

happy and thoroughly united family ; just as, on the occasion of the miracle of the loaves, when the people were seated on the grass at the hillside, the same benediction, the same nourishment united the multitude around our divine Saviour, and clasped them all in friendly bonds, so also does holy communion wind a strong though secret band of heavenly cords, formed by God's own hand, not only around one single hall, but around all churches ; not alone around one single hillside, but over all the mountains and valleys over land and sea, over all the zones and all the world. This explains the invocation in the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament, Bond of peace and charity. "

In the economy of divine grace, however, we cannot participate in these treasures without our own co-operation. Created with a free will our salvation is contingent upon our co-operation. This is a sublime and beautiful, though at the same time a dreadfully serious, truth, and explains, moreover, why so little fruit is frequently derived by Christians from the immense storehouse of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Let us conclude these considerations with a firm resolution never to receive holy communion except in the state of grace, never to approach the holy table in an unworthy manner. Reflect earnestly upon the words of the Apostle : " Let a man prove himself ; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself : not discerning the body of the Lord. Truly to the unworthy communicant this is an appalling statement. God, Eternal love, is ever ready to enter the hearts of the faithful and to fill them with indescribable joy, but the unworthy communicant eateth and drinketh that same Eternal Love to his own judgment and damnation. Most dreadful, moreover, is the reflection that the most flagrant sin against the Holy Ghost, obduracy of heart, concerning which Our Lord says that neither in this life nor in the next shall it be forgiven, results most easily from an unworthy communion. May the infinite mercy of God preserve us from such an evil ! May every holy communion unite us more intimately and more firmly to God.

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