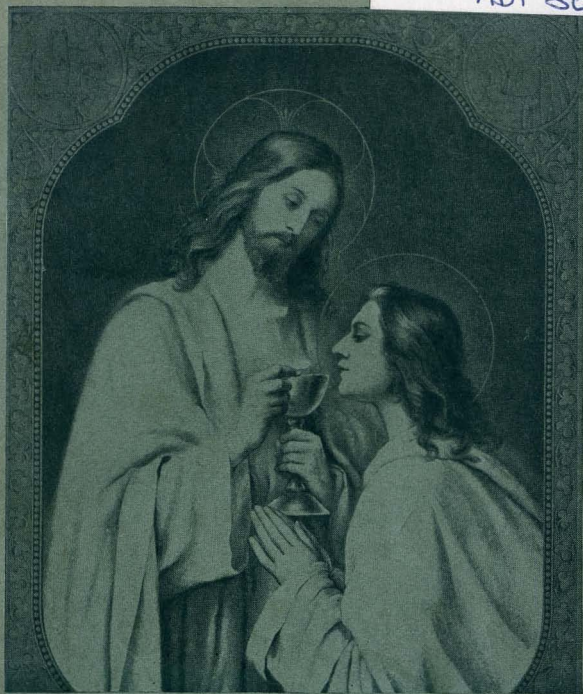


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The Bread of Life
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Bread of Life



The Bread of Life

By Rev. P. Lukas, O. S. B.

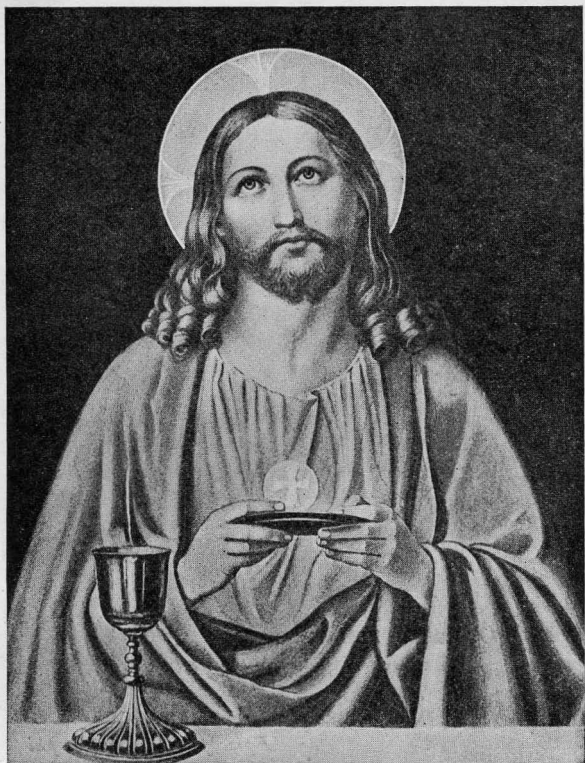
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**Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri**



Jesus, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to heaven unto His Almighty Father, He gave thanks, blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take ye and eat: this is My Body.

— *I Cor. xi. 23-24.*

The Bread of Life

Through Eating, Perdition — Through Eating, Salvation

God created nature in wonderful order and harmony. The supernatural order being the more excellent, must necessarily prove this harmony in a more prominent manner. The first Adam corresponds to the second Adam, the first Eve to the second Eve.

From the tree of Paradise came ruin and defeat, from the tree on Golgotha came salvation and victory; on the tree hung the seducer, on the tree of the Cross was to hang the Redeemer. By eating, man precipitated himself into perdition; by eating he should find salvation. The fruit of perdition was pleasing to the eye; in the fruit of life, faith alone should discover the kernel. The lying promise of the serpent: "Your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods" (Gen. iii. 5), the infinite wisdom of the Lord has mercifully altered through the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist: here the eyes of the soul are truly opened the wider, the longer they gaze at It, and here we shall, as the Church says, "partake of Divinity."

As our first parents by their disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit brought ruin to the human race, so the Son of God, in coming to redeem mankind, gave to us a Food which would bring us life. "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever: and the Bread which I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world. He that eateth

My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day” (John vi. 51, 52, 55).

How we must admire the dispensations of Providence in giving us this precious Food of our souls under the form of bread! Bread is necessary to sustain the life of the body; the heavenly Bread is necessary to sustain the life of the soul. Our Lord’s intention in giving Himself to us under the form of Bread, was to be daily eaten by the faithful. In doing this, in receiving Holy Communion, we comply with our Savior’s burning desire, who has loved us beyond measure. What corporal food is for the body, that will Jesus, the spiritual Bread, be for our souls, the daily source of new strength and new spiritual growth.

“What is sweeter, more precious, and more blissful than this Divine Food?” exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova. “The hungry person partakes thereof and is satiated; the needy receives it, and has his fill; the depressed partakes of it, and is inebriated with heavenly bliss; the just partakes of it, and becomes still more just; the devout penitent partakes of it, and becomes purified; the infirm partakes of it, and receives the grace of spiritual convalescence; the dying person partakes of it, and takes with him the surest pledge of eternal life!”



The Food of Our Soul

THE Holy Eucharist is the most precious treasure of the Catholic Church. When our Divine Lord, sitting by Jacob's well, asked the Samaritan woman to give Him to drink, He took occasion to speak to her of another water of life which He would give. "Ah!" said He, yearning not for her salvation alone, but for that of millions besides, "ah! if thou didst know the gift of God and who He is that saith to thee, give Me to drink, thou wouldst perhaps have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. Whoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give shall not thirst forever" (John iv.).

What is this living and life-giving water of which our Divine Lord speaks? It is the Holy Eucharist, the well-spring of life, at which the soul athirst for God's grace can satisfy its desires to the full. They who drink from it drink from the fountain-head of all grace, and, replenished by those life-giving draughts, they grow day by day in holiness of life, till in the end they pass from thence to a life of everlasting glory with Christ.

At another time Jesus, having fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, was followed next day by an immense crowd expecting He would feed them again

with the bread which perisheth; whereupon He took occasion to discourse to them of the Bread of Life which perisheth not. "Labor not," said He, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die" (John vi. 27, 50).

What is the Bread "which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die?" Our Lord tells us in the words immediately following: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever, and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world. 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. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John 51-55).

Well did our Lord redeem His word of promise. The Bread of Life here spoken of He gave on the eve of His death, when He instituted the Holy Eucharist, leaving His own most precious Body and Blood as a legacy of His love to His followers for all time to come. "And, whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and

gave to His disciples and said : Take ye and eat : This is My Body. And taking the chalice He gave thanks : and gave to them, saying : Drink ye all of this : for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins'' (Matt. xxvi. 26-28).

Divine Food

Thus has our Lord in His all-bounteous goodness provided for our souls a heavenly Food, wherewith they may be nourished unto life everlasting. For our mortal bodies He provided ample and suitable nourishment, making all nature tributary to man, to whom He gave power over every living thing : the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field; so that not a blade of grass springs from the earth but what God quickens into life for the support of His creature, man. Having provided for the perishable body, He provides for the godlike, spiritual, immortal soul, a Divine, a spiritual, an immortal Food, even His own most precious Body and Blood present in the Adorable Eucharist. And, as the body cannot grow or live without being supplied with food suitable for its sustenance, so neither can the soul grow in holiness or maintain its spiritual life, but must languish and die, unless it partake of the Bread of Life in the Holy Eucharist. "Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man

and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54).

By worthily partaking of the Blessed Eucharist we are, body and soul, united with our Lord. This union, if not finally interrupted and broken off by sin, is the forerunner and the pledge of a still closer union with Him in the world to come, of future immortality, in which the body as well as the soul will participate.

