

THE EUCHARISTIC MEDITATIONS OF THE CURÉ D'ARS

The "Eucharistic Meditations of the Curé d'Ars" – St John Baptist Mary Vianney – was first published in English by Carmelite Publications in 1961, following the centenary celebrations of the saint's death in 1959.

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In the Foreword for the original edition we find the following words, equally applicable and apt for today, for the post-Vatican II Church, indeed even more significant:

“His discourses on the Most Blessed Sacrament can truly be said to be the most expressive of him and of his love for God . . . From them we can learn the most precious lessons of Eucharistic devotion. For these reasons we hope that this little book of Eucharistic meditations may have the effect of enkindling in many hearts something of the saint’s own love for our Eucharistic Lord.”

THE CURÉ D’ARS: John Baptist Mary Vianney was born in Dardilly in France in 1786. He was ordained priest in 1815 and appointed cure of Ars – a village near Lyons – in 1818. He completely immersed himself in the work of his parish but soon gained a reputation right across Europe as a confessor and spiritual guide. He also the gift of healing and of hidden knowledge but he was also tormented in life by evil spirits. He gave all he had to the poor and needy and went about in ragged clothes, eat poorly, and slept little. In the twelve months before he died in 1859 he was visited by over one hundred thousand people. He was canonized in 1925 and declared Patron of Parish Clergy in 1929.

MEDITATION 1: JESUS CHRIST IS PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST

At the moment when the Mother of St. Alexis recognised her son in the dead body of the beggar, who had lived for thirty years under the stairs in her palace, she exclaimed:

“O my son! too late have I known thee!” The soul leaving this life will see at last Him, whom it possessed in the Eucharist, and at the sight of the consolations, beauties and riches that she had ignored, she will likewise cry out:

“O Jesus! O my Life! O my Treasure!

O my Love! too late have I known Thee!”

Divine Saviour, while I meditate on the proofs of your presence under the sacramental veils, enlighten my mind, influence my heart, inspire me with the lively, ardent faith, which is already a vision of your eternal beauty.

Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist with His Body and Blood, His Soul and Divinity. Do you wish for proofs clear and convincing?

1. OUR LORD HAS SAID IT.

The evening of the Last Supper, He took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the Apostles, and said: “Take and eat. This is My Body.” Then He took the chalice containing wine, and said: “Drink ye all of this. This is My Blood. Do this in memory of Me.”

“This is My Body” - then it is no longer bread. “This is My Blood” - then it is no longer wine. Jesus Christ has said it. I believe because He is the Truth, who does not deceive, the Power that all things obey.

But why reason, O my soul? Believe and adore. Believe that Jesus Christ is in this sacrament as truly as He was nine months in the womb of Mary, as really as He was nailed to the Cross. Adore in humility and gratitude.

2. IT IS A FACT THAT IS IN ACCORD WITH REASON.

Our Lord has said: “All that you ask the Father in My Name He will give it to you.” Never would we have thought of asking God to give us His own Son. But what man could not have even imagined, God has done. What man could not say or think, and what he could not have dared to desire, God, in His love has said it, planned it and carried His design into execution.

Would we have dared to ask God to deliver His Son to death for us: to give us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink? If all this is not true, then man has been able to imagine things greater than God can do. He would have gone further than God in the inventions of love. This is not possible. In other words, what man could not even conceive, God has executed.

If the Eucharist, mystery of an infinite love, was an invention of the human spirit we would have a greater idea of the love of God for men than that which God has realized.

But God does not let Himself be outdone in love, and we are compelled to say with St. Ambrose, who applies to the Eucharist the words of St. Paul, “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.” May He be blessed forever.

3. IT IS A FACT MADE EVIDENT BY A KIND OF INTUITION.

There is no room for doubting that Our Lord is in the Holy Eucharist. One knows well that He is there. One feels it.

In receiving Holy Communion one feels something extraordinary, a sense of well-being which pervades his whole body. What is this sense of well-being? It is Our Lord who communicates Himself to all parts of our bodies, and makes them thrill with joy. We are compelled to cry out with St. John: “It is the Lord.”

O Jesus, without wishing to aspire after the favours granted to your saints, give me, I pray, the proof of your presence in Holy Communion by the unction of your grace, by the spiritual joy and generous enthusiasm in the practice of virtue.

4. IT IS A FACT ATTESTED BY HISTORY.

A priest was saying Mass in a church of Bolsene and after pronouncing the words of Consecration doubted the Host. At that instant the Sacred Host was quite covered with Blood. Jesus Christ seemed to wish to reproach His minister for his infidelity, and to make him ashamed, and at the same time to show us by this great miracle how convinced we ought to be of His holy Presence in the Eucharist. This holy Host poured forth blood in such abundance that the corporal, altar cloth and even the altar itself were covered. The Pope, who was informed of the miracle, ordered that the corporal all saturated with blood should be brought to him. When it reached the town of Orvieto it was received with the greatest ceremony, and exposed in the church. Each year, this precious relic is carried in procession on Corpus Christi.

ANOTHER PROOF, THIS TIME PERSONAL.

“Do you believe that a piece of bread could detach itself and go on its own and place itself on the tongue of one who was coming to receive it?” I asked this one day of two Protestant ministers who did not believe in the Real Presence of Our Lord. “No.” Then it is not bread. Here is a story of which I myself am a witness. A man had temptations against faith in the Real Presence. How does one know it? It is not certain. The Consecration, what is it? What happens on the altar at that moment? But he wished to be delivered from these temptations, and he prayed to the Blessed Virgin to obtain for him a faith simple and peaceful. Listen now. I do not say that this happened somewhere. I say that it happened to me. At the moment when this man came to receive Communion, the Sacred Host left my fingers while I was yet a good distance away. It went of Itself and placed Itself on the tongue of this man.

See how that ought to strengthen our faith! But, my God, what need have we of proofs after the words of Jesus Christ Himself.

5. HOW DOES OUR LORD DWELL IN THE EUCHARIST?

In an invisible manner, hidden under the species of bread. He accommodates Himself to our weakness. In heaven, when we will be triumphant and glorious, we shall see Him in His glory. If He showed Himself now before us with this glory, we would not dare to approach Him, but He hides Himself as someone in prison and says to us: You do not see Me, but this does not matter: ask Me all that you wish, I will give it to you.

Oh! if we had the faith . . . if we were really persuaded of the Real Presence of Him who thus hides Himself out of love, and who is there, His hands full of graces, longing to distribute them, with what reverence we would come before Him, with what confidence we should invoke Him.

MEDITATION 2: THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

Jesus Christ having loved His own, loved them to the end (John xiii, 1). Is it not indeed an excess of love which makes Jesus perpetuate His presence in the midst of His disciples? He makes them an inestimable gift; He assures them of an all-powerful remedy for all the tribulations of the world; He opens to them a source of special graces. Let us meditate on the wonders of the divine love.

The love of Jesus Christ in the institution of the Eucharist shows itself:

1. BY THE GIFT THAT HE GIVES US.

By the Eucharist He feeds His children, not with the Manna with which the Jewish people were fed in the desert, but with His adorable Body and His precious Blood. Who could have ever thought of it, if He Himself had not told us and done it at the same time.

Has anyone ever seen the tenderness of a father, the liberality of a king for his subjects, go so far as that of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of our altars. Parents in their wills leave their goods to their children: but in the testament of Jesus Christ it is not temporal goods that He bequeaths to us, it is Himself He gives us with His divine riches. Is not this truly wonderful generosity on the part of God for His creatures?

Oh! how worthy these marvels are of our admiration and our love! A God after taking on Himself our weakness makes Himself the food of our souls! O, Christian people, how happy you are to have a God so good and so rich!

2. THE MOTIVE FOR WHICH HE GIVES THIS GIFT.

Knowing that the time had come for Him to return to His Father, He could not make up His mind to leave us alone among so many enemies, all seeking our destruction. He wanted us to have the happiness of being able to find Him always whenever we wished, and by this great sacrament, He pledges Himself to remain with us day and night, to be our Father, Consoler and our food.

More happy than those who were alive during His earthly life, when He was only in one place, we find Him today with His Body, His Soul and His Divinity in every corner of the world, and this happiness is promised to us until the end of the world. O immense love of God for His creatures! How great is His fatherly kindness.

3. OF THE GRACES HE GIVES US IN THIS GIFT.

In the Eucharist Jesus Christ is God Our Saviour, who, each day, offers Himself for us to the justice of His Father, and who, not satisfied with becoming man for our salvation, gives Himself to each of us in particular, urged to this by His love. And He desires that in Him we should find all our happiness. If we are in trouble or distress, He will comfort and relieve us. If we are ill, He will cure us or will give us strength to suffer in such a way as to merit heaven. If the devil, the world and our inclinations make war on us, He will give us arms to fight, to resist and to come off victorious. If we are poor, He will enrich us with all kinds of riches for time and for eternity.

Is all this enough, think you? Indeed no, He has still other gifts to bestow on us that His immense love has formed in His Heart burning with love for the world. But, let us pause, let us open, rather, the door of this sacred and adorable Heart; let us enclose ourselves, for an instant, in its flames, and we shall see what a God who loves us can do! O my God, who will be able to understand it!

MEDITATION 3: THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

“The greatest proof of love is to give one’s life for those one loves.” It is of you yourself that you speak, O Jesus, when You say these words.

In order to give me your life in the Eucharist you have left your sacrament open to the profanations of the wicked, and you come to me across these irreverences and mockeries. It is at the moment when your enemies prepare for you a crown of thorns, the nails, the cross, that you prepare for me a chalice of benedictions, and bread from heaven. O how eloquently you show me by this the strength of your love. Grant that I may be all on fire during this meditation.

Three things make the love of Jesus Christ shine forth for us in the institution of the Eucharist.

1. THE CONTEMPT TO WHICH LIE EXPOSES HIMSELF.

Before instituting this sacrament of love, He knew very well to how much scorn and contempt He was exposing Himself. O my Saviour, why not remain in heaven after your return there! There, at least, the Angels will love you with a pure and perfect love: but in the Eucharist, the Jews will pierce you again with nails, wicked Christians will receive you unworthily, some without contrition, others without the wish to correct themselves, others perhaps with crime in their hearts. He knows it: but all that does not hinder His love. "O city of Sion, exclaims the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet Isaias (xii, 6) cry out, thrill with joy, because your God dwells in the midst of you." Jesus Christ has chosen for Himself the humiliations and at this price has assured to us forever the happiness and benefit of His presence.

2. THE DAY ON WHICH LIE INSTITUTED THIS SACRAMENT.

What love is there like to that of Jesus Christ? He chose for the institution of the Eucharist the eve of the day on which He was to be put to death! At this moment all Jerusalem is in a fever. The whole people are angry, and all conspire to bring about His death, and it is precisely at this moment that He prepares for them the most ineffable pledge of His love. Men weave the darkest plots against Him, and He thinks only what is the most precious gift He can give them! They think only of lifting Him on an infamous cross to die: He thinks only of raising an altar on which to immolate Himself each day for us. They prepare to shed His Blood, and Jesus Christ wishes this same Blood to be for us the wine of immortality for the consolation and happiness of our souls. Yes, we can truly say Jesus Christ has loved us and has exhausted the wealth of His love, sacrificing Himself in every way that His wisdom and His power could inspire. O tender and generous love of a God for vile creatures like us, how unworthy we are of it!

3. SOME CIRCUMSTANCES EVEN OF THE INSTITUTION.

He chose for instituting the Eucharist bread and wine, the food of all, both rich and poor, of strong or weak, to show us that his heavenly nourishment is for all Christians - little and great, subjects and kings: "Come to me all you who wish to preserve the life of grace and to have strength to fight the evil spirit. Come to the feast I have prepared for you. I exclude no one."

He consecrated the wine in a cup. We read in the Apocalypse of St. John that this apostle saw an angel to whom the Eternal Father gave the vessel of His wrath to pour out on all the nations; but here we see quite the contrary. The Eternal Father puts in the hands of His Son the vessel of His mercy to be poured out on all the nations of the earth.

In speaking to us of His adorable Blood, He says to us as to His apostles: "Drink you all of this and you will find remission of your sins and life eternal." O ineffable blessing! O, happy fountainhead! The Blood of Jesus Christ will implore grace for you.

When Jesus Christ worked this great miracle (of the Consecration) He lifted His eyes to heaven, and gave thanks to His heavenly Father, showing us thus how this happy moment for us was desired by Him. Yes, my children, this divine Saviour seems then to say: My Blood is impatient to flow for you; My Body burns with desire to be wounded to cure your wounds; the thought of My sufferings and death fill Me with joy, because through them you will find a remedy for all your ills. O, what a love of a God for His creatures!

