

Father Burke, a friend of hers before her marriage, who had recently become their parish priest. "They're good children, clever and warm-hearted; they know their religion well, but, somehow, the loss of their mother for so long seems to have spoiled them in a way, made them difficult to do with."

"I think I understand exactly," replied Father Burke, who had visited at the house two or three times already, and had made the acquaintance of the small people under discussion. "They're fond of you, aren't they, and that's one good thing. It makes matters easier. But I have an idea."

"Oh, have you Father?" interrupted Mrs. Cologan delightedly. "I'm making the Nine Fridays to find out what I ought to do for them, and for the children themselves, to ask every grace from the Sacred Heart for them. I've consecrated them all, often, too, to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Mother, and I make them renew their consecration every First Friday, and on all the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin. And now I'm sure that, through your Reverence, the Sacred Heart is going to answer my prayer for guidance."

"Well, the course of action I am going to suggest is certainly inspired by our Blessed Lord," said Father Burke with a smile, "for what I'll say isn't my own mere personal wish, it's the command of the Holy Father himself. You've done well, very well, Mary, so far, and your teaching the children devotion to the Sacred Heart is the best thing you could have done—till now. For now you must do a better thing still, this beginning of theirs in devotion to the Sacred Heart must be improved upon and perfected. You've heard of the recent Decree on children's First Communion? How the Holy Father knowing the Heart of Him who said "Suffer the *little* children . . . to come to me," has fixed the age for First Communion as the time when the child has reached the use of reason? Well, now, I think we're both agreed as to there not being much doubt that Donal, Agnes and Tommy have all come to that age, they're bright, sensible children even if they *are* frolicsome; they know their