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Birth of Mary
of the Blessed Sacrament



By Father Eymard

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TRANSFERRED

FATHER EYMARD'S
*Month of Our Lady of the
Blessed Sacrament.*

With a Letter from His Eminence Cardinal
Gibbons, Approving the Works of
Father Eymard.

FROM THE SIXTH FRENCH EDITION.

Translated by a Visitandine of Baltimore, Md.



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New York City.

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FATHERS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

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JOHN M. FARLEY

Archbishop



CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Preparatory Meditation—The Month of our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.. | 21 |
| First Day—Mary, Mother of Eucharistic Adorers | 30 |
| Second Day—The Immaculate Conception and Holy Communion..... | 35 |
| Third Day—The Dowry of Mary Immaculate. | 40 |
| Fourth Day—The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin | 45 |
| Fifth Day—Mary's Presentation in the Tem- ple | 49 |
| Sixth Day—The Annunciation..... | 54 |
| Seventh Day—The First Adorer of the In- carnate Word | 60 |
| Eighth Day—Greatness of the Divine Ma- ternity | 63 |
| Ninth Day—The Interior Life of Mary..... | 67 |
| Tenth Day—Modesty, a Characteristic of Mary's Life | 71 |
| Eleventh Day—Mary at Bethlehem..... | 77 |
| Twelfth Day—Jesus Presented in the Tem- ple by Mary..... | 82 |
| Thirteenth Day—The Life of the Holy Family | 86 |
| Fourteenth Day—Mary's Compassion..... | 90 |
| Fifteenth Day—Mary After the Resurrec- tion | 94 |
| Sixteenth Day—Mary, Our Mother in the Cenacle | 100 |
| Seventeenth Day—Mary, Our Mistress in the Cenacle | 103 |
| Eighteenth Day—Our Lady of the Cenacle... | 109 |
| Nineteenth Day—Life of Adoration in Union with Mary | 112 |
| Twentieth Day—Mary's Adoration of Faith and Respect | 117 |
| Twenty-first Day—Mary's Adoration of Thanksgiving | 120 |

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Twenty-second Day—Mary's Eucharistic Contemplation | 123 |
| Twenty-third Day—Mary's Adoration of Propitiation | 127 |
| Twenty-fourth Day—Mary's Prayer of Adoration | 131 |
| Twenty-fifth Day—Mary's Apostolate..... | 135 |
| Twenty-sixth Day—The Divine Spouse and King of the Heart | 141 |
| Twenty-seventh Day—The Eucharist, the Centre of Mary's Life..... | 145 |
| Twenty-eighth Day—Mary's Life of Union with Jesus | 149 |
| Twenty-ninth Day—The Perfect Servant of the Blessed Sacrament..... | 152 |
| Thirtieth Day—Mary's Triumph..... | 157 |
| Last Day—Consecration to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament..... | 162 |

APPENDIX.

MOTIVES FOR DEVOTION TO OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter I—Idea of Devotion to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament..... | 167 |
| Chapter II—This Devotion is Opportune.... | 179 |
| Chapter III—First Foundation for Our Devotion, the Power of Mary..... | 192 |
| Chapter IV—The Principal Effects of Mary's Power | 215 |
| Chapter V—Other Effects of Mary's Power.. | 230 |
| Chapter VI—Second Foundation for Our Devotion, Mary's Life After the Ascension. She Assists at the Holy Sacrifice..... | 256 |
| Chapter VII—The Blessed Virgin's Communion | 266 |
| Chapter VIII—Mary's Life of Adoration Before the Most Blessed Sacrament..... | 294 |
| Mary and the Eucharist According to the Fathers | 316 |

APPROBATIONS.

HIS EMINENCE, CARDINAL GIBBONS.

In his latest Encyclical, Our Holy Father Leo XIII exhorts the faithful to increase their devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament and points out the great advantages accruing to society in general from the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which nourishes faith, hope and charity. He lays great stress upon the fruits of redemption gathered from the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and strongly recommends pastors to encourage devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament and frequent Communion. In a former Encyclical he exhorted the faithful to greater devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and signalized his own allegiance to her by the salutation—Queen of the Most Holy Rosary! This little work of Père Eymard entitled, "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament," is so much in accord with the wishes of

the Holy Father, that we cannot help giving its appearance in English dress a most cordial welcome. We are confident that it will be much appreciated, and that devout souls will find in it many holy thoughts that will serve to increase their devotion to the Holy Eucharist and their love for Mary Immaculate, and stimulate them to strive more earnestly after a life of virtue.

The Rev. Clergy will find in the work appropriate readings for May devotions. These readings possess a deep, fervent tone, which breathes the tender piety and profound religious spirit of Père Eymard. They cannot fail to awaken sentiments of faith in the Real Presence, and of reverence for her who was raised to the sublime dignity of Mother of God.

The great good accomplished in France for the edification of Christians of all classes by the writings of Père Eymard, is sufficient to warrant the hope that these writings will accomplish the same amount of good in this country. We are, therefore, glad to hear of the prospect of all his works being translated into the English language, and gratefully acknowledge the commendable thought of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament

to place the valuable works of their saintly founder at the disposal of English readers.

JAMES CARD. GIBBONS.

MGR. THE BISHOP OF ARRAS, BOULOGNE, AND SAINT-OMER.

Arras, March 19, 1872.

We have read with great interest the *Month of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. Its meditations taken from the writings of Père Eymard, are full of unction and very proper to inspire the Faithful with a desire always to unite with Mary in their numerous duties toward the Holy Eucharist.

The Appendix justifies the title, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, by sound theological reasons drawn from authors the most highly commended for knowledge and piety.

We shall be glad to see this work spread throughout our diocese. It will certainly encourage true and solid devotion, so

well comprised in these words: *Ad Jesum per Mariam.*

✠JEAN-BAPTISTE-JOSEPH,
Bishop of Arras, Boulogne, and Saint-Omer.

BISHOP OF MARSEILLES.

Marseilles, June 3, 1872.

REVEREND FATHER: No present could be more pleasing to me than that which you have been so kind as to make me of the works of the very lamented Père Eymard, for which I beg you to accept my most sincere acknowledgments.

In spite of my confirmations, I have commenced to read them, and that with the greatest edification. I find in them the tender piety and the sound theology of your venerated founder.

I am happy to unite with my venerable colleagues, the Bishops of Angers and Arras, to grant an Indulgence of forty days to the Faithful of my diocese for the invocation, whenever made: "Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

Accept, Reverend Father, the assurance of my affectionate devotedness.

✠CH. PH., Bishop of Marseilles.

THE BISHOP OF TARBES.

Tarbes, June 11, 1872.

MY DEAR FATHER: I have read with the liveliest interest, not the *Month of Mary*, from Père Eymard, but your *Appendix*. You have studied the subject thoroughly. You have thrown such light upon it that there remains nothing more to be said. The title, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, is henceforth secured to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and it is one of the most beautiful.

I heartily approve this new homage rendered to the Mother of God, and I willingly grant forty days' Indulgence to all in my diocese who will repeat three times this invocation.

Accept, dear Father, with my blessing and my thanks, the renewed assurance of my affectionate devotedness.

✠P. A., Bishop of Tarbes.

DIOCESE OF VALENCE.

The Almoner of the Hôtel-Dieu de Romans (Drôme) wrote, as follows:

July 5, 1872.

I have the happiness to announce to you that His Lordship, the Bishop of Valence, has informed me through M. Vigne, his Vicar-General, that he deigns to unite with the Bishops of Angers and of Arras in granting to the Faithful of his diocese an Indulgence of forty days, each time they recite the invocation: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee.* This Indulgence is applicable as suffrage to the souls in purgatory.

The Bishop of Angers and the Bishop of Arras were the first to bless this title, given to Mary. They graciously granted an Indulgence of forty days to all the Faithful of their diocese who would recite the invocation to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

We have reason to think that most of the Bishops will grant the same favor in their dioceses. We venture to beg the

promoters of the devotion to the Virgin of the Eucharist, to ask this favor in their respective dioceses. Nothing is so capable of spreading a devotion as the benediction of the chief Pastors.

The Bishop of Salamanca, Spain, not only approved the new title given to Mary, but preached and wrote in honor of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The following pages from his august pen, we copy from the *Bulletin Ecclésiastique, des Diocèses de Salamanque et Ciudad-Rodrigo*. They are clothed with such authority, that we should feel self-reproach did we neglect to reproduce them.

And again, we think that Père Eymard's children will welcome with delight this eulogium of their venerated Father. They will be powerfully encouraged by the kindly words addressed by the eminent Prelate to the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which he founded at the price of so great sacrifices, and even, we may say, at the cost of his life.

The following is the article signed by His Lordship, and translated from the Spanish:

OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Behold the new title given to Mary by the Very Rev. Pierre-Julien Eymard, Founder of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

This admirable man was born at Mure, Isère, in 1811. After embracing the ecclesiastical state and exercising the sacred ministry for some time, he entered into the Society of Mary, where for seventeen years he afforded an example of all the religious virtues. But God destined him to be the Father of a new family. As soon as the divine will was clearly known to him, Père Eymard accepted unhesitatingly all the trouble and labor which the founding of such a Society would cost him, and to it he gave the name, Society of the Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament. To glorify the Most Holy Eucharist, is its end. By what means? By solemn and perpetual Exposition of the August Sacrament. It has, also, an exterior apostolate, embracing all the works directly relating to this essential end.

This holy institution commenced in Paris, in 1856, in an humble locality given

provisionally by Apb. Sibour. In 1862, Père Eymard, having already a sufficient number of disciples, opened a novitiate. On the 8th of May of the following year, His Holiness, Pius IX., after having heard the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, granted the Decree of Approbation to the said Society.

The life of the pious Founder was not of long duration. But before his death God gave him the consolation of seeing his religious family consolidated and extended. On August 1, 1868, he died the death of the just, consumed with the love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Among the pious legacies which Père Eymard left to his religious family, there was one which to-day more especially claims our attention, since we are in the month of May, and that is the devotion to *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*.

May 1, 1868, being at Saint-Maurice, a house of retreat which he had opened in a pleasant situation far from the noise of the city, and the turmoil of the world, Père Eymard began the pious exercises of the Month of Mary, and closed his burning exhortation with these words: "O let us honor Mary under the title, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament! Yes,

let us say with confidence, let us say with love: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us, who have recourse to thee!*"

Père Eymard was radiant, his words trembling with emotion, his heart overflowing with joy, for he had discharged a debt of gratitude to Mary, his Mother, to Mary who had given him Jesus in the Sacrament, who had sustained and encouraged him with maternal solicitude in the founding of his pious and edifying Society. Upon the point of bidding adieu to his children, and leaving them a powerful means of serving their Master better, he added to Mary's diadem a jewel not less beautiful than glorious.

Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament is the new title of a thing very old, says the Father.

We have good reason to venerate all the mysteries of the life of the Mother of God. Contemplative souls have found an example in the life of Mary of Nazareth, as desolate hearts have done in Our Lady of Dolors. In all Mary's actions there is a grace which sweetly attracts us to honor and imitate them, each according to his vocation.

Now, Mary lived over twenty years after the Ascension of her Divine Son. By what were her long days of exile occupied, and what grace does this important part of our Mother's life comprise?

The Acts of the Apostles seem to indicate it with sufficient clearness. "The first Christians," we then read, "lived in peace, union, and the most ardent charity, sighing after martyrdom, and in order to prepare themselves for it, persevering in the breaking of the Bread: *Perseverantes in communicatione fractionis panis.*"*

To live of the Eucharist and by the Eucharist, to gather round the tabernacle in order to chant hymns and sacred canticles, this was the distinctive characteristic of the primitive Church. The Holy Spirit records it in the sublime ecclesiastical history written by St. Luke, and such is, also, the résumé of the Blessed Virgin's last years. She found again in the Adorable Host the blessed fruit of her womb, and in the life of union with Our Lord in His tabernacle, the happy days of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

*Acts ii., 42.

O yes! It was Mary, above all, who *persevered in the breaking* of the Bread. She is the great model for the adorers of the Blessed Sacrament.*

We shall now enumerate briefly some of the reasons which justify the title, *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, given to Mary by Père Eymard.

Mary is the Mother of Jesus, *de qua natus est Jesus*. We believe, and our faith is our sweetest joy, that the Adorable Body of Our Lord, really present in the Eucharist, is the same Body that was formed of the most pure blood of Mary, that was nourished with her substance and her virginal milk. It is for this reason that St. Augustine says, *Caro Jesu caro est Mariæ, et ipsam Mariæ carnem nobis manducandam dedit ad salutem.*† “The flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary, and the Saviour gives us this flesh of Mary as the food of our salvation.”

In the same sense spoke St. Ambrose, St. Anselm, Richard of St. Laurence, and the theologians Suarez, Kick, Schurlog, Zelada, Vega, Cornelius à Lapide, and others.

**Le Prêtre de l'Eucharistie.* Poussièlgue, Paris, 1872. †Super Psalm xcvi.

The Church in her Liturgy for Corpus Christi, repeats for that day the Preface of the Nativity of Our Lord, which speaks of the flesh given by Mary to the Word Incarnate. The Doxology of the Hymn of the Divine Office for this feast, after having chanted the love and the glories of Jesus in the Eucharist, turns to the Virgin as to the cause of the Gift that we receive at the altar: *Jesu tibi sit gloria, qui natus es de Virgine.*

These reasons and others, which we are forced to omit for want of space, authorize the new title given to Mary by Père Eymard. We have found them commented upon with wonderful erudition in one of the works of the *Bibliothèque*, published by the Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament.*

The Lord Bishops of Angers and Arras have granted forty days' Indulgence to the Faithful of their respective dioceses, and we accordingly do the same in our own for as often as the following invocation is recited:

Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

*See Appendix, end of volume.

Salamanca, fourth day and first Saturday of the month of May, consecrated to Mary, 1872.

The Bishop of Salamanca,

D. J. L.

PREFACE

We promised the devout readers of Venerable Père Eymard's *Bibliothèque du Saint-Sacrament* to give them what remains of his writings.

The following are his Meditations on the Blessed Virgin, whom he looked upon as a special model for devotion toward the Holy Eucharist. To sum up all the bonds that unite Mary to our Eucharistic Jesus, he has given her the title: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. It is particularly for religious and, above all, for servants of the Blessed Sacrament that he has written. All our associates, all those devoted to the Eucharist, will find in his pious effusions incentives to the love of Mary. They will, above all (and this is Père Eymard's main object), learn to unite in their homage Mary and the Eucharistic Jesus, to practice all their Eucharistic duties in union with and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

We shall publish these Meditations as a *Month of Mary*, a form generally received, and which will facilitate the circulation of his thoughts. To conform to custom, we have added to each Meditation an aspiration and a practice. We have tried to preserve unity throughout the work, and it is Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament who will make these examples, practices, and aspirations known and loved.

We must, furthermore, justify the new title given to Mary by Père Eymard, and this is done in the Appendix to this volume. There we shall produce reasons to authorize the invocation of Mary, as the Virgin of the Eucharist. This unique title has, moreover, been blessed by several venerable prelates. We know that the august Pius IX. loved and blessed it. Let us, then, say frequently and confidently:

“Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee!”

Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament—Month of Mary.

PREPARATORY MEDITATION.

OUR LADY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The month of Mary is the month of blessings and graces, for all graces come to us through Mary, as Saint Bernard and all the saints assure us. It is a feast of thirty days in honor of the Mother of God, and it will prepare us for the succeeding lovely month of the Blessed Sacrament.

I.—Because we make profession of especially honoring the Holy Eucharist, it does not follow that we should have less devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Far from it! He would be guilty of blasphemy who would say: "As for me, the Blessed Sacrament suffices. I have no need of Mary." —Where shall we find Jesus on earth if not in Mary's arms. Did she not give us the Eucharist? Was it not her consent to the Incarnation of the Word in her

pure womb that inaugurated the great mystery of reparation to God and union with us, which Jesus accomplished by His mortal life, and that He continues in the Eucharist?

Without Mary, we shall not find Jesus, for she possesses Him in her heart. There He takes His delight, and they who wish to know His inmost virtues, His sacred and privileged love, must seek them in the heart of Mary. They who love that good Mother will find Jesus in her pure heart.

We must never separate Jesus from Mary. We can go to Him only through her. I even maintain that the more we love the Eucharist, the more we ought to love Mary. We love all that our friend loves. Now, is there a creature better loved by God, a mother more tenderly thought of by her son, than was Mary by Jesus?

Oh yes, Our Lord would be very much pained if we, the servants of His Eucharistic Life, did not greatly honor Mary, since she is His Mother. He owes everything to her in the order of His Incarnation, His human nature. It is by the flesh that she gave Him that He has so glorified His Father, that He has saved us, and

that He continues to nourish and save the world by the Blessed Sacrament.

He wishes us to honor her so much the more now as, during His mortal life, He seems to have neglected it Himself. He truly honored His Mother very much in private; but in public He left her in the shade, since He had, before all, to assert and support His dignity as God.

But at the present day, Our Lord wishes us in some way to indemnify the Blessed Virgin for all that He did not do for her exteriorly; and we are bound (there is here question of salvation) to honor her as the Mother of God and our own Mother.

II.—But since, as adorers, we are more especially devoted to the service of the Eucharist, it is in this quality that we owe particular devotedness to Mary. Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament, servants of the Blessed Sacrament, associates of the Blessed Sacrament, we are by our state adorers of the Eucharist. This is our beautiful title blessed by Pius IX. Adorers—what does that mean? It means that we are attached to the Adorable Person of Our Lord living in the Eucharist.—But if we belong to the Son, we belong to the Mother, also; we adore

the Son, we ought to honor the Mother, also; and we are obliged, in order to persevere in the grace of our vocation and participate in it fully, to render to the Blessed Virgin very special honor under the title: *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*.

This devotion is not spread, nor is it explicitly defined as yet in the Church. Since devotion to Mary follows the worship of Jesus, it also follows its various phases and developments.

When we honor Our Lord on the Cross, we pray to Our Lady of Seven Dolors. When we honor His life submissive and retired at Nazareth, it is Our Lady of the Hidden Life that we take for model. The Blessed Virgin follows all the conditions of her Son.

We have never yet saluted Our Lady by this beautiful title: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. But the devotion to the Eucharist is spreading. Never was it greater or more general than in our time. It is taking new increase everywhere. It is the grace that the Immaculate Conception has brought to the world. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is not new, but there is, without doubt, a great and new manifestation of the Holy Eucharist. The

hidden God comes forth from His tabernacle. He is everywhere exposed by day and by night. The Eucharist is to be the source of salvation for this opening century. The worship of the Eucharist will be the glory, the grandeur of this age.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament will grow with the worship of the Eucharist. I have not found this devotion treated in any work. I have never heard it spoken of except in the revelations of Mother Mary of Jesus, where I read something of Mary's Communion, and in the Acts of the Apostles where we see Mary in the Cenacle.

III.—What did the Blessed Virgin do in the Cenacle? She adored. She was the Mother and the Queen of adorers. She was, in a word, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. Our occupation during this month will be, to honor her under this beautiful title, to meditate on what she did, to inquire how Our Lord received her adoration. We shall discover the perfect union of those two hearts, that of Jesus and that of Mary, lost in one love, and one single life. Piety must raise the mysterious veil that hides the adoring life of Mary.

We are astonished that the Acts of the

Apostles say nothing of it, but are satisfied with leaving Mary in the Cenacle. Ah! it is because her whole life in the Cenacle was one of love and adoration.

Why speak again of love and adoration? How shall we express that reign of God in the soul and that life of the soul in God? It cannot be explained. Language has no words to express the delights of heaven, and it is the same with the life of Mary in the Cenacle. Saint Luke tells us only that she lived and prayed there. Prayer and the love of study formed the essence of her life. Let us suppose that all that is most powerful in love, all that is most holy and perfect in the virtues, and attribute it to Mary. But because Mary lived there in union with the Most Blessed Sacrament for more than twenty years, all her virtues took the Eucharistic character. They were nourished by Communion, adoration, and constant union with our Eucharistic Jesus. Mary's virtues acquired in the Cenacle their highest perfection, almost limitless, surpassed only by that of the virtues of Jesus Christ.

Let us ask Our Lord to reveal to us what passed between Him and His Mother in the Cenacle. He will tell us

some of those wonders, not all, for we could not bear them, but a few, and they will fill us with joy.

O how happy we should be, could we make a month of *Maria Adoratrix!* Meditation is necessary for that, and much prayer. One must understand, also, the thanksgiving of Mary's love. I greatly desire this, but for such a work a longer preparation would be required.*

IV.—All the mysteries of Mary's life live again in the Cenacle. If we meditate on the birth of her Son in Bethlehem, let us continue the Gospel and behold the Eucharistic birth of that same Son on the altar. Is our subject, "The Flight into Egypt?" Well, then, do we not see that Our Lord is still in the midst of strangers and barbarians in those cities and countries in which the churches are closed, and no one goes to visit Him? Think again on His hidden life at Nazareth. Do we not find Him ever more hidden in His Eucharistic life? Consider all the other mysteries of Mary's

*Père Eymard put his hand to the work. We have his meditations on the adoring life of Mary. He enters into the interior of the Blessed Virgin, he aims at showing us the sentiments of her heart, the extent of her love.

life as connected with the Eucharist, and reflect on the part that she took therein.

The essential point is to seek out and practice Our Lady's virtues. Let us take them in order, the lowest, the smallest. We know them. We shall afterward rise by degrees to her interior virtues, even to her love.

Then let us daily offer up some sacrifice. Let us foresee something that will cost. There are some that we know in advance; for instance, to such a thing, to see such a person. Offer this sacrifice. The Blessed Virgin will be satisfied. It will be one more flower for the crown that she wishes to offer to her Son in our name on His day, the beautiful feast of Corpus Christi.

If we foresee no special sacrifices, let us maintain ourselves in generous dispositions to accept all that the good God will send us. Let us be watchful to catch on the wing that bird from heaven. It is a messenger from God, bringing us a grace and a crown of thorns. We must welcome them. A sacrifice foreseen makes us reason, and reasoning diminishes its value. But those that we make generously, without premeditation and without deliberation, are of more value.

The good God wants to surprise us. He says to us: "Hold thyself in readiness!"—And the faithful soul is disposed for all that the good God wills. Love loves to surprise. Let us never lose these sacrifices, and for that it suffices to be generous. A generous soul—O how beautiful! God is glorified by it, and He says of her as of Job, with sentiments of joy and admiration: "Hast thou seen My servant Job?" . . . The soul that loves, allows none of these sacrifices to pass. She has, so to say, her eye in the air. She feels that a cross is coming, and she prepares to receive it well.

Let us, then, honor the Blessed Virgin by a daily sacrifice. Let us go through her to Our Lord, take shelter behind her, hide under her mantle, clothe ourselves with her virtues, be, as it were, her shadow. Let us offer all her actions, all her merits, all her virtues to Our Lord. We have only to draw on Mary, and to say to Jesus: "I offer Thee the riches that my Mother has acquired for me,"—and Our Lord will be very much pleased with us.

Practice.—Let us fulfill all our Eucharistic duties in union with Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Aspiration.—Hail Mary, of whom was born our Eucharistic Jesus!

FIRST DAY.

MARY, MOTHER OF EUCHARISTIC ADORERS.

I.—If our life were not under Mary's protection, we might tremble for our perseverance and salvation. Our vocation, which in a special manner binds us to the service of the King of kings, makes it a duty incumbent upon us to appeal to Mary. Jesus is King in the Eucharist, and He wishes to have in His court only trained servants that have made their full course, and who, before presenting themselves to the King, have learned to serve. Jesus has left us His Divine Mother to be the Mother and Model of Adorers. According to the most common opinion, He left her twenty-four years on earth, that we might learn from her to adore Him personally.—What a beautiful life were those twenty-four years, passed in adoration! When we reflect upon the love of Our Lord for His Mother, we are lost in wonder that He consented to separate from her. Was it that the Blessed Virgin was not yet perfect? Was it that she had not suffered

enough, she who had endured on Calvary more than all other creatures? Ah, yes, she had, indeed, suffered! But the interests of the Eucharist called for her prayers. Jesus was not willing that the first hour of Eucharistic adoration should be confided to poor adorers, who knew not how to adore worthily. The Apostles, obliged to labor for the salvation of souls, could not give sufficient time to Eucharistic adoration. In spite of their love, which would have chained them to the tabernacle, their Apostolic mission called them elsewhere. As to the new Christians, like unto children still in the cradle, a mother was needed to educate them, a model whom they could copy, and it was His own Blessed Mother that Jesus Christ left them.

II.—The whole life of Mary tended to good. It may be summed up in one word, *adoration*, for adoration is the perfect service of God. It embraces all the duties of the creature toward the Creator.

It was Mary who first adored the Incarnate Word. He was in her womb, and no one on earth knew it. O how well was Our Lord served in Mary's womb! Never has He found a ciborium,

a vase of gold more precious, or more pure than Mary's womb. Mary's adoration rejoiced Him more than that of all the angels. "The Lord hath placed His tabernacle in the sun," says the Psalmist. That sun is Mary's heart.

At Bethlehem, Mary was the first to adore her Divine Son lying in the crib. She adored Him with the perfect love of a Virgin Mother, a love of dilection, as says the Holy Spirit. After Mary came Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi. But it was Mary who started that tongue of flame that will cover the whole world. O what beautiful things, what divine things could Mary utter, since she was in a state of love which we can neither fathom nor measure!

Mary went on adoring Our Lord in His hidden life at Nazareth, afterward in His apostolic life, and, lastly, on Calvary, where her adoration became pure suffering. Remark the nature of Mary's adoration. She adored Our Lord according to His various conditions, she adapted her homage to Jesus' state. It was that which gave character to her adoration. She did not remain in unchanging adoration. At one time, she adored God annihilated in her womb, at another poor

in Bethlehem, again laboring at Nazareth, evangelizing the country, and converting sinners. She adored Him in His sufferings on Calvary, suffering herself with Him. Her adoration was in touch with the sentiments of her Divine Son, which were clearly shown her. Her love brought her into perfect conformity of thought and life with Him.

III.—To you, adorers, we say: “Adore incessantly our Eucharistic Jesus, but vary your adoration as the Blessed Virgin did. Recall and revive all the mysteries of religion in the Eucharist, else you will fall into routine. If the spirit of your love is not nourished by some form, some new thought, you will become stupid in prayer.” We should, then, celebrate all the mysteries in the Eucharist.

It was thus that Mary acted in the Cenacle. When the anniversaries of the great mysteries, wrought under her own eyes, came round, can we think that she did not recall their circumstances, the words, the graces connected with them? When, for instance, Christmas came round, can we imagine that Mary did not recall to her Son, then hidden under the Eucharistic veil, the love that

greeted Him at His birth, His first smile, her own adoration, also that of St. Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi? She desired thereby to rejoice the Heart of Jesus by recalling to Him her love. And so it was with all other mysteries.

Ah! how do we act with a friend? Do we always speak to him of the present? Certainly not. We recall past memories, we call them into life again. When we want to compliment a father and mother, we recall the love, the constant and untiring devotedness, they showed us in our infancy. In like manner, Mary, during her adoration in the Cenacle, rehearsed to Jesus all that He had done for His Father's glory, recalling to Him His great sacrifices, thus entering into the Eucharistic grace of the mystery she was then contemplating. The Eucharist is the memorial of all the mysteries of religion. It renews their love and grace. It is as necessary for us as for Mary to correspond to this grace, by contemplating Our Lord in all His actions, by adoring Him in all His different states, and uniting with them.

The Blessed Virgin had so powerful an attraction for the Eucharist that she could not live away from It. She lived

in It, she lived of It. She passed her days and nights at the Feet of her Divine Son. She did, indeed, gratify the filial devotedness of the Apostles and the Faithful who desired to see her and converse with her, but her love for her hidden God shone in her countenance, and communicated its ardor to all around her.

O Mary, teach us the life of adoration! Teach us to find, as thou didst, all mysteries and all graces in the Eucharist, to live the Gospel over again, and to read it in the Eucharistic Life of Jesus! Remember, O Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, that thou art the Mother of all adorers of the Holy Eucharist.

Practice.—To offer our adoration to our Eucharistic Jesus through the hands of Mary.

Aspiration.—Thou art blessed among women, O Mary, and blessed is our Eucharistic Jesus, the fruit of thy womb!

SECOND DAY.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND HOLY COMMUNION.

I.—Mary's Immaculate Conception was predicted in the terrestrial Paradise. The

Blessed Virgin is that chosen woman whose heel crushed the infernal serpent. In creating Mary immaculate, God gained the greatest victory over the devil, and re-established His empire in the world. As Master, He took possession of His own creation, and it was chiefly for His own glory that He preserved Mary from the original stain; for in all His works God seeks first the interests of His own glory.

Every creature was born stained and guilty. God was not full master of it. He could not entirely possess it, for Satan seized upon the soul at the moment of its creation. God created, but Satan took possession of His work. The glory of God was humiliated in His creatures, and when the Lord had banished Adam and Eve from the earthly Paradise, Satan triumphed over God, Satan had the victory.

But behold Mary. God had guarded her. He preserved her by a special privilege. She passed through the period of natural conception, as did all men since Adam. But God owed it to Himself to preserve her pure. Eve, the first mother, was stained; Mary, the true mother of the living, will be immaculate. God

overshadowed her. She is His garden enclosed, His fountain sealed, of whose waters the King only shall drink. Satan will not dare approach Mary. She was born in the arms of God's love: *Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum*. She was a true daughter of God: *Primogenita ante omnem creaturam*. The Word should not blush for His Mother. As He gave her all that she possessed, God beheld His own honor and glory when He looked upon Mary. The Most Holy Trinity perfectly concurred in the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The glory of the Three Divine Persons demanded it. If Satan gets possession before God, then Satan is the conqueror. On whatever terms he may have been emancipated, he who was born in slavery always retains its mark.

Thus was the glory of God repaired in humanity. The image of God was remodeled and restored. God may without fear come down and take up His abode in Mary, for she is a tabernacle purer than the sun. Mary is by her purity God's heaven on earth. With her He will renew the world. Behold what the Immaculate Conception has given us: first of all, Jesus Christ. Mary in her

Immaculate Conception was the aurora of that beautiful Sun of Justice and of all the saints, those brilliant stars in the firmament of the Church. All were formed by Mary; all come to us from that Paradise of the Lord. The Immaculate Conception is the germ of all the graces that we have received. Like the little cloud that Elias saw, Mary is of herself only a speck on the horizon; but she grows, she expands, and her divine influence pervades the whole world.

II.—But for us, adorers, there is still something more in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. If God thus preserved Mary, it was because He wished to dwell in her. He wished to descend into a holy dwelling-place pure and perfect. The Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit purified Mary only to make of her a worthy tabernacle for the Divine Word. He had to create a new heaven for Him, one entirely pure. To receive Him into her bosom, Mary had to be immaculate. The Immaculate Conception is the remote preparation for Holy Communion. O with what happiness the Word contemplated that dwelling which He had

prepared for Himself! He hastened to it with giant steps: *Exultavit ut gigas.*

Jesus should do the same when coming to us in Holy Communion. He should long for the moment in which we would force Him, as it were, to leave His tabernacle. He should come to us with joy, as if going again to Mary. He will do so if we are pure. He expects of us this preparation of purity. It is only that that He demands. Great purity in receiving Holy Communion ought to be for us the fruit of the Immaculate Conception. Without purity, all virtues are as nothing. If that be wanting, Our Lord will come to us with repugnance, our heart will be to Him a prison.—“Ah,” He would exclaim to His priest, “whither are you carrying me? Into a heart that is not Mine, that My enemy possesses?—Leave Me, leave Me in My tabernacle!”

O Mary, lend us thy mantle of purity, clothe us in white, in the brilliancy of thy Immaculate Conception. It belongs to the mother to adorn her child for festive days. Robed by thee, O Mary, Jesus will receive me kindly. He will come with pleasure. He will see thee in me, and He will find His delight in dwelling in my heart.

Practice.—Prepare most carefully in union with Mary for Holy Communion.

Aspiration.—Jesus in the Host loves the sacred dwelling of Mary's womb more than all the tabernacles of Jacob.

THIRD DAY.

THE DOWRY OF MARY IMMACULATE.

I.—Mary received on the day of her Immaculate Conception a magnificent endowment, proportioned to the sublime duties and incomparable dignity of Mother of God. She received then that treasure of graces which was to make of her the coredemptrix of the human race, which was to associate her to the work of our salvation.

I doubt not that the grace of her Immaculate Conception transcends all her other graces, even that of her divine maternity. Though less in dignity, it is more important before God and for Mary; it is, moreover, the foundation and the source of all the dignities, of all the privileges afterward accorded her as its consequence.

It would have been of small account to be the Mother of God and, at the same time, a sinner. What constitutes great-

ness before God, is not the dignity that He confers, but the sanctity and purity with which it is borne. Throw a royal mantle around a mendicant, and he still remains a beggar. The Immaculate Conception having made the purity and sanctity of Mary, becomes the greatest of her graces. From the first instant of her creation, Mary was more pleasing to God than all other creatures. One act of love from that frail creature still hidden in the maternal womb, was more meritorious, gave more glory to God, than the united love of all the saints and angels. Interest is in proportion to capital. Mary possessed an incommensurable fund of grace, which produced a hundred-fold.

II.—The Immaculate Conception is the starting point of all Mary's virtues. It is her supreme virtue 'in this sense, that she always labored to render fruitful the fund of graces that she then received. We suppose on principal that she was never unfaithful to the slightest inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that to the fullest extent she turned to profit all the graces granted her. No saint ever arrives at that degree. The saints always remain below their graces. The angel

saluted Mary: "Full of grace."—"The Lord is with thee."—With thee always and in all things. There is in thee no void that grace has not filled. Ah! Mary was faithful to all her obligations, faithful to all the desires of the Lord! Never did she omit the least good to be done. She received all the rays of God's sanctity. She absorbed them, allowing not one to be lost.

This fidelity to her graces, made Mary constantly advance in all virtues. She watched over them, as if she feared to lose them. What a lesson for us! Whatever our graces, let us guard them carefully. Mary, the impeccable one, not by nature, but in consequence of her union with God—Mary whom temptation never approached, watched over herself and labored incessantly at the work of her sanctification. She was always advancing in holiness. She retired to the Temple at the age of three, in order to shun the scandals of the world. She trembled before an angel, a pure spirit that spoke only of God. Mary never thought that she had done enough. Her later life was a true martyrdom without consolation. She embroidered the robe of her Immaculate Conception, she enriched

and ornamented it with the most beautiful flowers of virtue. But it was always that first grace, that of her Immaculate Conception, which she developed and embellished by her virtues and sacrifices.

III.—The Immaculate Conception is, also, the measure of her power and glory. We can gain nothing from God but by purity, by holiness. God does great things only by pure souls. He listens only to the prayer of the innocent or the contrite. Mary's purity was never tarnished by the least stain. What, then, must be her influence! They say that a mother is all-powerful over the heart of her son. But if she herself is dishonored, what becomes of her influence? But to a pure mother, what can be refused?—Solomon thus addressed his mother after she had done penance: "I can refuse you nothing."—What, then, can Mary's Son refuse her? All graces pass through her hands. She is their channel. Jesus has clothed her with His almighty power in the order of salvation.

And what of Mary's glory? Her purity won for her the privilege of becoming the Mother of the King, and to-day she is seated on a throne at the right of her

Son. Apart from adoration, she receives all honor and all homage. She is so beautiful, so glorious that she alone of herself might constitute a paradise!

