

## CHAPTER XI

*Christ our Savior Celebrates the Sacramental Supper, Consecrating His Sacred and True Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist; His Prayers and Petitions; the Communion of His Most Holy Mother; and Other Mysteries which Took Place on This Occasion.*

469. With great hesitancy do I enter upon the treatment of the ineffable mystery of the Holy Eucharist and what happened at its institution, for raising the eyes of my soul toward the light which encompasses and governs me in the performance of this work, the high intelligence given to me regarding these vast wonders and sacraments reproaches me with my littleness in comparison with the greatness therein manifested. My faculties are disturbed, and I cannot find words to explain what I see and conceive, though all these conceptions are far from the reality revealed to my understanding. But though I am ignorant of the terms and very unfit for such discourse, I must speak so I may continue this History and relate what part the great Lady of the world, Mary most holy, had in these wonders. If I do not speak as appropriately as the matter demands, let my amazement and my lowly condition be my excuse, for it is not easy to descend to the exactions of exterior words when the will by itself only desires with affection to supply the deficiency of its understanding and enjoy that which neither can nor should be manifested.

470. Christ our Good had partaken of the prescribed supper with his disciples reclining on the floor around a table which was elevated from it little more than the distance of six or seven fingers, for such was the custom of the Jews. But after the washing of the feet He ordered another and higher table to be prepared such as we now use for our meals, by this ceremony putting an end to the legal suppers and things most low and figurative, and beginning the new banquet upon which He founded the new law of grace. From that time on He desired the sacred mysteries to be performed on the tables or altars which are in use in the Catholic Church. The new table was covered with a very rich cloth, and upon it was placed a plate or salver and a large cup in the form of a chalice, capacious enough to hold the necessary wine. All this was done in pursuance of the will of Christ our Savior, who by his divine power and wisdom directed all these particulars. The master of the house was inspired to offer these so rich and precious vessels of emerald-like stone; afterwards the sacred Apostles often used them whenever possible when offering the Mass. The Lord seated Himself at this table with the Apostles and some of the other disciples, and then ordered some unleavened bread to be placed on the table and some wine to be brought, of which He took sufficient to prepare the chalice.

471. Then the Master of life spoke words of most endearing love to his Apostles, and though his sayings were accustomed to penetrate to the inmost heart at all times, yet on this occasion they were like the flames of a great fire of charity which consumed the souls of his hearers. He manifested to them anew the most exalted mysteries of his divinity and humanity, and the works of the Redemption. He enjoined upon them peace (Jn. 14:27) and the union of charity (Jn. 17:26), of which He was now to leave a pledge in the mysteries about to be celebrated. He reminded them that in loving one another they would be loved by the eternal Father with the same love in which He was beloved. He gave them an understanding of the fulfillment of this promise in having chosen them to found the new Church and the law of grace. He renewed in them the light concerning the supreme dignity, excellence and prerogatives of his most pure Virgin Mother. Among all the Apostles St. John was most deeply enlightened in these mysteries due to the office imposed upon him. The great Lady from her retreat beheld in divine contemplation all these doings of her Son in the Cenacle, and in her profound intelligence She

entered more deeply into their meaning than the Apostles and the Angels, who also were present in bodily forms (452) adoring their true Lord, Creator and King. By the hands of these Angels were brought to the Cenacle Enoch and Elias from the place where they were, the Lord decreeing that these two Fathers of the natural and written laws be present at the new wonder and founding of the evangelical law and participate in its admirable mysteries.

