

EXPLANATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

We shall now consider the Sacraments of the Church. We shall treat them under one heading, since they all pertain to the effect of grace. First of all, that must be known which St. Augustine wrote in the tenth book of "The City of God": "a Sacrament is a sacred thing" or "the sign of a sacred thing." [1] Even in the Old Law there were certain sacraments, that is, signs of a sacred thing--for example, the paschal lamb and other legal sacred signs or "sacraments" which, however, did not cause grace but only signified or indicated the grace of Christ. The Apostle calls these "sacraments" "weak and needy elements." [2] They were needy because they did not contain grace, and they were weak because they could not confer grace. In them, as St. Augustine says, the merits of Christ brought about salvation in a more hidden manner under the cover of visible things. The Sacraments of the New Law, on the other hand, both contain grace and confer it. A Sacrament of the New Law is a visible form of invisible grace. Thus, the exterior washing which takes place when the water is poured in Baptism represents that interior cleansing which takes away sin by virtue of the Sacrament of Baptism. [3]

There are seven Sacraments of the New Law: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony. The first five of these Sacraments are intended to bring about the perfection of the individual man in himself; whereas the other two, Orders and Matrimony, are so constituted that they perfect and multiply the entire Church.

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE PHYSICAL LIFE: AN ANALOGY

The spiritual life conforms to the physical life. In the physical life man is perfected in three chief ways: first, by generation, in that he is born into this world; secondly, by growth, through which he is brought up into stature and perfect strength; thirdly, by food which sustains man's life and powers. This would suffice were it not that man is attacked by illnesses, and hence, fourthly, he needs something which will bring him back to health.

This also holds true in the spiritual life. First, man needs regeneration or re-birth which is brought through the Sacrament of Baptism: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [4] Secondly, it is necessary that man develop perfect strength, which is, as it were, a spiritual growth, and this indeed comes to him in the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is like the strengthening which the Apostles received when the Holy Ghost came upon them and

confirmed them. The Lord had said to them: "But stay you in the city of Jerusalem till you be endued with power from on high." [5] The third similarity is that man must be fed with spiritual food: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." [6] Fourthly, man must be healed spiritually through the Sacrament of Penance: "Heal, O Lord, my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." [7] Lastly, one is healed both in soul and in body in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." [8] Two of the Sacraments, Orders and Matrimony, are instituted for the common good of the Church. Through the Sacrament of Orders the Church is ruled and is spiritually multiplied; and through Matrimony it is increased physically in numbers. [9]

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

The seven Sacraments have some things which they all hold in common, and some things which are proper to each one. That which is common to all the Sacraments is that they confer grace. It is also common to all the Sacraments that a Sacrament is made up of words and physical acts. And so also Christ, who is the Author of the Sacraments, is the Word made flesh. And just as the flesh of Christ was sanctified, and has the power of sanctifying because of the Word united to itself, so also the Sacraments are made holy and have the power of sanctifying through the words which accompany the action. Thus, St. Augustine says: "The word is joined to the element, and the Sacrament is made." [10] Now, the words by which the Sacraments are sanctified are called the form of the Sacraments; and the things which are sanctified are called the matter of the Sacraments. Water, for example, is the matter of Baptism, and the holy chrism is the matter of Confirmation.

In each Sacrament there is required a minister, who confers the Sacrament with the intention of doing that which the Church intends. If any one of these three requirements is lacking, the Sacrament is not brought into being, viz., if there is lacking the due form of the words, or if the matter is not present, or if the minister does not intend to confer the Sacrament. [11]

The effect of the Sacrament is likewise impeded through the fault of the recipient, for example, if one feigns to receive it and with a heart unprepared to receive worthily. Such a one, although he actually receives the Sacrament, does not receive the effect of the Sacrament, that is, the grace of the Holy Spirit. "For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful." [12] On the other hand, however, there are some who never even

receive sacramentally, yet who receive the effect of the Sacrament because of their devotion towards the Sacrament, which they may have in desire or in a vow.