IV.—Thus all Mary's graces and virtues, all her power and glory, sprang from her Immaculate Conception. They are, as it were, its magnificent consequence. Baptism purifies us, renders us stainless, immaculate. As soon as the infant receives it, it becomes the temple of God, a paradise. With what vigilance ought we to guard baptismal purity! If we have lost it, we can regain it by penance. We must be pure. I do not speak merely of the purity of the senses. We must observe great purity in our will, in our intentions, in all our actions. To possess purity of life—in this all consists. Without purity we can never please the Eucharistic God, for He is all purity. Only pure hearts see Him, only pure hearts pierce the veils that hide Him. He manifests Himself only to the pure heart, for purity is love, the delicacy of friendship which fears to displease. The aim of our God in coming into our soul is, to purify us more and more. In purifying us, He sanctifies us, He unites us more intimately to Himself, and when

we are sufficiently pure, He will take us to Himself in Heaven and crown us.

Practice.—To ask through Mary in all our Communions the purity of a perfect life.

Aspiration.—We sing thy praises, O Mary, thou glorious City of the Eucharistic God!

FOURTH DAY.

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Let us rejoice, let us exultantly salute Mary's birth, the birth of our Queen, which filled heaven with joy, earth with hope, and hell with terror. Behold, at last, the "strong woman," the predestined Mother of the Messiah.

We shall speak neither of the place nor of the circumstances of her birth; but it may be supposed that, like her Divine Son, she was born in poverty. St. Joachim and St. Anne were poor and, belonging to the Levitical family, they lived on the tithes of the Temple. But, notwithstanding this, Mary was born amid grandeurs that far surpassed all the riches of the daughters of this world.

I.—Mary possessed human greatness. She was born the daughter, the sister, the heiress of Juda's kings. The Word willed to be born of a royal mother. He willed to be, according to the flesh, the brother of kings, in order to show clearly that it is from Him that all royalty flows, and that kings should come to adore Him as their Master and Sovereign Ruler. His Mother was, therefore, a queen. True, as her Son was a King without an earthly kingdom, without riches, without armies, so she was poor and unknown. Earthly grandeur does not constitute royalty; it is only its appendage. Even when royalty is despised, its rights still exist. And, moreover, the day was to come on which Mary's royalty, like that of her Son, was to be proclaimed and honored. The Church was to salute her as Queen, Queen of heaven and earth: "*Salve, Regina!*"—The angel had announced it. "*Dabit illi sedem David patris ejus.*"—"The Lord, O Mary, will give to thy Son the throne of David, His father."—But before that day He had to regain it by the combat of humility, poverty, and suffering.

II.—Mary possessed all supernatural greatness. Supernatural greatness is

nothing else than the reflection of God upon a creature whom He associates to His power and glory. Now, what did God do for Mary? He associated her to His great Mystery. The Father calls her His daughter, the Son loves her as His Mother, the Holy Ghost guards her as His spouse. She was called to share in the great works of divine power, she is associated to the empire of God Himself. Contemplate her thus on the beautiful day of her birth. With St. John, behold her clothed with the sun, *amicta sole*, coming from God and resplendent with His divine light. She is, as it were, penetrated with the rays of the Divinity, like to a most pure crystal which the sunbeam enters at every point. The moon is under her feet, typifying her unshakable power which defies inconstancy, for she vanquished once and forever the infernal dragon.—Her brow is encircled with a diadem of twelve stars, typical of the graces and virtues of all the elect, for Mary is the centre of creation. Jesus has intrusted to her hands all the means of Redemption, and she is crowned by all the saints, who are the work of her love and her protection.

III.—Mary was born with all personal

greatness. She was enriched with God's gifts. But that is little, for on the day of her birth she was already rich with her own merits. She had already acquired treasures of merits during the nine months of silent and uninterrupted adoration passed in the bosom of her mother. She was, even before her birth, penetrated with the divine light, and she had given herself entirely to God, whom she loved with a love of which we can form no just idea. She was born with the treasures that she had won, with the riches that she had acquired.—O if in spirit we could have seen Mary's birth, could have contemplated that sun rising out of the ocean of God's love!—in her mind, was the purest light; in her heart, the most ardent love; in her *will*, the most absolute devotedness. Never was there a creature with such a birth!

Even in her cradle, Mary was the delight of the Holy Trinity, the admiration of the angels.—“Who is this privileged creature,” they ask, “who, at the first dawn of life, is so rich in virtue and adorned with such glory?—*Quae est ista?*”

And the demons trembled. They beheld her advancing against them strong as an

army in battle array. They felt the humiliation of their chief's defeat, and they already foresaw the terrible war that this child of a day would wage against them: *Sicut acies ordinata.*

But the world rejoices, for we behold the advent of our liberatrix. Her birth heralds that of Our Saviour. O yes! Let us rejoice: *Nativitas tua gaudium annuntiavit universo mundo.*

As for ourselves especially, we ought to rejoice that Mary brings to us the Bread of Life. From the day of her birth, we salute her as the aurora of the Eucharist, for we know that the Lord will take from her the substance of the Body and the Blood that He will give us in the adorable Sacrament of His love.

Practice.—Offer to God by the hands of Mary the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary, who brought us from afar our Bread of Life, the Divine Victim.

FIFTH DAY.

MARY'S PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

I.—Mary had no childhood in the ordinary sense of the word. She had no

games, no childish tastes, none of the ignorance or levity of childhood.* From her very conception she possessed intelligence of God, and she merited. All her faculties were raised toward God and fixed on Him. He was her life. Her body alone had the weakness and littleness of infancy. As soon as she could walk alone, she begged her parent's permission to retire to the Temple. She was but three years old when she was received among the maidens consecrated to the Lord, and there she remained twelve years. We know nothing of her life in the Temple, excepting that she lived there hidden from the world and practicing all the virtues. Some pious writers and saintly doctors, such as Cederenus and St. John Damascene, say that she preferred the companionship of the children who suffered, caring for them in their sickness, and consoling them in their little troubles. Whenever a dispute arose, little Mary was always called to reconcile the parties and restore peace, which she bore with her everywhere. She lived in simplicity, never making herself remarkable in anything. She

*See Suarez. T. xix., d. xix., sect. iii.—St. Alph., Discourse II. on the birth of Mary.

made herself the servant and the least of all, never losing courage, and anticipating the desires of her little companions. She was protected by the angels and surrounded by the heavenly spirits. The demon could not approach her, shielded as she was by her faithful guardians. She was the "*garden inclosed*," which none but the well-beloved Spouse Himself could open.

II.—It is in this hidden life in the Temple that Mary should be our model. God had prepared her in secret, in silence, and without her suspecting the great mission that she was to fulfill. Later, Our Lord will prepare Himself, also, for His evangelical mission by thirty years of silence at Nazareth. During three years, He will prepare His disciples for the mystery of the Eucharist, and only on the eve of His death will He reveal to them all Its love.

Silence and secrecy are the soul of great things. Our Lord hid from Satan that He was the Son of God. Had the demon positively known it, he never would have urged the Jews to put Him to death. Nor did he know that this young maiden was one day to be the Mother of God.—So long as a work re-

mains hidden, unknown to the world, it grows in security. But as soon as the demon had discovered it and made it known to the world, he rises up against it, and combats it with all his might. If the seed cast into the soil is too often disturbed, it will not germinate. It must be allowed to rest hidden under the earth. It is the same with us. If we wish to increase, we must hide, we must remain unknown to the world, otherwise the demon will raise up many contradictions, and the wind of self-love will destroy us.

III.—Our Lord has prepared us a long time. He has hedged us about with graces since our infancy, in order to introduce us into the cenacle of the Eucharist. Let us thank Him with all our heart. And although we may not have given ourselves to Him at so early an age as Mary, we are, however, in the infancy of the Eucharistic life. The Eucharistic manifestation has only just begun, and Our Lord calls us among the first to concur in it.

Mary in the Temple adored God in spirit and in truth. By her prayers and ardent desires, she hastened the coming of the Messiah. But we adore Him really present on our altars. We do not call Him from afar like Mary. He is with us,

He is in the midst of us. We possess Him always. Let us imitate the silence, the solitude, the life hidden in God of the Blessed Virgin. May she be the model of our life hidden in the Eucharist!

Now we aim at appearing. We wish to have and to enjoy all at once. We know not how to wait. We force our plants, as it were, and they yield much at first; but they soon exhaust themselves and die.

Let us, then, love the simple and hidden life, the obscure employments of our position. Let us find our happiness in living unknown. Let us hide the tiny flame of our lamp under a bushel, for the least draught might extinguish it.

Mary gave herself to God promptly, entirely, and forever. She gave her whole being, her mind, her heart, her liberty. She reserved nothing. O let us give all to our Eucharistic Jesus, who gives Himself all to us! It is so easy to say: "My God, I give myself entirely to Thee,"—but it is difficult to do it in reality. Let us rely on His grace and on the prayers of our Mother, and when occasion offers, let us recall her perfect gift of herself to God. Her example will be our strength and encouragement.

Practice.—Incessantly repeat: “Mary and Jesus! Jesus and Mary!”

Aspiration.—They found the Infant with the Mother, and prostrating, they adored Him.

SIXTH DAY.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

Reflecting on the circumstances of the mystery of the Annunciation, we discover in Mary the most sublime qualities. What glory for her to have been called to take part in the work of the Incarnation of the Word, the grandest of the divine works! And what virtues her example teaches us!

I.—An archangel is deputed by God, an archangel of the divine power comes on the part of God to treat with a creature. It is the most important mission ever fulfilled by a heavenly messenger. The angel descends from heaven full of glory, beautiful as a star, flooded with rays of the Divinity.

To whom does he go? Ah! had the world known of the celestial messenger's coming to earth, it would have sought

among the rich and the powerful for the happy mortal to whom he bore the grand message, because the world willingly believes that perfection is found in greatness. But the angel goes to a virgin of fifteen, humble and unknown, legally espoused to a poor artisan, dwelling in a poor home, in a town despised and ignored. He goes to Mary!—What! so much preparation for this unknown maiden!—Yes.—Wordly prestige soon comes to naught and human pride is confounded. We see only what shines, we value only gold and diamonds. Ah! at the General Judgment they will be trodden under foot like vile stones, and hell will be paved with them.

The angel goes to a virgin.—God admits only pure souls to intimacy. He pardons the sinner, but He unites Himself only to purity.

The angel is the first to salute.—He is, indeed, the less worthy of the two. Mary is sovereign here, and since the Three Divine Persons are awaiting an answer, she holds in her hands the fate of the world. Ah, how powerful is that lowly maiden!

Hail, full of grace!—Among all the daughters of Eve, Mary alone is full of grace. We are full of the miseries of

original sin. Mary is pure as the sun. God formed her of special earth, and fashioned her with singular care.

The Lord is with thee.—Yes, for He dwells in the purity of thy heart, O Mary, as in a paradise of delights, and thy virtues are so many flowers that send up to Him the sweetest perfume.—At what hour did the angel appear?—The Gospel does not say. Commentators think that it was about midnight, at the moment that one day ends and another begins, for Mary is the aurora which separates darkness from light.—She was at that moment in prayer. She was sighing for the coming of the Messiah. We may suppose this without fear of being deceived, for God ordinarily gives to souls a prayer conformable to the grace that He designs to bestow upon them, and which prepares them for it. Let us at that solemn hour of the conception, and later at the birth of the Son of God, made flesh, pray with Mary, and in union with her adore the God who became incarnate for us.

II.—Mary was troubled.—It is characteristic of virgins, says St. Ambrose, to be troubled at the approach of a man, and to fear his words. Mary was troubled, also, at the praise addressed to her, al-

though she well deserved it. But true virtue never recognizes itself.

The angel reassures Mary.—It is characteristic of divine visions first to trouble, and then to give peace, whereas those from the evil one begin in peace and end in war.

“Thou shalt conceive a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.”—Heavenly Name! Divine Name, that no man could give, that had to be brought from heaven by an angel!—This Son will be powerful. He shall be called the Angel of the Great Council, the Mighty One, the Admirable.—The Blessed Virgin had so great a love for virginity, which she had vowed to God, that at first she did not consent.—“How shall this be done?” she asked. “I am, and I wish to remain a virgin.”—What a moment! Mary holds heaven and earth in suspense. God is waiting the consent of this lowly maiden! He cannot proceed! At that instant, Mary was more powerful than God. How could the Lord endure that species of inferiority before Mary? Ah! it was because He preferred the virginity of His Mother to every other consideration!

The angel yielded to Mary in the name of God. Mary triumphs, and hears these

words: "The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; in becoming a mother, thou shalt remain a virgin."

III.—Mary replied: "*Ecce ancilla Domini*, Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Be it done unto me according to thy word!"—O word full of deep significance! O admirable word full of humility! But how much is contained in the word: "*Ecce!*" When the Church presents to us the Sacred Host, before Communion, she says: *Ecce Agnus Dei!* When St. John wished to point out Our Lord to his disciples, he exclaimed: *Ecce!*—In that word is contained the gift of one's whole self. Behold me ready, entirely at the disposition of the Lord. There is in it a perfect act of faith.

Mary did not say: Behold the Mother of the Lord! although she was actually His mother at that moment. The saints are so much the humbler as God has elevated them higher. With reason, St. Bernard could say of Mary: "*Virginitate placuit humilitate concepit*:—She pleased the Lord by her virginity; she conceived Him by her humility."

Let us notice how sparing Mary was of her words. She said what was strictly

necessary, and nothing more. Silence and modesty are the safeguards of purity.

The Holy Spirit wrought in Mary His divine work. The consent of that lowly maiden changed the face of the earth. God entered again into His domain. He began again that converse with man much more perfect and much more lasting than in the earthly paradise.

This mystery of the Annunciation ennobles us. It brings God back to earth. It is at the same time a mystery entirely interior, a mystery of communion. In Communion, the Eucharistic Jesus becomes, in a manner, incarnate in us, and *Communion is one of the ends of His Incarnation*. By communicating worthily, we enter into the divine plan, we perfect it. The Incarnation prepared the way for and heralded Transubstantiation. Mary did not receive the Word for herself alone. She rejoiced that we participate in her happiness. Let us, then, unite with her when we receive Jesus Christ. Let us sing her *Magnificat*. The Lord, in this mystery, has done great things in her; and by coming to us, He has again done great things. Let us try to imitate her virtues, in order that Jesus Christ

may find in us, as in His holy Mother, a dwelling worthy of Him.

Practice.—To prohibit one's self every word, every species of noise, every distraction, when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Aspiration.—The fruit of my womb, Jesus in the Sacred Host, is more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. *Et fructus meus pretiosior auro et argento.*—(Eccles.)

SEVENTH DAY.

THE FIRST ADORER OF THE INCARNATE WORD.*

Behold, behold my model, my Mother, Mary, the first adorer of the Incarnate Word in her womb. O how perfect must this adoration of the Virgin Mother have been in itself, how pleasing to God and how rich in graces!

What ought to have been the perfection of Mary's adoration at the first instant of the Incarnation?

*This meditation has already been published in part in the Second Series of the *Bibliothèque Eucharistique*. We here produce it in full, for this is its rightful place.

I.—An adoration of humility, of annihilation before the Sovereign Majesty of the Word, at the sight of the choice He has made of His poor handmaid, under the weight of so much goodness and love for her and for men. Such ought to be the first act, the first sentiment of our adoration after Holy Communion. Such was Elizabeth's sentiment when receiving the Mother of God, who was bringing to her the Saviour still hidden in her womb—*Unde hoc mihi?*—Whence comes to me this happiness which I so little deserve? It is the word of the centurion, also, at whose house Jesus chose to sojourn: *Lord, I am not worthy!*

II.—The second of Mary's acts of adoration should naturally be an act of joyous gratitude for God's ineffable and infinite goodness to men, an act of humble gratitude for His having chosen this unworthy, but thrice happy, handmaid for the reception of so signal a grace. Her gratitude breathed forth in acts of love, of praise, of thanksgiving. She exalts the Divine Goodness. Gratitude is an outpouring of the soul in the person benefited, a great and loving expansion of the soul. Gratitude is the heart's love.

III.—The third act of the Blessed Vir-

gin's adoration had to be one of devotedness, the offering of self, the gift of self and of her whole life to the service of God: *Ecce ancilla Domini*; also an act of regret for being so little, for having so little, of being so incapable of serving Him worthily.

She offered herself to serve Him in whatever way He willed, by all the sacrifices that He might be pleased to exact of her, too happy to be able to please Him at any price, thus to respond to His love for men in His Incarnation.

IV.—The last act of Mary's adoration was, doubtless, an act of compassion for poor sinners, for whose salvation the Word became incarnate. She knew how to excite His infinite mercy in their favor. She offered herself to repair for them, to do penance for them, in order to obtain their pardon and return to God. She begged for them the happiness of knowing their Creator and their Saviour, of loving and serving Him, thus rendering to the Most Holy Trinity the honor and glory due from every creature, but above all from man, the tender object of the love and mercy of a God so great and so good. O that I could adore Our Lord as that good Mother adored

Him, for I possess Him as she did, in Holy Communion!

O my God, hearken to the great, the important petition that I now make Thee! Give me the Most Blessed Virgin Adoratrix as my true mother. Let me share in her grace, in that state of uninterrupted adoration in which she was during the whole time that she bore Thee in her pure womb, that paradise of virtue and of love.

I feel, O my God, that that would be one of the greatest graces of my life. I desire henceforth to adore in union with that Mother of adorers, the Queen of the Cenacle.

Practice.—Make faithfully, and in union with Mary, your thanksgiving after Holy Communion.

Aspiration.—O Mary, I have received thy well-beloved Son, and I shall never let Him go!

EIGHTH DAY.

GREATNESS OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, the Son of God, *Maria de qua natus est Jesus!*—Behold the sublime eulogium that the Gospel pro-

nounces on Mary! The Holy Spirit praises neither her gifts nor her virtues. He limits Himself to pointing out the divine principle, the law of expediency, namely, her divine maternity. Because she was to be the Mother of God, Mary received all graces, all honors. But when we call her the Mother of God, we say all that can be said of her, we recount all her greatness.

I.—She came to raise up the human race, to restore to mothers that crown of honor and nobility which Eve lost by her sin. Satan uncrowned our first mother. Mary reinstated her. She came as the queen, the liberatrix, prefigured by those noble women of the Old Law, Judith, Esther, Deborah. When the angel presented himself before Mary, he saluted her with sovereign respect, not daring to pronounce her name: *Ave, gratia plena*. Behold the difference between the angel's language to the true mother of the living, and that of the fallen seraph to our unhappy mother Eve.

Mary conceived of God. She bore in her womb the Saviour of the world, the source of love, Him who came to bring peace to men; whilst the first-born of Eve is a sinner, Cain the fratricide.

Mary was honored by shepherds and kings, by the poor and the rich. Her quality of Mother of the Messiah established her Sovereign of the whole world. The Son of God honored Mary as His true Mother, and rendered to her all the duties of a son. He gave us the example of the perfect fulfilment of this Commandment: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother."

II.—Eve, by her transgression, lost her liberty and her power, *sub potestate viri eris*: "Thou shalt be," said God to her, "under the power of man." It was then that woman became subject to man, the slave of man.

Behold the *strong woman*, the Mother *par excellence*. A mother has a right over her son, be he king or be he God, and so Mary commands Jesus,—and Jesus, before whom the powers of heaven tremble, obeys Mary! She alone commands Him, addresses Him in public, claims the rights of a mother over Him: *Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic?*—Do we comprehend the power of Mary? She it is who will unbind the power of Jesus at Cana, who will, in a way publish His majority.—Crown of power, such is the second privilege of Divine Maternity.

III.—It gives Mary a crown of glory, also. By her ambition Eve lost her glory. She was shamefully driven out of Paradise, and she brought forth in sorrow and ignominy.

Mary gave birth to the Saviour in joy. She knew not the sorrows of maternity. Passing through her womb, Jesus left there His glory; and Mary shall be a queen, because she brought into the world Jesus the King.—She shall be the Queen of the angels, the Queen of the Church. Kings will lay their empires at her feet. Nations will confide to her their safety, and wherever Jesus will have a throne, Mary will have hers, also. Mary's altar will always be side by side with that of Jesus.

Behold the honor, the power, the glory of the Divine Maternity! Mary is honored, powerful and glorious in Jesus and by Jesus. She is His Divine Mother!

Practice.—Frequently to receive the God of the Eucharist as a remedy against concupiscence, and a safeguard of purity.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary, spiritual Paradise of God, in which flourished the spotless and fragrant Lily, our Eucharistic Jesus!

NINTH DAY.

THE INTERIOR LIFE OF MARY.

I.—Mary adorned with all gifts, enriched with all virtues, perfect in all her graces, appeared to the world under a most ordinary exterior. There was nothing brilliant in her actions, her virtues were not striking, her life was passed in silence and obscurity, and the Gospel narrative says nothing of it. This was because Mary was to be the model of the life hidden in God with Jesus Christ, which we ought to honor and faithfully copy in our conduct. I wish to show that the law of holiness which God follows in our souls, is the same that He followed in Mary.

The Church sings of Mary: "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." Such is the character of Mary's sanctity. Nothing exterior, nothing known, all to God alone and known to Him alone. And yet Mary was the holiest, the most perfect of creatures. More beloved of God than any other creature, the Blessed Virgin received from His goodness graces the richest and the best, gifts the most excellent.

The Eternal Father communicated to her all the virtues of a mother; the Son, all the graces of the Redemption; the Holy Spirit, all the graces of love. But with all this Mary led only an ordinary life hidden and unknown. What must we conclude from this save that the hidden and interior life is the most perfect? And so it is without doubt.—The active, outer life, although devoted to God, is less perfect. It was the same in Our Lord's case. His life was much more hidden than exposed to the gaze of men. All the saints were formed on His model. To be a friend of God, one must be ground to powder, reduced to nothing, annihilated like Jesus and Mary.

II.—Hence I say: Do we wish to become saints? Then we must become interior. We are obliged thereto by our vocation of adorers. Without the interior spirit, how can we pray? If before Our Lord, we know not how to pass a single instant without a book, if we have nothing to say to Him from our own heart, why do we go to make our adoration? What! can we never speak our own thoughts? Must we always borrow the thoughts and words of strangers?—No, no! Let us labor to become interior.

Every one cannot be like Jesus and Mary, but every one can be according to his own grace and his own virtue. Without that we shall never receive consolation and encouragement in prayer, we should be too unhappy at the feet of Our Lord. To be an adorer, one must be interior. We must talk when kneeling before Our Lord. We must ask Him questions, and listen to His answers. We must enjoy God. We must be happy in His company, happy in His service. We need His familiarity, so sweet, so encouraging. But in order to find the Heart and the love of Jesus, we must be interior. After all, what is it to be interior? It is to love enough, to be able to converse and to live with Jesus. But Jesus does not make Himself heard by the ears, nor seen by the eyes of the body. He speaks only to the recollected soul. Jesus is wholly interior in the Blessed Sacrament. He no longer enters into the heart through the sight, as during His mortal life. He now enters the soul directly and speaks to it alone. When our soul does not expand in His presence, it is because He does not act upon it, there is some obstacle between it and Him.—Ah! let us not give the lie to Our Lord. He has said

that His yoke is sweet, and His burden light, but that means sweet and light for him who carries it with prayer and the interior life. Without that it would be heavy and fatiguing. When we are not interior, everything goes wrong in our life. O how I should wish to see accomplished in us that word so fully realized in the Blessed Virgin: "The kingdom of God is within you," the kingdom of love, of virtue, and of interior grace! Then we would begin to be adorers and saints. The grass of the field dies annually, because its roots do not strike deep in the soil; but the oak, the olive, and the cedar stand year after year, because their roots are sunk deep into the bottom of the earth. To last, to be strong, we must sink, we must descend to the bottom, even to self-annihilation. There we shall find Jesus. He is annihilated: *exinanivit*; and it was there that Mary found Him. O may that perfect Mother of the interior life make us live as she did in Jesus! May we, like her, remain always in Him and never leave Him!

Practice.—To live in recollection and in union with Jesus present in us, in imitation of our Mother.

Aspiration.—O Mary, true daughter of

the great King, all thy glory is in thy interior, because Jesus dwells therein!

TENTH DAY.

MODESTY, A CHARACTERISTIC OF MARY'S LIFE.

The hidden life of Mary possesses a characteristic that distinguishes it from that of Jesus. We do not find in Mary that humility which astonishes and confounds, that mingling of power and weakness of greatness and obedience, which we admire in the life of Jesus. The life of Mary is always equal, always simple and hidden; it is the reign of sweet and humble modesty. Modesty formed the characteristic of her piety, of her virtues, and of all her actions.

I.—Mary was modest in her exterior.—She was distinguished neither by the severity of her deportment, nor by an affected carelessness. Humble and sweet like the spirit of Jesus, all that she had in her use spoke of her lowly condition, and in no way distinguished her from the

women of her rank. We, too, ought to bear the insignia of lowliness, neither to much nor too little, if we wish to resemble our Mother in her life.

II.—Mary was modest in the world.—She eagerly sacrificed her privacy and the sweetness of contemplation, in order to go to her cousin Elizabeth, to felicitate her and to serve her. For three months she was her companion, her humble servant, making the happiness of that privileged household. When her Son's glory demanded it, Mary appeared in public. She assisted at the wedding at Cana. She spoke no word in her own praise, nor did she bring forward her title of Mother of God, nor the power and glory of her Son, in order to rise in the esteem of men. Her modesty was such that she lent herself to the call of charity, and withdrew when she was no longer needed.

III.—Mary was modest in her duties.—She fulfilled them with sweetness, without eagerness, always satisfied whatever might happen, always ready for a new duty. She discharged all with such equality of humor that she never gave evidence of chagrin, nor asked for any consolation. She never attracted the attention of any one, because everything

about her was natural and ordinary. She is a beautiful model for him who wishes to live the life of our Eucharistic Jesus, and for an adorer consecrated to His service. His whole life is composed of little acts of little sacrifices, which God alone knows and rewards. The humility of his service constitutes all the honor, all the joy of his filial devotedness, and his only ambition is to please his Master by a constant sacrifice of self.

IV.—Mary was modest in her piety.—Mary, raised to the highest degree of prayer to which any creature can attain, lived in the habitual exercise of perfect love, exalted above all the angels, and forming, by her dignity of Mother of God, an order apart in the wonders of God. She served her Lord, nevertheless, in the common and ordinary way of piety. She followed the prescriptions of the Law, she assisted at the legal feasts, she prayed with the multitude. Nothing distinguished her, not even her modesty, for she knew how to conceal it. Nothing, not even extraordinary fervor, revealed in her exterior the perfection of her piety.

Such ought to be our piety. Nothing conspicuous in its practices, simple in its

means, and modest in its action, carefully shunning singularity, the subtle fruit of self-love, and everything extraordinary as too subject to vanity and illusion.

V.—Mary was modest in her virtues.—Mary possessed them all in a supreme degree, and practiced them all in their sovereign perfection, but under a form simple and common. Her humility saw only the goodness of God, and for all the favors that she had received, she showed only humble gratitude, the gratitude of the poor, silent and undemonstrative, unnoticed by the world. *Can anything good come from Nazareth?*—and so, no attention was paid to Mary.

Behold the great secret of perfection, to know how to find it in what is most simple, to know how to nourish it in what is most common, to know how to preserve it in the midst of indifference and forgetfulness. Virtue flaunted in public is greatly exposed, virtue praised and extolled is very near a fall. The flower that everyone admires quickly fades.

Let us love the little virtues of Nazareth, the little virtues that grow at the foot of the cross, under the shadow of

Jesus and Mary. We shall not then fear the tempests that lay low the cedars, nor the thunderbolt that strikes the mountain top.

VI.—Mary was modest in her sacrifices.—Mary accepted exile silently and sweetly, and without a word of remonstrance. She did not esteem herself because called to great sacrifices, nor did she complain or beg for a mitigation of their rigor.

She was modest whilst enduring the trouble of her holy spouse. Rather than speak to him of the great mystery operated in her, and which was revealing itself to his eyes, she endured his doubts, she abandoned the care of it to God, and calmly left herself in the hands of His providence.

Pierced with sorrow she followed her Son bearing the Cross. But she did not fill Jerusalem with her cries and lamentations. Plunged on Calvary into sorrow great as her love, Mary suffered in silence, and after having uttered a last mute farewell to her Son, she withdrew, a mother desolate, but resigned.

VII.—Lastly, Mary was modest in her glory, and this is the most beautiful triumph of Mary's modesty.

As Mother of God, what titles she has to the homage of the universe! Yet Mary retained only the anguish and the sacrifice of her motherhood. Never was she seen when her Son was proceeding in triumph; but when there was a humiliation or a cross to be shared with Him, then was she in His suite.

If, then, we desire to be the children of this loving Mother, we must clothe ourselves with her modesty. Let us make it the ordinary subject of our meditation, for it is the heritage left us by Mary. Let her modesty be the rule of our virtues. Let her simplicity, which forgets itself to see only God, which inclines to duty rather than to pleasure, to God rather than to His consolation, to love for love, be our portion, the aim of our efforts, and the seal of our life.

Modesty is the royal virtue of an adorer, since it is the virtue, the livery of the servants of kings, and the virtue of the angels before the Divine Majesty. It is modesty that composes our demeanor in the presence of God, which makes to Him the homage of all our senses and of all our faculties. It is the etiquette of His royal service. In the service of Jesus, we must be modest like Mary.

Practice.—Let us try to show forth in our life the modesty of Jesus and His holy Mother.

Aspiration.—We bless thee, O chaste Dove, who didst bring to us the olive branch, and didst announce to us Jesus in the Host, who will save us from the spiritual deluge!

ELEVENTH DAY.

MARY AT BETHLEHEM.

The mystery of Bethlehem is full of love and sweetness. Jesus there shows Himself more lovable than upon Calvary. Let us enter into the dispositions of the Most Blessed Virgin.

I.—Let us unite with Mary in her expectation, during the hours that preceded the blessed moment of her Son's birth. Like her let us redouble our love and fervor. Let us unite in her recollection, and from her dispositions draw this lesson, that we must serve Our Lord as He wishes us to serve Him, and not as we would ourselves. Mary knew by the Prophets all that her Son would have to suffer, and she disposed herself to serve Him as He willed, and to follow Him

everywhere. Let us imitate her true love and devotedness. It would appear perfectly natural to Mary for Jesus to be born in a beautiful palace, or at least, as most children, in a certain degree of comfort. But no, He was born in a cave, in the hollow of a rock, into which, after being everywhere repulsed, Mary and Joseph were constrained to retire. St. Joseph's sorrow must, indeed, have been great. It was upon him, the head of the family, that devolved the care of finding a shelter for his holy Spouse, and we may well imagine his pain and anxiety when, refused admittance everywhere, he was forced to lead Mary at the moment of accouchement into so poor a refuge: as for Mary, she was happy in the midst of rebuffs. She possessed Jesus in her bosom, and she knew that it was He who permitted that they should be rejected and despised, and who had led them to that stable in which He had resolved to be born.

Thus it was that God accomplishes His aid, and when he has vainly exhausted all ends. Man is disturbed, he seeks human means, God leads Him where He wills. God permits that we fruitlessly seek the help of men, in order that we may aban-

don ourselves to Him, and allow ourselves to be conducted like Mary and Joseph. It is in this state of abandonment that we feel most sensibly the goodness of God. He then takes care of us, and we confidently draw near to Him, like children around their Father. When success crowns our efforts, when Divine Providence has shown Himself more sensibly, our love is no longer the same, for we, perhaps, count too much on our own efforts, and not sufficiently on God. The Israelites received more favors in the desert than in the Promised Land, and God was nearer to them; and Jesus was more lovable in His crib at Bethlehem or in the poor house of Nazareth, than in His public life in the midst of all the wonders that He wrought.

II.—And when Jesus was born—O let us comprehend, if we can, the adoration, the homage, the attentions of Mary. Let us adore Jesus in her arms, or sleeping on her breast. O what a beautiful ostensorium! It was wrought with skill by the Holy Spirit. What more beautiful than Mary even exteriorly? She is the lily, the lily of the valley, pure like it, and grown in an immaculate soil. Mary is the paradise of God! Let us see what

flower flourishes therein—Jesus, the Flower of Jesse! And what harvest does it produce—Jesus, the Wheat of the elect! And now let us enter into Mary's soul, and contemplate its beauty, for there is in it a beauty capable of forming our eternal happiness when we know it well. Almighty God exhausted Himself, as it were, in embellishing Mary. Behold the ostensorium of the Word Incarnate! Behold the channel by which Jesus came to us!

Ah, yes! The Eucharist began at Bethlehem, and in the arms of Mary. It was she who brought to humanity the Bread for which it was famishing, and which alone can nourish it. It was she that took care of that Bread for us. Divine Sheep, she nourished the Lamb whose life-giving Flesh we feed upon. She nourished Him with her virginal milk, she nourished Him for the sacrifice, for she already foreknew His destiny. Yes, she knew, and soon she will know still better, that her Lamb is only for immolation. She accepted God's will and, bearing Him in her own arms, she prepares for us the Victim of Calvary and of our altars. On the day of sacrifice, she will herself conduct her Divine Lamb to Jeru-

saalem, to deliver Him up to Divine Justice for the world's salvation. Ah, Bethlehem already foretells Calvary!—Truly, Mary had heard her Son's first word: "Father, sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not. Behold I come!"—and she united in His offering and anticipated immolation.

III.—But Bethlehem has its joys, also, joys most sweet. The shepherds, those simple souls, come to adore the Infant God. Mary rejoiced at seeing their homage, and the willing offerings that they made to her Jesus.

Some days later, the Magi bring their tribute of adoration and their royal gifts, and Mary presents her Babe to their love, for they found Him in her arms.

O how often may we not share the happiness of the Magi! How happy is the loving soul when it has found Jesus with Mary, His Mother! They who know the Tabernacle in which He resides, they who receive Him into their soul, know that His conversation is full of divine sweetness, His consolation ravishing, His peace superabundant, and the familiarity of His love and His Heart ineffable.

To find Jesus in the arms of Mary, to unite one's self to the sentiments of Mary

when she pressed Him to her heart—O delicious moment! Like the joy of Thabor, it passes all too quickly. It is a moment in which all else is forgotten, in which we no longer desire anything more, not even heaven, for we possess *Him*, we have Jesus and Mary!

Practice.—Let us constantly ask Mary to give us Jesus.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary, holy mountain upon which the Eucharistic Lamb found rich pasturage!

TWELFTH DAY.

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE BY MARY.

I.—Our Lord would not delay to offer Himself publicly to His Father. Forty days after His Birth, He inspired Mary to take Him to the Temple. Mary carried her Infant in her arms, about to offer Him to the Father, and to buy Him back with two turtle-doves. Jesus willed to be purchased for these little creatures, which speak to us of His purity and simplicity. The joy, the bliss of the Most Blessed Virgin ended on that day. Hark to the words

of the old man chosen of God: "This Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."

How can the Holy Trinity, how can God so good, so tender, thus discover such a mystery of sorrow to a poor young mother of only fifteen, still inebriated with joy at the birth of her Son? It is the first visit she has made since His birth, and she is told of the cruel death awaiting her beloved Child. O she understands all! From that day, Calvary is wherever Jesus is, at Nazareth, in Egypt—everywhere does she behold before her Jesus crucified. Ah! the soul that is not possessed of virtue, God allows to slumber on in a certain kind of security; but give Him a loving soul, and He is eager to crucify it for His own glory. Love lives on sorrow. Mary accepts it. Henceforth she converses with her Son but of Calvary, of His sufferings and death. She had strength to endure a Calvary that last thirty-three years. "Thine own soul a sword shall pierce."—Do we comprehend the crucifixion implied in these words? From the moment that Mary heard them, she saw all the suf-

ferings of her Son in their smallest details, she pondered them incessantly, and from that day she became the Queen of Martyrs.

II.—What must we glean from the mystery of the Presentation of Jesus by Mary?—The lesson is this, that we must not give ourselves to God's service in order to enjoy, to have consolations, to possess unalterable peace and tranquillity. Doubtless, Jesus says: "Take My yoke, for it is sweet, and My burden is light."—But He has also said: "He that does not take up his cross daily and follow Me, is not worthy of Me."