472. All these being gathered together, awaiting with admiration what the Author of life intended to do, there appeared also in the hall the Persons of the eternal Father and of the Holy Ghost as at the Jordan and on Tabor. Although all the Apostles and disciples felt this divine presence, yet only some of them were truly favored with a vision of it; among these was especially St. John the Evangelist, who was always gifted with eagle sight into the divine mysteries. The entire heaven was transplanted to the Cenacle of Jerusalem, for of such great importance was the magnificence of this work by which the new Church was founded, the law of grace established, and eternal salvation made secure. For a better understanding of the doings of the incarnate Word, I must remind the reader that He possessed two natures in one Person, the divine and human natures united in one divine Person of the Word; hence the proper activities of both natures are rightly attributed to one and the same Person, just as the same Person is called both God and man. Consequently when I say the incarnate Word spoke and prayed to the eternal Father, it must not be interpreted as meaning that He prayed or spoke insofar as He was divine, since in divinity He was equal to the Father, but insofar as He was human, inferior (Jn. 14:28), and composed of body and soul as we ourselves are. Hence in this sense Christ our Good in the Cenacle confessed with praise and magnificence his eternal Father for his divinity and infinite being; and then pleading for the human race He prayed, saying:

473. "My Father and eternal God, I confess Thee, praise Thee, and magnify Thee in the infinite Being of thy incomprehensible Divinity in which I am one with Thee (Jn. 10:30) and the Holy Ghost, engendered from all eternity by thy intellect (Ps. 109:3) as the figure of thy substance (Heb. 1:3) and the image of thy individual nature. In the same nature which I have assumed in the virginal womb of my Mother I desire to accomplish the Redemption of the human race with which Thou hast charged Me, and give this same nature the highest perfection and the plenitude of thy divine blessing, and then I desire to pass from this world to thy right hand, bearing with Me all those whom Thou hast given Me without losing a single one of them for lack of willingness on our part to help them (Jn. 17:12). My delight is to be with the children of men (Prov. 8:31), and since in my absence they will be left orphans if I do not give them assistance, I desire, my Father, to furnish them with a sure and unfailing token of my inextinguishable love and a pledge of the eternal rewards which Thou dost hold in reserve for them. I desire them to find in my merits an easy and powerful remedy for the effects of sin to which they are subject due to the disobedience of the first man, and I desire to restore copiously their right to the eternal happiness for which they were created.

474. "But since there shall be few who will preserve themselves in this justice, they shall need other assistance so they can reinstate themselves and strengthen themselves in the way of justification and sanctification by being continually furnished with new and exalted gifts and favors of thy clemency in their dangerous pilgrimage through life. It was our eternal decree that they have created existence and participate in our divine perfections and happiness for all eternity, and thy love, which caused Me to assume a nature capable of suffering and welcoming the humiliation of the cross (Philip. 2:8), would not rest satisfied until it invented new means of communicating itself to men according to their capacity and our wisdom and power. These

means shall consist of visible and sensible signs adapted to their condition as sentient beings and causing invisible effects in the spiritual and immaterial part of their nature.

475. "To advance these high ends for thy exaltation and glory, eternal Lord and Father, in my name and in that of all the poor and afflicted children of Adam I ask the fiat of thy eternal will. If their sins call out for thy justice, their neediness and misery appeal to thy infinite mercy. At the same time I on my part interpose all the works of my humanity, which is indissolubly bound to my divinity; my obedience in accepting suffering unto death; my humility in subjecting Myself to men and their depraved judgment; the poverty and labors of my life; the insults of my Passion and Death; and the love which urges Me to undergo all of this for the advancement of thy glory and the spreading of thy knowledge and adoration among all creatures capable of thy grace and happiness. Thou, my Lord and Father, hast made Me the Brother of men and their Head (Col. 1:18), and hast destined them to partake eternally of the joys of our divinity. As children they are to be heirs with Me of thy eternal goods (Rom. 8:17), and as members (I Cor. 6:15) they can participate in the influence of the Head which I desire to communicate according to the love which as a Brother I have for them; and I desire, as far as is my part, to draw them with Me to thy friendship and participation in our divinity for which they were formed from their natural head, the first man.

