

Whatever has been instituted by God for the sanctification of all must also ardently be desired, and thankfully accepted, by all.

13. Who is capable of receiving Confirmation?
Every one who is baptized.

14. How is a person to prepare himself for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?

1. He must cleanse his conscience at least from all grievous sins; 2. He must get himself well instructed in the fundamental truths of our faith, particularly in those which regard this Sacrament; and 3. He must heartily desire the grace of the Holy Ghost, and, for that purpose, he must fervently pray, and perform good works.

15. How are we to receive Confirmation?

We must, 1. Earnestly ask for the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; 2. Promise God that we will live, and die, as good Christians; and 3. Not leave the church before the Bishop has given his benediction.

16. What should we do after Confirmation?

We should, 1. Give humble thanks to God; 2. Spend that day especially in devotion; and 3. Preserve and increase the grace of the Holy Ghost by perseverance in our struggle against the enemies of salvation, and by an ardent zeal in all that is good.

17. Why are Sponsors, or Godfathers and Godmothers, required also in Confirmation?

That they may present to the Bishop those who are to be confirmed, and afterwards advise and help them in their spiritual combat for which they are consecrated in this Sacrament.

The Sponsor enters into this engagement by laying his hand on the right shoulder of the person to be confirmed. Thus he becomes his spiritual Parent and Guardian, and has to preserve him from losing the grace of Confirmation; and there arises from it the same spiritual relationship, and consequently the same impediment of marriage, as in Baptism.

18. What qualities does the Church require in the Godfathers and Godmothers of those who are confirmed?

They must be Catholics, must have been confirmed, be blameless in their conduct, and of such age that they are able to fulfil their duties as Sponsors. Parents cannot be the Sponsors of their children; and the Sponsor in Confirmation is to be different from the Sponsor in Baptism.

Application. Pray frequently and earnestly that the Gifts of the Holy Ghost may be strengthened in you. Perform without fear all the duties of a Catholic Christian. Should you have to suffer ignominy and persecution on account of your faith, consider it an honor, and rejoice in it after the example of the Apostles (Acts v. 41).

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

§ 1. *On the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.*

1. What is the Holy Eucharist?

It is the true Body and the true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is really and substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine for the nourishment of our souls.

It is called '*Eucharist*' from the Greek word '*Eucharistia*,' which means '*Good Grace*,' because it contains Christ our Lord, the true grace, and the source of all heavenly gifts; or '*Thanksgiving*,' because, when we offer this most spotless Victim, we render to God a homage of infinite value, in return for all the benefits which we have received from His bounty, particularly for the inestimable treasure of grace bestowed on us in this Sacrament. It is also called the '*Blessed* or '*Most Holy Sacrament*,' because it contains Jesus Christ Himself, the Author of all the Sacraments, and of all sanctity. The '*Sacrament of the Altar*,' because it is on the Altar it is offered and reserved. The '*Holy Host*,' because it contains Jesus Christ, the true Host or Victim, immolated for us. The '*Viaticum* (i.e., Provision for a journey), as well because it is the spiritual food by which we are supported during our mortal pilgrimage, as also, because it

prepares for us a passage to eternal happiness and everlasting glory (Catech. of the Coun. of Trent).

2. Is there in the Holy Eucharist all that is requisite for constituting a Sacrament ?

Yes; there are, 1. The visible sign, *i.e.*, the appearances of bread and wine; 2. The invisible grace, *i.e.*, Jesus Christ Himself, the Author and Dispenser of all graces; and 3. The institution by our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. When did Jesus Christ institute this Sacrament ?

He instituted it at the Last Supper, the evening before His bitter Passion.

4. How did He institute it ?

Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke and gave it to His Disciples, saying, '*Take ye, and eat: this is my Body.*' After that, in like manner, He took the chalice with wine in it, blessed and gave it to His Disciples, saying, '*Drink ye all of this: this is my Blood. Do this for a commemoration of me*' (*Short Hist. of Rel.* § 24).

5. What became of the bread and wine, when Jesus pronounced these words over them: '*This is my Body, this is my Blood*' ?

The bread was, in an invisible manner, changed into the true Body, and the wine into the true Blood, of Jesus Christ.

6. After these words of Christ, what did still remain of bread and wine ?

Nothing but their species or appearances.

7. What is understood by the appearances of bread and wine ?

All that which the senses perceive of bread and wine; as form, color, taste, smell, etc.

