (John vi, 54). We need this food often. Material food gives a man strength and endurance only for a time, and

the same is the case with Holy Communion. Whoever therefore desires to remain alive must often take food, and whoever wishes to continue in God's grace and not to break down in the struggle to persevere must communicate frequently. It is only in this way that Holy Communion is to men refreshment on the road to heaven.

There is, however, another, somewhat indirect manner, in which frequent Communion gives us everlasting life. The road to heaven is steep and narrow, and encompassed with many dangers; but, as we have seen, frequent Communion affords us strength and courage to persevere along this road to the end. It is often hard to find and easy to lose the right path. Sometimes it leads through thickets, sometimes through gloomy forests; it is not well trodden, and in many places is overgrown with grass. Here and there we may see some one in front of us, but we often lose sight of him, and then we have to be cautious and stop now and then to look about and make sure that we are on the right road. If we see that we have strayed from it, we must at once retrace our steps, lest we lose it altogether. Everyone who wants to be safe must often halt on the way to heaven, and either look for himself or inquire of others whether he is going right. Now each of our Communions is a halt of this kind; each is a light showing us the way to our Father's home in heaven. In Holy Communion we receive Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the light of mankind. St. Augustine remarks very aptly: "Just as the Jews were plunged into darkness through Christ crucified, so are we enlightened by receiving Him crucified as food—*manducando crucifixum et libendo illuminamur*" (Hom. 45 in Joan. n. 14).

Holy Communion, by increasing our knowledge and weakening our passions, strengthens our will, and in this way imparts energy to us on our way to heaven. St. Ambrose says (*de viduis* 10, n. 60)

that just as our Saviour once cured St. Peter's mother-in-law, so in the Holy Eucharist He will diminish in us the lusts of the flesh. He has triumphed over sin, death and hell. He will help you to control your undisciplined desires and to weaken their hold upon you, so that you may not yield to them; He will show you how to overcome all the enemies that lie in wait for you. St. Cyril of Alexandria rightly says that a man who is careless about the reception of Holy Communion and refrains from it by his own fault under the pretext of feeling deep reverence for the Holy Eucharist, will not enjoy life everlasting, because, by neglecting this mystical union with Christ, he refuses to allow himself to receive life (in Joan. vi, 35).

Frequent Communion necessitates frequent Confession, and each Confession is a halt on our way, encouraging us often to approach the Lord's table, and to advance with greater assurance along the rough, narrow, steep path that leads to heaven. In this way we obtain a better knowledge of ourselves, a keener perception of the dangers threatening us, and increased facility in discovering means to prevent us from going astray. If ever we are so unhappy as to lose our way through mortal sin, we shall soon come back to the right road, so that for this reason also frequent Communion helps us on towards heaven.

As a man lives, so will he die. Many die as they have lived, without contrition and without the Sacraments. A terrible death indeed! But no one need fear dying thus who goes often to Holy Communion, for he is always ready to die, being always in the grace of God; he has no reason to dread eternity, and has a better right than others to hope for time to make a good preparation for death. In life it has been his delight to receive his Saviour frequently, and our Lord will be glad to come to be his viaticum in

death, so that the devout soul will enter eternity upheld by His hand. You see that frequent Communion is undoubtedly the best way to heaven.

The case is different with one who communicates seldom; we cannot say of him that he is sure to reach heaven, in fact we might almost fear the contrary. Think of a person who goes seldom to Holy Communion. He is certainly not a model Christian, but a very ordinary mortal, if not actually a worldling. He communicates occasionally, chiefly because others do so, and he does not wish to be singular. Consequently it is not love of the Blessed Sacrament, not any desire for perfection, not a good and pious motive that makes him receive Holy Communion, but merely some external compulsion, pride or human respect. Such Communions do the soul more harm than good, as we shall see if we look into the matter.

One class of people who communicate seldom consists of those living voluntarily under circumstances that are immediate occasions of grievous sin. They are well aware, and if they are not, their confessor tells them, that, in order to make their Confessions valid, they must firmly resolve to avoid or abandon immediate occasions of sin. It would cost them something to do this, so what is the result? They go still less frequently to the Sacraments. They have not the courage necessary to abandon occasions of sin, and hence, in order to get absolution, they change their confessor, suppress more or less important facts, and gloss over their sins; in other words, they try to get absolution by some trickery. As a result the reception of the Sacraments affords them no peace of mind, and their conscience never ceases to reproach them. Consequently they communicate less and less frequently. If, however,

they adhered to the practice of frequent Communion, their conscience being ever on the alert, the grace of Holy Communion would soon lead them once for all to abandon immediate occasions of sin, and this would be of the greatest benefit to them. A man of this kind refrains from Holy Communion, but not from occasions of sin, and so his sins grow greater and more numerous, and his conscience is dull. Perhaps from time to time he still approaches the Sacraments, but he does so merely for the sake of appearances, and God alone knows what his Confessions and Communions are worth. I should not like to call them actually sacrilegious, but they are certainly of very doubtful efficacy, and a proof of this lies in the fact that such persons are never at ease when they think of death, nor when their conscience is reawakened by some mission, but they desire to make good their defective Confessions and Communions. This is, however, a great grace that God does not bestow upon everybody, and others go down to hell with their eyes closed to their real state. "His own iniquities catch the wicked, and he is fast bound with the ropes of his own sins" (Prov. v, 22).

Another class of people who seldom go to Holy Communion is that of the habitual sinners. Whoever commits a sin often, commits it with ever greater ease, until it becomes habitual, and habit is very rightly described as second nature. It is difficult for a man to cure himself of any inborn evil tendency, and it is almost equally hard to get rid of an acquired bad habit, especially if it is connected with something that appeals to our senses and gratifies the lower instincts of our corrupt nature. Whoever really intends to break off a bad habit must either naturally possess a strong will or acquire one by the grace of God. It is an article of faith that man, unaided by grace, cannot avoid grievous sins, especially habitual sins, but it is equally of faith that grace alone does not

sanctify a man unless he has the will to be sanctified. In order, therefore, to abandon a sinful habit, a man must himself firmly resolve to abandon it, and God must continually aid this resolution by His grace. The sinner must have recourse to the channels through which he can receive this indispensable grace, and the chief of them is Holy Communion. St. Ambrose writes (Serm. xix, in Ps. 118 n. 5): "The Body of Christ is a cool shade, allaying the heat of our passions, extinguishing the fire of concupiscence and diminishing the influence of our various emotions." We saw last time how Holy Communion suppresses our evil tendencies, so that we can say with St. Cyril of Alexandria: "The Holy Eucharist controls the law that rages in our members and destroys the impulses of our bodily passions" (in Joan. c. 17).

But this applies only to frequent Communion; one single Communion never yet overcame any sinful habit that had taken deep root in the heart, or had actually become a vice. Hence it behooves one who sins by force of habit to go to the Sacraments often and seek his restoration to spiritual health in Holy Communion, just as a man recovering from sickness regains his strength by adopting a suitable and nourishing diet. Frequent Communion will undoubtedly strengthen his will to resist the bad habit, if only he does his best to break it off. Otherwise he will fall back every time into the same sin, and his life will consist of brief periods of resistance separated by long intervals of yielding to his vicious habit.

Would it be of any avail to him to communicate seldom? Would this help him on the way to heaven, or prove eventually only a reason for his condemnation? Even if his rare Confessions and Communions were really good and valid, he would nevertheless be almost always in danger of being lost, since he would pass the greater part of his life in a state of sin. Many a drunkard has

died intoxicated; many a blasphemer has been overtaken by death when beside himself with rage, and we see the truth of our Lord's words: "The last state of that man was worse than the first."

Finally there are many who go seldom to Holy Communion because they are indifferent, lukewarm or careless. They are not in earnest about their religion, and therefore think very little of it, and in the intervals between their Communion they live on in a state of sin and temptation without any serious purpose of serving God. The thought of grave neglect of duties has no power to rouse their conscience, and they regard God's laws as of small importance or as no longer binding. If they go to Confession they do not really examine themselves, and they have no genuine contrition. They pay no attention at all to many sins unless their confessor happens to question them on the subject, and they are quite satisfied with reading an act of contrition in a prayer-book. Can this be what is meant by examining ourselves before receiving the Lord's Body?

The Communion of such people are most questionable. St. Paul says that whoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself (I. Cor. xi, 29), and shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord (*ibid.* v. 27). They cannot truly have the right faith, for otherwise they would neither communicate so seldom, nor approach the Lord's table in such a condition.

There is an argument that we unhappily hear very often, although those who use it have never seriously considered what it means. They say: "What is the use of going frequently to Communion? One always remains the same; I need only look at myself, or at any of those people who communicate often, and I find my opinion confirmed." This may be true of such as communicate seldom,

or of those who communicate often but without the right intention, being influenced by habit, vanity or motives of human respect. There is no foundation at all, however, for such a statement regarding those who communicate frequently or even daily, being in the state of grace and having a good intention. Anyone maintaining a contrary opinion would be declaring that the Church wished us to perform a religious action that was either useless or even harmful to us. Such a thing is inconceivable. Pope Pius X. wished to encourage us to communicate every day when in the decree dated Dec 20, 1905, he stated that any Christian might worthily approach the Lord's table daily, provided only that he was free from grievous sin and had a good intention.

