

pearances of bread and wine. Children will understand this quite early: for the age of love comes far sooner than the age of reason." "To these very just reflections of a Christian mother" writes Père Lintelo "one may be allowed to add that Baptism predisposes children supernaturally to understand Communion, and to look forward to its reception with a divinely-given instinct. Happy they if Jesus enter their souls while these divine gifts remain still unimpaired and in all their freshness!"

From the Church's teaching concerning the age for beginning to receive the Holy Eucharist, we may draw three conclusions. The first of these is that children *are bound under pain of grievous sin to communicate as soon as they are capable*: so that, when that period has been reached, they are no less bound to make the Easter Communion than they are to make the annual Confession. One may say more — as some theologians observe — namely, that a child may more easily be capable of communicating than of making a confession. The acts required for the Sacrament of Penance, notably that of distinguishing between sins and realising them, are much more difficult for a child to produce than are the necessary dispositions for Holy Communion. For, in order to receive the latter, it is enough to be in the state of grace and to have a good will.

It does not follow from this, however, that a child is absolutely obliged to start communicating at the Easter of the very first year in which it becomes capable. For, according to the teaching of the Council of Lateran, the Confessor is allowed, for some serious reason, to delay the child's fulfilment of the Paschal precept till a little later in the same year.

A second conclusion to be drawn. If the child be kept in ignorance of its strict duty, or parents, or ecclesiastical authorities forbid Communion, and the child, consequently, be excused from sin, its superiors thenceforward become responsible and burden their own consciences. Saint Alphonsus Liguori remarks: "Roncaglia is right in blaming parish priests who refuse, without discrimination, to admit children to Communion, unless