

CHAPTER X

The Virtue of Justice Possessed by Mary Most Holy.

550. The great virtue of justice is most necessary for the exercise of the love of God and man, and therefore also for all human conversation and interaction. It is a habit by which the will is urged to give to each one what belongs to him, and its object matter is the just and equitable dealing which must be observed toward God. And since there are so many occasions in which man can exercise or violate this equity, and in so many different ways, the range of application of this virtue is very wide and diffused, and there are many different species or kinds of justice. Insofar as it concerns the public and common good it is called legal justice; insofar as it influences all the other virtues it is called a general virtue, although it does not partake of the nature of the rest. Insofar as justice is employed for one determined object and by individuals to preserve the rights of each it is called particular or special justice.

551. This virtue in all its parts or kinds the Empress of heaven exercised toward all creatures in an eminent degree, for She alone knew by her greater enlightenment all its obligations and comprehended them perfectly. Though this virtue of justice does not immediately involve the natural passions, as is the case with fortitude and temperance (according to what shall be said later), yet ordinarily it many times happens that the failure to moderate and regulate these very passions causes justice towards the neighbor to be lost, as we see in those who by disorderly covetousness or for sensual gratification usurp what does not belong to them. But since in most holy Mary there were no disorderly passions or any ignorance of the proper measure to be maintained regarding justice, She fulfilled all justice toward each person and showed the way of justice to all who were privileged to hear from her mouth the words and doctrine of life. As far as legal justice is concerned, She not only observed it to the letter by obeying the common laws, as She did in the Purification and other prescriptions of the old Law, though exempt from them as Queen and without sin, but in addition no one except her most holy Son ever advanced so much as She did the public and common good of mortals, for toward this end She directed all her virtues and operations, earning thereby the divine mercy for mankind and benefiting her neighbor in many other ways.

552. The two kinds of justice, which are *distributive* and *commutative*, also belonged to most holy Mary in a heroic degree. *Distributive* justice regulates the distribution of the common goods to individual persons. This justice Her Highness observed in many affairs which were left to her authority and management in the primitive Church, as for instance in the distribution of the common property for the sustenance and other necessities of each person. Although She never distributed money (for that She never handled), yet She gave her orders and at other times her counsel for its just application. On these and similar occasions She always kept the strictest equity and justice according to the necessity and condition of each one. The same She also observed in the distribution of the offices and dignities or ministries which were divided among the disciples and first children of the Gospel in the congregations and assemblies they held for this purpose. All these matters this most wise Teacher ordered and arranged with perfect equity, for besides her ordinary knowledge and insight into the dispositions of each of her subjects She made use of prayer and divine enlightenment. For this purpose the Apostles consulted Her for these actions, as did other persons whom She governed, and She gave them counsel by which everything governed by Her was done and disposed with complete justice and without acceptance of persons.

553. *Commutative* justice procures reciprocal equality in that which is given and received by individuals, as for instance observing the rule to offer gift for gift, etc., or value for value. This kind of justice the Queen of heaven had fewer opportunities of exercising than other virtues, for She never bought or sold anything for Herself. If it was necessary to buy or commute any article it was done by the patriarch St. Joseph while he lived, and afterwards by St. John the Evangelist or some of the Apostles. The Master of sanctity, who came to destroy and eradicate avarice, the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10), desired to remove from Himself and from his most holy Mother all those negotiations and transactions in which the fire of human covetousness is enkindled and preserved.* Therefore his divine Providence ordained that neither his own hand nor that of his purest Mother would be soiled by the transactions of human commerce in buying and selling, even if only of things necessary for the preservation of human life; however, the Queen did not omit to teach men this virtue of commutative justice, directing in the way of perfect justice all those who in the apostolate and primitive Church were engaged in such affairs.