I cannot, however, deny that even those who communicate daily can and do fall into little faults; but, we may ask, are all these imperfections to be regarded as sins in the case of a communicant? Before I answer this question let us consider what are the causes of many faults in people who are really good and trying to lead good lives. Some commit faults in consequence of their natural disposition; they may be irritable and excitable, or be deficient in education. A mere trifle is often enough to rouse their anger and make them give way to bad temper. They may not even be aware that there is anything wrong or offensive in their behavior. Others, again, are obliged to associate with people with whom they are quite out of sympathy. It is no wonder if there are points of friction, and if they offend against charity, patience and gentleness; they give way to frailties to which even the saints are liable. There are others who, when young, have been badly trained, so that their selfish tendencies have remained uncorrected, and perhaps they grew up in houses where there was but little faith or piety. They are consequently self-centred and indifferent to

religion and to the claims of charity, and even if in later life they enter upon a way of greater perfection, they are very apt to fall into many faults and sins. No one becomes holy in a day, and we ought not to be surprised if really pious souls are not free from little defects and sins. Moreover, many of these imperfections are unconscious and involuntary, and due not to any bad habit for which they are responsible, but rather to ignorance. Such defects ought not to be regarded as sins, and why should we take scandal at them?

Consider, lastly, that Holy Communion can never directly remove all these causes of the involuntary and unconscious faults to which I have just alluded. Our Saviour did not promise, nor does the Church teach, that frequent or daily Communion completely removes all voluntary sins and imperfections, and so we ought not to be astonished if those who communicate daily still wilfully commit venial sins. If you are offended at their still sinning wilfully, think what would become of them if they went seldom to Holy Communion. I should be afraid of their sinning grievously against God, and it is therefore a very great grace if the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist preserves such weak mortals in the state of sanctifying grace.

In conclusion let us not forget that Holy Communion affects the soul in the same way as material food the body. By taking nourishment daily a child grows in course of time to its full stature, and the same is true of the soul. By receiving Holy Communion frequently for years in succession a poor mortal develops into a saint, a citizen of heaven.

Our Saviour said: "If a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth." Let us arm our souls with frequent Communion, that a stronger enemy may not

come and ruin them, for then our last state would be worse than our first. If we have a real desire for frequent Communion, God's grace will do the rest, and our Lord's words will be fulfilled. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John vi, 52). Amen.

IV. MEN AND FREQUENT COMMUNION

"Make the men sit down. . . . The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand."—John vi, 10.

What a wonderful sight must have been presented by the five thousand men who, having followed our Saviour, clustered about Him on the mountainside, eager to hear His words! Five thousand is a large number, and when Jesus had miraculously multiplied the five barley loaves before their eyes their enthusiasm for Him increased to such a pitch that they desired to make Him their king. They soon changed their minds, however, for when they gathered round Him on the next day at Capharnaum, secretly hoping to witness another miracle in evidence of His divine mission, our Saviour began to promise them another kind of bread, more wonderful than that which Moses gave the Israelites in the wilderness, namely, His own most sacred Body. They cared nothing for this bread, and so they went away murmuring and devoid of faith.

This episode reveals to us plainly the behavior of worldly-minded people. As long as God showers temporal benefits upon them, and, as it were, miraculously multiplies the loaves, they are willing enough to serve Him. But as soon as the following of Christ costs them some sacrifice, even though eternal happiness is to be its reward, they act like the five thousand in the wilderness and abandon our Lord. Do we not see this with regard to Holy Communion? Why do men communicate so seldom? They come, perhaps, at Easter, and once or twice in the year, but that is all. Our Lord indeed said: "He that eateth my flesh . . . hath everlasting life," the greatest benefit that even God can give us, but they, like

many of His disciples, say: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" Yet the reception of Holy Communion is most indispensable for men, and I purpose to-day to show you:

1. How necessary it is for men to communicate often;
2. The reasons why men communicate so seldom.

I.

No one can deny that the souls of men are exposed to very great dangers. A man lives out in the world and is surrounded by temptations. He hears others speak disparaging words of his faith and morals. He has companions who actually try to bring about his ruin. Bad examples confront him everywhere, however cautiously he behaves, and if he is to stand firm he will have to struggle hard against evil. A woman, being occupied at home, knows little or nothing of all these dangers, but it is obvious that the husband is peculiarly in need of Holy Communion, and that he ought really to communicate most frequently. Is it not precisely the man most tempted to sin against purity who has to struggle against the lusts of the flesh? He surely stands greatly in need of God's grace and ought to long for Holy Communion, for the source of grace and the bread of angels, to enable him to live chastely. Yet, as a matter of fact, such a man communicates very rarely, and hence there are fewer pure virgin souls amongst men and youths than amongst women and maidens. The infrequency of their communions is to a great extent the cause of this state of affairs.

It is a man's duty to set a good example to his family. If the disastrous spirit of worldliness is to be excluded from his household, and if true Christianity is to flourish, the husband must lead the way. As the proverb says: "Example is better than precept," and a man can set no better example to his family than by going

often to Holy Communion. It is at once a confession of faith and the best means of maintaining the spirit of reverence, love and obedience. If the wife, children and servants see the head of the household going with faith and humility to Holy Communion, and returning to his place in church to commune silently with his Creator, his example is sure to stimulate others to do likewise, and thus will be a blessing to the whole family. How much all the members of this household will respect such a man! Men little know of how much happiness they deprive others by communicating seldom.

Moreover, by communicating often a man can exert an influence over a wider circle. Whenever religious life is at a low ebb in a parish, the men seldom approach the Sacraments, and as soon as a man falls off in his attendance the women, too, begin to communicate less often, for his bad example affects them, and they are always influenced by the men's behavior. If things are ever to improve, the men must be induced to communicate often, and until this is done, it is useless to complain that the young people are good for nothing, and that quarrels and ill will prevail on all sides. A model parish in every respect is always one in which men rival women in the frequency of their communions.

In the life of a German lay-brother, Heinrich von Vries, who belonged to the Order of Oblates, we read that as captain of a ship and member of a shipping company he lost all his property through the bad management of the company, and went into business on land in a parish where Holy Communion was much neglected. Being a pious man, he went each week several times to Holy Communion, and this was something quite unusual. At first people laughed at him, but after a while others began to follow his good example and continued to do so long after he had entered the re-

ligious life. If any man wishes to do permanent good in the place where he lives, let him go often to Holy Communion, and he will bring down a blessing upon the whole parish.

Holy Communion is also a bond of union and a source of strength. We all know by experience how lonely and strange we feel in non-Catholic districts and surroundings. Diversity of faith gives rise to a kind of reserve, whilst unity produces a sense of being at home. Faith brings people together, and Holy Communion does so still more effectually.

A modern writer says that when people dine together they all take off, as it were, the distinctive attire of their various occupations and put them aside, so as to appear simply as natural and unaffected human beings. In a higher sense we may apply this remark to Holy Communion. Assembled round the altar, all are equal, all being God's children, brethren of Christ and joint heirs of heaven, have the same right to approach it.

Holy Communion bridges over the gulf between rich and poor, high and low, "for we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (1 Cor. x, 17).

Holy Communion has more influence upon the world than most people suppose. A complete transformation of society on the lines of Christian socialism is possible only if the men communicate in greater numbers. If they fall off from receiving the Sacraments, all the bonds of family and social life give way.

After the revolution of February, 1848, some eminent statesmen went to M. Desgenettes, the priest in charge of the church of Notre Dame des Victoires, in Paris, and asked him if he knew of any means whereby the tide of anarchy might be checked. He thought over the question for a minute, and then said very decidedly: "Gentlemen, go to Communion every week."

If the spirit of Christ is to dominate the masses, and peace and happiness are to prevail in each family, then let the men go often to Holy Communion, and their example will work wonders.

My fellow Christians, at the present time we hear on all sides that men must close up their ranks and stand shoulder to shoulder. Let us assemble before the tabernacle and kneel shoulder to shoulder at the Communion rail. Unless Catholic men gather together there, they run the risk of being scattered by the revolutionary spirit of the age, and therefore every one whose heart is filled with genuine love of his neighbor and true patriotism should communicate often. Otherwise the bond of union will be broken and human society will be ruined.

II.

If we try to discover the reasons why men communicate so seldom, I think we shall see that the primary cause is the weakness of their faith. We often are told that this is a nervous generation, and that peace and quiet have departed for ever. A boundless desire for temporal and earthly possessions has seized upon all classes of the population, and the frenzied pursuit of pleasure is plunging mankind deeper and deeper into the quagmire of materialism. Under such unwholesome circumstances faith must inevitably suffer. Religion requires calm thought and recollection. The present time is one of superficiality and distraction.

That progress has been made in every department of life is undeniable, and every man not well equipped for the struggle for existence is pushed aside and trodden down. The rush and turmoil of business at the present day have caused much injury to our faith and have produced a sort of half-hearted Christianity. A man whose whole time is occupied in worldly affairs has little or no in-

terest in the things of eternity, and finally satisfies himself that there is no need for him to trouble about them. The lamentable consequences of this attitude of mind are obvious everywhere; such a man never goes to the Sacraments, takes no notice of Sunday, has no family life, and is completely indifferent to religion. The world to-day advises its children to make the most of life and to have a good time—and that is all.

Therefore nowadays we need rest and recreation more than formerly, but ought we to seek them only in worldly amusements? Is there no better relaxation of mind than noisy entertainments? Yes, there is one place where you will find better refreshment than any worldly pleasure can afford, and that place is at the Communion rail. The Church applies to the Blessed Sacrament the words of the Book of Wisdom (xvi, 20): "Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels, and gavest them bread from heaven . . . having in it all that is delicious." And from the tabernacle our Saviour cries: "The bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world" (John vi, 52). "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matth. xi, 28). "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you" (John xiv, 27). "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds" (Phil. iv, 7).

It was from Holy Communion that all the heroes of the Church derived strength to do the glorious work that they accomplished for the honor of God and the benefit of mankind; and it was here that they found rest when wearied by the antagonism of the world. Why have we so little faith, and why do we seek strength and rest where we shall never succeed in finding them?

