

ating you with the prayer which they unceasingly offer to God.

(5) Consider the sins into which you are in the habit of falling, and try to foresee the opportunities of committing them which are likely to occur that day, also the particular virtues which you will be called upon to practise. Try to foresee also the obligations of your calling and position in life, the evil you can prevent, and the good you can do for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, in order that you may reflect on the best means of doing it.

Above all, in everything, do not forget to beg for the help of God's Grace.*

VII. OUR ACTIONS : HEARING MASS.

In order to hear Mass holily and to glorify God worthily in this most Holy Sacrifice, you have four things to do :

I. As soon as you leave your house to go to Mass, you should be possessed by this thought : that you are not only going to be present at, or to witness, but that you are going to *perform* an action which is the most holy and divine, the greatest and most important, the highest and most admirable action, which can be performed in Heaven or earth ; and that, consequently, it should be performed holily and divinely—that is to say, with dispositions which are altogether holy and divine, with great care and attention of mind and heart, as befits an affair of the highest consequence. I say that *you are going to perform this action*, for all Christians, being one with Jesus Christ, Who

* " Œuvres Complètes," vol. iii., 54.

is the great High Priest, and being thus partakers of His divine Priesthood, have not only the right of being present at the Holy Sacrifice, but also of doing with the priest what he does—that is to say, of offering, in union with him and with Jesus Christ Himself, the Sacrifice which is offered to God on the altar.

2. On entering the church, you should humble yourself in your heart, esteeming yourself most unworthy to enter the House of God, to appear before His Face, and to participate in so great a mystery, which comprises in itself all the mysteries and all the marvels of Heaven and earth. At the beginning of Mass, you should enter into a spirit of penitence, humiliation, and contrition at the sight of your nothingness and of your sins, accuse yourself of them in general with the priest, ask pardon of God, and beg Him to give you a perfect repentance.

3. After having adored our Lord Jesus Christ, Who offers Himself to us on the altar in order to receive the homage and worship which are His due, beseech Him that, as He changes the gross and earthly nature of the Bread and Wine into His Body and Blood, so He may change and transform the heaviness, coldness, and dryness of your heart—so carnal and arid—into the ardour, tenderness, and spirituality of the holy affections and of the divine dispositions of His Sacred Heart. Then remind yourself that Christians are one with Jesus Christ, as members are one with their head; and that, this being so, they partake of His double character of Priest and of Victim. Consequently, when they assist at Mass, they should do so as *Priests*, to offer with Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, the Sacrifice which He offers; and as *Victims*, to be

immolated and sacrificed with this same Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

Thus, as you participate in the divine Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and as, in your character of Christian, and member of Jesus Christ, you possess the name and dignity of priest; you should exercise this dignity, and make use of the right which it gives you, of presenting to God, with the priest, and with Jesus Christ Himself, the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, which is offered at Holy Mass, and of offering it to Him, as far as possible, with the same dispositions with which it is offered to Him by Jesus Christ. Oh, with what holy and divine dispositions is it offered to Him by His Son Jesus ! Oh, with what humility, with what purity and holiness, with what detachment from Himself and from all things, with what attachment of His mind to God, with what charity for mankind, with what love for His Father ! Unite yourself, by desire and intention, to these dispositions of Jesus ; pray Him to imprint them in you, so that you may offer this divine Sacrifice with Him, and with His dispositions.

Unite yourself also to the intentions with which He offers it, which consist of five principal ones :

The first is, to honour His Father, and to render Him a glory and a love worthy of Him.

The second, to offer Him a thanksgiving worthy of His goodness, for all the good He has ever done to all creatures.

The third, to atone fully for all the sins of the world.

The fourth, for the fulfilment of all His purposes and intentions.

The fifth, to obtain from Him all things necessary for all men, both for their soul and their body.

In accordance with these intentions of Jesus Christ, you should, therefore, offer to God the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass :—

(1) In honour of the most Holy Trinity ; in honour of all that Jesus Christ is in Himself, and in all His conditions, mysteries, qualities, virtues, actions, and sufferings ; in honour of all He does and operates, in mercy or in justice, in His blessed Mother, in all the Angels and Saints, in His Church—triumphant, militant, and suffering—and in all creatures, in Heaven, on earth, and in hell.

(2) As a thanksgiving to God for all the graces, temporal and eternal, which He has ever conferred on the Sacred Humanity of His Son, on the Blessed Virgin, on all the Angels, on all men, on all creatures, and especially on yourself.

(3) As an atonement to His divine justice for all your sins, for the sins of the whole world, and particularly for those of the poor souls in Purgatory.

(4) For the accomplishment of all His designs and purposes, especially of those which concern you.

(5) To obtain of His goodness all the grace which is necessary, to you, and to all men, in order that He may be served and honoured by all, in the degree of perfection which He requires from each one.

This is what you should do in your character of priest. But besides this, in your character of host, you are under the obligation, when you offer Jesus Christ, of offering yourself as victim with Him, or, rather, of praying Jesus Christ to come into your heart and to draw you to Him, to unite Himself to you, and to unite and incorporate you to Him in His character of Host, in order to sacrifice you with Him to the glory of His Father. And, because the victim which is sacrificed,

must be put to death, and then consumed by fire, pray Him to make you die to yourself—that is to say, to your passions, to your self-love, to all that is displeasing to Him ; to consume you in the sacred fire of His divine Love, and to grant that all your future life may be a perpetual sacrifice of praise, glory, and love to His Father and to Him.