554. This virtue of justice comprises also other kinds of activity in regard to one's neighbor, such as judging others in public and civil courts or in private. Our Savior refers to the contrary vice when He says in St. Matthew: *Judge not, that you may not be judged* (Mt. 7:1). These judgments are formed by each one according to the estimate which is in his own mind; therefore they are just judgments if they are conformable to reason, and unjust if they disagree with it. Our sovereign Queen never exercised the office of a public or civil judge, though She had the power to be the judge of all the universe; but by her most just counsels during the time of her life, and afterwards through her intercession, She fulfilled what was written about Her in the Proverbs (8:20, 16): *I walk in the way of justice; by me the mighty decree justice.*

555. Regarding particular judgments no injustice could ever find a place in the most pure Heart of most holy Mary, for She could never be imprudent in her suspicions, or rash in her judgments, nor was She troubled by doubts, nor if She had any would She ever decide them unkindly for the worst part. These vices of highest injustice are innate and as it were natural to the children of Adam, who are dominated and enslaved by the disorderly passions of hate, envy, malicious emulation, and other evil inclinations. From these bad roots sprout unjust suspicions with slight foundations, rash judgments, and prejudiced solution of doubts, for each one easily presumes in his brother his own faults. Because they are filled with hate and envy at the prosperity of their neighbor, and rejoice at his misfortune, they lightly give credit where none is due, because that is what they desire, and their judgment follows their desire. From all these consequences of sin our Queen was free, since She had no part in sin. Whatever entered or came from the sanctuary of her Heart was all charity, purity, sanctity, and perfect love; in Her was all the grace of truth and the way of life (Ecclus. 24:25). In the plenitude of her sanctity and science She doubted nothing and suspected nothing, for She was aware of all the secrets hidden in the hearts of men and searched their souls with the light of truth and mercy, not suspecting evil and never attributing blame where none was due; on the contrary, She was solicitous to excuse the sins of men, in justice and equity yielding to each and every one his due. She was always disposed with a benign heart to fill all men with the graces and sweetness of virtue.

556. In the two different kinds of justice, commutative and distributive, there are contained many other kinds or species of virtues, but I will refer to them only to say that all of them, both as habits and as acts, were possessed by most holy Mary in the highest and most excellent degree. Some of these virtues are related to justice because they are exercised in our dealings

* cf. Mt. 17:26 [Ed.]

with our neighbor, and partake to a certain extent of the nature of justice, though not in all their aspects, either because we are unable to pay fully what we owe, or because if we are able the debt or obligation is not so strict as that which is incurred by commutative or distributive justice. I will not enter upon a full explanation of these virtues, since they are various and numerous; but in order not to pass them over entirely, I will give a short summary in order to show how our Sovereign and most high Princess was adorned with all of them.

557. It is a just obligation to give honor and reverence to those who are placed above us. According to the greatness of their excellence and their dignity, and the benefits which we receive at their hands, varies also our obligation and the reverence which we owe them, though no return on our part can equal the benefit or the dignity. The first virtue of this kind is that of *religion*, by which we give to God due worship and reverence, though his magnificence and his gifts exceed infinitely all that we will ever be able to return in gratitude or praise. Among the moral virtues this one is the most noble because of its object, namely the worship of God, and its subject matter is as extensive as there are ways and means of directly praising and reverencing God. In this virtue of religion are comprehended all the interior acts of prayer, contemplation and devotion, with all their parts, conditions, causes, effects and purposes. Among exterior actions *latria*, which is the supreme outward adoration due only to God, falls under this head, and with it also all its different kinds or parts, namely sacrifices, oblations, tithes, vows, oaths, and exterior and vocal offerings of praise, because in all these actions, if they are performed in the proper manner, God is honored and revered by the creatures, just as He is very much offended by the contrary vices.