MEDITATION 4: EXCELLENCE OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

Lord, I will praise Thee with all my heart in the assembly of the just (Ps. 110. 1-5).

Creation, the government of the universe are great works showing forth your power, wisdom and goodness; but nowhere are they more resplendent than in the Eucharist, memorial of all the wonders you have wrought upon the earth. I devote my voice, my heart, my soul to bless you; give me the love and reverence of the Cherubim and Seraphim who adore you with a holy fear.

1. THE POWER AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD ARE SHOWN FORTH IN THE EUCHARIST BETTER THAN IN CREATION.

If we consider all that God has made: the heavens, the earth, the wonderful order that reigns in this vast universe, all declare to us an infinite power that created all things. an admirable wisdom which governs all, a supreme goodness which provides for all with the same care, as if it was concerned only with one single being – so many wonders must fill us with amazement and admiration.

But if we speak of the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, we can say that here is the prodigy of the love of a God for us; it is here that His power, grace, and goodness shine in a marvellous manner. Here is the bread come down from heaven, the bread of Angels which is given to us to be the food of our souls; the bread of the strong to comfort and sweeten our sorrows; here is the bread of the wayfarers; it is the key which opens heaven for us; so said the Saviour: “whosoever will receive Me will have life eternal.” To give us this bread, Jesus multiplies miracles, inverts the order of nature and suspends its laws.

2. HIS LIBERALITY AND HIS MERCY ARE MORE VIVIDLY SHOWN HERE THAN IN THE OTHER SACRAMENTS.

None can be compared to the Eucharist. By Baptism we receive, it is true, the character of children of God, and, in consequence. heaven is open to us and we share in all the treasures of the Church; by Penance, the wounds of our souls are healed and the friendship of God is restored to us; by Confirmation, Jesus Christ gives us the spirit of light and strength; by Extreme Unction He covers us with the merits of His Death and His Passion; by Holy Orders He gives to priests all His powers; by Marriage He sanctifies all our actions, even those that seem only to follow the inclinations of nature. Mercies truly of a God who is infinite. But all this seems to be only an apprenticeship to His love for men. In the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist He goes much further. We receive not only the application of His precious Blood, but Christ Himself, the Author of all Grace, who has Himself merited it for us by His Passion and Death. He is there as living as in Paradise. He communicates Himself to us with His glorious wounds, shining eternal witnesses of His love, source inexhaustible of all supernatural life. O my God, may you be blessed! I bow down and adore.

MEDITATION 5: THE EUCHARIST THE FOOD OF OUR SOULS

There is in every house a place where the provisions of the family are kept: the storeroom. The church is the house of souls. This house belongs to us who are Christians. Well, in this house there is a storeroom. Do you see this tabernacle? If one asks Christian souls, what is that? Your souls answer: “it is the storeroom. It is there that the Body and Blood of Jesus is, and this good Saviour says to us: ‘Take and eat . . . take and drink’.”

A mortal man, a creature, feeds himself, satiates himself with his God, making of Him his daily food and drink! O miracle of miracles! O love beyond all love! O happiness beyond all happiness! I

thank you, O my God, and I ask of you the grace to hunger always for this heavenly food.

1. THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST FEEDS OUR SOULS IN THE EUCHARIST.

All creatures have need of food in order to live, that is why God has made the trees and plants. It is a table well served where all the animals come to take the food which suits each one.

But the soul also must be fed. Where then is its food? When God wished to give food to our soul to sustain it in the pilgrimage of this life, He looked over all the creation and found nothing worthy of it. Then He fell back on Himself and resolved to give Himself.

O my soul, how great thou art since only a God can satisfy thee! The food of the soul is the Body and Blood of a God! What beautiful nourishment! The soul can only feed on a God! No other than God can suffice. Only God can satisfy its hunger. It needs God absolutely.

O my soul, bless this God who is so magnificent. Come often to this divine banquet to satiate thyself with justice and holiness. Those who refuse to sit down here or who partake of it only at long intervals, condemn themselves to certain death or to weakness, because one cannot live without food nor enjoy vigorous health without eating frequently.

2. JESUS, OUR FOOD, GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOUL AND WITNESS OF THE DIVINE CONDESCENSION.

Jesus our food, incomparable glory of the Christian soul. What the Angels behold only with awe, the radiant splendour of which they cannot sustain, we make our food, we receive it into us, we become with Jesus Christ one same Body one sole Flesh. Who shall declare the works of the Lord, and who shall declare all His praises (Ps. cv. 2).

3. JESUS OUR FOOD, WITNESS OF A LOVE MORE THAN MATERNAL. WHERE, THEN, IS THE SHEPHERD WHO FEEDS HIS SHEEP WITH

his own flesh? But why do I say shepherd! Some mothers there are who give their children to strangers to be nourished. Our Lord does not act thus. He feeds us with His own Blood and unites us to Himself in every way. By His Incarnation He has willed to be born of our race, to come to all. By the Eucharist He comes to each one of us, and those to whom He gives life He feeds on Himself.

It is without doubt very humiliating for the good God to come into our hearts, but it is to find there a soul that He loves, that He has bought at the cost of His Blood. Do not let us then be indifferent since we have been favoured with such love and such glory. Have you ever noticed how eagerly an infant sucks at his mother's breast? Let us come with the same eagerness to this Holy Table to this breast whence we draw a spiritual drink. Let us draw with greater strength still than the little ones, the grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us only have one regret – to be deprived of this heavenly nourishment. (St. John Chrysostom, Horn. 82 in Math.)

MEDITATION 6: THE SUNDAY FEAST

The Council of Trent wishes that at each Mass the faithful who are present may communicate in order to draw more abundant fruit from the Holy Mass (Sess. xxii. cap. vi). The faithful being obliged to assist at Mass on Sunday should then enter into the spirit of the Church and receive Holy Communion. That is why the saint recommends so earnestly “that we give our souls this special feast on Sunday.”

Let us thank the Holy Spirit for the light that he gives us by His Church and let us strive to conform our conduct to it.

1. THE SUITABILITY FOR AN IMMORTAL SOUL OF A GOOD BANQUET ONCE A WEEK.

The Third Commandment is a great affair – “You will spend the Sunday serving God devotedly.” Weekdays are for the matter, Sunday is for the spirit.

The body made from the earth can be destroyed; the soul image of God is imperishable, and it is this which sustains the body. It is to this then that we owe the most care, and, nevertheless, we always neglect the soul and care only for the body.

See, all the week one gathers, one spends, one buys, one sells; but all that is for the body. Arrange things then to make once a week a feast for the immortal soul: O delicious banquet! O heavenly Bread! Oh! what a privilege! to be able to feed his soul and to feed it with God!

2. WHEN OUGHT ONE TO COMMUNICATE?

On Sunday at least, it is true that we are obliged to do this only once a year – at Easter; but should we deny ourselves the happiness we may have by communicating often? The wise men of old could not understand this extraordinary thing. They said God was too great to become incarnate to give Himself. That is because they did not know how good God is. We know it.

How much better off we are; God has come amongst us, we can go up to Him. Ah, if we will, we will be as Angels on earth.

O beautiful life! O happy life! To live for God. Live for God at least on Sunday. Take care, without God you are lost. Has one then to hunger for God? Is it too much one day in seven to nourish oneself on God?

My body eats when it is hungry, but my soul? If it is not hungry, then it is that it is very ill. Oh! let us love God, live for God, serve God. There is happiness.

3. WE SHOULD PREPARE FOR THIS FEAST OF THE SOUL BY PURITY OF HEART.

We must take some trouble to purify our souls. Look at the pictures of the holy Virgin, of St. Philomena, the painter has worked hard to adorn them, that is why they are so beautiful. They are pleasing to look at. Let us work as hard to adorn our souls to please men and Angels and the good God.

Nothing is so beautiful as the pure soul that is nourished by its God. Purify yourself then by a good Confession, and each Sunday receive God the food of your soul. You know that one only relishes the good odour and taste of fruits in proportion to the health of the body; thus the soul penetrates the wonders of God in the measure of its purity.

Ah! we do not relish God because of lack of purity. Oh! what a misfortune not to taste the good God. Let us purify ourselves, let us receive our God, let us merit heaven; in heaven we shall see our beauty, and we shall feel all the taste of God.

4. TO DESIRE IT ARDENTLY.

See, if we reflected . . . this priest holds God to feed my soul! O! we should die of joy . . . but we do not love the good God. No.

Behold the good God is so good, so great that we must fly joyously and very high like a bird to come to Him. How we shall sing for joy when we have attained to Him! See then what joy it is to have this great God for food.

What has this soul done to merit it? O my soul, whom do you go to receive? Thy God, thy Creator, thy Saviour.

Ah, my children, if you understood this clearly, you would die of joy!

5. THE EFFECTS OF THIS BANQUET ON THE SOUL AND THE BODY.

We have seen good Christians who are unmindful of their bodies. Isn't that better than to be like those bad Christians who forget their souls, like people in the world who think only of

material things, who fill their stomachs with plentiful and delicious food. Well, what is the fruit of it? At the end a body which will go to the graveyard. For us Christians the fruit of our spiritual food is our salvation, and in heaven even our bodies will be transfigured.

Do you understand? To go up to heaven, to be filled with God! Man is so great, so great, that he is carried there on the shoulders of God.

See to what the fruit of partaking of this food leads; the Holy Communion nourished St. Simeon in his body as well as in his soul. His soul bathed in the joy of the love of God sustained his body.

MEDITATION 7: DAILY COMMUNION

Take and eat: bread is not made to be put behind a glass or kept in an urn, but to be food and daily food. The greatest compliment you can pay good bread, is it not to eat it?

O Flesh and Blood of Jesus, true food and drink of souls, I adore you. I hunger and thirst for you. Come each day to inundate with heavenly life this sad life of exile, to enrich it and to make shine in it a ray from the joys of our heavenly home.

1. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

There are two kinds of food - that of the soul - and that of the body which the earth brings forth. Our body which is only dust lives on the earth, but the food of the soul is the Body and Blood of a God. O beautiful food! it is enough, if one thinks of it to make one lose oneself in this abyss of love. My Father is God! my good is heaven! my food the Body and Blood of God Himself! O man, how happy thou art! Thou art made to adore, to love and to receive God!

The bread of souls is in the tabernacle. The tabernacle is the storeroom of Christians. Oh! how wonderful it is my children! when the priest holds up the Host and you see It, your soul can say: "there is my food." O! my children, we are too well off. We shall only understand it in heaven. What a pity! If we could conceive a little of the grandeur and happiness of Communion, we would desire life only to have the happiness of making Jesus Christ our daily bread. All created things would be as nothing. We should despise them in order to cling to God alone, and all our actions would tend only to make us more worthy to receive it. When one can have a divine banquet every day, is it not bad taste not to take it?

2. GO, THEN, TO COMMUNION.

My children, go to Jesus with love and confidence. Go, to live by Him in order to live for Him. Do not say that you have too much to do. Has not the divine Saviour said:

"Come to Me all you who work and are heavily laden; come to Me and I will comfort you"? Can you resist an invitation so full of tenderness and friendship? You work each day. Communicate then each day. Do not say that you are not worthy. What nonsense! It is true you are not worthy, but you are in need. If our Saviour had had our worthiness in view He would never have instituted His beautiful Sacrament of love, because no one in the world, not even the Saints nor the Angels, nor the Archangels, not even the Blessed Virgin, are worthy of it. Since He wishes to abase Himself to our misery, let us work then to merit to receive Him every day. This is what the Christians did in the early Church.

MEDITATION 8: DISREGARD FOR THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

“I AM with you said Jesus, the living Bread come down from heaven. He who eats this Bread shall live forever.”

I believe, I adore, because you have the words of eternal life. No one else can give it to me, and I know that apart from you there is only feebleness and decay. Grant, O Jesus, that I may fear above all things the indifference which, keeping me at a distance from the Holy Table, would deprive me of an increase of life divine and lead me progressively to death.

1. INDIFFERENCE TO HOLY COMMUNION IS SOMETIMES A SIGN OF TEPIDITY.

You who only communicate rarely are like someone between two sleeps. You know that Jesus Christ is truly in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that this food is absolutely necessary for your poor soul. Nevertheless, one sees in you little desire.

