

of persons were excluded from a frequent approach to the holy table; for instance those engaged in trade, or even those living in the state of matrimony.

Others, however, went to the opposite extreme. Under the persuasion that daily Communion was a divine precept, and in order that no day might pass without the reception of the Sacrament, besides other practices contrary to the approved usage of the Church, they held that the Holy Eucharist ought to be received, and in fact administered it, even on Good Friday.

Under these circumstances the Holy See did not fail in its duty of vigilance. For by a decree of this Sacred Congregation, which begins with the words *Cum ad aures*, issued on the 12th February, A.D. 1679, with the approbation of Innocent VI., it condemned these errors, and put a stop to such abuses; at the same time declaring that all the faithful, of whatsoever class, merchants or tradesmen, or married persons not excepted, might be admitted to frequent Communion, according to the devotion of each one and the judgment of his confessor. And on the 7th December, 1690, by the decree of Pope Alexander VIII., *Sanctissimus Dominus*, the proposition of Baius, postulating a perfectly pure love of God, without any admixture of defect, as requisite on the part of those who wished to approach the holy table was condemned.

Yet the poison of Jansenism, which, under the pretext of showing due honor and reverence to the Holy Eucharist, had infected the minds even of good men, did not entirely disappear. The controversy as to the dispositions requisite for the lawful and laudable frequentation of the Sacrament survived the declarations of the Holy See; so much so, indeed, that certain theologians of good repute judged that daily Communion should be allowed to the faithful only in rare cases, and under many conditions.

On the other hand, there were not wanting men of learning and piety who more readily granted permission for this practice, so salutary and pleasing to God. In accordance with the teaching of the Fathers, they maintained that there was no precept of the Church which prescribed more perfect dispositions in the case of daily than of weekly or monthly Communion; while the good effects of daily Communion would, they alleged, be far more abundant than those of Communion received weekly or monthly.

In our own day the controversy has been carried on with increased warmth, and not without bitterness, so that the minds of confessors and the consciences of the faithful have been disturbed to the no small detriment of Christian piety and devotion. Accordingly, certain distinguished men, themselves pastor of souls, have urgently besought His Holiness Pope Pius X. to deign to settle, by his supreme authority, the questions concerning the dispositions requisite for daily Communion; so that this usage, so salutary and so pleasing to God, might not only suffer no decrease among the faithful, but might rather be promoted and everywhere propagated; a thing most desirable in these days, when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are so lacking in many quarters. And His Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, out of his abundant solicitude and zeal, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily, and should profit to the utmost by its fruits, committed the aforesaid question to this Sacred Congregation, to be looked into and decided once for all (*definitum*).

Accordingly, the Sacred Congregation, of the Council, in a plenary Session, held 16th December, 1905, submitted the whole matter to a very careful scrutiny; and, after sedulously examining the reasons adduced on either side, determined and declared as follows:

1. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can be lawfully hindered therefrom.

2. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine, or vain glory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.

3. Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection

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thereto, nevertheless it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning mortally in future; and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from even venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better; therefore, care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving according to each one's strength, circumstances and duties.

5. That the practice of frequent and daily Communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor's advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade anyone (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in a state of grace, and approaches with a right intention.

6. But since it is plain that, by the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist, union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient, therefore parish priests, confessors and preachers—in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part II, cap. 4, n. 60)—are frequently, and with great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

7. Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in religious orders and congregations of all kinds; with regard to which, however, the decree *Quemadmodum*, issued on the 17th December, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

8. In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or religious vows, in whose rules or constitutions, or calendars, Communion is assigned to

(Continued on page 8)

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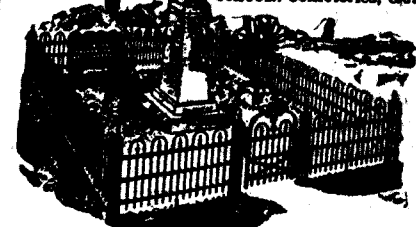
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