8. How do we know that with these words, '*This is my Body, this is my Blood,*' Christ gave His true Body and His true Blood to the Apostles ?

We know it—

1. Because Christ had long before promised to His disciples that He would give them His real Flesh to eat and His real Blood to drink,¹ and because He then, at the Last Supper, expressly declared that that which He then gave them as food and drink was really His Body and His Blood;² and

2. Because the Apostles and the Catholic Church have at all times believed and taught so.³

¹ 'The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: 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. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed' (John vi. 52, etc.)

² Christ foresaw that the Church would understand His most clear and distinct words in their proper and literal meaning. Had He wished to be understood in a different manner, He would also have spoken differently, that He might not in such most important matter give occasion to misunderstanding and error.

³ The teaching of the Apostles, especially of St. Paul, is evident from 1 Cor. x. 16, and xi. 23-29; the teaching of the whole Church, from her prayers and rites relating to the Divine Service; from the decrees of her Councils; from the numerous testimonies of the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. For instance, St. Justin Martyr says: '*As Jesus Christ took flesh and blood, so also is the food consecrated by His words flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus.*' St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, gives this evidence: '*As Christ Himself declared and said, "This is my Body," who would dare to doubt it? As He openly protested, saying, "This is my Blood," who would hesitate, and think that it is not His Blood? Once He changed water into wine; and should we question whether He could change wine into blood? No less plain and precise are the testimonies of St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and of many other Fathers, even of the first centuries. We have also a strong proof of the antiquity of the Catholic doctrine in this, that the Schismatic Greek Church, and the other older Oriental Churches, believe and teach precisely the same.*'

9. Did Christ give also to His Apostles power to change bread and wine into His Sacred Flesh and Blood ?

Yes; He gave them that power with these words: 'Do this for a commemoration of me' (Luke xxii. 19).

10. To whom did this power pass from the Apostles?

It passed from the Apostles to the Bishops and Priests.

11. When do the Bishops and Priests exercise this power?

At Mass, when they pronounce over the bread and wine these words: 'This is my Body, this is my Blood.'

12. Is there, then, after the consecration no longer bread and wine on the altar?

No; there is then on the altar the true Body and the true Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

This change is properly called '*Transubstantiation*,' which means a real conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and of the substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood (Counc. of Trent, Sess. 13, Ch. 4, and Can. 2).

13. How long does Christ remain present with His Sacred Flesh and Blood?

As long as the appearances of bread and of wine continue to exist.

14. Is the Body of Christ alone present under the appearance of bread, and the Blood of Christ, alone, present under the appearance of wine?

No; under each appearance Christ is present entire and undivided, as He is entire and undivided in Heaven.

15. When the Priest breaks or divides the Sacred Host, does he also break the Body of Christ?

No; he breaks or divides the appearances only: the Body of Christ itself is present in each part entire and living, in a true though mysterious manner.

16. What does the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist require us to do?

To visit Him frequently, and to adore Him with the most profound humility and awe, and with the most ardent love and gratitude.

'Let all the Angels of God adore Him' (Hebr. i. 6). In order to show due honor to the Ble-sed Sacrament, the Church exposes it for public adoration, gives Benediction with it, carries it reverently about in solemn procession, has established Feasts and Confraternities (of the Most Holy Sacrament, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and others). As an emblem of adoration and love, a lamp is kept burning day and night before the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle.

17. Is Christ present in the Holy Eucharist only that He may be also as man with us?

He is also present for two other reasons:

1. That He may offer Himself for us in the *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*; and

2. That in *Holy Communion* He may give Himself to us for the nourishment of our souls.

Application. Rejoice that our Lord and Saviour is pleased to remain in the Blessed Sacrament amongst us to the end of the world. Thank Him for this exceedingly great favor; love Him, and visit Him often and with devotion. Pour out all your sufferings before this amiable Comforter, and have full confidence in His help; for He Himself invites you, saying: 'Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you' (Matt. xi. 28).

§ 2. *On the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*

18. What is a Sacrifice?

A Sacrifice is that first and highest act of Religion, in which a duly-authorized person offers to God some sensible thing which is visibly immolated either physically or mystically, in token and acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion over all things and of our total dependence on Him.

He who sacrifices is styled a *priest*; the sensible thing which

is sacrificed is called the *victim*; the place where it is sacrificed is the *altar*. These four—*priest*, *victim*, *altar*, and *sacrifice*—are inseparable. Each one of them calls for the others.