There are some things which are characteristic of each individual Sacrament. Certain ones impress a character on the soul which is a certain spiritual sign distinct from the other Sacraments. Such are the Sacraments of Orders, Baptism, and Confirmation. The Sacraments which give a character are never repeated in the same person who has once received it. Thus, he who is baptized need never again receive this Sacrament; neither can he who has been confirmed receive Confirmation again; and one who has been ordained need never repeat his ordination. The reason is that the character which each of these Sacraments impresses is indelible.

In the other Sacraments, however, a character is not impressed on the recipient, and hence they can be repeated as far as the person is concerned, not however as far as the matter is concerned. Thus, one can frequently receive Penance, frequently receive the Eucharist, and can be anointed more than once with Extreme Unction, and likewise he can be married more than once. Yet, regarding the matter, the same Host cannot be frequently consecrated, nor ought the oil of the sick be frequently blessed.[13]

(For "Questions for Discussion" see Chapter.)

ENDNOTES

1. "Sacramentum est sacrum signum." This is slightly different in the passage quoted in "The City of God," Book X, chapter x. See also "Epist. ii." The "Roman Catechism" ("The Sacraments in General," Chapter I, 4) seemingly follows St. Thomas here.

2. Gal., iv. 9.

3. "A Sacrament, therefore, is clearly understood to be numbered amongst those things which have been instituted as signs. It makes known to us by a certain appearance and resemblance that which God by His invisible power, accomplishes in our souls. . . . In order to explain more fully the nature of a Sacrament it should be taught that it is a thing subject to the senses which possesses, by divine institution, the power not only of signifying holiness and justice, but also to impart both to the recipient. Hence, it is easy to see that the images of the Saints, crosses, and the like, although they are signs of sacred things, cannot be called Sacraments. Thus, the solemn ablution of the body [in Baptism] not only signifies, but also has the power to effect a sacred thing which is worked interiorly in the soul by the invisible operation of the Holy Ghost" ("Roman Catechism,"

"Sacraments in General," Chapter I, 6 and 11).

4. John, iii. 5.

5. Luke, xxiv. 49.

6. John, vi. 54.

7. Ps. xl. 5.

8. James, v. 14.

9. "Why there are neither more nor less [than seven Sacraments] may be shown at least with some degree of probability from the analogy that exists between the spiritual and the physical life" ("Roman Catechism," "loc. cit.," 20).

10. "In Joan.," Tract. LXXX, 3.

11. "It should be explained that the pastor will inform the faithful that the 'sensible thing' which enters into the definition of a Sacrament as already given, although constituting but one sign, is of a twofold nature. Every Sacrament consists of two things: 'matter' which is called the element, and 'form' which is commonly called the word. . . . In order to make the meaning of the rite that is being performed easier and clearer, words had to be added to the matter. Water for example, has the quality of cooling as well as of making clean, and may be symbolic of either. In Baptism, therefore, unless the words were added, it would not be certain which meaning of the sign was intended. When the words are added, we immediately understand that the Sacrament possesses and signifies the power of cleansing. . . . Although God is the author and dispenser of the Sacraments, He nevertheless willed that they should be administered by men in His Church, not by Angels. The ministers of the Sacraments, in performing their duties, do not act in their own persons but in that they represent Christ, and hence, be they good or bad, they validly confer the Sacraments as long as they make use of the matter and the form always observed in the Catholic Church according to the institution of Christ, and intend to do what the Church does in the administration of the Sacraments" ("Roman Catechism," "loc. cit.," 16 and 24).

12. Wis., i. 5.

13. "This character has a twofold effect. It qualifies us to receive or perform a sacred act, and distinguishes us by some mark one from another. This is seen for example, in Baptism, whose character first renders one qualified to receive the other Sacraments, and, secondly, by it the Christian is distinguished from those who do not profess the faith" ("Roman

Catechism," "loc. cit.," 31).

