

book concealing nothing except, perhaps, some circumstances of mode, time and place of the numerous mysteries of the Real Presence. But she knew enough of the immense love that Jesus would testify us therein to adore It beforehand as the Bread that would nourish her old age, and restore to her, in sacramental communion, the Flesh that she had given Him in the Incarnation.

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What! Mary not know in advance, Mary not comprehend the mystery of the Eucharist, when her Son was born at Bethlehem, the House of Bread!—when she laid Him upon the straw of which He was the Divine Wheat! When she carried Him to her breast she knew well that she was given nourishment to Him whose Body and Blood would nourish the world. This was the sweet meditation of Saint Augustine, who contemplating Jesus in His early Infancy at His Mother's breast, addressed to her this devout prayer: "O Virgin, nourish our Bread. That Infant sheltered in thy arm, whom thou press to thy bosom, thou knowest, O Virgin, will be our Bread. He is as yet too young; He must reach maturity in order to serve for our nourishment. Take care, then, to feed Him. Reflect that, by feeding thy Son, thou art feeding the faithful whose milk and nourishment He will be in the Eucharist."

From this it follows that all Mary's care, all her labor and solicitude were to watch over our Bread and to protect Jesus for our Eucharist. She is, indeed, strongly united to her Son and her God by love and grace, but she no longer feels Him living in her womb as during the nine months that she carried Him. Her prayer then must have been something like this: "O my Son, return, return into my womb that I may again feel Thee therein! But since Thou canst return only by the Eucharist, hasten the institution of this august Sacrament."

Jesus seems to have wished to hear in advance the prayers of His Mother, and His first miracle will be the most striking figure of the Eucharist. With what ardor Mary urges her Son to institute the Adorable Sacrament:

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