

It is much to be desired that parish priests, filled with the true spirit of the Church, should clearly grasp the fact that diocesan statutes only refer, have power only to refer, to the *public* and *solemn* celebration of First Communion ; and that they in no way forbid—indeed, are powerless to forbid—the administration of Holy Communion to those who are already fit for its reception. Let parish priests or rather confessors, feel no hesitation in granting Communion in the ordinary form to a considerable portion of the children before these have reached the age appointed by the Bishop for the solemn celebration. The touching and pious ceremony of First Communion need not on this account fall into disuse. It will retain all its impressiveness, in the same way that the solemn rites of Baptism are administered to infant princes who have already been baptised in private—and just as young priests not uncommonly come to sing their first high Mass in their native parish days, weeks, and even months after their ordination and first Mass.

The priest will sometimes find himself confronted by practical difficulties standing in the way of private Communion ; but is it not advisable to strive by prudent degrees to bring our customs into harmony with the full truth of divine and ecclesiastical law ? And since the 'jurisprudence of the Holy See opens to us a middle course to this very end, why should we not seek, with discretion, it is true, but still efficaciously, to enter the path ?

Unfortunately, it may happen that even those children who have received all the spiritual helps that the Church can give them, will not always retain the sap of grace which has been communicated to them in such special abundance. Yet, in many instances, one may notice the most unmistakable proof of the divine working of this supernatural hygiene. Ere his passions awake, let the young Christian receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, and, in the Eucharist, let him complete his union with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus when the Devil comes he will find the citadel already held and fortified. Why should we fear to make a trial of it ? It is our duty to uphold the reign of Jesus