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To Help You At Mass--VIII.
(h. Communion.)

Three excellent prayers are said by the priest in preparation for Communion. The first begins with a prayer for the whole Church: "Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst say to Thine apostles, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, take not into consideration my sins but the Faith of Thy Church, and to her, according to Thy will, deign to grant peace and unity."

Then the priest turns in the prayer upon himself, imploring that no sin of his own may violate these sacred things: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Who by the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit cooperating, didst through Thy death give life unto the world, free me by this Thy most holy Body and Blood, from all my sins, from all and every evil, and make me cling ever close to Thy commandments, and don't ever permit me to be separated from Thee."

Like a child, the priest asks Jesus Christ directly, and through Him, the other Persons of the Trinity, to free him from the awful tyranny of sin, to make him cling close to the Commandments, wheroin is life, so that he will continue his companionship with Jesus Christ to the end.

Diffidently, and with great reverence, he continues: "May the Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I unworthy do presume to take, in no way issue for me into judgment or condemnation, but, for Thy mercy's sake, may it be for me the safeguard both of mind and body."

Unworthy is our body, unworthy is our mind; but I come to Communion, not because worthy, but because not worthy. I would be most unworthy if I imagined myself to be worthy.

True, I must never have unrepented, unconfessed grave sin on my soul in receiving Our Lord. Nevertheless, after I have crept back to Christ, confessed my guilt, still unworthily I approach Communion because I need Him and His strength.

"The Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ guard my soul unto eternal life! The Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ guard my soul unto eternal life!"

After Communion the priest holds out the chalice that wine may be poured into it. Then he says: "What with our lips we have taken, Lord, may we with pure mind enfold; and from the Gift of the moment may there come forth for us an everlasting remedy."

Too awestruck to mention the name of the Gift he has received, the priest merely asks that the mysterious Food bear eternal fruit within his soul.

While wine and water are poured upon his fingers he implores that "Thy Body, Lord, which I have taken, and Thy Blood, which I have drunk, may cleave to my very heart, and grant that in me no stain of sin may remain when Thy pure and Holy Sacrament has recreated."

The Food of Immortality reinforces and strengthens grace within us, builds us up, establishes us in the divine manhood wheroin we are brothers of Jesus Christ, adopted sons of God, and temples of the Holy Spirit.

Study, in retrospect, the extreme care and humility in which the priest prepares himself to receive Christ's Body and Blood. Before our Communions--during Mass, or outside of Mass--we must take time and thought to realize the awful Action in which we are about to participate. And we should turn, with our whole heart and soul, for at least seven minutes, to devout thanksgiving.