

renunciation of mortal sin and a firm purpose of perseverance in this renunciation. With these dispositions, the Christian may approach that God who, even in this world, deigns to offer him the fullest possession of Himself in the "Mystery of Faith," who thus bends down to His creature to raise him to Himself.

In the postcommunions of the Mass, which form quite a treatise on the Holy Eucharist, the Church teaches us all these truths. St. Denis also expresses them in the following words: "The Lord coming forth from the hiddenness of His divinity, lovingly became like unto us, assuming yet not absorbing our entire human nature. He clothes Himself in our compound nature, without altering His essential unity; and by an effect of this same charity He invites the human race to a participation of His essence and of His own riches, provided that we entirely unite ourselves to Him by the imitation of His divine life; for thus we shall be truly associated to the Divinity, and share all its riches."

If we desire to know whether we are with fitting dispositions receiving this supernatural Food, we must judge by Its effects. We can not of course have any sensible perception of the divine life infused by It into us, but we are made aware of the presence of that life by the evident change wrought by It in the habits of the soul. We do not receive the Holy Eucharist for the purpose of being sensibly moved, of experiencing great consolation in sweet colloquies with Our Lord, or of being made aware of the presence of our divine Guest by a kind of physical emotion; but we approach the Holy Table because the Sacraments work what they signify, and signify what they work, and since the Living Bread is the Mystery of Faith, It enables us to live by God, with a life which is not directly perceived nor grasped in itself, but which manifests its presence by the growth of holiness and of the theological and moral virtues, by the gradual removal of all obstacles, and the cessation of all search after anything but God.

From all this we must conclude that Holy Communion can not, without irreverence, be likened to other practices of piety. The Holy Eucharist is not given even as a means of intercessory prayer, although our



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