When the disciples returned to their Master after their first missionary journey (Mark. vi, 30), and told Him their experiences

and the results of their Apostolic labors, He said to them: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little." Our Lord addresses the same words to all Christians men and youths. After all your exertions to acquire property, honor and pleasures, He invites you to rest, and that rest is provided in Holy Communion. He calls you all to come apart and tell Him all the trials of your life, all the sufferings and sorrows that are your daily lot. He bids you rest on His Heart, and take thence the consolation and strength that you need. Go, then, to Holy Communion. If Jesus does not comfort you, if the Son of God cannot help you, who else can do so? Where will you look for assistance? Rely upon our Divine Saviour, for He truly cares for you. He not only feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, but He, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing (Job xii, 10), will succor you in a very special manner if you pray to Him with confidence.

Is it not Christ who gives us our daily bread? He does not only give us in Holy Communion the bread of everlasting life, but, if we ask Him, He will give us also material food. How well He knows our misery, and how ready He is to help us! In order to redeem mankind He took upon Himself the form of an artisan, a servant, as St. Paul says (Phil. i, 7), and lived a life of labor, toiling to earn His daily bread. Can He, who is all goodness and power, fail to sympathize with us? Christians, seek help of Him in Holy Communion, for He is, in the fullest sense of the word, our Emmanuel, our God with us (Is. vii, 14).

Weakness of faith gives rise to another thing that deters men from frequent Communion, and that is cowardly fear of men. Many are convinced that, in order to live as Christians, they ought to communicate often. Many young men know by their own experience that they need to receive the Sacraments frequently if

their lives are to be pure and good, but they are afraid that someone will talk if they suddenly begin to be pious. They fancy that others will point at them and ridicule them, and so they resolve to go on as they have done hitherto and approach the Sacraments very seldom. I should like to question such a man and say: "Would you act in this way with regard to temporal matters? Would you abandon a profitable transaction because others, not understanding its advantages, might laugh at you? I think you would pay no attention to them; why, then, do you not behave as sensibly with regard to what is eternal? Do you not see how weak your faith is? Do you not know that the smallest grace received in Holy Communion is worth more than all the money in the world? How can you be so foolish as to neglect these infinite treasures for such trivial reasons? Why do you give way to this miserable fear of your fellow creatures? I am convinced that if enemies invaded the country and you were called out to defend it, you would not hesitate to face the foe with true contempt of death. Why, then, are you so timid, and why do you refrain from Holy Communion, because you are too cowardly to bear a few mocking remarks? It is quite inexplicable. How applicable to you are the words in the Following of Christ (iii, 3): "The world promiseth things temporal and of small value, and is served with great eagerness. Christ promiseth things most excellent and everlasting, and yet men's hearts remain torpid."

Someone anxious to excuse his human respect may reply: "I used to be considered a good Catholic, although I went to the Sacraments only a few times in the year. It is surely an innovation to ask me to go so often to Holy Communion." I have no wish to argue the point whether or no you really were a good Catholic, in spite of going to the Sacraments only once or twice a year. It

may be that your companions thought you so, because they did not communicate any more frequently, but the verdict of your own conscience will hardly coincide with their opinion. If you are honest you will have to confess that prayer and thoughts of God and eternity were not enough to keep you from sin and to make you lead a really Christian life. You needed other, stronger aids, and now you perceive the necessity of frequent Communion. It is nothing new, as you mistakably suppose, but just the same strong, holy, daily bread that made our forefathers in the faith so steadfast in all dangers.

If the present century resembles in some respects the godless and immoral age in which the first Christians lived, we, too, ought to seek strength and protection where they did, viz., at the Lord's table; we, too, ought to make it our practice to communicate frequently or even daily. Such was the custom in the early Church, not Communion on rare occasions, which you advocate.

And even if it were an innovation to go more frequently to the Sacraments, you ought to welcome it with joy, because of the extraordinary benefits to be derived from it. Our century is full of innovations in industry, means of communication, material prosperity and science. You all adopt the new inventions in your business and homes, and do not at once reject them simply because they are novelties. Why should you act otherwise with regard to frequent Communion, and the great benefits that it confers upon us for this life and the next? Do not be inconsistent, half-hearted Christians, cowardly slaves to human respect.

Surely, the men of the present day are poor creatures! Look at the early Christians, who often went to Holy Communion at the risk of their lives, whilst you fear the ridicule of bad or lukewarm Catholics. We often hear of manly courage, but this certainly is

not displayed by a cowardly neglect of your duties as Christians or by actions against your better knowledge. Is it a disgrace to be considered a good Catholic? If not, why be influenced by human respect? If you were invited every week to a royal banquet, would you not feel honored and accept the invitation willingly and gladly? But when God, the King of Kings, does you the greatest honor conceivable to man here below, and invites you to His banquet, and although to be present at it would be most profitable to you, you shrink from accepting His invitation. Human respect makes you injure both yourselves and your neighbors. Be zealous communicants and the world will respect you.

I am not asking much of you when I say: Go at least four times in the year to Holy Communion. A good Catholic must certainly communicate at *Christmas*, for it is his duty to thank our dear Saviour for becoming man in order to redeem us. Christmas is a family festival, but it has no higher meaning unless we think of our Lord. Make a point of going to the Sacraments, and at your Holy Communion pray for all the graces that you need, and beg the Infant Jesus to bless those dear to you and to bestow upon them His heavenly gifts in rich abundance.

Every Catholic goes to Communion at *Easter* as a matter of course. He is bound not only to comply with the Church's law, but also to thank our Divine Saviour for His suffering and death. You are Catholics, children of the Church, and you have often publicly acknowledged this fact. Do so also in church, and there can be no better opportunity of proclaiming your faith and your devotion to the see of Peter than the feast of the two great Apostles, *Peter and Paul*. This should be a Communion-day for all Catholic men and boys. You know many loving souls that have passed away before you into eternity. They are perhaps the souls

of your parents, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. The Church remembers them all on *All Souls' Day*. You ought to go to Holy Communion in order to offer up our Lord's Body for the faithful departed. It would be most ungrateful and un-Christian on your part not to be willing to do this to help them.

Regard these four days at least as fixed Communion-days every year, and if you are able, approach the Sacraments on other festivals, too. Communicate on one of our Lady's feasts as a token of love to your heavenly Mother. Observe the feast of your patron saint, your wedding-day or other important anniversaries by receiving your dear Saviour in Holy Communion. Enter upon no serious undertaking without first seeking counsel and help of Jesus in Holy Communion. Regard it as a great honor to be allowed to communicate often. It was to men, not to women and children, that our Lord first gave His holy Body, and will you men abandon Holy Communion to women? Was it not again to men that the Son of God entrusted Himself in the Holy Eucharist? Always remain true lovers of Holy Communion and frequent guests at the table of the Lord.

When in the early ages of Christianity the horrible cry arose, "*Ad bestias!*"—"Cast the Christians to the wild beasts," men used to receive Holy Communion to strengthen them for the conflict that they would have to undergo; and then, when the wild beasts roared in anticipation of their prey, when the fires were kindled and the instruments of torture were ready, the Christians stood fearlessly before their judges and the hostile, fanatical multitude, and said boldly: "We are Christians." They had no fear of death.

To-day we are surrounded by other enemies, bitterly opposed to our faith and eager to destroy, not our bodies, but our immortal souls. How much we need to strengthen our faith by means of

frequent Communion! We, too, may win the crown of the confessors; we, too, may be stalwart in our regeneration! Away with half-hearted Christianity and with all wretched human respect!

Before the Battle of Austerlitz Napoleon turned to one of his regiments and addressed the following words to the soldiers: "I want a hundred men ready to devote themselves and to die for their country. I appeal to your courage." Then he was silent for a moment, scrutinizing the regiment, and cried: "Men prepared to sacrifice yourselves, take three steps forward." The whole regiment advanced as one man—none lagged behind.

We live in perilous times and hard conflicts await us. The Church calls to the men: "Come forward to the Communion rail." May none of you be cowardly enough to remain behind when this cry is ringing in your ears.

Lacordaire said on one occasion: "Every Catholic must necessarily be an apostle." Become apostles of the world in which you live, by means of receiving Holy Communion frequently. Amen.

V. FREQUENT COMMUNION—A TOKEN OF LOVE AND RECONCILIATION

"You have not known Him."—John viii, 55.

How many benefits were lavished by God upon His chosen people! And how anxious our Lord always was to help His own nation! As St. Peter said: "He went about doing good" (Acts x, 38). Everyone in Judea knew something of His kindness. What did He receive in return? Gratitude? No, we read in the Gospels what return was made Him. Once He was accused of having a devil, and when He quietly disproved this charge the people took up stones to throw at Him. Our Saviour desired nothing so much as the welfare of the Jews, but they would have nothing to do with Him. He said to them: "You say (of My Father) that He is your God, but you have not known Him," and He might with equal truth have added: "You fancy that you know who I am, but you know Me not."

The same reproach might be brought against many people at the present time: "You believe that you know our Saviour, but you know Him not. How much good He has done you! The whole universe, the life of each individual and every moment of your existence proclaim His goodness, but you do not know him, because you refuse to recognize His benefits."

Is it not something infinitely great and truly Divine, that our Saviour became man for us and died for us upon the Cross? Yet that is not all. He wanted us to receive the abundant graces of redemption not once only, but daily, in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. But just as the Jews of old received Him not, when He

came to them, so men and women nowadays care little about Him and are unwilling to welcome Him in their hearts. Let us consider two chief points to-day:

1. That we owe it to the love of Christ, displayed in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to receive Him frequently in that Sacrament.

