

PART II

Of the Divine History and Life of the Queen of Heaven, Mary Most Holy; Contains the Mysteries from the Incarnation of the Divine Word in Her Virginal Womb until His Ascension into Heaven.

BOOK THREE

FIRST OF PART II

Containing the most Exquisite Preparations of the Almighty for the Incarnation of the Word in Mary Most Holy; the Circumstances Accompanying this Mystery; the Exalted State in which the Blessed Mother was Placed; the Visitation to St. Elizabeth and the Sanctification of the Baptist; Her Return to Nazareth; and a Memorable Battle of the Virgin with Lucifer.

CHAPTER I

The Most High Begins to Prepare in Most Holy Mary the Mystery of the Incarnation during the Nine Days Preceding its Execution; Declaring that which Happened on the First Day.

1. The Most High had placed upon our Queen and Lady the duties of a spouse of St. Joseph, occasioning more opportunity for Her to converse with her neighbors so her blameless life could be to all an example of the highest holiness. The heavenly Lady, finding herself in this new state, was filled with such exalted thoughts and sentiments in the fulfillment of her duties, and ordered all the activities of her life with such wisdom, that She was an object of admirable emulation to the angelic spirits and an unparalleled example for men. Few knew Her and still fewer had spoken with Her, but all of these happy ones received such divine influences from the heavenly Mary that with a wonderful joy and unaccustomed flights of spirit they sought to express and manifest the light which illumined their hearts and which they knew came from Her. The most prudent Queen was not unaware of these operations of the Most High, but neither was it time nor would her most profound humility as yet consent to their becoming known to the world. She continually besought the Lord to hide them from men, to make all the favors of his right hand redound solely to his praise, and to permit Her to be ignored and despised by all mortals insofar as his infinite goodness would not be offended thereby.

2. These prayers were accepted by her divine Spouse with great benignity, and his providence arranged all things in such a manner that the very light which incited men to proclaim her greatness at the same time caused them to be mute. Moved by divine power they refrained from expressing their thoughts, inwardly praising the Lord for the light which they felt within themselves. Filled with marvel they suspended their judgment, and leaving behind the creatures they sought their Creator. Many turned from sin at the mere sight of Her, others amended their lives, and all were affected at seeing Her and experienced heavenly influences in their souls. But immediately they forgot the source of these influences, for if they could have remained in her presence or retained the memory of her image, and if God had not prevented it by a mystery, nothing would have been able to divert their attention from Her, and all would have sought Her without wavering.

3. In such fruitful occupations, and in augmenting the gifts and graces from which all this good proceeded, our Queen, the spouse of Joseph, busied Herself during the six months and seventeen days which intervened between her espousal and the Incarnation of the Word. I cannot pretend to refer even briefly to her great and heroic acts of all the virtues, interior and exterior, all her deeds of charity, humility and religion, and all her works of mercy, her alms and benefactions, for all this exceeds the power of the pen. The best I can do is to sum it all up and say that the Most High

found in most holy Mary the fulfillment of all his pleasure and desires as far as possible in the correspondence of a creature with its Creator. By her sanctity and merits God felt Himself as it were obliged and (according to our way of speaking) compelled to hasten his steps and extend the arms of his omnipotence to bring about the greatest of wonders conceivable in the world before or after, namely the Incarnation of the Onlybegotten of the Father in the virginal womb of this Lady.

4. In order to proceed with a dignity befitting Himself, God prepared most holy Mary in a singular manner during the nine days immediately preceding this mystery, and allowed the river of the Divinity to rush impetuously forth to inundate this City of God with its floods (Ps. 45:5). He communicated such great graces, gifts and favors that I am struck dumb by the perception of what has been made known to me concerning this miracle, and my lowliness is filled with dread at even the mention of what I understood, for the tongue, the pen, and all the faculties of a creature fall far below any possibility of revealing such incomprehensible sacraments. Therefore I wish it to be understood that all I say here is only an insignificant shadow of the smallest part of these wonders and ineffable prodigies, which are not at all to be encompassed by our limited words but only by the divine power, which I do not possess.

5. On the first day of this most blessed novena the heavenly Princess Mary, after a slight rest, rose at midnight according to the example of David her father (Ps. 118:62), for this was the order and arrangement given Her by the Lord, and prostrate in the presence of the Most High She began her accustomed prayer and holy exercises. The Angels who attended upon Her spoke to Her and said: "Spouse of our King and Lord, arise, for His Majesty calls Thee." She raised Herself with fervent affection and answered: "The Lord commands the dust to raise itself from the dust." And turning toward the countenance of the Lord who called Her, She added: "Most high and powerful Master, what dost Thou desire to do with me?" At these words her most holy soul was raised in spirit to a new and higher habitation, closer to the same Lord and more remote from all earthly and passing things.