There are long intervals between your Confessions and Communions. You decide to go because of a great feast or a jubilee or a mission, or because others are going, and not because your poor soul needs it. Not only do you not try to merit this happiness, but you do not even envy those who taste it more often. Thus you imitate the Jews. They are reproached for refusing shelter to Jesus Christ on the first Christmas night although they did not know Him. You treat Him with the same discourtesy, you who neglect to receive Him into your hearts in Holy Communion. Do not forget that at the Particular Judgment Jesus Christ will judge us on all the good we could have done. He will show you all the sacraments that you could have received during your life. How many more times you could have received His Body and His Blood if you had wished to lead a better life. Ah, great God!

2. INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS HOLY COMMUNION PUTS OUR SALVATION IN DANGER.

Here are Christians who are poor in spiritual goods, who are subject to a thousand infirmities, who are weak and languishing. My God! how then can they remain three, four or five and six months without giving this heavenly food to their souls.

Beside the beautiful Sacrament, they are like someone who is dying of thirst beside a river, and would only have to bend his head to drink, or like a man who remains poor beside a treasure, who need only stretch out his hand.

Having a remedy so efficacious for curing their soul and a food so capable of conserving its health, how is it that they let it die of misery? My God! what misfortune and what blindness!

Alas! let us say it groaning. One spares nothing for a body which sooner or later will be destroyed and eaten by worms, and a soul created to the image of God, a soul that is immortal, is despised and treated with the greatest cruelty. Is it not, in effect, to treat it without pity, to let it die of starvation, refusing it the bread of life which alone can sustain it?

But, we are peaceful and happy in this state. Yet you risk being surprised by death and cast into hell.

Is it because the devil is your master? If your faith was not dead, what confusion you would feel at seeing your father, or mother or brother or sister, or one of your neighbours go to the Holy Table to be fed with the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, and you, yourself, abstaining from it! O my God! what a misfortune! So great that one cannot understand it!

MEDITATION 9: THE EUCHARIST UNITES US TO JESUS CHRIST

A saint used to say that we were God-bearers. It is really true because at the moment of receiving the Blessed Eucharist, and as long as the Sacred Species subsist, Jesus Christ is substantially present with His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in our body and our soul. We are thus tabernacles, living ciboria of Jesus Christ. What are You doing, O my Saviour, during this quarter of an hour, when You deign to dwell in me; when You are in contact with my body and my soul? I cure you of your spiritual laziness, strive to draw you into My Heart; I set you on fire with flames of love for God and for your brethren. O mystery of condescension and of divine love! Give me O Jesus, an understanding and relish of it.

1. UNION OF SPIRIT WITH CHRIST.

Jesus, whilst He remains after Holy Communion under the Eucharistic Species, unites Himself intimately to the Christian soul, by animating it with the most lively sentiments of love and fervour; this is the chief end for which He comes into our hearts. The union of the Flesh of Christ with our flesh has its consummation and its perfection only in this union of spirit which it brings about and symbolises. In the Eucharist, the Flesh of Our Lord is in some way the instrument by which the Divinity touches us even to the most intimate depths of our being in order to give us life.

Let us listen to the servant of God telling us, after the manner of the saints, this wonderful effect of this adorable Sacrament.

One Communion is to the soul what a breath of wind is to a fire that is dying out, but where there are still many embers. It blows on them and the fire is rekindled.

One Communion well made is sufficient to inflame a soul with the love of God and to make him disregard the world.

A great personage of this world not long since came here to Holy Communion: he had a fortune of 300,000 francs. He gave 100,000 to build a church, 100,000 to the poor, and 100,000 to his parents, and he entered La Trappe. A lawyer came after him; he made a good Communion, and set out determined to put himself under the direction of Père Lacordaire. Oh! One Holy Communion, one only, it is enough to give man a distaste for earth and to give him a foretaste of heavenly delights.

When one has received Communion, the soul revels in the embraces of love as a bee in the flowers. He who communicates loses himself in God as a drop of water in the ocean. They cannot be separated.

He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, said Jesus Christ, abides in Me and I in him. My Flesh is meat indeed and My Blood is drink indeed; so that by Holy Communion, the adorable Blood of Jesus Christ flows in our veins, His Flesh is truly mingled with ours. We are united to His Person as food is to our flesh.

St. Paul expressed this union very well when he says: "It is no longer I that live, but Jesus Christ Who lives in me." It is no longer I who act, who think, but it is Jesus Christ who acts and thinks in me. If we communicate often and worthily, our thoughts, our desires, and also all our actions and our proceedings have the same end as Jesus Christ had whilst He was on earth. We love God, we do not attach ourselves to any of the things here below. Our hearts and minds aspire only for heaven. O what happiness! No, no, it will only be in heaven that we shall understand it. O my God! a creature enriched by such a gift.

He, says St. Cyril, who receives Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, is so united to Him that they are like to two pieces of wax that are melted together, and end by becoming only one.

When you have received Our Lord, you feel your soul purified and bathed in the love of God.

When we have the good God in our heart, it ought to be on fire. The hearts of the disciples on the way to Emmaus were burning, and they only heard Him speak.

What does Our Lord do in the Sacrament of His love? He has taken His good Heart in order to love us. There goes out from this Heart a flood of tenderness and mercy to cleanse the sins of the world. O Heart of Jesus, loving Heart! Flower of love! If we do not love the Heart of Jesus what then will we love? There is only love in this Heart. How is it possible not to love what is so lovable.

2. HOLY COMMUNION IS THE SIGN OF UNITY AND THE BOND OF CHARITY.

Jesus, whilst He remains after Holy Communion under the Sacred Species, unites us intimately to our neighbours by charity.

It is at this moment that He says again His prayer. "Holy Father, that all these may be one as Thou Father in Me and I in You, that they may be one in Us." "This Sacrament is the sign of unity, the bond of charity, the symbol of concord," says the Council of Trent. What it signifies, that it effects. He is generous to us with Actual Graces, to help us to love our brothers sincerely, and generously, and to make with them one body with Jesus Christ. That is why this sacrament is called by the name Supper and Table of the Lord. These names express the union of a family, the union of friends who gather at the same feast, around the same table.

But this union is the fruit of the sacrament. One can tell, said one saint, when a soul has worthily received the Eucharist. It is so bathed in love, penetrated and changed, that one no longer recognises it by its actions, in its words. It is charitable it is on good terms with everyone.

If you communicate often and worthily, you will be touched by the spiritual and temporal miseries of your neighbour. Do not suffer any ill-will or bitterness in your heart against your neighbour. This would be contrary to the work of Jesus in you. But this is not enough. At the moment of Communion, and during the time after receiving, pray for the conversion of sinners, for fervour for the tepid, the salvation of the dying, and the relief of the dead. When infinite love comes to you, He can refuse you nothing for the souls He loves so dearly.

MEDITATION 10: THE HOLY EUCHARIST INCREASES SANCTIFYING GRACE IN US

He who eats My Flesh shall live by Me. It is You, O my God, Who will be his life. What a transformation life works where it meets with no obstacle. From inert dust, from a little mud, it brings forth a flower which delights us with its perfume and colour; it communicates to it its nature and its properties. It is thus You treat my soul by Holy Communion, O Jesus. You bow down even to me, You, the substantial and uncreated life. You divinize the dust of my nothingness, and this nothingness, when divinized, produces fruits worthy of You, of infinite value because it is a divine sap which makes it fertile. O Jesus, be my life, my holiness, my love.

1. HOLY COMMUNION INCREASES SANCTIFYING GRACE IN US.

This is easy to understand, because when we receive Jesus Christ, we receive the source of all sorts of spiritual blessings.

Jesus Christ is the light.

When we receive Him, we feel our faith reanimated. We see more clearly the truths of our holy religion. We realize more the gravity of sin, and its dangers. The thought of the judgment frightens us more, and the thought of the loss of God becomes a greater grief.

Jesus Christ is the life.

In receiving Him, our soul is strengthened: we are firmer in the fight; more unyielding in trials and temptations. Food is not changed into our substance immediately, says St. John Chrysostom, but the action of the divine Blood on our soul is instantaneous, and the soul feels at once its

marvellous effects.

Jesus Christ is love.

When we receive Him, our intentions are more pure in all we do. Our love is inflamed more and more. The thought that we have Jesus Christ in our hearts, the joy that we experience in this happy moment seems to unite us and bind us in such a way to God that our hearts can think of and desire only God.

Jesus Christ is the sovereign good.

In receiving Him, the thought of the perfect possession of God fills us in such a way that our life appears long. We envy not those who live a long time, but those who set out soon to be reunited with God forever. All that tells us of the dissolution of our bodies fills us with joy.

By increasing Grace, the Blessed Sacrament enlightens our faith, revives our hope and inflames our love, and spreads abroad in our souls with greater abundance, the gifts of Fortitude, Fear of the Lord and Piety.

2. SANCTIFYING GRACE IN HOLY COMMUNION ADORNS THE SOUL AND COMMUNICATES TO IT A FECUNDITY WHICH IS THE WEALTH AND ORNAMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

If anyone could put his hand into liquid gold, says St. John Chrysostom, he would draw it out covered with gold. The Eucharist does more for our souls. He who buys a slave, buys him with gold, and if he wishes to adorn him he does it also with gold. Jesus Christ has bought us with His Blood, and He adorns us with His Blood. You who receive this Blood are clothed with the Royal Robe of Jesus Christ.

What do I say? They are clothed with the King Himself.

This Blood makes shine in us the royal image of Christ. It produces an incredible beauty, and when the soul is often watered and nourished, its nobility is never tarnished.

From the earthly Paradise there burst out a spring which produced rivers; from this table there pours forth a stream which is the source of all grace – grace overflowing without stint or limit.

Near this source spring up, not sterile willows, but trees which mount up to Heaven producing their fruits in their time, fruits which will never wither. These fruits are abundant, of great variety, delicious. “They are,” said the Curé d’Ars, “humility, gentleness, mortification, modesty, charity, virginity.” A soul that communicates worthily becomes inexhaustibly fruitful, and one no longer recognizes it.

MEDITATION 11: THE BLESSED EUCHARIST LESSENS IN US OUR TENDENCY TO EVIL

WE read in the Gospel that when Jesus Christ went into St. Peter’s house, he asked Him to cure his mother-in-law who was sick of a violent fever. Jesus Christ commanded the fever to leave her, and instantly she was so completely cured that she was able to serve them at table.

The fever, says St. Ambrose, is our avarice, our anger, our sensuality. These passions boil up in our flesh, and agitate the soul, the spirit and the senses. They have their remedy in the Blessed Eucharist, the food and strength of the Christian soul. Let us thank Our Lord for this healing and sanctifying gift.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST WEAKENS OUR INCLINATIONS TO EVIL.

The precious Blood of Jesus Christ which flows in our veins, and His adorable Body which is blended with ours, can it do less than destroy, or at least greatly diminish the attraction towards forbidden pleasures that the sin of Adam has left in us.

This is so true that when one receives Jesus Christ one feels a new taste for the things of Heaven, and a new contempt for created things.

Tell me, how could you let pride find its way into a heart that is about to receive a God, humiliated even to annihilation? Can one consent to think anything of one's self! On the contrary, would he not find matter enough to cause him to abase and despise himself? A heart that is about to receive a God who is so pure, who is holiness itself, will it not feel born in it an invincible horror of all sins of impurity, and would it not rather let itself be cut in pieces rather than consent, I do not say to a bad action, but even to a bad thought?

A tongue which a short time ago has been so happy as to bear its Creator and Saviour, could it dare to lend itself to lascivious words, to sensual kisses? No, without doubt, it would never dare to act thus.

Eyes which just now desired so earnestly to contemplate their Creator, who is more pure than the sun's rays, could they after such happiness, look on indecent objects? That would seem to be impossible.

MEDITATION 12: THE BLESSED EUCHARIST, PLEDGE OF LIFE ETERNAL AND OF THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION

What was the cause of the resurrection of Lazarus? It was because he had often received Our Lord into his house. The Saviour loved him so much that He shed tears when He saw that he was dead. How then could He leave in the humiliation of the grave, those whom He has honoured by His visit in Holy Communion, who have longed for Him and who have received Him into a pure heart inflamed with love. He has said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood shall live eternally, and I will raise him up at the last day."

1. THE PLEDGE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Holy Communion is for us the pledge of eternal life, so that it guarantees heaven to us. It is a pledge sent from Heaven to tell us that it will one day be our dwelling place.

Oh I if we could really understand how much Jesus Christ loves to come into our hearts! Once He is there, He would wish never to leave it. He can no longer separate Himself from us during our life nor after our death.

Consider St. Teresa, she received Holy Communion frequently and fervently. By this means, she became so pleasing to God that one day Jesus Christ appeared to her, and said to her that she pleased Him so much that if there was not a heaven already, He would create one for her alone.

