

examine their thoughts and inclinations and especially their predominant passions, asking themselves, "Are not vanity, selfishness, pride, uncharitableness envy, and jealousy at the bottom of all my faults."

Let them also examine their words and reflect upon their manner of speaking. Are their words not governed by injustice? Do they not speak with untruthfulness and uncharitableness? Are they not imprudent in speech and careless about the reputation of their neighbor?

Let them, moreover, examine their actions, their prayers, their devotions at holy communion, their daily occupations, and the manner in which they perform the duties of their state of life. Are they honest and sincere in all their actions? Are they conscientious in the performance of every duty? Are they faithful in little things?

No doubt the majority of those who have nothing to confess would find innumerable faults if they were accustomed to subject themselves to a rigid and sincere examination of conscience. They should not be satisfied, however, with the mere examination and confession of their faults. They should moreover ask themselves: "What is the cause of my frequent relapses into the old imperfections? What measures must I adopt to correct these faults?"

One of the most important means to perfection is, no doubt, the daily examination of conscience with regard to our predominant passions. If all those who communicate frequently would adopt the habit of a daily, sincere and systematic examination of conscience, and would then endeavor to make a more perfect act of contrition, a firmer purpose of amendment, and a better confession, their fellow Christians would cease to be scandalized at their conduct and to complain about the fruitlessness of their many holy communions. We must, however, guard against another bad habit in which we are apt to fall when we receive holy communion frequently. We must carefully guard against performing our devotions before and after holy communion in a distracted, mechanical, and prefatory manner. If those who wait on kings and serve the potentates of this world are at times careful in the exact observance of every rule and regulation of propriety, no matter how often they may appear before their exalted