What, then, shall we do?—We should offer ourselves in union with Mary, our Mother, give ourselves to God, and accept the pain, the sufferings, and all the crosses that He may will to send us. At first, after giving herself to God, the soul receives consolation, the service of God is full of sensible sweetness for her. There are many souls who, disgusted with the world in which they find only deceit, return to piety, to find in it peace and consolation. They seek that alone, they desire to find only that in God's service. They serve Him as long as the Lord bestows upon them divine favors; but when

He hides Himself, and wishes to substitute stronger nourishment instead of children's food, they become disgusted, discouraged, and scrupulous. They torture their imaginations to find out what could have drawn upon them such punishment. They fancy that their confessions have not been sincere, that they have made bad Communions. They wish to find in themselves the cause of that change; but not succeeding, they become despondent, and end by abandoning their pious exercises.

We must not, indeed, disdain God's consolations, we must receive them with joy when He sends them; but we must not seek them alone. Such sweetness, such favors pass, while Jesus alone remaineth forever. There have been saints who were favored with great sweetness from God, with ecstasies and transports—but O how they suffered! God gave them those celestial favors only at long intervals. They were the recompense of their sufferings, and an encouragement to suffer still more for His love. It is by suffering that we are sanctified. It is by crosses and trials that the soul is strengthened and disengaged from self, in which blessed state it no longer seeks

its satisfaction in the service of God, but in God alone.

Such is the teaching of the mystery of Mary's Purification and of Jesus' Presentation in the Temple. Let us put it in practice if we wish to be worthy of the august Victim whom we incessantly contemplate in the Blessed Sacrament, and of His Mother who so generously offered Him for us.

Practice.—To offer one's self to Jesus, the Victim of love on our altars, for all that He may desire of us in union with Mary.

Aspiration.—O Mary, fruitful Vine, that hast given us the Eucharistic Wine! Be thou forever blessed!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

THE LIFE OF THE HOLY FAMILY.

Let us meditate upon the life of the Holy Family, the life of Mary and of Joseph in Jesus.

I.—Jesus was the centre of Mary's and

Joseph's love. Where the body is, there shall the eagles be. Where the treasure is, there is the heart. To possess Jesus was the sole joy of those happy parents. They held neither to Bethlehem, nor to Nazareth, nor to Egypt. To possess Jesus was their all. He was the home of their heart.

After a forced absence, how quickly did St. Joseph return, with what eagerness and joy, to the house in which was the Divine Child! He lost no time far from Him, for he knew that Jesus was Divine Love incarnate.

My house, my family, my centre, is the Eucharist, the tabernacle near which I dwell. Like Mary and Joseph, I ought to be happy only there.

II.—Jesus was the end of Mary's and Joseph's life. They lived only for Him, they labored only for Him. O how gladly did good St. Joseph labor to gain for Him and His Divine Mother their daily bread! With what satisfaction he brought home the small returns of his work! And when it had cost him a little more fatigue, how sweet that fatigue was to Him, since it was all for Jesus!

And so should Jesus in the Eucharist be the object of my life, the joy of my

life, the joy and happiness of my labor. And what life more beautiful than that passed in the companionship of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament?

III.—Jesus was the constant nourishment of Mary and Joseph's life of union and love.—They were so happy in looking at Him, in listening to Him, in seeing Him working, obeying, praying, for He did all things so well.

But, above all, were they happy in regarding His interior, in studying His intentions, in discovering His sentiments, the motives of His virtues. They beheld Him incessantly seeking and choosing, by preference, occasions of poverty, obedience, and penitence. They contemplated His abasement, His self-annihilation. They admired His fidelity in referring all to the glory of His Father, wishing as man to be the object of no praise, no glory, but giving all to the Divinity.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had but one end in their whole life, and they wished but one thing, the glory of the Heavenly Father.

Behold what I have to do! For that I must unite with Mary and Joseph. I must share their life, their family life, the

interior life of which God alone holds the secret.

O how happy is the soul in contemplating the interior of the Holy Family, all that is said and done therein, the Gospel of the family of Jesus! The beautiful evenings spent in heavenly conversation and the prayers at Nazareth!—Surely, Jesus explained to Mary and Joseph all that the Scriptures said of Him. He revealed to them Calvary and all the scenes of humiliation and suffering through which He was to pass. He showed them in His hands the place through which the nails were to pierce, and He did so, in order to plant in His Mother and His holy guardian the virtues of Calvary. He must have spoken to them of the Church, of the Apostles, of the Religious Orders which would consecrate themselves to His and their honor. He spoke to them of me, of my misery, and of the immense love that He bore me.

Nazareth had become a heaven of love, a paradise of the second Adam and of the new Eve, a heaven of the purest virtues, of the holiest love. What a delicious perfume ascended to the Lord from that delightful garden, in which flourished the Word Incarnate, Mary and Jo-

seph the Just! The Heavenly Father found therein His delights; the angelic spirits looked upon it in admiration; and as for me, I desire to glean from it love for a life pious and recollected in Jesus, Mary, and Josph.

Practice.—In union with Mary, accompany the Blessed Sacrament when borne to the sick.

Aspiration.—O Queen of Mercy, we behold thee beside the King of kings, our Jesus, in the Eucharist!

FOURTEENTH DAY.

MARY'S COMPASSION.

I.—Mary had neither original nor actual sin to expiate. She had not, like Jesus, been charged by God with the weight of our iniquities. How was it, then, that all her life she suffered so much; first, from the foreseen death of her Son, which was incessantly before her; and secondly, from His actual sufferings on Calvary itself?

It was because suffering is the law of love. It was Mary's love that made her a martyr; and because she loved more than

any creature, she suffered an incomparable martyrdom. It was, again, because suffering is the actual glorification of Jesus Christ in us. By suffering, we continue and finish His sacrifice. Again and above all, it is because maternity is purchased by suffering. In bringing into the world her spotless Son, Mary escaped that law; but when she was to become our Mother, to bring us forth to grace, she felt all its rigor. What did Jesus Christ not suffer in order to create us anew in Himself? And Mary, also, stood at the foot of the cross, and underwent in her heart all the torments of the Passion, in order to become our Mother by adoption.

Let us reflect upon Mary's share in the Passion of Jesus. Let us, if we can, comprehend the part she took in it.

II.—By supernatural light, Mary saw Jesus in the Garden of Olives. She shared in His prayer, His sadness, His agony, for there was so much sympathy of life and love between those two Hearts!

She afterward saw Him betrayed by Judas, abandoned by all, denied by Peter, alone before His judges, without a defender, ignominiously buffeted, treated as a fool!—Ah, poor mother!—How cruel

that absolute abandonment must have been to her! What! is there no one, not even among his friends, who will take up His defence? Will no one dare even to recognize Him?

And when St. John recounted to her the scenes in Pilate's judgment-hall, the iniquitous condemnation to death, her heart must have burst with grief. When she arrived at the pretorium, she heard the strokes of the scourging, she saw Jesus exposed with Barabbas and presented to the populace as the equal of that malefactor; she heard the *Ecce Homo*, and the ferocious cries of the impious multitude: *Tolle tolle, crucifige!*—"Let Him be crucified!—Let Him be crucified!"—To snatch Him from His executioners,—ah! poor Mother!—she had only her tears!

III.—She followed Him to Calvary. She met Him upon that dolorous journey which He was moistening with His Blood. Their eyes, their heart, their sorrow united in one same sacrifice, and in one same perfect resignation.

Behold Jesus on Calvary! Mary gazed on Him as they inhumanly and cruelly despoil Him of His garments. She beheld Him extended on the cross, and she

heard the blows of the hammer that fastened to it His hands and His feet. What a spectacle for a mother! She, too, was crucified. The blows rebound, and inflict wounds on her.

She saw Him when they raised Him above the earth. She followed Him with her eyes. Hardly was the cross planted firmly in the ground, before that brave Mother, spurning all obstacles, hastened to the feet of her beloved Son. There, abyssed in an ocean of sorrow, she contemplated Him. She felt every one of His pains. Her soul was fastened to His wounds. She was stronger than death, but more crucified by her union with Jesus than by all deaths and all martyrdoms.

She listened to every word her Son uttered, and she laid it up in her memory in order to repeat it. She saw His Blood flowing, His life ebbing away. Without being able to relieve Him, she heard Jesus asking for water—O what sorrow for a Mother!—And, at last, she heard Him complaining of being abandoned even by His Heavenly Father! Her well-beloved Son yielded His last sigh, and what did Mary do? Ah! she agonized in sorrow and love. She re-

ceived His sacred Body in her arms, she embraced it with the tenderness of a mother, she adored It with the faith of a Christian, she entombed It as the desolate widow her only son.—And after all was over, she wept. Her life thenceforth was passed in recalling the sorrows of His Passion, in order to renew her own martyrdom, and the glory that her sufferings would render to God. She often made the Dolorous Way, being the first to teach us that devotion so pious, so powerful with Jesus, and so useful to the soul, the Way of the Cross.

Practice.—In union with Mary, to repair by every possible means the sacrileges committed against the Eucharist.

Aspiration.—O Mother of love, grant that we may feel the immensity of thy grief at the sight of thy Jesus outraged in the Blessed Sacrament!

FIFTEENTH DAY.

MARY AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

I.—As Mary had suffered in union with her Son dying upon the Cross, so did she live of His happiness and joy after His

resurrection. Mary's life was always conformed to that of Jesus, which it faithfully reflected.

To whom was the first visit of Jesus risen? Assuredly, to His Mother. It was just that, having participated more than any one else in the sacrifice of His death, she should receive the first news, the first grace, the first joy of the resurrection. Hardly had He issued from the tomb glorious and triumphant, when He went to visit her. He had parted from her in tears, He returned to her in joy. What a moment for Mary when her risen Christ embraced her with all the respect and love that she deserved! What passed in that blissful interview? Scripture does not tell us, but we may imagine things the most delightful. What a glorious reception in Mary's little room! Love's contemplation alone can picture what passed therein. Without doubt, Jesus appeared to His Mother in all His risen beauty. No Apostle saw Him in such beauty as did Mary. The spiritual sight is proportioned to holiness, and so Mary penetrated even to His interior beauty, the perfection of His love, His happiness. She must have seen the glory of His Divinity at that blessed moment, since the-

ologians declare that she was at times privileged to see God face to face. Our Lord conversed with her. He showed her His hands and feet, which had been pierced with nails,—those dear hands and feet that she had kissed with so many tears on His descent from the Cross, and that were now radiant with purest light, whose wounds shot forth luminous waves, for the greater the suffering of any member, the greater its glorification. Mary must have kissed those Wounds in transports of joy, and felt the influence of the floods of grace that flowed from them. She must have seen Jesus' Sacred Heart through the pierced side. He showed It to her now beating, now palpitating with life, and shooting forth flames of love. Ah! we cannot doubt that Mary pressed her lips to It in holy tenderness. And if St. John, from having laid his head upon that Divine Heart, hidden in the Sacred Side and under Our Lord's clothing, drew from It, nevertheless, so many graces, what must it have been for Mary when she embraced It, kissed It uncovered and palpitating under her pure lips? Then it was that she comprehended still more perfectly that suffering and glory, death and life are but one and the same thing before God.

II.—But our Lord came not alone to visit Mary. He was followed by a cortège of all the saints who had arisen with Him, from the Patriarchs down to St. Joseph and the Good Thief. All came in the suite of their triumphant King to salute their Queen. Adam and Eve, to whom God had promised this daughter, this Mother of the Saviour Messiah, prostrated themselves at her feet. It was to her after Our Lord that they owed their pardon. It was she who had given them their Liberator. And to all the felicitations of the saints of the Old Law, who thanked her for having given them a Saviour, Mary replied, without doubt: *Magnificat*—“My soul doth magnify the Lord, because He has regarded the humility of His servant.”—And St. Joseph, and St. Joachim, and St. Anne,—were they not come, also, to make to this daughter, this heavenly spouse, their visit of respect and love? The sight of her must have filled them with joy, for she was the pure reflection of the splendor of Jesus.

At last, Our Lord left His Mother perfectly consoled, embalmed with His divine presence, in order to go to Magdalen

and the Apostles. No doubt, He often returned to see her before His Ascension, and talked over with her all the events, the joys, and the sorrows of His mortal life.

III.—From the silence of the Evangelists on that apparition, as well as upon all the rest of Mary's life, we may draw precious instruction. After having giving Jesus to the world, it was for Mary to hide herself. She had to remain in the shade, in order to become the model of interior souls, the patroness of the lowly and hidden life. Mary's mission after her Son's resurrection was only one of love and prayer. Our Lord seems to have kept for Himself alone the secret of His Mother's life. He desired it entirely for Himself.

There is also another reason. Jesus concealed Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, He veiled Himself still more than in His mortal life. Mary had to imitate that state, share that annihilation. As Jesus deprived Himself of speech, movement, and sensible action in the Eucharist, Mary was no more to speak, no more to appear in the world. Because Jesus had become a silent prisoner, Mary devoted herself to guard Him in the secrecy

of a life entirely given up to prayer. Had not Mary consecrated herself to this state, we adorers of the Eucharist could never have found in her our model. But Mary, the unknown servant and custodian of the Holy Eucharist, is our Mother, and her life is our grace.

As the light and heat of the sun increase until it reaches its meridian, so Mary became more perfect every day. Her last years were filled with love of such breadth and extent, such depth, that we can form no idea of it.

The resurrection of her Son produced in Mary this prodigy, that it buried her, transformed her into the resuscitated life of Jesus, a life entirely interior, invisible, separated from all created things, and uninterruptedly united with God. Let us in this imitate our Mother. Let us remember that the more interior the life, the more perfect it is; that a covered fire is long-lived, but uncovered it soon burns out. There are few who wish to live the life of annihilation, because it is the final immolation of self-love. But it is the portion of souls who, like Mary, desire to love only Our Lord and to be known only to Him.

Practice.—Live in union with Mary the

resuscitated life that Jesus leads in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary, vessel of purest gold, which contains sweetness itself, our Eucharistic Jesus, the Manna of our soul!

SIXTEENTH DAY.

MARY, OUR MOTHER IN THE CENACLE.

I.—It is to our best interest to honor with an entirely special devotion the life of Mary in the Cenacle, altogether given up to the service and glory of the adorable Eucharist. We must try to catch something of her spirit and her love, in order to render to our Divine Saviour present among us, a worship of adoration more agreeable and more perfect in union with that which His most holy Mother offered Him. To become good servants of the Eucharist, we must be docile and devout children of Mary. It was not an empty claim that Jesus from the Cross gave us over the heart of His Mother. By that testament of love, we take His place in Mary's heart. That

good Mother loves us henceforth as her true children.

Let us, then, breathe in Mary's spirit. It is the same as that of Jesus. She inhaled it from its divine Source. She is full of His grace, in order to communicate it to us. She is the only true and perfect copy of His virtues. She labored for three and thirty years, the Divine Original before her eyes. She possesses all the secrets of the Saviour's love for men. She shares His unbounded love for us. O like Mary, let us tenderly love, let us love devoutedly! She loves us as Jesus loves us. She loves us as only a Mother so good and so powerful can love.

II.—Her great mission is to form Jesus in us. It is the mission that He gave her on Calvary.

Mary wished at that moment to die with Jesus at the foot of the Cross. But when the flame of the love of her virginal heart encircled His Divine Person, Our Lord seemed to say, when giving to her St. John: "By My sacrifice I become the Saviour and the Father of the great human family; but these poor children still so young, must have a mother. O strong Woman, be thou their Mother! Love them as thou has loved Me, as I have

loved them. It was through love for them that I became man, and that My Heavenly Father made thee My Mother. It is for them that I am giving My Blood and My life. I love them more than Myself, and I transfer to them all the claims that I have to thy maternal love. Whatever thou wilt do for them, will be done for Me. I remit into thy hands the fruit of My Redemption, the salvation of mankind, the care of My Church, the service of My Sacrament of Love. Form for Me true adorers in spirit and in truth, that they may adore Me as thou hast adored Me, that they may serve Me as thou hast served Me, that they may love Me as thou hast loved Me!"

This was Jesus' last legacy, signed with His Blood, and ratified by the heart of Mary, His divine Mother.

She ascended Calvary with Jesus to die with Him. She came down from it with the disciple, her son of adoption, with the holy women, her daughters, and went to the Eucharistic Cenacle, there to begin her Christian maternity at the foot of the Divine Sacrament.

It is she who will form for Jesus in the Eucharist His court of honor, it is she who will train for Him His servants.

O do not doubt it! If you have entered into the Cenacle, if you have the happiness of knowing, loving, and serving the Most Holy Sacrament, it is to Mary that you owe it. It is she who demanded you of the Heavenly Father as a guard of love for the Eucharistic King. It is she who preserved you pure in the midst of the world, who led you by the hand to the foot of the Eucharistic throne.

O thank this good Mother! You owe to her all the graces of your life, and the greatest of all, that of loving and serving, by consecrating your entire life to Him, the King of kings on His throne of love.

Practice.—Render to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament the respect, the duty, and the love of a true child.

Aspiration.—It is thou, O Mary most amiable, who dost nourish thy children with the Bread of immortality.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

MARY, OUR MISTRESS IN THE CENACLE.

I.—“Disciple, behold thy Mother.”—
When Mary heard from Jesus’ lips these

words so consoling to us, she could have died of sorrow. Alas! the disciple instead of the Master, John instead of Jesus, the creature instead of the Son of God! But the divine Mother lovingly accepted the substitute. She covered us with Jesus' blood and merits, and began to love us with a boundless love, so far as to be happy in tarrying still twenty-four years here below, in order to nourish us with her love and incomparable favors, and in spite of her intense desire to be at once united to her Son in glory.

Mary's mission will be to superintend our Christian education. Jesus acquired all the treasures of grace. Mary will have but to draw from them, to distribute the bread that He left us, to make us follow the law that He gave us. Jesus could not remain among us in His glorified state. We should have been afraid of Him. He remains, indeed, in the Sacrament, but His love deprives Him of all exterior action, whilst keeping Him there to render Him more attractive, more accessible to all. But behold our Mother, who is His, also. She possesses the secret of His Heart and of His life. She is going to bring Jesus' virtues down to our level, showing us under that amiable and easy

aspect how to imitate what a Mother alone knows how to present.

O how beautiful and touching will be the words of Jesus repeated by Mary's lips! How amiable, how easy of imitation are His virtues, so sublime in themselves, going to become when explained to us by Mary! How beautiful and lovely Jesus will be when painted by Mary! How easy will our education be under so good a Mistress!

II.—She will conceive, will form and perfect Jesus in us. She conceives Jesus in us, she gives Him to us. The Father has delivered to her His Son, that she may give Him to us. The world was unworthy to receive the Word directly from God. Mary was our Mediatrix in the Incarnation, and she continues to exercise that function. No one comes to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and embraces His holy law, no one obtains the Faith that saves, but by Mary's prayers. Her mission, and she is faithful to it, is to give Jesus. He must be received from her hands, and in vain shall we seek Him elsewhere. Moreover, Jesus will increase in us only by Mary. All the graces of spiritual progress will come to us only through her. It was under her

maternal direction that He grew at Nazareth, and He wishes us to follow the same law. We see in the Gospel, also, that all His principal favors were granted through Mary and with her. By her He sanctified St. John the Baptist; He glorified His Father, and constituted Himself our Model at Nazareth under her eyes; He strengthened at her prayer, the faith of His disciples at Cana; lastly, on the Cross, He solemnly charged her with the duty of forming us. It is, in short, by Mary that He will perfect Himself in us. The perfection of Jesus in us is properly the work of the Holy Spirit. But as the Spirit of Love willed to make His Masterpiece, the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, in union with Mary, so to establish in us the perfect image of the Saviour, to transform us into other Christs, He claims Mary's co-operation. The more of Mary he finds in a soul, the more powerfully He works therein. Ask all the holy souls in whom reigns sovereignly the love of Jesus, whence they drew it, and they will tell you that it was from Mary. Is she not the Mother of beautiful love? Has she not the secret of the Spirit of Jesus? She has it in plenitude.

It is for Mary to give us the family

spirit, if we may so say. For that she takes all the qualities of Jesus, all His virtues, and passing them through her maternal heart, she renders them sweeter and easier, and thus encourages us to imitate them. By Mary's love, we proceed even to the sanctity of Jesus. By living of Mary's holiness, we live of Jesus' sanctity.

III.—How beautiful it would be to study Mary instilling into some little child the idea of Jesus, rousing some youth to generosity in the service of Jesus, preparing him for First Holy Communion, and leading him to make choice of a holy and suitable state of life! By the sentiment of her love and piety she makes an impression on his heart that even future disorder cannot efface, a habit of respect and of love for her which will last even in forgetfulness of God. Mary's grand and winning presence accompanies us everywhere in life. Happy he who has received from her his first education! Mary will be to him a lever to raise him from evil; her name will always rouse in his heart a thrill of love.

It is, again, Mary who educates the Christian maiden. From infamy she inspires her with her own piety, her own

love for Jesus. She lights in her heart a noble flame. She excites in her a divine ambition. She shows her her own immaculate lily, and, making of it a crown for her, she presses her to her motherly bosom. Kissing her with a chaste and maternal kiss, she says to her: "O my daughter, be a lily, be the spouse of my Divine Son! Give Him thy heart, and receive His virginal ring. Look at my crown, the reward of my love for virginity, and be doubly my daughter."

Thus Mary forms virgins, guards and defends them. *Adducentur virgines post eam.*—Mary is their Queen.

This is the education that Mary gives. She makes piety sweet and easy. What she did in the first days of the Church, she still continues. Like us, the Apostles had the Eucharist. But the first education is not given by the father. An education destitute of maternal tenderness, always shows the want. Sanctity fashioned by Jesus alone, is more austere. That which Jesus and Mary form together is more winning, witness St. John and St. Paul. Let Mary lead us to Jesus, let her make us know and love Him as she knows and loves Him. In that consist sanctity and happiness.

Practice.—Pray to Mary that all in their last agony may receive Holy Viaticum worthily.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary, celestial Cloud, which sheds the Eucharist over the world like a beneficent dew!

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

OUR LADY OF THE CENACLE.

Let us follow our Mother to the Cenacle, and listen to the lessons that she gives us. She receives them from her Divine Son. With Him she converses day and night. She is the sweet and faithful echo of His Heart and His love. Let us love Mary tenderly, labor under her eyes, and pray by her side. Let us be to her tenderly devoted children. By so doing we shall honor Jesus who has given her to us for our Mother, that she may rear us in His love and according to her own life.

Place yourself, then, under Mary's direction. Think her thoughts, speak her words, imitate her manners, perform her actions, tell her love, share her sufferings

—and all in her will speak to you of Jesus, the greatest service to Jesus, the greatest glory of God!

Honor in Mary, at the foot of the tabernacle, all the mysteries of her life. All were stations leading to the Cenacle.

Find in her life in the Cenacle the model and the consolation of your own life. True, in the Cenacle, this august Queen kneels as adoratrix and servant of the Blessed Sacrament. Kneel at your Mother's side, adore and pray with her, and you will thus continue her Eucharistic life on earth.

When you go to Holy Communion, clothe yourself with the virtues and merits of Mary, your Mother, and you will communicate with her faith and her heart. O how happy Jesus would be to find in you the image of His sweet and holy Mother!

When you labor for the Eucharistic adoration, unite with Mary's intention and joy when working for Jesus in the Sacrament, and you will be happy.

O how Mary will love you if you serve her Jesus well! How she will protect you if you labor only for the glory of Jesus! How she will enrich you if you live only for the love of Jesus! You will render

her still more a Mother, since you enable her more perfectly to discharge her mission as Mother of the adorers of Jesus.

But be modest like her. Remember her modestly in the angel's presence, and reflect with what modesty she served her Son in the Sacrament.

Be pure like Mary. Remember that, to guard the flower of her virginity, she would have refused even the glory of the divine maternity.

Be humble like Mary, entirely lost in her own nothingness, entirely abandoned to God's grace.

Be sweet and amiable like Mary. Mary was the expression of the sweetness of the Heart of Jesus.

Be devoted like Mary. Mary loved even to Calvary. She loved even to death. It was on Calvary that she became the Mother of love. It is there that you will become a true adorer, worthy of the Cenacle, worthy of Jesus and Mary.

Practice.—Labor zealously for the adornment of the Eucharistic altars, particularly for those of poor churches.

Aspiration.—The Lord, O Mary, has adorned thee as the tabernacle of His choice, and Jesus in the Host has made it His delight to dwell in thee!

NINETEENTH DAY.

LIFE OF ADORATION IN UNION WITH MARY.

I.—In attentively considering the reasons that induced Our Lord to separate from and to leave His Mother, it seems to me that He did so because He distrusted our weakness and inconstancy. Our Lord feared that men, not knowing how to find and adore Him in His Sacrament, would become discouraged and forget Him. The child, as we know, does not search long. If he does not at once find what he wants, he changes his desire, and runs after something else. This is what Our Lord feared for us. So, He left us His Mother, whose mission it should be to take us by the hand and lead us to His tabernacle. The Blessed Virgin, then, became our Mother in view of the Eucharist. It is for her to show us how to find our Bread of Life, to make us appreciate and desire it. It is her mission to form us to adoration. She gathered at Jerusalem a community of pious women; she remained in the midst of them, distributing to each one her treasure and her grace of love.

Her influence extended to the disciples, to the first Faithful. Like a true mother she reared her children, training them to virtue and to the duties of their state. What Mary did then she will do again for us. She will instruct us, showing us Our Lord in the Eucharist, sharing with us her own reverence for Him, and her devotedness to His service; for all that a mother has belongs to her children, and it is for them that she stores it up. Mary is a mother. She will, then, educate us. When the child goes wrong in its work, the mother is there to put it right. If it is sick, she cares for it. She never leaves her child, for she must fulfill her mission of teacher. It is Mary who will train you. She will inspire you with her manner of adoring, she will even make your adoration in you, for she can breathe into you the spirit of true and earnest adoration. It is only the heart of a mother that can make itself perfectly understood by her child. The Blessed Virgin must say to you: "Come, adore with me." Our Lord has given us Mary to be the bond of union between Him and us. Mary gives us the first attraction to Jesus. The child goes first to its mother, by instinct; the mother leads it to its

father. But it does not run of itself to the father; at first, it follows the mother. Our Lord has, then, given us Mary for Mother, that she may be for us a first centre of easy attraction. Before knowing the Eucharist, we knew the name of our Mother, we already loved her. Mary attracted us to herself. She formed us to the virtues necessary for the Eucharistic life. It was meet that it should be thus, and it is evident that there will be good vocation to the Blessed Sacrament, true devotion to the Eucharist, only among those that Mary shall have formed. Yes, yes! The child is formed only in its mother's arms and on her bosom. To be agreeable to the Heart of Our Lord, all vocations must pass through Mary's hands.

II.—Study your past life. Had you not a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin before devoting yourself to the Eucharist? You sighed for her purity, her love. Without knowing the Eucharistic life of Mary, you said: "O if I had her virtues to serve Jesus!"—That was the first attraction. You behaved like a little child. When it cannot take its mother by the hand, it grasps her apron or the hem of her gown. If it leaves her for an instant it thinks itself lost. The mother is the

centre. She is always the centre. We have need to live with her, to dwell with her. The Blessed Virgin is not like the saints, who gain for us certain graces once in a while; she obtains for us all graces. We have need of her at all times. Again, it is the mother who teaches the child the word that pleases the father. She composes the little speech for the child to recite; she prepares the feast according to the father's taste.—Do you see at what I am aiming? I would say to you: Adore Our Lord in the company of the Blessed Virgin. I do not say dwell in her. No! Jesus is there before you, that you may address yourself directly to Him; but do so in union with Mary. Live with her, live in her house. Since Our Lord has given her to you as a teacher, never adore without her. Say to her: “Sweet Mother, come with me. A mother always goes with her child. Without thee I should not know what to say.”

Represent to yourself Mary on her knees in the Cenacle. Behold her adoring her Son hidden in the Eucharist. O how pleasing to Him were her words! How well she knew how to touch the heart of her Son! Kneel at Mary's side.

Seek not to walk alone. Do not walk before her, but keep at her side. Make the same adoration as she does, offer the same homage.—“O Jesus, I do not know how to adore, but I offer Thee the words, the ecstasies of Thy Mother’s heart, which is mine, also. I do not know how to adore, but I repeat to Thee her adoration for sinners, for the conversion of the world, and for all the wants of the Church.”

By so doing, you will rejoice Mary’s heart. She will show you to Jesus, saying: “Behold, my Son, how I live again in this soul, how I again adore Thee in and by him.”

O yes, if anyone ought to honor, love, and serve Mary, it is he who makes profession of living for the Eucharist. He has need of Mary, in order to adore. He must make but one with her in his adoration.

Ah! let the Blessed Virgin govern your life. Let her lead you to Jesus. She desires only one thing, the glory of her Divine Son and your happiness.

Practice.—As much as possible, prepare yourself for Holy Communion by assisting at Holy Mass.

Aspiration.—The Divine Sparrow of

the tabernacle has found in thee His nest, O Blessed Virgin, and He lovingly dwells therein.

TWENTIETH DAY.

MARY'S ADORATION OF FAITH AND RESPECT.

I.—How much might be said of Mary's life of adoration in the Cenacle! Twenty-four years passed in that holy place in which Jesus instituted the Eucharist, in which He erected His first tabernacle! Mary was wholly employed in adoring and honoring Him in His Eucharistic life. She passed the greater part of her days and nights at the foot of that divine tabernacle, for there was her Jesus, her Son and her God.

When she left her poor little cell, to go to the oratory of the Cenacle, she began her adoration. She walked with an air of recollection, her eyes downcast, her step grave and modest, preparing herself in this way to appear before the God of the Eucharist.

When before the tabernacle, she pros-

trated with great devotion and profound respect. Then she composed her senses in simple and pious recollection, her person erect, her hands joined or crossed on her breast, or, better still, if alone, suppliantly raised toward the tabernacle upon which her eyes were generally turned.

II.—Mary adored with most submissive faith. She adored her hidden Son, veiled under a strange form, her love penetrating the cloud even to the sacred Feet of Jesus, which she venerated with the most tender respect, and to His holy and venerable Hands, which had consecrated and borne the Bread of Life. She blessed the sacred Mouth, which had pronounced the adorable words:—"This is My Body!—This is My Blood!"—She adored the Heart all on fire with love, whence had issued the Holy Eucharist. Mary would have wished to lose herself, to annihilate herself before the Divine Majesty annihilated in the Sacrament, thus to render Him all the honor and homage due Him.

III.—Mary's adoration was deep, interior, profound. It was the gift of her whole self. She offered herself entirely to the loving services of the Eucharist, for love lays down no conditions, no

reservations. It no longer thinks of self, no longer lives for self. It is a stranger to itself, and it lives only for the God whom it loves. All in Mary turned toward the Blessed Sacrament as toward its centre and end. A current of grace and love was established between the Heart of Jesus in the Host and the heart of Mary adoring. They were two flames united into a single one. God was then perfectly adored by His creature!

IV.—Following Mary's example, the adorer kneels with the most profound respect. Like Mary, he recollects himself, and in spirit takes his place at her side to adore. Let him come before Our Lord with that modesty, that interior and exterior recollection, which wonderfully prepare the soul for the angelic office of adoration.

Under the Eucharistic veils that hide from his eyes the Sacred Humanity, let him adore Jesus with the faith of Mary and of the Holy Church, those two Mothers that the Saviour has, in His love, given him. Let him adore his God as if he both saw and heard Him, for lively faith sees, hears, and touches with more certitude than the senses themselves.

Practice.—Maintain sovereign respect in presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Aspiration.—O Mary, thou who didst serve the God of the Eucharist, be our divine teacher in that sweet service!

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

MARY'S ADORATION OF THANKSGIVING.

I.—To her act of humble and simple faith, to her adoration of self-annihilation, Mary added thanksgiving. After remaining abysed in the sentiment of the grandeur of the Divine Majesty, veiled under the Sacrament, she raised her head toward the Thabor of love, to contemplate its beauty, and taste its ineffable sweetness. Mary gave thanks to Jesus for His love in the gift of the Eucharist, that sovereign act of His infinite bounty. Her thanksgiving was perfect, because she understood the greatness of the gift.

O how happy was Mary when, before the Last Supper, Jesus revealed to her that the hour for the triumph of His love had come, that He was about to institute

His adorable Sacrament, by which, perpetuating Himself and living among us, each of the Faithful could share her happiness and, like her, receive Him into his breast; behold Him in some manner; and, in His Sacramental state, enjoy all the graces, and experience the mysteries of His mortal life!—"After this Gift, in which I exhaust My power, I have nothing more to give to man except heaven!"

At this glorious news, Mary prostrated at the feet of Jesus, adoring in the effusion of her gratitude His too great love for men, too great for her, His unworthy handmaid. She offered herself to serve Him in His adorable Sacrament. She had consented to see the hour of her reward delayed that she might remain an adorer on earth commissioned to guard, to serve the Eucharist, happy to die at the foot of the divine tabernacle.

II.—In her adoration in the Cenacle, Mary daily renewed her thanksgiving: "How good Thou art, O my Saviour!" she exclaimed,—“how good Thou art, my Lord and my Son! How couldst Thou love man to such a degree as to give him more than he can acknowledge, to invent what his heart can never understand! For love of him Thou dost ex-

haust Thy power and the treasures of Thy Heart!"

Then Mary gave thanks to each of the powers of Jesus' soul, to each of the Saviour's members, which had co-operated in the institution of the Eucharist, offering to them the flames of love that consumed her heart.

O with what satisfaction, with what happiness Jesus received this first homage of His Blessed Mother, the first rendered to His Sacrament! O how His Heart rejoiced at having left for Mary's consolation His Sacramental Presence!—For Mary alone, Jesus would have instituted the Eucharist. Let us not be astonished at this. Mary's adoration and thanksgiving were of more value, in the eyes of Jesus, than the united homage of all the saints.

Mary's thanksgiving was, besides, most agreeable to Jesus, because recognition of benefits received and gratitude for them please Him above all else. That is all that He looks for from us. To adore by thanksgiving, is to adore well. It is to recognize the first of His attributes, that, above all, which He came to manifest here below, namely, His goodness. Let us tarry long at His feet.

Let us thank through Mary. A child receives, but it is his mother who thanks for him. United with the thanksgiving of Mary, ours will be perfect, and very acceptable to the Heart of Jesus.

Practice.—Pray incessantly to Mary for seminarians, the altar boys of the various parishes, and for all the Faithful that they may acquit themselves with piety and reverence of their holy functions.

Aspiration.—O Mary, perfect handmaid of our Eucharistic Jesus, we bless thee!

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

MARY'S EUCHARISTIC CONTEMPLATION.

I.—Contemplation naturally follows adoration and thanksgiving, whilst, at the same time, it nourishes and perfects them. Eucharistic contemplation is the look that the soul fixes on Jesus in the Sacrament, to know His perfections in detail, to see His goodness in the institution of the Eucharist, to study its motives, examine its sacrifices, weigh its gift, and appreciate its love.

The first fruit of Eucharistic contemplation is to fix, to recollect the soul in Our Lord, discovering to it the mystery of His perfections and the love of the ineffable Gift of the Eucharist. This view, thoughtful and reflective, of the excessive love of Jesus preparing, instituting, and perpetuating the Adorable Sacrament, produces in us first, adoration, then praise, and lastly, expansion of love. A soul goes out of self in order to unite, to adhere to the Divine Object of her contemplation. Whence it results that contemplation is the essential part of adoration. It is its focus.

II.—Mary before the Eucharist was in contemplation such as neither human nor angelic tongue could express. Jesus Christ alone, the object of it, knew its value. Mary had the highest knowledge of the love that Jesus had shown in instituting the Eucharist. She knew what combats His Heart had to sustain, and the sacrifices exacted of Him by the institution of this Sacrament; combats of His love against the incredulity and the indifference of the greater part of mankind; combats of His sanctity against the impiety, the blasphemy, and the sacrileges of which His Eucharist would be the ob-

ject, not only from heretics, but even from His friends themselves; combats of His goodness against the ingratitude of Christians who neglect to receive Him in Holy Communion, thus refusing His best graces, His most tender invitations. But Jesus' love triumphed over all these obstacles. I shall love men under all circumstances, and their malice shall neither discourage nor conquer My goodness!