558. The second virtue falling under the above class is *piety*, by which we are inclined to honor our parents, to whom after God we owe our being and our education. By it we also show proper regard for those who participate in the quality of parents, such as for instance our relatives or our country which sustains and governs us. This virtue is so important that we must prefer its dictates to the acts of supererogation in the virtue of religion, as Christ the Lord teaches us in St. Matthew when He reprehended the Pharisees for setting aside piety toward their parents under the pretext of the worship of God (Mt. 15:3). In the third place must be mentioned *observance*, which inclines us to give honor and reverence to those who possess some superior excellence or dignity of a different kind from that of our parents or fatherland. This virtue the Doctors divide into two kinds: *Dulia* and *obedience*. *Dulia* is the veneration due to those who participate in a certain measure in the majesty and dominion of the supreme Lord, who is God and to whom is due the worship of adoration or *latria*. Therefore we honor the Saints by the reverence called *dulia*, and likewise those in the higher dignities, to whom we subject ourselves as servants. *Obedience* is the subjection of our will, inducing us to do the will of our superior in preference to our own. Our free will is so estimable that this virtue is admirable and excellent above all the moral virtues, for the sacrifice is greater than in any other.

559. These three virtues of *religion*, *piety* and *observance* were possessed by most holy Mary in such great plenitude and perfection that nothing possible pertaining to them was lacking. What intellect can ever comprehend the honor, veneration and worship with which this Lady served her most beloved Son, adoring Him as true God and Man, as Creator, Redeemer, Glorifier, the Highest, the Infinite, the Immense in essence, in goodness, and in all attributes? She knew more about Him than any other creature and more than all of them together, and according to her knowledge She rendered Him due honor, teaching even the Seraphim how to reverence Him. In this virtue She was so great a Teacher that merely to see Her was sufficient to rouse, urge and incite all by a secret force to worship the supreme Lord and Author of heaven and earth, and

without any other effort on her part She induced many to praise God. Her prayers, contemplations and devotions, together with the wonderful effects and power of her intercession, are known to all the angels and saints but cannot be comprehended by them, exciting their endless admiration. To Her all the intellectual creatures are indebted, since She satisfied and made recompense not only for that which they have culpably neglected in this regard, but also for that which they could never attain, execute or merit. This Lady hastened the salvation of the world, and if She had not been in it the eternal Word would not have issued from the bosom of his eternal Father. She excelled the Seraphim from her first instant in contemplation, prayer, petition, and devout promptitude in the service of God. She offered the proper sacrifice and gave oblations and tithes, and all this in such a perfect manner that nothing on the part of men was more acceptable to God after those of her most holy Son. In the ceaseless praise, hymns, canticles, and vocal prayers which She offered She was above all the Patriarchs and Prophets, and if in the Church Militant her doings were known as in the Church Triumphant they would be the admiration of the world.

560. The virtues of *piety* and *observance* Her Majesty exercised in proportion as She knew how to estimate better her obligation toward her parents and their heroic sanctity. The same was true in regard to her relations. For instance, She procured special graces for the Baptist and his mother St. Elizabeth, and some others in the apostolate. Certainly if her fatherland had not been made unworthy of favor by the ingratitude and hardheartedness of its inhabitants, She would have made it the most fortunate country on earth; nevertheless, insofar as the Most High permitted, She conferred upon it great benefits and favors, both spiritual and material. In reverence toward the priests She was admirable, for She alone knew and could set proper value on the dignity of the anointed of the Lord. She has taught us all in this matter, and also how to honor the Patriarchs, Prophets and Saints, as well as the temporal masters and those in authority. She omitted no act pertaining to these virtues, being solicitous according to time and opportunity to instruct others in the exercise of them, especially the first faithful in the establishment of the evangelical Church. When no longer obeying in person her most holy Son or her spouse, but submitting to the ministers of her Son, She became an example to the world of a new kind of obedience, for in those times it was not She who owed obedience to any creature, but the whole earth in a special manner owed obedience to Her, since She was staying upon it as its Lady and Queen for the very purpose of governing it.