More wonderful than that of the body, is the union of the soul with Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, whereby the Christian advances day by day, as by so many steps of a ladder, from grace to grace, and from virtue to virtue, and from glory to glory, "unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13), imitating, though it be at a great distance, the example of Him, of whom it is written, that "He advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man" (Luke ii. 52).

The union of soul and body with our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist, if preserved to the end of life, is the prelude to, and the cause of, our union with Him forever in the glory of His heavenly kingdom, where we shall see Him, not as now, hidden under the sacramental forms, but revealed to us in the fulness of His unclouded glory.

Great Gift of Love

WHO can comprehend the greatness of the love of Jesus? What tongue is capable of praising and magnifying His love as it deserves? Not only did He give us His abiding presence in the Tabernacle to receive our adoration; not only did He place Himself into the hands of the priest to offer Himself for us in a mysterious manner, but He even wished to enter into our very bosom, to dwell within us! Our soul is so dear and precious to Him that He would not only provide for it like a father, protect and enrich it with graces like a benefactor, but He would even enter and repose therein and unite Himself most intimately with it. How did His omnipotence fulfil the desire of His immeasurable love? He prepared for those who love Him a wonderful banquet — He gave Himself to them as food, as nourishment.

In Holy Communion we receive this spiritual nourishment, this Divine Food of our soul, Jesus Christ our Lord and God. We receive Him whole and entire, truly and substantially, with His Divinity and humanity, with Flesh and Blood. We receive Jesus who was born of the Virgin Mary, who lived thirty-three years upon earth, who redeemed us by His Passion and death, who, after

a three days' rest in the grave, rose gloriously from the dead; Him we receive with all He is and has, with the immeasurable treasury of His merits, with the fullness of His graces, with the whole ardor of His love.

Can there be a more precious gift, a more delicious food, than Jesus in Holy Communion? What we there receive exceeds all that human wisdom can conceive, all that the most tender love could expect. To the Holy Eucharist, as food of our souls, may be applied in a special manner the words of St. Augustine: "It is impossible for God to give us more. God is eternal wisdom, yet He knows of nothing higher to give us; God is almighty power, yet He can give us nothing greater."

Had He given us as food the precious fruit from the tree of life in paradise, or the miraculous manna that fell from heaven, the world would have been astounded at such a wonder. But what Jesus gives us in Holy Communion is so infinitely sublime, so infinitely holy, that nothing can be compared to It: It is the Bread of Life, the living Bread that came down from heaven. Our Divine Lord has invited, yea, commanded us, to partake of It: "Take ye and eat: This is My Body" (Matt. xxiv. 26).

His Ardent Craving Appeased

Our Adorable Savior burned with such ardent love for us that, in a certain sense, He could not rest until He had transformed our heart into a crib, in which He could repose; into a throne, from which He could dispense His graces! Then only, after He had given Himself as food to the soul, was His ardent craving satiated. Then had He attained all for which He labored. Then God's dwelling was not only among men, but in man himself! Now in very truth we may call Jesus Christ our "Emmanuel,"—that is, "God with us;" now each of us is truly a "Christopher,"—a "Christ-bearer."

Angels wonder, hell trembles, when a person worthily approaches the Holy Table; when a frail creature receives his Lord and God. Yet, the creature should not be animated by fear when he receives the purest, the holiest One. No; not with timidity, but with confidence and love should he receive Him.

Jesus loves us so much that He, our Lord and God, not only permits us to receive Him, but He even most ardently desires it. He loves us so much that His desire to come into our hearts is greater than our desire for Him. He loves us so much that He offers us the greatest graces, makes the most magnificent promises, and assures us of ever-

lasting life, if we present ourselves at His Table with humility and love. He loves us so much that He commands us most strictly, under penalty of eternal death, to nourish ourselves with His sacred Flesh and Blood. "Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54). In Holy Communion our Divine Savior lavishes His love upon us without measure, without limit!

Intimate Union

THE thoughts and views of those who love each other are most closely united. St. Thomas says, "Those who love each other wish to make but one of themselves." — Jesus loves us infinitely, therefore, His Divine Wisdom devised the most intimate union possible between Himself and us — the union through the reception of His Flesh and Blood.

The food we eat changes itself into our substance; it strengthens, preserves and renews our body. The nourishment we take enters into the most intrinsic union with our body. But when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, He unites Himself far more intimately with our body and our soul. He feeds us with His own Flesh and inebriates us with His own Blood. However, He is not changed into our substance, but we are

changed and transformed into Him. St. Augustine has our Divine Savior speak thus to the soul: "Eat; but not I will be transformed into thee, like earthly food, but thou wilt be transformed into Me."

Jesus Himself declares: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me and I in him" (John vi. 57). What an intimate union! Christ is in man, and man in Him, His Lord and God! As the soul lives and operates in the body, so Christ lives and operates in us, in so far as our free will submits to Him and places no obstacles to His sway.

United to Christ through Holy Communion, the soul may truly say with the apostle: "I live, now, not I: but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20); for He is the soul of our soul, He fills and penetrates it, He absorbs it entirely into Himself. So intimate is this union, that the Heavenly Father beholding it, may say also to us: "This is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

With a mystic writer, we repeat: "Christ unites Himself so closely with us through Holy Communion, that we may say it is He who, in us and through us, adores the Heavenly Father when we adore, sings His praises when we sing, labors when we labor, or suffers when we suffer, for the honor of the Most High." It did not suffice Jesus Christ

to assume one Body in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and to unite Himself to one soul; He wishes to unite Himself bodily and spiritually with all the faithful in a mystical manner, to use them as so many instruments with which to glorify His Father.

To Him, thirty-three years seemed all too short a time to work on earth for the honor of His Father. He wishes to work for Him to the end of time. One mouth, one tongue did not suffice to satisfy His longing to proclaim the praise of the Divine Majesty; one Heart did not suffice Him to love His Eternal Father: He must have every mouth, every tongue, every heart, through which to glorify the admirable perfections of God, to adore Him, to love Him. It did not suffice Him to have offered His life once on Calvary, He wishes to renew this Sacrifice daily on our altars the new Calvary of love.

Nothing Greater; Nothing Holier

Do you now comprehend, Christian soul, how meritorious your works and sufferings become, how precious even your death will be, if you are united to Jesus in Holy Communion, and make His will also your will? Do you realize the value and profit of one single Holy Communion, and to what perfection it raises you, if you do not oppose the Divine operation within you? — Listen to

comparisons from the holy fathers: —

“When two pieces of wax are melted together, one seems to pass over into the other; so also he who eats the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, and drinks His Precious Blood, will, as He Himself has said, be found as one with Him” (St. Cyril). As iron cast into the fire becomes white with heat and assumes all the qualities of fire, without losing its own nature, thus the soul through Holy Communion is penetrated by the power and spirit of God within her, without, however, ceasing to be what she is: a human soul endowed with free will. As the branches are inseparably united to the vine from which they receive the same sap that vivifies the vine, thus in Holy Communion the spirit and life of Jesus pass into the soul, and ennoble and sanctify its works and intentions. “I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit” (John xv. 5).

Can there be anything greater for man on earth, anything holier, anything more blissful, than to receive Jesus living and personally into our soul, and thereby enter into the most intimate, into a wholly incomprehensible union with Him? Can there be a greater proof of love than we experience through the wonderful union with our Lord and God in Holy Communion?

“In no action,” says St. Francis de Sales, “is our Savior more intimate, more loving, than just in this in which, as it were, He annihilates Himself as food, that He may permeate our souls and become one with the hearts of the faithful.”

St. Lawrence Justinian exclaims: “How wonderful, O Lord Jesus, is Thy love, that Thou wouldst so incorporate us into Thyself, as to make us one heart and one soul with Thee!”