Mary had followed these combats, she had shared these sacrifices, and she saw the victory. She revived them in her adoration. She recalled them to the Saviour, and she exalted the love that had made Him a victor.

III.—To appreciate the gift of the Eucharist, an adorer ought, like Mary, and with her, to go to Its source, to the sacrifices It demanded of Our Lord's love. If that love is beautiful on Calvary, it is yet more beautiful in the Cenacle and on the altar. It is there love forever immolated. The sight of those combats and of that victory, will suggest to the adorer what he owes in return to a God so good. And then with Mary, His divine Mother, he will offer himself to Jesus in the Eucharist with his whole heart, to bless Him, to

thank Him for so much love. He will consecrate himself to honor the various states of our Sacramental Jesus, practicing in his life the virtues that the Saviour continues therein and glorifies therein most admirably. He will honor the profound humility of the Saviour, which goes so far as to annihilate Him entirely under the Sacred Species. He will honor the abnegation of His glory and power, which makes Him the Prisoner of men. He will honor the obedience, which makes Him the servant of all. He will take Mary as the mother of his Eucharistic life, in order to aid him in his practical study. He will love her and confide himself to her as to the *Mother of Adorers*, which is the title most dear to her heart and most glorious to Jesus.

Practice.—Pray incessantly to Mary for the interests of the Eucharist.

Aspiration.—O Mary, no one can approach so near to Jesus as thou!

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

MARY'S ADORATION OF PROPITIATION.

I.—Mary adored her most dear Son in His character of perpetual *Victim*, always immolated on our altars, incessantly imploring by His death grace and mercy for sinners. Mary adored the Saviour on this new Calvary, upon which His love crucified Him. She offered Him to God for the salvation of her new family, and the sight of Jesus on the Cross with His gaping wounds, renewed in her soul the martyrdom of her compassion. At Holy Mass, she beheld again her crucified Jesus, shedding His Blood in streams in the midst of sorrows and opprobrium, abandoned by God and man, and dying in the supreme act of His love. Mary, adoring her God present on the altar by the Consecration, shed abundant tears at the sight of men who make no account of this august sacrifice, who render sterile this Mystery of their Redemption, who dare offend and despise this Adorable Victim immolated under their eyes and for their salvation.

Mary would have wished to offer a

thousand deaths to repair so many outrages; for the unfortunate creatures who thus rendered themselves guilty, were her children whom Jesus, when dying, had confided to her. Poor Mother! Was not one Calvary sufficient for her? Why daily renew her sorrows, and pierce her heart with new words of impiety?

Like the best of Mothers, however, instead of rejecting and cursing sinners, Mary took on herself the debt of their crimes. She expiated them by sufferings, she became herself a victim at the foot of the altar, asking grace and mercy for her guilty children.

II.—Mary adored the state of prisoner that Jesus took by uniting Himself inseparably to the Sacred Species. She contemplated His glorified Body, His feet, His hands, condemned to material immobility, His tongue speechless, His soul without exterior expansion, His love without arms, without wings, but tied, bound, unable to show men aught but His amiable chains.

“O happy bonds that keep Jesus in our midst,” said Mary, “be ye blessed! Ye are fiery chains that attach me to this divine tabernacle! Silence of my God, how eloquent art thou to my heart! Sacred

members of my Saviour, you are still more dear to me than when the nails fastened you to the Cross, or when the folds of the winding-sheet encircled you! It is love that binds you here, and that forever, that I may make of Jesus my Treasure, my Prisoner of love, the Companion of my captivity here below, the God of my heart!"

III.—Mary adored the hidden state of Jesus' Divinity and Humanity in His Sacrament, veiled that man might not attach himself to the glory and beauty of His Person, but should go unshackled to the Divinity of the Word. Jesus thus veiled Himself only to spiritualize man's faith, to purify his heart, to stimulate his love, and to attract him to the infinite, to the ever-increasing and always new beauty.

Mary, then, adored Jesus veiled, but discoverable by love. She contemplated behind the cloud the beauty of this Sun that manifests Its ardor by the light which It gives to the mind, and Its presence by Its sweetness.

Mary honored the hidden life of Jesus by her own retired and solitary life. She passed the greater part of her time in making reparation for ungrateful man. At sight of the Eucharistic annihilations

of Jesus, she would have wished to be annihilated, also, changed into a Sacramental Species, deprived of her own peculiar mode of life. She had, in fact, lost, transformed into Jesus her natural life, as the bread is transformed into the substance of Jesus Christ.

Seeing His Divine Mother at His feet, the Saviour consoled Himself for men's desertion. He loved the sacrifices that He had so generously made, and He preferred His state of annihilation to that of His glory. Mary, His Mother and the Mother of all adorers, indemnified Him for everything, and Jesus' love found indescribable satisfaction in receiving her prayers and her tears shed for the salvation of the world.

Practice.—Assist at Mass to repair, in union with Mary, the crime of those that fail to do so.

Aspiration.—O Mary, thou art the true mystical Table whereon we find the delicious Food of our soul, Jesus in the Eucharist!

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

MARY'S PRAYER OF ADORATION.

I.—Mary devoted herself absolutely to the Eucharistic glory of Jesus. She knew that the desire of the Eternal Father was, to have the Eucharist known, loved, and served by all men; that the hunger of the Heart of Jesus was, to communicate to men all His gifts of grace and glory; that the mission of the Holy Spirit was, to extend and perfect in hearts the reign of Jesus Christ; and that the Church had been founded only to give Jesus to the world. All Mary's desire, then, was to make Him known in His Sacrament. Her great love for Jesus felt the need of expanding, of consecrating itself as a kind of relief, so to say, for her own inability to glorify Him as much as she desired.

Since the scene on Calvary, men were her children. She loved them with a mother's tenderness, and longed for their supreme good as for her own; therefore, was she on fire to make Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament known to all, to inflame hearts with His love, to see them chained to His loving service.

To obtain this favor, Mary made a perpetual mission of penance and prayer at the foot of the Most Adorable Eucharist. It was there she treated of the world's salvation. In her magnificent zeal, she embraced the wants of the Faithful of all places and of all future time, who were to become heirs of the Holy Eucharist and to serve It.

But the mission dearest to her soul was, to pray continually for the success of the preaching and labors of the Apostles and of all members of Jesus Christ's priesthood. It was not surprising, then, that those apostolic workmen so easily converted entire kingdoms, for Mary remained at the foot of the throne of mercy, supplicating for them the Saviour's goodness. Her prayer converted souls, and, as every conversion is the fruit of prayer, and since Mary's prayer could meet no refusal, the Apostles had in this Mother of Mercy their most powerful helper.—“Blessed is he for whom Mary prays!”

II.—Eucharistic adorers share Mary's life and mission of prayer at the foot of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It is the most beautiful of all missions, and it is without danger. It is, also, the most sacred, for it is the exercise of all the vir-

tues. It is the most necessary to the Church, which has much more need of souls of prayer than of preachers, of men of penance than of men of eloquence. To-day, more than ever, we want men who disarm by self-immolation the anger of God irritated against the ever-increasing crimes of nations. We must have souls who, by their importunity, reopen the treasures of grace, which general indifference has closed. We must have true adorers, that is to say, men of fervor and of sacrifice. When they have become numerous around their Divine Chief, God will be glorified, Jesus will be loved, society will become Christian, conquered to Jesus Christ by the Apostolate of Eucharistic prayer.

III.—Mary's apostolate, moreover, consisted in the very persuasive preaching of respect. Such sermons suit all, and a soul zealous to make the Eucharist known and loved, will, in union with Mary, aim thereat with great care. With what modesty and reverence this perfect adorer comports himself before the Blessed Sacrament! Like the angels, he kneels before the Divine Majesty. Entirely penetrated with faith, and absorbed in the divine presence of Jesus, he pays no at-

tention to any one or anything around. Such adorers never present themselves before Our Lord without being suitably and modestly clothed, as if for a visit of ceremony. Any negligence in dress, or carelessness of manner, would indicate little faith and a disorderly interior.

As much as she was able, Mary remained on her knees at the feet of her God. That is the posture of adoration adopted by the Holy Church, the homage of the body, the humility of faith. On the knees at Jesus' feet, is the place of love.

Respect in the holy place, above all before the Most Holy Sacrament, ought to be the great exterior virtue of adorers. This respect is the solemn profession of their faith, and at the same time it is for them the grace of their piety and fervor; for God always punishes irreverence in His sanctuary by the weakening of faith, and the withdrawal of grace and devotion. He who is irreverent or indecorous before Our Lord, should not be astonished at the coldness that he experiences in prayer. That would even be a small punishment compared with what he deserves; for he merits to be expelled from God's presence as a rude, unmannerly fellow, or a senseless fool.

Let us, then, be very severe on the subject of respect. Let us maintain a reserved exterior, a devout attitude, a rigorous silence, and an absolute guard over the senses. When in church, we must have eyes only for Jesus Christ. Friends must then be ignored. Jesus is all. The court has eyes fixed only on the king, it honors only the king. At sight of the profound and religious respect of adorers, worldlings will be forced to say: "Here is something grand, indeed!" The weak, the tepid, will blush for their tepidity and again recognize Jesus Christ, for example is the royal lesson of wisdom, and the most fruitful apostolate.

Practice.—Pray for all First Communicants and for the catechists who prepare them.

Aspiration.—Hail, Mary! who, by the apostolate of thy prayer, vanquished all heresies raised against the Holy Eucharist!

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

MARY'S APOSTOLATE.

I.—The soul that lives on the Eucharist ought to occupy itself with all the inter-

ests of the Adorable Sacrament. Now, the first, the dearest to Jesus, is the priesthood. By priests, the Blessed Sacrament is given to us. By them, Jesus receives the sacramental life which He consecrates to the glory of His Father; by them, He is more glorified than by even the most pious of the Faithful. He has given to them all His rights and all His power.

Pray, therefore, for the priesthood. Ask that vocations to it may be multiplied. Obtain for the people holy priests, men of fire and flame. This was Mary's prayer, her apostolate of predilection. And now she protects holy vocations, she implores them of her Son. The priest is the privileged child of Mary.

It is she who trains him to piety when young, and shields his virtue. It is she who nourishes his fervor, who leads him by the hand to the foot of the altar, and who presents him to the Bishop, as she once offered Jesus in the Temple. She encourages him in the thousand sacrifices of study, in the combats against fear of the priestly responsibility. The priest formed by Mary!—O good and holy priest, most acceptable to Jesus!

II.—Mary lives again in the priest, and

through him continues her mission to souls for Jesus' glory. The first Incarnation was made in Mary and by Mary. In her the Word took flesh. In the hands of the priest and at his word, Jesus Christ becomes our Bread.

The dignity of Mother of God is incomparable. She is the Mother of the King, consequently, the Mother of angels and of men. The priest is the father of our Eucharistic Jesus, the spiritual king of souls. He is a God on earth, *terrenus Deus*, who has received all the riches of God, who opens and closes heaven.

Mary reared Jesus. She nourished Him and cared for Him at every age. The priest, also, causes Jesus Christ to increase in souls. He leads them to follow Him, to entertain Him in their interior, until He has reached the perfect age, and has transformed the soul into Himself.

Mary, as Mother, has over Our Lord all the rights that maternity confers. The priest, also, has direct power over the Person of Jesus Christ. Mary is powerful only by Jesus. The priest, also, is powerful only by the graces that Jesus puts into his hands. He places Himself at his disposition, in order to give him a greater power of action.

But Mary, under certain conditions, may envy the privileges of the priest. She carried the Word made Flesh nine months in her womb, and that was all. The priest is never exhausted. He incarnates Jesus Christ every day. His consecrating power is inherent in his priesthood. Like unto the Father, who engenders the Son without ever exhausting Himself,—like the sun, which daily renews the gift of its light and heat, so is the priest of the Most High.

Mary brought forth the Saviour in His mortal state, weak and for the Cross; the priest brings Him down upon the altar, but in His glorious and risen state. His glory does not appear to our gross eye, but the angels see it. It is a sun radiant toward heaven, but veiled to earth.

III.—The mission and duties of the priest and those of Mary, in regard to the Eucharist and to souls, are the same. That of the priest is one of adoration and of the apostolate. The priest is, first of all, an adorer and the guardian of the Blessed Sacrament. He is, above all, a man of prayer: “*Nos autem,*” said the Apostles, “*orationi et ministerio verbj instantes erimus.*”—“Let us give ourselves to prayer and preaching.”—He must

unite himself to the prayer of the Victim that he prepares and offers. He must begin at the foot of the altar his exterior apostolate.

Mary in the Cenacle!—Behold the Divine Mother in this first duty. Her office there is that of adorer. She adores by taking care of the Eucharistic worship. She repairs the glory of God outraged by sinners. She consoles the love of Jesus unheeded by His own. To the Father she offers Jesus; to Jesus she shows her maternal heart; to the Holy Spirit, she presents souls, His inheritance and His Temples, that He may renew and animate them with His love.

Behold what the faithful priest, who understands the favor of the Saviour's love for him, owes to Jesus!

The second priestly function is, to announce Jesus Christ to the people. Mary is here again his sweet protectress. She educated Jesus, and she revealed the mysteries of His life to the Apostles and the Evangelists. She spoke of Him incessantly, and made Him loved by all around her. She was the zelatrix of Jesus.

Now, behold what the priest has to do: To preach, to make Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament known, to spread His worship

and His reign with indefatigable zeal. For this he addresses himself to Mary, who loves priests with a love of predilection. She loves them in Jesus, her Son, whose ministers they are; she loves them for the glory of God and the salvation of souls whose Apostles they are.

The priest has duties to fulfil toward this tender Mother. He ought to be second to none in the honor he renders her, the tender love that is due her. He should zealously make her known and loved.

And for us.—if we love the Eucharist, if we desire that It be served, preached, adored by all, let us incessantly beg of Jesus, through Mary, holy priests, apostolic workmen, faithful adorers. The glory of the Blessed Sacrament and the salvation of the world are the price.

Practice.—Pray constantly for vocations to the priesthood, and exercise toward the priests of Jesus the most devoted and respectful charity.

Aspiration.—O Queen of the clergy, send workmen into the vineyard of thy Divine Son!

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

THE DIVINE SPOUSE AND KING OF THE
HEART.

I.—In her adoration, Mary aimed at honoring all the conditions of Jesus, at exalting Him under titles most dear to Him, and which establish most perfectly His empire over men's hearts.

She adored Jesus under His title of Spouse of Souls. Union is the perfection of love. Jesus, in giving Himself substantially in the Eucharist, unites Himself to our soul as His cherished spouse. As Spouse, He gives us all His riches, He gives His very name, His Heart, His whole Self, but it is by right of return. The soul, His spouse, must live only for Him. Jesus is a jealous God. Woe to him that steals from Him the spouse of His Heart!

Now, Mary, like a good mother, would have the nuptials of her Beloved Son celebrated happily. As formerly at Cana, she prevented the confusion of the young couple, so does she adorn the faithful soul with her own virtues, that Jesus may find it deserving of Him. O yes!—the

best preparation for Communion is that which Mary makes. Is it not the mother's duty to clothe her daughter for the wedding day? On that day she despoils herself. Who can say the care that this good Mother takes of the spouses of the Eucharistic God, above all, of the purity of their hearts, that they may make the delight of their well-beloved Spouse?

But Jesus is also the Spouse of the Church, whose fruitful virginity makes Him the Father of the new generation of God's children. Mary adored Him, also, as the Spouse of the Church, and she loved the latter as her daughter, indissolubly united to her very dear Son. Mary would have willingly given her life for the Church. She protected it, defended it by her incessant prayers. She gladly watched over its progress and shared its dangers, suffering with it and for it. Though the Mother of the Church, she was at the same time its daughter. Like the most submissive of its children, she obeyed Peter and John and all other priests. She honored the holy ceremonies, she adored Jesus by the Church, by its worship, its liturgical prayers, its priesthood, and all its children. O what beautiful adoration was that which

united Mary and the Faithful at the foot of the Blessed Sacrament! Heaven could not be jealous of it, for Mary was in the Church as the sun among the stars. God might well love the earth, and Jesus His tabernacle! It was the heaven of love.

II.—Again, Mary adored Jesus in His quality of King, for the Holy Eucharist is the Saviour's royalty. By it He reigns in hearts and over society. Truth, to triumph over men, must needs pass through the Eucharist, in order to catch some of Its sweetness, and to become persuasive and touching. As long as a man has not communicated, he has only the faith of truth, he has not yet the faith of love, the joyousness, the sweetness of faith. He has met Jesus on his way, he has conversed with Him without knowing Him well. The Eucharist alone will reveal to him, in all His power and light, Jesus Christ and all the secrets of Faith. By the Eucharist, then, Jesus is King of truth.

As of truth, so of the other virtues. The Eucharist is necessary in order that they may reign definitively in the heart. Communion is necessary to refine, to soften, to beatify them in the love of Jesus. Jesus must give Himself to me, in

order to subjugate me by His love, and be able to say to me: "My child, give Me thy heart." In the Eucharist alone, the love of Jesus Christ is royally served, since in It He has a palace, a court, and adorers.

Mary, then, adored Jesus as her King, no longer in His poor and fugitive royalty of Bethlehem or of Egypt, nor as her Crucified King on Calvary, but in His permanent royalty, seated on His throne of glory, all veiled as He is, invulnerable to the darts of His enemies, invincible in His victory, glorious in the triumph of His love. Mary saw, realized the words of the angel: "He shall reign over the House of Jacob, and of His reign there shall be no end." She saw the Eucharistic thrones daily multiply. Every city, every village, becomes His court, and offers to Him a palace. She beheld all virtues flourishing in the world by means of the Eucharist, and they are the royal crown of the God who Himself inspires and fosters them.

O what sighs, what prayers for the Eucharistic reign of Jesus, issued from Mary's heart in the Cenacle! She asked, and she saw in the course of the ages, the Eucharist spreading, and the love of

Jesus everywhere triumphing. In fine, Jesus will be loved, His Eucharist will find sympathetic hearts, and Its fire will envelop the world to renew it.

O Divine King! Yes, reign as Sovereign over my heart and my life as Thou didst over Thy Blessed Mother! May Thy truth be my ensign of honor, Thy virtues my arms, Thy love my word of command, and Thy greater Eucharistic glory the fruit of my victory!

This is the ardent prayer of my heart, which I offer Thee through Mary, the Queen of the Cenacle, and the Mother of adorers.

Practice.—Pray to Mary constantly to extend the Eucharistic reign of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world.

Aspiration.—O Immaculate Heart of Mary, nuptial couch, upon which the Spouse finds His delights, inflame us with the love that consumes thee!

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

THE EUCHARIST, THE CENTRE OF MARY'S
LIFE.

I.—Mary lived of the Eucharistic life of Jesus. Loves desires a life in common

with the Beloved. At Bethlehem and at Nazareth, Mary had lived the poor and hidden life of Jesus; in Egypt, she shared His persecuted life; through the little villages of Judea, she led His apostolic life. She had shared His suffering life, consequently, with greater reason, she would live the Eucharistic life of her Divine Son, for it is the crown of all the others.

Mary lived by means of the Eucharist, a life altogether interior and hidden, silent, separated from the world, having only Jesus for witness and confidant. Her life was consumed in contemplating and thanking the sovereign bounty of the Eucharist. This thought absorbed her mind, and nourished it with truth. It sweetly filled her heart, which had no other desire, no other need than to love more, and always to give herself to Him more entirely. Mary's body even shared the joy and heavenly peace of that life. It became entirely spiritualized: *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum*—"My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in God, my Saviour."

II.—This Eucharistic contemplation is more active than passive. It is the soul giving itself incessantly to God under the ever new and ever more and more de-

licious impression of His goodness, under the ever increasing action of His love, which purifies her, disengages her from earthly things, and united her more intimately to the Well-Beloved. Recollection is the first condition of this contemplation. The soul then free from the representations of external objects, disengaged from all irregular affections, goes straight to God as the needle to the pole. The soul, recollected and fixed on Jesus, nourishes herself with His truth, His goodness, His love. Prolonged prayer costs little or nothing, because, freed from all things, she can follow her Saviour whithersoever He goes, nothing urging or calling her elsewhere; and because always recollected in herself, she can study, can fathom the deep mysteries on which she makes her prayer. She sees things as they really are in Jesus Christ. Recollection and contemplation strengthen her sight, and render it reflective and penetrating.

III.—How perfect must have been Mary's contemplation before the Most Blessed Sacrament with the great light of her faith, the purity of her life, the perfect love of her heart! Assuredly, distractions, that fever of the mind and of

the heart, came not to trouble the repose that she took in her Well-Beloved. Her soul, more united to Jesus than to the body that enveloped it, drank in long draughts of the living waters of grace and love. She forgot the earth to remain alone with Jesus alone; for love loves to isolate itself, to simplify itself, to concentrate itself in unity, in order to unite itself always more closely to the Beloved.

Let the adorer, united to Mary *adoratrix*, apply with patience, with constancy, to the virtue of recollection, to the exercise of the contemplation of Jesus Christ, studying, at first, more to know Him than to enjoy Him; for love comes of truth known, and a grace of light is of more value than the greatest grace of sweetness and consolation. Truth remains, but sentiment passes.

O happy the soul which, like Mary, comprehends this mystery of love, who desires it, who asks it without ceasing, who incessantly exercises herself in it! The reign of God is in her!

Practice.—Pray to Mary for the faithful perseverance of spouses consecrated to Jesus in the cloister and in the world.

Aspiration.—O Mary, like little new-

born babes, we ask of thee our spiritual milk, Jesus in the Eucharist!

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

MARY'S LIFE OF UNION WITH JESUS.

I.—Mary lived in the Eucharist. He who loves truly, thinks, desires, acts, rejoices, or sorrows in the person loved, his natural centre of life. Indeed, Jesus has said: "Where your treasure is, there is your heart."—And to His Apostles: "Remain in Me, remain in My love as I remain in My Father's love."

Mary remained, then, in the Divine Eucharist, the Centre of her love. All her thoughts, words, actions came forth from It as the sun's rays come forth from that luminary. The Eucharist was the oracle that she consulted, the grace that she followed.

II.—But Jesus in the Sacrament lives the same life of love which consumed Him in the days of His mortal existence. In His Sacramental state, He continues to adore His Father by His profound annihilations. He is still the Mediator and In-

tercessor before the Divine Goodness for the salvation of men.

Mary united with Jesus in prayer, adding thereto the exercise and the merit of the virtues that Our Lord, in His glorified state, can no longer actually practice. To Jesus' state of humiliation in the Sacrament, she responded by the virtue and acts of humility; to His condition of victim, by her actual endurance of suffering; to His state of propitiation, by her voluntary acts of mortification. To honor the hidden life of Jesus, Mary effaced herself aiming at being nothing more than a human appearance, as it were, whose whole being and substance are changed, transformed into Jesus Christ. She is poor, like Jesus in the Sacrament, poorer even, since she can experience the real privations of poverty. Like Jesus, she obeys, and honors His sacramental obedience by submitting to the last of the ministers of the Church. To imitate His obedience, so sweet, so simple, and so prompt, she is happy to obey, eager to yield at the least sign. In one word, Mary realizes in herself the Eucharistic life of Jesus Christ.

Mary, moreover, renewed in the Eucharist all the mysteries of the Saviour's

mortal life, perpetuating and renewing her gratitude with ever increasing fervor.

III.—Such ought to be the life of the adorer, if he wishes to live in the Eucharist. But to reach this life of union, he must free himself from all slavery, from the life of self-love, which sees only self even in God's service; which speaks to Jesus only of self, of its own personal interests, of its own affairs; which knows not how to entertain itself with Jesus by speaking of Him and the interests of His glory, of the desires of His Sacred Heart; which knows not how to remain calm and tranquil at His feet, satisfied with Him, desiring nothing but Him. He must free himself from that life which has not the patience to listen to Jesus, but which renders us like mercenaries impatiently awaiting their wages, as commissioners eager to set out on some journey.

Jesus has very few adorers who consider themselves sufficiently recompensed and happy to remain with Him, occupied in serving Him like the angels in heaven, like Mary in the Cenacle. He sees at His feet only beggars, or the fever-stricken, asking for help. In a royal palace, however, they who assist before the throne

know how to be courtiers, doing nothing but honoring the king by their presence. Alas! there is the reign of sense, and that costs the creature nothing. At the Eucharistic court of Jesus, it is the interior reign of His love, and we are afraid of it, we flee from it, we wish to act. Jesus alone does not suffice for us, we must have something besides Him!

Mary never lost the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. She acted only when He wished it, considering herself sufficiently occupied to be at His feet, sufficiently recompensed in possessing Him.

Practice.—In union with Mary, to live the life of Communion and thanksgiving by interior recollection.

Aspiration.—O Heart of Mary, magnificent Throne of the Hidden God, be thou exalted to the heights of the heavens!

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

THE PERFECT SERVANT OF THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT.

I.—*Ecce ancilla Domini*—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" exclaimed the

Blessed Virgin, and her whole life was passed serving Him in the most perfect manner. She is the model, royal and divine, of our Eucharistic service. Her service in the Cenacle sums up her whole life. There she renewed all its phases, all its graces; there her virtues acquired their supreme perfection, which was to render them worthy of heaven and of the immense glory that awaited her. To attach himself to this last link of Mary's life, is the grace of a servant of the Eucharist; to imitate her virtues and her devotedness, is his strength and his rule.

The spirit of a servant of Jesus is thus defined: Devoted love to the Blessed Sacrament in the spirit and virtues of the Blessed Virgin.

It is disinterested devotedness. He does not devote himself in order to be perfect or happy, to amass for himself a spiritual fortune, or to gain a beautiful paradise. No, he devotes himself through pure love of the Beloved. Devotedness longs for one thing only, and that is, to give pleasure and to fulfil duty. Now, Our Lord does not ask us to serve Him in the outside world, even in souls; but He says to us: "To ascend My throne

of love, I must have adorers. Without adorers, I cannot be solemnly exposed. You will remain with Me, you will be My adorers. You will be attached to My person. You will exist for Me as I shall for you. You shall go so far as totally to renounce your own will, for I want it for Myself. Renounce your personal interests, I will assume them. A king desires to build up the fortune of his subjects, though he does not tell them what he is going to do."—So, the field that we have to cultivate is Our Lord Himself, He alone. He retains us for Himself, and commits Himself to our care.—And the reward of this devotedness—what is it? It is to live near the King, to please Him, to be His favorites. Ah, let us serve Him for His own glory, and efface ourselves in everything!

This devotedness ought, then, to be a devotedness of pure love, most pure and Eucharistic. The Eucharist absorbs everything else. Jesus gives Himself entire, and He wishes us entire. But He brings with Him a sentiment of joy and happiness which spreads over our whole life. What! to be associated to the Eucharist, to adoration, to become one of the staff of Jesus Christ—what is there

greater? Go, then, to this service with joy, with gladness. Love flies. It loves the service of Jesus better than its own repose, its own gratification. When we do not love, we go not quickly, we delay. But, like Mary, do you fly to the service, to the adoration of Jesus, who is waiting for you.

II.—The service of Our Lord is our share with Mary. You are called to serve *Him*, and not yourself. You must guard against using terms that indicate a low understanding of this sublime service. You must not say: “I am going to perform *my* service.” No! No! All employees talk that way. But you must say: “I am going to the service of Our Lord.”—There is a great difference between the two expressions, and above all, between the two thoughts. A courtier knows that it is proper to say: “I am in the king’s service.”—Ah, well! we say: “I am in the service of Our Lord.” By that we efface self, we lose sight of self, and we put Our Lord in the foreground.

This service embraces several functions. There are some that directly regard His Person, such as the Mass, Adoration, the Office; there are others that refer to His household and to the good of

His servants. But all are functions belonging to the royal service of Our Lord. Our Lord's house exacts varied attention, varied material employments. We are not pure spirits. But in all these labors, it is the King that we must see, for Him that we must act.

Devotedness to the glory of the Blessed Sacrament.—What is this glory that we owe Him? It is to return to Him all the good that we do, to keep nothing for self, not to lay up for self a little sum of money, a little private purse. Let us be servants of the Blessed Sacrament, like Mary; servants who have no more interest, no more individuality, who are absolutely consumed in the service of Jesus.

What a beautiful title! “The handmaid the servant of the Lord!” It is the one that Mary preferred. It is the only one that she ever gave herself. In taking that title of your Mother, you must take with it the duties and virtues that it implies: all are contained in the *Magnificat*: “The Lord hath had regard to the humility, to the lowliness of His handmaid.”—Ah, if any one ought to be humble and devoted, it is the servant! What, if a servant should wish to choose in his mas-

ter's service, to economize his moments, keeping time for self?

And all Mary's virtues,—take them in their final character in the Cenacle,—are nothing more than acts of her adoration. Mary adores by every one of her virtues. Adoration is the sum total of her whole life. To serve Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament in the spirit and in the virtues of Our Lady of the Cenacle,—behold the life of a servant. His motto is: "All for the service of Our Eucharistic Jesus in union with Mary!"

Practice.—Consecrate yourself to works of Eucharistic devotion, in order to imitate Mary, the handmaid of Jesus in the Cenacle.

Aspiration.—O Mary, Mother of fair love, make us love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as thou didst love Him!

THIRTIETH DAY.

MARY'S TRIUMPH.

I.—On the day of her glorious assumption, body and soul, into heaven, Mary received the crown of all her graces. Truly, we may rejoice. We shall not lose

our Mother. We only send her before us, to prepare our plans and to acquire for us rights over the heart of God. We can truly say to him: "Our misery is great. Yes, this earth is but a desolate valley, but it sends Thee what it has most beautiful, a marvel that it could not be expected to produce, Mary, Thy Mother! Look upon us with eyes of mercy for the sake of that blessed flower of our garden which we offer Thee. It is the purest and thè most beautiful."

But Mary's triumph is, also, that of Jesus. He will find again His Mother, He will again become a Son by her presence. Jesus loved His Mother so much—how, then, could He separate from her? He did it only through love of us. Having given her to us for Mother, it was right that He should allow us to enjoy the inestimable gift. But the time was come to recall that gift, and Jesus comes Himself to seek His Mother: *Innixa super dilectum suum*.—Mary died of love. The longing to see her Son, and to be fully united to Him, snapped her thread of life. Jesus is about to accord her a grand triumph. O what passed between Jesus and Mary at the moment of their meeting! We know the joy of a mother

and a son meeting after a long separation. Jesus desired to see His Mother again, and, lo! she stands before Him! O with what loving embraces He welcomes her!

II.—Jesus introduces her Himself into glory, for He owes her a reward. All her life Mary was poor and despised, but now the time has come to crown her with glory and honor. She enters heaven in splendor, such as was never before seen. She enters by a special gate, open for her alone. She could not pass through that of the simple elect. If the twelve Apostles are the twelve gates of heaven, Mary is the royal entrance to that country, the *gate par excellence*. O august and holy Gate! How good to pass through thee! Doubtless, the observance of the Law will give us sure entrance into heaven, but it is better still to confide one's self to Mary's compassion. Mary seeks only to save. Pass, pass by the way of mercy, and count not so much on your works and your fulfilment of the Law. Examine well, and you will find that fulfilment very imperfect.

Jesus led His Mother by the hand up to the throne of God. "Behold, O Father, her with whom Thou art associated, by

choosing her to give Me My Humanity!"—And the Father crowned her with her three most beautiful titles, Queen, Mother, Mediatrix. In Mary's diadem, three pearls are shining with dazzling brightness, namely, that of her humility, that of her poverty, and that of her sufferings.

III.—Mary was the most humble of creatures; in heaven, she is the most glorious. If she is seated on a throne the nearest to Jesus Christ, it is because she approaches nearer than any other to the perfection of His humility. She passed for a sinful daughter of Eve—she who did not undergo the shame of original sin. She followed her Son. The Jews regarded her as an ambitious woman—she who had never said one word to her own advantage.

No one was so poor as Mary, and never was poverty so meritorious as hers, for she was the Mother of the King of heaven and of earth. To imitate the poverty of Jesus, she labored at Nazareth, begged in Egypt,—and what could be poorer than the lowly house of Loretto? The justice of Our Lord owed her a compensation. As she shares all the merits, all the graces of her Son, she has the free disposal of

them. All graces of salvation, both natural and spiritual, will be given us by Mary. She is rich with the riches of God Himself. And if Divine Justice did not oppose the inclination of her maternal heart, the gates of hell would soon be closed. The demon has been forced to acknowledge that he is never sure of a victory so long as he whom Mary protects, retains a breath of life. She supplicates, importunes, and, as it were, snatches from God the graces of mercy and pardon for the most hardened criminals.

Lastly, if happiness is in proportion to sufferings, no one in heaven is so happy as Mary; for having never loved so much as she, no one has ever suffered so much. Mary was tried by God. He martyred her constantly. Simeon's prophecy empoisoned all her joys. From the moment of its utterance, Mary took the place of Jesus, still too young to suffer publicly. At the foot of the Cross she is nearest to Jesus that she may suffer more. Because He wished her nearest to Him in heaven, He united her more than any other creature to His sufferings and humiliations on earth.

God has, in one word, crowned Mary

with glory and honor as the masterpiece of His love. Above her there is only Himself: *Solo tonante minor!* But in the midst of her glory, Mary remembers that she is our Mother. She ascended to heaven before us only to facilitate our entrance, and to conduct us there. She herself will come to seek us at the supreme moment, and she will lead us by the hand, if we have known how to call her to our assistance.

Practice.—Prepare the agonizing to receive Holy Viaticum. Notify the priest in time. Arrange for Our Lord a proper reception in the homes of the poor.

Aspiration.—O Mary, give us Jesus Christ now and at the hour of our death!

LAST DAY.

CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I.—At the close of this beautiful month, which we have consecrated to thee, O Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, after having meditated upon thy greatness, admired the perfection of thy adoration and Eucharistic service in the Cenacle, it remains to give ourselves entirely to thee,

so that thou mayest guard and direct us in our vocation as adorers.

I remit into thy hands the direction of my vocation and the graces of the sublime duties that it imposes upon me.

My vocation of adorer is beautiful, the most beautiful of all, since it retains me forever in the service of the Adorable Person of Jesus Christ in His Divine Sacrament. It is a privilege, since it gives me the right to go directly to His Divine Person without an intermedium.

My vocation is beautiful and sublime, since I share the functions of the angels and, if I dare say it, those of the Blessed Virgin herself, in the service of Jesus. But for this divine vocation, I should have some remarkable qualities, some true virtues, and, at least, ordinary piety—but, alas! I have nothing of all this, and I am nothing! I can do nothing!—I have, on the contrary, only defects, bad habits, and I am full of self-love. I have no humility, no meekness, no spirit of mortification. I know not how to pray nor how to make prayer. I possess only routine piety, with some meagre ideas of virtue, narrow and limited. Alas, my God! Thou who shouldst have at Thy service all that is greatest, most perfect,

and most holy, how hast Thou chosen me, poor infirm creature, a nothing full of miseries, still covered with the scars of my sins, all leprous still with the *old man that lives in me?*

How dare I accept this grace, to dwell with angels, to be in the same house with Thy Holy Mother, to remain in Thy company and in Thy presence?

O Mary, my celestial Queen and my Divine Mother, I cannot accept the honor of becoming the happy servant of our Eucharistic Jesus, if thou dost not consent to form me, to raise me, and to clothe me with thy spirit, thy virtues, thy merits; if thou dost not take me for thy child, O thou who art the Queen and Mother of the servants of Jesus, thou who didst love only in Jesus and for Jesus!

I remit, then, into thy hands, my good Mother, the grace and the training of my vocation. I give myself to thee, do thou give Jesus to me. Formed and presented by thee, O good Mother, Jesus, my sweet Master, will receive me kindly and love me in thee.