2. That the horrible ingratitude of others towards this Sacrament of love ought to stimulate us to receive it often in a spirit of reparation.

I.

The eternal Word declared once that it was His delight to be with the children of men (Prov. viii, 31). Now, as in God everything is perfect and infinite, this delight at being with us must have been boundless. We can obtain a glimpse of this delight in His Incarnation, and we can see that the Word made Flesh, as God and man, would desire to remain with us always and everywhere. The Holy Land was a very small part of the inhabited world, and the years of our Lord's life only a diminutive fraction of the period during which the human race has existed. He died at the age of thirty-three, without ever having gone beyond Palestine and Phoenicia. Was His delight at being with us to last only so short a time, and to be limited only to a single nation? No; His love devised a means of remaining in our midst, a means such as no created intellect, but only the vast, all-embracing love of God could have imagined, namely, the blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Although Christ ascended into heaven, He comes to us in the consecrated Host, in order to be with us everywhere, and to remain with us to the end of time. He is with us day and night, wherever the blessed Sacrament is reserved. He is a Friend ever ready to sympathize with us and to help us, and we may go to Him whenever we are weighed

down by our crosses and sufferings, and tell Him our troubles and ask His help, for He said: "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matth. xi, 28).

But that is not all, for Jesus desires to remain with us to be our food. It is not enough for Him to be near us everywhere and always, but He wishes to dwell in the most intimate manner conceivable within our souls; He wants to be united with us by becoming the food of our souls. How great is His love for us wretched mortals! It could not possibly be greater, for it is indeed as great as His Divinity itself. Surely, it behooves us to set no limits to this love. If our Saviour delights in being the Food of our souls, it should be our most intense happiness to welcome Him. Love begets love. We cannot maintain that we love Him if we stay away from Holy Communion.

Our Lord, however, intended to give us in this Sacrament further proof of His love, by making it remind us of His Passion and death. What should we be without our Saviour? The most miserable of all created beings. Christ became man, knowing us to be poor and wretched, and He died on the Cross that we might not perish for ever. He said plainly: "The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting" (John iii, 14, 15). God could have redeemed us in some other way, but it was His will to suffer for us, in order to make us realize better His love of man. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." We owe everything, therefore, to Christ's Passion and death; this is the greatest benefit conferred upon by God; and hence, as St. Thomas Aquinas says (S. Th. iii, qu. 73, a. 5), men needed always to have something to remind them of their Saviour's sufferings. In the old dispensation it was chiefly the Paschal lamb, but in the new it is the Holy Eucharist. This is

why at the Last Supper our Lord gave His Body to the Apostles, saying: "This is My Body, which is given for you; do this for a commemoration of Me" (Luke xxii, 19). He intended the Eucharistic sacrifice to be offered continually in the Church, and the sacrificial Food to be received in constant commemoration of the redemption that He had effected. This Sacrament ought to be most dear to us, as in it our Saviour gives us Himself in commemoration of His death. Let us receive it often, and never forget our Lord's Passion and death.

By going often to Holy Communion we ought to give expression also to our love, gratitude and appreciation of this great gift. St. Augustine says that Christ, though almighty, could not have given us anything greater; though omniscient, He did not know how to give a better gift; though He possessed all things, He had nothing better to bestow. The blessed Sacrament is at once the result of Christ's sufferings here on earth and the treasury of all His merits, accumulated from the moment when His Mother uttered her joyful *fiat*, "Be it done to me according to Thy word," until He Himself cried on the Cross; *Consummatum est*, "All is consummated."

The sacred Host represents to us Bethlehem and Nazareth, Gethsemani and Golgotha. It contains the body of Christ, which He took of His most pure Virgin Mother, and which arose in glory from the tomb; it contains our Saviour's precious Blood, with which He redeemed us, and one drop of which would have been enough to redeem not our world only, but thousands and tens of thousands of worlds; it contains His most sacred Soul, the abode of graces and virtues in absolute perfection; it contains the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God, who is one in nature with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost.

The venerable servant of God, Mary Angela, had an intense de-

votion to the Blessed Sacrament. When very young she left her parents and her home, and entered religion for love of her Saviour. On her heart she wore continually a picture of the Sacred Host, on which she had written, "I live for His sake." When she felt death approaching, she added: "And I die for His sake." She lived and died for her Saviour in the tabernacle.

If we were to consider the joy felt by our Lord, the Son of God, on entering our hearts, if we were to call to mind what He did and suffered for us, and that He desired this Sacrament to be a continual commemoration of it, if we kept our eyes fixed on this priceless pledge of His infinite love, we surely should feel impelled to receive this most holy Sacrament very often, to make it the centre of our thoughts, and to live and die for it.

In this way all false ideas of reverence which keep many away from frequent Communion, would vanish at once. Of course the deepest possible respect is due to our dear Saviour in the sacred Host, but in instituting the Sacrament He aimed at our good, rather than at receiving our homage. Hence we ought to beware of all exaggerated anxiety about going to Holy Communion, as this might only too easily prevent our approaching the Lord's table. I do not mean that we should be careless in our preparation for or indifferent in our reception of the Sacrament, but if you go to Communion in the state of sanctifying grace and with a right and pious intention, thinking of Christ as your dear Redeemer, your greatest Friend and Benefactor, if you do your best to make a good preparation and thanksgiving as far as your abilities and circumstances allow, if you look upon Holy Communion as a remedy for all your weakness and frailty, then you will indeed and in truth receive the Holy Eucharist with the sort of reverence required by Christ and the Church. Yet, although it is so easy for us to communicate often,

there is not much love shown to our Lord in the blessed Sacrament; He receives far more indifference and ingratitude than devotion and grateful love.

II.

At noon on the first Good Friday the sun's light failed, and a mysterious darkness brooded over Mount Calvary, so that it was difficult to see the three crucified figures. From that on the right proceeded from time to time groans of pain, from that on the left constant cries of agony and despair. Round the crosses stood an excited crowd, but the attention of all was centred upon the middle figure. Suddenly through the darkness rang out the words: *Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani*, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The bystanders shuddered. Again the voice of the sufferer on the middle cross was raised, crying: "I thirst." There was silence; all stood watching. "Now there was a vessel set there, full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth" (John xix, 29). Rallying His strength for the last time, He cried once more: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit," and then, after casting one last glance at Jerusalem, and also at you and your sins, He bowed His head and said: "It is consummated." Our Saviour was dead, and He had died for us, because He loved us.

How can we ever forget His death? How can we be indifferent to all that He suffered for our sake? One would suppose it impossible, and yet it is the case. Ask those who seldom or never communicate, or who receive the Sacraments carelessly or unworthily—they never think of our Saviour's death. We might perhaps understand their coldness and ingratitude, if Christ had not actually died for them, but He gave Himself up for pure love of man. If some stranger, not a loving father or dear friend, had done

only the smallest fraction of what our Lord did for you, I am convinced that you would love him, and testify your love to him in many ways, and never forget him. Does our Saviour deserve less love than a man? How ungrateful we are! Suppose you were at the point of death, and the only means of preserving your life was for another to die in your stead. And imagine that a rich man in a distant country, as happy as you were miserable, hearing of your pitiable state and of the sole means of helping you, came forward and died a horrible death for your sake. Would you not cherish his memory? Would it not be your greatest delight to think of him often, and to carry out his last wishes, if he had expressed any? Yet you do not think of your Saviour, who died a death of shame upon the Cross for your sake, and has delivered you from everlasting death, not once perhaps, but many times. Do you make light of Holy Communion, in which His death is commemorated?

If ever anyone deserved our love and gratitude, it is our Saviour; but do we give them to Him? At the Last Supper, when He took the bread into His hands and uttered the words: "Take ye and eat, for this is My Body," He saw before Him Judas, into whose treacherous and ungrateful heart He was about to enter, and not only the one man Judas, but all the traitors who ever would receive Him unworthily, men and women, youths and maidens, people of every age and rank. As He held the consecrated Bread in His hand, He saw in spirit how in future consecrated Hosts would be trodden under foot, cast to animals and flung down into filth; He knew how little real desire men would feel for the Bread of heaven, how seldom and with what scanty devotion they would receive it. Nevertheless He gave Holy Communion to all the disciples, saying: "Do this in commemoration of Me." In order not to deprive loving souls of this heavenly Food, He gives Himself to all men.

Is it not, therefore, our most sacred duty to atone for the want of love and reverence displayed by others by going frequently to Holy Communion ourselves? If your father or mother were ill-used or treated disrespectfully by strangers, you would certainly stand up for them; why, then, have you so little sympathy with Christ when He is insulted and despised by bad, indifferent Christians? How much we have wounded our Divine Saviour! Certainly He never deserved that we should treat Him thus. He complained bitterly to His faithful servant, blessed Margaret Mary Alacocque, of the ingratitude of men, and especially of those who have especially dedicated themselves to His service. What would He say of those who receive Him seldom or even unworthily? I cannot bear to pursue this line of thought, for it is too painful. I feel inclined to say to such souls: "If you do not love yourselves or our Divine Saviour, if you have no pity on ourselves, at least feel pity for Him."

Let us to-day promise our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament to turn over a new leaf. Henceforth we will communicate more often and more reverently, and lose no opportunity of going to Holy Communion whenever it is possible. If it is our Lord's delight to be with the children of men, it shall be our delight to be with Him. In future we will be careful to receive Him with the utmost purity and sanctity of heart, to which by God's grace we can attain. We will not be content to avoid grievous sins, but, for love of our Divine Redeemer, we will do our best not to offend Him voluntarily by little sins and omissions. If Jesus Christ has loved us, we must love Him. Let this be our fixed purpose.

