

Any public devotion was enhanced by being held, when possible, in the presence of the exposed Sacred Host. Thus we are not surprised to learn that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the "Evening Canticles to the Blessed Virgin Mary" were recited in conjunction with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. And Benediction of our day, often coupled as it is with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is a direct outgrowth of this devotion.

The origin of the blessing itself is clearly traceable to the practice of blessing the people present before replacing the Sacred Host in the tabernacle at the conclusion of any exposition.

As a devotion of beauty, Benediction is unequaled; as a devotion of efficacious prayer, it comes next to the Mass, and as a devotion displaying true love of Jesus Eucharistic, it might almost be said to surpass the Mass. It was a non-Catholic writer who, while not understanding the peerless value of the Holy Sacrifice, was perhaps entirely correct when he said that it is at Benediction one finds the really holy people. There is no obligation. The Mass, they must attend at least once a week, but to Benediction they go through love alone.

They go to Him through love alone. True, they go to Him because He will bless them, because He will strengthen them, because He will help them, because He will give them the graces and benefits for which they ask; but they trust Him for all this because of love—His love for them and theirs for Him! They go to Him at the hour of Benediction through love alone.

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The manna which fell in the desert was but a figure of the true bread from heaven—Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.