Now, Christian soul, being assured that our Lord loves you so unspeakably that He gives Himself to you so intimately, what will you do? Listen to what Jesus Himself requested of His faithful servant, Margaret of Ypres, after Holy Communion; it is meant also for you:— “Behold, My daughter, the beautiful union between thee and Me! Love Me and let us always remain united!”

Means to Glorify God

NO one either in heaven or on earth can worthily praise and love the most High God, except His Son, Jesus Christ who according to His Divinity, is equal to the Father. Ah, could you but realize what great honor you give to God the Father when you receive Holy Communion, and how easily you can thereby supply for all the praise

and honor you have so often neglected to give to God !

Wherever Christ is — and He is in heaven, He is in the Sacrifice of the Mass, in the monstrance, in the ciborium and in the hearts of those who receive Him in Holy Communion — in all these places He praises and loves His Heavenly Father as much as He deserves to be loved. The Father is infinitely well pleased in beholding the beauty and amiability of His Son and in listening to the Divine praises He offers Him.

In order that you may do an infinitely great favor to God the Father, receive Christ into your heart, that God the Father may be truly well pleased in beholding Him in your heart and that He may be worthily praised and loved by Christ present in your heart. When you receive our Lord in Holy Communion, you cause the personal presence of Christ to be multiplied, and God the Father to be praised and honored in your heart by His Son. This special praise and honor would not be given to the Heavenly Father if you did not communicate. Receive our Lord, therefore, with the intention that He may praise and glorify His Father in your heart, and supply for all the praise and honor which you have neglected to give to God. Ah, with what complacency the Heavenly Father will look upon you and also say of you : "This is My

beloved child, in whom I am well pleased!"

Further, you can imagine no more efficacious manner of paying off the debt due to your sins, than by offering to God the Father the merits of Christ, for these are of infinitely greater value than the combined good works of all mankind and of all the saints. After Holy Communion, Christ with all His merits is in your power. Offer, therefore, the merits of our Savior with all confidence to God the Father, and be convinced that, by this offering you can expiate more of your guilt than if you would perform the most severe penance all your lifetime.

Effects of Holy Communion

BY instituting the Most Holy Eucharist, our Savior has taken into account all our weakness and misery, and desired to give us aid. His wisdom has found a remedy to help us; His love has poured out upon us all the treasures of His infinite goodness by giving us His Divine Flesh as food and His Divine Blood as drink. Wonderful are the effects of worthy Communion.

1. *Holy Communion quenches the ardor of concupiscence and conquers the Evil Spirit.* In His wisdom, our Lord has ordained that we receive His virginal Flesh so that our flesh may become purified, and the rigid law

in our members be suppressed. This mysterious Sacrament breaks the power of Satan who seeks to destroy our souls by the deadly arrows of sin. It is a celestial Manna from which, as from a refreshing morning dew, flows the dew of grace, the dew of purity and holiness, which quenches the ardor of sinful propensities. It is the wheat of the elect, the wine that springs forth virgins. It fills the soul with the fire of love that will consume the carnal desires and curb the boldness of all sensual inclinations.

2. *Holy Communion effaces venial sin and preserves us from mortal sin.* Jesus, our Redeemer, is the repairer of human frailty, and as often as we communicate, He purifies our souls from the stains of sin by His Sacred Body and Blood. By the indwelling of Jesus, the fount of holiness, in our souls, sin is driven away, a liberal expiation of temporal punishment effected and the heart filled with holy love.

3. This heavenly Manna, is in truth, the antidote which preserves us from mortal sin and eternal death; it is the germ of immortality. *It restores health to the soul wounded by sin,* and infuses into it a fresh supernatural life. O the marvelous, hidden grace of this vivifying Sacrament, whereby virtue is repaired in the soul, and beauty disfigured by sin, regained!

4. *Holy Communion often imparts health and strength to the body.* When our Lord walked on earth, virtue proceeded from Him in such abundance that every manner of disease fled from those who but touched His garments. Should not disease flee from us who are so happy not only to touch His garments but even to receive His most holy Flesh into our bosom? Truly, so great at times is the grace imparted in Holy Communion that from the abundance of devotion bestowed, not only the mind, but the frail body also feels strengthened and renewed.

5. We can never fully comprehend the *abundant fruit, the marvelous spiritual gifts* that stream forth from the worthy reception of this most Holy and august Sacrament. At this fountain and source of grace, sinners are reconciled with God, the just become more perfect, the angels are rejoiced, merits are accumulated, vices are removed and virtue increased; the treachery of the evil one is baffled, the sick become well, those who have fallen arise, and by the efficacy of this Sacrament, the faithful departed are released.

6. *Jesus unites us with Himself in Holy Communion, and rejoices our souls with heavenly bliss.* He desires to change us into Himself, to transform us wholly into Him. He places His loving Heart on our heart, and fills it with holy love, so that we have but one

soul, one life with Him. Truly, in no other action does Jesus appear more lovable, than in annihilating and transforming Himself into food, in order to permeate our whole being and unite our heart and body most closely with His.

7. The Adorable Sacrament is *spiritual sweetness tasted in its fountain*, for It contains the holiest of the holy, the love of all loves, the sweetness of all that is most ravishing and delightful. Mortal tongue can never express the depths of heavenly joys, the marvelous bliss, the unspeakable delights that ravish pure souls who approach this banquet of the Lord. Sweet hymns of gratitude rise from their hearts, joyous thanksgiving resounds in their souls, when the Delight of angels becomes their guest. O delicious feast, at which angels assist, refresh and satiate our souls by thy wonderful sweetness!

8. *The worthy reception of Holy Communion is also the pledge of our glorious resurrection.* Our loving Redeemer solemnly and clearly gave us the assurance: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 55). Death will have no sting for him who is preserved with this Divine Body; the grave cannot conquer him who is inebriated with this Precious Blood. Jesus the eternal beauty and splendor of the Father is indeed our resurrection and our life.

Cause of Our Glorious Transformation

The Heavenly Father

THE priest administers to you the Holy Eucharist, but He who really gives you this Divine Food is the Heavenly Father. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). In Holy Communion you receive the Son of God, of the same substance with the Father. You therefore receive the eternal, the infinite, the Holy God full of love and mercy.

Why does the Heavenly Father give you this precious nourishment? For the sake of your soul; to prepare it for heaven, that through grace and mercy you may become a child of God. The Heavenly Father gives you God, because God wishes to fill your soul entirely in eternity. Your understanding shall be enlightened by the truth and wisdom of God, and the superabundance of God's love shall be poured into your will. You in God and God in you!

The Blessed Virgin Mary

What do you receive in Holy Communion? The Body and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. "My Flesh is meat indeed: and My Blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 56). Who gives you the Flesh and Blood of Jesus? Mary, the Mother of God. For Jesus received His Flesh and Blood not from His Father, but

from His Mother. For what purpose do you receive the Flesh and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ? That by the Flesh and Blood of Christ your own flesh and blood may be ennobled and sanctified; that your flesh, O man, may be worthily prepared for heaven.

What then, must heaven be, that God thus prepares our souls and our bodies! What must be our future glory there! How wonderfully shall we one day be transformed!

Bond of Charity

THIS is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). When did Jesus speak these words? After the institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament, after administering Holy Communion.

In Holy Communion, Christ wishes to impart the fruits of Redemption personally to each individual soul. Not only to intimate and worthy friends like the apostles at the Last Supper does He give Himself as Food, but to everyone who comes to His Table. He makes no distinction between prince and beggar; He does not regard beauty, education or riches; He does not search the previous life and merits of the communicant, nor does He remember the sins of his past life if only they have been cancelled by penance. He comes

to each soul with all His merits and gifts; He comes with a love so tender and so great as only His Divinely-human Heart can contain; and in spite of all the coldness, indifference,



Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, come, let us adore!

contempt, irreverence and insults of which men make themselves guilty against this Holy Sacrament, He does not withdraw the Legacy of His Love.