476. "Impelled by this boundless love, my Lord and Father, I ordain that from now on men may reenter into thy full friendship and grace through the Sacrament of *Baptism*, that they may do so as soon as they shall be born to daylight, and their desire of renascence into grace which they cannot in their infancy manifest on their own account shall, with thy permission, be manifested for them by their elders. Let them become immediate heirs of thy glory; let them be interiorly and indelibly marked as children of my Church; let them be freed from the stain of original sin; let them receive the gifts of faith, hope and charity, by which they may perform the works of thy children in knowing Thee, trusting in Thee, and loving Thee for thy own Self. Let them also receive the virtues by which they restrain and govern disorderly inclinations and be able to distinguish without fail the good from the evil. Let this Sacrament be the portal of my Church and the one which makes men capable of the other Sacraments, and for new favors and benefits of our grace. I ordain also that besides this Sacrament they may receive another as soon as they shall arrive at the use of reason, *Confirmation*, in which they are made strong and confirmed in the holy faith they have professed and must continue to profess, and enabled to defend it with fortitude. And because human frailty easily falls away from the observance of my law, and since my charity will not permit Me to leave them without an easy and opportune remedy, I desire to provide the Sacrament of *Penance*. Through it men, by acknowledging their faults and confessing them with sorrow, may be reinstated in justice and in the merits of glory promised to them. Thus shall Lucifer and his followers be prevented from boasting of having so soon deprived them of the advantages of Baptism.

477. "By the justification of these Sacraments men shall become fit to share in the highest token of my love in the exile of this their mortal life, namely to receive Me sacramentally under the species of bread and wine in an ineffable manner. Under the species of bread I shall leave my body, and under the species of wine I shall leave my blood. In each one of them I shall be present really and truly, and I institute this mysterious Sacrament of the *Holy Eucharist* as a heavenly nourishment proportioned to their condition as wayfaring men. For their sake shall I work these miracles and remain with them until the end of the coming ages (Mt. 28:20). For the strengthening and defense of those who approach the end of their lives, I establish for them the Sacrament of *Extreme Unction*, which shall also be a certain pledge of their resurrection in the

same bodies signed by this Sacrament. And because all must be ordered for the sanctification of the members of the Mystical Body of my Church, in which must be maintained the highest harmony and order, giving to each one the suitable grade for his ministry, I desire the ministers of these Sacraments to have the supreme rank with respect to the other faithful, that of priests, and to provide for this I institute the sacrament of *Holy Orders* to mark, distinguish and sanctify them with a particular excellence. Although all of them shall receive it from Me, I desire it to be by means of one head who shall be my Vicar and represent my Person, and he shall be the High Priest into whose will I deposit the keys of heaven, and him all upon earth must obey. For the greater perfection of my Church I establish the last Sacrament, *Matrimony*, to sanctify the natural union established for human propagation. Thus shall all the grades of my Church be enriched and adorned by my infinite merits. This, eternal Father, is my last will, in which I make all mortals inheritors of my merits, linking them together in my new Church wherein my merits shall be deposited.”

478. This prayer Christ our Redeemer made in the presence of the Apostles, but without exterior demonstration. The Blessed Mother, who from her retreat observed and followed Him, prostrated Herself upon the floor and as his Mother offered to the eternal Father the same petitions as her Son. Although She could not add anything to the merits of the works of her divine Son, nevertheless as on other occasions She as his Coadjatrix united her petitions with his, so by her faithful correspondence She could move the eternal Father to so much the greater mercy. And the Father looked upon them both, graciously accepting the prayers respectively of the Son and Mother for the salvation of men. The Queen performed something else on this occasion because it was left to Her by her most holy Son. In order to understand what this was, it must be remembered (as I mentioned in the preceding chapter) that Lucifer was present at the washing of the feet of the Apostles, and being forced to remain and witness the doings of Christ in the Cenacle he astutely inferred that the Lord had resolved on some great work for the benefit of the Apostles. Although the dragon felt his forces much diminished and altogether unavailing against the Redeemer, he nevertheless sought with implacable fury and pride to spy out these mysteries for the concoction of future malicious plans. The great Lady perceived these intentions of Lucifer, and knew the foiling of them was left in her hands; therefore, inflamed by zeal and love for the Most High, She as sovereign Queen commanded the dragon and all his squadrons to leave the hall and descend to the depths of hell.