19. Have there been Sacrifices at all times ?

Yes, there have been Sacrifices from the beginning of the world, and under the Old Law they were strictly commanded by God Himself.

20. Why were the Sacrifices of the Old Law abolished ?

Because they were only figures of the unspotted Sacrifice of the New Law, and were, therefore, not to last longer than the Old Law itself.

‘For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, by the self-same sacrifices, which they offer continually every year, can never make the comers thereunto perfect; for it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away. Wherefore when He [Christ] cometh into the world He saith: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou [O God] wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Then said I: Behold, I come: in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will, O God. . . . He taketh away the first, that He may establish that which followeth*’ (Hebr. x. 1-9).

21. What is the Sacrifice of the New Law ?

The Sacrifice of the New Law is the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ, who, by His death on the Cross, offered Himself to His Heavenly Father for us (Hebr. ix. 14).

22. Was all Sacrifice to cease with the death of Christ ?

No; there was to be in the New Law of Grace a *Perpetual Sacrifice*, in order to represent continually that which was once accomplished on the Cross, and to apply the fruits of it to our souls.

23. Was such a Sacrifice promised to us by God ?

Yes, even in the Old Law it was prefigured by the Sacrifice of Melchisedech,¹ and was foretold by the Prophet Malachias.²

¹ As Melchisedech offered bread and wine (Gen. xiv. 18), so also Christ offers Himself under the species of bread and wine unto the end of the world. Therefore it is said in Ps. cix.: ‘*The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.*’² ‘*I have no pleasure in you [Jews], saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand; for from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation*’ (Mal. i. 10, 11).

24. Which is this perpetual Sacrifice, foretold by Malachias ?

It is the Sacrifice of the Mass.

25. By whom was the Sacrifice of the Mass instituted ?

It was instituted by Jesus Christ, when at the Last Supper He offered Himself up under the appearances of bread and wine to His Heavenly Father, and commanded His Apostles thenceforth to celebrate this His Sacrifice.

26. What, then, is the Mass ?

The Mass is the perpetual Sacrifice of the New Law, in which Christ our Lord offers Himself, by the hands of the Priest, in an unbloody manner, under the appearances of bread and wine, to His Heavenly Father, as He once offered Himself on the Cross in a bloody manner.

27. What is the difference between the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice of the Cross ?

The Sacrifice of the Mass is essentially the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross; the only difference is in the manner of offering.

28. Why is the Sacrifice of the Mass the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross ?

Because in both it is the same High-Priest who offers, and the same Victim who is offered—namely, Jesus Christ our Lord; and because in the Sacrifice of the Mass the oblation which Christ made of Him-

self on the Cross, for us, to the Father, is commemorated and continued.

The Priest is only the minister and visible representative of Christ; therefore he does not speak in his own name, but in the name of Christ: 'This is my Body, . . . this is my Blood.'

29. How is the manner of offering different in both?

On the Cross Christ offered Himself in a bloody manner; but in the Mass He offers Himself in an unbloody manner, whilst He renews the Sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, without suffering or dying any more.

30. If Christ dies no more, how, then, can the Sacrifice which He consummated on the Cross be renewed in the Mass?

It is renewed, because in the Mass Christ offers Himself really and truly under the emblems of the bloody death which He suffered on the Cross—that is, under the separated appearances of bread and wine.

By virtue of the words which the Priest pronounces, the Body of Christ becomes present under the appearance of bread, and His Blood under the appearance of wine; and both these appearances being visibly *separated* from each other, the separation of the Blood from the Body, consequently the bloody death on the Cross is represented in an unbloody, mystical manner. This unbloody renewal is, however, not made in order that we may be redeemed anew, for the Sacrifice of the Cross was sufficient for the redemption of the whole world; but that we may have a standing memorial, and a lively, though unbloody, representation of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross, by which God is perfectly honored, and the abundant fruits of the Redemption are applied to our souls.

31. How do we prove that, from the time of the Apostles, the Mass has always been celebrated?

We prove this, 1. By the words of St. Paul, which clearly show that as early as in the times of the Apostles the Christians had an altar of their own;¹ for where an altar is, there must also be a Sacrifice; and 2. By the undeniable testimonies of the holy

Fathers, the decrees of the Councils, the most ancient prayers of the Mass, and by many other memorials of the Eastern and Western Churches.

¹ 'We [Christians] have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle, *i.e.*, the Jews (Hebr. xiii. 10; comp. 1 Cor. x. 18-21).

