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PREPARATION
for

**FIRST
COMMUNION**

by

William J. Smith, S.J

THE QUEEN'S WORK

3742 W. Pine Boulevard

ST. LOUIS, MO.

AEQ 8025

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Deacidified



He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth
in me, and I in him.—*St. John: VI.*

THE PICTURE

Take a good look at the picture.

Find Our Lord in the picture.

Do you see that He is holding something in His hand?

All right; now start the story.

THE STORY IN THE PICTURE

WHEN?

It is the night before our dear Lord died.

It is now supper time.

Who do you think are at the table? The picture tells us.

Yes, Jesus and twelve of His best friends are there.

His friends are the Apostles.

He has lived with His Apostles for three years and He has told them very many things about Himself. But

He still has a big secret for them. He will tell it tonight, because tomorrow the cruel soldiers will nail Him to a cross.

The picture shows the farewell feast.

Peter and James and John and the other Apostles are listening to Our Lord. He is telling them that He is going away. He is going back to heaven. But He loves them so much He does not want to leave them.

Here is the secret: *He is going to stay with them all their lives.*

He must die, but He will come back to life. Then He will go up to heaven for good.

But the secret said that He would stay with them, didn't it?

Yes, He loves them so much that He cannot leave them.

What does He do?

WHAT?

You can never guess it.

In story books you have read of beanstalks growing up to the sky and giants who could lift trees, and the magic stick that made people disappear.

But they were only stories. Those things never happened.

This did happen. Listen . . .

Jesus is talking to His friends. They are at supper.

He picks up a piece of bread. He blesses it. Then He breaks it.

He is God, you know; the God-Man.

While they are watching Him, He says,

“THIS IS MY BODY”

Do you know what happens? He means it to happen, and He is God.

That isn't bread any more.

What is it? Jesus. God.

It looks like bread; it tastes like bread. But it isn't bread. It is Jesus.

He then takes a cup of wine. He blesses that, too. Then He says,

“THIS IS MY BLOOD”

Do you know what happens? Yes; you do.

That isn't wine any more.

It looks like wine; it tastes like wine. But it isn't wine. It is Jesus.

Were the Apostles fooled? Oh, no; not at all. They knew Jesus. They knew He would not fool them.

When He said that it was His body, it became His body.

When He said it was His blood, it became His blood.

They knew that He couldn't tell
a lie.

How did it happen?

How?

Only God knows how it happened.
Nobody else knows all that God
knows.

Not even the Apostles knew how
this could take place.

But in their souls they knew it was
Jesus—not bread, not wine.

It was easy for our dear Lord to
do this. He is God.

Only God could do it.

No one knows how.

We know He did it, because He
told us that He did it.

Can you guess why He did it?

WHY?

Jesus loved His friends very, very
much.

He loved His Apostles with all His loving heart.

He wanted to give them a gift that night.

To give Himself to them was the best gift He could think of giving. So He gave Himself.

But that is not all.

He loves you too.

He left a gift for you that night too.

Yes, for you.

He loves you with His all-loving heart.

That is why He left you so big a gift.

What was it?

He told His Apostles that when He was gone they should do the same thing He did.

That was for you.

He made them the first priests.

After our dear Lord died on the cross, they were to say Mass.

That meant they would take Jesus' place.

On the cross He gave Himself up to God the Father.

When they said Mass, they were to give Him up to God the Father. How?

By making bread and wine become Jesus.

That is why He did it for them at the supper table; so they could do it for you.

Can anybody do that now?

Now?

Yes. Your priest does it. He does it for you.

Every day at Mass Jesus comes.

The bread is gone and Jesus is there.

The wine is gone and Jesus is there.

The priest holds Him up for us to see and say, "I love you, Jesus."

Jesus loves you so much He does not want only to stay on the altar.

He wants to come into your heart.

He comes into your heart in Holy Communion.