II.—If my vocation is beautiful, its duties are great and divine. I should pass my life in adoration at the foot of the throne of Incarnate Love, doing before

that Eucharistic throne what the angels and saints do, and will eternally do in heaven, praising His infinite bounty, blessing His boundless mercy, thanking His love, devoting myself to His glory, immolating myself for sinners, and consuming myself for the extension of His reign on earth.

I ought to live always with Jesus in the Host, like the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth and in the Cenacle, like the saints in glory. I ought not to quit Him, even to serve and follow my neighbor. My mission is that of Magdalen, contemplative, with the Queen of the Apostles in the Cenacle, praying before the tabernacle, converting the world by her prayer at the foot of the Eucharist; that of St. Teresa, St. Catharine of Siena, and of all those holy souls who carry on an uninterrupted apostolate of prayer and immolation.

I ought to honor in an entirely special manner the interior and hidden life of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, living unknown to men, even the pious and the holy, forgotten by my own, despised by the world, dead to all in order to live more freely and more purely with Jesus in God.

But how can I, all alone, fulfill duties so sublime? How dare I even approach Jesus to serve Him? Alas! all alone—I should be ashamed of myself!

But, O my good Mother, since thou dost deign to become my teacher, thou wilt let me adore Jesus with thee, bless Him with thy praises, entreat Him with thy prayers, serve Him with thy hands, love Him with thy heart, glorify Him with thy sanctity. I will be thy disciple, thy child, and, shall I say it?—a little Mary, another thyself,—the servant of Jesus!

I shall tell thee simply and artlessly my faults, O my good Mother! I shall make known to thee my ignorance, my little knowledge, my little success. I shall give thee the tiny flowers of virtue that I shall have gathered, and thou wilt offer all to Jesus, and myself along with thyself.

On this condition alone, do I hope to become a true servant of the Most Blessed Sacrament. My God, behold Thy humble servant! May it be done unto me according to Thy merciful goodness and Thy grace of love!

Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of Adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

APPENDIX.

Motives for Devotion to Our Lady OF THE Most Blessed Sacrament

CHAPTER I.

IDEA OF THE DEVOTION TO OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

In these days, when devotion to the Holy Eucharist is making such progress, when Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is practiced everywhere, and even becoming perpetual; when the Visit, Holy Mass, and Communion enter into the Christian life as daily practices, and form the foundation of piety, still another need springs up. Should not Mary, associated as she is in all the mysteries of Jesus,—Mary whom we find the loving apostle of every devotion, the devoted directress,

the gentle and most amiable model of the virtues of Jesus—shall not Mary have her place in the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament?—And which is her place?—When we perform our duty to the God of the Eucharist, what help shall we look for from Mary to aid us, more speedily to find her Son hidden under the Eucharistic veils? In a word, is it here alone that Mary will fail to be our apostle, our model, our mother?

The need of her maternal protection is most sensibly felt. Jesus demands, by virtue of His real and living presence in the Sacrament, duties better fulfilled, virtues more elevated. It is more difficult to discover Him behind His veil of love.—“O then, Mary, Mary, be our model! We so much desire to appear before our Eucharistic Jesus, but only in thy company. We shall be satisfied to know that thou thyself hast discharged toward the Blessed Sacrament the duties that our title of Christian imposes on us. And when we receive Jesus, when we adore Him hidden in the tabernacle or exposed in His sparkling throne, we shall be so happy to thank thee with Him, and to know that if Jesus gives Himself it is through thee; that if we possess the Holy

Eucharist, it is to thee that we owe it; and that all Eucharistic graces pass through thy hands before coming to us. O Mary, show us, reveal to us the part that thou didst take in the amorous economy of the Holy Eucharist!"

Such is the cry that forcibly escapes from the heart when before the Blessed Sacrament. If, in the Gospel, Mary is so closely united with her Son, if the Magi found Him only with His Mother, prostrate before the same Infant, still more lowly, still more lovable in the Eucharist, we shall see there His Mother, also: *Et invenerunt Puerum cum Maria Matre ejus.**

Guided by love, the devout Christian has already given to Mary names expressive of his desire to associate the Mother to the homage rendered the Son in the Blessed Sacrament. We have, for instance, the Confraternity of *Our Lady of First Communion*,† enriched with numerous Indulgences. Christian childhood

*Matt. ii.

†The home of the Confraternity is the Little Seminary of Felletin (Creuse). It numbers in France a great many associates, and issues a monthly bulletin entitled, *Le Parterre de Notre Dame de la Première Communion*.

is there intrusted to Mary, that that tender Mother may preserve it pure, and may adorn it with her virtues for the grand day on which Jesus will enter for the first time into those young hearts.

Our Lady of First Communion, sweet title!—title full of love and touching reality! Whoever has made his First Communion well, let him proclaim aloud as a duty of gratitude, that he owes to Mary that grace of graces.

At Mauron, in Brittany, there is a beautiful sanctuary, which is the center of a "*Confraternity of Thanksgiving*," the members of which pledge themselves to thank God incessantly for His benefits, and, above all, for the unspeakable gift of the Eucharist.

How could it be that Mary would not have part in such a work, she, the most grateful of creatures, she who first sang, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the canticle of thanksgiving *par excellence*? A beautiful window in the apse of the church represents Mary kneeling before the Sacred Host in an ecstasy of thanksgiving, and repeating the *Magnificat*. Whoever prays before that picture of Our Lady of Thanksgiving, gains forty

days' Indulgence, granted by the Bishop of Vannes.*

At Lyons, is *Our Lady of Viaticum*, to whom prayers are offered to obtain for the agonizing the Adorable Sacrament, the pledge of a peaceful death and a happy awaking in the glory of God. They beg Mary to renew the mystery of her Visitation, and again to carry Jesus to those that His love wills to visit.†

Christian art has everywhere spread a pious inspiration which applies well to our subject.—Who has not seen *Our Lady of the Tabernacle*, sometimes kneeling before the prison of love which incloses her Son; or sometimes, according to the words of Scripture, herself the tabernacle, showing us in her heart the place which the Most High sanctified, and in which He took His delight?‡

The Christian soul adores in union with Mary. She comes with Mary to visit the Prisoner of love, and her visit is better made. She is more faithful and, in-

*Any one may become an associate on certain very easy conditions, by addressing the Directress of *L'Action de grâces*, Mauron (Morbihan).

†*Evangile de l'Eucharistie*, by Mgr. Pichenot, Bishop of Tarbes. ‡ Psalm xlv., 5.

spired by Mary's presence and example, she finds words more consoling; a gift more generous to offer to the Divine Captive of the Eucharist.

Long ago, M. Olier, in order to offer us the most perfect model for Communion, had an exquisite picture drawn, representing St. John communicating Mary, laying upon the trembling lips of the Mother the Adorable Body of the Son: *Ecce Filius tuus!**

The life of union with Jesus, the life of Communion, is admirably represented under another subject: Mary, her eyes lowered and attentively fixed upon the Host which she has in her heart, seems to be entirely absorbed in Jesus. She is presented to us as the perfect realization of that word of St. Paul: *I live no longer, it is Jesus who lives in me.*

Lastly, at Solesmes, we gaze in rapture on a very old picture of Mary communicated by Jesus Christ Himself. The Blessed Virgin almost swooning from the

*In the picture that represents Mary communicated by St. John, is often found this legend: *Filius adoptivus matri reddit Filium*—"The adopted son restores to his mother her own Son." (Ed. Lafond. *La Table de la Cène, à Rome.*)

ardor of her love, is supported by the Prince of the Apostles, whilst Jesus, rejoicing to restore to His Mother what He had received from her, laid upon her lips His Sacred Body hidden under the snowy Eucharistic species.

All these productions of faith and piety give us a little insight into the close and ineffable relations between Mary and the Eucharist. "I marvel," says a pious writer, "that after all these titles, a church has not yet been raised to Mary under that of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament."*

That desire has been accomplished. In the churches of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament, the chapel of the Blessed Virgin is dedicated to Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament; and Père Eymard, before his death, left this devotion to his children as the legacy of his love, recommending them to practice it fervently among themselves, and to spread it by all the means afforded by Christian piety.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, such is the title that this venerable religious "raised up by God," as, says the

**La Table de la Cène, à Rome.*

Bishop of Tarbes,* “to develop among us by his word, his writings, and his Congregation, the sublime devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament,” has chosen in order to sum up all the relations that bind Mary to the Eucharist.

This title differs from those that we have enumerated only in this, that it is more expressive, and comprises them all. It is, also, the most glorious to Mary. The titles, Our Lady of Communion, Our Lady of the Tabernacle, Our Lady of the Viaticum, honor only one act of Mary’s Eucharistic life, recall but one of her relations to the Blessed Sacrament. But Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament embraces them all,—comprises the whole adoring life of the Blessed Virgin.

Still more, the title penetrates the mystery itself of the Eucharist, and, when well understood, manifests to us the most important part granted to Mary in the economy of the Holy Eucharist.

If we have thoroughly seized Père Eymard’s thought contained in the title, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, we understand that she is, first, the Mother

*Approbation to Vol. I. *Œuvres du Père Eymard*. Paris, Poussiègue.

of Jesus, giving to the Word her most pure blood, which was changed on the day of the Incarnation into His own Body, into His own Blood, in order to consecrate it later, on the night of the Last Supper, into His Sacrament of Love.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament is, in the second place, Mary receiving in quality of universal dispensatrix of grace, the full and absolute disposition of the Eucharist and the graces that It contains, because this Sacrament is the most efficacious means of salvation, the fruit *par excellence* of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. To her, consequently, it belongs to make Jesus in the Sacrament known and loved; to her it belongs to spread the Eucharist throughout the world, to multiply churches, to raise them in infidel lands, and to defend faith in the Eucharist against heretics and the impious; to her it belongs to prepare souls for Communion, to rouse them to make frequent visits to Jesus, and to assist zealously at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. She is the treasure-house of all the graces comprised in the Eucharist, both those that prepare the soul for It and those that flow from It.

In both cases, it is Mary who gives the Eucharist to the world. In the first place, she is intrinsically united to the very essence of the mystery, inasmuch as she herself furnished the matter, the subject for it, namely, her Son; in the second, she applies the Eucharist to each one of us, she distributes It. She is the means of Its exterior life, of Its expansion, the instrument of the good that It effects in souls.

Again, and above all, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament is Mary living for over twenty years after the Ascension of Our Lord, at the foot of the altar, passing her life in the Cenacle, nourished by the Eucharist, adoring her Son veiled under the Sacred Species, assisting at the Holy Sacrifice; in a word, Mary fulfilling toward the Most Holy Sacrament all the duties of an humble child of the Church, and making it her glory to serve Him of whom she is the Divine Mother.

Behold here my model, my perfect, my lovely model in my duties as a Christian toward the Holy Eucharist! I do what my Mother did. She inspires me with her gaze, she inspires my good dispositions. My aim in the service of the Sacrament of Love shall be to do as Mary

did, to act according to her intentions, to clothe myself with her virtues, above all, her faith, her love, her recollection, and her life of Communion with Jesus in the Host. Then my duties will be better performed, they will better please Our Lord, they will give more glory to my Master, and they will be sweeter to myself.

O Eucharistic Life, practiced in union with Mary under the eyes and the protection of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, how beautiful art thou! how good for the soul, how glorious to God! Thou dost give me Jesus living, Jesus loving, Jesus and His Heart, Jesus veiled for love of me. Thou dost introduce me to the friendship, the conversation, the familiar and intimate life with Jesus in the Sacrament. And at the same time, to fill up the measure of my happiness, thou dost unite me with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and my own Mother,—Mary, the perfect adorer, the necessary channel of all holiness, the lovable, the maternal, the easily-imitated model of all virtues!

What a horizon stretches out before me! Jesus attracting to the Sacrament, into that tiny Host, the entire Trinity, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,

whom legions of innumerable angels surround in the most profound adoration; Jesus there uniting for me His Divinity and His Humanity, the mysteries of His eternal and those of His temporal life, His divine attributes and His virtues, concentrating in this ocean of His Eucharistic Heart all the streams of His grace, all the merits of His action, of His prayers, and of His sufferings!—And at the same time, that the Host may be truly a heaven on earth, I behold Mary taking her part in the economy of the mystery. Yes, Mary, the source of this Sacrament, from whom flows the Blood that we drink therein, the Flesh that we eat therein, and on that account, Mary the Mistress, the Sovereign, the Mother still of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.—Yes, Mary commissioned to give the Eucharist to the world, and to bring back the world to the Eucharist, to captivate the world by the Eucharist in order to regenerate it, to save it, and secure its happiness!

Behold all that is comprised in this beautiful title, which, when we understand it, we can repeat only in accents of gratitude and love: **OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT, MOTHER AND**

MODEL OF ADORERS, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE
RECOURSE TO THEE!

CHAPTER II.

THIS DEVOTION IS OPPORTUNE.

We shall begin by explaining the foundation for this devotion. But before doing so, we shall say something about an objection which constantly sounds in our ears, and which it is better to dispose of at once. Our readers will then be able to give undivided attention to our further remarks.

This objection, and it is merely captious, is based upon the uselessness of giving a new title to Mary, and upon the danger of introducing a new devotion.

That the title is new, we freely acknowledge. But if it expresses something very real and very true, ought it to be rejected without examination only on account of its novelty?

The title is new. But how many titles, now very old, have had a beginning in the Church? When St. Juliana made known the order that she had received from God for the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi, there was a general

outcry: "It is an innovation, a useless, even a dangerous, innovation!"—But in our own day, how sweet is that title to us! Its very name, *Corpus Christi*, awakens memories of joy and happiness, and it is hard for us to understand how obstacles could ever have been raised against its adoption.

There was a time when the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was long confined to the secrecy of cloisters and of hearts by that same objection: "It is new. The old suffices!"

And some few years ago, who had heard of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart? We all know the opposition that was made to this title, so true, so glorious to Mary and to Jesus, and so full of graces for the Church at large. But the Archbishop of Bourges, appointed by God Himself to judge of its doctrine, approved the new title and blessed it. Pius IX. himself intervened, and permitted the glorious statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to be crowned in his name. All remember the splendid ceremonies that attended the event, the number of Bishops present, the immense concourse of pilgrims. Sacred learning raised its voice in attestation of the solidity of the

incipient devotion. The Bishop of Tulle, upon whose lips the most abstract theological questions becomes poems, sang of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Bishop of Poitiers, whose name alone is an authority, proved that to unite Mary to the Heart of Jesus, was not to innovate, but to penetrate into the very essence of Christianity, and to show forth the invariable law of the economy of salvation, which always operates by means of Mary and Jesus. Summing up this thought in a burst of irresistible eloquence, he exclaims: "Have I not said enough to make you understand that Mary is inseparable from Jesus, and that the essential economy of Christianity is imperfectly known, that the divine order is troubled, if Mary is forgotten, if Mary is neglected, if Mary is excluded? When, then, on entering this splendid and beautiful church, you behold in the sanctuary the meek and loving Jesus, His Heart radiating the flames of His love, surmounted and crowned, as it were, by the sweet and virginal figure of Mary, His Mother—if you are told that that is something new, a practice foreign to the pure Gospel, a devotion unknown to the primitive Church, the reply is easy. Is it not the

pure Gospel? Is there anything more primitive than that which is written in the first chapter of St. Matthew: '*Maria de qua natus est Jesus*, Mary of whom was born Jesus'? Is it not the pure Gospel?—and is there any devotion more primitive than that recorded in the second chapter of the same evangelist: '*Et intrantes domum invenerunt Puerum cum Maria matre ejus*: And going into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother'? Supporting my remarks on this text, I venture to say that a temple is for me a Christian and orthodox temple only inasmuch as Mary is shown to me therein with Jesus. My faith must have it thus, and my heart freely accords with my faith."*

And Mary's new title is spread throughout the world, and received by the faith of the Faithful, because in its novelty it expresses an adorable and very ancient reality.

When Père Eymard proposed the title, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, he tells us: "It is the new title of some-

*Homily pronounced at the coronation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, at Issoudun, Sept. 8, 1869.

thing very ancient." For since the existence of the Eucharist, the relations that bind Mary to her Son have also existed. Let us here remark that we were greatly encouraged in our design of spreading this devotion by the Bishop of Angers, and that this acknowledgment is a testimony of gratitude which we consider our duty to render publicly to the illustrious Prelate. In a petition in which he is supplicated to bless the title of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, we read the following words: "Deign, Your Lordship, to approve this new devotion to Mary."—"No, no," exclaimed His Lordship, "strike that out! The devotion to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament is not a new devotion, for at all times Mary has been honored in the Church as the Mother of the Eucharistic Christ."

This devotion is not substantially new. It is the title alone that has not yet been publicly decreed to Mary. The practice, namely, the frequent and general meditation on Mary's relations with the Eucharist, is new. But for that sole reason, is that which seems, at least, presented to us as a grace, to be rejected? We think not. Rome, we hope (for the question has been submitted to its infallible tribunal),

will soon permit Mary to be publicly invoked under the title: Our Lady of the Most Blesed Sacrament. Several Prelates have already approved it, and the Bishop of Angers, in order to prove his faith and ardent love for the Mother and her Eucharistic Son, has graciously granted forty days' Indulgence to all the Faithful of his diocese who devoutly recite the invocation: "*Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*"*

When the novelty presents itself with such support, it is but a new manifestation of the love of Our Lord, a new grace, a new help that He offers us. Every age has its own graces. When the Immaculate Conception was rejected as a fatal innovation, the learned Archbishop Catharin responded: "Does the Immaculate Conception astonish you? But I do not think that what we shall discover of Mary's grandeur is limited to that. There are in her ineffable secrets known only to the blessed spirits, and which God will one day manifest to His Church, in order that every age may rejoice in the mani-

*See Preface for other Approbations.

festation of some new mystery, some new glory of the Blessed Virgin.”*

The Lord holds in reserve helps of which we know not. A new devotion toward the Blessed Virgin is a torrent of graces flowing over the whole world. “He,” says Father Faber, “who can find a point of view from which our dearest Mother would appear to him greater than ever, has found a new means of sanctification, for he has acquired a new power to love God.”†

What! If the knowledge of Mary’s relations with the Eucharist makes us love the Most Blessed Sacrament with a more devoted love; if the example of Mary’s life of adoratrix in the Cenacle makes us fulfil with more piety, reverence, and love our duties toward His august Person present among us, who will complain of this new devotion? Who will not, on the contrary, recognize in this manifestation of one of her grandeurs, the merciful intervention of the Queen of Heaven,

*Ego enim non in hoc privilegio (Immac. Concept.) finiri Mariæ laudes existimo; sed latere etiam plura, beatis spiritibus nota, et suo die Ecclesiæ revelanda, ut quævis ætas suis ac novis gaudeat decorata mysteriis. Cath. arch. Camps. *Serm de Conc. Immac.*

†*The Precious Blood*, p. 387.

who wishes herself to serve as a model and encouragement in the service of her adorable son, thus to concur in the spread of His Eucharistic reign and His coming into hearts?

An act of love!—That means heaven merited, glory redoubled. If this blessed title can multiply our acts of love, it shall have borne sufficient fruit for us to recognize in it the fruitful tree planted by the Lord in the garden of the Church.

Lastly, it may be objected that the Scriptures, the Fathers, say enough about the Blessed Virgin, and that we must be satisfied with what we already know of her. Is not Mary already sufficiently well known?

Ah, no! Mary is not sufficiently known. Who can plume himself upon having sounded all the depth, measured all the extent of that word which is the foundation of Mary's greatness, and with which the Holy Ghost, who certainly knew how to express it, is pleased to praise Mary: *Maria de qua natus est Jesus*,—"Mary, the Mother of God, the Mother of Jesus"?

Ah! let all the Doctors search, let all prayerful souls contemplate, let all generations investigate Mary's greatness, and

we shall even then just touch the outer limits of her grandeur, the fringe of the mantle of glory of the Mother of God. Eternity will not be too long, the divine light too brilliant, to manifest to us even with some little perfection that masterpiece of God's power.

These thoughts are not our own. They are St. Bernard's, who exclaims: "O Mary, glorious City of the Most High! Very glorious things have already been said of thee. But there is still much to praise in thee, and hitherto all praise accorded thee is but childish stammering: *Adhuc locus est tue laudi, adhuc in tuis laudibus omnis lingua balbutit.*"*

It is because we know Mary to be an ocean of grandeur that we have confidence, and that we piously believe in this new title, this new phase of her power in the economy of salvation, which she seems to manifest to us.

In the Preface to his *Treatise on the Blessed Virgin*, forestalling the objection which might be adduced from the silence of the Gospel respecting the Mother of God, about whom he was going to write, Suarez, the positive theologian *par excellence*, utters some words so appropriate

**In Deprec. ad B. Virg.*

to our subject, that we should esteem ourselves worthy of reproach if we failed to cite them:—"It is not without a particular design of the Holy Ghost that many of Mary's mysteries and privileges have not been recorded in the Scriptures, nor handed down by tradition. God wished thereby to give to those that were to come after, a greater reason to study and meditate those mysteries, to speak and write, moreover, of things connected with the Blessed Virgin which, until then, they did not possess of her, *deducing them by reasoning from principles received.*"*

When the author of this work explained its principal features to the Bishop of Angers, His Lordship addressed to him the following words, which he made the rule of his conduct: "Seek in the Apostolic Fathers the witnesses of the devotion of the early Church toward the Most Blessed Sacrament, and proceed by induction to study Mary, who was the most docile, the most perfect member of the Church at the same time that she was its Mother."

We shall now enumerate Mary's titles bearing upon the Blessed Sacrament, supported upon theology and ecclesiastical

**De Incarnatione*, t. xix., Ed. Vives.

history. Without desiring to force the belief of the reader, we wish to show that our own is reasonable, and that the motives that support it suffice to establish a probable opinion. This being so, we shall borrow the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori, praying that the reader may be inspired by their spirit while perusing this little work: "When an opinion is in some way honorable to the Blessed Virgin, and there is some foundation for it, provided it is not otherwise repugnant to Faith, to the Decrees of the Church, nor to truth, not to hold it, and even to contradict it for the reason that the contrary opinion may also be true, is to show little devotion to the Mother of God. I do not wish to be of the number of those that have so little devotion, nor do I want my reader to belong to them. I would prefer to be among those that believe fully and firmly all that, without error, we may believe of Mary's grandeur, according to the thoughts of the Abbé Rupert, who, among the homages most agreeable to the Mother of God, counts that of firm belief in all that enhances her glory: *Ejus magnalia firmiter credere.*"*

**Glories of Mary*, ch. v., sec. i.

It was this thought of glorifying Mary that led Père Eymard to give her the new title of honor, "the most glorious title," as he says, "of the Queen of Saints, for it is that which brings her nearest to Our Lord, the Principle of all her greatness." By it our devotion to Mary becomes an integral part of our devotion to Jesus.

Let us here gladly repeat the beautiful saying of a young priest who, after edifying the Seminary of St. Sulpice for several years, died in the odor of sanctity at the foot of the Blessed Sacrament: "There is but one title in my estimation, which equals the title of Mother of God, and that is, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament."*

In this title we approach Mary not from one mystery alone, or from one virtue of her Son, but from His Divine Person, the living and glorious substance of all mysteries, of all virtues. And if it is true, as Faith teaches, that the Eucharist is the centre of all religion, that it is the Man-God with all His greatness and all His glory, Jesus in the highest effort of His love, to approach Mary from the Eu-

**Vie de L'Abbé Bonnel de Longchamp.* Paris, Poussielgue frères.

charist, is to glorify her as much as she can be glorified, which is to say, in one word, that it is to glorify her whole life, with all her greatness and all her glory.

We hope that, if we prove the reality of Mary's relations with Jesus in the Eucharist, the strength of the bonds that attach her to the Blessed Sacrament, the immense share that she has in that Mystery of love, we shall be pardoned our apparently new devotion, and that our readers will confidently and lovingly honor Mary under her beautiful title, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Still further to strengthen our position, let us quote here the words of Blessed Albertus Magnus: "If the reader, deigning to cast his eyes on this little work, is somewhat troubled at the novelty of the subject that it treats, as may perhaps happen, I beg him not hastily to accuse me of rashness, but rather to pardon the simplicity of my devotion: *Obsecro eos qui praesens opusculum forsitan dignabuntur aspicere, ut si quid in illo offendit, ex sui forsitan, ut contingit, novitate, non facile adscribant temeritati, sed parcant potius simplici devotioni.*" (In praefat. de Laud. B. V. M.)

CHAPTER III.

FIRST FOUNDATION FOR OUR DEVOTION, THE
POWER OF MARY.

“Mary, Mother of Jesus, *Maria de qua natus est Jesus,*” is the foundation of our devotion toward Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the first bond which unites Mary to the Eucharist.

We believe, and this belief is our sweetest joy, that the Adorable Body of Our Lord, really present in the Eucharist, is the same Body that was formed of the most pure blood of Mary, nourished by her substance and her virginal milk.

On the altar, we adore the true Son of the Virgin, and with the Church we sing, associating the Mother with the Son, the Cause with the effect, the Source with the rivulet, the Principle with the consequence: “*Ave, verum Corpus natum de Maria Virgine*—Hail, true Body of the Lord, born of the Virgin Mary!”

St. Ambrose, even in his day, laid the first foundations of our devotion when he placed on the lips of the Saviour, instituting the Holy Eucharist, these memorable words: “This is truly My Flesh for the

life of the world. Believe it firmly. This is absolutely the same Flesh which was formed and was born of Mary, which suffered on the Cross, and which issued glorious from the tomb. It is the same, I repeat to you: *Haec, inquam, ipsa est.*"*

Again, let us quote the words of the Bishop of Poitiers: "Mary is in some way associated to the Real Presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. The first blasphemy against the reality of the Sacrament of the Altar consisted in denying that the Eucharistic Body of the Lord was the Body born of Mary."†

This union appears more intimate when we consider the Liturgy for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Church of Rome, according to the illustrious author of *L'Evangile de l'Eucharistie*, that Church, whose intuition of the true is so keen, did not take the trouble, as did the Gallican liturgists, to compose a special Preface for the Feast of the Body of Our Lord. But uniting the maternity of Mary and the Real Presence of Jesus, she repeats on that day the Preface of the Nativity, thus attesting the truth of the flesh

*De Consec. D. 2. Quoted by Ben. XIV. in opere *de Canonizatione* SS. Lib. iv., c. xxxi.

†Homily pronounced at Issoudun.

given by Mary to the Word Incarnate. And the Doxology for the Hymns of that day, after celebrating the glory and love of the God hidden in the bread, goes back to Mary, the cause of the Gift which we receive at the altar: *Jesu, tibi sit gloria, qui natus es de Virgine.*

We all know the following words of St. Augustine, now become classic: "*Caro Jesu caro est Mariae, et ipsam Mariae carnem nobis manducandam dedit ad salutem.*"—The Flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary, and the Saviour gives us this Flesh of Mary as the nourishment of our salvation."

On these words, Père Binet exclaims: "He who will dive deeply into this mystery, will find sublime thoughts."†

But more happy is he to whom Mary herself deigned to reveal it. St. Ignatius of Loyola once had an admirable vision on this subject. "As I was communing with the Holy Spirit before Mass," he tells us, "it seemed to me that I felt and that I saw something very bright, of a fiery color and strange appearance. As I was preparing to ascend the altar, and

**Comment sup. Psalm xcviii.*

†*Le Chef-d'Œuvre de Dieu.*

afterward when, being clothed with the sacred vestments, I was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, I experienced a violent interior shock, accompanied by abundant tears and sobs, and at time even by the loss of speech. Then I felt, nay, I saw the Blessed Virgin exercising her influence with the Father in my behalf, so that, during the Canon and the Consecration of the Mass, I could neither see nor feel anything, excepting her who is, so to say, a part of this immense grace, and the gate by which we arrive at it. By a spiritual perception, I understood that she showed me in the act of Consecration the existence of her own flesh in the Flesh of her dear Son, that is to say, that which had been formed of her virginal substance. The perception of what had been revealed to me was so interior that I cannot express it.”*

Père de Machault, a son of St. Ignatius, speaks of this vision, and confirms it by his testimony in his admirable treatise: *Des Grands Biens de la Sainte Eucharistie*. He says in his simple faith: “Who

*Extract from the *Table de la Cène, à Rome*. Père Machault took this incident in the life of St. Ignatius from J. Nieremberg's *Life of the saint*. L. iv.

can tell the divine effects produced by Holy Communion in Ignatius' heart all on fire, when considering at the altar that the Son and the Mother are but one flesh and one blood, or, at least, that the Son is a part of the Mother, he feasted on the delicious thought, that in the Eucharist he received not only the Flesh and the Blood of Jesus, but in a goodly share the flesh and the blood of Mary also, as the Blessed Virgin herself disclosed to him in a notable vision."*

It is a doctrine received in our own day and taught by all, that Mary is the universal dispensatrix of the graces of her Divine Son.† In Jesus Christ, as in the Head of the Church, resides the plenitude of every grace. In Mary, also, there is a certain proportionate plenitude, founded on that of Jesus Christ, of which it is, as it were, the conduit, and which suffices for the salvation of the entire world.

"We say that Mary is full of grace for three reasons: . . . the third is, that she is commissioned to pour out grace upon all mankind. It is very much for a saint

*T. ii., p. 564.

†Throughout this chapter we shall quote from St. Alphonsus di Liguori.—*Glories of Mary*, ch. v., vi., and vii.

to be able to obtain the salvation of several souls confided to him; but the highest degree of power would be, to have sufficient grace for the salvation of the whole world. Now, this is the power that dwells, both in Jesus and in Mary, for in every spiritual danger, we can obtain safety from the glorious Virgin. In every virtuous work, she can help us. She herself says: 'In me is all hope of life and salvation.'"—(*Ecclus.* xxxiv., 25.) *

This plenitude of grace has caused Mary to be called the mystical neck through which passes to the members of Jesus Christ all the supernatural influence sent them by that august Head. *In Christo fuit plenitudo gratiae sicut in capite influente; in Maria sicut in collo transfundente.*† St. Bernardin says: "Since Mary has given to the world Jesus Christ, the Author of Grace, all the vital influences that flow into His mystical body, pass through Mary."‡

St. Germain, of Constantinople, supports his words on this truth when he

*St. Thomas, *in Salut, Angel.*

†Contenson, quoted by St. Liguori.

‡Per Virginem a capite, Christi vitales gratiæ in ejus corpus mysticum transfundantur, a tempore quo virgo mater concepit.

says: "No one, O Mary, receives any grace except through thee."* St. Bernard gave utterance to this beautiful and well-known word: "Let us love, let us love the Most Blessed Virgin with all our heart, for such is the will of her Son, who wants us to receive everything through her."†

Mary is not only the mystical neck, but the channel, the aqueduct, without which the world would perish for want of the waters of divine life. If it was so long deprived of grace, it was because that divine channel had not yet been established between God and man. "But," adds St. Bernard, "Mary was given to the world as an equeduct, by which God's graces incessantly flow to the earth. What honor, what love does not Our Lord oblige us to render her, since He has filled her with the plenitude of all good in such a way that, if we have some hope, some grace, some chance of salvation, we have it all from Mary!"‡

Contenson places on the dying lips of Jesus these merciful words: "O men, behold your Mother! My Wounds are the

**Serm. de Zona Mariæ.*

†*De Aquæductu.*

‡*Ibid.*

sources of grace, but their streams, their currents, are spread abroad only by the channel of Mary.”

“Mary is, therefore, the Sovereign of heaven and of earth. She has special dominion over all creatures,” says Suarez.* The Church calls her Queen and Mistress, and the Fourth Ecumenical Council solemnly proclaimed her “The Sovereign of all Christians.”

From all these magnificent titles given to Mary, and which testify to her unbounded power, there results for us an absolute necessity to claim her intercession. Her meditation is not only useful, but it is necessary in the work of salvation.

“Certainly,” says St. Liguori, “we do not say that God cannot, we say that God will not, grant us grace without the intercession of His Mother.”

“Jesus is the only Meditator of justice who can ask in His own name, and in consideration of His own merits and His own rights. Mary herself obtains what she asks only through the merits of the Saviour, and in virtue of prayer made in the name of Jesus Christ; nevertheless, such is the order freely determined by

*T. xix., d. xxii., sect. i.

God, that Mary's mediation always intervenes in the dispensation of grace. This order admirably restores the plan vitiated and destroyed by sin; for as a man and a woman concurred in our loss, a man and a woman ought to labor together to redeem us.*

"And while God willed to create all things out of nothing, by His power alone, He has willed to re-establish nothing without Mary's concurrence."†

The presence in the economy of Redemption of this sweet and beneficent Mediatrix, is a mystery full of love and mercy. "Toward her," says St. Bernardin, "all men who ever have existed, who do exist, or who ever will exist, cast their suppliant glances as to the means of their salvation and the work of the ages."‡ And it is with good reason, "for all the holiness, all the honor, all the glory that have been, that are, and that will be conferred on any creature whatsoever, from Adam even to the consummation of time, on the Apostles, the Prophets, the just, and the humble of heart, have come to us from thee, O thou immaculate One,

*St. Bernard, in *Signum magn.*

†*Orat.* li.

‡*Serm.* in *Pentec.*

and it is in thy plenitude that every creature rejoices.”*

From the foregoing authority, we may draw conclusive inference, with regard to the subject under consideration. If all good things come to us by Mary, the Eucharist, which is the Gift of gifts, is also the fruit of her mediation. This conclusion is but just. We shall explain it, by studying the foundations of Mary's power. We shall see that what constitutes her authority over the graces of Redemption, forever establishes her power over all those of the economy of the Holy Eucharist.

“If Mary,” says Suarez,† “is called to dispense all the graces that Redemption has acquired for us, it is because of the special manner in which she co-operated in that great work. For although she has not, indeed, properly speaking, purchased us, and in rigorous justice merited anything for us, nevertheless, she was the co-Redemptrix of the human race (*adjutrix redemptionis*, says Blessed Albertus Magnus), by her special co-operation in our salvation. Mary did, in effect, give to the Saviour from her own substance

*S. Ephrem, quoted in the *Life of M. Olier*.

†T. xix., d. xxiii., sect. i.

the Sacred Humanity, which formed the price of our purchase. She offered It for our salvation. She desired our Redemption, and she procured it by her prayers and petitions. Hence, her titles: "Cause of our Salvation," "Life of the World," "Redemptrix," "Hope of Creatures," which the Fathers lavish on her.*

Mary's participation in our salvation consisted chiefly in furnishing to Jesus Christ His Flesh and His Blood, which He offered on the Cross for our ransom. This is the reason of Mary's power over all the graces purchased by that Precious Blood.

"By listening to Mary, and granting all her requests," says St. George of Nicomedia, "Jesus Christ only discharges a debt to His Mother: *Filius quasi exsolvens debitum, petitiones tuas implet.*"†

"Courage, confidence, O Mary! Fearlessly petition for us. Thou hast for debtor Him who gives to all. We are God's debtors; but to thee, O Mary, God Himself is indebted."‡

*A certain author tells us that in the writings of the Fathers, Mary is called Co-redemptrix twenty-two times. †Or. *de Sim. et Anna.*

‡Euge, euge, quæ debitorem habes filium qui omnibus mutuatur: Deo enim universi debemus, tibi autem etiam ille debitor est. (S. Methodius, *Orat. B. M. V.*)

Jesus Christ a debtor to Mary?—In what?—“Ah, yes!” exclaims the Bishop of Tulle, “He is in debt to her. He owes to her all that He has gained by His Incarnation.”* Truly, Mary has good reason to sing: *Magnificat*, “I have exalted, I have magnified the Lord!” She has magnified Him with that Flesh, with which He was able to merit, to die, and to save the world; with that Blood, by means of which He acquired the glory of His name and universal royalty over angels and men; with that Sacred Humanity, in which He glorifies His Father, and wins for us grace and glory. During four thousand years, the Word of God longed for that Flesh. He could not find it, “for all flesh had corrupted its way.”† But behold Mary appears! She offers Him pure blood, blood worthy of being associated to Him in unity of person, sufficiently pure to become the Blood of God, to cleanse the whole world, and to regenerate the fallen race of Adam. He darts eagerly into Mary’s womb, His love urging Him on with giant steps: *Exultavit ut gigas!*

*Discourse for the Coronation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

†Gen. vi., 12.