479. To accomplish this the arm of the Almighty gave new power to most holy Mary so neither the rebellious Lucifer nor all his hosts could resist. They were hurled into the infernal abysses, there to remain until they would again be permitted to issue forth as witnesses to the Passion and Death of the Savior in order to be finally convinced He was the Messiah and Redeemer, true God and man. Let it then be understood that Lucifer and his demons were present at the legal supper and washing of the feet, and also afterwards at the entire Passion of Christ, but they were not present at this institution of the Holy Eucharist, nor at the Communion then distributed by Christ our Lord. Then the great Queen was raised to a most sublime state of contemplation of the mysteries about to be enacted, and the holy Angels, as to another valorous Judith,\* sang to Her of this glorious triumph over the dragon. At the same time Christ our Lord offered up to the eternal Father exalted gratitude and praise for the blessings conceded to the human race in consequence of his petition.

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\* cf. Judith 13:22-26; Epistle, Sept. 15, Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary [Ed.]

480. Thereupon Christ our Lord took into his venerable hands the bread which lay upon the plate, and interiorly asked the permission and cooperation of the eternal Father that now and ever afterwards, in virtue of the words about to be uttered by Him and later to be repeated in his holy Church, He would really and truly become present in the host, Himself yielding obedience to these sacred words. While making this petition He raised his eyes toward heaven with an expression of such sublime majesty that He inspired the Apostles, the Angels, and his Virgin Mother with new and deepest reverence. Then He pronounced the words of consecration over the bread, changing its substance into the substance of his true body; and immediately thereupon He uttered the words of consecration also over the wine, changing it into his true blood. As an answer to these words of consecration was heard the voice of the eternal Father, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I delight, and shall take my delight to the end of the world; and He shall be with men during all the time of their banishment." In a similar manner was this confirmed by the Holy Ghost. The most sacred humanity of Christ, in the Person of the Word, gave tokens of most profound veneration to the Divinity contained in the Sacrament of his body and blood. The Virgin Mother in her retreat prostrated Herself on the ground and adored her Son in the Blessed Sacrament with incomparable reverence. Then the Angels of her guard, along with all the Angels of heaven, likewise adored the Blessed Sacrament, and after them the holy souls of Enoch and Elias adored the Host in their own name and in the name of the holy Patriarchs and Prophets of the natural and written laws respectively.

481. All the Apostles and disciples (except the traitor Judas), because they had faith in this great mystery, joined the Blessed Mother in adoring Jesus Christ in the sacred Host with profound humility and reverence according to each one's disposition. Then our great High Priest Christ raised up his own consecrated body and blood so all who were present at this first Mass could adore them in a special manner, which they also did. In this elevation his most pure Mother, St. John, Enoch and Elias were more enlightened to understand in a special manner how in the species of bread was contained his body, and in those of the wine his blood; how in both, because of the inseparable union of his soul with his body and blood, were present the living and true Christ; how with the Person of the Word was also therein united the Person of the Father and of the Holy Ghost; and how by this concomitant and inseparable union and existence of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there remained in the Holy Eucharist all three Persons, with the perfect humanity of Christ our Lord. All this was understood most profoundly by the heavenly Lady, and by the others according to their degree. They understood also the efficacy of the words of consecration, now endowed with such divine power that as soon as they are pronounced with the intention of doing what Christ did at that time by any priest since that time over the proper material, they would change the bread into his body and the wine into his blood, leaving the accidents to subsist in a new way and without their proper subject. They saw that this change would take place so certainly and infallibly that heaven and earth would sooner fall to pieces than the effect of these words of consecration, when pronounced in the proper manner by the sacerdotal minister of Christ, would ever fail.

