

EASTER COMMUNION.

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER XV.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Receive your God worthily at least in Easter time.

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405. *An Unworthy Communicant Possessed by the Devil.* -

The fourth commandment of the Church, my very dear friends; obliges us to make Holy Communion at least once a year, and within the Paschal time; but it would not fulfil the precept to make that communion in a sacrilegious manner. A young man, who lived in criminal habits, would, nevertheless, make his Easter Communion. The shame of declaring his sins, and the fear that his confessor might put him off to another time, induced him to conceal a part of his sins in confession; he received the words of absolution (which, of course, could not absolve an unconfessed mortal sin), and had the audacity to present himself at the holy table, and receive the adorable body of Jesus Christ. This new Judas did not make his sacrilegious communion with impunity. Scarcely had he received the Sacrament when he was possessed by a devil who shook him every day in a horrible manner. The bishop, having ascertained the reality of the possession, sent a messenger to exorcise the demoniac The missionary, in order to let the spectators see

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that the man was really possessed, commanded the devil to lift the unfortunate man up and hold him suspended in the air; the devil did so. He then commanded him to give him back the body; the fiend obeyed: he threw him on the ground without hurting him in any way.

"Answer me," said the priest then to him - "why did you take possession of the body of this unhappy Christian?"

-- "Because I had a right to him; he is mine, for I reign in his heart ever since he made a bad communion."

This declaration struck all who heard it with a salutary fear, and did them more good, perhaps, than the sight of a fervent communion.

- GUILLOIS, *Nouv. Explic. du Cat.*, 289.

406. *I Want to Make My Easter Communion.* -

We sometimes find, my dear children, young people, and even aged persons, who seriously neglect the most important of their duties, and still imagine that they can make their Easter Communion. It is a gross mistake, my friends; for, in order to be admitted to Holy Communion, one must render himself worthy of it.

A bad Christian went one day to his pastor and said to him:

- "You will please come to the sacristy, father, to hear my confession, for I want to make my Easter Communion. It is necessary to obey the Church, and one of her commandments is to receive worthily at Easter time."

-- "Very good," said the priest, "but take notice of the word *worthily*, that, of course, means being well disposed. Have you the necessary dispositions? I doubt it much, knowing you as I do."

-- "You know me for a

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jolly good fellow, father, that's all."

-- "You want to go to communion tomorrow in order to obey the Church, but is there not another commandment of the Church which says: *Sundays and holy-days Mass you shall hear?* Yet I do not see you often at Mass on Sundays or holy-days. Does not the Church command you to keep festival days holy? Yet you work on those days. Again, does not the Church in these times command you to abstain from flesh meat on Fridays? Yet you eat meat, all the year round, and you in perfect health. Are you not also commanded by the Church to fast in Lent and on Ember days? Do you do so?"

-- "I always fast on Good Friday, father! I never miss that."

-- "That is good as far as that goes. But the Church asks much more of you and so, therefore does the Lord Christ, our Good Shepherd and Saviour. But I know further," continued the priest, "that you have taught your children so well that they know how to curse and blaspheme as well as yourself, and that you get drunk two or three times a week."

-- "Father, I will tell you all that in confession; come now and hear me, for I want to go to my duty."

-- "I am quite willing to hear your confession, but I cannot give you Holy Communion till you have corrected your evil habits."

- "Father, you have greatly helped me in my examination of my conscience. Thank you. I now intend to make an authentically good confession and set about reforming my whole life. Please, hear my confession."

A good lesson, perhaps, for some of us, my dear children.

It would be well for us if we know how to profit by it.

- LASSAUSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire*, 313.

407. *Let us not Wait too Long to Make our Easter Communion.* -

If we thought seriously of the danger to which we expose ourselves in postponing our conversion, dear friends, we would set about it with a little more zeal and exactness. The Abbe

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Favre, Missionary Apostolic of Savoy, cites an example of which he was himself a witness, and which happened, I believe, in 1827 or 1828. You will find it related in an excellent book entitled *Le Ciel Ouvert* (*Heaven Open*). At St Jean de Maurienne, if I am not mistaken, a father of a family always put off fulfilling his Paschal duty, notwithstanding the repeated warnings of his pastor, who was a priest full of zeal and charity. On Palm Sunday he put it off to Holy Thursday, on Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, on Easter Sunday to Low Sunday. Finally, when the previous Saturday came (the Saturday before low Sunday, known as Easter Saturday or Saturday of the Easter Octave), instead of preparing himself, he must needs put it off again to the following week. Alas! dear friends, there was no following week for him, for the very next day after this last postponement, that is to say, the Monday after Low Sunday, he went to work in the vineyard with one of his servants, and with the first shovelful of earth he raised, he fell backwards on a vine-prop.

They thought he had only swooned; his servant tries to raise him up; he calls assistance, a doctor comes, feels his pulse and declares that it is too late, that the unhappy man is dead! - Behold, children, how well might our Lord say: *Watch, and be ready, for you all know not the day nor the hour.*

- FAVRE, *Le Ciel Ouvert*, p. 364.