He is born, He grows, He dies, He saves us in His Blood. Having thus satisfied His infinite love for His Father and for us, having procured for His Father greater glory than He could ever have rendered without that Body, having been able to love man with a love such as He never could have bestowed upon him had He not taken a Heart of Flesh, and come to the school of misery to learn mercy,* what gratitude does He feel toward His Mother, who gave Him that Body and that Heart, who gave Him the means of manifesting His love in the work of Redemption! "Ah! My Mother," He seems to say to her, "take all My merits. All My graces are thine. It is by thy help that I have acquired them. Thou didst furnish the capital. Dispose, as its Mistress, of the revenue that it produces."

Redemption is continued in the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist that it is applied. God is again glorified therein, man again saved by the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ. The Son of God there satisfies His consuming love for man, there exhausts the means inspired by His

*Ep. ad Hebræos: Tentatus per omnia. . . ut misericors fieret.

zeal, for the glory of His Father;—but without Mary there would be no Eucharist! Without her Jesus would never be our nourishment, never give us His Flesh to eat, His Blood to drink!

And yet, He came down from heaven to be our Bread in the Sacrament, to be the Life of the world: *Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et panis quem ego dabo caro est pro mundi vita.** During His life, He was pressed by consuming desire to institute the Sacrament, and to fulfil the end for which He came: *Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum.* But that plan of His wisdom, those desires of His Heart, He can accomplish only by the Flesh that He took from Mary: “For,” says St. Augustine, “it was the flesh that ruined us, and it is the flesh that must work our restoration.”—Suarez also, says that, for the remedy to be suited to the disease, it was necessary that Jesus should give us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink.

Again, Jesus Christ can do all that in the Sacrament only by the Flesh that He owes to Mary. Here again, as in the Incarnation, He is her debtor, and He has

*St. John vi.

only one means by which He can worthily discharge His debt of gratitude, and that is, to give over to Mary the dispensing of all the graces comprised in the Eucharist, as He remitted into her hands the entire and absolute disposal of all His other graces. And that is just what He has done. Who can doubt it for an instant? We shall, a little further on, specify which are the principal graces that Mary draws for us from the Eucharistic treasures of Our Lord. We are, at present, anxious to establish, on a still more magnificent foundation, Mary's power over the Eucharist, the source of our confidence, the motive of the fervent prayers that we address to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

All the created graces that the Sacrament of the Eucharist comprehends, are in Mary's hands. But even that is little. In the Sacred Host, is the Author Himself of grace, Jesus, the infinite and eternal God. Now, *Mary has a mother's power over Jesus in the Eucharist*, the power of a Mother! She gives, she dispenses, also, the Uncreated Grace, and that is what constitutes her the Mistress, the Lady of the Blessed Sacrament! Blessed Albertus Magnus says: "Through Mary come to

us all the grace, created and uncreated, that the world has ever received, or will receive: *Per ipsam exivit quidquid gratiae unquam creatum vel increatum in hunc mundum venit vel venturum fuit.***

Here we find in the Eucharist that law, admirable and full of love, which the Holy Gospel proclaims on every one of its pages, Jesus giving Himself through Mary. It is formulated in these typical words of St. Matthew, Chapter ii.: *Et invenerunt Puerum cum Maria matre ejus.*

This law is invariable, so much so that Richard of St. Laurence felt authorized to place on the lips of Our Lord the following words: "No one can come to Me unless My Mother draws him to Me."† St. Bernard, also, predicts certain failure to him who thinks to find the Son without the Mother: "*Nunquam invenitur Christus nisi cum Maria, nisi per Mariam; frustra igitur quærit, qui cum Maria invenire non quærit.*"‡

Still more, according to the same saint, to wish to remain apart from Mary, to separate Jesus from His Mother, is a

*Quoted in the *Life of M. Olier.*

†*De Laud., B. M. V.*

‡*Spec. Mar., lect. vi.*

crime. "Not only they," he says, "sin against Mary who positively insult her, but they, also, who do not call upon her, who neglect her necessary intercession."

Mary is the treasury of Jesus Christ. It is He Himself whom she possesses, He Himself whom she gives: *Thesauraria Jesu Christi*.*

Bossuet, in beautiful words, declares the law necessitating the union between Jesus and Mary, the mission of Mary to give Jesus to the world in all His mysteries. He quotes St. Thomas's words: "Mary has received so great plenitude of grace, that she approaches nearer than any other creature to the Author Himself of grace, and having once conceived and brought forth Him who is the Author of grace, she has, by so doing, poured grace into all human nature." Here we touch upon a main point of the mystery, upon the basis which forever associates Mary to Jesus, which renders her the dispensatrix of Jesus Himself. "It was necessary," says Bossuet (Serm. III. upon the Conception), "that Mary should concur by her charity in giving its Redeemer to the world. As this truth is well known, I shall not pause to demonstrate it to

*Albertus Magnus.

you; but I shall not suppress a consequence which, perhaps you have not sufficiently considered. It is that God, having willed to give us Jesus Christ through the Blessed Virgin, that order is not changed, and the gifts of God are without repentance."

It is, then, Mary's great mission to give Jesus to the world in all His manifestations, in all His mysteries, as she did at first in the Incarnation. If we open the holy Gospel, we shall there find this truth as clear as day.

Jesus desires to go to sanctify John by His presence, and it is Mary who carries Him over the journey. She is the Sacrament of Jesus, and her maternal voice is the channel of the Saviour's divine influence upon the Precursor. Mary gives Jesus to St. John the Baptist.

Some months later, the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, and in them of all nations, find the Child with His Mother,—the Infant-God on the lap, in the arms of Mary, who presents Him to their adoration. Mary gives Jesus to the world.

Forty days have scarcely passed since His Birth, when Mary presents Jesus in the Temple. She, in very truth, offers Him to God, despoiling herself in His

hands of all her rights as a mother over her Babe. She gives Him for the salvation of the world, ratifying by this public offering the sacrifice that Jesus had made of Himself to His Father from the first moment of His conception. "Priest of the New Law," says St. Epiphanius, "Mary gives her Son in sacrifice for us."

Again, on the day of His first public manifestation, it is Mary who draws Jesus forth from His obscurity. She gives Him to the world as the Prophet who is about to announce the mercies of the Lord, and she wins for Him the assured faith of His first disciples, until then wavering: *Et crediderunt in eum discipuli ejus.** At Cana, it is Mary who again gives Jesus.

But, upon Calvary!—Ah! it is there that Mary truly gives Jesus to us!—"Not only," says Père Ventura, "did Mary, in imitation of the Father, consent, but she ardently desired, she efficaciously willed, that her well-beloved Son should charge Himself with our faults, in order that we might share in His righteousness."—"And let us not for an instant doubt," St. Bona-

*John iii.

venture dares to say, "that Mary's soul would not have longed to immolate her Son for the salvation of the human race, if the executioners had failed to do their work, for she desired to be in all things conformed to the Father, who had delivered His Son, and to the Son, who immolated Himself for us."*

To understand Mary's participation in this gift of Jesus on Calvary, let us consider St. Epiphanius's words, as quoted by Cornelius à Lapide:† "As Jesus immolating Himself on the Cross, pays to the Father the just price of our ransom, so Mary, by her offering of Him, co-operated as far as she could in the sacrifice of her Son, and consequently in our salvation, for Christ belongs to Mary, He is her riches, her all: *res et peculium Virginis*. He belongs to her as a son to his mother. He is a part of His Mother, that is to say, the flesh of her flesh, the bone of her bone."—St. Bernard, therefore, did not hesitate to say: "Mary so loved the world that she gave it her only Son. She did not spare her own Son, but she delivered Him for us all!"‡

**La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes.*

†*Comment. in Prov., c. viii.*

‡Quoted by Ventura.

Ah, well, then, will it be only in the Eucharist that Jesus will not be given to us by Mary, that He will not come to us by Mary? Will the Holy Eucharist be the only manifestation of His love in which she will not be the means, the instrument? After having given Jesus to us in the Incarnation as the principle of grace, will she not give Him in the Eucharist as the application of that grace?

Mary is our Mother, our Mother in every sense of the word; she has brought us forth in incomparable sorrow; she longs to fulfil toward us all the duties of a mother. It belongs, then, to her to feed us, and our Bread is the Eucharist; consequently, it is for her to cut our Bread for us, for her to give It to her children.

It is not possible that Mary could be excluded from this last and perpetual Gift of Jesus in His Sacrament; on the contrary, everything connected with It, claims her intervention.

We know that, for thirty years, Jesus was subject to His Mother at Nazareth. Has He now shaken off the yoke? No, certainly not! In heaven Mary is still the Mother of Jesus, and when she asks anything of her Son, gloriously seated on His

throne, she does it rather as a mother who commands than as a suppliant who entreats. All legitimate relations are perfected in glory. There the son is more filial, the father more paternal, the spouse more loving, the friend more faithful. Jesus must, then, glorify and exalt the filial submission with which He honored His Mother here below, and in heaven, as in the Sacrament, our faith and our love tell us, He is still subject to His Mother. Suarez teaches that Mary always holds toward Jesus the relation of maternity, and that, for all eternity; it is, then, true to say that Jesus Christ, the Man-God, was engendered of Mary, and that she is His Mother.

Filled with amazement at the immense share which Jesus gives to Mary in all His works, we say with St. Peter Damian: "It is the invariable design of God to do everything in union with Mary, by Mary, and in Mary; so that just as nothing was made without Him, so nothing can be restored without her: *Per ipsam, cum ipsa et in ipsa, totum faciendum decernitur, ut sicut sine ipso nihil factum est, ita sine illa nihil reffectum sit!*"—(Serm. de Annunt.)

O Mary, is it not true to say that it is

to thee we owe the Eucharist? It was thy prayers, together with the loving desire of thy Son, that obtained for us Its first institution. It is thou who dost still continue to the Church the daily gift that He makes of His Flesh and His Blood. It belongs to thee, O Blessed Mother, to give thy Jesus! It is for thee to make Him known in His Sacrament, to make Him loved, to defend Him! Do thou give Him to us, for we wish to owe Him only to thee, O loving Mother!

O dear reader, always seek Jesus with Mary! Ask from Mary your Host of each day. Ask of her the graces that prepare for the Eucharist, the graces that flow from It. If by the numerous reasons that we have given, you are not yet convinced that Jesus is found only in Mary's arms, remember those words of St. Bonaventure: "Jesus is the flower that sprang from the root of Jesse. If you wish to pluck that blessed flower, bend over by your prayers the branch that bears it, and seek our Eucharistic Jesus only on the virginal bosom of Mary: *Si hunc florem habere desideras, virgam precibus flectas!*"—(Spec. M. V., lect. vi. c. xii.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCIPAL EFFECTS OF MARY'S POWER.

We have seen that all comes to us through Mary, and we have inferred, as a natural consequence, that we owe to her the ineffable gift of the Eucharist, and all the graces which that Sacrament contains. We must study still more closely the part that Mary had in the Gift that was given us for the first time at the Last Supper, we must see what are the special graces which Eucharistic piety may hope for from Mary in its daily practice toward the Blessed Sacrament. In other words, is it to Mary that we owe the first institution of the Eucharist? Is it to her that we owe the Gift that has been made to us with so great liberality in all places and in all times?

First, let us recall this principle, namely, that the Eucharist is the extension, the final end, the crowning-point, and the application of the Incarnation. It will be permitted us to apply to Mary's relations with the Eucharist the laws which regulate her relations with the first mystery. Mary knew beforehand, she desired, she hastened by her prayers

the Incarnation of the Word. She merited in part the realization of that mystery of love, and it was for her, above all, for love of her, that the Word became Man. She co-operated most admirably in that divine work, and her co-operation became the foundation of her universal power in the order of grace.

These principles are established by St. Thomas and by Suarez, for whom they are incontestable. Let us endeavor to apply them to the Eucharistic order.

If, before Its institution, Mary knew of the mystery of the Eucharist, she ardently desired Its accomplishment. She prayed for It, and it was her prayers which, united to the inflamed will of her Divine Son, obtained It for us. We have seen in a preceding chapter, that Mary in giving her blood to the Word, co-operated in forming the Eucharist. We shall now give our attention to the question, whether the desires and the prayers of Mary exerted any influence over the will of Jesus, and whether, above all, it was in view of His Mother that God became bread as He has become flesh.

Some remarks upon the supernatural light and the knowledge of the Blessed Virgin will be useful here.

“From her Immaculate Conception,” says Suarez,* “Mary, prevented by grace, turned to God by a free disposition of her will, and she knew Him more perfectly than any other creature. During the whole of her infancy, she had the most perfect use of her reason, illumined by the splendors of faith. Her whole life was an uninterrupted contemplation of God’s mysteries. Her intelligence never ceased to act. She was ever in actual meditation of the divine magnificence. Her teacher was the Holy Spirit Himself, and it was from Him that she received by infusion her first notions of the divine mysteries, and the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence, which admirably aided those first ideas. The angels, also, notably St. Gabriel, were commissioned to instruct her in certain things.” “Men taught her nothing,” says St. Bernard.† “It ought not to be that the Mother should appear ignorant of her Son’s designs. On the contrary, it was proper that she who would one day instruct the Apostles and the Evangelists, should, from the first, and by a divine light, be herself instructed in the mysteries of her Son.”

*T. xix., d. xix., sect. ii.

†Homil. sup. Missus est.

Follow Mary to the Temple. By the assiduous reading, joined to the constant meditation, of the Holy Scriptures, she increased her knowledge, and penetrated all the secrets of the Old Law, the figures of the Patriarchs, the mysterious words of the Prophets.* “Mary,” says Origen, “possessed perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, and constant meditation had revealed to her all the oracles of the prophecies.”†

If this was so, when Mary prayed before the Ark, did not the Manna contained in it reveal to her that the day would come when we should possess the true Manna descended from heaven? When morning and evening, she saw the lamb sacrificed in the Temple, did she not understand that it was the figure of the Lamb immolated from the beginning, and which would be offered at all times and in all places? She had read Malachias,‡ and she knew that the figurative sacrifice of the Temple was no longer pleasing to God, that the goats, the bulls, and rams were not the pure oblation which would appease His offended majesty, and at-

*Suarez *loc. citat.*

†Orig., quoted by Suarez.

‡Malach. iii.

tract His looks of complacency. The Scriptures are full of the most expressive figures of the Eucharist. For Mary these figures were no longer veiled.

The Incarnation was effected in her womb. The Word Incarnate there offered Himself continually to His Father. "At that moment," says Suarez, "as later in the most important circumstances of the Saviour's life, Mary was admitted to see God face to face."* She beheld the mysteries in the light of the Word, as they are seen in the heavenly home, in order, says St. Bernard, that He who was known only to the Father in heaven, should be known, also, by His Mother on earth. "At the moment in which Mary uttered her *fiat*, by the clear understanding that she had of the Prophets, and still more, by the abundant effusion of celestial light that flooded her soul, she saw as in a mirror, and one after another, all the events, all the mysteries, which were to fill the life of the Son whom she had conceived."†

Doubtless, Mary did not know at that time all the circumstances, the mode, the

*Suarez here cites Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas of Villanova, and others.

†Ventura, *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des Hommes*, chap. iii.

numerous mysteries of the Real Presence. But she knew enough to adore the immense love that Jesus testifies for us therein, enough henceforth to look upon her Son as the Bread that was to nourish her old age, and which was to return to her in Sacramental Communion the flesh that she had given Him in His Incarnation.

What! Mary not know in advance, Mary not comprehend the mystery of the Eucharist, when her Son was born at Bethlehem, the House of Bread!—when she laid Him upon that straw, of which He was the Divine Wheat! Ah! let us elevate our ideas, let us entertain sentiments worthy of this incomparable creature in whom all is marvelous!

“The Mother of Jesus,” says Père Ma-chault,* “knew that He had come to be the Saviour of men, as much by the instruction that she had received from the angel, as by the interior light of the Holy Spirit. She knew that one of the principal means that He would employ for our salvation, would be to make Himself in the Eucharist the Bread of our soul; consequently, she desired to give Him to us in that quality. This was the sweet

*T. II., p. 551.

meditation of St. Augustine, who, contemplating Jesus in His early infancy at His Mother's breast, addressed to her this devout prayer: "O Virgin, suckle thy Son, nourish our Bread! *Lacta, O Virgo, panem nostrum.**—That Infant sheltered in thy arms, whom thou dost press to thy bosom, thou knowest, O Virgin, will be our Bread. He is as yet too young. He must reach maturity, He must attain full growth, in order to serve for our nourishment. Take care, then, to feed Him. Give Him the breast, that He may grow. Reflect that, by suckling and feeding thy Son, thou art suckling and feeding all the Faithful, whose milk and nourishment He will one day be in the Eucharist."

Thenceforward, all Mary's care, all her labor and solicitude are to watch over our Bread for us, to protect for us our Eucharist.

O what prayers, what sighs, what burning desires, rise from her heart and call for the institution of the Eucharist! She is united to her Son and to her God by grace and love, but she no longer feels Him living in her womb as during the nine months that she carried Him.—"O

**Serm. de Annunt.*

my Son, return, return into my womb, that I may again feel Thee living therein! But since Thou canst return only by the Eucharist, hasten, hasten the institution of that august Sacrament!"

Jesus seems to have wished to hear in advance the prayers of His Mother, and His first miracle will be a figure, perhaps the most striking, of the Holy Eucharist. "See," says a pious author,* "with what ardor Mary urges her Son to institute the Adorable Sacrament: *Vinum non habent!*" But the hour had not yet come. Jesus had to acquire, by His apostolic labor, His weariness, His sufferings, and His death, the infinite treasures of grace and mercy that He desired to inclose in the Eucharist, in order to apply them all at once. Let us say with Pinna† and his commentator that, if Mary pressed Jesus in this way at Cana, it was because, since the day of His Birth, He had pledged Himself to His Mother to institute this Sacrament of Himself, and Mary did but claim the fulfilment of His promise. However that may be, Jesus' first miracle is one that announces and prefigures the Eucharist. And it was performed at

*Conti, *Aquila Eucharisticus*.

†Pinna, *Ethol. DXCIX., in Eccles.*

Mary's request. It seems as if Jesus wished to comply, as far as He could at the moment, with the ardent prayers of His Mother for the Eucharist. Ah! the guests at Cana believed in Him, says the Sacred Text, but they did not understand Him! Mary comprehended its import. She knew that three years would not pass before the Eucharistic Transubstantiation, prefigured by the change of water into wine, would crown the marvels of Jesus' power and love.

If all this does not suffice to prove that Mary knew of the Eucharist long in advance, it must, at least, be allowed that she believed in the famous promise made at Capharnaum, and that she fully comprehended the words: "I am the living bread. I am the bread come down from heaven. I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world, is my flesh."* Yes, Mary knew, and because she knew, she desired, she prayed. With Salazar,† Père de Machault,‡ and Père Bernardin, of Paris,§ we say that was to her prayers, it was

*John vi.

†*Comment in Prov. viii.*

‡T. ii.

§*La Communion de Marie, Mère de Dieu.*

for her sake, it was for her, above all, that Jesus instituted the Eucharist.

Suarez, supporting his arguments on St. Thomas, proves that the Holy Fathers of the Old Law merited, by their prayers and their ardent desires, not the Incarnation of the Word, which, being the cause and the foundation of all graces, could not be merited, but the manifestation and the accomplishment of the Incarnation; and more than that, they merited even some of the merciful circumstances that accompanied its accomplishment.*

But Mary surpassed them all. She was, in all truth, by the graces with which she had been prevented, and by her constant co-operation with them, worthy to become the Mother of God. The Church, following the Fathers, declares that she had prepared in her womb a tabernacle worthy of the Son of God.†

“It was the most holy purity, the most pure holiness of her heart,” says St. Anselm, “that merited for her to become the perfect reparatrix of the lost human race.”

St. Bernardin says, “The Word became incarnate more for Mary, than for all the rest of the human race: *Plus venit pro*

*Q. xi., art. ii.; d. xii., sect. vi.

†Brev. Rom. *Orat. ad Antiph. B. V. M.*

*ipsa redimenda, quam pro omni alia creatura.”**

Ah, yes! if Jesus instituted the Eucharist, it was more for His Mother than for us. She was His principal end in view, and it was on her account that we received this Adorable Sacrament.

Read on this chapter the admirable work of Père Bernardin, of Paris, and be convinced of this truth.

We shall review some of his reasons: In all things God chooses the noblest ends. Now, Mary, by her graces, her holiness, her title of Mother of God, is more worthy to arrest the thought of Jesus than any other creature.

If the Eucharist is the effect of His immense love for the Church, Mary is more beloved by Jesus than the entire Church.†

If it is the love that He hopes to receive in return for that magnificent Gift, the honors that will be given It, the fruits of holiness which that Sacrament will bring forth, that led Him to institute It, Mary alone will love Him more than all those that will come after her down

**Serm. de B. M. V., s. iv., a. iiii., c. iiii.*

†See Suarez, *De Causis Meritorum B. M. V.* t. xix.

through the ages; she alone will honor Him more than we ever can; and the Eucharist produced in her more fruit than in all the saints that will ever live!

Study the eight reasons that the Council of Trent gives for the institution of the Eucharist. They appertain to Mary by many more titles than to us. One alone does not belong to her. Having never been tainted by sin, or the inclination to sin, in her the Eucharist is not an antidote to sin; but, we must acknowledge it, this negative effect of the Eucharist proceeds only from our misery. It is not a title by which this Sacrament is to be merited, which is the Sacrament of the living; and if this effect is not produced in Mary, it is for her a glory, very far from being a reason to exclude her from participation in this Mystery.

Jesus, says the Sacred Council,* desires to scatter profusely the riches of His love. But what object is more worthy than Mary? In whom will His love find such correspondence as in her?

Jesus wishes to establish in the Sacrament a memorial of all His works. For whom will He do it more gladly than for

*Sess. xiii., c. ii.

her who co-operated therein in so admirable a manner?

Jesus desires that, in consecrating the Eucharist, we show forth His death. But who better than she who stood at the foot of the Cross, and who suffered with Him one same martyrdom, can recall His death, can reproduce it in herself, can immolate herself in union with the Victim of the altar?

Jesus instituted this Sacrament to be the spiritual nourishment of Christians. But of what Christians? Of those that live always of His life by sanctifying grace, for He is the Living Bread. Now, in whom will the spiritual life ever attain perfection even approaching that of Mary?

The Eucharist is a sign of spiritual union with Jesus. But is there a creature more closely united with Him, who is more strictly one with Him than His Blessed Mother, whose thoughts, whose desires, whose will, whose whole life is absorbed in Him?

Lastly, Jesus desires that the Eucharist should be the pledge of future glory, the leaven of the resurrection. But Mary was to rise in body as well as soul. She must not know the corruption of the tomb, and

so it is for her, above all, that it is true to say: "He who eats Me, I will raise him up in My glory."

One reason more: "I have desired," said the Saviour in the effusion of His love, "I have desired with desire to eat this Pasch with you!"

What! eat with us, with us poor creatures? with us so lacking in virtue?—Yes, Jesus sighs for our hearts, those tabernacles which sin, alas! has so often defiled, and which are warmed and purified by so little love! But, O my God, what was Thy desire to eat that Pasch with Mary, to dwell in the tabernacle of her heart, holy, pure, immaculate, adorned with the most beautiful virtues, and burning with love?—O my Saviour, the saints prepared themselves by penance to receive Thee, the martyrs by prisons and tortures, and still they are unworthy of Thy Majesty. But, behold Mary! She is worthy of Thee. Thou hast already dwelt in her. Thou knowest her heart. Thou makest therein Thy delights. Ah! institute the Eucharist. Re-enter into her. Come reside in this dwelling which is thine, which the enemy has never taken, never laid waste, never despoiled of its beauty! Satisfy Thy desires. Insti-

tute the Eucharist for Thy Mother. Let us receive It on her account. Let the abundance of her love, of her virtues, indemnify Thee for what Thou dost not, alas! receive from us. Yes, because Mary communicated, I understand Thy desires to institute the Eucharist, and Thy eyes were fixed upon Thy Mother when Thou didst exclaim in the inebriation of Thy love: "*Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum!*"

Let us conclude with Père Bernardin, of Paris: "We are not rash in affirming that, among all the Faithful, Mary was present to the mind of Jesus Christ when He instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. He rejoiced to return to His Mother the Body that He had received from her. It was to Mary principally that this great miracle of His love referred. Suarez declares that the primary cause of the institution of Eucharist was Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It was on this account that St. Gregory of Nyssa calls the Eucharist the *Mystery of the Virgin*, Mary being the chief reason for the Divine Power's doing so great things in this Mystery."*

**La Communion de Marie, Mère de Dieu.*
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CHAPTER V.

OTHER EFFECTS OF MARY'S POWER.

If Mary thus inclined her Son to institute the Sacrament, and to make to us at the Last Supper this first gift of Himself, now that It is instituted, she has received the merciful dispensation of It. "Mary's liberality is not exhausted," says Père de Machault; "It extends to our own time, and shows itself daily in constant exercise. The Holy Mass and the Holy Communion, which are continually renewed are, as it were, the distribution of her riches, the daily gifts of our magnificent Queen, to which all the Faithful flock to take part."*

The principal foundation of this power for Mary is the union of her will with that of her Son. "The will of Mary," says Père de Machault again, "always united to that of her Son, contributes, on her part, to all the gifts that He makes us of Himself at the holy altar. If it is true that, at every Mass, the Saviour is

*T. ii., p. 557.

the principal minister, the Blessed Virgin shares in this function of the Sovereign Priest, for she consents to the oblation that her Son makes of Himself. Her quality of Mother continues, and she gives Him to us every day at the altar as she gave Him long ago at the Last Supper and on Calvary. There was in the sacrifice of the Cross but one will common to Jesus and Mary; at the Mass, that same sacrifice renewed, it is the same will that still offers it."

Let us study in detail the Gift of Mary and what graces Eucharistic piety chiefly hopes for from Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sarrament.

1.—At every Mass, Mary gives her Son to be immolated. She immolates Him herself, uniting her will to that of Jesus, the principal Sacrificer. The act of Consecration is the act of that will common to both. It is, then, from Mary we must implore all the graces attached to the Holy Sacrifice, with her we must unite to assist at it well. It is she whom we must invoke, that the Christian observance of Sunday may be re-established in society; with her we must weep over the absence of the Faithful from Mass, in which state so many indifferent Christians stagnate;

and over the sacrilegious crimes committed in the oblation of the Divine Victim.

2.—Can Mary have a more lively desire at heart than to see us worthily and frequently approaching the Holy Table? Ah! *she* knows what we there receive, *she* comprehends all that a fervent Communion operates in a well-disposed soul. Listen to the pressing invitation of this Mother of increated Wisdom, and which the Church bids us repeat on each of her feasts.* She cries out from the hilltops, from the public roads and highways, near the gates of the city, in the most frequented places: “O men, it is to you that I raise my voice, to you that I utter this cry of my heart! Hearken to me! I love them that love me; and they that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me. With me are riches and glory, glorious riches and justice. The blessed Fruit of my womb is more precious than gold and precious stones, purer than choice silver. I have but one desire, to enrich them that love me, and fill up their treasures. O my children, blessed are they that keep near me, watching at

*Prov. viii.

my gate the moment of my going forth! He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord."

Again, she tells us: "All ye that love me, come to me. Eat and drink of my fruits, for my spirit that you will taste therein, and all my good and my inheritance that I will give you, will be to you sweeter than honey."

Among the Biblical figures of Mary, there are several which represent her inviting us to Holy Communion. Such is the table of the Temple upon which rested the loaves consecrated to the Lord. "Hail, Mary," says St. Ephraim, "spiritual table of faith, who dost offer the true Bread to the famished world!"—On these words Pinna remarks: "Why does this holy Doctor give to Mary the title of table instead of ark, since the Ark contained the miraculous manna?—Ah! it is because the Ark hid what it held; whilst the table exposed to view the food that was laid on it, and seemed to invite the guests to partake of it."—The same author says again: "It is because the Ark contained only manna, while the table holds not only bread, but all kinds of savory food and delicious drinks, also. Now, Mary, in offering Jesus to us in Holy Com-

munion, gives us a Bread which has in Itself all flavors, and which satisfies every desire.”*

In another place, Mary is compared to the lamp which ought, according to the Law, to be placed very near the table of the sanctuary. “What means this prescription?” asks Conti. “Without doubt, to light up that holy table and the sacred loaves that it holds. It is thus that Mary attracts us by the light of her inspirations, in order to show us the Eucharistic Bread which will make our delight.”

But a still more striking indication of Mary’s power over the dispensing of this ineffable grace of Communion, is the word of St. Peter: “As new-born babes, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation: *Quasi modo geniti infantes, rationabile lac concupiscite, ut in eo crescatis ad salutem.*”† Cornelius à Lapeire says that many interpreters understand by this spiritual milk the Eucharist, which in the early Church was given immediately after Baptism, and even to infants. The Eucharist has, indeed, the color of milk.

**Aquila Eucharist.*—Pinna, Ethol. DXCIX.

†I. Peter ii., 2.

Like milk, It is sweet to the taste, and like It, again, It marvelously nourishes the soul. St. Peter's expression, *Concupiscite*, "Desire ardently," shows us with what eagerness we ought to desire this spiritual milk. "Do you not see," says St. Chrysostom, "with what haste little infants seize the mother's breast? Ah! with still greater eagerness let us run to the source of this Blessed Beverage! Let us, like new-born babes, suck in the grace of the Holy Spirit."*

The Eucharist is, then, the milk of our soul. But how suggestive of Mary is this word milk! Who gives the milk to the babe but the mother? O Mary, give us that substantial Milk of our soul! In thy immense goodness, thou didst allow St. Bernard, one day, to draw near to thy bosom and, in a wonderful manner, to taste of the milk of thy breasts. Toward us thou art still more munificent! Thou dost give us in Communion a Divine Milk, God Himself changed into milk for our weakness, for our infancy, for, as St. John Damascene declares: "The Virgin's milk is changed into the Flesh of the Saviour, and it is that milk, that milk, it-

*Homil. lx. ad pop.

self, without doubt, that we receive at the Holy Altar: *Manat aliquid ex uberibus Virginis et in carnem vertitur Salvatoris; illud, inquam, absque dubietate, non aliud nunc de sacro altari percipimus.*"*

St. Augustine, glancing from the Cross to the Altar, knew not by which God testified the more love for him, and he exclaimed: "*Hinc pascor a vulnere, hinc lactator ab ubere*, Upon the Cross He opens to me His Heart; at the Altar, He presents to me the Breast, and feeds me with Divine Milk!"

Ask Mary, then, for this delicious Milk, and so realize the Prophet Isaias's word of love: "You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you: *Ad ubera portamini, et super genua blandientur vobis.*"†

Let us turn to Mary for Communion. Christian mothers, place your children under her protection, that she may prepare them for the greatest day of their life. Show them this event, their First Communion, as the great aim, the great end of their childhood. Teach them to

*Serm. xlv.

†Isaias lxvi., 12.

offer to Mary their prayers, their easy little duties of childhood, that she may form of them a bouquet for their First Communion. Make them join with you every day in begging Mary to give them her Divine Infant Jesus!

It is of Mary that we must implore the universal observance of Easter. Alas! who can express this dear Mother's sorrow when she sees her children persisting in dying of hunger far from the life-giving Banquet so lovingly offered them!

From Mary let us beg the supreme grace of receiving Holy Viaticum. Every day, when we say to Mary: "Pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death," let our desire be to obtain Viaticum for the terrible journey into eternity. Viaticum well received, means a good death. We shall fall asleep in the arms of Jesus, and awake upon His bosom in glory.

And all ye, pious souls, who have already the permission to communicate frequently, do you not sometimes feel a more lively hunger? You already have much, but you long for still more! Ah! it is that holy avidity excited in the soul by Him who has said: "He that eats Me, shall still hunger for Me"—And you dare

not ask, because you feel yourselves so unworthy of what you already possess!

Ah! turn to Mary. It is she who excites in you that eager hunger. She desires to satisfy it. She will incline the heart of your directors. They will of themselves offer you what you dare not ask. Mary has spoken a good word for you.

Finally, in all the circumstances of life, in sickness, on journeys, let us ask Mary for Communion. She will give It to us. Her desire to give us Jesus is more vehement than ours to receive Him. Her mission is to give Jesus.

3.—It is to Mary that is confided the care of the Real Presence of her Son Jesus in our tabernacles. The saints tell us that parents retain in heaven constant care over what belongs to them on earth, and especially over their children, who are, as it were, a part of themselves. Who can doubt that Mary's thoughts are constantly turned toward all that concerns the Body of her Son? Her glances follow Him to every place in which He is present by virtue of the Consecration. Her mission of universal Mother of all Christians enables her to embrace all places in her watchful gaze, know all the

individual actions of men. All are her clients, all are her children.

Again, it is Mary who gives to Jesus His name of Emmanuel, God with us, which is manifested in all its reality, in all its extent only by His permanent Presence in our tabernacles. The Saviour's other titles, such as, the Mighty, the Wonderful, come from His Divinity, from His Eternal Father. But Mary gives Him, by His human life, the power to be in truth the Emmanuel: *Nobiscum Deus*. In all our churches, at the side of the Emmanuel's little dwelling, there is the statue of the sweet Mother, as if still watching over, still guarding Him. What more touching? Alas! how often she is alone with Jesus, left in perfect solitude! Why do we not more frequently renew in her heart the joys of Bethlehem, when the Magi, the shepherds, the people came to adore their Infant-God, and to gaze with rapture upon His divine beauty, His heavenly charms? Mary, too, was consoled and rejoiced by those visits. She listened in admiration to the great things that were said of her child: *Et mirabantur super his quae dicebantur de illo*.* If the thought of relieving the Saviour's

*Luke ii.

solitude is not sufficient to excite us to visit Him daily and often, let the thought of the happiness that we may procure Mary, at least, attract us. We shall make two happy if we go 'often and devoutly to adore the Emmanuel!

4.—Guardian of the Emmanuel! Again, it is Mary who exposes Him for public adoration. It is to her prayers that we owe the Forty Hours and all those beautiful works of perpetual adoration, which have sprung up to rejoice the Church, and to sustain it in the rude struggles of our unhappy times. Mary herself says: "*Ego feci ut in coelis orietur lumen indeficiens*: I made rise in the heavens light that never faileth."*

Ah! that light that never fails we behold shining in the heavens of the Church! Raise your eyes, look above the altar, on that magnificent throne erected in this splendidly adorned sanctuary, and behold the true Light, the Sun, the Orient! It is to Mary that we owe this grace of Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

More than a century ago, when the Forty Hours, the solemn Exposition of three days, were celebrated in the Church

*Eccles. xxiv., 6.

only at rare intervals, a pious Jesuit of that time attributed its institution to Mary. He saw the figure of this august solemnity and its institution by Mary in the celebrated dream of the cup-bearer of the Egyptian king (Gen. xl., 12). Joseph revealed to him, as we know, that the three branches rising from the vine signified the three days of his captivity. "This vine," says Escobar, following Martin del Rio,* "is Mary, who sent forth from the treasury of her heart three branches, as it were, laden with celestial fruit, namely, the three days of the Forty Hours, during which she offers to the adorers of Jesus a delicious festivity in Holy Communion, and in the adoration, the most abundant graces."

We are, moreover, far from regarding as a simple coincidence that at Paris, the perpetual adoration, day and night, arose about the time of the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We owe it to her honor to say here that it was Mary who caused to rise in the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament that Sun which never sets, Jesus perpetually exposed.

