

a retreat in some religious house. But at least never fail to make your meditation every morning.

The third means is the frequenting of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Communion. By confession the soul is kept purified, and by it not only are our faults forgiven us, but additional helps are obtained for us for resisting temptations. And for this end you have your director; always confess to him and not to another, and consult him on all affairs of importance, even though they be of a temporal nature; and obey him in every thing, particularly if you are troubled with scruples. He who obeys his director never need be afraid of doing wrong. *He who hears you, hears me.* St. Luke x. 16. The voice of your director is the voice of God.

The Holy Communion is called heavenly bread; because as earthly bread maintains the life of the body, so does the Holy Communion maintain the life of the soul: *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man you shall not have life in you.* St. John vi. 54. On the contrary, to him who frequently eats of this bread, is promised eternal life: *If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever.* Ibid. 52. Hence the Council of Trent (Sess. 13, c. 2.) calls the Holy Communion a "Medicine which frees us from venial sins, and preserves us from mortal ones." Resolve, therefore, to communicate at least every eight days,\* with a determination not to allow any worldly affair to prevent you from so doing; there is no affair of greater importance than eternal salvation. Besides, the more you are in the world, the greater need have you for spiritual help, because you are exposed to greater temptations.

The fourth means, is to hear Mass every morning. When we assist at Mass we give more honour to God than all the angels and saints in heaven give him, because their honour is only that of creatures; but in the Mass we offer to God Jesus Christ, who gives him infinite honour.

The fifth means is to visit the Blessed Sacrament every day, Jesus Christ remains upon so many altars in so many churches to bestow favours upon all those who come to visit him; and hence those who practise this beautiful devotion derive innumerable benefits from it. The graces which you should particularly seek for in your visits, are the love of God and holy perseverance to the end of your life.

The sixth means, which above, all others I recommend you to practise, is holy prayer. It is certain that we cannot, without the help of God, do the least good for our souls: and God declares he will not bestow on us his help unless we ask him for it: *Ask, and it shall be given you.*—St. Matt. vii. 7.—Hence St. Teresa says: "he who asks not, receives not." Hence also, that common sentence of the holy Fathers and divines with St. Thomas, that "without prayer it is impossible to persevere in the grace of God and to be saved." But he who prays is secure of God's assistance; we have his word for it, which cannot fail, and repeated many times in the Sacred Gospels: *All things, whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive! and they shall come unto you.* St. Mark, xi. 24. *Every one that asketh receiveth.* St. Luke, xi. 10. *Amen, amen, I say unto you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you.* St. John, xvi. 23. God grants whatever is asked for in the

\* If your Director approves of it.