

CHAPTER VII

The Most High Celebrates a New Espousal with the Princess of Heaven for the Nuptials of the Incarnation, and Adorns Her for It.

70. Great are the works of the Most High, for all of them were and are executed with the plenitude of knowledge and goodness, in equity and measure (Wis. 11:21). Not one of them is faulty, useless, ineffectual, superfluous or vain; all are exquisite and magnificent, finished and executed according to the full measure of his holy will. Such He desired them to be so He could be known and magnified in them. But in comparison to the mystery of the Incarnation all the works of God *ad extra*, though they are in themselves great, stupendous and marvelous, more to be admired than comprehended, are only a small spark issuing from the unfathomable abyss of the Divinity. This great sacrament of vesting Himself in a passible and mortal nature is preeminently the great work of his infinite power and wisdom, and the one which immeasurably excels all the other works and wonders of his powerful arm; for in this mystery not merely a spark of the Divinity but that whole vast volcano of the infinite conflagration which is God broke forth and communicated Himself to men, uniting Himself by an indissoluble and eternal union to our terrestrial human nature.

71. If this wonderful sacrament of the King is to be measured only by his own vastness, it follows that the Woman in whose womb He was to become man deserved to be so perfectly adorned with the plenitude of his treasures that no gift or grace within the range of possibility would be omitted, and all these gifts be so consummate that nothing is lacking to them. Since all this was reasonable and altogether befitting the greatness of the Omnipotent, He certainly fulfilled it in most holy Mary, much better than king Assuerus did with the gracious Esther (Esther 2:9) when he raised her to his magnificent throne. The Most High visited Mary our Queen with such great favors, privileges and gifts that the like was never even conceived in the mind of creatures, and when She issued forth in the presence of the courtiers of this great King of the eternal ages (I Tim. 1:17) they recognized and exalted in Her the power of God, at the same time understanding that He who chose to select a woman for his Mother could and did make her worthy of having Himself for her Son.

72. The seventh day of this mysterious preparation for the approaching sacrament arrived, and in the same hour as already mentioned the heavenly Lady was called and elevated in spirit, but with this difference, that She was bodily raised by her holy angels to the empyrean heaven, while in her stead one of them remained to represent Her in corporeal appearance. Placed into this highest heaven She saw the Divinity by abstractive vision as on other days, but always with new and more penetrating light, piercing to new and more profound mysteries which God according to his free will can conceal or reveal. Presently She heard a voice proceeding from the royal throne which said: "Our Spouse and chosen Dove, come, our gracious and beloved one, Thou who hast found grace in our eyes, and art chosen among thousands: We desire to accept Thee anew as our only Spouse, and for this We desire to give Thee adornment and beauty worthy of our desires."

73. Upon hearing these words the most Humble among the humble abased and annihilated Herself in the presence of the Most High more than can be comprehended by human power. Entirely submissive to the divine pleasure, and with entrancing modesty, She responded: "Here is, O Lord, the dust; here is this vile wormlet; here is thy poor slave, in order that thy greater pleasure be fulfilled in her. Make use, my Good, of this humble instrument according to thy

desire, and govern it by thy right hand.” Presently the Most High commanded two Seraphim of those nearest to his throne and highest in dignity to attend on this heavenly Virgin. Accompanied by others they presented themselves in visible form before the throne and there surrounded most holy Mary, who was more inflamed with divine love than they.

74. It was a spectacle worthy of new wonder and jubilation for all the angelic spirits to see in this heavenly place, never touched by other feet, a humble Maiden consecrated as their Queen and raised to the closest proximity to God of all created beings; to see that Woman, whom the world ignored and held in oblivious contempt, so highly esteemed and appreciated (Prov. 31:10); to see human nature with the pledge and beginning of elevation above the celestial choirs, and already placed among them. O what a holy and just emulation must such a strange wonder have caused in the ancient courtiers of the heavenly Jerusalem! What thoughts rose up within them in praise of its Author! What sentiments of humility did it awaken in them, subjecting all their high intellects to the decrees of the divine will! They saw He was holy and just who exalted the humble, who favored human lowliness and raised it above the angelic choirs.