Behold! this magnanimous example of love is effected day by day before our eyes; we experience it in our own person, we perceive it

in our soul at each Holy Communion. Through Holy Communion, our Divine Savior wishes to unite all the faithful; therefore He invites them to a Banquet of which He Himself is the Host and Food. In astonishment St. Augustine exclaims: "O Sacrament of mutual love! O sign of unity! O bond of Christian charity!"

Oh, the lessons of charity imparted by the Holy Eucharist! Through the frequent reception of Holy Communion our love of God and of our neighbor should grow more and more. But let us not forget that we are commanded to love also our enemies and those who have offended us. Even pious souls often find it difficult to forgive a slight offense! It may at times, seem a very great sacrifice even for saints to love their enemies, but in the Holy Eucharist they find strength.

"Everything Depends on This"

MONSEIGNEUR Doutrelox, Bishop of Liege, at the Eucharistic Congress of Paris in 1888, related the following: "In December, 1887, I had recourse to Don Bosco,* in order to secure a foundation of his society in my episcopal city. 'Your Grace,' he answered, 'the fact that Liege is the city

* Ven. John Bosco was founder of the Salesian Society. His zealous labors for poor boys in Turin, Italy were blessed with admirable fruit. The influence of his piety drew thousands to the Blessed Sacrament.

of the Blessed Sacrament, has induced me to consider your request in preference to many others which of late have been made. Wherever my religious go they make it their duty to promote devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially to encourage the practice of frequent Communion.' Then he added in a tone of deepest conviction, which one must have heard in order to understand: *Everything depends on this.*

"Everything depends on this. I shall never forget these words of the greatest reformer of the laboring classes in our present times. These words enlightened me more in a single moment, than anything else that I see or hear. Yes, my brethren, let us imitate the example of this holy man and profit by his words. Truly, everything depends on this: for this is true life."

Holy Communion is prayer. To pray, means to draw down the grace of God upon us, and to communicate, means to possess God Himself with all the treasures of His merciful kindness. Holy Communion is prayer in its highest power and greatest intensity.

Holy Communion is a shield against sin. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "Sin is a kind of spiritual death to the soul." We protect our bodies against natural death by preserving our strength by means of food and remedies; we defend it from exterior attacks by means of

armors and weapons. Likewise the Holy Eucharist is a nourishment, a remedy, and an armor against the attacks of the devil.

Holy Communion is purity. The chaste Flesh of Jesus Christ is the most efficacious remedy against the passion of impurity. "The insatiable desire for pleasure," says Leo XIII, "consumes mankind in our days; from their very youth they are a prey to this contagious disease. But the Divine Eucharist offers us a most efficacious remedy against this terrible evil."

Holy Communion is the spirit of sacrifice. It requires sacrifice. How many little victories must not the communicant gain over himself until he reaches the Holy Table! He must rise earlier, perform more acts of devotion, go to church, carefully purify his heart, combat human respect, the indifference of parents and friends, etc. In Holy Communion, especially, we perceive the call of Jesus to greater, interior fidelity in our daily duties, to a more perfect self-denial, and to a more generous practice of charity.

Holy Communion is consummate and perfect faith. The person who communicates frequently, proves that he is not satisfied with a general observance of his religion, but accepts it in its fullest purport; he recognizes its most mysterious dogma, he lives its most interior life, he makes one of its most grace-

giving exercises, viz., the love and veneration of the Blessed Sacrament, his own. Each Holy Communion vivifies in him the hidden strength of the supernatural grace received in baptism, and especially does this Mystery of Faith increase in him faith and love.

Holy Communion is perseverance. Be convinced, that without Holy Communion there will be only a wavering between courage and weakness, between virtue and sin; but true strength, unconquerable strength is the portion of every Christian in whom Jesus Christ dwells continually, by virtue of frequent or daily Communion.

Conditions for Holy Communion

IT is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Holy Church, that the faithful receive Holy Communion daily or at least as often as possible, because in Holy Communion we receive our Lord really and truly, with His Soul and Body, His Humanity and Divinity. By means of this wonderful Sacrament we are most intimately united with our Lord. God is in us and we are in God.

1. For frequent and daily Communion not more is required than for a monthly or yearly Communion.

In the Decree of December 20, 1905, Pope Pius X clearly and definitely laid down the

requirements for frequent or daily Communion. There are but two conditions :

a) *To be free from mortal sin.*

b) *To have a right and devout intention.*

2. It is, therefore, not necessary that one who communicates frequently or daily, be exempt from fully deliberate venial sins, although it is expedient. Frequent and daily Holy Communion is the most excellent means to purify ourselves from deliberate venial sins.

3. The right and devout intention which is required for receiving Holy Communion consists in approaching the Holy Table not through habit or custom, nor through human respect or vanity, but for the purpose of pleasing God, or of obtaining strength to shun sin and to overcome our passions, or of acquiring treasures for heaven, or of becoming one with Jesus Christ.

4. Human motives would only then be an obstacle to a worthy Communion, if they were the principal or sole reason for our communicating. A person receiving Holy Communion from such a motive would be a hypocrite. If we are disturbed by a thought of vanity, we should disregard it and quietly approach the Holy Table. We should not abstain from Holy Communion through fear of communicating out of custom, otherwise we should never be at peace and timid souls would always feel bewildered. Holy Communion is intended

to give peace of heart, not to cause confusion.

5. How often should I go to confession, and how much time should I spend in preparation for Holy Communion ?

No one may ever receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin. Persons who go to Holy Communion frequently during the week, are as a rule preserved from mortal sin, for this is a fruit of frequent or daily Communion. Such persons usually confess once a week or fortnight. Many devout persons, who go to Holy Communion daily, seldom fall into deliberate venial sins. Such souls may be at peace, even if they go to confession only every three or four weeks.

A devout preparation and fervent thanksgiving will be a most powerful factor to receive the Divine grace abundantly in Holy Communion. But not to have sufficient time to make a long preparation or thanksgiving is no reason to prevent one from receiving Holy Communion. The best preparation is a pure heart.

6. It is advisable to ask our confessor's advice with regard to frequent or daily Communion. He will gladly permit frequent or daily Communion to those who strive to lead a virtuous life and desire to communicate with a good intention.

How grateful should we not feel to Holy Church, which, through the saintly Pope

Pius X, has opened the Tabernacle for us, and made the frequent or daily reception of Holy Communion depend only upon the fulfilment of the two above mentioned conditions!

Frequent Holy Communion

IF you wish to go to heaven, frequently receive the holy sacraments; go to Holy Communion very often, even every day, if possible.

Who desires your frequent and daily Communion?

1. *Our Savior Jesus Christ.* — “He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life” (John vi. 55).

2. *Holy Church* which, by the decree of Pope Pius X, says in the name of Jesus Christ: “All the faithful, married or single, young or old, even children from the time of their first Communion are invited to go to Holy Communion frequently, yea, daily.”

3. *The saints* exhort us to do so by word and example. St. Augustine says, “You sin daily, communicate daily.”

4. *Your own welfare.* — Especially your spiritual welfare. Cost what it may, you must save your soul; and frequent, yea, daily Holy Communion is the principal means to preserve your faith and your Christian morals.

Even your temporal interests: peace and

unity in the family, progress and prosperity in your various undertakings, success in the bringing up of children : all these advantages are obtained by frequent Communion. Everything depends on God's blessing; this you receive at the Table of the Lord. There you become united with Him. There He will grant you everything you desire. Therefore, receive Holy Communion several times a week, or even daily : for the Sovereign Pontiffs and the Council of Trent repeat again and again, "As often as you assist at Holy Mass receive Holy Communion."

Are you surprised at this? You may well be; but the saints, the Popes and Holy Church exhort us and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself desires it. Therefore, be not deterred from the frequent reception of Holy Communion.

