

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

Second Article: Constituent Elements and Conditions, or Matter, Form, Ministration, and Subject of the Sacraments in general.

10. "The Sacraments," says Pope Eugenius IV., "are perfected by the concurrence of three elements: the thing, which is the matter; the words, which are the form; and the person of the minister, who confers the Sacrament with the intention of doing what the Church does." We may say, in other words, that three things are requisite for the existence or making up of a Sacrament—matter, form, and the minister who joins the matter and form together.

11. Rightly to understand this, we must observe that, in the distinction of the three constituent elements, we liken the Sacraments to the compounds of nature, in which we distinguish matter, form, and the union of one with the other.

Thus in man there is a matter which is the body, a form which is the soul; and, besides, there is the union of the soul with the body—that vital and essential union which determines the existence of man. And it is by analogy that in the Sacrament, which is a moral compound, we likewise distinguish matter, form, and the union of both, effected by a lawful minister.

(1) Matter.—In a Sacrament, the matter is the thing or part which signifies grace in an indistinct manner. For example, the bread and wine in the Blessed Eucharist, the water in Baptism, or its being poured upon the head of the catechumen.

(2) Form.—The form consists in the sacramental words, or that part of the rite which signifies grace in a distinct manner. For example, in Baptism, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

(3) Union.—The union of the form and the matter takes place through the act of the minister, who pronounces the words over the matter duly present.

12. The form united to the matter by a lawful minister properly constitutes the rite or sacramental sign instituted by Jesus Christ. For example, in Baptism, water poured over the head of the catechumen by the minister, who, at the same time, pronounces the sacramental formula, is the Sacrament regarded in its most simple state, in its strict essence. This form, matter, and minister are three elements chosen by the Son of God and are unchangeable and essential for the validity of the Sacrament. Any change or substantial defect in these points would render the Sacrament null, because it would no longer be the rite instituted by Jesus Christ.

Besides the substance and essence there are, in the Sacraments, accessory parts; these are the ceremonies, of which we shall treat later.

13. The minister of the Sacrament is the person authorised by Jesus Christ to accomplish or confer the Sacrament.

Each Sacrament has its proper minister, sometimes a bishop, sometimes a priest, or occasionally a layman.

The minister must have the intention of doing what the Church does—that is, of performing the rite used by the Church. So far as the validity of the Sacrament is concerned, this is the only condition required on the part of the minister; holiness, uprightness, and even faith itself are not necessary for the valid administration of the Sacraments.

It is without doubt true, that, being a holy thing, a Sacrament ought to be administered by one in the state of grace; for if in the state of mortal sin, the minister would incur the guilt of sacrilege by performing this function. Nevertheless this would not affect the validity of the Sacrament. It would remain the same; just as the royal seal will always impress the image of the king upon wax, whether the seal be of gold or baser metal; and as a key will open just the same, whether the hand that turns the lock be spotless or defiled.

14. As a seal requires wax to receive its impression, so do the Sacraments, in order to produce their effect, require a subject, a human person to receive them. Here the Blessed Eucharist is an exception; this Sacrament exists in itself, independently of the communion in which it is received by the faithful.

The Way of the Saints

To make democracy safe for the world, the spirit of the Gospel must reign in the hearts of men. "We may say with truth," says the author of *Golden Rules*, "that the saints, one and all, were distinguished for their exquisite refinement, charity, and mildness, no matter whether they earned heaven in a kitchen, like St. Zita, or graced a throne, like St. Margaret of Scotland; whether they sprang from the most degraded class, like St. Margaret, the penitent of Cortona, or stained the baptismal robes with martyr's blood, like the gentle child, St. Agnes; whether bred at the plough, like St. Vincent, or in a feudal castle, like the sweet saint of Geneva, St. Francis of Sales; whether they passed their lives in a desert, like the first hermit, or exchanged the sword of a cavalier for the sword of the spirit, like the brave soldier of Loyola; whether they begged their bread, like St. Labre, or wielded a sceptre, like the last of the crusade kings—whether in fine, they offered fair children to martyrdom, like St. Felicitas, or served God in the cloister, like St. Teresa."

Marist Brothers' School, Newtown, Wellington

There was much to be commended (says the *Dominion*) in a concert given in the Town Hall on Monday night, the 5th inst., to an audience of 2000, by the pupils of the Marist Brothers' School, Newtown, assisted by well-known Wellington performers. The various items were much appreciated, and were generally of a high order. A feature of the concert was the singing of the school choir, a body of singers, under the able conductorship of Brother Adrian, which demonstrated powers rarely seen in an organisation of youngsters. It gave a spirited rendering of "God Defend New Zealand" at the opening of the performance. Later in the evening it sang Moore's "Canadian Boat Song" and a part song, "Autumn's Golden Leaf," from an air of the year 1600. Other choral items well sung were "Oberon in Fairyland" and the "Soldiers' Chorus" from "Faust." Two clever young elocutionists from the school were Masters P. Barraclough and E. Purcell. The former, supported by a tableau of "dead" men in gymnasium dress, gave a spirited rendering of an Irish verse, "Michael Dwyer." In the middle of the recitation, when the elocutionist was telling how Michael Dwyer had said that Irishmen would always fight for their freedom, there was tumultuous applause and "Hear, hear" from members of the audience. Master Purcell recited "Lost," an Australian poem. Master V. Reece, a little fellow with a striking soprano voice, sang Squire's "My Prayer." Master Mahoney sang "Waking of Spring" and a sword dance was given by Master D. Scott, Mr. D. Scott, sen., being the piper, in full regalia. The "Trial Scene" from "The Merchant of Venice" was presented in a convincing manner by boys of the school. The pupils of Mr. Joe Knowsley were seen in a pretty dancing scene. They did very well, and Mr. Knowsley and Miss J. McKenzie were effective in solo work. One of the best items of the performance was that given by Mr. Stanley Warwick. Miss Evelyn Harris, a lyric soprano, sang the Gavotte from "Mignon" very well, and Mr. Joseph Elliott was excellent in "The Bedouin Love Song." A Spanish beggar dance was given by Misses Beryl Ward and Laurine Hathaway, and showers of pennies were thrown on the stage during the item. Recitations were given by Mr. Fergus Reeves and Miss A. Flan, and Mr. Lawrence Hanlon sang. Exhibitions of statue and physical drill by the boys were much appreciated. A good orchestra played an overture and an entr'acte, and Mrs. O. Ellis was the accompanist.

HAVE YOU A COPY OF

"A Reverie?"

A Beautiful Christmas Song.

Written from a Scene in that Great Drama

"THE SILVER KING.

Posted anywhere for 2/2. For Orders Apply—

H. I. CONNOR, Kowhai Street, Castlecliff, Wanganui