32. To whom do we offer the Sacrifice of the Mass?

We offer it to God alone; however, we also celebrate the memory of the Saints in it.

33. How do we celebrate the memory of the Saints in the Mass?

1. By rendering thanks to God for all the graces bestowed upon them in this life, and for the glory they now enjoy in Heaven; and 2. By imploring their intercession for us.

34. What are the ends for which we offer the Mass to God?

We offer it to God,

1. As a *Sacrifice of Praise* for His honor and glory;

2. As a *Sacrifice of Thanksgiving* for all the graces and benefits received from Him;

3. As a *Sacrifice of Propitiation* for the many offences given to Him; and

4. As a *Sacrifice of Petition*, in order to obtain His assistance in all our necessities of soul and body.

35. What effects has the Mass as a Sacrifice of Propitiation?

By it we obtain from the Divine Mercy,

1. Graces of contrition and repentance for the forgiveness of sins; and

2. Remission of temporal punishment deserved for sins.

36. To whom are the fruits of the Mass applied?

The *general* fruits are applied to the whole Church, both the living and the dead ;

The *special* fruits are applied, 1. Chiefly to the Priest who celebrates the Mass; 2. Next, to those for whom in particular he offers it up; and 3. To all those who assist at it with devotion.

37. Which are the principal parts of the Mass ?
The principal parts of the Mass are, 1. The *Offertory*; 2. The *Consecration*; and 3. The *Communion*.

38. What do you think of the ceremonies which the Church has added to the Sacrifice of the Mass ?

The ceremonies of the Mass have all been handed down to us from the most ancient times, many from the times of the Apostles themselves, and their sublime and mysterious signification is intended to fill our hearts with devotion and reverence.

1. The Priest first prays with heartfelt sorrow, and profoundly bowing, at the foot of the altar; then having ascended the steps, he kisses it reverently, reads the Introit, and prays again in the spirit of humility to God, by reciting alternately with the server the 'Kyrie eleison' (Lord, have mercy on us). 2. He intones joyfully the Hymn of the Angels (Gloria), and turns then towards the people, to wish them the Divine Blessing. 3. He prays at the side of the altar, in the name of all who are present, to God for the necessities of all. After that, he reads two portions of the Holy Scripture, the Epistle and the Gospel, the latter, however, at the other side of the altar, to intimate that the Evangelical doctrine, rejected by the Jews, passed over to the Heathens. 4. The Gospel is followed, on certain days, by the Nicene Creed. This is the preparation for the Sacrifice. It was anciently called the *Mass of the Catechumens*—i.e., of those who were still in the first rudiments of Christianity, because they were permitted to assist at it thus far before they were baptized. Next begins, 5. The *Sacrifice* itself by the *Offertory*: the Priest, united with the people, offers bread and wine, and then washes his hands, to show the purity of heart with which we should assist at the Holy Sacrifice. 6. He invites all to fervent prayer, and, praising God, he joins with the Choirs of Angels, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy,' etc. 7. Next follow prayers, said in a low voice, for the Church, her Rulers, and all the faithful, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin

and all the Saints. 8. Then he pronounces the mysterious words of *Consecration*, adores, making a genuflection, and elevates the Sacred Body and the Sacred Blood above his head. At the ringing of the bell the people adore on their knees, and strike their breasts in token of repentance for their sins. 9. The Priest begs of God graciously to accept the Sacrifice, to have mercy on all mankind, also on the souls in Purgatory, and concludes with the Lord's Prayer, which contains the substance of all petitions. 10. After a preparatory prayer, during which, at Solemn Masses, the Kiss of Peace is given, follows the Holy *Communion*, of which all those who are present should partake, at least spiritually. 11. The Communion being over, the whole concludes with a prayer of thanksgiving, the blessing of the people, and the reading of the Gospel of St. John.

39. Why is the Mass said in Latin ?

1. Because this language comes from Rome, whence we received our faith; 2. Because, being a dead language, it does not change in the course of time like living languages; and 3. Because thereby the *Unity* and *Uniformity* of the Church, even in her public service, is represented and preserved over the entire earth.

40. Why has the Church assigned particular vestments for the Priest whilst officiating at the altar ?

That we may remember that the Priest does not act at the altar in his own person, but as the representative of Jesus, and that he celebrates a most holy Divine Mystery.

