

3. When He went He left her to be to the Church what she had been to Him, and in fact always works in the Church by her and never without her. Now, look at the first fact, Jesus did not come without her. She was an integral part of the plan of redemption, not a mere ornament, as some speak. Can anything be merely ornamental in any work of God? It may be doubted whether it is consistent with reverence to say so. The first thing that meets us in the Sacred Infancy is that He will not be incarnate without her consent. That there was the Incarnation was owing to her consent, and therefore, that there was the Blessed Sacrament, which is a daily and hourly renewal of the Incarnation, is owing to her consent. What is present in the Blessed Sacrament by the force of consecration is just what He took from Mary, and only that, His Flesh and Blood. All else is present by concomitance. Some theologians say deep things of the preservation of the original matter of His Body, and its not being liable to the usual changes. St. Ignatius had a mysterious vision in which Mary showed him what was in some sense hers in the Adorable Host. But these thoughts led once through an untheological exaggeration, to an irregular devotion, mentioned by Benedict XIV.; and so for the present I pass on. I have said enough for my present purpose. Let us come to the second fact. When He came, He made the access to Him lie through her. When St. John the Baptist was to be sanctified, it was through her that the grace came. She was as it were deputed to confer on him the insignia of original justice. But I have already shown the parallel which there is between the Blessed Sacrament and our Lord's life in the Womb. When the simple shepherds come to worship the newborn king in Bethlehem, our Lady stands guardian by the manger side. When the learned kings of the East knelt to make their mystic offerings to the Omnipotent Child, it was on Mary's lap they found Him. Her knees were the seat of wisdom. And if they kissed the Saviour's feet, it was she who interpreted His will, and permitted the familiarity and the grace. So too in the Blessed Sacrament, the light of her dignity shines