

canticles their joyousness, to our heart its transports, if not that upon the altar, Jesus is really born again, although in a different manner? Are not our hymns, our homage directed straight to His Real Presence? The Object of our Feast, as well as of our love is present. We go in reality to Bethlehem, and there we find Him, not a mere remembrance, not a mere image, but the Divine Babe Himself!

See, again, how the Eucharist is begun at Bethlehem. He is always the Emmanuel who comes to dwell among His people, and the Eucharist will perpetuate His presence. There the World was made Flesh. In the Sacrament, He becomes bread, in order to give us His Flesh without exciting our repugnance. There, again, at Bethlehem, He commences the virtues of the Sacramental state.

He had already hid His Divinity, in order to make Himself man's familiar, to familiarize man with God. He had already veiled His divine glory at Bethlehem, in order by degrees to veil even His Humanity in the Holy Eucharist. He bound His mighty power by the weakness of an infant's members, and later He chained it under the Sacramental Species. He is poor, He is despoiled of every possession, He the Creator, the Sovereign Master of all things. The stable does not belong to Him, for it was given Him as an alms. He sees the offerings of the shepherds and the gifts of the Magi in His Mother's hands. Later, in the Eucharist, He asks of man a shelter, the matter of the Sacrament, a vestment for His priest and His altar.

We find in Bethlehem, also, the inauguration of the Eucharistic worship in its principal exercise, adoration.

Mary was the first adoratrix of the Incarnate Word, Joseph His first adorer. Their faith is their virtue: *Beata es, Maria, quæ credidisti*. It is the adoration of virtue.

The shepherds and the Magi adore in union with Mary and Joseph. Mary gives herself up entirely to the service of her Son. She is all attention to His needs, preventing His desires in her eagerness to satisfy them. The shepherds offer their simple and rustic gifts, the Magi their magnificent tributes of homage. It is the adoration of fealty.