

the first time. If we exhort you to accuse yourself of them anew, without mentioning either their number or their circumstances, it is in order that your confession may not be null for want of sufficient matter, and that you may receive the fruit of the Sacrament.

When you have to confess only light faults, which are not even real sins, or which, if real sins, do not inspire sufficient sorrow, omit confession, and go to Holy Communion as did the first Christians. They confessed only mortal sins and contented themselves, to obtain pardon of venial sins, with reciting the *Pater Noster*, as St. Augustine tells us (1) and after him St. Alphonsus di Li-  
guori (2).

In communicating in the state of grace, although with venial sins upon the conscience and without previous confession, you will make a good Communion.

If you prefer to follow the custom of Christians of our own day, that is, if you wish to confess before approaching the Holy Table, it is absolutely necessary that you confess well, and therefore, that you confess with sorrow for your sins. If, then, you have not new sins for which you may prudently judge that you have true sorrow, confess the old ones for which you certainly have repented.

We do not teach this doctrine in order to give you to understand that sins ought to be confessed more than once, which would be a manifest error; but we put it forth that you may be able to assure yourself of the fruit of the Sacrament of Penance. This fruit for Christians exempt from mortal sin, is an increase of sanctifying grace. In effect, sacramental confession gives grace to those deprived of it by mortal sin, and it increases that grace in those that, guilty only of venial sin, already possess it.

Many authors do not approve accusations made in the following or similar terms: *I accuse myself of sins of thought, of word, of deed, and of omission committed in the past.* Such an accusation appears to them too general, and is equivalent to this: *I accuse myself of being a sinner*, since whoever sins, offends God either by thought word, action, or omission. So vague an accusation is, according to them, insufficient. They demand the mention of some

(1) Tract. 26 in Io.

(2) Dir. des confess., ch. 22 p. 2, § 32.