561. There are other virtues which can also be classified under the heading of justice, for they dispose us to yield to others that which we owe them due to some moral obligation founded upon an honest and just title. These virtues are *gratitude*, which is called *thankfulness*, *truth* or *veracity*, *vengeance*, *liberality*, and *friendliness* or *affability*. By *gratitude* we create a certain equality of ourselves with those from whom we have received benefits, giving them thanks in return according to the nature of the benefits and the kindness with which they were bestowed (which after all is the most valuable part of the benefit). The grateful also take into account the position and dignity of the benefactor. Gratitude bears in mind all these elements and can be manifested in different ways. *Veracity* inclines us to be truthful with everyone as is proper in human life and conversation, avoiding all lying (which is never allowed), all dissimulation, hypocrisy, boastfulness and irony. These vices are all opposed to truth, and though it is possible and even advisable to minimize when we are speaking of our own excellence or virtue in order not to offend by boasting, yet it is not right to do so by telling a falsehood, imputing vice to ourselves untruthfully. *Vengeance* is a virtue which teaches us to recompense or make up for damage done by ourselves or by our neighbor, satisfying for it by some punishment. Among

mortals the practice of this virtue is difficult, for they are ordinarily moved by immoderate anger and fraternal hatred by which they are lacking in charity and justice. But when no harm to others is intended, but rather some particular or public good, vengeance is no small virtue, for Christ our Lord made use of this virtue when He expelled from the temple those who desecrated it by their irreverence (Jn. 2:15); Elias and Eliseus drew down fire from heaven in order to chastise some sins (IV Kg. 1:10); and in the Proverbs it says *he that spareth the rod hateth his son* (Prov. 13:24). *Liberality* serves to distribute in a reasonable manner money or other goods without falling into the vices of covetousness or prodigality. *Friendliness* or *affability* consists in conversing and acting in a decent and becoming manner towards all, without quarreling or flattery, which are the vices opposed to friendship.

562. None of these virtues (and if there is any other attributed to justice) were lacking in the Queen of heaven; of all these She had the habit and practiced them as the occasion offered, and to many souls, as the Teacher and Mistress of all sanctity, She gave instruction and enlightenment regarding how they were to exercise and practice them with the greatest perfection. The virtue of *gratitude* towards God She exercised by acts of religion and worship, as we have already described, for this is the best way to show our gratitude toward Him; and since the dignity of most pure Mary and her concomitant sanctity were exalted above all created understanding, this eminent Lady gave a return of gratitude proportionate to his benefits within the measure possible to a creature. The same holds true in regard to her piety toward her parents and her country, as mentioned above. To her fellowmen this most humble Princess returned thanks for each favor as if She deserved no consideration from anyone, and though all favors were due to Her in justice, She nevertheless gave thanks for them with gracious affability. She alone knew and practiced this virtue to such an extent that She returned thanks for injuries and offenses* as if they were great benefits, for in her incomparable humility She never recognized anything as an injury and considered Herself under obligation for what really were such. Moreover, since She never forgot any benefit She also never ceased in her gratitude.

563. Regarding the *veracity* of Mary our Lady little need be said, since She who was so superior to the demon, the father of lies and deceit, could not tolerate even the shadow of that despicable vice. The standard by which the virtue of truthfulness is to be measured in our Queen is her dove-like charity and simplicity, which excluded all duplicity or deceit in her dealings with creatures. And how could the guilt of deceit be found in the mouth of that Lady, who with one word of truest humility falling from her lips drew down to her womb that One who is essential truth and sanctity? In regard to the exercise of the virtue called *vengeance* most holy Mary likewise was proficient, not only instructing others as a Teacher during the time of the first beginnings of the evangelical Church, but zealously advancing the honor of the Most High and trying to convert many sinners through fraternal correction, as was the case regarding Judas many times, or commanding the creatures (who were all obedient to Her) to punish some of the sinners† so they might be converted and saved from the eternal punishment due to their sins. Although on these occasions She was most sweet and kind in her punishments, yet She did not remit them whenever necessary to secure an effective cleansing from sin. Most of all, however, did She exercise vengeance against the demon in order to free the human race from his slavery.

564. The sovereign Queen practiced also the most exalted *liberality* and *affability*. Her generosity in giving and distributing was on a scale befitting the Empress of all creation and one

* cf. Rom. 12:14 [Ed.]