BAPTISM

Having considered the Sacraments in general, it is now necessary to say something about each one in particular. First, we consider Baptism, of which it must be known that the matter of this Sacrament is natural water, and it makes no difference whether it is cold or warm. In artificial waters, however, such as rose water, one cannot baptize. The form of Baptism is: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The minister of Baptism ordinarily is the priest, whose office it is to baptize. In case of necessity, however, not only a deacon but also any lay person, even a pagan or a heretic, can baptize as long as he observes the form specified by the Church, and intends to act according to the intention of the Church. If a person is baptized by these not in a case of necessity, he received the Sacrament and must not again be baptized; but the grace of the Sacrament is not received, because such persons are not truly deputed to baptize outside of cases of necessity, and, hence, they act contrary to the law of the Church regulating reception of the Sacraments.[14]

THE EFFECT OF BAPTISM

The effect of Baptism is to remit both original and actual sin as well as all guilt and punishment which they incur. No kind of punishment must be enjoined for past sins upon those just newly baptized. Hence, those who die immediately after Baptism are admitted to the glory of God without delay. The effect, therefore, of Baptism is the opening of the gates of paradise.

ERRORS CONCERNING BAPTISM

There have been certain errors concerning this Sacrament. The first was that of the Solentiani, who received a baptism not of water but of the spirit. Against them the Lord says: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [15] The second error was that of the Donatists, who re-baptized those who had been baptized by the Catholics. Against them it is written: "One faith, one baptism." [16] They also err in holding that a man in the state of sin cannot baptize. Against them it is said: "He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth." [17] It is thus seen that a minister who is himself evil does not invalidate either this or any of the other Sacraments, because it is Christ who, by the merits of His passion, gives to each Sacrament its efficacy; and He is good. The fourth error is that of the Pelagians who say that children must be baptized because by their regeneration they, as adopted children of God, are

admitted into the kingdom, but by this regeneration they are not freed from original sin.

ENDNOTES

14. The priest is the ordinary minister of Baptism. In case of necessity, however, anyone who observes the proper form and intention can baptize validly but not licitly; and an adult who permits himself to be baptized without necessity by a layman would be acting illicitly, but the baptism is valid. For such conduct places an "obex" (obstacle or hindrance) to the reception of grace. The grace of the Sacrament is revived ("reviviscitur") with at least contrition, and probably attrition, or simply by an act of perfect contrition.

15. John. iii. 5

16. Eph., iv. 5.

17. John. i. 33

CONFIRMATION

The second Sacrament is Confirmation. The matter of this Sacrament is chrism made from oil, which signifies the bright lustre of conscience, and from balsam, which signifies the odor of a good name; both of which are blessed by the bishop. The form of this Sacrament is: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." [18] The minister of this Sacrament is solely the bishop. [19] It is not licit for a priest to anoint on the forehead with chrism those who are to be confirmed. [20]

THE EFFECT OF CONFIRMATION

The effect of Confirmation is that the Holy Spirit is imparted to give strength, just as He was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Thus, the Christian must boldly confess the name of Christ. The one who is confirmed is anointed on the forehead wherein is the seat of fear; so that he will not blush to confess either the name of Christ or especially the cross of Christ, which to the Jews was a scandal and to the pagans foolishness. For this reason he is signed with the sign of the cross.

ERRORS CONCERNING CONFIRMATION

Certain of the Greeks erred concerning this Sacrament in saying that it

could be administered by one who is only a priest. Against this it is said that the Apostles sent the Apostles Peter and John to impose hands upon those who had been baptized by Philip the deacon, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now, the bishops of the Church are in the places of the Apostles, and in their place also do they impose hands when the Sacrament of Confirmation is administered.

ENDNOTES

18. "Amen" is omitted in the Roman Pontifical.

19. The ordinary minister of Confirmation in the Latin Church is the bishop. In virtue of canon 782, # 3, only Abbots, Prelates Nullius, vicars and Prefects Apostolic can confer this Sacrament validly and only within the confines of their own territory and during their term of office. Cardinals can confirm validly anywhere.

20. A priest of the Latin Rite who has a special indult granted by the Holy See may confirm Catholics of his own rite only, unless it is otherwise stated (Canon 782, # 4).

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The third Sacrament is the Holy Eucharist. Its matter is wheaten bread and wine from the grape mixed with a little water so that the water becomes part of the wine. The water signifies the faithful who are incorporated into Christ. Other than wheaten bread and wine from the grape cannot be the matter for this Sacrament. The form of this Sacrament is the very words of Christ, "This is My Body," and "This is the chalice of My Blood of the new and eternal testament; the mystery of faith; which shall be shed for you and for many, to the remission of sins." These words spoken by the priest in the person of Christ brings into being this Sacrament. The minister of this Sacrament is the priest; and no one else can consecrate this matter into the Body of Christ.