Objections

1. *I am not worthy.* — "No one is worthy," answers St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, "but we are much in need of Holy Communion for the salvation of our souls."

2. *I am not pious enough.* — You will become so.

3. *I do not think myself sufficiently prepared.* Only two things are required for frequent Communion : To be in the state of grace and to communicate with a right and pious intention, that is, to be free from mortal sin and

to approach the Holy Table for the honor of God and the salvation of your soul.

4. *I have no time.* — God has given you time, mainly for the purpose of sanctifying yourself. We can find time if we wish. Where there is a will there is a way. Make an attempt to complete your work somewhat sooner. Take the trouble to rise half an hour earlier and you will find time.

5. *But every day is too often.* — Our Divine Lord through Holy Church tells you it is not too often. To whom will you listen? Why not obey the voice of God?

6. *Others do not go to Communion.* — That is their affair. You must save your soul and preserve it pure and spotless.

7. *I will have to go to confession too often.* If you have had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, yes, go; otherwise frequent confession is not obligatory.

8. *I commit so many faults.* — For that very reason you must communicate often, and your faults will gradually diminish.

9. *I do not wish to be a devotee.* — Surely not; but you must be a pious, zealous, chaste Christian; to be so, you must go to Holy Communion often.

10. *Temptations prevent me.* — By virtue of Holy Communion you will overcome temptations. Do not be scrupulous. It is a sin to yield to temptation, but the temptation itself

is no sin. We must suffer temptations. To conquer them means for you new glory in the kingdom of heaven. Holy Communion will give you strength and courage.

11. *I shall remain virtuous without Holy Communion.* — It may be, but you will become more virtuous and perfect by frequent Communion. Beware of danger: not to go forward in the way of virtue means to go backward.

12. *What will people say of me?* — Are you a slave of human respect? Do what is right and let others say what they please.

13. *I cannot resist my passions.* — Without the assistance of grace, no; with the assistance of grace, yes; “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 13). Approach the Table of the Lord to obtain grace.

14. *I shall not persevere in frequent and daily Communion.* — How long have you still to live? All will end well if frequent, worthy Communion has become a deeply rooted custom.

15. *I am married and have many cares.* — An additional reason to obtain the courage necessary to bring up and educate children and to lead them on the way to heaven; for this frequent Holy Communion is necessary.

16. *I shall communicate through routine.* — Vain fear. That depends entirely on yourself; do well whatever you do; fulfil the duties of

your state in life as preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion.

17. *I make no progress on the way of perfection in spite of my Communions.* — You imagine this because you do not feel it: with every Holy Communion you receive sacramental grace.

18. *I do not feel attracted to frequent or daily Communion.* — We do not love what we do not know. Make a trial and you will experience its good effects.

19. *My confessor does not say anything to me about frequent Communion and I never hear much about it in sermons.* — Frequent Communion is spoken of frequently; pious books and periodicals invite you to its practice. A great number of priests recommend frequent and daily Holy Communion. The permission of your confessor is not even necessary; but you ought to ask his advice. He cannot refuse permission if the two conditions, the state of grace and right intention, are not wanting.

20. *My parents and superiors will oppose my frequent Communions.* — They would indeed be poorly instructed parents and superiors. They have no right to make objections. Believe the Pope, who is your highest superior and your highest spiritual father.

21. *My child is too young to go to Holy Communion so often.* — Our Lord says: "Suf-

fer the little children to come unto Me." The passions must be combated and subdued from tenderest childhood. Frequent and daily Communion is an infallible means for accomplishing this.

22 *Children are so unruly, they have not yet sufficient understanding.* — It is true, children are naturally frivolous, but in order to correct this fault and make them virtuous, they must be encouraged to go to Holy Communion frequently. The priest will give them the necessary instructions.

23. *You wish that all become priests and religious.* — Vocation to the religious and sacerdotal state is a gift of God; daily Communion, as a rule, does not change our vocation, but fits us all the better for our future calling. We certainly need good fathers and mothers and excellent Catholic citizens: Holy Communion is the wonderful means to produce them.

24. *I live too far from church, I have so much to do, and the weather is often so unfavorable.* — Exert yourself, learn to bring sacrifices. Jesus suffered so much for the salvation of your soul. If, however, it is impossible for you actually to receive Holy Communion, at least make an act of spiritual Communion.

25. *I approach the Table of the Lord once a month; that is sufficient.* — Away with those

old Jansenistic ideas and errors; endeavor to be more intent on doing good, but the greatest, highest, most fruitful and lasting good for you and your neighbor is the reception of Holy Communion. In the Christian's life Holy Communion is everything. To go to Holy Communion means: to pray, to resist sin, to recover and preserve purity, to sacrifice oneself, to have a firm faith and to live up to it, and to persevere in the state of grace. Holy Communion constitutes our heaven in this world and is the pledge of our happiness in the next.

Take these words to heart, communicate often and by your good example lead others to frequent Communion.

Remember His Unspeakable Love

WHEN receiving Holy Communion, Saint Mechtilde was accustomed to meditate diligently upon the Passion of Christ, because our Lord said, when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament: "Do this for a commemoration of Me," and when she asked our Lord to explain these words to her, she was taught by the Holy Ghost as follows: "The words: 'Do this for a commemoration of Me,' are to be understood thus:—

"First: *The eternal love*, with which God loved us, even before we existed; God, who

although He foresaw all our frailty and infidelity, nevertheless, mercifully created us according to His image and likeness, wherefore we should justly thank Him.

“Secondly : *The immeasurable love*, with which the Son of God, although He was in the glory of the Father, inclined His infinite majesty to our indigence, to us, who languish in the bonds of Adam; and, with unspeakable patience, suffered hunger, cold, heat, fatigue, sadness, contempt, and the most painful death of the Cross, that He might free us from our poverty.

“Thirdly : *The unfathomable love*, with which God beholds us each moment and preserves us with fatherly care, so that He who is our Creator, our Lord, and most loving Brother, continually intercedes for us with His Father, and represents our needs as a faithful advocate and administrator.

When we receive Holy Communion it is well for us to remember these three points.

“Father, I am Hungry”

ST. Catherine of Siena communicated daily. When, in obedience to her spiritual director, she once abstained from Holy Communion, she suffered the severest pains in all her members, for the union of her body with the Sacred Body of

our Lord Jesus Christ, was her health and strength. Among all her directors, Raymond of Capua, afforded her the greatest consolation, because he always permitted her to communicate daily. In a burst of fervor she often said to him, "Father, I am hungry, for God's sake give my soul nourishment."

One day Catherine had recourse to several priests, all of whom refused to give her Holy Communion because frequent Communion was not customary at that time. She humbly begged the Mass server to ask the priest to give her Holy Communion, but he refused even to tell him. She waited, however, with holy longing, and behold, our Divine Lord Himself, with His own hand gave her His Sacred Body. Before Holy Communion she usually sobbed and wept, and it was impossible for her to conceal her emotion. Pope Gregory IX granted her the favor, that at all times and wherever she might be, a priest could offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and give her Holy Communion.

Vehement Desire

Immediately after her conversion St. Catherine of Genoa was seized with a vehement desire for Holy Communion. She begged for permission to communicate daily, and our Divine Lord Himself inspired her

director to grant her this favor. He even deigned to testify by a number of miracles how pleasing this practice was to Him; for, often when the privilege was denied her and Catherine was afflicted thereat, the priest would summon her to approach the Holy Table. When she did not communicate, she felt an unspeakable sadness and such spiritual and bodily dejection, that it was feared she would die.

This same saint envied no one on earth but priests, who daily consecrate, handle and receive the Blessed Sacrament. She would willingly have traveled miles on foot in order to be able to receive her Lord. And she really did walk an hour every morning to receive Holy Communion during the time an interdict rested on the city of Genoa: the greatness of her love made her forget all weariness and fatigue.