482. The heavenly Queen understood also by a special vision how the most sacred body of Christ is hidden beneath the accidents of bread and wine without change in them or alteration of the sacred humanity, for neither can the body be the subject of the accidents, nor can the accidents be the form of the body. The accidents retain the same extension and qualities as before, and each of their parts retain the same position after the host has been consecrated, the sacred body remaining present in an invisible form, also retaining the same size without intermingling of parts. The body remains in the whole host, and all of it in every particle of the

host, without being strained by the host, or the host by the body. For neither is the extension of his body correlative with the accidental species, nor do they depend upon the sacred body for their existence. They therefore have a totally different mode of existence, and the body enters into the quantity of the accidents without hindrance. Although naturally the head would demand a different place than the hands, or these a different one from the breast, and likewise for any other part of the body, yet by the divine power the consecrated body places itself unimpaired in its extent in one and the same place, because it bears no relation to the space which it would naturally occupy, having thrown aside all these relations, though still remaining a quantitative body. Moreover, Christ need not necessarily remain in one determined place only, or in only one host, but at the same time He can be present in many innumerable consecrated hosts.

483. She understood likewise that the sacred body, although not naturally depending upon the accidents as above declared, yet does not continue to exist sacramentally in these accidents after the corruption of the species of the bread and wine, and this for no other reason than because the most holy will of Christ, the Author of these wonders, ordained it so. Hence the miraculous coexistence of his body and blood with the incorrupt accidents continues because of the voluntary and moral codependence willed by Christ. As soon as the accidents deteriorate and disappear due to the natural causes destructive of these species, as happens after Holy Communion when the host is altered and corrupted by the heat of the stomach, or by other causes which have the same effect, then God, in the last instant when the species are ready for their last transformation, again creates another substance. This new substance, being now devoid of the Divinity, nourishes the human body, and finally coalesces with the human form of existence, which is the soul. This wonderful creation of a new substance for the assumption of the changed and corrupted species is consequent upon the will of the Lord, who desires not to continue the existence of his body in the corrupted accidents; and this process is demanded also by the laws of nature, for the substance of man cannot be nourished and grow except by some other substance newly added to it, and the accidents cannot continue in this substance.

484. All these and other wonders the right hand of the Almighty perpetuated in this most august Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. All of them the Mistress of heaven and earth understood and comprehended profoundly. In like manner St. John, the Fathers of the ancient law, and the Apostles understood much regarding these mysteries. Knowing the great and public benefit contained therein for all men, the most pure Mother foresaw also the ingratitude of mortals in regard to this ineffable Sacrament established for their benefit, and She resolved to atone with all the powers of her being for our shameless and ungrateful behavior. She took upon Herself the duty of rendering gratitude to the eternal Father and to his most holy Son for such a rare wonder and favor granted to the human race. This earnest desire dwelled in her soul during her whole life, and many times did She shed tears of blood welling forth from her purest Heart in order to satisfy for our shameful and apathetic forgetfulness.

485. Still greater was my admiration when Jesus our Good, having raised the most holy Sacrament for the adoration of the disciples (as I said before), divided it by his own sacred hands, and first partook of it Himself as being the first and the High Priest. Recognizing Himself as man inferior to the Divinity which He was now to receive in this his own consecrated body and blood, He humiliated Himself, shrank within Himself, and had as it were a trembling of the sensitive part of his being, thereby manifesting two things: First, the reverence with which his sacred body must be received; and the other, the sorrow He felt because of the temerity and audacity of many men during the reception and handling of this exalted and sublime Sacrament. The effects of Holy Communion in the body of Christ were altogether miraculous and divine, for

during a short space of time the gifts of glory overflowed into his body just as on mount Tabor, though the effects of this transfiguration were manifest only to his Blessed Mother, and partly also to St. John, Enoch and Elias. This was the last consolation He permitted his humanity to enjoy in its inferior part during his earthly life, and from that moment until his death He rejected all such alleviation. The Virgin Mother, by a special vision, also understood how Christ her divine Son received Himself in the Blessed Sacrament and what was the manner of its presence in his divine Heart. All this caused inestimable affection in our Queen and Lady.