THE EFFECT OF THE EUCHARIST

The effect of this Sacrament is twofold: first, in the very consecration of the Sacrament, since in virtue of the above words bread is changed into the Body of Christ, and wine into His Blood; so that Christ is entirely contained under the appearances of bread which remain without a subject; and Christ is entirely contained under the appearances of wine. And, moreover, under each part of the consecrated Host and of the consecrated wine, Christ is totally present even after the separation is made.[21] The second effect of this Sacrament brought about in the soul of one who

worthily receives is the union of man with Christ, as He himself says: "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." [22] And since man is incorporated with Christ and united to His members

through grace, it follows that through this Sacrament grace is increased in those who receive it worthily. Thus, therefore, in this Sacrament there is that which is the Sacrament alone ("sacramentum tantum"), that is, the species of bread and wine; and that which is known as the "res et sacramentum," that is, the true Body of Christ; and that which is the "res tantum," that is the unity of the Mystical Body, that is, the Church which this Sacrament both signifies and causes. [23]

ERRORS CONCERNING THE EUCHARIST

There have been many errors regarding this Sacrament. The first error is of those who say that in this Sacrament is not the true Body of Christ but only a sign of it. The author of this error is said to be Berengarius against whom it is written: "For My Flesh is meat indeed; and My Blood is drink indeed." [24] The second is the error of the Arrodinici, who offer in their sacrament bread and cheese because they say men at first made offerings of the fruits of the earth and of their flocks. Against this, however, stands the fact that the Lord who is the institutor of this Sacrament gave to His disciples bread and wine. The third is the error of the Cataphrygae and the Praeputiati, who drew the blood of an infant from tiny punctures in its body, and mixing this with flour made a bread of it; and thus asserted that they consecrated the sacrament. This is more like the sacrifices of demons than that of Christ: "And they shed innocent blood . . . which they sacrificed to the idols of Chanaan." [25] The fourth is the error of the Aquarii, who offer water only in their sacrifices. But against this are the words from the mouth of Wisdom, which is Christ: "Drink the wine which I have mingled for you." [26] Another error is that of the Poor People of Lyons who hold that any just man can consecrate this Sacrament. Against such errors is the fact that the Lord gave to the Apostles the power to celebrate this Sacrament; and hence only those who receive this power in a certain succession from the Apostles can consecrate this Sacrament.

(For "Questions for Discussion" see Chapter 6.)

ENDNOTES

21. "Hence it also follows that Christ is so contained, whole and entire, under either species that, as under the species of bread are contained not only the body but also the blood and Christ entire, so in like manner under the species of wine are truly contained not only the blood, but also the body and Christ entire. These are matters on which the faithful cannot

entertain a doubt. Wisely, however, was it ordained that two distinct consecrations should take place. They represent in a more lively manner the Passion of Our Lord, in which His blood was separated from His body; and hence in the form of consecration we commemorate the shedding of His blood. Again, since the Sacrament is to be used by us as the food and nourishment of our souls, it was most appropriate that it should be instituted as food and drink, two things which obviously constitute the complete sustenance of man.

"Nor should it be forgotten that Christ is, whole and entire. contained not only under either species, but also in each particle of either species. 'Each,' says St. Augustine, 'receives Christ the Lord, and He is entire in each portion. He is not diminished by being given to many, but gives Himself whole and entire to each' (cited in Gratian, 'De consecratione,' dist. 2). This is also an obvious inference from the narrative of the Evangelists. It is not to be supposed that Our Lord consecrated the bread used at the Last Supper in separate parts, applying the form particularly to each, but that all the bread then used for the sacred mysteries was consecrated at the same time and with the same form, and in a quantity sufficient for all the Apostles. That the consecration of the chalice was performed in this manner, is clear from these words of the Saviour: 'Take and divide it among you' (Luke, xxii, 17)" ("Roman Catechism," "The Eucharist," 35-36).