Help for Imperfect Souls

Marceau, the captain of a French battleship, received Holy Communion daily towards the end of his life. The crew became indignant at this. One day the captain assembled them and said, "You should rejoice instead of murmuring, because if I did not communicate daily, I would cast you overboard at your least offense" (the captain was naturally quick-tempered). We often complain about

the small faults of those who communicate daily, but we do not think of the great sins into which they would fall were they to omit Holy Communion.

How We Can Find Time

General de Sonis, who died Aug. 15, 1887, himself related how he found time to receive Holy Communion even during his military expeditions. "During our expeditions in the French-German war," he writes to a friend, "when galloping through towns or villages early in the morning, if we (he and his friend, Captain Robert) notice a church tower, we both alight, enter the church, and ask a priest to give us Holy Communion. Having received the Blessed Sacrament, we remount our horses, for the time is not at our disposal, and make our thanksgiving in the saddle during our march..."

Does not such zeal put to shame the lukewarmness of so many Christians, who fear to spend a short half hour or even fifteen minutes for our Lord, under the pretext that they have no time? Why has God given us time, if not for His service? Or is there anything more important than to work for the salvation of our soul?

Christian people, Christian youth, let this be your firm resolution, to approach the Holy Table daily or as often as possible, and you

will bless the day on which you have heeded the voice of Holy Church.

Fear of Frequent Communion

Once when St. Mechtilde was praying for a person who feared to communicate often, our Lord said to her: "The oftener a person washes himself with water, the cleaner he will be. The oftener a person communicates, the more I operate in him and he in Me, and his works will be made great. The more diligently a man communicates, the deeper he will be immersed in Me, and the purer his soul will become. The oftener the depth of My Divinity penetrates his soul, the more it will be expanded and become capable of receiving My Divinity."

The Proper Exterior Conduct at the Communion-Railing

(Instructions of an Aged Pastor to First Communicants)

LET all things be done decently and according to order," says St. Paul (1. Cor. xiv. 40). "These same words I address to you, dear children, regarding your exterior conduct at the communion-railing. Not only at your first Communion, but whenever you approach the Holy Table: 'Let all things be done decently and according to order.'

"During the forty-six years of my minis-

try, I have distributed Holy Communion to thousands of persons in various places, and have had all sorts of experiences which I shall now enumerate.

“Some of the communicants manifested by their manner of behavior that they had not forgotten the instructions given them at the time of their first Communion. They conducted themselves with such decorum and order, that I was touched and edified. But with a great many others I noticed that the training they had received in their youth, was followed only partly or not at all. The following are some of the faults which I have noticed in them.

Improper Way

“Some kept their gloves on, others placed their hands above the communion-cloth or under it without raising it up; others, again, held up the cloth, but in the form of a slanting roof, instead of in the form of a table. Many kept their head bowed so far, that I was obliged to stoop low in order to see their mouth; others scarcely opened their mouth and drew back their tongue instead of placing it on the lower lip; others, again opened their mouths entirely too wide, and extended almost the full length of their tongue. Many drew back their tongue rapidly, before the Sacred Host could be properly placed on it;

then there were some who moved their head towards the Sacred Host, whereby it easily happens that the Sacred Host touches the teeth; others let their tongue tremble or moisten the priest's finger with it; and some even kneel there with eyes wide open, staring into the face of the priest, which certainly presents a disagreeable sight.

“And now, dear children, in order to preserve you from these faults, I will briefly give you the necessary instructions on this matter. I sincerely hope that the careful observance of these points at every Communion, may be for you a happy remembrance of your first Holy Communion.

Proper Way

“It is the desire of Mother Church, that we approach the Holy Table without gloves, and we should always consider the wish of the Church a command. Furthermore, girls and women should not wear such immensely large hats: modesty in clothing and deportment, is what the Church desires at all times. The Church does not adapt herself to fashion.

“The communion-cloth is for the purpose that if ever the Sacred Host should happen to drop from the priest's fingers, it would not fall on one's garments or on the floor, but would rest on the cloth; therefore the

communion-cloth should be held in the form of a table under the chin.

“The head should be held erect, not bowed down. The smaller a person is, the more necessary it is that he hold his head erect, in order that the priest can easily see his mouth.

“The tongue should not be extended too far, as that is very unbecoming, nor kept too far within the mouth, but it should rest on the lower lip, the tip slightly forward.

“The mouth should not be opened too wide, yet far enough to leave sufficient space between the tongue and upper teeth, so that the Sacred Host may easily be placed on the tongue.

“The eyes should be modestly cast down; but they should not be forcibly closed.

“As soon as we feel the Sacred Host resting on our tongue, we should draw it back quietly, and slowly close our mouth, without bringing the communion-cloth to our mouth.

Precaution

“Should it ever happen to any of you that the Sacred Host falls on the communion-cloth, remain perfectly calm, and hold the cloth quiet, in order that the priest can easily take it up again. In case the Sacred Host should fall on the floor, the priest would be obliged to purify that spot afterwards.

“Be careful not to keep the Sacred Host in your mouth too long, and should it adhere to the palate, loosen it gently with your tongue, but without being excited.

“After receiving the Sacred Host avoid spitting until you have taken food or drink; this, however, should not be done before the lapse of fifteen minutes.

“I conclude, dear children, by repeating what I said before, that the conscientious observance of these instructions, may ever be for you a happy remembrance of your first Holy Communion. Thus you will always comply at the Holy Table with the admonition of the apostle: ‘Let all things be done decently and according to order.’”

Efficacy of Spiritual Communion

SPIRITUAL Communion is an ardent desire for a loving, spiritual union with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. In spiritual Communion we make an act of lively faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and in the infinite love with which He desires to unite Himself to us; we then desire with humble confidence for union with Him, and receive Him spiritually as we would actually receive the Blessed Sacrament. Afterwards we thank and praise our amiable Savior.

Spiritual Communion produces effects similar to actual Communion.

The fruits of spiritual Communion correspond to the degree of faith and the intensity of one's desire and love. A spiritual Communion received with a lively faith and ardent desire, will produce richer fruits, greater graces, and will be far more pleasing to God, than many a sacramental Communion received with lukewarmness.

Great doctors of the spiritual life highly recommend the practice of frequent spiritual Communion. St. Alphonsus Liguori writes: "I exhort each one who desires to increase in the love of Jesus to communicate in this manner, at least once a day: when he visits the Blessed Sacrament, as also at every Holy Mass." In some religious communities it is customary for the religious to make a spiritual communion at every hour of the day.

This devotion is far more salutary than many imagine, and at the same time it is easily practiced. "For," says St. Johanna of the Cross, "without being noticed, without having previously fasted, a person may communicate spiritually as often as he desires: only an act of love is required."

"O my God!" exclaimed Bl. Angela of the Cross, "how beautiful it is to communicate spiritually, without being noticed, without troubling a confessor; for we depend on no

one but on Thee who dost nourish our soul in solitude and dost speak to our hearts!"

The Two Precious Vessels

God Himself has frequently made known to pious souls, how pleasing it is to Him if we receive Him spiritually. St. Alphonsus relates that our Savior once appeared to Sister Paula Mareska and showed her two precious vessels, one of gold, the other of silver. "Your sacramental Communions I preserve in the golden vessel," said our Lord, "your spiritual Communions in the silver one."

It was likewise revealed to Ven. Johanna of the Cross that with every spiritual Communion God grants a grace similar to the one He bestows in sacramental Communion.

Spiritual Communion is the best preparation for actual Communion; it is the most efficacious means to enable us to receive our Lord sacramentally with greater benefit. Who could doubt this? St. Gertrude once asked our Savior: "O God, how can I worthily approach Thee, who with such generous goodness dost come to me?" Our Lord replied: "I desire nothing else but that thou come wholly empty to Me, that I may fill thee entirely, because from Me thou receivest everything that makes thee pleasing in My eyes."

