



The Feast of the Purification and Holy Communion

Before Communion.

Represent vividly to yourself this scene in the Temple, note with what grace enters into it the Holy Virgin, Phoenix of Purity, bringing with her two spotless doves, whilst to meet her a swan glides softly forth, which, both by the streams flowing from its eyes, and by its voice, sings sweetly of its approaching death; nor is there wanting even a widowed turtle-dove who no longer laments her solitude, but prophesies her consolation. Consider how Holy Simeon prepared himself on that day for receiving into his arms the Lord. It is not said that he was aged, but *just* and *fearing* the Lord, for in His holy service age is not computed by the number of years, but of merits; and *fearing*, for he who is to receive Him must fear Him. His arms trembled not so much from age as from the diffidence proceeding from his delicate and sensitive conscience. Oh, great disposition! First replenishing with the Divine Spirit his soul, ere he takes into his arms the Incarnate Word, he hearkened to the answer of the One Divine Person, and thus obtained the favours of the other.

Reflect, my soul, that to-day you are to receive the same Child Jesus, no longer wrapped in swaddling clothes, but covered with the sacramental accidents. Should you not then prepare yourself the whole of your life! for if the Holy Simeon in order merely to press Him once to his breast so exercises himself in virtues for