22. John. vi. 57.

23. "Those who receive this Sacrament piously and fervently must, without any doubt, so receive the Son of God into their souls as to be united as living members to His Body. For it is written, 'He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.' And again: 'The bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world' (John, vi. 58). . . . For the Eucharist is the end of all the Sacraments, and the symbol of unity and brotherhood in the Church" ("Roman Catechism," "loc. cit.," 49).

24. John, vi. 56.

25. Ps. cv. 39.

26. Prov., ix. 5.

PENANCE

The fourth Sacrament is Penance. The matter,[27] as it were, of this Sacrament is the acts of the penitent, which are called the three parts of Penance. The first part is a heart-felt contrition, by which one is sorry for the sins one has committed, and determines not to sin again. The second

part is confession, which consists in this that the sinner confesses all the sins of which he is mindful to the priest; and all of them at one time to one priest, not dividing them to a number of priests. The third part is satisfaction, which is enjoined according to the judgment of the priest; and consists especially in fasting and prayer and almsgiving.

The form of this Sacrament is the words of absolution which the priest speaks when he says: "I absolve thee" ("Ego te absolvo"). The minister of this Sacrament is the priest having authority to absolve, which is either ordinary or by commission of his superior. The effect of this Sacrament is absolution from sin.[28]

Concerning this Sacrament is the error of the Novati, who say that any one who has sinned after having been baptized cannot receive pardon through the Sacrament of Penance. Against this are the words: "Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen; and do penance, and do the first works."[29]

ENDNOTES

27. 51. Thomas uses here the words: "quasi materia." The "Roman Catechism" ("Penance," 13) follows this teaching. "The faithful should be especially informed on the matter of this Sacrament. That it differs from the other Sacraments in that for them the matter is something, whether natural or artificial; the matter as it were (quasi-materia) of Penance is the acts of the penitent, i.e., contrition confession, and satisfaction. This has thus been defined by the Council of Trent. . . It is not because they are not the real matter that they are called by the Council the matter as it were, but because they are not of that sort of matter which is applied externally, such, for instance, as water in Baptism and chrism in Confirmation."

28. "A knowledge of it [the form of Penance] will excite the faithful to receive the grace of this Sacrament with the greatest possible devotion. The form is: 'I absolve thee,' as may be inferred not only from the words: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven' (Matt., xviii. 18), but also from the teaching of Christ Our Lord, handed down to us by the Apostles. . . . The minister of the Sacrament of Penance must be a priest possessing ordinary or delegated jurisdiction, as is evident in the law of the Church. Whoever performs this sacred duty must be invested not only with the powers of orders, but also with that of jurisdiction. We have greatest proof of this ministry in the words of Our Lord: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' John, xx. 23). These words were not addressed to all, but only to the Apostles, who are succeeded in this ministry by priests" ("Roman Catechism," loc. cit., 54).

29. Apoc., ii. 5.

EXTREME UNCTION

The fifth Sacrament is Extreme Unction. Its matter is olive oil blessed by the bishop. This Sacrament should only be received by those who are in danger of death through sickness. They are to be anointed in the places of the five senses: that is, on the eyes, because it is the organ of the sense of sight; on the ears, because of hearing; on the nostrils, because of smell; on the lips, because of taste or speech; and on the hands because of touch, and on the feet because of walking.[30] The form of this Sacrament is this: "Through this anointing and through His most divine mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatever thou hast committed through sight" (and so on for the other senses). The minister of this Sacrament is the priest. The effect of this Sacrament is a medicine for both mind and body.[31]

Concerning this Sacrament is the error of the Elaeonitae, who are said to anoint their dying with oil and balsam and water and to accompany the anointing with invocations in Hebrew pronounced over the head of the sick. This is, however, contrary to the form handed down by St. James, as given above.

(For "Questions for Discussion" see Chapter 6.)

ENDNOTES

30. Anointing of the feet may now be omitted (Canon 947).

31. "This Sacrament imparts grace which remits sins, especially lighter sins or venial sins; for mortal sins are removed by the Sacrament of Penance. Extreme Unction was not instituted primarily for the remission of grave offenses; only Baptism and Penance accomplish this directly. . . . Finally, the recovery of health, if indeed advantageous, is another effect of the Sacrament" ("Roman Catechism," "Extreme Unction," 14-16).

