

abode with us? A Redeemer was promised to the world, *unasked*, for fallen man would never have dared of himself to hope to appease God's anger at the price of His Son's blood. Unasked, Jesus descended into Mary's womb—the humble Virgin of Nazareth had never aspired to so great a dignity. Of His own accord, also, out of pure love and pity for weak man, our merciful Lord instituted the Blessed Eucharist, which is the crowning miracle of His love. No human mind could have conceived it possible for Jesus thus to abase Himself; not even the most loving human heart would have had the temerity to desire such a union as that to which He condescends in the Holy Communion.

God is the first to bestow Himself on man; it is always He, the dear Lord of love who makes the first step; He —oh, wondrous mercy! who desires us to desire Him. And do we desire Him? Which of us can say that we long for His coming with even a shadow of the yearning love which consumed His Blessed Mother? Our hearts are too often tepid and unmoved as we wend our listless way to the Altar rails to approach the Sacrament, which only infinite love could institute. What effort do we put into our preparation? How few of us really put God first! We have work to do, and obligations to fulfil and relaxation to take, and we are well pleased with ourselves if we can set apart a few moments for God, and make them fit in with the plan we have marked out for the day. Let us resolve in future to think more seriously of what takes place when we go to Holy Communion. Who is it that we receive? Is it not the same Jesus who gave Himself first to Mary? The self same God, with the same perfections, the same power, the same mercy, the same love? We receive Him as she did, but, do we prepare like her? "Oh! the blindness and hardness of the heart of man, that doth not consider so unspeakable a gift, and from a daily use of it, falls into a disregard of it." Thus speaks the "Imitation of Christ" and do not these words apply too well to each of us?

Let the thought of Mary's fervent, loving expectation animate us to better things; let us unite ourselves to her