**The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis**

**BOOK FOUR:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 12:** The Communicant Should Prepare Himself for Christ with Great Care

**Quote:**

“The Voice of Christ

I AM the Lover of purity, the Giver of all holiness. I seek a pure heart and there is the place of My rest.

Prepare for Me a large room furnished and I with My disciples will keep the Pasch with you.

If you wish that I come to you and remain with you, purge out the old leaven and make clean the dwelling of your heart. Shut out the whole world with all the din of its vices. Sit as the sparrow lonely on the housetop, and think on your transgressions in bitterness of soul. Everyone who loves prepares the best and most beautiful home for his beloved, because the love of the one receiving his lover is recognized thereby.

But understand that you cannot by any merit of your own make this preparation well enough, though you spend a year in doing it and think of nothing else. It is only by My goodness and grace that you are allowed to approach My table, as though a beggar were invited to dinner by a rich man and he had nothing to offer in return for the gift but to humble himself and give thanks.

Do what you can and do that carefully. Receive the Body of the Lord, your beloved God Who deigns to come to you, not out of habit or necessity, but with fear, with reverence, and with love.

I am He that called you. I ordered it done. I will supply what you lack. Come and receive Me.

When I grant the grace of devotion, give thanks to God, not because you are worthy but because I have had mercy upon you. If you have it not and feel rather dry instead, continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and do not give up until you receive some crumb of saving grace.

You have need of Me. I do not need you. You do not come to sanctify Me but I come to sanctify you and make you better. You come to be sanctified and united with Me, to receive new grace and to be aroused anew to amend. Do not neglect this grace, but prepare your heart with all care, and bring into it your Beloved.

Not only should you prepare devoutly before Communion, but you should also carefully keep yourself in devotion after receiving the Sacrament. The careful custody of yourself afterward is no less necessary than the devout preparation before, for a careful afterwatch is the best preparation for obtaining greater grace. If a person lets his mind wander to external comforts, he becomes quite indisposed.

Beware of much talking. Remain in seclusion and enjoy your God, for you have Him Whom all the world cannot take from you.

I am He to Whom you should give yourself entirely, that from now on you may live, not in yourself, but in Me, with all cares cast away.

**Definition:**

Communicant - A person who partakes in Holy Communion

**Scripture:**

**1 Corinthians 11:28-29**

Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

**John 6:56**

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.

**Psalm 46:10**

Be still, and know that I am God.

**Concept:**

Prepare devoutly before communion and carefully keep yourself in devotion after communion

**Discussion:**

Why is your afterwatch after receiving communion the best preparation for obtaining greater grace?

Why might "careful custody of oneself" after Communion be as important as preparation beforehand, and what are some ways to maintain devotion after receiving the Sacrament?

What role does humility play in fostering a meaningful connection with Christ during Holy Communion, as described in the passage?