She appeared one day accompanied by Jesus Christ to a religious. This religious was astonished and she asked:

"Why, O Jesus, is Teresa with You?" The Saviour answered that Teresa during her life had been so united to Him by Holy Communion that He could not separate Himself from her.

Oh, how beautiful will be a soul that has often and worthily received the good God! It will be united to the soul of Our Lord. Then it will enjoy a happiness pure and perfect. It will shine like a beautiful diamond, because God will be reflected in it.

When the soul of a Christian who has received Our Lord enters Paradise, it adds to the joy of heaven. The Angels and the Queen of Angels come to meet it because they recognise the Son of God in this soul. Those who receive Holy Communion at the moment of death are very fortunate. At the particular judgment which takes place immediately after death God the Father sees His Son in them! He cannot condemn them, Oh! no.

2. **HOLY COMMUNION - PRINCIPLE OF THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.**

Jesus Christ will raise up our bodies as much more glorious as we shall have more often and more worthily received Him. There is nothing we do which adorns the body more for Heaven than Holy Communion.

At the day of Judgment, the body of Our Lord will shine through our glorified body. His adorable Blood through our blood, as we see gold shine in copper and silver in lead.

Can one doubt it when we realise how close is the union effected between Jesus and the devout communicant? If then, whilst He was still passible and mortal, Jesus Christ raised the dead by His mere touch, how will He not raise us up, we, who have eaten His Flesh and drunk His Blood.

What happiness for the just when at the last day the soul all embalmed with the fragrance of Heaven will come to seek its body to enjoy God for all eternity! Then our bodies will come out of the earth as linen which has been washed in dye. The bodies of the just will shine as beautiful diamonds, as globes of love.

What a cry of delight when the soul comes to unite itself with the glorified body, to this body which will be no longer for it an instrument of sin nor a cause of suffering.

It will revel in the sweetness of love as the bee does in the flower.

If a little leaven, says St. Francis of Sales, makes a great mass of dough to rise, if a spark suffices to set a house on fire, if a seed put into the earth makes it fertile and productive of other seeds, have I not reason to hope that your Holy Body coming into mine, when the time comes, will raise it up from its corruption, will glorify it and bring it forth again immortal, impassible, agile, subtle, resplendent, and furnished with all the glorious qualities that it can hope for.

MEDITATION 13: THE BLESSED EUCHARIST THE SOURCE OF JOY

What must have been the joy of the aged Simeon when pressed to his heart, overflowing with love, the Infant Jesus who still more inflamed his love so that he cried out:

“Now Lord, let me die.” Assuredly, he was in an ecstasy. it we, are we not more happy than Simeon? He could only keep Jesus for a short time, we can keep Him always we will. He comes not only into our arms, but into our art.

1. **THE EUCHARIST, SOURCE OF JOY AND SWEETNESS.**

Oh, who will ever understand the happiness of the Christian who receives Jesus Christ into his heart, who us becomes a little heaven. He alone is as rich as all heaven put together.

Qh! happy home where these Christians live. What reverence ought we to have for them during the whole Ly! To have in this house a second tabernacle where the good God has been present in Body and Soul.

O Man, how happy thou art, but how little thou dost understand this happiness. Didst thou but understand it, you could not live. Oh! no. Truly you would not be able live! You would die of love! That God gives Himself thee, thou canst carry Him away with thee if thou wilt, whither thou wilt. He is one with thee. Ah! a heart that is once been seized in the holy embrace of its Saviour can never find happiness out of Him.

One Easter Sunday, after Holy Communion, St. Teresa is rapt in God. Having come to herself, she found her mouth full of the precious Blood of Our Lord, which communicated so much sweetness to her that she thought she would die of love. I saw my divine Saviour, she writes, who said to me: “My daughter, I wish that this adorable Blood which causes thee so much love, may be employed save you. Never fear that My mercy will be wanting to you. When I shed this previous Blood, I only experienced pain and bitterness, but to you it will only bring sweetness and love.”

Several times when she had the great happiness of receiving Holy Communion, the Angels came down in a crowd from heaven, and seemed to delight in uniting with her to praise Our Lord whom she bore in her heart.

2. EFFECTS OF THIS SPIRITUAL SWEETNESS.

It repairs the strength and appeases the hunger of the soul, and enables it to carry out joyfully and with fervour all the duties of the Christian life.

When you have had the happiness of receiving the good God, you feel, for some time, a joy and comfort in your heart. Pure souls are always in that state, this union is their strength and their happiness. Oh! how sweet is this life of union with the good God! It is heaven on earth. There are no more troubles, no longer any crosses!

Without the Blessed Eucharist there would no longer be any happiness in this world, life would be unbearable. When we receive Holy Communion we receive our joy and all our good.

O, my children! the Blessed Victoire used to say why do you crawl along in the way salvation? Why have you so little courage to work to merit the great happiness of going to the Holy Table, and to eat there the Bread of Angels, which gives such strength to the weak. Oh! if you knew how this heavenly Bread sweetens the sorrows of life! Oh! If once you had tasted how kind and generous Jesus Christ is to those who receive Him in Holy Communion! . . . Go, my children, eat this Bread of the strong and you will return filled with joy and courage, you will desire more sufferings, pains and combats in order to please Jesus Christ.

When Our Lord comes to a pure soul, He is pleased. He fills it with joy and gladness. He bestows on it this generous love which makes it do and suffer all to please Him. If one could understand all the blessings contained in Holy Communion nothing else would content the heart of man. The miser would no longer run after his treasures, nor the ambitious after glory. Everyone would shake the dust of earth from their feet and would fly towards heaven.

MEDITATION 14: DISPOSITIONS OF SOUL FOR HOLY COMMUNION

When Jesus Christ instituted the Blessed Eucharist, it was in a room well furnished, to teach us how we ought to take care to adorn our soul³; with virtues in order to receive Him in Holy Communion. Let us thank Our Lord for this instruction.

The first ornament of the soul who wishes to communicate is the state of Grace, the next is freedom from any affection for venial sin.

1. TO BE IN A STATE OF GRACE TO RECEIVE COMMUNION WORTHILY.

(a) Let a man prove himself, says St. Paul, before coming to the Holy Table: and then let him eat and drink of this chalice. Because he who eats and drinks this chalice unworthily, eats and drinks his own condemnation not discerning the Body of the Lord.

We must, before going to the Holy Table, be sure that we have spent sufficient time in examination of conscience in order to discover our mortal sins, and that we have a great sorrow also, that our confession has thus been entire. We must have a firm determination to do, by the grace of God, all that we can, not to fall into sin again.

If we have not confessed entirely or sincerely, in receiving Holy Communion we would put Jesus Christ at the feet of the devil. What an enormity!

When we go to receive the Body of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, we should be ready for death and ready to appear with confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ.

(b) Those who go to Holy Communion without having purified their hearts, ought to be afraid of incurring the chastisement of the servant who dared to sit at table without a wedding garment.

The Master ordered his officials to bind his hands and feet, and to cast him into the outer darkness. Even thus Jesus Christ will say at the hour of death to those who have the misfortune of receiving Him into their hearts unworthily. "Why have you had the audacity to receive Me when you were stained with so many sins?" No, never forget that to communicate we must be truly converted, and have a sincere determination to persevere.

(c) Sin, according to the mind of St. Bernard, is the poison of our souls.

(d) You would not embrace a King if your mouth gave out a fetid odour, and you embrace the King of heaven with a soul more fetid still! No outrage could be greater. Do you not see with what care, decency and splendour even the Sacred Vessels are kept. How much more pure and shining ought our souls to be! Because the Sacred Vessels do not share in the mysteries that they enclose, they are not conscious of them. There is no real union between them and Him who is in them. For us it is otherwise. We must, then, in order to receive the Sacred Host purify our minds and make our souls all holy.

2. TO BE FREE FROM AFFECTION FOR VENIAL SIN, IN ORDER TO GATHER ABUNDANT FRUIT FROM COMMUNION.

Before giving His adorable Body and precious Blood Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles to show us that we must be free from sin, even the slightest, and that we should have no affection for them. The purity of Jesus is so great that the least fault prevents us from being united to Him as completely as He would wish.

Venial sin, it is true, does not make our Communion unworthy, but it is the reason why we profit so little from

it. See, for instance, how many Communions you have made. Are you any better? No, perhaps. Why? Because you retain nearly always the same imperfections. You have a horror of big sins which would kill your soul, but for all these acts of impatience, these murmurings when some trouble or some annoyance or contradiction befalls you, for these little evasions in speech.

You wish everyone should love you, and have a good opinion of you. You do not make the least effort to correct yourself.

Set to work to destroy in yourself all that is not pleasing to Jesus Christ, to speak willingly to those who have caused you pain, to be pleased to see them, to love them sincerely, to practise the perfect renouncement of yourselves and you will see how your Communion will carry you forward with great strides towards Heaven. The more you do it, the more you will feel yourself detached from sin and carried to God.

MEDITATION 15: THE DISPOSITION OF SOUL FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Zacheus, having heard about Jesus Christ desired ardently to see Him. As he could not, because of the great crowd, he climbed a tree. But Our Lord saw him: "Zacheus come down because I wish to spend today in your house

Zacheus made haste to come down and ran to prepare as well as he could to receive the Saviour. When Our Lord came in He said: "This day is salvation come to this house." Zacheus moved by the great kindness of Jesus Christ who had come to stay in his house, cried out: "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged anyone I will restore him fourfold."

O Jesus, give me the ardent desires of this sinner, his lively faith and immense joy in receiving You, and when You come into my heart bring it also salvation.

1. TO HAVE A LIVELY FAITH.

As this sacrament is a sacrament of faith, we must believe firmly that Jesus Christ is really

present in the Holy Eucharist, that He is there living and glorious as He is in heaven. In former times, before giving Holy Communion, the priest, holding the Sacred Host between his fingers, said aloud: "Do you believe, my brethren, that the adorable Body and precious Blood of Jesus Christ is truly in this Sacrament?" Then all the faithful answered: "Yes, we believe it." Let us have the same faith.

2. TO HAVE A GREAT DESIRE TO BE UNITED TO JESUS CHRIST.

Observe the earnestness of the Magi in seeking Jesus Christ in the manger. See holy Magdalen, as she eagerly seeks the risen Saviour. Do you seek Jesus Christ with the same desire, the same ardour, and nothing will hinder you from receiving Him. Long to communicate because there is nothing so great as the Eucharist. Put all the good works against one good Holy Communion. By one Communion you give more glory to God than by giving a hundred thousand francs to the poor.

Have a desire to go to Communion because it is the only food which suits perfectly your soul.

Oh, if Christians could understand the language of Our Lord, who says to them: "In spite of thy misery, I wish to see very near to Me this beautiful soul that I have created for Myself. I have made it so great that I alone can fill it. I have made it so pure, that only My Body can nourish it."

St. Catherine of Siena cried out in her transports of love: "O my God! O my Saviour! Ah, what excess of love and goodness for creatures to give yourself with so much eagerness!; and in giving Yourself, you give all that You have, all that You are! My loving Saviour, I beg you to water my soul with your precious Blood, nourish my body with your adorable Flesh, so that my body and my soul may belong only to Thee, and aspire only to please You and to possess You."

St. Catherine of Genoa was so eager for this heavenly bread, that she could not see it in the priest's hands without feeling as if she would die of love; so very great was the desire she felt to possess It, she exclaimed: "Oh Lord, come to me! My God, come to me! I can wait no longer. Oh! My God come, please, to the depth of my heart. No, my God, I can wait no longer. You are all my joy, all my happiness, and all the nourishment of my soul."

3. TO HAVE A RIGHT INTENTION.

There are some people who go to Holy Communion to gain the esteem of the world. It avails them nothing. Others go out of habit. Poor Communions, they have not the right intention.

Go to Communion to obey Jesus Christ, who has commanded you to do so, under pain of not having eternal life.

Go to Communion to obtain the graces that you need, humility, patience, purity.

Go to the Holy Table to unite yourself to Jesus Christ so that He will make of you other Christ's, which happens to those who receive Him worthily.

When you go to Holy Communion you should always have an intention, and say when about to receive the Body of Our Lord: "O my good Father, who art in heaven, I offer you, at this moment, your dear Son, such as He was when He was taken down from the Cross, and laid in the arms of the Holy Virgin, and as she offered Him to You in sacrifice for us. I offer Him to You by the hands of Mary, to obtain such or such graces, faith, charity, humility." My children, listen well to that. Everytime I have obtained a grace, I have asked it like this, I have never been disappointed.

