

it as they worked in the fields, knew that the Body of Christ was at that moment being raised up to heaven in propitiation for their sins...

The history of the practice of looking at the Blessed Sacrament seems to show that however excellent a devotion may be in itself, it also has its dangers. "Noticing," say the assembled Bishops in the Council of Cologne, "that the rude and uneducated populace, ignorant of ancient and true religion, pay no attention to nothing which is done in the Sacrifice of the Mass except the offering of the Sacred Host; and that from this cause has grown up in towns where many Masses are said that people run from altar to altar without fully giving their minds to any one Sacrifice in particular, while in the hamlets and villages they stroll about the church yard, often discussing their worldly affairs, until the signal is given for the Elevation of the Host; and that when they have once seen and saluted this (the Host), even from a long way off, they consider that they have fully discharged the duty of a Christian... we have thought"...

To look devoutly at the sacramental species, the veils under which God hides His presence amongst us is a helpful thing. It develops that human sense of nearness and intimacy, which is such a power for good and evil. But clearly it may be abused. When the looking at the Sacred Host became so absorbing a devotion that people began to think that to see the Body of Christ at the Elevation was the same thing as hearing Mass, it is plain, that the essential was being swallowed up by the accidental, that the end was being subordinated to the means. It was a good thing to behold the Host when it was lifted by the priest, but it was a far better and more necessary thing to assist at Mass as a Sacrifice. This sort of disproportion is always something of a danger in our popular devotions admirable as they are as helps. By all means let us venerate and appreciate and use any such aid as comes in our way, whether it be the Rosary, or the Scapular, or the Nine Fridays, or the Cord of S. Francis, or the relics of Saints, or miracles, but let us not forget that even by such means