4. You should prepare yourself to communicate—if not sacramentally, at least spiritually. For you should consider that our Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves you with an infinite love, does not become present in this Sacrifice only in order to be with you, to converse familiarly with you, and to confer on you His gifts and graces ; but—what is much better—He desires to come into you ; He has a great longing to make His dwelling in your heart, and to give Himself to you by a Communion, sacramental or spiritual. This is why you should prepare to receive Him at all events spiritually, and to this end, enter into the same dispositions which you should have in communicating sacramentally—*i.e.*, dispositions and sentiments of humility and love. Humble yourself, therefore, before Him, deeming yourself most unworthy to receive Him. But, nevertheless, as He desires it so much, desire also, on your side, to receive Him ; and invite Him, by many acts of love, to come into your heart, and to live and reign in it perfectly.

5. Lastly, after having thanked our Lord for the grace He has conferred on you in the Mass, withdraw with the firm resolution of employing the day in His service, and with the thought that you should henceforth be a host, at once dead and living : dead to all which is not God ; living in God and for God, wholly consecrated and sacrificed to the glory and love of God. Protest to our

Lord that you desire that it should be thus, and offer yourself to Him to do and suffer all He pleases. Pray Him, in His mercy, to accomplish His Will in you ; to give you grace to raise your heart often to Him during the day ; to do nothing that is not for His glory ; ask Him to let you die rather than offend Him, and to give you His most holy benediction.

This is the use you should make of an action so holy and so divine as is the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If you do not need so many thoughts to occupy your mind holily during Mass, choose those which are most pleasing to you.

Here are a few short invocations which will be most useful to you :

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, I adore Thee through our Lord Jesus Christ, present on this altar.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, I thank Thee for all Thy benefits through our Lord Jesus Christ, present on this altar.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, I ask forgiveness of my sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, present on this altar.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, I pray that Thy holy Will may be done, through our Lord Jesus Christ, present on this altar.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, I ask Thy grace for myself and for those I love through our Lord Jesus Christ, present on this altar.

VIII. OUR ACTIONS : HOLY COMMUNION.

1. *Preparation for Holy Communion.*—In the Holy Eucharist our Lord comes to us, with an infinite humility, which causes Him to abase Himself and to take the form and appearance of bread in order that He may give Himself to us. He comes with an ardent love, which impels Him to give us, in this Sacrament, all He possesses which

is most high, most dear, and most precious. We should therefore draw near to Him, and receive Him, with very deep humility and very great love. These are the two chief dispositions for receiving the Holy Communion. You should, therefore, make Acts of humility and love with as much fervour as possible.

It is also most useful to desire to have the devotion and the love of all holy souls. Our Lord said one day to S. Mechtilde, a daughter of S. Benedict, that if, when she was about to communicate, she felt in herself no devotion, she should desire to have the devotion and love of all the holy souls who have ever communicated, and that, in His eyes, it would be the same as if she, herself, had these dispositions.

It is said of S. Gertrude, who lived at the same time, and in the same convent, that one day, when on the point of communicating, she did not feel in herself the preparation and the devotion she desired. So she betook herself to our Lord and offered to Him the preparation and the devotion of all the Saints and of the Blessed Virgin. At once our Lord appeared to her, and spoke these words: "At this moment thou appearest before Me, and in the eyes of My Saints, adorned with the ornaments thou desirest."

Ah, Lord, how good Thou art, thus to accept our good desires in the place of deeds!

2. *Thanksgiving after Communion.*—After Holy Communion you have three things to do:

(1) You should prostrate yourself in spirit at the feet of the Son of God, dwelling in you, in order to adore Him, and ask forgiveness for all your sins and ingratitude, especially for having received Him in a dwelling so unworthy of Him, and with so little devotion.

(2) You should thank Him for giving Himself to you, and invite all creatures in heaven and earth to unite with you in blessing Him.

(3) As He has given Himself to you, so you, too, should give yourself wholly to Him.

IX. OUR ACTIONS : DEVOTIONAL READING.

Amongst the pious exercises which may help souls to advance in the paths of divine Love, one of the most excellent is the reading of good books. For this reason I advise and exhort you, as far as I may, never to let a single day go by without reading some good book for at least half an hour. In order to do this reading well, bear in mind what is related of the Son of God in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of S. Luke, how, having entered a synagogue one Sabbath day, He took a book and read. Therefore—

1. Offer Him your reading in honour of His.

2. Raise your mind to God in order to protest to Him that you desire to do this action for love of Him, and to ask Him for light and grace to do it well.

3. During your reading also, raise your mind to God, and make Acts of faith, hope, confidence, humility, and hatred of sin. Offer yourself to God, and make resolutions to avoid such and such sin, and to practise such and such virtue.

4. If it is the life of a Saint that you are reading, be careful to—

(1) Praise God for the glory He has rendered to Himself, and for the favours He has done to His Church by means of this Saint.

(2) Rejoice with the Saint on account of the