4. TO PREPARE WITH FERVOUR.

During the days before Communion, desire to communicate as worthily as possible to have as much love as all the saints put together. Your mere desire will be rewarded. Do all your actions as a preparation for Holy Communion. Converse with Jesus Christ who reigns in your heart by His grace. Think how He will come on the altar and from there into your soul to visit it and to enrich it with all sorts of good things and happiness. Implore the Blessed Virgin, the angels and the saints to

pray to the good God for you and prepare you to receive Him. The day of your Communion, come to Holy Mass a short time before it begins. Hear it still better than at other times. Have your beads or your office book, that your mind and heart may be all the time at the foot of the tabernacle; that it may long continually for the happy moments when Our Lord will come; that your thoughts may not be of this world, but all of heaven, and be so lost in God that you seem to be dead to the world. Make acts with all possible fervour to reanimate in your soul, faith, hope and a great love for Jesus Christ, who will come soon to make of your heart his tabernacle, or if you wish a little heaven. My God, what a happiness, what an honour for such miserable creatures like us!

After you have made your acts of preparation, you must offer your Communion for yourself or for others.

MEDITATION 16: UNWORTHY COMMUNION

UNWORTHY Communions are made very often. How many there are who have the temerity to come to the Holy Table with sins unconfessed or disguised in Confession. How many have not the contrition that the good God demands of them, and keep a secret will to commit sin again and not to make every effort to correct themselves. How many do not avoid the occasions of sin when they could do so, and bring to the Holy Table enmities in their heart! If ever you have been in these dispositions when going to Holy Communion, you have been guilty of sacrilege. Horrible crime on which we are going to meditate.

1. THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT IS A TRAITOR AND A HYPOCRITE.

Having lied to the Holy Spirit in Confession by hiding or disguising some sin, he dares, this wretch, to take his place among the faithful about to eat this bread, with a hypocritical look of respect! Ah! no, no, nothing prevents the monster; he goes forward to bring about his reprobation. In vain this loving Saviour, seeing him come to Him, calls out from the tabernacle as to the perfidious Judas: "My friend, whereto art thou come?" Why my friend, do you betray your God and Saviour with a sign of peace! Stop, stop, my son, ah! for mercy's sake spare Me! But no, no, neither the remorse of conscience nor the loving reproaches which his God makes to him can prevent his criminal steps. Ah, he goes forward, he is going to pierce his God and Saviour! Oh, heavens, how terrible! Can you support without trembling this miserable murder of your Creator? Ah! is it not the crime of crimes and the abomination in the holy place.

2. THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT IS AN UNGRATEFUL PERSON.

"Why do you persecute Me?" Jesus Christ said to the Jews. "Is it because I have opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame walk, cured the sick and raised the dead? Is it a crime to have loved you so much?" Such is the language that Jesus Christ speaks to those who profane His adorable Body and precious Blood. The greatness of their ingratitude is shown in that they outrage their benefactor through the greatest of his benefits, even worse, they use Himself to insult Him. Jesus Christ says to us by the mouth of one of the prophets: "If this affront had been offered to Me by enemies, by infidels who had never had the happiness of knowing Me, or even by heretics born in error, there might have been some reason for it. But you, He says to us, whom I have set in the bosom of My Church, you whom I have enriched with My choicest gifts; you who by Baptism have become My children and heirs to My kingdom! What! is it you who dare to outrage Me by this horrible sacrilege? What! you can still break the heart of the best of fathers, who has loved you even unto death. Well! ungrateful ones, are you not satisfied with all the tortures that have been inflicted on My innocent Body during My sorrowful passion? Oh! for mercy's sake, spare your God who has loved you so much; why do you wish to give Me to death a second time, by receiving Me

into a heart stained with sin?”

3. THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT IS A PARRICIDE.

Would you know what he does? Listen well so that you may understand your cruelty towards Jesus Christ. What would you say of a man whose father was about to be led to the place of execution, if he found that the executioners had not the power to hang him, should say to them: “You have not the strength. Here are my arms, let them serve you to hang my father”? Such an action would make you shudder with horror. That would be as it should be. Ah, well, if I dare, I would say to you that that is still nothing if we compare it with the appalling crime those commit who communicate unworthily. What indeed is natural death, even violent death, if we compare it to that which the sinner inflicts on Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic. The Jews persecuted Jesus Christ during His mortal life, but the unworthy communicant is the dwelling place of His glory.

While Jesus Christ was on earth, there was only one Calvary where He could be crucified, but here there are as many crosses as there are sacrilegious hearts. Jesus Christ died only once a natural death, but this death that you inflict on Him by unworthy Communion, ah! when will they end! O what a long agony!

On Calvary, even the most insensible creatures seemed to be afflicted by the death of the Saviour, and seemed in some way to wish to share in His sufferings. But here, nothing of all that appears. He is insulted, outraged, murdered and slaughtered by a vile nothing, and all is done in silence. The sun is not darkened, and the earth does not tremble, the altar is not torn down. This good God so unworthily outraged, can He not complain even more justly than from the tree of the Cross, that He is abandoned? Ought He not to cry out: Ah I my Father, why have You abandoned Me to the fury of My enemies? Must I then die every moment? My God, how can it be that a Christian can have the audacity to go to the Holy Table with sin in his heart, and so put You to death there? There is neither Cross nor Calvary, as formerly, he says to the demon, but I have found something to take its place. How? replies the demon, very astonished. It is my heart. Be prepared. I am going to seize Jesus. He has sent you to Hell, now take your revenge, slaughter Him on this cross. O my God, can one think of this without trembling with horror? No, no, if there were a thousand hells that would not be enough to avenge such a crime. Alas, says St. Paul, the unworthy communicant eats and drinks his judgment (1 Cor. x. 29). O terrible misfortune! It is not on paper that the decree of reprobation of these sacrilegious ones is written, but in their own hearts. At the hour of death Jesus Christ will come down with a torch in His hand into the sacrilegious hearts, and will find there His adorable Body, so often profaned, which will cry to heaven for vengeance. O divine Saviour, will the anger and power of your Father be strong enough to cast down these miserable Judases into the depths of the abyss.

MEDITATION 17: DISPOSITIONS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Communion! Oh, what an honour God does to His creature. He rests on his tongue, passes by his palate as by a little road, and stops in his heart as on a throne.

Let your modesty be known to all, in your dress, in your looks, in your attitude, in your walk, because the Lord is near.

To the dispositions of soul necessary for a good Communion must be added certain dispositions of the body which this sacrament demands.

1. ONE MUST BE SUITABLY CLOTHED.

One must be suitably clothed, not richly clad, but respectably. It is not becoming in young people to make a display of vanity in going to receive a God humiliated and despised. My God! My

God! what a contradiction:

they seem to make no difference between the Holy Table and a ball or dance.

It is also disrespectful to Jesus Christ to communicate with one's clothes soiled or torn. See that they are clean. Change your linen if you can. Have your hair, face and hands in good condition. The majesty of the King of Glory who wishes to come into our hearts demands at least this care. But labourers should not hesitate to come to the Holy Table in their working clothes if they are in a hurry, and if they are obliged to be at work immediately after receiving Holy Communion. According to the thought of a Father of the Church, what Christ desires is not garments of silk, embroidered with gold, but souls of gold.

2. KEEP YOUR BODY PERFECTLY PURE.

Your body is not a profane thing, but something holy, august and sacred. It is the dwelling place of Jesus Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost. Even though the material violation of the body cannot wrest from the soul the flowers of its virginity, strive with all your might to preserve your mind, your imagination, your senses, and even your flesh, from all stain, even involuntary. St. John Chrysostom says that the mouth which receives Jesus Christ, and the body in which He rests ought to be as pure as the rays of the sun. Your exterior ought to convey to all who see you, that you are preparing for something great. Approach the Holy Table with great modesty. Kneel down and try to enkindle your faith, so that you may be sensible of the greatness of your happiness. Take care not to look about you. Keep your eyes lowered and your hands joined, and say the Confiteor. While you are waiting for Communion, stir up in your heart a great love for Jesus Christ, and humbly beg Him to deign to come to your poor and miserable heart.

MEDITATION 18: THANKSGIVING

When we come from Holy Communion if someone asked us: What are you bringing into your house? You would be able to say: I am bringing heaven. it is really true, but we have not sufficient faith. We do not understand our dignity. When we leave the altar rails we are as happy as the Magi would have been if they had been able to carry off the Infant Jesus. After each of your Communions, listen to Our Lord present in your heart, converse with him, invite the Blessed Virgin to thank Him for you, and keep recollected all day. The most elementary politeness and our own interest make thanksgiving a duty for us.

1. WE MUST LISTEN TO WHAT GOD SAYS.

When you have received Holy Communion, rise up reverently, return to your place and kneel down; do not at once take your book or your beads. I do not like to see people begin to read as soon as they have come from the altar. Oh no, of what use are the words of men when it is the good God who speaks? We must be like someone who is curious and who listens at doors. We must listen to what the good God says at the door of our heart.

2. WE SHOULD CONVERSE WITH JESUS.

Converse for a little while with Jesus Christ whom you are fortunate to possess in your heart, Body and Soul as He was formerly during His life on earth. Ask Him for all the graces you desire for yourself and others; the good God will not be able to refuse you anything if you offer Him His Son, and the merits of His Passion and death.

3. WE SHOULD MAKE ACTS OF THANKSGIVING.

Make your acts of thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Then invite the Blessed Virgin, all the

angels and all the saints to thank God with you. Sometimes when St. Teresa had the great happiness of receiving Communion, the angels came down in a crowd from heaven, and seemed to make it their delight to unite her to praise the Saviour that she possessed in her heart. Many times she was seen borne by angels to the altar. They carried her on a high seat.

Do not leave immediately after Mass, but stay a little while to ask the good God to strengthen you in your good resolutions.

4. WE SHOULD KEEP RECOLLECTED.

When you go out of the church, do not stop to talk, keep recollected, thinking of your happiness in possessing Jesus Christ in your heart. You must go home and watch over your thoughts, words and actions, that you may preserve intact the grace of, the good God. You take a glass of spirit and cork it well. You preserve the spirit as long as you wish. In the same way, if you keep recollected after Communion, you feel for a long time this burning fire which will inspire you with a delightful leaning towards good and a strong repugnance for evil.

5. WE SHOULD CARRY THE EFFECT OF HOLY COMMUNION INTO OUR WHOLE DAY.

If you have a little time between your duties spend it in good reading or a visit to the Blessed Sacrament to thank the good God for the favour that He did you in the morning. Occupy yourself as little as possible with worldly affairs on the day of your Communion.

MEDITATION 19: THE RESPECT DUE TO CHURCHES

What is this holy place! It is truly the house of God and the gate of heaven! exclaimed the patriarch Jacob after the visions of the miraculous ladder. We can say as much of each of our churches. They are the dwelling places of angels and archangels, the palace of God, heaven itself. If we do not believe it, look at the altar of sacrifice. Recall for what purpose and for what end it is set up. Think what He is Who is about to come down, Who will be penetrated with a holy awe.

1. THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Our churches are holy, consecrated, sacred, because God made man dwell there day and night. In early times, many Christians crossed the seas to see the holy places where the great mystery of our redemption was wrought. Oh, blessed places! they exclaimed, where so many wonders were worked to save us! And they could hardly tear themselves away from the Cenacle or the Garden of the Agony without shedding tears.

On Calvary, when Jesus Christ endured such great sufferings for us, they felt their faith rekindled and their hearts burning with a new fire. But without going so far, or exposing ourselves like them to many dangers, have we not Jesus Christ in the midst of us, not only as God, but Body and Soul? Are not our churches as worthy of reverence as the holy places?

What a blessed people are Christians, who see renewed each day on the altars all the wonders that Almighty God worked formerly on Calvary.

2. REVERENCE IN CHURCH.

And meanwhile, for the most part, we come to church without reverence, without love of God, without knowing even what we have come to do. Some let their minds and hearts dwell on a thousand worldly matters. Others are there reluctantly and are bored. There are some who scarcely kneel whilst a God pours out His precious Blood for their pardon, lastly others are in such haste to leave the church, they do not wait for the priest to come down from the altar. My God what little love Your children have for You, or rather, how they scorn You! Indeed, what a spirit of frivolity

and distraction appears when people are in church. Some sleep, others converse together, and nearly everyone is taken up with what he has to do.

3. LACK OF FAITH.

See, it is lack of faith that is the matter. We are poor blind folk. We have a mist over our eyes. Only faith can dissipate the mist.