486. While receiving his own body and blood Christ our Lord composed a canticle of praise to the eternal Father and offered Himself in the Blessed Sacrament as a sacrifice for human salvation. He took another part of the consecrated bread and delivered it to St. Gabriel the archangel, who brought and communicated it to most holy Mary. By having such a privilege conferred on one of their number the holy Angels considered themselves sufficiently recompensed for being excluded from the sacerdotal dignity and yielding it to man. The privilege of merely having even one of their number hold the sacramental body of their Lord and true God filled them with a new and immense joy. The great Lady and Queen with abundant tears was awaiting Holy Communion when St. Gabriel with innumerable other Angels arrived; and from the hand of the holy Prince She received the Blessed Sacrament, the first after her most holy Son, imitating Him in his humiliation, reverence, and holy fear. The most holy Sacrament was deposited in the bosom and above the Heart of most holy Mary as in the most legitimate shrine and tabernacle of the Most High. There the ineffable Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist remained deposited from that hour until after the Resurrection, when St. Peter said the first Mass and consecrated anew, as I shall relate in its place (*Cor.* 112). The Almighty desired to have it so for the consolation of the great Queen and in order to fulfill his promise that He would remain with the children of men *even to the consummation of the world* (Mt. 28:20), for after his death his most holy humanity could not remain in his Church any other way than by his consecrated body and blood. This true manna was then deposited in Mary most pure as in the living Ark, together with the whole evangelical law, just as formerly its prophetic figures were deposited in the ark of Moses (Heb. 9:4). The sacramental species were not consumed or altered in the bosom of the Lady and Queen of heaven until the next consecration. Having received Holy Communion the Blessed Mother gave thanks to the eternal Father and to her divine Son in new canticles similar to the ones the incarnate Word had rendered to his Father.

487. After having thus favored the heavenly Princess, our Savior distributed the Blessed Sacrament to the Apostles (Lk. 22:17), commanding them to divide it among themselves and partake of it. By this commandment He conferred upon them the priestly dignity, and they began to exercise it by giving Communion each to himself. This they did with the greatest reverence, shedding copious tears and adoring the body and blood of our Lord whom they were receiving. They were established in the power of the priesthood as being founders of the holy Church and enjoying the distinction of priority over all others (Eph. 2:20). Then St. Peter, at the command of Christ the Lord, took other consecrated particles and administered Holy Communion to the two ancient fathers, Enoch and Elias. This Holy Communion so rejoiced these two holy men that they were encouraged anew in their hope of the beatific vision, which for them was to be deferred for so many ages, and they were strengthened to live on in this hope until the end of the world. Having rendered most fervent and humble gratitude to the Almighty for this blessing, they were brought back to their place of abode by the hands of the holy Angels. The Lord desired to work this miracle in order to pledge Himself to include the ancient natural and written laws in the benefits of the Incarnation, Redemption, and general resurrection, since all these mysteries

were contained in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. By thus communicating Himself to the two holy men, Enoch and Elias, who were still in their mortal flesh, these blessings were extended over the human race such as it existed under the natural and the written laws, while all the succeeding generations were to be included in the new law of grace with the Apostles at the head. This was all well understood by the two holy men Enoch and Elias, and in the name of the other saints of the natural and written laws they gave thanks to their and our Redeemer for this hidden benefit.