We read in the *Life of Père Eymard*,

*T. ii. in *Ev.* I. viii., obs. vi.

that Mary herself prepared him for the foundation of that religious Society, whose only end is to expose perpetually the Most Blessed Sacrament, and to render to It public and solemn adoration. It was on the Feast of the Purification, February 2d, in the holy sanctuary of Fourvières, that the Blessed Virgin revealed to her servant her desire that he should found a Religious Order exclusively devoted to the Eucharist. Three years passed in painful efforts to carry out her wish. But the Immaculate Conception was hardly proclaimed, when Père Eymard received from Pius IX. the assurance that the project came from God, and that he should devote himself to it without delay.

The Perpetual Exposition, served by religious priests day and night, is the flower which expanded in the sun of the Immaculate Conception.

We confess with joy, O Mary, that it is to thee we owe our existence. Grant, O tender Mother, that this little Society may breathe in the service of its Divine King thy own sentiments. Multiply its sanctuaries. Let the adoration cease neither day nor night. Send to it adorers in spirit and in truth, priests of fire, men

who, after being inflamed upon the prie-Dieu, may traverse the whole world, spreading the fire of love which Jesus came to cast upon the earth, and which consumes Him in the Blessed Sacrament!

5.—But, alas! we must acknowledge it, the God of love receives many outrages in the Eucharist. He is treated with great contempt, or, to say the least, with thoughtlessness and indifference. He bitterly complained of it to Blessed Margaret Mary. He showed her His Heart, drenched with ingratitude, demanding of her consolation and reparation. Mary heard the complaint of her Son. She is the Mother of repairers, the Mother of those who compassionate, for her own love made her on Calvary one same victim with her Crucified Son. Later, after the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist had been taught in the Church, Mary saw the heretical Ebionites and Encratites rising up to deny It. False brethren profaned the Most Blessed Sacrament. She saw by supernatural light, for mothers instinctively foresee the misfortunes that threaten their children, all the outrages and ingratitude the Blessed Sacrament would receive down through the centuries. She spent the last years of her life

in reparation at the foot of the altar. It was she, too, who inspired the thought of the work *Maria Reparatrix*, whose members devote themselves to repairing, in union with Mary, the impiety, the sacrileges, which attack the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Give us, O Mother of pure love, to feel as thou dost, to compassionate with thee Jesus outraged in the Eucharist! Then our reparation will console His Heart: *Eia, Mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris, fac ut tecum lugeam!*

6.—Mary is commissioned to see that the Church is never wanting in the Eucharistic Bread. She is that true Sara,* charged by Abraham to prepare bread for the guests, and she eagerly obeys. Holy Scripture praises her maternal solicitude: “Like the valiant woman, she hath risen in the night, and given a prey to her household and victuals to her maidens.”† It is through her inspiration that Christians furnish the foundation that maintain the priests and the altars.

7.—It is Mary who multiplies churches: *Mulier sapiens aedificat domun* (Prov.

*Gen. xviii., 6.

†Proverbs xxxi.

xiv.), and in the Holy Scripture, we find her occupied in the holy house that she has built, preparing for us an inebriating banquet: *Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum.** In how many places, indeed, has Mary wrought prodigies, appearing in marvelous apparitions, most frequently to request the building of a church in certain places, where crowds of pilgrims, attracted by the extraordinary graces that she there lavishes, find the Holy Eucharist, and glorify It by the numerous Masses there said, the innumerable Communionss there made, and the fervent prayers there offered to God. Such is Mary's aim. Ah, how well does this most prudent Mother know how to attain it! Who can say the glory that the Blessed Sacrament has received, and does receive, every day in the sanctuaries of Loretto, of Laus, of La Salette, of Lourdes, of Notre-Dame des Victoires, and of so many other celebrated pilgrimages?

8.—It is Mary who keeps alive the courage of those souls that devote themselves to works of Eucharistic zeal. Who would not wish, in imitation of Mary preparing the linens for Jesus, weaving His linen

*Ibid. ix.

tunic, and later in the Cenacle, embroidering His corporals and the ornaments of His ministers, to unite in so sacred a work as is that for His tabernacles, or in that other so peculiarly Eucharistic, the lamp of the sanctuary?

Does a lamp burn in your country church? Is it olive oil that is consumed in it, according to the prescriptions of the Church? Attend to it in union with Mary. Think you, in the Cenacle she left that care to another?

Labor with her to adorn the altars, for she, "the valiant woman, hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands: *Operata est consilio manuum suarum.*"*

9.—It belongs to Mary to form good priests. She is called the Queen of the Priesthood, *Regina Cleri*, and not without reason. Although she never received the sacerdotal character, she possesses its spirit admirably, and she fulfils its functions. She offered her Son in the Temple, and she willingly immolated Him on Calvary. "Were the executioners wanting," says St. Bonaventure, "Mary's love would have led her to Immolate her Son

*Ibid xxxi.

herself for our salvation." This leads to the understanding of St. Epiphanius's saying: "The Virgin!—I call her the priest and the altar: *Virginem dico sacerdotem pariter et altare.*"*

It is of Mary that we must ask holy vocations. Let all be filled with her spirit, and the world will be saved. The Apostles did not receive the plenitude of the sacerdotal spirit until the day of Pentecost. But before dividing on the head of each one of them, the Holy Spirit rested entire above Mary, in order to show that they received Him from her superabundant plenitude.

10.—It was Mary who preserved intact in the Church the dogma of the Eucharist. Since the aberrations of the first heretics against the Eucharist, of whom St. Ignatius of Antioch complains in the first century, passing over the blasphemies of Berengarius and Luther, down to the radical negations of modern rationalism, it was Mary who vanquished the spirit of error: "*Gaude, Maria Virgo!* Rejoice, O powerful Virgin, thou hast crushed all heresies!" No matter of what form they were, they all tended to deny the truth of the

*Quoted by Cornelius in *Prov.* viii.

dogma of the Eucharist by attacking the Divinity and the Humanity of Jesus Christ. But Mary, "terrible as an army in battle array," intervened and triumphed over them.

11.—Mary forms the grace, Mary gives the spirit to all the virtues most necessary to Eucharistic piety. She is the Mother of faith in the Eucharist: *Ego mater agnitionis*. Faith is living only when nourished with the Bread of life and understanding. Mothers, Christian wives, who groan over the incredulity of a husband, of a cherished child, try to lead them into the presence of the Eucharist. If their faith is doubting, wavering only, and not extinguished, endeavor to introduce them more frequently to the source of light. The Eucharist is the centre of religion, the epitome of faith. He who believes in the Eucharist, believes all other truths, for all are continued in It.

For such conversions, go to Mary. It is the privilege, the happiness, of mothers to show their children to others. Do you see that woman whose bearing is so queenly? She is carrying in her arms her treasure, of which she is justly proud, her new-born son, swathed in linen of snowy whiteness. Approach her. Ask

her,—and what request could be more legitimate?—the favor of seeing her beautiful child. To gratify you, she carefully puts aside the delicate veils, and shows you her child. O Mary, that is thy prerogative, that is thy duty, even in the heavens! Does not the Church teach us to sing: “*Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.*” “And, Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, after this exile, show unto us, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!”—Behold for all eternity Mary, the radiant ostensorium of Jesus—*Nobis ostende!* O sweet Virgin, begin thy ministry in time, and show unto us, reveal unto us thy Son.* Give us to believe in the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Obtain for us the grace to know only Jesus, only our Eucharistic Jesus!

12.—If the Eucharist is the epitome and the centre of faith, It is, also, the most lovable, the most assured foundation of Christian hope.

Hope is established on the word of God, yet still more on His goodness, His love, and the proofs that He has given us of it. Ah! who could fall into despair

*The Bishop of Poitiers.—*Homil. sup. citata.*

when he beholds the Eucharist? What! if Jesus gives Himself here below so lavishly, in spite of all the sacrifices that it costs Him, will He not grant us the grace of salvation? What is the grace of salvation excepting the fruit of the Eucharist: *Qui manducat me, habet vitam æternam?* When I receive the Eucharist, I have in my possession the pledge of my eternal salvation: *Pignus futuræ gloriæ.* After all, heaven is only a created grace, but Jesus gives me in the Sacrament the Author of grace, Grace increated, the superabundant Bread of glory. Ah! who will give us to found our hope upon the Eucharist, to hope in the love of God there consumed with love? Mary will do it, for she is the Mother of holy hope: *Ego mater sanctæ spei.*

13.—*Et Pulchræ dilectionis.* The title which applies most sweetly to the Blessed Virgin of the Eucharist, is that which she takes in Holy Scripture, Mother of Beautiful Love. It is, then, of her that we must ask the love necessary to respond to the immense love of Our Lord in His Sacrament. Let us remark, the Eucharist being, above every other Sacrament, the love of Jesus Christ, love in Its origin, in Its institution, in Its end, we unite our-

selves to It, we sanctify ourselves by It, only by impregnating ourselves, as it were, with love which is Its nature. We must serve by love Him who gives Himself with so much love. No virtue is in such sympathy with the Eucharist as love. It is in this Sacrament that Jesus is truly Beautiful Love, and His Mother alone can give Him to us in that character: *Et pulchræ dilectionis*.

14.—Another fundamental grace in the reception of the Eucharist is purity of conscience. We know, but we forget too easily, how necessary it is for Holy Communion. Here it is that Mary's help will be a most precious advantage to us.

The unfortunate guests of the Gospel, who excited the indignation of the father of the household, were cast into exterior darkness, not because they were wanting in virtue, nor because they had defects, since, on the contrary, the lame, the sick, the poor, had been introduced to the banquet, but because they had not covered their rags with the wedding-garment.

“O,” says Pinna,* “where shall we, in our extreme misery, purchase a wedding-

**Ethol.* DXCVII.

garment? Mary has provided it. It is sufficient to be of her household, to be one of hers, to receive it." "All her domestics are clothed with double garments: *Omnes enim domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus.*" "This valiant woman," says St. Augustine, "never fails to clothe all her children, so that not one can complain."

15.—Another figure of Mary's help in Holy Communion is the vision of Isaias,* in which a seraph purifies his lips with a live coal, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs: *Forcipe tulerat de altari.*—"I am amazed," says Conti, "that a seraph, who is Himself all fire, should make use of an instrument to seize a coal, instead of taking it in his hand. But the mystery of that action is unveiled when I remember that this coal is the figure of the Eucharist: *Carbo est quo nos inflammet.*† Who would dare approach and receive this Sacrament without Mary's help, for she is the divine instrument by means of which alone we can worthily partake of it?"

It is, then, to Mary that we must confide the care of preparing our heart for

*Isaias vi., 6.

†S. Chrysostom.

Holy Communion, and from her blessed hands receive It. Her joy is, to introduce her Son into pure hearts, and to give Him to those that are inflamed, if it be with only a little love.

16.—We have enumerated the principal graces which we ought to hope from Mary in our relations with the Eucharist. It is by that, above all, that her power over this Sacrament is applied. This is her title to the invocation, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament. To obtain those graces, is for Mary a kind of merciful obligation; consequently, we must ask them of her with unlimited confidence. Of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, we beg the grace of suffering, the tears of repentance; from Our Lady of Victory, the grace to triumph over the enemies of our salvation; but Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament we invoke, to obtain all the graces of which we have need in the accomplishment of our Eucharistic duties.

We have not said all. The soul that faithfully meditates the magnificence of Mary, will discover many other treasures that enrich her. We have not spoken of the greatest of all the helps which Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament offers

us, namely, that of her own example. Did Mary live in the Eucharistic time? Did she receive Jesus in His Sacrament? Did she adore Him in His tabernacle? Did she, as we do, assist at the Holy Mass?—Yes, certainly, and it is this that we are going to prove in the following chapters. We must be convinced that, in all our Eucharistic duties, Mary is our model, and that we are doing what she herself did with such perfection. One word more, which will be like a corollary of what we have just said.

If the Eucharist and all our Eucharistic graces come from Mary, we must return to Our Lord, through her, all the fruits that they produce: *Date ei de fructu manuum suarum.** “It is only justice,” says St. Bernard, “that grace return to the source whence it flows, by the channel that brings it to us.”† Let us offer all to Our Lord by the hands of Mary, all our adoration, visits, Masses, Communions. Let us do all in union with Mary. Père Eymard had so comprehended this need to serve Jesus in the

*Prov. xxxi.

†Ep. clxxiv. Ut eodem alveo ad largitorem gratiæ gratia redeat, quo fluxit.

Eucharist with Mary, that he was not satisfied with writing the sweet meditations of the foregoing pages, but he wished that the imitation of her adoring life should become, as it were, living in a religious Society. He instituted *The Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, in order to make Mary live again at the foot of the Eucharistic Throne. Their mission, their grace, their end, and their perfection are, to serve the Most Blessed Sacrament through *Maria Adoratrix*, like her, and united to her. O noble thought of his grand soul! He makes us touch with the finger, as it were, the reality of that portion of Mary's life of which we are now going to treat, namely, her life of Adoration and Communion in the Cenacle. There she is truly our model and our Mother. There her life is summed up in this word, left by Père Eymard as a device to his children: "All for the love and the service of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament!"

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND FOUNDATION FOR OUR DEVOTION.—
 MARY'S LIFE AFTER THE ASCENSION.
 —SHE ASSISTS AT THE HOLY
 SACRIFICE.

Mary's life after the Ascension of Jesus is little known. The Gospel says only: "Faithful to the mission confided to him by the dying Saviour, St. John took Mary to his home, and treated her as his mother: *Et accepit eam discipulus in sua.*"

The Acts of the Apostles, also, say that the Apostles "persevered in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus."

What does tradition teach us on this point? We shall give it in a few words. Afterward studying what part the Eucharist played in the life of the first Christians, we shall be able to infer from it some consequences applicable to the Blessed Virgin.

In the first place, how many years did Mary live after her Divine Son returned to heaven? There is a difference of opinion. It is, however, certain that, having given birth to Our Lord at the age of fifteen, she was forty-nine years old when He left this earth. Some writers have

thought that she survived her Son only one or two years, but this opinion is not followed. Others, and they are the greater number, think that she broke her mortal bonds at the age of sixty-three, and that would be fourteen years after the Ascension of Jesus Christ.

“But,” says Suarez, “the opinion which appears to me the most probable and the true one, is that Mary lived seventy-two years in all, thus divided: fifteen years before Christ, thirty-three with Him, and twenty-four after His ascension.”*

This is the opinion of St. Epiphanius, of Cedrenus, and Baronius. Cornelius, also, sustains it, calling it very probable.†

Those twenty-four years were, without doubt, the most perfect of Mary’s life. Like to the way of the just, which increases in splendor up to the noonday, the life of Mary constantly developed to almost limitless perfection. All the graces of her life were stored up to that time. Faithful to every inspiration of the Holy Ghost, meriting by every act, Mary had in her hands, at that period, an immense capital of graces, accruing

*Q. xxxviii., a. iv., d. xxi., s. ii.

†*In Act. Apost.*

from revenues faithfully managed. It was the glorious appanage, the dowry for the life that she was now going to lead at the foot of the Holy Eucharist.

During those twenty-four years, says Suarez, Mary led a life entirely heavenly. She dwelt in the home of John, living far from intercourse with men, in continual meditation and incessant love.

The life of contemplation, however, did not absorb her so entirely as to prevent her, in quality of Mother of the Church, from watching over its interests, providing for its needs, and laboring in its service. Just as her active life in the past was spent in the corporal service of the Saviour, so now she devoted herself to a service entirely spiritual and still more perfect than the former.*

She instructed the Apostles and the Holy Evangelist Luke in the mysteries of the Faith, and in all that had passed at Nazareth, and it is believed that she often aided and consoled the Faithful with her counsels. St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to her, supplicating her to console and strengthen him in the struggles that he had to undergo for the Faith. The sweet Mother replied to him,

*Suarez, *loc. cit.*

as might be expected from a heart so tender and loving, promising him that she would soon visit Antioch with St. John.

Up to that time Mary had remained at Jerusalem, occupying the house adjoining the Cenacle, which John Marc had placed at the service of Jesus and His Disciples.*

She accompanied the Apostle to Ephesus, and there passed a certain time, as the Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council, held in that city, testify.

In what year did Mary return to Jerusalem? This date we cannot determine. It is certain, however, that her glorious death took place there in the fifty-seventh or the fifty-eighth year of the Christian era.

Now, what part did the Holy Eucharist play in Mary's life? To discover this, let us study the rôle that Eucharistic piety played in the life of the first Christians. But it is so far back that we may, perhaps, be tempted to think it impossible to know anything very definitely on the subject.

Such, however, are not the thoughts of

*Allioli, Giry.

Suarez, of Bona, of Bellarim. To defend the Eucharistic dogma against the attacks of Protestants, who accuse the Church of not walking in the footsteps of the Apostles, and of having invented creeds and practices unknown in Apostolic times, they have affirmed and proved the perpetuity and the identity of the Faith, even the perpetuity and the identity of discipline, in leading points. It is by following those masters, by relating simply their testimony, that we shall establish the magnificent part that the Holy Eucharist took in those early days, Its influence upon the first years of the Church, and the use made of It by our forefathers in the Faith. These premises laid down, it will be easy to draw the conclusion: If the first Christians assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, communicated, adored Jesus perpetually present among them, Mary, the most devoted daughter of the Church, did all this more faithfully and more perfectly than any other.

The Eucharistic life is reduced to three fundamental duties: Sacrifice, Communion, and Adoration.

Could Mary and the first Christians hear Mass every day?

Was Holy Communion frequent? Was it daily?

In the early days of the Church, were they able to adore Jesus constantly reserved in the tabernacle?

These are the questions which we shall now examine.

On the evening of the Last Supper, Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrifice of His Body and His Blood. He Himself said the first Mass, teaching His Apostles the rite and the manner of celebrating, and, moreover, commanding them to offer that same Sacrifice in memory of Him.

On what day did the Apostles, obedient to the word of their Master, begin to celebrate the Holy Mass?—"Some," says Bona,* "believe that the Apostles celebrated immediately after the resurrection of the Saviour, as much to render to God by this Sacrifice the supreme worship that is due Him, as to thank for Jesus' triumph over death, or again, for their own consolation and the good which they and the Faithful would derive from it. Their ardent love for the Saviour, their fervent zeal, the remembrance of the joy that they experienced at the first Mass of

*Bona, *de Sacrific Miss.*, c. iv., 1.—Dom Guéranger. *Inst. Liturg.*

the Last Supper, along with other reasons, authorize us in thinking that it was as is said above." Theophilus Renaud, of the Society of Jesus, defends this opinion, and Bona is not without foundation for it. "I think, however," says the learned Cardinal, "that the Apostles dared not undertake this sublime ministry before having been prepared for it by the reception of the Holy Spirit, and especially since, before His coming, the Old Law was still in vigor, and it would seem inopportune to celebrate the Sacrifice of the New Law. But as soon as the Holy Spirit had filled them with His love, the Apostles preach and convert, the Church is founded, and its new Sacrifice ought to be offered. On the day of Pentecost, therefore, Mass was said by St. Peter, to whom that honor was accorded, in presence of the other Apostles and of Mary, who was persevering with them in prayer, edifying them by her example and her words." In support of his opinion, Bona cites Asterius, St. John Crysostom, and the venerable Bede, of whom the last named thus expresses himself: "Hardly had the new converts been baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, than the Apostles presented them at the holy

altar to receive the Communion of the Lord, as the first fruits of the New Testament.”*

The Sacrifice inaugurated by St. Peter has never ceased to be offered in the Church. Besides the need the nascent Church had of it, can we suppose that the Apostles, understanding what glory it gives to God, what benefit men draw from it, how great is the happiness to offer it, could pass a single day without strengthening themselves by the oblation and the consuming of the Divine Victim?

“For the rest,” says Bona, “there can be no doubt that private Mass was said every day in the Church, whether we understand by private Mass, a Mass celebrated on a day not a feast, or in a private place, or in presence of few or no assistants.”†

The Apostle St. Andrew declared to the Governor Egeus that he was accustomed to offer daily the Sacrifice of the Lamb without stain to the Almighty God: *Ego omni die sacrifico Deo omnipotenti.*‡

St. Iræneus, in the second century,

**Homil. de Pent.*

†*C. xiv.*

‡*Oct. S. Andreæ, ap. Bolland, 30 Nov.*

mentions the Apostolic tradition in his book against the heresies: "The Lord commanded us to offer the Sacrifice of the altar without intermission."*

Tertullian gives a great number of witnesses of the same kind in his treatise against idolatry. At sight of certain profanations committed by the heretical priests, he exclaims: "O crime! The Jews crucified Jesus Christ once, but they crucify Him every day at the altar!"†

St. Jerome utters this significant word: "Christ taught His Apostles to say confidently every day in the Sacrifice of His Body, this prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven."‡

We shall not inquire into the testimony of the later Fathers, since our end is to prove only that, from the first days of the Church and in the lifetime of Mary, the Holy Mass was said daily. The Blessed Virgin lived with St. John, who was a priest, and even a bishop. He daily celebrated in her presence the august Sacrifice, in order to afford her the means of satisfying her love and of fulfilling her duties as a child of the Church; for although she was the Mother of all Chris-

**Adv. her.* xxxiv. †*De Idolatria*, c. vii. ‡*Adv. Pel.*, I. i., c. xviii.

tians, Mary was always a child of the Holy Church, a member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ. Now, if she submitted with so much eagerness to the least prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, with what fidelity would she embrace under her Son's law of love all the practices of Christianity?

Yes, Mary daily assisted at Mass. It was her strength, her true morning meal, for we shall soon see that she always communicated at it. But with what perfection? Ah! to answer that question, we should have the pen of St. John, who witnessed it, or a revelation from our tender Mother herself.

We shall make only one remark capable of giving us a feeble idea of the dispositions that she brought to it. "The Sacrifice which is offered at the altar," says the Council of Trent, "is the same that was offered on Calvary; it has the same Priest, the same Victim."* With our weak faith, we can hardly seize the reality expressed by these words, and see in the Eucharistic Sacrifice that of the Cross. But Mary, with her mother-heart, with her faith and her supernat-

*Sess. xxiv.

ural lights, Mary comprehended it. There was for her no difference between the two. At the altar, as on Calvary, the sword of sorrow which took the life of the Son, immolated the Mother, and all the dispositions of the Blessed Virgin, assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, may be summed up in her compassion. Mary offered herself with Jesus, and she died with Him in a common sentiment of zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of the world.

Mary assisted daily for twenty-four years at Holy Mass, behold our model in this first of our duties toward the Eucharist! May this Mother of Sorrows make us comprehend a little that the true disposition for assisting well thereat is, to compassionate the Divine Victim, to offer one's self, and to die with Him!

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S COMMUNION.

The Sacrifice is for Communion. After Jesus offered Himself, He gave Himself to His Apostles; so the Mass that is not followed by Communion, is but imperfectly heard. The Church teaches us this

when she desires, by the voice of the Council of Trent, that all who assist at the Mass should be sufficiently pure to receive each time the Holy Communion.

Assisting at Mass, Mary also communicated at it. She communicated, because the counsel of frequent Communion regarded her. She communicated, because her love drew her to the Holy Table with irresistible force. Above all, did she communicate in order to respond to the desires of Jesus Christ in Communion, to satisfy His longing to come to us. She communicated in order to please Jesus Christ in His views, in His designs. She went to Jesus for Jesus, and she sought for herself neither sweetness nor consolation. She wished but Him!

Let us for some moments reflect upon our authority for declaring that Mary communicated daily.

When did Mary begin to communicate? Was she deprived of that happiness on the day of the institution of the Holy Eucharist? Although her sex excluded her from the repast at which Jesus instituted the Christian priesthood, some writers of authority think that the Blessed Virgin received Holy Communion in a room adjoining the hall of the Last

Supper. Thither she had retired, with the holy women, to eat the Pasch, and from it, by prophetic light, she followed all that went on in the Cenacle. United to her Son, of her own free will, she gave herself for the world at the same time that He offered Himself. She prayed for the Apostles, wept over the frightful fate of Judas, and compassioned the afflicted Heart of Jesus, whose immense love was repaid by our black ingratitude.

Drexelius transcribes the recital of Simeon Metaphrastes, who says: "In the same house in which the Saviour ate the Pasch with His Apostles, although in another room, Mary remained with the other holy women, who had followed and served Jesus Christ in His Apostolic journeys. The Lord sent them the Eucharist by St. Peter, rewarding them by that Gift for the good offices that He had received from them."—"This is an opinion which can be sustained," adds Drexelius. "It is shared by Gerson, Barradius, Vega, and Walterius."*

Special revelation confirm the above. Mary of Agreda says marvelous things of this first Sacramental Communion of the

*Drexelius, S. J., part II., c. vii.

Virgin.* If Jesus, as think St. Jerome, St. Thomas, and other Fathers cited by Suarez, communicated Himself on that day, we may understand that He would not willingly deprive His Mother of a happiness which she desired so ardently, having already, during the nine months' sojourn that He made in her womb, tasted how sweet is the Lord; and if it be true that they who eat Him still hunger for Him, Mary, who had received Him so perfectly, and had entertained Him so worthily at the time of the Incarnation, must have been consumed with a languishing hunger for that first Communion which gave Him back to her again.

If, according to the opinion of Theophilus Renault given above, Jesus or the Apostles celebrated the Mass during the forty days that preceded the Ascension, no doubt Mary communicated at it. Nothing is opposed to that. The love of the Mother, the love of the Son, permits us, on the contrary, to look upon it as a certainty.

As to that last repast of friendship which Jesus made with His Apostles before quitting them to ascend into heaven, and which many interpreters think was a new celebration of the Eucharist, there is

*See *Fourth Day* of this volume.

much stronger reason to believe that Mary received Holy Communion at it. It is with this view, no doubt, that Father Faber says: "During the ten days intervening between the Ascension and Pentecost, He remained in the reality of His sacramental Presence in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as in a repository."*

Jesus sent His Holy Spirit. The Apostles celebrated Mass in the Cenacle the evening of Pentecost itself. That great day was crowned by the Communion of all the Faithful of the Church, the disciples, and the newly baptized. "When enemies are reconciled, they invite one another to festivals of peace. Ah, well! on this day Jesus Christ shows us that He has reconciled us to His Father by sending us the Spirit of Peace. This day ought to end in the inebriating joys of the Eucharistic Banquet."†

Behold the Mother of the Church presenting herself at the altar, and receiving in ecstatic recollection, with love redoubled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Sacred Body of her Divine Son! Behold her surrounded by her children

**The Precious Blood*, p. 211.

†St. John Chrysostom, quoted by Bona: *Notæ ad calcem*, t. i.

born today to the Faith, leading them by her example, inflaming them with the fire of her own love, to receive worthily the Gift of God, and to guard in a pure conscience the Mystery of the Faith! O Communion of Pentecost! O happy Christians, seated at the Banquet of Life by the side of the Mother of God!

The Church grew, her children multiplied, Communion is their daily nourishment. Their whole life is summed up in this word which we cannot too frequently meditate: *Erant perseverantes in communicatione fractionis panis.* They were persevering in the communion of the breaking of the bread.”*

The Fathers unanimously see in these words daily, or at least, very frequent Communion, and they all teach that It was in general use in the first age of Christianity.

The word, *the breaking of bread*, is much stronger in the Greek text than in the Latin version, says Cornelius. It means, “the breaking of *this* bread: *fractio illius panis*,” of this Eucharistic and Divine Bread that we receive at the altar. The Syriac version, also, clearly says: “The breaking of the Eucharist.”

*Acts ii., 46.

The Acts speak of daily Communion: "And continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart."*

St. Paul speaks of it as a habit received and practiced daily. Alas! human misery, which so easily becomes familiar with what it repeats every day, soon introduced into the Eucharistic celebration abuses which necessitated the Apostle's stern reprimands to the Corinthians.†

Pope St. Clement and St. Denis relate the same tradition. We may read their testimony in Suarez' treatise on the Eucharist.‡

The custom had even become a sort of law, and St. Anacletus, third successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome, ordained that all who assist at Mass should communicate at it, threatening them who refused to do so with expulsion from the holy assembly; "for such is the order which we have received from the Apostles, and which the Church of Rome practices: *Sic enim et Apostoli statuerunt et sancta Romana tenet Ecclesia.*"

*Acts ii., 46.

†I. Cor. xi., 22.

‡Q. lxxix., s. iii.

The Tenth Canon of the Apostolic Constitution says, also: "All the Faithful who enter into the assembly, hear there the reading of the Scripture, but do not remain to receive Communion, disturb the Church, and ought to be excommunicated."

"This does not undoubtedly prove," adds Suarez, "that there was a divine precept to communicate every time that one assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, but that such was the teaching of the Apostles and the custom of the primitive Church, which custom had its origin in the fervor and holiness of the early Faithful."

It is unnecessary to state that Tertullian, St. Cyril, St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine are formal and unanimous in witnessing to this fact of daily Communion in the first days of the Christian Faith. Fénelon, in his letter upon frequent Communion,* has quoted a great number of their testimonies. We conclude with Suarez: "The first Faithful communicated every day. This is the unanimous opinion:† *Fideles primitivi quotidie communicabant, ut omnes exponunt.*"

*Re-edited by Mgr. Dupanloup, in 1855.

†Q. lxxix., sect. iv.

Certainly, if this can be said of the simple Faithful, what shall we say of Mary? Daily Communion is according to the intention of the Saviour. He makes us ask for it in the prayer that He Himself taught us. That which alone can keep us from it, and make us defer our approach to it, is sin or tepidity. "But when the conscience is pure, it is always time to approach: *Semper esse tempus accedendi si semper conscientia sit pura.*"* Could Mary be guilty of sin or tepidity? That thought would be blasphemy!

Mary always aimed at the most perfect, always entered perfectly into the intentions of Our Lord. Now, it is more perfect in itself, independently of different circumstances of persons, places, and times, and supposing the requisite conditions, to communicate every day than to abstain from time to time through devotion. This is the opinion of St. Augustine, quoted by Suarez. The reasons are clear, says that theologian. They apply admirably to Mary, and prove that she must have communicated daily. We shall give them in a few words.

*St. Chrysostom, *Homil. xxviii., sup. I. ad Cor.*

To communicate well is radically good of itself. To abstain from Holy Communion is good only *per accidens*, that is, abstaining in order to excite greater reverence, or to shun routine, or to repair some defect of disposition for it. But what is always good in itself ought to be preferred to what is good only by reason of some accompanying circumstance; consequently, it is better to communicate every day and without interruption. We must, then, admit that Mary did this. In her there was no human respect to be aroused, no imperfect disposition. Her fervor, far from cooling by frequent custom, increased, was fed as fire is fed by fire. Each Communion renewed and increased her dispositions, her hunger, her desires. Communion was for her a mystery of love ever ancient and ever new.

To communicate daily comes from the fervor of charity; to abstain comes from negligence or fear. But an act done through love is better than a work performed through fear. Then, Mary, communicated daily, for love was her only motive, her only constraint, her only intention. Mother of Love Incarnate, she was altogether transformed into love

and love had banished fear from her heart.

There is, moreover, an advantage in communicating which exists not in abstaining, and that is, the fruit which the Sacrament produces by Its own virtue: *Ex opere operato*. Now, this fruit is immense and sure when the dispositions of the communicant are sufficient. Mary, who never neglected the least grace, and whom the Holy Spirit willed to sanctify by every means, ought for this very reason to embrace ardently the practice of daily Communion.

Again, in the desire to communicate in order to unite one's self to Jesus Christ and to glorify Him, is there not as much, and often more, merit, than in the desire of abstaining through respect? Yes, without doubt. Then, this is another reason for Mary to receive daily the Body of her most dear Son.

If, for good reason, we sometimes abstain from Holy Communion, it is, above all, to conceive or preserve greater respect, greater devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament. But this devotion, this respect, can better be acquired, better preserved, by participating than by abstaining, supposing even moderate dil-

igence in preparing one's self. Good habits help to perform well our repeated acts, and the strength derived from the Sacrament contributes thereto not a little. "Let us conclude, then," says Suarez, "that it is simply more perfect to communicate as frequently as possible than to abstain sometimes, even through devotion."

If the Faithful at large cannot apply this conclusion to themselves without great reserve, on account of the immense weight of misery that weighs us down, also because, unless we are blind, we know ourselves to be infinitely unworthy of such a favor, the same cannot be said of Mary. In her the disposition for Holy Communion was supreme. It had reached the highest degree of possibility in a creature. Only one person received Holy Communion in better dispositions than Mary, and that was Our Lord Himself at the Last Supper!

To get some notion, if that is possible, of Mary's admirable dispositions for Holy Communion, we must explain in a few words the beautiful teaching upon sanctifying grace and the state of charity. We shall quote from St. Thomas and Suarez, which latter theologian clearly refers to it in his treatise on the Blessed Virgin.

Let us first remark that the great, the true disposition to communicate well, is love. It supplies for every other, and it is absolutely necessary if we desire to enter into the spirit of Holy Communion. Communion, in effect, is the supreme act of love. Its motive, its end, its means, all is love. In order, then, that there may be communion between Jesus Christ and us,—a common union,—there must be some bond of relation, some foundation, and that bond, that foundation, is love.

Now, let us hear what Suarez says of Mary's love. We cannot, indeed, even after that, measure the perfection of her dispositions; but amazed we may admire, and comprehend, in a degree, how ardent was Jesus' desire to enter into Mary's breast, and what His joy to rest in that heart in which His love found so perfect a response.

In justifying us, God gives us habitual charity. To justification is joined a state of charity whose intensity varies and can increase indefinitely. To be justified, or to be clothed with charity, is the same, and these two things, sanctifying grace and charity, are so closely united, that many theologians do not distinguish one from

the other. St. Thomas and Suarez* do distinguish them, but only as the sun is distinguished from its heat, light from color. According to them, sanctifying grace is the root, the principle of charity. Charity supposes it already in the soul, and comes forward only to put it into action. But the degree of charity corresponds always to the degree of intensity of sanctifying grace.

We shall, then, make use of these two terms indiscriminately. When we speak of grace, the state of grace, we shall mean also, charity, the state of charity, love, the state of habitual love, according to the language of Holy Scripture: *Caritas diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui effusus est in nobis.*†

We distinguish in Mary three sanctifications, that is, three grand infusions of sanctifying grace, which have elevated her to the sublime degree to which she is raised. They are like three magnificent dowries of this Spouse of the Most High.

The first took place in her Immaculate Conception. "There," says Suarez,‡ from whom we quote, "Mary received a degree

*1a 2ae, q. cx., a. iii.—Lib. vi., *de Gratia*, c. viii.

†Rom. v., 5. ‡T. xix., d. iv., sect. 1.

of the state of grace not only superior to every state received by any other creature at the first moment of life, but even more elevated than the last and highest grace, to which no angel had ever been raised." "And that," says St. Lawrence Justinian, "because at that first moment, Mary was already more loved by God than any angel or any saint will ever be, even after a life of continual merit."*

The second sanctification of Mary was granted her at the moment of the Incarnation of the Word in her womb. The Holy Spirit adorned her with His most admirable gifts, and the Word filled her with all the riches of the Divinity. At that moment Mary's grace was such that many have thought that she had no greater afterward. They supported their opinion on this conjecture that, in order to become the Mother of God, she ought to possess the highest degree of grace possible to any mere creature. Suarez regards this opinion as ill-founded, since, during all the rest of her life, Mary produced acts truly meritorious, which essentially led to an increase of the state of grace.

**Serm. de Nat. Virg.*

Lastly, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled Mary with His plenitude, and the Blessed Virgin's state of charity attained the proportion of an almost limitless ocean.

That was the gift of God. By her infused graces alone, Mary was raised to an order apart in the celestial hierarchy, and this was already a beautiful disposition for Communion, a glorious garment, indeed, for the union which she daily renewed with her God.

And yet that was little! Mary labored upon this foundation, already so rich. She increased, she even doubled, by every one of her meritorious acts, that foundation of charity which she had received from the divine liberality.

