

worthy ? True virtue dwells in him who thinks himself without virtue. Do you think you have a right to weigh your virtues, your qualifications, to see whether you deserve Communion ? Sink into your nothingness, ardently desire—behold the true disposition for Holy Communion !

But I insist on this point : Have purity of conscience. Without that, the Bread of Life would become a bread of death. The Eucharist is, however, not intended to give death. But were you already dead before receiving It, you would be doubly so after.

It is the state of grace that St. Paul demands when he says : " Let a man prove himself " before eating this Divine Bread. And because some communicate with a guilty conscience, he tells them that they have eaten their own damnation. They have crucified Jesus in their heart, Jesus, their own Judge.

The Eucharist is the Bread of the Living. Our Lord indicated that when He proclaimed this mystery : " I am the Bread of Life : He that eateth Me shall live in Me and by Me. " Behold here two lives : the divine life of Jesus in the soul, and the life of the soul in Jesus.

But if Communion is the union of the soul with Jesus, there must of necessity be between these two terms a unity, a likeness, which will form the foundation of the union, for contraries are never united. Light cannot mingle with darkness, death with life. Since Jesus, who comes to us, is living, we, too, ought to be alive, otherwise there would be no union. You will, at most, detain the Lord for some instants in your heart, but He will not abide there, and you will have committed in His regard a sacrilegious violence.

Let us, then, always remember this essential condition purity of conscience. The Church inculcates it strongly by the voice of the Council of Trent. She expressly forbids us to communicate before confessing, if our conscience reproaches us with a mortal sin, no matter what may be our sorrow.