The more a soul hungers and thirsts for God in this Divine Sacrament, the more

abundantly will she be refreshed. "God thirsts to be thirsted for." The larger the vessel with which one comes to the well, the more water will he draw therefrom. Likewise, the more frequent our spiritual Communions, — the more plentiful will be the graces we receive in actual Holy Communion.

"The desire and hunger for this Celestial Bread, which is one of the most excellent dispositions, increases with the taste and experience of Communion. The more frequently we receive It, the oftener shall we desire It, and the oftener shall we receive It worthily."

— *Louis of Granada.*

"He who keeps away from Communion because he is tepid and cold, resembles one who should say: I do not approach the fire, because I am cold; I do not wish for a physician, because I am sick."

— *Gerson.*

"The principal effect of this Sacrament is the preservation of the life of grace within us. It is called the 'Celestial Bread,' because It preserves the life of the soul, which is the grace of God, in the same way as earthly food preserves the life of the body."

— *St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

"O my soul, how great thou art, since nothing less than God can satisfy thee! The food of the soul is the Body and Blood of God! O admirable Food! If we considered it, it would make us lose ourselves in that abyss of love for all eternity."

— *St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars.*

Mass Devotion in Honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Good Intention

G MY God, I offer to Thee this Holy Mass through the hands of the priest, together with all the Holy Masses which are now being celebrated throughout the whole world. In union with this oblation, I offer to Thee also all the Holy Masses of the past and future, all the prayers and good works which are performed in the whole world, as also the praises and merits of the saints. All this I offer to Thee for Thy eternal glory, for myself and all mankind, and for the holy souls in purgatory, O ye dear holy angels and saints, especially you, dear guardian angels, present in this church, pray for us and for the poor souls.

At the Confiteor

Almighty God, present in the Most Holy Sacrament! my faith tells me that Thou hast erected Thy throne of love and mercy here in the Tabernacle, and that Thou hast invited all to come to Thee with their needs and petitions. Thy voice of grace invites us daily: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you; I will lighten your cross and fill you with consolation."

Trusting in Thy gracious invitation, I humbly kneel before Thy throne of grace to ask pardon for my sins. O good God! shame and contrition fill my heart, for I am a sinner and have often offended Thee, my God and Father. Have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy, and forgive me my sins, my great sins, and wash away my iniquities, that I may adore Thee with a pure heart. Glory be to Thee, O Father! Glory be to Thee, O Son! Glory be to Thee, O Holy Ghost, now and forever! Amen.

At the Gloria

O holy angels, ye princes of heaven, ye thrones and dominations! let us love, praise and adore our God in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Let us thank Him that He abides also with us on earth even to the end of time. Intone the heavenly anthem of praise which you sang at the birth of the Savior of the world, and sing with holy joy: Glory be to God on high; peace on earth to men; adoration to our God in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar!

At the Collect and Epistle

Eternal God, I cry to Thee from the depths of my heart; let my prayer ascend before Thy holy face, and do not disdain my petitions. Give me all that is needful for my soul's salvation, and listen also to the prayers of all

those who are here assembled for Thy honor, and with the priest offer to Thee this Sacrifice of praise.

O God! in this Sacrament Thou art all love toward man. But, alas! how little Thou art loved by us in return! Forgive the sins which I have committed through lukewarmness and sloth in presence of this Holy Sacrament. I offer to Thee this Holy Mass as a Sacrifice of petition, and exclaim from the inmost of my heart: Praised, blessed and adored be the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar now and forever!

At the Gospel

In the Mystery of the Altar Thou, O Jesus, art our daily Sacrifice and the Food of our soul. Not only in life wouldst Thou give us Bread from heaven, but also as a Viaticum on our journey into eternity, so that, in all truth, we could say: God has loved us to the end; yes, eternally has God loved us, for whoever eats this Bread shall live forever. I thank Thee, O my good God and Father, for the precious and Divine gift which Thy Son has bequeathed to us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I thank Thee for all the graces which are imparted to all mankind by the reception of this Sacrament. In thanksgiving for this priceless benefit, I offer to Thee in this Holy Mass the same priceless

gift which Thy love has conferred on us. I offer Thee Thy Divine Son with Body and Soul, Flesh and Blood, with His Divinity and Humanity: just as He gives Himself to us. To Thee be thanksgiving, praise, benediction and honor, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom we believe to be truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist.

At the Offertory

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless His holy Name! What shall I give to Thee, my God, who hast given Thy Son to die on the Cross for me? All that I have is insufficient; therefore, dearest Father, graciously accept these gifts of bread and wine, and through Thy omnipotent power and by the prayer of the priest, let them be changed into the Flesh and Blood of Thy Divine Son, so that this precious Sacrifice may redound to Thy honor and glory.

O God, have mercy on us and bless us who humbly prostrate in spirit before the throne of Thy mercy. Deign to receive us all in heaven who here unite our hearts in supplication to Thee. O Father, exclude none from Thy blessed reward, since we all enclose ourselves in the Heart of Jesus. Hear our prayers, O God, and let our cry come unto Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

At the Preface

Praise the Lord, ye angels of heaven, praise our God, ye hosts of angels, and extol the Lamb of God, which is now being offered on the altar to the Eternal Father. Thou, too, my soul, ascend to God, the Most High, rejoice with holy joy, and unite thy praise with the angelic spirits, with all the saints of heaven, and praise God for His mercy, especially for His wondrous invention of Love, the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Yes, my God, I will extol Thy mercies, for Thou hast instituted a sacred memorial of Thy wonders. Thou givest us heavenly Food, therefore it is but meet and just that heaven and earth thank Thee, praise Thee and adore Thee. With the choirs of angels, with Mary the Queen of angels, I unite my voice and exclaim: Holy! holy! holy! Lord God of hosts! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!

At the Elevation

My Lord and my God!

Adoration of the Sacred Host

O Divine Jesus, I adore Thee under the form of bread as my God and my all, my Redeemer and Savior. Jesus, for Thee I live! Jesus, for Thee I die! Jesus, I am

Thine in life and in death! Jesus, have mercy on me and be gracious to me!

Adoration of the Precious Blood

Most merciful Jesus, I adore Thy sacred, Precious Blood here present under the form of wine in the chalice. True Blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the Tree of the Cross for the salvation of the sinful world, cleanse me from my sins and iniquities.

After the Elevation

O Heavenly Father, through the hands of the priest, I offer to Thee the Body and Blood of Thy Son, with all the merits of His life, Passion and death.

O excess of love! What may I not hope to obtain from such a Divine Son, and through such a Son! I entreat Thee, Heavenly Father, never let me receive this Divine Sacrament unworthily, but always with holy sentiments and proper preparation.

Jesus, present here upon the altar as God and Man, I believe in Thee. O Jesus, true Sacrifice of propitiation, I hope in Thee. O Jesus, God of love, I love Thee! O Jesus, be gracious and merciful to me a poor sinner. Amen.

Memento for the Dead

Remember, O Lord, the souls of the faithful departed, especially those for whom I am

obliged to pray, as also those who devoutly venerated the Blessed Sacrament, or zealously promoted Its honor, and who are now detained in purgatory, deprived of the vision of Thy countenance. In virtue of this Holy Sacrifice, and through the intercession of Holy Church, deliver them from their place of torment, and receive them into the abode of peace and joy. Amen.

At the Pater Noster

Say slowly and devoutly the "Our Father," reflecting on the words, "Give us this day our daily bread" — the Bread of our soul, the Bread of Life.