"The Virgin," says Suarez,* "merits an increase of sanctifying grace by each and every one of the human actions that she performed from the first instant of her sanctification. In her there was no indeliberate act, and with still greater reason, no bad act. All her actions are good, all meritorious, because she referred them often and entirely to God as to the end of her whole life and all her actions.

*D. xviii., sect. xxi.

Never was her will inadvertently distracted from God, and never did she desire to distract it from Him.

“Still more, Mary merited by her acts not only an increase, but a redoubling of her state of charity, because her acts were done through love, and according to the whole extent of the state of charity that she possessed at the moment in which she acted.” It is the opinion of Suarez, shared by other good theologians, that an act done through love, and according to the whole intensity of the state of charity that we possess, acquires for the soul as many new degrees of charity as it had before. If the habit of charity of any soul corresponds, for example, to two degrees, and it acts according to all the strength of these two degrees, that last action raises its state to four degrees. A new act proceeding from these four degrees, doubles them, and raises them to eight degrees, and so on, every act doubling the sum of charity with which it is made.

“Now, from this principle,” says Suarez, “I conclude that the Blessed Virgin very often doubled her state of charity, because she ever acted according to the full strength of grace and the divine im-

pulse. She performed her acts with an intensity equal or superior to the habit of charity that she possessed, which fact doubled the sum possessed before the acts."

And those acts of the Virgin, who can count them? How many times did Mary thus multiply a foundation which, at the first hour of her existence, already surpassed all that an angel, even the most elevated in heaven, possesses in glory?

Let us again remark with Suarez something which touches most closely upon the Eucharistic and adoring life of Mary, and which will make us comprehend a little better her dispositions for Communion. The more Mary advanced in age, the more perfect were her acts, the greater also the sum of habitual grace that each one laid up for her. The reason for this is, that these acts at the end of her life were produced according to all the strength of a state already so many times doubled, and still doubling. In her last years, also, Mary could merit by a single act as many degrees of grace as she had acquired by all the acts of her past life, this last act proceeding from a foundation on which were accumulated all the merits of her admirable life.

“It is for this reason, then, that Mary’s grace,” says Suarez, “came to be almost without limit, *prope immensam*.” “It is ineffable,” says St. Anselm, “and she will be the astonishment of all ages. Thought and speech fail me when I wish to measure the immensity of her graces.”

Happy impotence, which proves to us Mary’s greatness! The less we are able to comprehend it, the greater it is. Its most beautiful eulogium is the amazement, the stupefaction of our silence before that abyss of greatness and glory!

Ah! all those graces, that ocean of charity, all those meritorious acts, were Mary’s preparation for Communion. All her life she had increased and adorned magnificently the cenacle of her heart, in which Jesus was to eat the Pasch with her. Let us not be astonished at that. The sacramental Communion of her Son demanded not less perfect disposition than did the first Incarnation of the Word. It is on His part, as great an act of love. God, therefore, who always proposes to Himself the highest end in His works, ought to prepare Mary for Communion from the first instant of her life. “The highest end, in effect, to which

Mary could be destined," says Blessed Bernardin, of Paris,* "was to receive God into her womb by the Incarnation, and to be united to Him by Communion. The Incarnation and the Communion are the two terms to which Mary is destined. God could not form greater designs for Mary than to create her to bring forth His Son by the Incarnation as a mother, and to receive Him by Communion in quality of nourishment, as a member of His mystical Body. In this marvelous design, His power is exhausted, His wisdom cannot pass beyond."

We understand that the Lord, after having sanctified His temple, took pleasure in descending to it, and that His delights were to dwell in it. Doubtless, He remained there long. Some grave authors assure us that He was always present therein under the Sacramental Species, miraculously preserved in their integrity from one Communion to another.† This opinion is worthy of Jesus, worthy of Mary. It supposes a miracle, it is true. But can we be astonished at any-

**La Communion de Marie, Mère de Dieu*, p. 41. †Father Faber, quoted above.

thing when there is question of this privileged creature in whom all is miraculous?

Speaking of the numberless miracles which God has wrought in Mary's regard, Suarez says that we must not suppose them, unless some reason of fitness or utility demands them. Now, this miracle of the conservation of the Sacred Species in the Virgin, is one of fitness and extreme utility.

The fitness of it rests in the love of Jesus for His Mother. He dwelt in her for nine months in His corporal Presence. Mary is a tabernacle, a sanctuary, so pure, so loving, so united to God, so separated from every distraction, from everything created, that Our Lord tastes in her the delights that He finds nowhere else. He receives in her more honor than in our sanctuaries, for the ciborium is living. It glorifies God not only by the richness of its material, but still more by the free acts, the acts of a merit almost infinite.

We know, moreover, that every means of grace had been employed to enrich Mary, that the Holy Spirit has neglected not one, and that all that we receive in measure, Mary receives in plenitude.

Now, the prolonged duration of the Sacramental Presence of Jesus in our breast is a powerful means of grace, a magnificent pledge of sanctification. This Presence is not of long duration, because Jesus wills to subordinate His sacramental life to the existence and the integrity of the accidents of bread and wine. But as long as it lasts, it is for us the source of great favors.

This is the beautiful teaching of Gabriel, Cajetan, Major Paludanus, Ruard, whose unanimous opinion Suarez quotes.* "They affirm," he says, "that so long as Christ remains present under the Species in him who has worthily received, He acts upon him by the influences proper to sacramental grace, *ex opere operato*. Provided the good dispositions of the communicant increase during those blessed moments, sacramental grace increases also, by the very fact of the corporal Presence of Jesus Christ.

"And that appears very reasonable," adds Suarez. "First, this sacrament, which is a food, ought to produce Its effects in the manner of a nourishment.

*Q. lxxix., a. viii.—D. lxiii., sect. vii.

But material nourishment does not produce its salutary influences only at the moment in which we take it, but it nourishes and strengthens as long as it remains in the stomach. Why should it not be the same with the divine nourishment of our soul?

Again, why should we say that Christ present in us, remains idle, as it were when He has the power to sanctify us more, supposing that we dispose ourselves more and more to receive His graces?

Can we say that the Sacrament, producing Its whole effect at the moment we receive It, the duration more or less prolonged of Jesus' presence in us should be considered as a merely physical effect, incapable of conferring any supernatural influence?

"We cannot think so," answers Suarez. "On the contrary, we think that it is much more conformable to Our Saviour's manner of acting, more conformable to His goodness, more encouraging to our piety, to believe that the prolonged duration of His Sacramental Presence increases grace in us, if he who enjoys it increases in love, in desires, if he increases his capacity to receive. We

cannot possibly see therein any inconvenience, any repugnance."

Now, in that case, Jesus Christ remains in us still as nourishment, which is the essence of the Sacrament. True, It is not any longer nourishment being actually eaten, but It is nourishment continuing its strengthening influence. It is, indeed, to that Presence that Jesus Christ has promised the grace proper to Holy Communion: "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me:" and, again: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in Him."*

Suarez refutes the weak objections that could be made to this doctrine, and shows that it fully satisfies the Christian spirit, whether on the part of Jesus Christ, who, wherever present, ought there to act, or on the part of the Sacrament, which, producing Its effects as do natural causes, ought to operate as long as It remains united to a subject properly disposed. Above all, does it satisfy, if we consider the advantage that the soul can then derive. The moment which follows Communion is the most precious for us. It

*St. John vi.

is more favorable to entire recollection than the instant itself in which we receive the Sacrament, for then a certain preoccupation almost necessarily attends the exterior action. But in the following moment, the mind can concentrate itself without distraction on the Well-Beloved, and lose itself in Him.

St. Liguori rehearses all this with his ordinary piety and authority. We shall quote him in conclusion: "The soul, according to the opinion of several Doctors, Gonet, Suarez, and others, draws fruit so much the greater from her Communion as she occupies herself the more with good works during the time that the consecrated Species last; for this Sacrament having been instituted to serve as nourishment for the soul, the Council of Florence teaches that, as material nourishment is so much the more beneficial to the body as it remains longer in the stomach, so the longer the celestial nourishment remains in our soul, the more life does it impart to it, provided only that the communicant, by his good dispositions, always increases in sanctity. It is, then, not astonishing that during those moments, every good action acquires more value and merit, for the soul is

then united to Jesus Christ more strictly than ever.”*

After the above, may we not say: If for Mary it was an advantage, however small, to retain the Sacred Species as long as possible, she received that favor from her Son? But He could do more, and remain in her from one Communion to another, in order that she might incessantly be sanctified by the virtue proper to Holy Communion. Then He did it, and in her alone was realized the whole extent of these words of the Saviour. “He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him,” for He was in His Mother not only by the influence of His grace, but by His Sacramental Presence. And Mary, renewing at each instant of the day, her ejaculations of love, her inflamed desire, received at each instant the grace of a new Communion.

What shall we say of Mary’s thanksgiving? We may understand its perfection from what we have hitherto said. A word which the Holy Spirit has said of the Virgin characterizes it perfectly: *Maria autem conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo.*† “Mary pre-

*Selva, part II., c. i., No. 17.

†Luke ii., 19.

served all the words and all the actions of Jesus, meditating upon them and reflecting on them in her own heart." To preserve the Holy Communion, to renew It in her heart by desire, to develop It by meditation, to open that Treasure, to draw from It by love and prayer, that was, indeed, perfect thanksgiving, and such was Mary's.

From Communion to Communion, the Blessed Virgin reached at last the one that was to be the seal of her life. Her raptures of love exhausted her strength, and, swooning from the vehemence of her desires, the day came on which she could no longer go to her oratory, nor approach the Communion Table to receive the Living Bread which formed her strength and her only nourishment. The Apostle St. John would have considered it an honor to take to her himself her God in Viaticum, as it is believed that they carried to her the Sacrament of the dying.* But Jesus wished to render to His Mother that office of love in person. Cartagena, Gerson, and others relate and confirm the tradition, that the High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself, attended by the

*Suarez and others think that Mary received Extreme **Uction**.

whole celestial court, descended to Mary's humble, little apartment, and communicated her with tenderness and love, worthy of such a Son and such a Mother.*

And Mary having seen again the face of her most dear Son, having pressed Him once again to her heart, her soul burst the immaculate envelope which had retained it for seventy-two years in this land of exile, and soared up to the heavens, carried on the wings of the seraphim. "Many die in love, but Mary died of love!"† She went to continue in heaven communion with her Son no longer veiled, but unveiled, glorious and triumphant.

From the height of heaven, Mary looks down with maternal tenderness, sometimes, alas! with anxiety, upon all who approach the Holy Table. She assists at every Communion made all over the world. She knows, by the light of God and by the duty of her charge of Mother of all Christians, the dispositions that we take thereto. Ah! how ardent are her desires to see us approaching in good dispositions! She offers us her help, her

*Gerson, t. ix., *sup.* Magnificat.—Cartag., *de Vita Mariæ*, lib. xiii., *Homil.* ix.

†St. F. de Sales, *Love of God*.

example, her virtues, her graces. Let us clothe ourselves with Mary, in order that Jesus, finding His Mother in our heart, may descend into it with real joy.

It now remains for us to consider Mary in the third duty of the Eucharistic life, namely, adoration, or visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is not only Sacrifice and Communion, He is there still living and present among us without interruption. He is there to do us good, to receive our homage, and to bestow upon us favors. His Presence claims from us one more duty, and that is, to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Here, again, Mary will be our loving and perfect model.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY'S LIFE OF ADORATION BEFORE THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

“Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Matt. xxviii., 20.)

These words announce the consoling dogma of the permanent Presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament. There is today not a country, not a city, not a Catholic village, in which the God

of the tabernacle is not found. He remains there with unshaken constancy day and night, protecting the world by His Presence, shedding around Him the divine influences that sanctify souls, preserving peace in families, conducing to the moral prosperity of cities, and giving to the earth the fruits and the harvests that feed man.

Has it always been true to say that Jesus dwelt sacramentally among His children? It is quite generally thought that, in the early ages, the Christians, pursued by incessant persecutions, poor, and without influence, had no churches, and that, consequently, the Blessed Sacrament was not reserved for the consolation of the Faithful; that the Holy Sacrifice offered, the Communion received, the Eucharistic life ceased till the next day.

This was not so. We shall prove briefly that, from the first days of the Church, there were places exclusively consecrated to the worship of God, and that those temples were sanctified by the perpetual Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist.

“In the beginning,” says the learned Allioli,* “the breaking of the Bread was

**Notæ in c. II. Actis Apost. v., 46: Frangentes panem circa domos.*

celebrated in a house in which all could assemble. Later, the number of Christians having increased to thousands, they used to assemble in several different houses. These individual houses were the origin of the parishes, which were soon after established. He who presided at the place of reunion was like the parish priest of the congregation."

"The Holy Sacrifice was offered," says Dom Guéranger, "as much as possible in a large hall suitably adorned, in order to recall that in which the Saviour ate the Last Supper, for which He desired a cenacle large and richly decorated: *Coenaculum grande, stratum*. The Apostles conformed to circumstances, so the Sacrifice celebrated at the house of Gamaliel, or at that of the Senator Pudens was naturally attended with more pomp than was that at the house of Simon, the carrier."*

We see by the Acts of the Apostles, that in the houses in which the Faithful were accustomed to meet, a chamber in the highest story was consecrated to that purpose. When St. Paul was preaching at Troas, "a certain young man named Euty-chus, sitting on the window, being op-

**Instr. lit. circa initium.*

pressed by a deep sleep (as Paul was long preaching), by occasion of his sleep fell from the third loft down, *de tertio coenaculo*, and was taken up dead.”*

These cenacles were our churches in the embryotic state. They were true sanctuaries dedicated to the Lord. “From the moment that Faith had taken root in a city, and that the Apostles had established there a bishop, priests, and deacons, the exterior forms acquired extension, and worship necessarily became more solemn.”†

It is, indeed, of a consecrated church that St. Paul speaks, when he reproaches the Corinthians with desecrating it by their disorderly repasts and drinking. This is the opinion of Cardinal Bona.‡

Baronius, also, asserts that, as soon as the Apostles had preached at Rome, they there established churches.§ “Although, for the sake of prudence, they were not built on the public streets, they were none the less true churches, exclusively consecrated to divine worship,” says Bona’s continuator. Should that name be refused them, because the Christians alone knew the way to them, and they

*Acts xx., 9.

†D. Guéranger, *loc. cit.*

‡Lib. i., C. xix.

§An. lvii., No. 100.

were hidden from the pagans? And because they had been at first private houses, consecrated later to the Lord by their converted owners, did they less deserve the name of House of God? Who would refuse to behold a veritable church in the cenacle of Jerusalem, in which the Lord instituted the Eucharist, in which the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles, for the reason that it had been the private residence of John Marc? Is it not, on the contrary, that which, with great reason, Hippolytus of Thebes calls the mother of all churches, the most holy of all that have ever existed?*

Moreover, the piety of the first Faithful, who excelled in all virtues, inspired them to ornament magnificently and to enrich with splendid decorations the places which they had consecrated to the worship of the Holy Eucharist. Their ornamentation was in the interior, the Church not yet enjoying the liberty of erecting religious edifices in public. The pagan Lucian, in the first century, ridiculed their generosity. "I have found," he says, "gates of iron, and I have crossed courts of brass. After mounting several

**Sala, Not. in c. xix.*

flights of stairs, I came to a hall whose ceiling was of gold, like that of the palace of Menelaus, as Homer tells us. I gazed in astonishment and admiration at all these wonders, and I saw there men praying prostrate in the dust.”*

Sala remarks on the above: “Who would not admire the magnificent liberality of the first Christians in their divine worship, since conversion led to the Church only men of the common people? As early as the time of the Apostles their churches were ornamented with so generous magnificence that they might be compared to heaven itself.”†

But why this pomp unless the Lord God personally resided in these temples consecrated to His honor?—“We call our church *Dominicum*, that is to say, the palace of the Lord,” says St. Cyprian, “because the Lord in the veiled majesty of the Sacrament remains there incessantly present.”

“If,” says Bona, “it was permitted to the Christians of the first days of the Church to carry home and preserve the Eucharist, to take It with them on journeys, it is much more credible that It

*In *Philopatre*, quoted by Bona.

†*Not. in c. xix., I. i.*

remained perpetually in the churches, in order, at least, that It might be at hand for the dying: *Multo credibilius est in ecclesiis conservatum fuisse, ut semper in promptu esset ad infirmos communicandos.*"*

Suarez, to prove against Protestants that the Eucharist consisted not only in the use, but that Jesus Christ remains always present in the Species, as long as they last, argues thus: "This truth is proved by the belief and by the constant practice of the Church; for in the Church it has been an unvarying custom to preserve in her temples a consecrated Host for the consolation of the Faithful and in order to give them the means of honoring and adoring God there present, also to help the sick, that they might not die deprived of Holy Viaticum."†

This theologian supports his opinion on several authorities, among others on the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which were collected by St. Clement, a disciple of St. Peter: "It is one of the principal duties of the clerks, after all have communicated, to collect the particles of the Body of the Lord which remain, and to pre-

*Lib. ii., c. xvii., s. vi.

†Q. xlvi., sect. viii.

serve them religiously.” In Bk. viii. c. xx. of the same collection, we read this other Decree: “After all have communicated, the deacons take the sacred Particles that still remain and carry them into the *pastophorium*.”

What was this *pastophorium*? “It was,” replies Bona, “like a sacred closet, or sacristy, in which were constantly preserved the Eucharist and the vessels for the Sacrifice. St. Clement ordained that on the eastern side of every church, there should be built a *pastophorium*.”*

The Holy Scripture employs this word, *pastophorium*. In I. Esdras, x., it is written that the High Priest having left the court of the Temple, retired into the *pastophorium* of Jonas, the son of Eliasib: *Abiit in pastophorium Jonae filii Eliasib*.

It was the chamber which the custodian of the Temple occupied, says Bellarmine, and he applies the word to the sacred ciborium. The Apostles named the vessel consecrated to the perpetual preservation of the Eucharist, the *pastophorium*, because the true Custodian of the Temple, Jesus Christ, dwells there

*Bona, *loc. cit*—*Const. Ap.* I. ii., c. lvii.

really under the Species of the Sacrament.*

Suarez, also, says: "*Pastophorium* signifies chamber of the Spouse, *thalamus sponsi*, a name very suitable to our tabernacles, in which Jesus Christ has always willed to dwell with the Church, His Spouse, not only figuratively, as in the Synagogue, nor unveiled as in heaven, but in a manner hidden, though very real, in the Blessed Sacrament. In those early times, above all, when persecution raged, it was fitting that Jesus should remain without interruption to console and defend His dear Spouse so cruelly afflicted."†

Those churches were not only the meeting places of the Faithful for public prayer in common, but all who had need of consolation and strength went there to pray, whenever they wished, in recollection and solitude. Bellarmine says, with much reason: "Churches are erected as much for private prayer as for solemn worship." In the first place, they were such in the Old Law: "My house is a house of prayer," and the Acts of the Apostles show us St. Peter and

**Controv.* I. iv., c. iv.

†*De Euch.* d. xlvi., sect. viii.

St. John going to the Temple to pray, even at noonday. Again, prayer made in a temple has more value before God than that which is made in one's own home. The Anomeans said: "We can pray very well in our own houses. We have no need to go to the Temple."—St. John Chrysostom replied to them in these words: "You make a great mistake. Although you may, it is true, pray in your own dwelling, you will not do so as well as you would do in church: *Tamen fieri non potest ut tam bene ores quam in ecclesia.*"*

"The reason is," adds Bellarmine, "that in our churches, besides the presence of God, as in all other places, there is, moreover, ordinarily the corporal Presence of the Mediator Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, which is well calculated to increase the faith and confidence of him who prays, and to redouble his respect and salutary fear."†

Can we not now draw the conclusion: From the first days of Christianity, and during the lifetime of Mary, there were churches established, in private houses for the most part, above all in those of

**Hom.* xxx.

†Bellarmine, L. iv., c. iv., p. 521.

the newly converted who, like Pudens at Rome, or Læta at Ephesus, received the Apostles at their homes and offered them generous hospitality. In those oratories, they constantly preserved the Eucharist for the consolation of the Faithful and for the relief of the sick. Mary, therefore, who always accompanied St. John, who dwelt in the same house with him, had at her disposal an oratory enriched by the Presence of her most dear Son, and, like ourselves, she could visit and adore Him. She is our model and our Mother in that Eucharistic service of love and adoration.

Dare we penetrate further, and seek to discover the perfection of Mary's adoration? Of the interior perfection of her prayer we are incapable of speaking. We have read the beautiful effusions of Père Eymard on this subject. Let us study only the exterior of her life of adoration, that is, the time that she consecrated to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and the knowledge that she had of that Mystery of Faith, a knowledge which formed the basis of her perfect contemplation.

Père Eymard seems to exaggerate somewhat when he says that Mary passed her days and nights at the feet of Jesus in the

Eucharist. We think, nevertheless, that he spoke the exact truth.

“Some very grave and very ancient Fathers,” says Suarez,* “assure us that Mary passed all her childhood in the Temple, continually occupied, day and night, in chanting the praises of God, and in contemplating His greatness.

“They add that the angels brought her food prepared by themselves, in order that the care of the body might not, even for a moment, take her from her heavenly communications. So think St. Jerome, St. Bonaventure, also Cedrenus and St. George of Nicomedio. We can readily believe,” adds Suarez, “for a similar favor was granted to certain saints far less worthy of it than Mary.”

What! in the Temple of Jerusalem, in which there was only the figurative manna, the tables of the Law, which was about to come to an end, and a Presence of the Lord purely spiritual, Mary passed her days and nights in prayer, and yet did not do the same in the Cenacle, in which resided God Himself, her Son in Body and in Soul! Shall we forget that she was the well-beloved Mother of the

*T. xix., d. vii., sect. i.

most loving Son? For the three days that she lost Jesus, she sought Him in mortal disquietude, bemoaning in deepest sorrow His temporary absence; during His preaching she never lost sight of Him, she followed Him everywhere; on Calvary, in spite of the presence of the executioners, the soldiers, and the servants (enough to frighten any modest woman), Mary was beside her Son. Nothing could separate her from Him. St. Epiphanius calls her the “Constant attendant of Jesus: *perpetuam Jesu sectatricem.*”^{*} And now that she possesses a tabernacle, that she can enjoy His Presence in peace, would Mary be willing to leave Jesus for a single instant?

But sleeping, eating,—ought they not to compel her to relax her continual contemplation? We do not know whether the angels still fed her in this last period of her life, as they had done in the Temple of Jerusalem, though, indeed, it would seem but natural. In any case, we think that Mary had need of so little nourishment that the Bread of the Eucharist would ordinarily suffice to sustain her, as it sufficed for other saints during a time more or less prolonged.

^{*}*Heres* lxxviii.

As for sleep, it is a well-founded opinion that Mary passed the nights in continual vigils. "Let no one be astonished," says Suarez, "that many assign the hour of midnight as that in which took place the angelic annunciation; for it is very well believed that the Virgin was accustomed to pass the greater part of her nights in meditating on divine things."*

Canisius says of the life of Mary that it was one continual and incessant contemplation: *Quaedam jugis et continua contemplatio.*† Upon this Suarez remarks: "For the time of waking, that is certain; for the time of sleep, it is probable."‡ St. Bernardin, following his opinion, and that of other Fathers, says: "Sleep never prevented Mary from turning toward God. Still more, her sleep was a continual contemplation, more elevated than that of any saint in his waking hours of prayer."§

That was also the opinion of the Abbé Rupert: "While the Blessed Virgin granted some instants of repose to her body, her soul continued to penetrate divine secrets."||

*D. xviii., sect. ii. †Q. xxx., art. iv., sect. v.

‡Serm. li., art. iii. §Serm. iv., art. i. et ii.

||Quoted by Suarez, *loc. ut supra.*

“At all events,” says Suarez, “if we ought to believe that Mary took sometimes a short repose, and interrupted for some moments her perpetual contemplation, it was for a very little time, and her sleep was so full of heavenly thoughts, of loving desires and aspirations, that we may say her contemplation never ceased.”*

“Even naturally speaking, on account of her most perfect constitution, and her very temperate manner of living, *ob moderatam vivendi rationem*, Mary had need of only a very short sleep; and the great self-control by which she subdued her body led her to pass the greater part of her nights in holy vigil.”†

Where did Mary spend those prolonged vigils? We have seen that the churches were ordinarily in houses occupied by the Apostles. Then, Mary had near her the Blessed Sacrament. She could go to It whenever she wished, above all, when in Jerusalem, where she dwelt in one of the apartments adjoin-

*D. xviii., sect. iii.—St. Ambrose says of Mary's sleep: *Cum quiesceret corpus, vigilabat animus, quia frequenter in somniis, aut lecta repetit, aut somno intercepto continuat, aut disposita gerit, aut gerenda pronuntiat.* (*De Virginit.*) †Suarez, *loc. ut supra.*

ing the Cenacle. Who could for an instant doubt of her being day and night before the sacred tabernacle, communing with her Son, praying for the world, preparing the harvest which the Apostles were to reap? Divine Master! what sweet nights Thou didst pass in Thy prison of love, with Mary prostrate at Thy feet, discovering Thee by her lively faith behind the veils that hid Thee, and uniting herself to Thee, her soul melting into Thine in the fires of consuming love!

Behold the Model, the Patroness of nocturnal adoration! Adorers of the night, who come to console the Divine Saviour for the crimes committed during those hours in which the demon has still greater sway over men, unite with Mary in your pious vigils, pass your nights kneeling before the august tabernacle of the Cenacle!

We shall now speak of the Eucharistic veils of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Did those veils exist, as far as Mary was concerned? Was not her contemplation a clear view? In answering this question, we shall fulfil our promise to touch upon Mary's knowledge of the Eucharist. 'Let us first lay down as a principle,' says

Suarez, "that Mary was a traveler in this land of exile, and that she did not ordinarily enjoy the Beatific Vision."*

From this principle it follows that Mary had the virtue of faith, that faith which believes what it does not see. It is for that reason the Holy Spirit proclaims her blessed for having believed: *Beata es, Maria, quæ credidisti.*†—Mary's faith was as perfect as it could be, as well on the part of the subject, in whom it was absolutely certain, excluding even the first movement of doubt, as in the object, since by her faith, she believed most firmly the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation, as well as all the other mysteries which relate to the Divinity or to the Humanity. St. Bernard calls Mary, therefore, the Mother of believers. *Mater credentium.*

But to Mary's faith was joined the experience of certain effects, which transformed her faith into natural evidence; for instance, of the Incarnation, she had a knowledge which surpassed the simple light of faith, says St. Antony and Blessed Albertus Magnus.‡

*D. xix., sect. i. †St. Luke i., 45.

‡Quoted by Suarez, *loc. ut supra.*

This evidence did not diminish the merit of her faith. It was its expansion, its recompense. It supposed it, as the flower does the root. Still more, such evidence belongs to an order inferior to faith, and the certitude that it establishes is not so solid as the certitude of faith. It does not, therefore, necessarily exclude the act of supernatural faith.

Mary received, besides, an infused supernatural knowledge, by which she saw the objects of faith, the mysteries of religion, in the manner of the angels without any pictures of the imagination. This explains the fact, that the Virgin could not for one instant cease to meditate divine things, and yet without in the least fatiguing the mind, weariness of the body coming from its share in the operations of the intellect by furnishing the matter for ideas.

Suarez. says that this knowledge of Mary was not simply knowledge as such, but a theological knowledge by means of which she knew very distinctly the mysteries of faith in themselves, along with the truths and the conclusions that flow from them. This knowledge was given to her according as circumstances required it. On the day of Pentecost, for

instance, she received a knowledge more distinct and more detailed of all that regarded the Church, namely, the Sacraments, the conversion of the Gentiles, the needs of the Faithful, and all that was necessary for her charge of teacher of the Apostles.

Mary retained this knowledge as her habitual state. It remained in her soul, and constantly illumined her intelligence. Such is the teaching of Suarez upon the Blessed Virgin's knowledge.

As to the Eucharist in particular, what was the depth of her knowledge? This Mystery, which is a depth in which one is lost who attempts to sound it by the aid of pure reason alone, is, for sincere and humble faith, the most attractive, the most extensive study of our Faith, for in it are comprised all the mysteries of time and eternity.

Now, could Mary see with her corporal eyes Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament? Could she comprehend with the eyes of the soul the secrets of His Presence, the mysteries that It contains?

As to the first question, St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Alexander Hales, and, perhaps, also St. Thomas,* think that, by a miracle

*Quoted by Suarez, q. lvi., a. vii., d. liii., sect. vi.

of the Almighty, her bodily eyes could be raised to behold Jesus just as He is under the Sacramental Species. Alexander Hales says still more formally: "It was given to Mary by a special privilege to see with her eyes the Body of her Son as He exists in the Blessed Sacrament."

We believe, indeed, that, if it were possible, Our Lord did not refuse this favor to His Mother. He owed to her that special mark of love, on account of the maternal devotedness which she had always testified to Him.

As to her intellectual knowledge, that is, clear understanding of the Eucharistic Mystery, Mary received it, without doubt, when she saw the mysteries in the light of the Word, a favor granted her several times during her life. She then comprehended in the light of God Himself as do the blessed in heaven. Again, she certainly possesses in glory (and it would seem that nothing there is opposed to what she had on earth), an infused knowledge of the manner in which Jesus remains in the Blessed Sacrament, of the way in which the Sacred Species exist, and of the bond, if there is one, between the accidents and the Body of Jesus

Christ. In that, says Suarez, is truly perfect knowledge.*

If the knowledge of the blessed is the source of their beatitude, what an ocean of felicity inundates the soul of Mary, contemplating and unveiling that adorable Sacrament in which God has centred His most admirable wonders! To Mary alone it has been given to know in this way, because she alone loved more than all other creatures.

This is the foundation of Mary's contemplation. We now understand why she prolonged her adoration. Would an entire life suffice to study the Eucharist? Mary's vigils were passed in delightful raptures, her interior gaze going from beauty to beauty. If the blessed never weary contemplating the same God, because He reveals Himself to them ever ancient and always new,—ah! could Mary grow tired contemplating Jesus in the Eucharist, the Wonder of the wonders of God: *Maximum miraculorum*?†

We leave to souls of prayer to penetrate into the secrets of Mary's adoration. True Eucharistic adoration ought to reproduce that which Jesus incessantly offers in the

**De Euch.* d. liii., sect. vi.

†S. Thomas Aquinas.

Blessed Sacrament to His Father. If Mary, in her whole life and all her actions, was the perfect copy of her Son, her adoration was modeled on that of Jesus, and God was truly glorified by the sweet-smelling sacrifice, which arose to Him from the Cenacle in which Jesus and Mary adored Him with one and the same soul!

And now, pious reader, we pause. In these few pages we have tried to show forth the reasons which establish the devotion to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and authorize us to invoke her under that title. Mary, Mother of the Saviour living in the Eucharist—Mary, the sovereign Dispensatrix of that Sacrament and of all the graces that It contains—Mary, the first to practice the duties of the Eucharistic life, and teaching us by her example to assist well at the Holy Sacrifice, to communicate well, and frequently and piously to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament—Mary, to say all in one word, giving the Eucharist to the world and leading the world back to the Eucharist—such is Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

We are far from having exhausted our subject. Labor in prayer, dig into this

fruitful mine of Mary's relations with the Eucharist. If the joy of discovering the magnificence of your Mother does not urge you to the study of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, recall the words of Holy Writ: "They who seek to know Mary will gain eternal life, *Qui elucidant me vitam aeternam habebunt.*"*

MARY AND THE EUCHARIST.

ACCORDING TO THE FATHERS.

We shall reproduce here from the *Semaine Eucharistique* of Père de Machault, some of the eulogistic passages of the Fathers, which prove how those men of God associated in thought and affection Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and His Most Blessed Mother, who gave Him to us.

Each of these eulogiums may form a subject for fruitful meditation. They admirably confirm the thoughts that fill the foregoing pages, or rather, those thoughts are only their development. From them they draw whatever strength they possess.

*Eccles. xxiv., 31.

Benedictus fructus The Eucharist is the
ventris Mariæ. (Luke Blessed Fruit of
i., 42.) Mary's womb.

Beatus venter qui Blessed is the womb
illum portavit et ubera that bore Thee and
quæ suxit. (Luke xl., the paps that gave
27.) Thee suck.

Generaciones Mariæ. The Eucharist, that
(Eccles. xxiv.) is the Fruit of Mary.

Quis det ut de car- Who will give us of
nibus ejus saturemur? His Flesh, that we may
(Job xxxi., 31.) be filled?

De carne Mariæ, caro The Flesh formed
data manducanda. (St. from that of Mary, and
Augustine.) which she gives us to
eat.

Novus flos carnis The new Flower of
humanæ ex partu vir- humanity inclosed in
gineo. (St. Leo, D.) the womb of Mary.

Botrus de sua vite The Cluster of
germinans. (St. Clem- grapes which ripened
ent, D.) on this celestial vine.

Virginis Filius. (St. The Son of the Vir-
Augustine, D.) gin.

Hostia virgineo fla- The Host of virginal
grans odore. (Missale perfume.
Rom.)

Cibus noster a Vir- Our Food suckled by
gine lactatus. (St. Au- the Virgin.
gustine, D.)

Panis satus in Virgine cœlestem cibum quotidie subministrans fidelibus in altaribus. (St. Peter Chrysologus, D.)

The Bread sown in the Virgin, which daily gives to the Faithful the heavenly food of the altar.

Panis de cœlo formatus in utero Virginis. (Peter Blessius.)

The Bread of heaven made in the womb of Mary.

Panis ex intacta terra Virginis. (St. Gregory Nyssa, D.)

Bread from the most pure earth of Mary.

Fructus Mariæ dulcis gutturi. (St. Bernard, D.)

The Fruit of Mary infinitely sweet to the taste.

Eva lacrymas, Maria gaudium in utero portavit. (St. Augustine, D.)

Tears came from Eve; but in the Fruit of Mary is the source of joy.

Pullus Reginæ cœli et Turturis castæ. (St. Francis de Sales, D.)

The Little Chick of the Queen of Heaven and the chaste Celestial Dove.

Poculum vitæ et pacis per Mariam exhibitum. (St. Peter Damian, D.)

The chalice of life and reconciliation offered by Mary.

Vestis incorruptibilitatis ex velere Mariæ. (St. Epiphanius, D.)

The robe of immortality woven from the fleece of the Divine Lamb.

Induit carne Deum, ut indueremus Deum. (St. Bernard, D.)

She clothed God with flesh, that we might be clothed with God.

Per Evam mors; at Death came through
 Maria vitam protulit Eve; Mary brings us
 per quam caro mortua life, in which all flesh
 possit resuscitari. (St. dead shall live again.
 Augustine, D.)

Fœnum de prato The pasturage af-
 uteri virginalis collec- forded in the spiritual
 tum. (St. Bernard, D.) meadow of the womb
 of Mary.

Incomprehensibilis The miracle of the
 mysterii miraculum incomprehensible Mys-
 per Virginem datum. tery offered to the
 (St. Epiphanius, D.) world by Mary.

Panis in Maria igne The Bread baked in
 Spiritus Sancti coctus. Mary's womb by the
 (St. Bernard, D.) fire of the Holy Spirit.

Acervus tritici ex The Wheaten Mass
 utero Mariæ diffusus from Mary's womb is
 in hunc mundum. (St. spread throughout the
 Ambrose, D.) world.

Sic Christi frater es, You are, therefore,
 sugens ubera ejus. the brother of Jesus,
 (Cant. viii.) nourished like Him at
 the breasts of His
 Blessed Mother.

Dulcedo lactis Mariæ The sweetness of
 in Filio nobis por- Mary's milk, which we
 recto. (St. Birgit.) taste in eating the
 Body of her Son.

Mensa quæ nobis The mystical table
 panem cœlestem pro- whereon we find the
 tulit. (St. Epiphanius, Bread of Heaven.
 D.)





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