HOLY ORDERS

The sixth Sacrament is Holy Orders. There are seven orders: priesthood, diaconate, subdiaconate, acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter. Tonsure (clerk-ship, clericatus) is not an order, but a formal profession of giving one's life to the divine ministry. The episcopate is rather a dignity than an order.[32] The matter of this Sacrament is that matter which is handed over to the candidate at the conferring of the order. Thus, priesthood is conferred by the handing over of the chalice, and so each order is

conferred by the handing over of that matter which in a special way pertains to the ministry of that particular order. The form of this Sacrament is this: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice in the Church for the living and the dead." And similarly power is conferred in the other orders. The minister of this Sacrament is the bishop who confers the orders. The effect of this Sacrament is an increase of grace for the performance of the duties of a worthy minister of Christ.

Concerning this Sacrament was the error of Arius, who taught that the priesthood could not be distinguished from the episcopate.

ENDNOTES

33. "That the number of ministers was wisely established, is proved by considering the various offices that are necessary for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the Blessed Sacrament. This is the chief scope of their institution. They are divided into major or sacred orders (priesthood, diaconship, subdiaconship) and minor orders. . . The bishops are placed over the various dioceses to govern, not only the other ministers of the Church, but also the faithful, and to promote their salvation with supreme care and diligence." Roman Catechism, "Holy Order," 26). It is the common opinion to-day that the episcopate is an order.

MATRIMONY

Matrimony is the seventh Sacrament. It is a sign of the union between Christ and the Church. The efficient cause of Matrimony is the mutual consent expressed in words effective in the present by the parties.[33]

Matrimony has a threefold good. The first is the birth of children and the educating of them to the worship of God. The second is that fidelity which one must render to the other; and the third is that it is a Sacrament, or, in other words, the indivisibility of Matrimony which shows forth the indivisible union of Christ and His Church.

Concerning Matrimony there are a number of errors. The first is that of Tatian, who condemned marriage, and against such it is written: "If thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned." [34] The second error is that of Jovinian, who made marriage equal to virginity. The third is that of the Nicolaitae, who mutually exchange their wives. There were also many other heretics who taught and worked impurities, and against which are the words of St. Paul: "Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." [35]

ENDNOTES

33. "This means that the consent is the effective cause of marriage, . . . because without the consent and the contract, the obligation and the bond cannot exist. . . . God Himself instituted marriage, and, as the Council of Trent declares, He made it perpetual and indissoluble. 'What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' said Our Lord (Matt., xix. 6). It belongs to marriage as a natural contract to be indissoluble; but, above all, its indissolubility arises from its nature as a Sacrament. This sacramental character raises marriage to the highest perfection. Moreover, dissolubility of marriage is immediately contrary to the proper education of children and to the other advantages of marriage. Holy Scripture frequently proposed to us the divine union of Christ and His Church under the figure of marriage" ("Roman Catechism," "Matrimony," 11-15).

34. Cor., vii. 28.

35. Heb., xiii. 4.

SEVEN GIFTS OF ETERNAL GLORY

By the reception of these Sacraments, man is led to future eternal glory which consists in seven gifts, three of the soul and four of the body. The first gift given to the soul is the vision of God in His essence, according to the words: "We shall see Him as He is." [36] The second gift is comprehension, or that understanding of God as the reward of our merits: "So run that you may obtain." [37] The third is perfect enjoyment, wherein we shall have full happiness in God: "Then shalt thou abound in delights of the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face to God." [38]

The first gift which shall be enjoyed by the body is that of impassibility, [39] for "this corruptible must put on incorruption." [40] The second gift is brilliancy: "Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." [41] The third is agility, through which they can instantly be present wheresoever they wish: "They shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds." [42] The fourth is the gift of subtility, whereby they can penetrate wherever they desire: "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." [43] To all of which may He lead us, who liveth and reigneth forever and ever! Amen.

(For "Questions for Discussion" see Chapter 6.)

ENDNOTES

36. I John, iii. 2.

37. I Cor., ix. 24.

38. Job, xxii. 26.

39. For another description of these gifts, see above, p. 61.

40. I Cor., xv. 53

41. Matt., xiii. 43.

42. Wis., iii. 7

43. I Cor., xv. 14.