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Pax et Veritas

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New Legislation

THE recent legislation of the Holy See extending the privilege of afternoon Mass and mitigating the law in regard to the Eucharistic fast has caused widespread favourable comment. True there are, so to speak, "hard-shelled" Catholics who dislike any kind of change, even for the better. They prefer things to be static, preferably fossilized.

But the Church which we rightly call our Holy Mother, pays close attention to the needs of her children. Some of those needs are permanent, unchanging. Others differ with the ages. For both categories, she has unwearying solicitude.

The present legislation is an excellent case in point. For a permanent need of man is spiritual food, a need superabundantly satisfied at the Eucharistic Table. He also needs a penitential reverence in his approach to that table, for here no ordinary Food crosses his lips. Thus, we have the eucharistic fast, legislated by the Church, as a necessary preliminary to the reception of Holy Communion.

In our day, many men have found that their work or other obligations make it difficult, even impossible, to get to Mass and Holy Communion at the ordinary morning hours. Others have found that the prolonged fast made frequent reception of Holy Communion impossible or difficult for them.

So, to give men the thing they desperately need—the Holy Sacrifice and the Bread of Angels—the Vicar of Christ has decreed that the Mass may now be celebrated in the afternoon. And the Eucharistic fast has been mitigated, for those who need milder legislation.

The whole purpose of the new decree is to make it easier for us to get to Mass and Holy Communion. The time of Mass is not essential, nor is the fast and its duration. What is necessary has not changed. What is accidental has been modified. Catholics all over the world will be grateful to the Holy Father for his paternal solicitude.—*Catholic Opinion.*

Mitigation of Eucharistic Fast.

THE law governing the Eucharistic fast being a Church law, can be altered by the Holy See. In order to develop a more intense Eucharistic life among the faithful, His Holiness Pope Pius XII has recently mitigated the law concerning the Eucharistic fast in order to facilitate and encourage the reception of Holy Communion.

A history-making Apostolic Constitution, beginning with the words "*Christus Dominus*", lays down the following rules:—

I. General Rule.

Out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, all those who are able to keep the complete fast from midnight must continue to do so, but the drinking of plain and natural water, whenever taken, no longer breaks the Eucharistic fast.

II. The Sick.

Faithful who are sick, even though not confined to bed, if by reason of their illness they can not remain fasting until Holy Communion without real inconvenience, may take something in the form of drink, to the exclusion of alcoholic drinks. They may also take something in the form of medicine, either liquid or solid (excluding alcoholics), as long as it is question of a true medicine prescribed by the physician or commonly recognised as such. It is to be remembered that a medicine taken for nourishment can not be considered as a true medicine; that no sick can avail themselves of this dispensation without the consent of a confessor, either in or out of confession, who must prudently consider the case and can give his consent once and for all so long as the same conditions of illness remain.

Sick priests, even though not confined to bed, may without question avail themselves of the dispensation whether before Mass or before Holy Communion.

III. Faithful who are not sick.

With the approval of a confessor and not otherwise, the faithful who are not sick but in particular circumstances are permitted for reasons of grave inconvenience to take something in the form of liquid, but never alcoholic, up to one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Those circumstances are:

1. When enervating labour precedes Holy Communion;
2. When Holy Communion can only be received after 9 a.m,
3. When a long journey of a mile and a quarter or proportionately longer if by vehicle, is to be made to reach the church; considering the difficulties of the trip and the condition of the person.

The reasons must be prudently evaluated by a confessor, and his decision may be given, once and for all for the duration of the cause of the great inconvenience, either in or out of confession.

IV. Priests who are not sick.

In the following circumstances priests, who are not sick, may take something in the form of drink, alcoholic drinks excluded, one or more times according to need, but only up to one hour before beginning Mass. The three circumstances are:

1. When the priest celebrates at a late hour (that is, after 9 a.m);
2. After heavy work in the sacred ministry;
3. After a long journey (as above for the faithful III)

The foregoing faculty must be interpreted strictly and can not be enlarged. Besides, all priests who say two or three Masses the same day may take the ablutions but by using water only. If the ablutions have been taken inadvertently with wine, the priest may say the other Mass or Masses. When the Masses are said immediately one after another the rubries concerning the ablutions must be kept.

IV. Evening Masses.

The Bishop is the sole judge as to their necessity and advisability in his own diocese. Specific regulations in regard to the Eucharistic fast in such