6. She felt at once that She was being prepared by those illuminations and purifications which at other times She had experienced in some of the most exalted visions of the Divinity; I shall not dwell on them since I have described them in the first Part (*Con.* 620-6, 629). The Divinity manifested Himself not by an intuitive but by an abstractive vision, so clearly however that by it She understood more of this incomprehensible Object than what the Blessed see and enjoy intuitively. This vision was more exalted and more profound than others of this kind, because each day the heavenly Lady was more capable, and the blessings She received (using them so perfectly) disposed Her for others, and the repeated enlightenments and visions of the Divinity continually enabled Her to respond more and more appropriately to his infinite operations.

7. In this vision our Princess Mary learned most high secrets of the Divinity and his perfections, and especially regarding the communications of God *ad extra* in the work of creation. She saw it originated in the goodness and liberality of God, and that creatures were not necessary for supplementing his Divine existence, nor for his infinite glory, since without them He was glorious through the interminable eternities before the creation of the world. Many sacraments and secrets were manifested to our Queen which neither can nor should be made known to all, for She alone was the only One (Cant. 6:8; 7:6), the chosen One, selected by the highest King and Lord of creation for these delights. But since Her Highness in this vision perceived this impulse and inclination of the Divinity to communicate Himself *ad extra* with a force greater than that which makes all the elements tend toward their center, and as She was drawn within the sphere of this divine love, She besought the eternal Father with an inflamed

Heart to send his Onlybegotten into the world and give to men their remedy, since in this manner He would satisfy and (humanly speaking) execute the promptings of his divinity and perfections.

8. These petitions of his Spouse were very sweet to the Lord; they were the scarlet lace (Ib. 4:3) with which She bound and secured his love. And in order to put his desires into execution He sought first to prepare the tabernacle or temple whither He was to descend from the bosom of the eternal Father. He resolved to furnish his beloved and chosen Mother with a clear knowledge of all his works *ad extra*, just as his omnipotence had made them. On the first day therefore, and in this same vision, He manifested to Her all He had made on the first day of the creation of the world as it is recorded in Genesis, and She perceived all with greater clearness and comprehension than if She had been an eyewitness, for She knew them first as they are in God, and then as they are in themselves.

9. She perceived and understood how the Lord in the beginning created heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1-5); in how far and in what way it was void, and how the darkness was over the face of the abyss; how the spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters, and how at the divine command light was made, and what its nature was; how after the darkness was divided it was called night and the light day, and how thus the first day was made. She knew the size of the earth, its longitude, latitude and depth, its caverns of hell, limbo and purgatory with their inhabitants, the countries and climes, the meridians and divisions of the world, and all those who occupied and inhabited them. With the same clearness She knew the inferior orbs and the empyrean heaven, how the angels were made on the first day, and She understood their nature, conditions, diversity, hierarchies, offices, grades and virtues. The rebellion of the bad angels was revealed to Her, their fall and the occasion and the cause of that fall, though the Lord always concealed from Her that which concerned Herself. She understood the punishment and the effects of sin in the demons, beholding them as they are in themselves; and at the conclusion of the first day the Lord showed to Her how She also was formed of this lowly earthly material and endowed with the same nature as all those who return to the dust. However, He did not say She would again return to it, yet He gave Her such a profound knowledge of earthly existence that the great Queen humiliated Herself to the abyss of nothingness. Being without fault, She debased Herself more than all the children of Adam with all their miseries.

10. This whole vision and all its effects the Most High arranged in such a way as to open up in the Heart of Mary the deep trenches which were required for the foundations of the edifice which He desired to raise in Her and which was to touch even the substantial and hypostatic union of the Divinity himself. And since the dignity of Mother of God was without limits and to a certain extent infinite, it was proper for Her to be grounded in a proportionate humility such as would be without limits, though still within the bounds of reason itself. Attaining the summit of virtue, this blessed One among women humiliated Herself to such an extent that the most holy Trinity was as it were fully paid and satisfied, and (according to our mode of understanding) constrained to raise Her to the highest position and dignity possible among creatures and nearest to the Divinity himself. In this highest benevolence His Majesty spoke and said to Her:

