

this holy obligation. We should, however, calumniate her were we to maintain that she exacts of children of this age what persons of thirty or forty can scarcely give.

St. Thomas, that faithful interpreter of the thought of the Church, says : " We may without fear give the Eucharist to children as soon as they begin to have the use of reason and can conceive devotion toward It." "*The use of reason*," says the doctor—not the perfect use, nor in the same measure for all, but rudimentary, ordinary, mediocre—not the perfect possession, the plenitude of reason, ripe from logical deductions and experience, but the dawn, the awakening of the reason that begins to be conscious of itself. Their reason must be sufficiently awake "for them to conceive devotion toward Communion." Yes, they must know what the Church ordains for us to believe about Communion. They must have the desire to nourish themselves with It, in order to preserve their soul from mortal sin, to obtain the strength to keep the law of God, and thus to reach eternal life. They must, be purified by confession from every grave fault, in order to receive in a state of grace the God of all sanctity. They must, in fine, approach with respect this Table, so hospitable to good-will, so terrible to rashness. This is sufficient to form "the devotion necessary for the fruitful reception of the Eucharist," for young children, as well as for everyone else, at Easter, on feasts, monthly or weekly.

But if we desire to grant them frequent Communion, we shall demand from them the dispositions of fitness, above all the struggle against the affection to venial sin, the habit of daily prayer, at least vocal, a more exact fidelity to the duties of their state, and an effort, pretty well sustained and at least courageously resumed, for the correction of their defects and the empire over their passions. All this is very well ; it is just and lawful. These better dispositions are, however, to be demanded only in the measure in which, at such or such an age, they may generally be furnished ; also in that in which each child can have them agreeably to his special degree of intelligence, his education and his sphere of life. All circumstances that concur to determine his actual situation must be taken into consideration. The most elementary idea of justice ordains conformity in the supernatural order to