Before Holy Communion

O Adorable Jesus! who can comprehend the immensity of the love which constrains Thee to dwell amongst us in the Blessed Sacrament, and to dispense Thy graces so liberally! Thou dost conceal Thy Godhead under the appearance of bread, that we may approach without fear to receive Thy sacred Body as the food of our soul. Thy love even invites us to come and partake of this heavenly Bread, this Food of angels, which Thou hast prepared for us. O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the soul filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us! O my Jesus, make me worthy of this grace! Come to me at least

spiritually, and heal my wounded soul. The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting!

After Holy Communion

My soul, rejoice and exult in God, Thy Savior! O my God, Heavenly Father, the Sacrifice of the Mass is now accomplished, and again I offer it to Thee as a reverent act of thanksgiving for the institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament, beseeching Thee to let me partake of the salutary effects of this priceless Sacrifice. Grant me especially, that, at the end of my life, after a contrite confession and the worthy reception of the Sacred Body and Blood of Thy Divine Son, I may enter eternity where, with all the angels and saints I shall see Thee, love, praise and adore Thee, my God, for all eternity. Amen.

At the Priest's Blessing

Almighty Father, behold us, Thy children, kneeling before Thee. Stretch forth Thy paternal hand and bless us, that we may persevere in the true Faith, and ever praise Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament. Amen.

At the End of Mass

Accept, Eternal Father, this unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass to the honor of Thy Name

and for the salvation of the whole world, as Thou didst accept the bloody Sacrifice which Jesus offered to Thee on the Cross for the forgiveness of sin.

Prayer after Holy Communion

By St. Thomas Aquinas

I GIVE Thee thanks, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, that Thou hast vouchsafed, for no merit of my own, but of the mere condescension of Thy mercy, to satisfy me a sinner and Thine unworthy servant with the Precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. I implore Thee, let not this Holy Communion be to me an increase of guilt unto my punishment, but an availing plea unto pardon and forgiveness. Let it be to me the armor of Faith and the shield of good will. Grant that it may work the extinction of my vices, the rooting out of concupiscence and lust, and the increase within me of the virtues of charity and patience, of humility and obedience. Let it be my strong defence against the snares of all my enemies; visible and invisible; the stilling and the calming of all my impulses, carnal and spiritual; my indissoluble union with Thee, the one and true God, and a blessed consummation at my last end.

And I beseech Thee that Thou wouldst

vouchsafe to bring me, sinner as I am, to that ineffable banquet where Thou, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, art to Thy saints true and unfailing light, fulness of content, joy for evermore, gladness without alloy, consummate and everlasting bliss. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St. Bonaventure

O most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, grant that my soul may ever hunger for Thee, Thou Bread of Angels, Thou refreshment of holy souls, our daily supersubstantial Bread, having all manner of sweetness and savor, and all most thrilling delights. May my heart ever hunger for Thee and feed on Thee, on whom angels long to look. May I ever thirst for Thee, Thou well of life, Thou fountain of wisdom and knowledge, Thou source of everlasting light.

Be Thou alone and evermore my hope, my trust, my riches, my delight, my gladness, my joy, my rest and my calm repose, my peace and my sweet contentment, my fragrance and my sweetness, my food and my refreshment, my refuge and my help, my wisdom, my portion, my own possession and my treasure, in whom my mind and my heart are fixed and rooted firmly and immovably for evermore. Amen.

Thanksgiving

Lord, I am too insignificant to thank Thee adequately for the immeasurable love Thou hast shown me. With eternal love hast Thou loved me and in mercy drawn me to Thee. Great things hast Thou done to me, O mighty God! With Thy Precious Blood Thou hast purchased and redeemed me; by Thy grace Thou hast made me partaker of Thy Divine nature; and by the reception of Thy most Sacred Body Thou hast united me most intimately with Thee. How shall I requite Thee for this love? I offer Thee my sincerest gratitude and promise to love Thee with grateful affection in return. I promise to keep Thy holy commandments faithfully and conscientiously, in small things as in great; gladly will I undertake anything by which I can please Thee; nothing shall seem too much for me. I will be zealous at prayer, and thereby inflame my love anew. I will be faithful to Holy Church, and love my neighbor for Thy sake. O Jesus, increase my weak love, let it grow to a sacred fire which will inspire me to all good, and purify my soul from all that is sinful and displeasing to thee.

Dearest Lord, I also recommend to Thee all for whom I am obliged to pray. Impart help and consolation according to each one's need. Be merciful to the poor souls. Grant them

eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Holy Mary, Immaculate Mother of God, I beseech Thee by the love which thy Son has shown me in this hour, take me under thy protection and assist me in all the dangers and necessities of this life, especially at the hour of my death. Amen.

Prayer of St. Ignatius

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me!

Within Thy Wounds hide me.

Never permit me to be separated from Thee.

From the malignant enemy defend me.

At the hour of my death call me,

And bid me come Thee,

That with the Saints I may praise Thee,

Forever and ever. Amen.

300 days, every time. 7 years, after receiving Holy Communion. Pius IX, Jan. 9, 1854.

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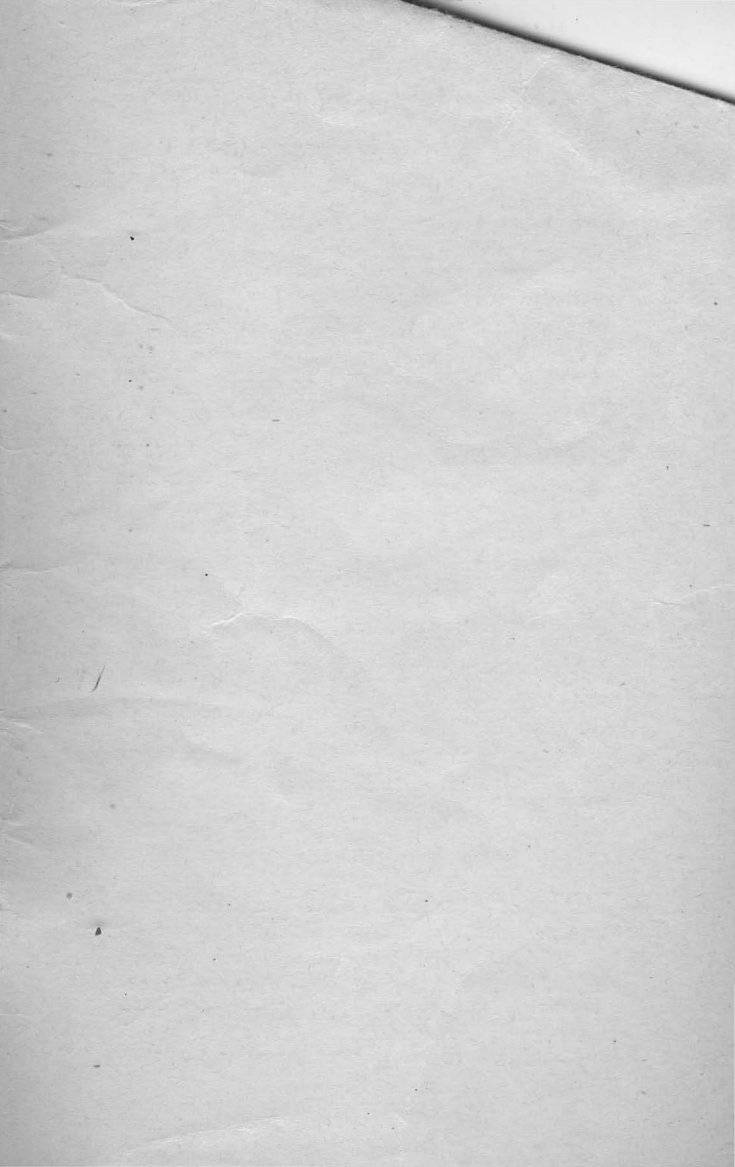
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