In the life of blessed Margaret Mary we read that she once saw the Infant Jesus, and not a consecrated Host, being given in Communion to a sick person. The Divine Child appeared to be troubled and unwilling to enter this soul, and the servant of God, being full

of love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, was grieved at the sight, and retired to her cell, weeping. Suddenly she again beheld our Saviour in the same form as before, and He said sorrowfully: "I entered into that soul with grief; let me now find consolation and love in thy heart."

How gladly would our Lord enter your hearts also, if He could find there some little compensation for the many insults offered Him in the Sacrament of His love! By the mouth of the prophet He says: "I sigh, and there is none to comfort Me" (Lam. i, 21), a sad utterance for a loving heart, and doubly sad if it falls on cold and indifferent ears! Let it be so no longer as far as we are concerned.

O, dear Saviour, if it is Thy delight to be with us, it shall be our greatest joy often to be with Thee. If others despise and neglect this most holy Sacrament, we will receive it often in reparation for their ingratitude. Didst Thou seek one to comfort Thee, and find none? Seek no further, dear Lord, for Thou hast found us. Amen.

VI. FREQUENT COMMUNION—A COMFORT IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

“Behold thy king cometh.”—Matt. xxi, 5.

Our Lord's last Pasch was at hand, and the time had nearly come when the Son of man should be betrayed into the hands of sinners (Matth. xxvi, 45); but it was His will, before He suffered, to enter Jerusalem in triumph, that His people might have an opportunity of honoring Him publicly as their promised Messiah. “Behold, O daughter of Zion, thy King cometh.” The streets of the city resounded with the cry: “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest” (Matth. xxi, 9).

These events occurred five days before the Pasch (John xii, 1, 12), on the day when the Jews used to select their Paschal lambs, which must be without blemish, but they were not slain until the fourteenth day of the month (Exod. xii, 2, etc.). Our Lord chose to make His solemn entry into Jerusalem on this particular day, because He wished to show Himself to the Jews as the one true Paschal lamb. “Behold, O daughter of Zion, thy King cometh,” even the Lamb of God, who will take away thy sins.

Behold, O Christian soul, thy King cometh to thee also in Holy Communion. He comes as the Lamb of God, who bore thy sins and was sacrificed for thee on the Cross. To thee, as well as to Jerusalem of old, the prophet Sophonias exclaims: “Give praise, O daughter of Zion; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgment, He hath turned away thy enemies; the King of Israel, the Lord, is in the midst of thee, thou shalt fear evil no more” (Soph. iii, 14, 15).

I wish to dwell to-day upon one thought, which is full of comfort, and to conclude my course of sermons on frequent Communion by showing you: 1. What consolation the frequent reception of this holy Sacrament affords us in all the sorrows and sufferings of this earthly life. And, 2. How consoling it will be to us at the hour of our death to look back upon our frequent Communions.

I.

The earth is a vale of tears, for the curse of sin weighs heavily upon mankind. Our times of happiness are rare, and we are surrounded on all sides by crosses and suffering. Here a sick man groans on his bed of pain, there a broken heart mourns over the death of some loved one. Disappointment, too, is always with us. How many a wife and mother sheds bitter tears in secret over the loss of her happiness and the disappointment of her hopes! How many a father, sick and out of work, lies sleepless, dreading the fresh misery that the coming day may bring!

Life is indeed full of crosses, and man is born to bear them; he cannot cast them aside. If he throws away one, he will only find another still heavier than the first, and there is no one on earth able to relieve him. As Sirach, the wise man, says: "They (*i. e.*, sorrows) compassed me on every side, and there was none that would help me. I looked for the succor of men, and there was none" (Ecclus. li, 10). All that our fellow creatures do is to lay heavy burdens upon us, and jostle us roughly as we try to bear our cross; the world never helps us. There is but one who is able and willing to lighten our burden—our Lord Jesus Christ.

"I am the Lord, thy God, who take thee by the hand and say to thee: "Fear not, I have helped thee'" (Is. xli, 13). Christ Himself says: "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matth. xi, 28).

No matter how great our need and our trouble may be, no matter if all men forsake us, Christ will never fail us. How is it possible to doubt this? Did He not become man and *die* on the Cross for us? Did He not give Himself to be our daily Food, as the result of His suffering? "The poor shall eat and shall be filled," exclaimed the Psalmist (Ps. xxi, 27), seeing in spirit the redemption and the sacred Host, the fruit of that redemption. "The poor shall eat and shall be filled," filled with comfort amidst the trials and sufferings of bodily and spiritual poverty.

We must never forget that all pain and trouble are the consequence of original and of actual sin, but Christ "hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Apoc. i, 5), and He has taken away also the punishment due to sin. The satisfaction that He offered to His heavenly Father for the sins of the human race was superabundant, and St. Thomas Aquinas teaches (S. Th. iii, qu. 49, a. 3) that the eternal penalty due to sin is remitted when the sin itself is forgiven through the merits of Christ's suffering. But His suffering affects us only if we apply it to ourselves in faith and love, as we do in receiving the Sacraments, and especially the Holy Eucharist. Being a sacrifice instituted for the remission of sin and the penalty of sin, this holy Sacrament remits the punishment of sin *directly*, and in Holy Communion it does so also *indirectly*, because it effects a union between the soul and our Saviour, and this produces acts of reparation and love. The greater the devotion and love with which we receive Holy Communion, the more completely shall we be delivered from the punishment due to our sins.

Whenever therefore, we are weighed down by sorrow and pain, whenever we "mingle our drink with weeping" (Ps. ci, 10), let us go to the Lord's table. Every worthy Communion secures for us the remission of part of the penalty due to our sins, and so eases

our burden, for God will have less reason to punish us if we thus get rid of our penalties. Should it, however, be His will that we should suffer, for "whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth" (Heb. xii, 6), frequent Communion will give us courage and strength to persevere, and the consolation of knowing that, as we are in the state of grace, our suffering is meritorious. It will, moreover, inspire us with confidence that what "is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (II. Cor. iv, 17).

There is, however, another way in which the frequent reception of this holy Sacrament affords comfort and help in all our troubles, and that is that it increases the efficacy of our prayers. The saints tell us that prayer is the key to the treasury of God's mercies. Through the Psalmist God says to us (Ps. xlix, 15): "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee." And St. James says: "Is any of you sad? Let him pray" (v, 13).

No prayer can ever be more pleasing to God than that which we offer at Holy Communion. Our Saviour helped the woman with the issue of blood (Matth. ix, 22), the blind man on the way to Jericho (Mark x, 52), the woman of Canaan, and many others who had recourse to Him, because, as we read in Holy Scripture, they all had faith. Is not the reception of Holy Communion the best evidence that we can give of our faith? If God is to hear prayer, it must proceed from a pure and innocent heart, and when is a man ever so careful to be pure and holy as when Jesus Himself is coming to complete the purification of his heart? Our Saviour Himself said (John xvi, 23) that our heavenly Father will give us whatever we ask in His name, and so surely there is nothing that we may not hope to receive, when at Holy Communion Christ prays in and with us to His Father in heaven.

How gladly does our Saviour help us when we have recourse to Him in this holy Sacrament! How kind and merciful He is! He had compassion on the multitude that followed Him, and healed their sick (Matth. xiv, 14). He worked a miracle to multiply the loaves, that the people might not go away hungry (Matth. xv, 36). Again and again in the accounts of His miracles we read that He had compassion on those whom He healed. He went up and down Judea doing good, and the same merciful Lord comes to us, too, in Holy Communion. He is still the same as when the Jews laid the sick in the streets, whenever He entered their villages or cities, "and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment; as as many as touched Him were made whole" (Mark vi, 56).

We may, indeed, hope everything from Jesus, since we do not merely touch Him, but take Him into our hearts. He is so good, so gentle, and so merciful; go to Him, poor, troubled soul; He has called you; He will be your best comforter and helper, and the more often you receive Him in the Sacrament of His love, the better will you comprehend how sweet the Lord is (Ps. xxxiii, 19).

Be sure that Christ will help you in Holy Communion. Transport yourself in thought to the cenacle, just after He had given Holy Communion to the Apostles. How serious they all look! They have some idea of the great mystery, but cannot grasp its full value. "And when they had said an hymn, they went forth to the Mount of Olives" (Mark xiv, 26). What a strange and solemn scene! Jesus Christ and His disciples went down Mount Zion, He was in their midst, but also in their hearts, and at that sacred time He said: "If you abide in me . . . you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv, 7). Do you see what efficacy is possessed by prayer offered at Holy Communion? You are not likely to receive at any other time a favor withheld from you then.

Therefore the greater your trouble and the heavier your cross, the more often should you approach the Lord's table. Our Saviour has promised to help you, and He will certainly keep His word. He may make you pray for a long time, like the woman of Canaan, or the two blind men who followed Him persistently, but He is only allowing you to wait, in order to test your perseverance, and this is an additional reason for communicating frequently. He is perfectly sure to hear you sooner or later.

No prayer offered at Holy Communion is ever wasted. After placing all our difficulties in our Saviour's hands, we may look forward to the future with firm confidence. There is no friend so faithful, no one so ready to help us as our Lord, if only we do not forget to receive Him in Holy Communion. Every one has a cross to bear, heavy or light, as God sees best. Let us then often go to the Lord's table, that the light cross may not grow heavier, and that the heavy one may become lighter. If any one refuses to seek help and consolation in Holy Communion, he ought not to complain if things are not well with him. He is like a hungry man who will not accept an invitation to a rich banquet, or a poor man who rejects the means offered him by some wealthy person to alleviate his troubles.