Why indeed, since the same wonders which were wrought in the Cenacle and on Calvary are wrought every day under our eyes, have we not the same love, the same gratitude, the same reverence as the pious pilgrims who used to visit the holy places? Because in punishment for our ingratitude and the bad use we have made of Grace and the divine Eucharist, the good God has deprived us in some measure of the light of faith. So we scarcely feel or understand that we are in the presence of God. My God, what a misfortune! Let us fear, let us fear, lest the good God punish us for the little respect we have for His adorable presence.

It is like the good bishop who was here the other day. Everyone jostled him. Ah! if they had known that he was a bishop! Ah well! because Our Lord does not let us see Him in the Blessed Sacrament in all His majesty you stand here without respect, and nevertheless, it is He. He is in the midst of you! Ask Him then to open the eyes of your hearts. Say to Him, as the blind man in Jericho: "Lord that I may see."

MEDITATION 20: THE MOTIVES FOR VISITING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

St. Paul tells us that at Athens he found written on an altar: "To the unknown God." Alas, I might say the opposite to you! I am about to preach to you a God that you do not adore, and whom you know to be your God. How many Christians have time on their hands and who never deign to come alone to visit their Saviour. Oh! what a shame on us! If some novelty turns up, one leaves everything and runs to it. As for our God, we fly from Him. We find the time we spend in His presence hard. Oh! what a difference between the first Christians and us! They spent entire days and nights in the churches to sing the praises of the Lord, and to weep over their sins, but today it is not the same. Jesus is forsaken, abandoned in the sacrament of His love. Let us think about some of the motives we have for visiting Him.

1. JESUS CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE IS OUR FRIEND:

If we really love the good God, we will find it a joy and happiness to spend some time near Him, to adore Him, and keep company with so good a friend.

He is there in the tabernacle. What is He doing, this good Jesus, in the sacrament of His love? He is loving us.

If you pass a church then, go in to salute Him. Would you pass the door of a friend without saying good-day? And Our Lord is a friend who has been so good to us. It would be a very ungrateful person who would not visit Him. Come to adore Him because He is your divine friend, your Creator, and your sovereign Master? You owe Him the homage of your whole being. Bow down before Him and praise Him. Come to keep Him company in the solitude in which the Christians leave Him. Come, my soul, redouble your fervour. You are alone to adore your God. His eyes regard you alone. Come to His feet to thank Him, and then recall the benefits of redemption; the adoption of sons ; the right to eternal life; so many pardons; so many Communion received, each of which brought you an increase of the supernatural life.

Come to show your love to Him. He will say to you: "My child, give Me your heart." Oh! open it then, dilate it, and give Him love for love!

2. JESUS CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE IS AN ILL-TREATED FRIEND.

To what outrages has He not exposed Himself in order to remain in our midst?

Masses and Communion, tepid or sacrilegious, profanations, neglect of Sunday observance, long periods alone in the churches. Irreverent attitudes and indifference for His Sacred Presence, and for the gift of Himself which He has made to us. There is no kind of outrage to which He is not subjected, and His Heart is wounded at the sight of so many offences. Oh! how pleased He is when we give up some of our occupations, or some frivolities to spend a quarter of an hour with Him to console Him!

When He sees pure souls come eagerly to see Him He smiles on them. They come with that simplicity which is agreeable to Him to ask His pardon for the insults of so many ungrateful people. Let us come then, to sympathise with Him in His sorrows! Those who will have wept on His account on earth will rejoice in heaven.

3. JESUS CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE IS A RICH AND GENEROUS FRIEND.

He is hidden there, waiting for us to come to visit Him and to make our requests. He wishes to see us near Him, to tell us that He loves us, and wishes to load us with good things.

When you go into a church and take holy water, when you make the sign of the cross, look at the tabernacle. Our Lord will at the same time bless you and say to you: "Come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you."

Are you sad? Come then cast yourself at His feet, and you will feel comforted.

Are you despised by the world? Come here and you will find a friend who will never fail you.

Are you tempted? Oh! it is here you will find powerful arms to conquer your enemies.

Do you fear the terrible judgment, at the thought of which the greatest saints have trembled? Profit by the same when your God is the God of mercy, and when it is so easy to obtain grace.

Are you oppressed by poverty? Come here and you will find a God who is infinitely rich and who will say to you that all good things are yours not in this world but in the next. It is there that I prepare infinite riches. Despise these perishable goods, and you will have those that perish not.

Sinners, ask Him with tears and contrition to pardon your sins, and you will surely obtain it.

Be reconciled to Him. Beg the precious gift of perseverance. Oh! tell Him that you wish never more to offend Him, that you would rather die than offend Him again.

4. JESUS CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE IS OUR MEDIATOR.

He is there, in the sacrament of His love, sighing, and interceding with His Father for sinners, and He asks that we pray for their salvation.

He is so good that there goes out from His Heart a flood of love and mercy to wash away the sins of the world.

During His agony, He experienced a sweat of blood, and this blood flowed even to the earth. It is this sweat of love which has saved the world and which still goes out from His Heart in the tabernacle. Now, Our Lord to share with us the privileges of His Redemption wishes us to point out to Him the souls on which He ought to pour out the graces of His atonement. Let us then intercede with Him for poor sinners, and thank Him for having such compassion in His Heart for them. We can never thank Him enough for it.

MEDITATION 21: THE SWEETNESS OF A VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

How great, O my God, is the happiness which Thou has reserved for them that fear Thee. They will be filled with the abundance of Your house, and You will give them to drink of the torrent of Your delights. Because Your conversation has no bitterness, nor Your company any tediousness, but joy and gladness. With you, O Jesus, our churches are earthly paradises where one tastes in anticipation the joy of the elect.

1. THE JOY OF A VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

What happiness do we not find in the presence of God, when we find ourselves alone at His feet before the tabernacle. Ah! if we had the eyes of the angels! Seeing Our Lord Jesus Christ Who is present on this altar and Who is looking at us, how we would love Him! We would wish to remain always at His feet. This would be a foretaste of heaven and everything else would become insipid. How sweet and consoling are the moments spent with the good God! Yes, how good it is to enjoy the chaste embraces of the Saviour! Ah! you have never tasted them! If you have had this happiness, you would not be able any longer to leave them. Do not then be surprised that so many holy people have spent their life in His house, day and night, they could not tear themselves away from His presence.

They are like the good Monsieur de Vidaud. He used to get up early and go to adore the Blessed Sacrament, as soon as the church was opened. One day when he was at the chateau, they had to send three times to call him to breakfast. The mistress of the house was impatient. At the third summons he came away from the presence of Our Lord, saying: "My God, one cannot spend a moment in peace with You!" He had been there since four in the morning! There are good Christians who spend their whole life thus lost before the good God. Ah! how happy they are. We read in history that a holy priest found so much sweetness and consolation in our churches that he slept on the altar step to have the joy of waking to find himself so near his God, and God to reward him let it come to pass that he died at the foot of the altar.

2. THE CAUSE OF THIS SWEETNESS.

The visit to the Blessed Sacrament is a source of so much sweetness because we have in the tabernacle, the same God who is the source of happiness for the elect in heaven. The Eucharist becomes thus an earthly paradise. One asked a saint if it were hard for him to remain so long in the church. "Ah!" he answered, "I would spend an eternity there!" He was right. Our Lord is in heaven; He is also in His tabernacle. What a joy! The saints in heaven are they weary of contemplating, adoring and praising Jesus Christ or of remaining in His presence? We ought to experience a happiness like theirs near the tabernacle where the same God dwells.

If we were honoured by a visit from the Blessed Virgin, our heart would overflow with joy, and we would cry out with St. Elizabeth, "Whence is this to me that the Mother of God should come to me?" But now it is not only Mary, it is her divine Son Himself who deigns to come down on the altar during Mass and to remain with us afterwards. How is it possible not to rejoice in this merciful visit, and not to relish this gracious presence. God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. The need of God is the most imperious in our nature. As the plant seeks the sun, so our soul is athirst for God. But now we can say, speaking of Jesus in the tabernacle, I have found Him whom my soul loveth. He is there, an infinite ocean of kindness and goodness, inviting us to lose ourselves there, claiming our spirit and our heart. He is the light; He enlightens us. He is a consuming fire; He enflames us. He is beatitude itself; He consoles us and makes us happy. He is the life; He cures us and restores our life. He is the way; He teaches us the road. He is the truth; He banishes the darkness of error which surrounds us. He is the strength; He sustains our weakness. He is providence; He makes all things work together for good for those who

love Him. Happy those who can live in His presence. Happy are we – we, with whom God dwells; we who can visit Him as often as we wish.

MEDITATION 22: VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - A METHOD OF MAKING IT

Who can express, O Jesus, the power and depth of your regard!

You looked on Simon, and You saw in him the eternal foundation of Your Church.

You looked at Matthew, and You drew him to You to make him an apostle.

You looked at Zacheus, and You brought salvation to him, and to all his house.

You looked at your unfaithful apostle, and opened in his heart an inexhaustible source of tears.

The good thief looked at You, and Your charity and sweetness revealed to him the Son of God.

You looked at the good thief, and You assured him of his pardon, and You opened to him the gates of Your kingdom.

O Jesus! deign to turn on me one of those merciful looks, and grant that in contemplating You, I may be filled with your love.

NO NEED OF MUCH SPEAKING.

When we are before the Blessed Sacrament, instead of looking about us, let us close our eyes and open our hearts. The good God will open His. We will go to Him. He will come to us, the one to give, the other to receive.

It will be like a whisper from one to the other. What happiness do we not find when we forget ourselves to seek God? The saints forsook themselves in order to see God only, to work only for Him. They forgot all created objects to find Him alone. That is the way to heaven.

There are some poor women who imagine that the more they speak the better they pray. They have scarcely begun their beads than they look to see how soon they will be finished. That is not as it should be, my children. One has no need of much speaking to pray well. One knows the good God is in the tabernacle. One opens to Him his heart and rejoices in His whole presence. That is the best prayer. Listen well to this, my children. When I first came to Ars, there was a man who never passed the church without going in. In the morning on his way to work, and in the evening on his way home, he left his spade and pick-axe in the porch, and he spent a long time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Oh! how I loved to see that! I asked him once what he said to Our Lord during the long visits he made Him. Do you know what he told me? "Eh," Monsieur le Curé "I say nothing to Him, I look at Him and He looks at me!" How beautiful, my children, how beautiful!

MEDITATION 23: THE SENTIMENTS WE OUGHT TO HAVE WHEN WE ASSIST AT THE PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ON CORPUS CHRISTI

O city of Sion, said the prophet, rejoice because your God dwells in the midst of you. Words more true for Christians than for the Jews. Yes, Christians, rejoice! Your God is going to appear in your midst. This loving Saviour is going to visit your squares, your roads and your houses. Everywhere he will shower the most abundant blessings. O fortunate houses before which He will pass! Happy the streets on which His sacred feet will tread.

What does Jesus Christ do when we carry Him in procession? He is like a good king in the midst of His subjects, or a good father surrounded by his children, or a good shepherd who visits

his flock.

Let us go with Him with a lively faith, a firm hope and an atoning love.

1. WITH A LIVELY FAITH AND FIRM CONFIDENCE.

Like the first faithful who followed Him when He was on earth, doing good to all the world. Remember the two blind men who were on the road where the Saviour passed by, who began to cry out: "O Jesus, Son of David, have pity on us." Jesus gave them their sight.

Remember Zaccheus, who in a procession, wishing to see Jesus, climbed a tree to see Him. Jesus converted him. Remember the poor woman suffering for twelve years from loss of blood, and who succeeded in touching Jesus during another procession. She was suddenly cured. If we have the same faith, the same confidence, we will obtain the same graces, because it is the same God, the same Saviour, and the same Father filled with the same love.

Alas! How many sick to cure, how many blind to whom He should give back sight!

Amongst the followers of Christ, how many there are whose poor souls are all covered with wounds! How many are in darkness and do not see that they are in danger of hell! My God! heal these wounded souls give light to those in darkness.

2. WITH ATONING LOVE.

Let us imagine, during this procession, the Saviour going to Calvary. Some kick Him, others heap injuries and blasphemies on Him. Some holy souls only follow Him, weeping for Him and mix their tears with His blood, which He pours out on the ground.