In the Old Testament God Himself minutely appointed the vestments for the Priests, and said: 'Aaron and his sons shall use them when they approach to the altar to minister in the Sanctuary, lest being guilty of iniquity they die' (Exod. xxviii. 43).

The different colors of the Priest's vestments have also their meaning. The *White* signifies innocence and spiritual joy; the *Red*, the love of God; the *Green*, the hope of eternal life; the *Violet* or *Purple*, humility and penance; the *Black*, deep mourning.

Application. Endeavor to assist daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with sincere devotion and profound reverence; for there is no other act so holy and

Divine, so rich in graces and heavenly blessings. At the Offertory, offer yourself with Jesus Christ to your Heavenly Father; at the Consecration, humbly adore your Saviour, and beg His pardon; at the Communion, communicate, at least *spiritually*—that is to say, desire most earnestly to be united with your dearest Lord in this Sacrament of Love.

§ 3. *On Holy Communion.*

41. What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is truly the receiving of the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ for the nourishment of our souls.

Communion means, Union of the faithful with Christ and with one another; or, Common participation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (see page 269, quest. 46). The Communion is also called the *Lord's Supper*, the *Receiving of the Blessed Sacrament*, of the *Holy Eucharist*, etc.

42. Was it God, or is it the Church only, that has commanded us to receive Holy Communion?

God has commanded it, and the Church also; for Christ our Lord says expressly: '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).

43. Must we also drink the chalice, in order to receive the Blood of Christ?

No; for under the appearance of bread we receive also His Blood, since we receive Him whole and entire, His Humanity and His Divinity.

Therefore, Christ promises eternal life to those also who receive Him under the appearance of bread alone: 'If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world' (John vi. 52). 'This is the bread that came down from Heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever' (John vi. 59).

44. But why, then, did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist in both kinds?

Because He instituted it, not only as a Sacrament, but also as a Sacrifice, for which both kinds are required (see page 264, quest. 30).

Accordingly, the words of Christ, 'Drink ye all of this' (Matt. xxvi. 27), imply by no means a command to all the people, but only to the Apostles, and their Successors the Bishops and Priests, when they celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Therefore, Priests also, when they do not actually celebrate Mass, communicate under one kind only.

45. Why does the Catholic Church give Holy Communion to the faithful in one kind only—namely, under the form of bread?

1. To prevent the Sacred Blood from being profaned, since, under the appearance of wine, it might easily be spilled, and could not well be reserved;

2. To make it easy for all to receive the Blessed Sacrament, as many feel a disgust at drinking out of a common chalice; and

3. To declare thereby against the heretics that Christ is present whole and entire under each kind.

In the very first times of the primitive Church, the sick, prisoners, and all those who communicated at home, received the Blessed Sacrament only under the form of bread. Thus only the breaking of bread is mentioned by St. Luke, xxiv. 30: 'Whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them'; and in the Acts, ii. 42: 'And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers' (comp. Acts ii. 46). Subsequently, it is true, Pope Leo and Pope Gelasius commanded the chalice to be received by the faithful in the public Communion, but only in order to combat the erroneous doctrine of the Manicheans, who detested wine as something diabolical, and to prevent these heretics from approaching with the Catholics to Communion. But this was only for a time and to meet an emergency. When that heresy disappeared, the faithful could return to the ancient and general usage.

46. Why does our Lord communicate Himself to all the faithful as food?

1. To give us a proof of His tender superabundant love, and to unite Himself most intimately with us:

‘He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him’ (John vi. 57); and

2. To unite us also most closely together with one another by a bond of love and concord: ‘For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread’ (1 Cor. x. 17).

47. What graces does Holy Communion impart to our souls?

By uniting us in the most intimate manner with Jesus Christ, the Source of all Divine graces, it imparts to us innumerable graces, especially these:

1. It preserves and increases sanctifying grace;
2. It weakens our evil inclinations, and gives us a desire and strength to be virtuous;
3. It cleanses us from venial and preserves us from mortal sin; and
4. It is to us a pledge of our future resurrection and everlasting happiness (John vi. 55).

48. Does every one receive in Holy Communion the graces it is intended to give?

No; he who receives Holy Communion unworthily—that is, in the state of mortal sin—brings damnation upon himself.

‘Whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the Chalice; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord’ (1 Cor. xi. 27-29).—Comparison with the Ark of the Covenant, which brought happiness and blessing upon the pious Israelites, but misfortune and a curse upon the impious Philistines.