II.

One hour will inevitably come to every man—the hour of his death. It comes when we least expect it. As Job said (xiv, 1, 2): "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow." Some day you will be attacked by illness, and your sick-bed will prove to be your death-bed. At first, perhaps, you will not think seriously of your malady, but gradually you will grow worse, until all hope of recovery is abandoned. Some one will carefully inform you of your condition and tell you to prepare for death.

The priest will be summoned, so that you may make your last confession, and then, amidst the tears of your relatives and friends, he will give you the Lord's Body, saying: "Receive the viaticum of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may preserve thee from the malignant enemy and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen."

At the conclusion of this course of sermons, let each of us ask himself: "What sort of Communion will my last one be? Will it be to me a pledge of future glory or a reason for my still greater condemnation?" Be sure that your last Communion will resemble those that you make during life. As you live, so you will die. A holy life is followed by a holy death, and a bad life by a bad death.

A man who receives the Sacraments seldom during his life, is not a model Christian. He goes seldom to Holy Communion because he is not firmly determined to avoid sin and do his duty. His many serious lapses into sin, his careless Confessions and his indifferent or even unworthy Communions bear witness to this fact. He serves the devil rather than God. He may go to the Sacraments at Easter, and once or twice in the year, but he devotes a very small part of his time to God's service, and spends most of it in a state of sin; and if, as may well be the case, his Confessions are invalid and his Communions unworthy, he is in continual slavery to the evil one. Suppose that his last hour comes, on which his whole eternity depends. Will Holy Communion really be to him a viaticum for his long journey into eternity? Will he receive it in the state of sanctifying grace? I cannot tell; I only know that all saints and all priests agree in saying that a death-bed conversion is always doubtful. St. Augustine says of such a man (serm. 39, 3): "I can give him absolution, but not safety." Must not a person have never really cared about securing his salvation if he has approached the

Sacraments seldom and with indifference, and has received them only, as it were, under compulsion from motives of human respect or for other equally bad reasons? If he had really desired to amend his life, he would have begun by going more often to Holy Communion.

It may be regarded as a good sign if on his death-bed he desires to make reparation for all the sins of his past life. But is this an easy task? He has put off making his peace with God until death is imminent, and the enemy of his soul is doing his utmost to destroy it; he is weak and suffering, his memory is failing, and his physical pain leaves him perhaps little power of feeling true contrition. God gives us our whole life to be a preparation for eternity, not only the last hours of life. He offers us His holy Body to be our daily bread and refreshment as we wearily toil along the path of life, not simply to be our viaticum as we pass into eternity. Of course God is merciful even towards those who have abused His mercy in life, and He gives them grace to their last breath; yet it was not lightly, but very solemnly, that our Saviour said: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54). I personally should not like to quit this life without having often received Holy Communion.

What abundant consolation must a person at the point of death derive from the thought of having communicated frequently. His soul being brought so closely into contact with our Saviour, has participated in His divine life, has eaten His Flesh, and drunk His Blood, so that he enjoys a pledge of everlasting life. He may say with the Psalmist: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped: let me never be put to confusion" (Ps. lxx, 1). "Thou hast said: He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (John vi, 59); behold, O Lord, I have

trusted in Thy words, reward my faith. "Stay with me, because it is towards evening" (Luke xxiv, 29), the last evening of my life, to be followed by the endless day of eternity. Such a soul will be filled with peace, the prelude of the endless peace that it will enjoy in heaven. It will not be hard to die, when in life we have received Holy Communion often.

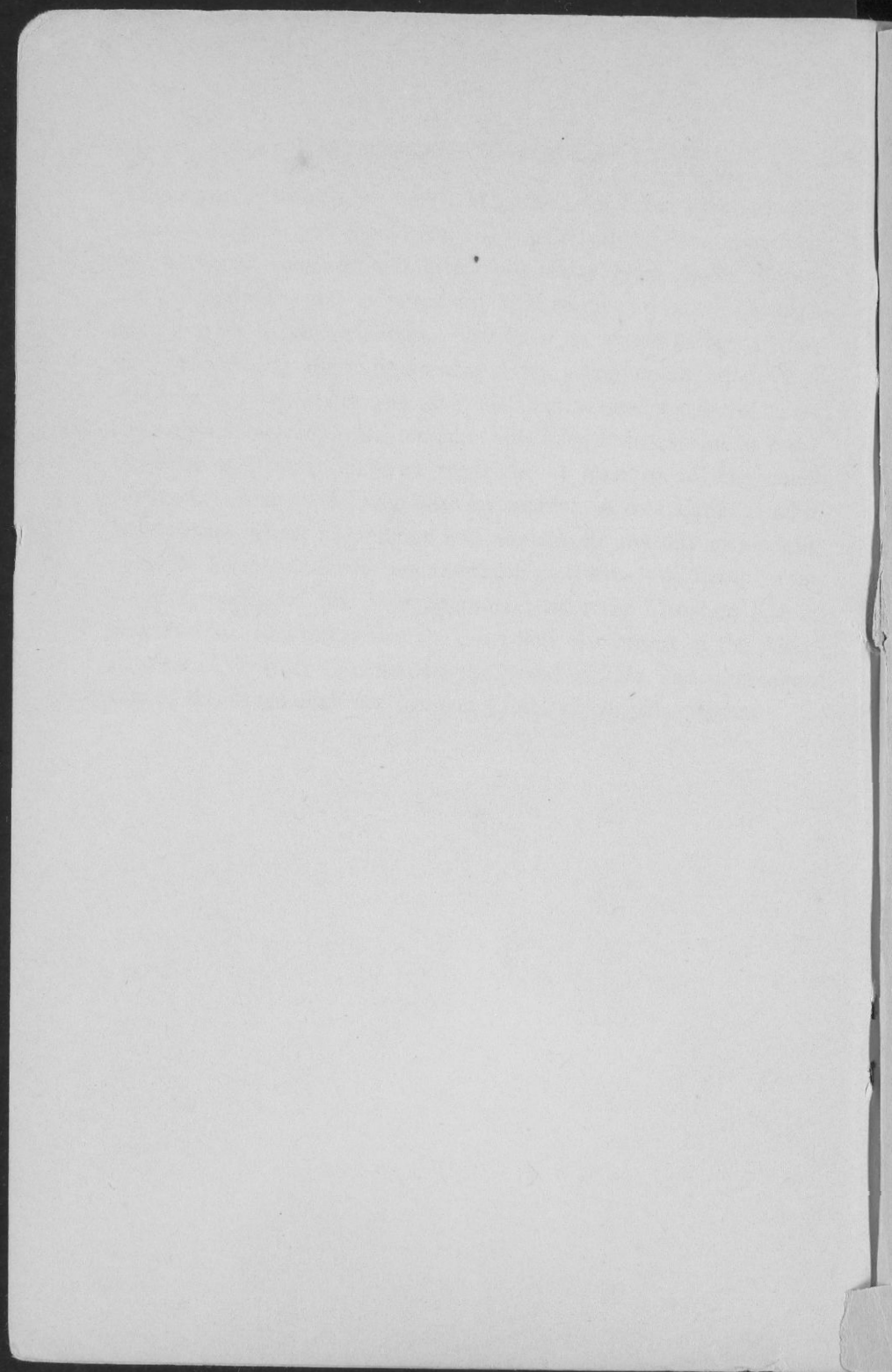
If hitherto you have been careless and indifferent about the Sacraments, become from henceforth zealous and devout communicants. I am not urging you to communicate daily, although it is the desire of Christ and of the Church that all Christians should receive the Lord's Body every day. Some with the best intentions cannot possibly do so, and of others it would perhaps be too much to ask all at once. I will only implore you to increase the number of your yearly Communion, and this will gradually lead many to communicate daily. I wish, however, to urge those who go to Communion every Sunday and hear Mass every day, to make up their minds to communicate daily at Mass. Do not stay away because of the little faults and omissions of your ordinary life; you can get rid of them by an act of perfect contrition just as well as by going to Confession. The Council of Trent (Sess. xiii, c. 2) declared the Blessed Sacrament to be a remedy whereby we are delivered from our daily transgressions and preserved from mortal sin.