11. "My Spouse and Dove, great is my desire of redeeming man from sin, and my immense kindness is as it were strained in waiting for the time in which I shall descend in order to repair the world. Ask Me continually during these days and with great affection for the fulfillment of this desire. Prostrate in my royal presence let not thy petitions and clamors cease, asking Me for the Onlybegotten of the Father to descend in reality to unite Himself with the human nature." Whereupon the heavenly Princess responded and said: "Lord and God eternal, who has all the power and wisdom and whose desire none can resist (Esther 13:9), who hinders thy

omnipotence? Who detains the impetuous current of thy divinity so thy pleasure in conferring this benefit upon the whole human race remains unfulfilled? If perhaps, O my Beloved, I am a hindrance to such an immeasurable benefit, let me perish before I impede thy pleasure. This blessing cannot depend upon the merits of any creature; therefore, my Lord and Master, do not wait, since we might later on merit it so much the less. The sins of men increase and the offenses against Thee are multiplied; how shall we merit the very blessing of which we become daily more unworthy? In Thee thyself, my Lord, is the reason and motive of our remedy; thy infinite bounty and thy numberless mercies incite Thee, the groans of thy Prophets and the Fathers of thy people solicit Thee, the Saints sigh after Thee, the sinners look for Thee, and all of them together call out to Thee. And if due to my ingratitude I, an insignificant wormlet, am not unworthy of thy merciful condescension, I venture to beseech Thee from the bottom of my heart to quicken thy coming and hasten thy Redemption for thy greater glory.”

12. When the Princess of heaven had finished this prayer She returned to her ordinary and more natural state; but anxious to fulfill the mandate of the Lord, She continued during that whole day her petitions for the Incarnation of the Word, and with the deepest humility She repeated the exercises of prostrating Herself to the ground and praying in the form of a cross, for the Holy Ghost, who governed Her, had taught Her this posture by which She so highly pleased the most blessed Trinity. God saw in the body of the future Mother of the incarnate Word as it were the crucified person of Christ, and therefore He received this morning sacrifice of the most pure Virgin as an advance offering of that of his most holy Son.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

13. My daughter, mortals are not capable of understanding the ineffable operations of the arm of the Omnipotent in preparing me for the Incarnation of the eternal Word. Especially during the nine days which preceded this exalted sacrament my spirit was elevated and united with the immutable being of the Divinity. I was submerged in the ocean of his infinite perfections, participating in all those eminent and divine effects which are beyond all presentiment of the human heart. The knowledge of creatures communicated to me penetrated into their very essence, and thus it was more profound and piercing than that of all the angelic spirits, though their knowledge of creation due to the beatific vision is altogether admirable; moreover, the images of all of them were impressed upon my mind to be used by me as I desired.

14. What I desire of thee today is to take notice how I used this knowledge, and to imitate me according to thy power with the help of the infused light which thou hast received for this purpose. Profit by the knowledge of creatures by making of them a ladder to ascend unto God thy Creator, so thou mayest seek in all of them their first beginning and their last end. Let them serve thee as a mirror from which the Divinity is reflected, reminding thee of his omnipotence and inciting thee to the love which He seeks in thee. Be thou filled with wonder and praise at the greatness and magnificence of the Creator, and in his presence humiliate thyself to the dust. Shun no difficulty or suffering in order to become meek and humble of heart. Take notice, my dearest, that this virtue of humility was the firm foundation of all the wonders which the Most High wrought in me; and so thou mayest esteem this virtue so much the more, remember that among all other virtues it is at the same time the most precious and the most delicate and perishable, for if thou lose it in any respect, and if thou art not humble in all things without exception, thou shalt not be humble in anything. Remember thy earthly and corruptible nature, and be not ignorant of the fact that the Most High has providentially formed man in such a way that his own existence

and formation intimates and rehearses the important lesson of humility, never allowing him to be without this salutary teaching. For this reason He has not formed him of the most excellent material, and has concealed the noblest part of his being in the sanctuary of his interior (Ex. 30:24), teaching him to weigh as in a balance on the one side the infinite and eternal existence of the Lord, and on the other his own ignoble material existence. Thus he is to give unto God what belongs to Him, and to himself what belongs to his own self (Mt. 22:21).

15. With perfection I attended to this sense, becoming an example and guide therein to all mortals. I desire thee also to do this in imitation of me, and zealously study to acquire the humility which pleases the Most High and myself, for we desire thy true advancement. I desire thy perfection to be built up in the deep trenches of thy own self-knowledge, so the deeper its foundations are laid, to so much the higher and more exalted perfection may rise the edifice of thy virtue. Thus thy will shall find a most intimate conformity with that of the Lord, who looks down from the eminence of his throne upon the humble of the earth (Ps. 112:6).