

that he put no positive impediment in the way. Now apply all this to the Blessed Eucharist. This Holy Sacrament is made ready at the Consecration of the Mass, when bread and wine are changed into Christ's Body and Blood. But it is applied to the receiver, when he performs the act of swallowing the Sacrament. He may be distracted at the moment. He may be a tiny babe, which has just been baptized. But if he swallows the Sacramental Body of Christ, *opus est operatum— the deed is done.* Jesus has fed him with His Sacred Body, as He fed His Apostles at the Last Supper. God has seen the Holy Sign completed, and by virtue of *'the deed that has been done ('ex opere operato,' you remember)* He unfailingly pours down His grace, into that soul, unless some obstacle interfere. Now what are the obstacles that can interfere in the case of Holy Communion? Only the lack of those two conditions which Christ Himself laid down and which His Church teaches us are alone required for a fruitful reception of this Sacrament. And these two conditions are, first, the state of grace, gained by Baptism, or by Penance after a mortal fall; and second, in adults, the intention to receive the Sacrament. Now, is all this clear?"

"It sounds very strange," said Mrs. Mary, "why—from what you say, nothing more is required for a fruitful Communion, than for a fruitful Baptism."

"Only the state of grace," said Father Carson, smiling. "Anyone who can be baptized, can receive the Holy Eucharist fruitfully straightway afterward, provided only he can swallow the Blessed Sacrament. But from motives of reverence, not every one who may be baptized, is allowed to receive the Holy Eucharist. The two Sacraments are not equally necessary, you see."

"Well—isn't it an irreverence to the Blessed Sacrament," said Mrs. Mary "to give Communion to little tots who can scarcely say their prayers? How can they realize what they are doing!"

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Mary," said Father Carson, "if it comes to that, do we realize much more ourselves what we are doing, when we receive the Bread of Life? We