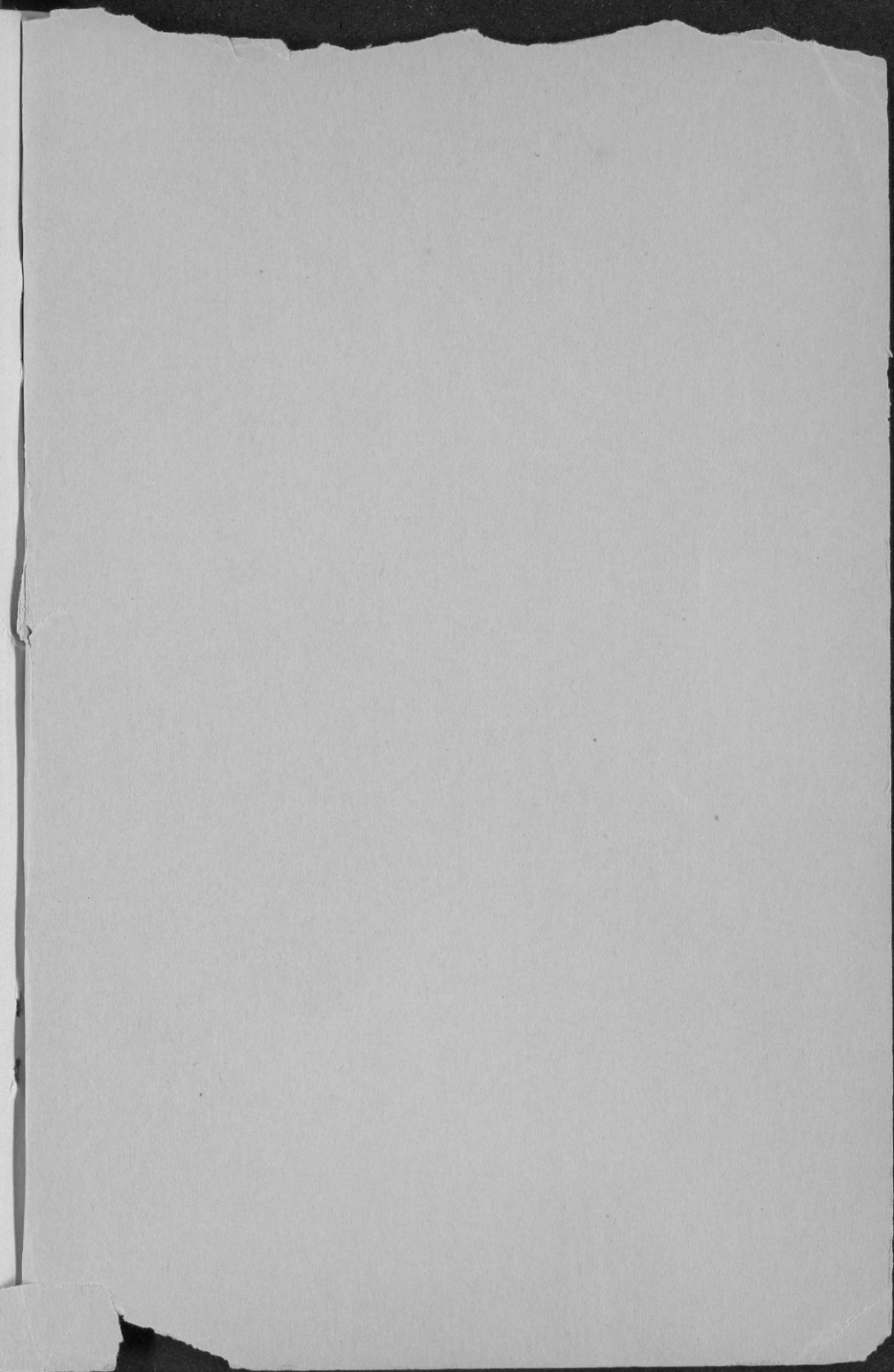
Our Lord calls you, saying: "Come, eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mingled for you" (Prov. ix, 15). Come, Christian maidens, our Lord's holy Body will preserve your virginity, the fairest ornament of your souls. You cannot resolve at the same time to lead chaste lives and to communicate seldom; the two things are incompatible. Come, Christian boys and young men, for you frequent Communion is a matter of life and death. You are at an age when you are exposed to great temptations, and your future life de-

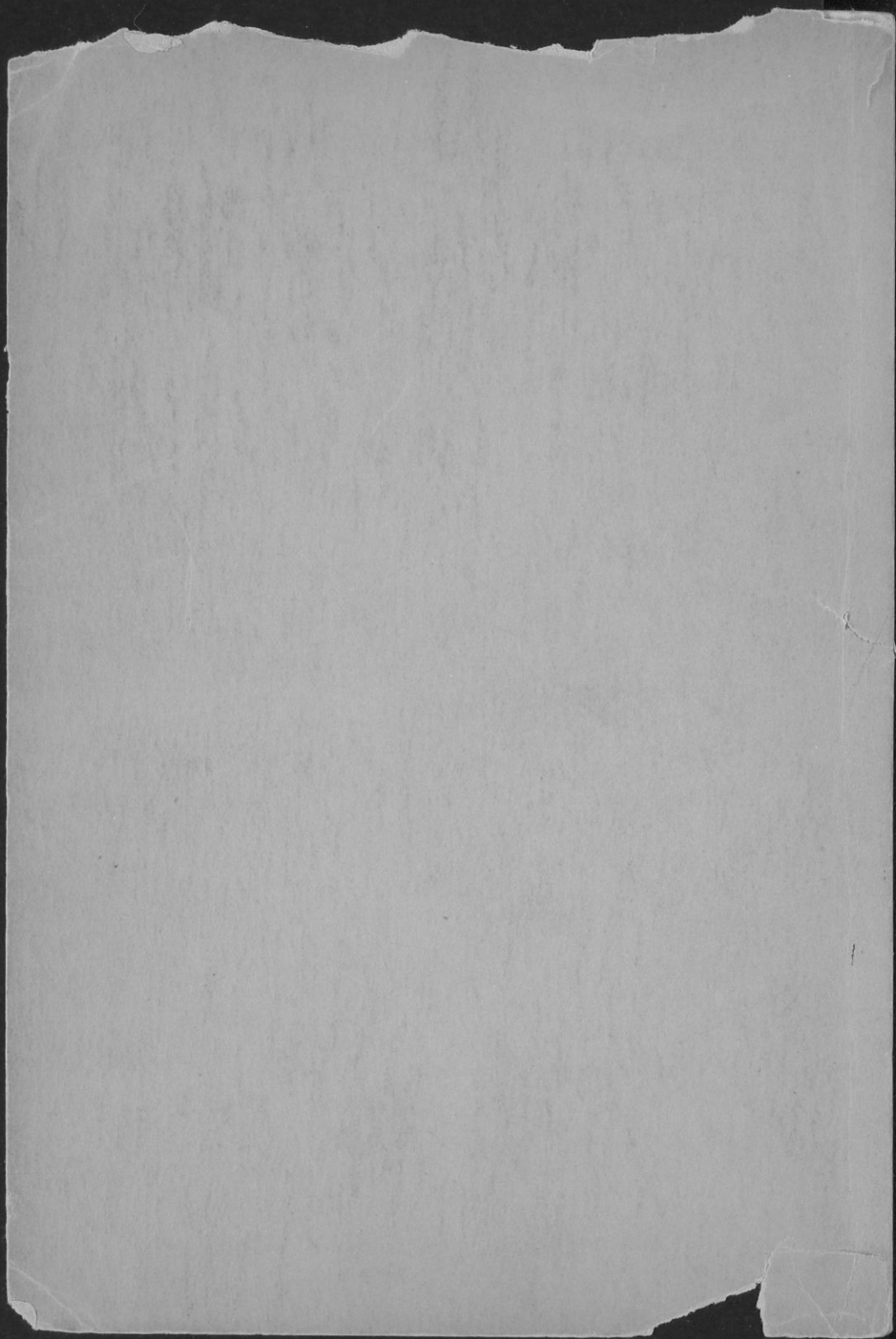
depends upon what you are now. If you do not often approach the Sacraments now, you should fear for your salvation; for it may well be that your passions will carry you away from God. Come, Christian parents, you will some day have to give an account to God for the souls of your children. You have no reason to fear if you are accustoming them to receive Holy Communion often and worthily, but remember you must set them a good example. You have already accomplished much, if you have been careful to communicate with your children regularly, at least on all the chief festivals. Come all, all who hear my words. A true Catholic, who is in earnest about his religion and anxious to save his soul ought never to be satisfied with communicating seldom. Without a frequent reception of this holy Sacrament no truly Christian life is conceivable. Remember that the most holy Sacrament of the Altar is to us all, in Holy Communion, the Bread of Life, and whosoever eats of this bread shall live for ever (John vi, 48, 52). Amen.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The first part of the history of the
country is the story of the
early settlement of the
country by the
English in the
year 1607. The
settlement was
made on the
James River
in the colony
of Virginia.
The first
governor was
John Rolfe.
The first
cotton was
planted in
the year 1690.
The first
cotton gin
was invented
in the year
1793 by
Eli Whitney.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of wood.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of iron.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of steel.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of brass.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of copper.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of silver.
The first
cotton gin
was made
of gold.







SOCIAL ASPECT IN HOLY COMMUNION

Mutual Union of Recipient With Christ and Other Communicants

The mutual union of the faithful with Christ, so close that it brings us into corporate unity with Him and through Him with other communicants, is one of the great effects of Holy Communion, which, as the Baltimore Catechism defines it, "is the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ." The social aspect of the Blessed Eucharist, through this mutual union, is forcibly brought out in the new book, "The Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ," by Abbe Anger, translated by the Rev. Dr. John J. Burke, C.S.P., and published by Benziger Bros.

Through the Eucharist we are incorporated into Christ. We form but one with Him. The natural result of this living union with Christ Jesus is the mutual union of His members, one with another, their "concorporation."

St. Paul expressly teaches it: "We, though many, are the one Bread, the one Body, all who eat of the one Bread" (I Cor. x, 17). St. Thomas, commenting on this, says: "St. Paul shows that we are all one in the Mystical Body of Christ." He states the fact of the union and then he gives the reason. "The Holy Eucharist unites us to Christ and unites us as well one to another, makes us 'concorporeal.'"

The Council of Trent declares that Christ willed to make the Eucharist "the symbol of this one only Body of which He is the Head, to which He would have us united as members by the close bonds of faith, hope and charity, even to the point where among ourselves, we would speak the same mind, and know not any divisions." The sacraments effect that which they signify and symbolize. The Eucharist effects both the union of the faithful with Christ and the union of the faithful one with another, in the Mystical Body.

By the Eucharist we are transformed in Christ: we are made members one of another. The Holy Eucharist is, therefore, in a supreme way the sacrament of charity and of love. "O sacrament of filial devotion, O symbol of unity, O bond of charity!" It is of course true, as Billot states, that the habit of charity increases in direct proportion to grace received. Grace is conferred by all the sacraments. The worthy reception of any sacrament brings an increase, therefore, to the habit of charity. But the Eucharist has as its own proper and special end—the increase of the habit of charity and the perfection thereof, whether this habit be viewed in itself or in the exercise thereof.