Oh! how many Jews and executioners are going to follow Jesus Christ, and who will not be satisfied to make Him die once by mortal sin, but on as many altars as there are hearts. How many profanations and sacrileges has He not suffered, during this long procession of nineteen centuries since the institution of the Blessed Eucharist until this day. Ah! is it possible that a God who loves us so much can be so despised and ill-treated! Let us behave as a friend saddened by the afflictions of his friend, and thus show him a sincere friendship. Let us mourn over the insults done to Jesus Christ and try to repair them by the greatest and most ardent love.

MEDITATION 24: THE SENTIMENTS WE OUGHT TO HAVE WHEN WE ASSIST AT THE PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ON CORPUS CHRISTI

What a wonderful day this is for us. This earth is about to become truly the image of heaven. The feasts and joy of heaven are going to come down to earth. Jesus is going to walk through our city!

How can we help saying to ourselves when we re-pass the same way. "This is where 'my God passed by; that is the path He followed when He poured out His blessings on this parish. Oh! if my tongue can forget these benefits, may it cleave to my palate! Ah! if my eyes can still fix their regards on earthly things, may heaven refuse them sight!"

To gather up the graces that Jesus offers us on this feast day, let us follow Him with docile attention to His word, with the deepest respect, and with a joy all heavenly.

1. WITH ATTENTION TO HIS WORD.

We read in the Gospel of the two disciples going to Emmaus. Jesus walked with them, but they did not know Him. When they recognised Him, He disappeared. Quite beside themselves with joy, they said one to the other:

"Is it not true that our hearts were inflamed with love whilst He spoke with us, and explained the scriptures to us?" We are a thousand times happier than these disciples who walked with Jesus

Christ without knowing Him. We know that it is our God and Saviour who walks before us, who is going to speak in the depths of our heart, who is going to fill our hearts with many good thoughts and good inspirations. My child, He will say, why do you not desire to love Me? Why not give up this detestable sin which puts a barrier between us? Oh, my child, can you really abandon Me? Would you compel Me to condemn you to eternal torments? My child, here is your pardon, do you wish to repent? Then He will arouse in us the most filial, delicate and generous love. Let us listen to Him.

2. WITH THE MOST PROFOUND REVERENCE.

Let us remember that we are sinners, unworthy to follow a God so holy and so pure.

It is certain that if we had the happiness of many saints to whom God showed Himself, sometimes as an infant in the manger, sometimes on the Cross, we would be penetrated with a very great reverence for Him. But He is not less present with us under the sacramental veil.

When the Ark of the Covenant passed through the land of the Bethsamites, fifty thousand of them were stricken dead because of their lack of respect. Oh! how this example should make us fear. What did the ark contain? A little manna, the tables of the law, and because those who approached it were not sufficiently awed by its presence, God struck them down. But, I say, who is there that reflecting even a little on the presence of Jesus Christ will not be seized with fear? He is the true manna come down from heaven, the living bread of our souls, the sovereign lawgiver, the all powerful, all holy God! Would it not be supremely unbecoming to follow Him without recollection, with a thoughtless mind, and a sinful heart? How many indeed are unfortunate enough to walk with Our Lord with a heart laden with sins. Oh! unhappy one, you will have scarcely bent the knee when God is raised to bless His people; His piercing looks will not fail to see the defilement of your heart.

3. With a heavenly joy, representing to ourselves the great procession which He will lead after the general judgment. Today He invites us to merit heaven and to make ourselves worthy of it. Then He will, Himself introduce us there, and we will be part of the glorious procession of the elect. Now He is hidden from our eyes under the humility of His sacrament in order to try our faith: then He will walk clothed in majesty, light and power, at the head of all the saints, who will be united with Him in glory. Now our procession is made amidst the sufferings and trials of this life in the steps of a crucified God, who wishes that we carry your cross with Him: then the tears of all the wounded, the persecuted, will be changed to eternal gladness and eternal joy.

MEDITATION 25: ON THE PRIEST

“How wonderful the dignity of priests” says St. Augustine, “in their hands as in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Son of God becomes incarnate.” They are the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God, thus spoke St. Paul before him.

Commenting on these words, the Curé d’Ars said:

“Without the priests the Death and Passion of Our Lord would be of no use to us; the priest has the key of the treasures of heaven; he is the steward of the good God, the administrator of His goods. Let us ask the Holy Spirit for the knowledge of these truths. It will fill us with a holy reverence for the excellence of the priest, and a lively gratitude towards Our Lord who has invested him with it.”

1. THE GREATNESS OF THE PRIEST.

Who is the priest? A man who holds the place of God, a man who is clothed with all the powers of God. “Go,” said Our Lord to the priest, “as My Father has sent Me, I send you.”

At the Consecration, the priest does not say: "This is the Body of Our Lord." He says: "This is My Body." See then the power of the priest! The tongue of the priest and a morsel of bread makes a God. It is more than the creation of the world. Someone said: "St. Philomena obeys the Curé d'Ars." Indeed she may well obey him since God Himself obeys him. The Blessed Virgin cannot make her divine Son come down into the Host. A priest, no matter how simple he is, can do this.

Oh! how wonderful the priest is! The priest will only understand himself really in heaven. If he understood it on earth he would die, not of fear, but of love.

If I met a priest and an angel, I would salute the priest before saluting the angel. The angel is the friend of God, but the priest holds his place. St. Teresa used to kiss the place where a priest had passed.

One values greatly objects which have been placed in the bowl of the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Jesus in Loreto, but the fingers of the priest which have touched the adorable Flesh of Jesus Christ, which are plunged in the chalice where His precious Blood has been, in the ciborium where His Body has been, are they not more precious?

2. THE PRIEST IS THE FOSTER-FATHER OF SOULS AND THE MAINSTAY OF RELIGION.

When the bell calls you to church, if someone asked you: "Where are you going?" you could answer: "I am going to feed my soul." If one asked you, pointing to the tabernacle: "What is that golden door?" "It is the larder, it is the storehouse of my soul." Who is it who has the key of it, who provides the food, who prepares the feast, who serves at table? The priest. And the food? It is the precious Body and Blood of Our Lord. O my God! my God! How you have loved us!

The priest is for us as a mother, as a nurse for an infant of a few months. She gives him his food, he has only to open his mouth. The mother says to her infant: "Take my little one, eat." The priest says to us: "Take and eat, this is the Body of Jesus Christ, may He keep you and bring you to eternal life." O beautiful words! A child when it sees its mother come towards it struggles against those who hold it. It opens its little mouth, and stretches out its little hands to embrace her. Your soul in the presence of the priest goes naturally towards Him. It runs to meet Him, but it is prevented by the bonds of the body among men who give all to the senses, who live only for the mortal (dead) body.

When the bell rings you can say: "What is there? The Body of Our Lord." "Why is it there? Because a priest has been there and said Mass."

After God, the priest, that is all. Leave a parish twenty years without a priest and they will adore the beasts.

If Monsieur le Missionaire and I were to go away, you would say: "What is happening to this church? There is no longer any Mass. Our Lord is no longer there. We might as well pray at home."

When anyone wishes to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest, because when there is no priest, there is no longer any Sacrifice, and then when there is no longer any Sacrifice, there is no longer any religion.

The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus. When you see the priest, think of Our Lord.

MEDITATION 26: THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

"From the rising of sun until the going down thereof, My name is great among the nations, and in every place there is offered to My name a pure oblation because My name is great," says the Lord of Hosts.

The earth is indeed, since the Redemption, an immense temple where each moment from sunrise to sunset the Victim of Calvary is lifted up between heaven and earth by countless priests,

to the glory of the Most High.

A Victim essentially spotless and which keeps its sanctifying virtue even when it is offered by unworthy hands. Jesus offers Himself as substitute for sinful men to give to His Father the honour which His Divine Majesty demands, and begs for them mercy and grace.

1. THE ESSENCE OF THE MASS.

The Holy Mass consists of the words of Consecration. How wonderful it is! After the Consecration the good God is there as He is in heaven. If men really knew this mystery they would die of love. God has to spare us because of our weakness. The Holy Sacrifice is the same as that which was offered once on Calvary on Good Friday. The only difference is that when Jesus Christ was offered on Calvary, the Sacrifice was visible. That is to say, one saw with one's bodily eyes that Jesus Christ was offered there to God His Father by the hands of His executioners, and that He shed His Blood; that is to say that the Blood flowed from His veins and one saw it flow on the earth. But in the Mass Jesus Christ offers Himself to His Father in an invisible and unbloody manner.

2. ITS NECESSITY AND ITS ENDS.

Man as a creature owes God the homage of his whole being, and as a sinner he owes Him a Victim of expiation. That is why in the old Law multitudes of victims were offered to God every day in the Temple. But these victims could not satisfy God fully for our sins. There was need of a victim more holy and more pure who would continue to offer Himself until the end of the world, and who was capable of paying what we owe to God. This Holy Victim is Jesus Christ Himself, who is God like His Father and man like us. He offers Himself every day on the altars as formerly on Calvary.

By this oblation, pure and undefiled, Our Lord gives to God all the honour that is His due, and pays for man all that man owes to His Creator. He is immolated to acknowledge the sovereign dominion of God over His creatures, and the outrage that sin has done to God is fully repaired. As Mediator between God and men, He obtains for them by this Sacrifice all the graces they need. As Victim of thanksgiving, He returns to God all the gratitude they owe Him.

3. ITS VALUE AND ITS FRUITS.

Would you like to know the greatness of the merit of Holy Mass? It will suffice for me to say with St. John Chrysostom, that the Holy Mass rejoices the whole Court of heaven, relieves all the souls in purgatory, draws down on the earth all kinds of blessings, and gives more glory to God than the sufferings of all the martyrs, than the penances of all the solitaries, than all the tears that they will shed until the end of the world. If you ask me the reason, it is quite clear. All these actions are done by sinners, more or less guilty, whilst in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is a Man-God equal to His Father who offers the merit of His Death and Passion. All these works are the works of men, and the Mass is the work of God. Martyrdom is the sacrifice that man makes to God of his life, and the Mass is the sacrifice that God makes to man of His Body and of His Blood. You see then that the Holy Mass is infinitely precious. Also let us notice in the Gospel that at the moment of Our Lord's Death, He works many conversions. The Good Thief receives the assurance of paradise. Many Jews were converted, and some Gentiles struck their breasts saying that He was truly the Son of God. The dead rose again, the rocks were rent and the earth trembled.

4. THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE.

After all this, will it be possible to look at the altar without shedding tears?

It is there that the Eternal Father satisfies His justice in immolating each day His divine Son; there this same Father satisfies His mercy in sacrificing each day this well-beloved Son for the

salvation of our souls; there Jesus Christ pays by the shedding of His adorable Blood all the debts we owe towards the justice of His Father, there in order to give us the life of grace, He overcomes the death caused by sin.

This altar is like the womb of Mary where a God becomes incarnate each day in the hands of the priest; the manger where He is born a second time; Calvary where He immolates Himself; a second heaven where He sits at the right hand of His Father to be our Mediator. How, at the sight of so many benefits on the part of God, should we not feel our hearts burn and melt with love before this altar, as wax before the fire.

MEDITATION 27: DAILY MASS

You will draw waters with joy from the Saviour's fountains. The mysterious and life-giving waters of grace: for the conversion of sinners, for the perseverance and holiness of the just, refreshment, light and peace for the faithful departed. These waters spring from the wounds of the Saviour nailed to the Cross. Just as Moses in striking the rock in the desert made water flow from it to quench the thirst of the Jews, so the thorns and nails which pierced the flesh of Christ, the scourges which tore it, have opened an inexhaustible source of graces for Christian souls, which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass distributes to them in the measure of their desire and their devotion. Blessed are those who assist often and with devotion at the Holy Sacrifice: they will enrich themselves with all the gifts of God and will enrich their brethren with them.

Daily Mass is the channel of the most precious and abundant graces.

1. GRACES OF CONVERSION.

Do you wish to obtain your conversion? that is to say, to give up sin in order to return to God? Assist at some Masses for this intention and you may be sure, if you assist at them devoutly, that the good God will help you to give up sinning, even if you had the misfortune of being as obstinate as the Jews, more blind than the Gentiles, harder than the rocks which were rent at the death of Jesus Christ.

To give an example: It is told that a young girl during several years had led a miserable life. Suddenly she was seized with fright in considering the state of her soul. Immediately after Mass she went to the priest to ask him to pray for her to help her to give up sinning. The priest, who knew her life, asked her what had brought about such a change. "Father," she said, "during Holy Mass which my mother, when she was dying, made me promise to hear every Sunday, I felt such a horror of my state that I could not stand it any longer." "O my God" exclaimed the priest, there is a soul saved by the merit of Holy Mass." The Council of Trent says rightly that Mass appeases the anger of God, and converts sinners.