49. What sin does he commit who dares to communicate unworthily?

1. He commits, like Judas, a horrible sacrilege, because he is guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord (1 Cor. xi. 27); and
2. He renders himself guilty of the blackest in-

gratitude, because he treats his Divine Redeemer with the foulest indignity in the very same instant in which he is favored by Him with the greatest proof of His immense love (Ps. liv. 13).

50. What are frequently the consequences of an unworthy Communion, even in this life?

Blindness and hardness of heart, and sometimes also sudden death, and other temporal punishment.

Example: Miserable end of Judas, of whom our Saviour said: ‘It were better for him, if that man had not been born’ (Matt. xxvi. 24). And of such St. Paul says: ‘Therefore [on account of unworthily receiving], are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep’ [the sleep of death] (1 Cor. xi. 30).

51. What, then, must we do when we have committed a grievous sin?

We must make a good confession before we receive.

‘Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the Chalice’ (1 Cor. xi. 28).

52. How must we further prepare ourselves, as to the *soul*?

We must endeavor, 1. To cleanse our souls also from venial sin; and 2. To excite in our hearts sentiments of fervor and devotion.

53. Does venial sin also render our Communions unworthy?

Venial sin does not render them unworthy or sacrilegious, but it diminishes the graces which they otherwise would produce.

54. How can we excite sentiments of fervor and devotion in our heart?

By pious meditations and devout exercises.

55. Which are the best exercises before Holy Communion?

The Acts, 1. Of Faith and Adoration; 2. Of Hu-

mility and Contrition ; and 3. Of Hope, Love, and an ardent Desire.

56. How do you make an *Act of Faith*?

O my Jesus, I firmly believe all that Thou hast revealed, but especially that Thou art really present in this Most Holy Sacrament, because Thou, the eternal and infallible Truth, hast declared it.

57. How do you make an *Act of Adoration*?

O my Jesus, in union with all the Angels and Saints I adore Thee in this Most Holy Sacrament, in which Thou art concealed for the love of me ; I adore Thee as my Lord and my God, my Creator and my Redeemer.

58. How do you make an *Act of Contrition*?

O my Jesus, I am most heartily sorry for all my sins, because by them I have provoked and offended Thee, my most bountiful God, whom I love above all things.

59. How do you make an *Act of Humility*?

My Lord and my Saviour, how dare I approach Thee after having so often offended Thee ! Indeed, I am not worthy to receive Thee into my heart ; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.

60. How do you make an *Act of Hope*?

Yes, my most amiable Jesus, Thy mercy is unbounded ! Thou vouchsafest to come to me, and to dwell in my heart ; so Thou wilt also, I confidently hope, sanctify me, and replenish me with Thy grace.

61. How do you make an *Act of Love*?

O my Jesus, Thou hast loved me unto the death of the Cross, and, for the love of me, Thou wilt now become also the food of my soul. Oh ! what return can I make for Thy love ? In life and in death I will love Thee, and none but Thee.

62. How do you make an *Act of Desire*?

Come, O Jesus, come and take possession of my

heart ; make it entirely Thine own. Come, my Jesus, come and visit me, and strengthen me with Thy grace.

63. How must we prepare ourselves as to the *body*?

1. We must be fasting ; that is, from twelve o'clock the night before we must not have taken even the least thing by way of eating or drinking ;¹ and

2. We must be decently dressed.

¹ The Church commands this under pain of a grievous sin, in order to prevent great abuses that would follow from the disregard of this law.

64. Who are dispensed from this command to receive fasting ?

Those who are dangerously ill, and receive the Blessed Sacrament by way of *Viaticum*—*i.e.*, as a preparation for their passage into eternity.

65. How should we approach the altar-rail, in order to receive Holy Communion ?

With the greatest reverence, with hands joined and raised, and eyes cast down.

66. What should we do at the time of our receiving the Sacred Host ?

We should spread the communion-cloth over our hands and under our chin, hold the head erect and firm, extend the tongue a little upon the under lip, and then most reverently receive the Sacred Host.

Do not keep the Sacred Host in your mouth until it is quite dissolved ; but let it moisten a little upon your tongue, and then swallow it. Should it stick to the roof of your mouth, remove it with your tongue, and not with your finger.

67. What must we do after receiving Holy Communion ?

We must retire with the greatest modesty to our place, and spend some time in devout prayer.

No time is more precious and more favorable for obtaining graces than that which immediately follows Holy Communion ; therefore we should avail ourselves of it in the best manner