488. Another very hidden miracle happened at the Communion of the Apostles. The perfidious and treacherous Judas, hearing the command of his Master to receive Holy Communion, resolved in his unbelief not to comply, but if he could do so without being observed he determined to expel the sacred body and bring it to the priests and Pharisees in order to give them a chance of incriminating his Master by showing them, by this great crime, what He had called his own body, or if he would not succeed therein, to consummate some other vile act of malice with the divine Sacrament. The Mistress and Queen of heaven, who by a most clear vision was observing all that happened, and who knew the interior and exterior dispositions of the Apostles along with their actions and affections in receiving Holy Communion, saw also the execrable intentions of the obstinate Judas. All the zeal for the glory of her Lord, existing in Her as his Mother, Spouse and Daughter, was aroused in her most pure Heart. Knowing it was the divine will that She make use of her power as Mother and Queen, She commanded the holy Angels to extract from the mouth of Judas the consecrated bread and wine and replace them from whence they had been taken. It well befitted Her on this occasion to defend the honor of her divine Son and prevent Judas from heaping such an ignominious injury upon Christ the Lord. The holy Angels obeyed their Queen, and when it was the turn of Judas to communicate they withdrew the consecrated species one after the other, and purifying them from their contact with Judas, the most wicked of living men, they secretly replaced them. Thus the Lord shielded the honor of his malicious and obstinate Apostle to the end. This was attended to by the Angels in the shortest space of time, and the others then received Holy Communion, for Judas was neither the first nor the last to communicate. Then our Savior rendered gratitude to the eternal Father, and therewith ended both the legal and the Sacramental supper in order to begin the mysteries of his Passion, which I shall relate in the subsequent chapters. The Queen of heaven attended to all full of wonder and joyful praise, magnifying the Most High.

#### *INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO ME BY THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.*

489. O my daughter! Would that the believers in the holy Catholic faith opened their hardened and stony hearts in order to attain to a true understanding of the sacred and mysterious blessing of the Holy Eucharist! If they would only detach themselves, root out and reject their earthly inclinations, and restraining their passions apply themselves with living faith to study by the divine light their great happiness in thus possessing their eternal God in the Blessed Sacrament and being able by its frequent reception to participate in the full effects of this heavenly manna! If they would only worthily esteem this precious gift, begin to taste its sweetness, and share in the hidden power of their omnipotent God! Then nothing would ever be lacking to them in their exile. In this, the happy age of the law of grace, mortals have no reason to complain of their weakness and their passions, since in this bread of heaven they have at hand strength and health. It matters not that they are tempted and persecuted by the demon, for by receiving this Sacrament frequently they are enabled to overcome him gloriously. The faithful are themselves to blame for



all their poverty and labors since they pay no attention to this divine mystery, nor avail themselves of the divine powers thus placed at their disposal by my most holy Son. I tell thee truly, my dearest, that Lucifer and his demons have such a fear of the presence of the Blessed Sacrament that to approach it causes them more torments than to remain in hell itself. Although they do enter churches in order to tempt souls, they enter them with aversion, forcing themselves to endure cruel pains in the hope of destroying a soul and drawing it into sin, especially in the holy places and in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Their wrath against the Lord and against the souls alone could induce them to expose themselves to the torment of his real sacramental Presence.

490. Whenever He is carried through the streets they usually fly and disperse in all haste, and they would not dare to approach those who accompany Him if by their long experience they did not know they will induce some to forget the reverence due to their Lord. Therefore they make special efforts to tempt the faithful in the churches, for they know what great injury they can thereby do to the Lord himself, who in his sacramental love is there waiting to sanctify men and to receive the return of his sweetest and untiring love. Hence thou canst also understand the strength of those who prepare themselves to partake of this bread of angels,\* and how the demons fear the souls who receive the Lord worthily and devoutly, and who strive to preserve themselves in this purity until the next Communion. But there are very few who live with this intention, and the enemy is ceaselessly alert in striving to throw them back into their forgetfulness, distraction and indifference, so he may not be obliged to encounter such powerful weapons in the hands of men. Write this admonition in thy heart; and since without thy merit the Almighty has ordained for thee to receive Holy Communion daily, seek by all possible means to preserve thyself in good dispositions from one Communion to the other. It is the will of the Lord and my own that with this sword thou fight the battles of the Almighty in the name of the holy Church against the invisible enemies, for in our days they are heaping affliction and sorrow upon the Mistress of the nations, while there is none to console Her or take it to heart (Lam. 1:1). Do thou thyself weep for the same reason and let thy heart be torn in sorrow. But while the omnipotent and just Judge is so greatly incensed against Catholics for having outraged his justice by their immeasurable and continual transgressions even under the aegis of their grand faith, none are found to consider and weigh the fearful damage, nor to approach the easy remedy of receiving the divine Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist with a contrite and humble heart, nor does anyone ask for my intercession.