The Eucharist perfects and strengthens the virtue of charity. It may be regarded as the true remedy for that native tendency towards egoism which leads a man to think of himself as the center of the universe. The Eucharist brings to the heart of man his need to serve others. The Eucharist perfects the exercise of charity, giving fresh impulse to the zeal of those who sacrifice self, sustaining them amidst numberless contradictions, trials and ingratitude.

The object of this charity is God and our neighbor. We readily see now that it is impossible for one truly to love God and not love his neighbor. The second commandment speaks of our neighbor. It is like

unto the first, which speaks of God (Matt. xxii, 38, 39). One cannot separate Christ Jesus from His members or from His Father. The Eucharist obligates us to charity, for charity finds in the Eucharist a new basis and a new food. In His discourse after the Last Supper, our Lord repeatedly recommended it to His disciples. As He asked for the oneness of the faithful with Himself and with His Father, He begged also for their oneness one with another. The latter cannot be without the former, nor the former without the latter. Christian perfection knows its most exact, its fullest expression in this: "that all may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee; that they all may be one in Us" (John xvii, 21).

To receive the Holy Eucharist is to be in communion with the body of the Church: it is to unite oneself through Christ with all the members of the Mystical Body even as they themselves are united to the Head. Consequently, one thus unites himself to the saints in heaven, above all others, to the Blessed Virgin, to the souls in purgatory, to his brothers upon earth, and in a special way to those who, under Christ, are the visible heads of the Church here—the Pope and the Bishops. Hence the usefulness of Holy Communion in giving us the Catholic spirit, the Catholic sense. Hence also the necessity for us who receive Holy Communion to make our feelings with regard to our neighbor square with the charity symbolized in this sacrament. We are one because of the Holy Eucharist. We are pictured as such. There would never be any occasion of making a lie out of what the Holy Eucharist signifies if we would but reap its fruits. Therefore, St. Augustine presses this appeal. "If you would with profit receive the Holy Eucharist, above all else be ye yourselves what It symbolizes. Be united to the Church; be united among yourselves; be the Mystical Body of Christ."

We shall be pardoned for insisting on this social conception of the Eucharist, so familiar to the Fathers and to St. Thomas. It seems to us almost to have disappeared in the shadows of this, our day. Re-read the early Fathers, particularly St. Ignatius, St. Cyprian, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril, St. Augustine, and it is evident that they never separated the unity of Christ with the faithful from the unity of the faithful among themselves. Hence they speak (particularly St. Ignatius and St. Cyprian) of union with the Church and union with the Bishop. Assuredly they meant as do we, Holy Communion, the receiving of the true Body and Blood of our Savior. For them, the Church was inseparable from her Head. So firmly they believed Christ and the Church to be one that they dared not separate what God had joined together. For them Christ and the Church made the one same spiritual personality. The bond of union is the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Spirit. From their understanding of this truth was born their tender, strong, sensitive love for the Church.

For them, then indeed, to receive Holy Eucharist is to be united to Christ—but to the complete Christ, the Head and the members. So in their works this social aspect of the Holy Eucharist parallels and is often

what we want is a religion of
ising, and unless that comes and un-
ess there is a renewal of the spirit
f Christ as against the spirit of the
world in the populations of these na-
ons, it is going to get worse and
orse, and then, through despair,
nly God knows what might happen.
he present government might go
own under that pressure of despair.
Ve don't want that. We love our
ountry.

"Some of the men who have grown
normously wealthy have so stuffed
hemselves with money that they
annot even think. They have lost
ll sense of feeling for their fellow
nan. I do not want to draw on my
ersonal experiences, but going along
n the pages of experience among the
ery rich I have met some that were
oble souls. I would like to name
vo of them, Henry Higginson,
ames J. Storrow. They were two
reat men. These men were enor-
ously wealthy and were the most
enerous hearted souls whom I ever
met in my life. It is not every day
hat I talk as plainly as this, but
ere are two men that Boston can
eally be proud of, and America and
umanity can be proud of them.

"I might mention dozens of things
ainst the rich. There are a great
umber of rich men who ought to
e flogged. They have grown insen-
ible to everything around them.
ome of them are supposed to be
atholics. Don't be hoodwinked.
They are not.

"Some Catholics are wonderful
men. I knew Jim and Nick Brady
nd their sister, Mrs. Farrell. The
vo boys are now dead. There is
ot a Catholic cause in all America
hat the Bradys have not furnished
oney to. So we are able to quote
rom both sides, two noble men who
ere not Catholics in the letter of
he law, but were Catholics in spirit,
nd here is the noble Catholic family
hich devoted its all to the further-
nce of worthy causes.

"On the other hand, I regret to
ay, there are some Catholics who
rose from nothing, and I think some-
imes they are the worst—those who
ave suddenly risen from nothing
and do not know the true value of
oney. They grabbed and grabbed
and grabbed. They never did any-
hing for anybody. They never gave
anything to the Church.

"I know of a case where one of
hem was approached as a matter of
onor, because I felt it would be an
onor, out of his enormous wealth, to
elp one of our institutions for the
eaf and dumb. When this man was
iven the opportunity to come for-
ward with some of the money bags
n which he was sitting and have him
out up a house as a memorial to him,
e practically insulted the priest that
sent there.

"That's what this mechanical in-
ustrial age has brought about. Some
of the great big bankers, heads of
usiness and some of the so-called
merchant princes have been the cause
of this terrible situation. We are not
through with it yet. It has brought
ntold suffering to the world.

"Unless something happens to
make people think less of money and
more of the big things of life, then
Christianity has failed. Christianity
has never failed. This time it will
not fail."

POPE'S MESSAGE CHEERED IN FRENCH CHAMBER

Paris.—The essential passages of
the Sovereign Pontiff's letter appeal-
ing for a charitable crusade to com-
bat the disasters of unemployment
were read in the Chamber of Deputies
in a discussion of the unemploy-
ment crisis in France. Henri Meck,
deputy from the Lower Rhine, secre-
tary general of the Federation of
Independent Unions of Alsace and
Lorraine, asked the chamber to be
inspired by the noble words to work
to help all those who are suffering so
terribly in the present crisis. The
Pope's message was heartily ap-
plauded.

work of Bishop
who was consecrated April 16, 1913.
Bishop Duffy and his people have
built one of the most beautiful Cath-
edrals in the West at Grand Island.
It is a consecrated building.

Many Polish in Diocese

Though the Polish people are not
the majority, they are strongly rep-
resented in the diocese, perhaps
a third of the total. The nam-
ing of an American of Polish ex-
traction as Bishop makes an inter-
esting combination in the hierarchy
of Nebraska. Bishop Rummel of
Omaha is of German descent and
Bishop Kucera, Lincoln, of Bohem-
ian. All three of the Bishops are
American born.

The Grand Island diocese is one
of the group of dioceses in which
The Register enters every home with
a diocesan edition. On behalf of
the editorial staff and its readers, it
extends sincerest felicitations and
the heartiest of welcomes to the dis-
tinguished Chicagoan who has been
selected for the Bishopric.

The date of the consecration has
not yet been announced. The cere-
mony ordinarily occurs on the feast
of an Apostle, unless it is set for
another day by special permission.
Any Sunday is also one of the days
when it can occur, but is rarely
chosen as it would be incon-
venient for visiting clergymen.
Among the days available in the near
future would be January 18, Feast
of St. Peter's Chair at Rome, or
January 25, the Feast of the Con-
version of St. Paul. The ceremony,
though this has not yet been form-
ally announced, will likely be held
at the Holy Name Cathedral, Chi-
cago. The installation at Grand
Island will be held shortly after-
wards. The jurisdiction of a Bishop
begins with his installation.

FEW HOLIDAY CHECKS FROM AMERICA TO IRELAND NOW

Dublin.—This is a thin holiday
season for many poor Irish Catholic
families, particularly in the West,
who used to look forward to receiv-
ing from \$20 to \$200 in Christmas
remittances from relatives in the
United States. Last year saw the be-
ginning of the change brought about
by the world depression. Fewer and
smaller checks reached the Irish
cabins. Money used to be sent home
from America to pay the passages to
the United States of relatives in Ire-
land. This year the position is re-
versed; the money is being sent out
to pay the return passages to Ire-
land of emigrants from Ireland who
have, in the dearth of employment,
failed to earn a living.

LONDON SUBURB NAMES STREET "SAINT ANTHONY"

London.—St. Anthony's road will
in the future be the name of the
thoroughfare in which St. An-
thony's church and the Franciscan
friary at Forest Gate, a London
suburb, are situated. Khedive road
was the former address. Francis-
cans petitioned the West Ham coun-
cil to change the name to mark the
saint's seventh centenary. All the
householders in the street were can-
vassed and 80 out of 120 favored
the change. None opposed it. The
local council gave its unanimous con-
sent.

NOTED IRISH EDITOR WILL WRITE FOR N.C.W.C. PAPERS

Washington.—William H. Bray-
den, distinguished Irish journalist,
has been appointed correspondent
for Ireland of the N.C.W.C. News
Service, it is announced. Mr. Bray-
den was from 1892 to 1916 editor of
The Freeman's Journal. He has also
been Dublin correspondent of the
Associated Press and The Chicago
Daily News in this country, The Uni-
verse in London, and The Month of
Auckland, New Zealand. Mr. Bray-
den succeeds Joseph J. Mooney, who
has been appointed judge advocate
general of the Free State army.