Our Lord during the Holy Mass sends forth rays of light into the hearts of poor sinners to make them understand their miseries and to help them to be converted if they are faithful to grace.

2. MANIFOLD GRACES FOR SALVATION.

St. Thomas tells us that one day he saw, during Holy Mass, Jesus Christ with His hands full of treasures that He endeavoured to distribute, and that if we have the good fortune to assist often and devoutly at Mass, we shall have many more graces than we have to save our souls, and even for this life.

St. John Chrysostom says that "there is no time more favourable for treating with God about our salvation than that of Holy Mass when Jesus Christ offers Himself in sacrifice to His Father for us to obtain all kinds of blessings and graces. Are we in affliction? says this great saint. We will find in Mass all kinds of consolations. Are we tempted? Let us hear Mass and we will find there the

means of overcoming the evil.”

Pope Pius II tells that a man of the province of Ostia continually struggling with a temptation to despair went to find a holy religious in order to tell him of the state of his soul. The religious advised him to have in his house a priest to say Mass for him each day. The man took this advice. Every day the priest said Mass at which he assisted as devoutly as he could. He gained by this means a great peace of soul, and at the hour of his death he avowed that from the time he had assisted at Mass each day, the devil had no longer tempted him to despair. If we had faith enough, Holy Mass would be a remedy for all our ills, because Jesus Christ is the medicine for soul and body.

3. THE GRACE OF A GOOD DEATH.

“Know, my daughter,” Our Lord said to St. Mechtild that the saints will assist at the death of all those who will have heard Mass devoutly, to help them to die well, to defend them against the temptations of the devil, and to present their souls to My Father. What good fortune for us to be helped at this important moment by as many saints as we shall have heard Masses!

4. THE GRACE OF DELIVERANCE FROM PURGATORY.

After the Consecration God looks on the altar: “There,” He says, “is My well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” To the merits of the offering of this Victim He can refuse nothing. You remember the story of the holy priest who was praying for his friend; apparently God had made known to him that he was in purgatory. It occurred to him that he could do nothing better than offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for his soul. At the moment of the Consecration he took the host between his fingers and said: “Holy and Eternal Father, let us make an exchange. You hold the soul of my friend in purgatory, and I hold the Body of Your Son in my hands: Good! You free my friend and I offer You Your Son with all the merits of His Passion and Death.” At the moment of the Elevation, he saw the soul of his friend all shining with glory going up to heaven.

MEDITATION 28: OBJECTIONS TO DAILY MASS

“All day long I stretch forth my hands towards an unbelieving people who contradict me.”

This is the complaint of Our Lord at the sight of the indifference of men for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the work of the Redemption. Jesus has stretched forth His hands on the Cross to embrace us all in the ardour of His love and to overwhelm us with the grace of His mercy: the last and supreme effort of a God dying in the midst of indescribable torments. Ought one not to be moved even to tears by so much love, and hasten each day to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass where that of the Cross is renewed?

Alas! worldly wisdom, human respect, an unworthy preference for temporal things over those of eternity keep them away. Let us make honourable amends to Our Lord for this indifference, and try to understand that no reason can excuse it.

1. DO NOT BE AFRAID THAT HOLY MASS WILL HINDER YOU IN YOUR BUSINESS.

Quite the contrary, be sure that all will go better and that your affairs will succeed better than if you have the misfortune not to assist at it. Experience proves it, and have you not read that Jesus Christ says in the Gospel about seeking first the Kingdom of God and that all the rest will be given to us besides? If we put all our confidence in God, how happy we shall be! But you will say to me: “if we have nothing, one gives us nothing.” What do you wish that the good God should give you when you rely only on your work, and not at all on Him since you do not even take time to say your morning and night prayers, and are content to come once a week to Mass. You do not know

the resources of the Providence of the good God for those who trust in Him. Do you wish for a striking proof? It is before you. Look at your Curé and you will see that he has all he needs. Surely, you will say, all this has been given to you. But who gives it to me? The Providence of the good God. There is all my trust. He is my only Treasure. Alas, how blind is the man who allows himself to be tormented with anxiety only to be miserable in this world and to be damned in the next. If you are wise and think of your salvation and of assisting at Holy Mass as often as you can, you will soon see the proof of what I tell you.

2. OR THAT PEOPLE WILL MOCK YOU.

Do not be afraid that by going to Holy Mass on weekdays people will mock you and say that it is only for those who have nothing to do, and who have enough means to live on.

Are you ashamed to serve the good God for fear of being despised? But look then at Him who is dead on the Cross: ask Him if He was ashamed to die in the most humiliating way. Oh! cursed human respect, which makes us lose all the graces that the good God has merited for us by His Death and Passion. But who are those who laugh at you? Poor unfortunates, senseless and blind fear nothing, and go your own way. They do much evil without hurting you by it. Pity them, and keep to your usual course.

3. BEWARE OF SELFISH VIEWS.

If there was only one church in the world where one celebrated the august mystery of our altars when one consecrated it, we should doubtless feel a holy envy for those who were near this church. But we are these chosen people. We are at the door of this place so holy, so pure, where God immolates Himself each day. What does it profit us? Alas, to gain five or six francs you will go three or four leagues, and you will not even take thirty steps to hear Mass on weekdays! Where is your faith? We have very special graces and favours, and we do not avail ourselves of them. Take care lest God withdraws His gifts from us to give them to others who will appreciate them better.

When the thought occurs to you to go to Mass on a working day, that is a movement of grace that God is very desirous of giving you. Follow it. The saints only became holy by their great attention to and following of all the good inspirations that the good God sent them, and the damned are in hell because they despised them.

You will be judged on these thoughts that you have not welcomed and on the Masses that you could have heard and that you will not hear. Ah, great God, what will become of us! The flames of purgatory will be the chastisement of our laziness or of our too selfish views.

MEDITATION 29: A METHOD OF HEARING MASS

WHAT should be our sentiments when assisting at Holy Mass? In the presence of a God made man, Who offers Himself mystically for our salvation, in a manner very real. Faith, hope and love, contrition for our sins, and an ardent desire to communicate with the Victim of Sacrifice, ought to fill our hearts. We find some models of these sentiments in the publican of the Gospel, in the Good Thief and the Centurion. Let us meditate on them.

The best way to hear Mass is to unite with the priest in all that he says and to follow all he does.

However, here is a method that you may use with profit.

1. FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE OFFERTORY.

Behave as penitents penetrated with the most lively sorrow for their sins and take for your model the publican in the Temple. He stood, says the Gospel, afar off his eyes bowed, not daring to

look at the altar, and striking his breast, saying, Lord, have mercy on me because I am a sinner. He stood at the back of the temple in the most secluded place believing himself unworthy to go further in. He was, then very unlike these Christians in name who are never well enough placed, who will only kneel on a chair; who stretch out on the bench and cross their knees.

He lowered his eyes to the ground so ashamed was he at the sight of his sins. He did not behave like those Christians who come into our churches with a proud and arrogant air; with a kind of contempt for the presence of God; who seem to come to Him like people who have nothing on their consciences capable of humbling them before their Creator. Oh, how many reasons they should have to be ashamed of and to lower their eyes? He had sincere contrition for his sins. He acknowledged his guilt and would have wished that his heart would break, because he struck his breast said St. Augustine to show to God that he was sorry he had offended Him. He was not like those people who only come to church to insult a God humiliated by their vain display of vanity with the intention of attracting the eyes of the world.

Oh, if we heard Mass in these dispositions of humility and contrition, how many graces, how many blessings, we would obtain! We should go out as full of the blessings of heaven as the bees after they have found more flowers than they wished. We would very soon obtain the pardon of our faults and the grace to persevere.

2. FROM THE OFFERTORY TO THE CONSECRATION.

Let us act as ministers who offer Jesus Christ to God His Father, and who make to Him the Sacrifice of all that they are and take for model the Good Thief on the Cross.

What progress did he not make in the few hours that he found himself in the company of his dying Saviour. He opened at first the sight of the eyes of his soul to recognise his Liberator. Then attached to the Cross as he was, there only remained free his heart and his tongue. He offered both to Jesus Christ. He consecrated to Him his heart by faith and hope, and asked humbly for a place in paradise. He consecrated his tongue by declaring publicly His innocence and sanctity: "It is just that we should suffer," he said to his companion, "but as for Him He is innocent." He made this panegyric on Jesus Christ when others only thought of outraging Him, and his charity is so great that he made every effort to convert his companion.

Like the Good Thief, offer Jesus your heart to love Him, and consecrate to Him your tongue by making use of it, from now on, only to glorify Him, and to chant His praises. Immolate yourself with Him in renouncing all that could displease Him, and receiving as your due in expiation for your sins, the cross that He sees fit to send you.

Like the Good Thief, have a firm hope of your salvation, at the sight of a God who dies to assure you of a place in His Kingdom, and accept death with the divine Victim to acknowledge His supreme dominion over you.

3. FROM THE CONSECRATION TO THE END.

Look on yourselves as people about to receive the adorable Body and precious Blood of Jesus Christ; and rouse in your hearts the sentiments of the centurion to communicate spiritually or sacramentally. The example of the centurion is so much to be admired that it seems as if the Church took pleasure in putting it before our eyes each day at Holy Mass. "Lord," said this humble soldier, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come to my house, but, say only the word, and my servant shall be healed." Ah! if the good God saw in us this same humility, this same recognition of our nothingness, with what pleasure and with what an abundance of graces would He not come into our hearts. What strength and courage to conquer the enemy of our salvation.

MEDITATION 30: AFTER HOLY MASS

When Our Lord celebrated the first Mass in the Upper Room the Gospels tell us that He sang a hymn with His Apostles. From this St. John Chrysostom concludes that the faithful who assist at the Holy Sacrifice ought not to withdraw without thanking God for this inestimable favour. Gratitude, admiration, a firm purpose not to sin again, all these should find place in his heart.

1. GRATITUDE.

Before leaving the church after Holy Mass, do not forget to thank God for the graces that He has just given to you.

St. John and the holy women who were present at the Sacrifice of the Cross never forgot the vision of Calvary, and they came down from the Holy Mount, covered with the merits of Jesus Christ. Let us likewise praise Our Lord. Let us bless Him for having allowed us to take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by which He renews the Sacrifice of the Cross and applies the fruit to us.

2. ADMIRATION.

Go home then quite taken up with the thought of what you have seen.

Holy Scripture tells us that the Queen of Sheba, having heard such wonderful things of Solomon and the marvels that were worked in his palace, wished to see them for herself. But when she had seen the beauty of the Temple, and the beautiful order which reigned there, she returned avowing that all that she had heard was nothing in comparison with what her eyes had seen. These wonders remained deeply impressed in her heart.

That is precisely what would happen to us when we leave our churches if we had paid great attention to all that took place during our holy and unspeakable mysteries. In the Temple of Solomon it was the work of man that one could contemplate; here it is God Himself who acts and works infinite miracles. He changes bread into His Body, and wine into His Blood, as formerly at the Last Supper. He, Life Eternal, and always working puts Himself in a state of death and places Himself on the tongues and in the hands of men. True God and true man, He is contained whole and entire under the least particle of the species of bread and wine. He is eaten by those who receive Him without being consumed. He may be found at the same time in an infinite number of places.

The Temple of Solomon was built to hold a little of the Manna and the tables of the Law, but in our churches, Ah! great God! it is Jesus Christ Himself who sheds His Blood and immolates Himself each day on our altars to the justice of His Father for our sins.

Marvels so great that the more we think of them the more incomprehensible we find them. But the more meritorious our faith, the greater will be our reward.

3. THE FIRM PURPOSE NOT TO SIN AGAIN.

A Christian on leaving the holy place moved by the holy thoughts that have been aroused in him by the sight of the ceremonies he has seen, and the prayers that he has said, ought to say to himself: "I have just come from assisting at Holy Mass, a God has immolated Himself for me; He has shed His Blood for the salvation of our souls; what more could He do? Oh! how miserable I am, I who for so many years have refused Him my heart, which He has created for Himself and which He asks of me only in order to make it happy. I have just celebrated the praises of God with this same mouth that I had often sullied by all sorts of sins. Oh! my God, shall I always then beg from creatures the peace they are powerless to give me! My tongue shall it serve sometimes to praise You, sometimes to mispraise You. No, Lord, I now wish only to bless and to love You.

Any Christian who has not, in going out, these thoughts in his heart, has not assisted at the

Holy Mass with the dispositions he ought to have, because the sight of Jesus Christ immolated on the altar on account of our sins, ought to produce in us sentiments of sincere contrition and perfect love.