HOLY COMMUNION

In Holy Communion you receive Jesus, all of Him.

He comes to you body and blood, soul and divinity.

Your eyes cannot see Him.

Your ears cannot hear His words.

But if you listen, your soul will tell you that Jesus is in your heart.

YOUR PART IN THE STORY

Have you a part in the story? Oh, yes. The story is just begun.

But you do not read the rest of it in a book. You write the rest of it in your heart.

After the priest brings Jesus from heaven He will come into your heart in Holy Communion.

That is where your part comes in. Now you must learn what you must do in the story.

Learn your part well. For it lasts all your life; and not only for now, but forever in heaven.

BEFORE YOU GO

- 1) You make sure that there is no sin on your soul.

Big sins are washed away in Confession.

Small sins are washed away by telling God you are sorry.

- 2) You make sure that you have not eaten or drunk anything since midnight.

3) You get your soul ready. That means you think of God and pray to Him as you kneel in your place. How can you think of God?

It is not hard.

You can imagine that you see Jesus coming from heaven with His angels. He *is* coming to you. That is not imagination. You imagine you see Him.

Maybe you can think of the picture and pretend to yourself that you are there with His friends and receiving with them.

Maybe you would like to think of Him as the little Babe in Mary's arms.

Or maybe as the Little Boy, just your size. He was God then, too.

And best of all, you can picture Him dying for you nailed to the cruel cross.

And when you think of Him, talk to Him. He is on the altar now, you know.

Say to Him: "Jesus, I believe all the Church teaches about you. I hope you will get me to heaven. I love you. I love you more than anything. I am truly sorry for my sins, dear Lord."

It is not hard to pray like that, is it?

Tell Him that you know He is so great and you are so small. Tell Him that you know He loves you and that you want Him to come into your heart. Tell Him that you want to love Him in return for all His love.

Keep saying it over and over again until it is time to go to Him.

WHEN THE TIME COMES TO GO TO HIM

You forget everything else but Jesus. Say to yourself: "He is thinking of me—I will think of Him."

You join your hands before your breast and walk to the rail with your eyes down. At the rail, when it is your turn, you raise your head and put out your tongue. When the Sacred Host (Jesus) is put on your tongue, you swallow it quietly and calmly. All the time you keep telling our dear Lord, "I love you."

You walk slowly back to your place. You don't look at the people.

Now you pray as hard as you can to Him who has come from heaven for you.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

You must not look around. Jesus is in your heart. He wants you to

talk to Him. He wants to give you His love. He cannot do this if you do not listen. Tell Him what you told Him before. And what you want Him to know.

He loves your parents; tell Him about them. Tell Him about your chums. Tell Him about your lessons. Tell Him about your sins. Tell Him you are sorry and that you will not sin again. He will listen to all you say. And He will love it.

One little friend of Our Lord was asked after First Communion:

“Did you talk to our dear Lord?”

“Oh, yes!” was the answer.

“What did you say?”

“I said, ‘Thank you, Jesus, for coming to visit me.’ Then I said my A B C’s for Him and I told Him a ghost story.”

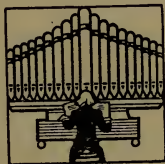
Haven’t you some nice little things

that you want to tell Him alone? Save your best little tales for Him at Holy Communion time. He loves secrets.

AND DON'T FORGET

1. Our Lord's best friends stay to pray at least ten minutes after Holy Communion.
2. Find the prayer, "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus," in your prayer book. Say it after Holy Communion, and then say five Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Glory be's for the Pope's intentions.
3. Never go to Holy Communion with a big sin on your soul.
4. Never stay away for a little sin. Tell God you are sorry and go.
5. At the altar rail swallow the Sacred Host right away.

6. Never touch the Sacred Host with the fingers. If it sticks to your mouth, loosen it with your tongue and swallow it.
7. Our Lord wants you to come to Him very, very often, every week if you can, but best of all every day.



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