491. Though all the children of the Church largely incur this fault, yet more to be blamed are the unworthy and wicked priests, for by the irreverence with which they treat the Blessed Sacrament the other Catholics have been drawn to undervalue it. If the people see their priests approach the divine mysteries with holy fear and trembling,† they learn to treat and receive their God in like manner. Those who so honor Him shall shine in heaven like the sun among the stars, for the glory of the humanity of my divine Son shall reflect a special light in those who have behaved well toward Him in the Blessed Sacrament and have received Him with all reverence, whereas this shall not happen to those who have not frequented this holy table with devotion. Moreover the devout will bear on their breast, where they have so often harbored the Holy Eucharist, most beautiful and resplendent inscriptions showing they were most worthy tabernacles of the holy Sacrament. This shall be a great accidental reward for them, and a source

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\* cf. Ps. 77:25; Wis. 16:20 [Ed.]

† cf. par. 485 above [Ed.]

of jubilation and admiration for the holy Angels and all the rest of the Blessed. They shall also enjoy the special favor of being able to penetrate deeper into the mystery of the presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and understand all the rest of the wonders hidden therein. This shall be such a privilege that it alone would suffice for their eternal happiness, even if there was no other enjoyment in heaven; moreover, the essential glory of those who have worthily and devoutly received the Holy Eucharist shall in several respects exceed the glory of many martyrs who have not received the body and blood of the Lord.

492. I also desire thee, my dearest daughter, to hear from my own mouth what were my sentiments when in mortal life I was about to receive Holy Communion. In order to better understand what I say, reflect on all I have commanded thee to write about my gifts, merits and labors in life. I was preserved in my conception from original sin, and at that instant I received the knowledge and vision of the Divinity, as thou hast often recorded. I knew more than all the saints; I surpassed the highest Seraphim in love; I never committed any fault; I constantly practiced all the virtues in a heroic degree, and in the least of them I was greater than all the saints in their highest perfection;\* the intention and object of my actions were most exalted, and my habits and gifts were noble without measure; I imitated my most holy Son most closely; I labored most faithfully; I suffered with eagerness, and cooperated with the doings of the Lord exactly as was appropriate for me; I ceased not to exercise my love and gain new and supereminent merits of grace. Yet despite all of this I thought myself to have been fully repaid by being allowed to receive Him even once in the Holy Eucharist; yea, I did not consider myself worthy of this one favor. Reflect then what thy sentiments must be, and those of the rest of the children of Adam, on being admitted to the reception of this admirable Sacrament. And if for the greatest of saints one Holy Communion is a superabundant reward, what must the priests and the faithful think when they are allowed to receive Him so frequently? Open thine eyes in the deep darkness and blindness which overwhelm men around thee, and raise thine eyes up to the divine light in order to understand these mysteries. Look upon all thy works as insufficient, all thy sufferings as most insignificant, and all thy gratitude as falling far short of what thou dost owe<sup>†</sup> for such an exquisite blessing as that of possessing in the holy Church Christ my divine Son present in the Blessed Sacrament in order to enrich all the faithful. And if thou dost not have worthy recompense to offer Him for this blessing and the others thou dost receive, at least humiliate thyself to the dust and remain prostrate upon it; confess thyself unworthy in all the sincerity of thy heart. Magnify the Most High, bless and praise Him, preserving thyself at all times worthy to receive Him and to suffer many martyrdoms in return for such a favor.

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\* cf. Ps. 86:1 [Ed.]

† cf. *Lauda Sion*, v. 2, Mass for Corpus Christi [Ed.]