† cf. Wis. 5:18 [Ed.]

who knows the proper value of all invisible and visible things. This Lady never possessed anything of her own that She did not consider just as much the property of her neighbor as hers, nor did She ever deny anything to anybody, not even waiting until they would pay the price of asking for it whenever She could be beforehand in giving. The poverty and miseries which She alleviated, the benefits which She bestowed, the mercies which flowed from Her, even regarding mere temporal matters, could not be recounted in an immense volume. Her amiable friendliness toward all creatures was so singular and admirable that if She had not concealed it with rare prudence She would have drawn to Herself all the world, entranced by her most sweet conversation. Her mildness and kindness, though tempered by a divine seriousness and wisdom, displayed in her conduct the marks of superhuman excellence. The Most High himself regulated this perfection in Her, allowing at times some of the signs of the sacrament of the King to show themselves, but taking care that the veil would fall immediately and again conceal the mystery beneath earthly labors, thus forestalling the applause of men. All their honors were far below that which She deserved, and men would never be able to attain, and would either fall below or exceed, the correct measure of honor due to one who was at the same time a creature and the Mother of God. This was reserved for the time when as children of the Church men would be enlightened by the Catholic faith.

565. For the adequate and perfect exercise of this great virtue of justice the Doctors point out another part or aid to it which they call *epikeia*, which guides us in some affairs which are above the common and ordinary rules and laws; for not all affairs, with their varying circumstances, can be covered by the ordinary laws, and therefore it is necessary to proceed on certain occasions by the light of a superior and extraordinary reasoning. This part of justice the sovereign Queen practiced on many occasions during her life, both before and especially after the Ascension of her onlybegotten Son. In order to regulate the affairs of the primitive Church, as I will say in its place (cf. *Coronation*), She often made use of *epikeia* as required by the interests of the Most High.

INSTRUCTION OF THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

566. My daughter, regarding this extensive virtue of justice, although thou hast been taught much of its value, thou art yet ignorant of the greater part of it because of thy condition in this state of mortality, and therefore also this thy account of it is insufficient for a full understanding of its excellence. Nevertheless thou hast in it a copious summary to direct thy dealings with creatures and thy worship of the Most High. In regard to this latter I remind thee, my dearest, that the supreme majesty of the Almighty receives with just indignation the offense offered by mortals who forget the veneration, adoration and reverence due to Him. And when some of them do give it, it is so coarse, inattentive and discourteous that they do not merit reward but chastisement. They revere and adore profoundly the princes and magnates of the earth; they ask favors and seek to obtain them with the utmost diligence; they are effusive in their thanks when they succeed, protesting their lifelong gratitude. But the supreme Lord who gives them being, life and activity, who preserves and sustains them, who has redeemed them and raised them to the dignity of sons, who desires to give them his own glory, and who is the infinite and highest Good: His Majesty they forget, because they cannot see Him with corporeal eyes, and as if they had not received all good from Him they return at most merely a sluggish remembrance and a hasty thanksgiving. I shall not even mention at present how much those offend the most just Ruler of the universe who wickedly break through and overturn all the order of justice toward

their neighbor, perverting the whole natural order in wishing to their brethren what they would not wish for themselves.

567. Abhor, my daughter, such execrable vices, and as far as thy forces will allow make up by thy works for this lack of acknowledgment in the service of the Most High. And since by thy state of life thou art consecrated to the divine worship, let that be thy principal occupation and delight, striving to imitate the angelic spirits in their ceaseless fear and worship of the Lord. Preserve reverence for holy things, including also the ornaments and sacred vessels used in divine service. During the divine office, prayer and sacrifice be sure to remain on thy knees; implore Him with faith, and receive his favors with humble gratitude. The same consideration thou must show also to all men, even if they offend thee. To all be kind, affable, meek, simple and truthful, without deceit or duplicity, without detraction or murmuring,* without rash judgment of thy neighbor. And in order to fulfill all justice, revive the memory of it constantly and desire to do to thy neighbor what thou dost desire to be done to thyself. Especially remember how my most holy Son, and I in imitation of Him, acted toward all men.

* cf. Lv. 19:16 [Ed.]