And Yahweh will . . stretch out his hand over the River, and divide it into seven streams for man to cross dry-shod, to make a pathway for the remnant of his people left over from the exile . . Isaiah 11: 15



The Sacraments

We grow in grace and pursue holiness of life not only by means of meritorious acts, but also by receiving the Sacraments.

Seven in number, the Sacraments are defined as sensible signs instituted by our Lord Jesus which ***symbolize and confer*** grace.

God, knowing how we are easily drawn to external things, willed, in His infinite goodness, to attach His grace to material objects and visible actions. It is a matter of faith that our Sacraments contain the grace they symbolize and confer it on all those who place no obstacle in the way.

Reception of the Sacraments

For the most fruitful reception of the sacraments we are encouraged to attend carefully to the following, signalled by the teaching of the church, viz.

"The Holy Spirit distributes to each according as He wills, and according to each one's disposition and cooperation"

This implies:

(1) That we have a ***deep desire*** of receiving the Sacrament we approach, with all its fruits and blessings. . . to hunger for the graces the Lord wishes us to have on this occasion. . . . to have our hearts wide open and receptive to His favours. . . .to have Him " fill the hungry with good things".

(2) Approaching the Sacraments with this genuine desire, ***fervour*** in the actual reception of the Sacraments will make us even better disposed to what the Lord is doing; for,
fervour
is that generous attitude of refusing the Almighty nothing, of allowing Him to act in all the fullness of His power, and cooperating with Him with all our energies.

Such dispositions render us more responsive to the action of the Holy Spirit.

In Summary

At all the important stages of life, for every duty, individual or social, we receive, through some Sacrament, wonderful graces. These graces help to make us holy, and urge us to practice the virtues to which we are bound.

It is our task, then, to correspond to these graces, by bringing to the Sacraments the best possible dispositions.

[Baptism]