75. While the inhabitants of heaven were lost in their praiseworthy admiration, the most blessed Trinity (according to our imperfect mode of understanding and speaking) conferred within Himself how pleasing in his sight was the Princess Mary, how perfectly and completely She had corresponded with the blessings and gifts entrusted to Her, how adequately She had by them augmented the glory of the Lord, and how free She was of any fault, defect or hindrance regarding the dignity of Mother of the incarnate Word for which She was destined. Accordingly the three Persons of the Trinity resolved to raise this creature to the highest position of grace and friendship of God, such as no creature had ever or would ever attain, and then and there They gave to Her more than to all the rest of creatures together. The most blessed Trinity was pleased and rejoiced in seeing the supreme sanctity of Mary was such as had been conceived and determined for Her in the divine mind.

76. In correspondence with this sanctity and as a completion of it, and as a testimony of the benevolence with which the Lord desired to communicate to Her ever new influences of his divine nature, He ordained and commanded that most holy Mary be visibly clothed and adorned with mysterious vestments and jewels which would symbolize the interior graces and privileges of a Queen and heavenly Spouse. Although such bridal adornment had already been conferred upon Her before that time, when She was presented in the temple (*Con.* 434), yet now this was done under new and wonderful conditions, for it was to serve as the immediate preparation for the miracle of the Incarnation.

77. Presently therefore, upon the command of the Lord, the two Seraphim clothed most holy Mary with a tunic or ample robe which, as a symbol of her purity and grace, was so exquisitely white and resplendent that if one single ray of the light so profusely emitted by it would flash into the world it would by itself give more refulgence than all the stars combined, even if they were all suns, and in comparison with it all the light which is known to us would seem obscure. While the Seraphim vested Her the Most High gave Her a profound understanding of the obligation entailed thereby, namely that She make an appropriate return to His Majesty by proportioning her faithful love and the exalted perfection of her actions to that which She had now learned; yet always the end which the Lord had in view, that of assuming flesh in her virginal womb, was hidden to Her. All the rest of the mysteries our Lady understood, and for all of them She humbled Herself with ineffable prudence, and She asked the divine assistance for corresponding to such favors and blessings.

78. Over this robe the same Seraphim placed a girdle as a symbol of the holy fear which was infused into Her. It was very rich, with jewels of extreme refulgence and beauty. At the same time the fountain of light bursting forth from the Divinity enlightened and illumined the heavenly Princess so She could know and understand the most exalted reasons why God must be feared by all creatures. With this gift of fear of the Lord She was appropriately girded as appropriate for a mere creature who was to treat and converse so familiarly with her Creator as his Mother.

79. Presently She perceived that the Seraphim adorned Her with most beautiful and abundant hair, held together by a rich clasp, more brilliant than pure and polished gold. She understood that in this embellishment was conceded to Her the privilege of spending her whole life in exalted and divine thoughts, inflamed by the most subtle charity as signified by the gold. In connection with this privilege She was established anew in the habits of unclouded wisdom and science, exquisitely binding up the hair of exalted thoughts by an ineffable participation in the wisdom and science of God himself. Sandals or shoes were also given to Her to indicate that all her steps and movements would be most beauteous, tending always to the high and holy aim of the greater glory of the Most High; and these shoes were laced with the special grace of solicitude and diligence in doing good before both God and man, as it happened when She hastened to visit St. Elizabeth and St. John (Lk. 1:39), and thus this Daughter of the Prince proceeded most beautifully in her footsteps (Cant. 7:1).

80. Her arms were adorned with bracelets, filling Her with magnanimity for undertaking great works in participation of the divine magnificence, and thus She always extended them toward courageous deeds (Prov. 31:19). Her fingers were embellished by rings so in smaller or more inferior matters She could act in a superior manner, exalted in aim and purpose, and in all respects making her doings grand and admirable. To this they added a necklace set with inestimable and brilliant jewels and containing symbols of the three most excellent virtues of faith, hope and charity in correspondence with the three divine Persons. Renewed in Her were the habits of these most noble virtues, which She would especially need in the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.

81. In her ears they hung earrings of gold filigreed with silver (Cant. 1:10), thus preparing her ears for the message which She was shortly to hear from the archangel Gabriel, and at the same time they furnished Her with knowledge so She could listen attentively and give discreet and acceptable answers to the divine proposals. Thus would the pure silver of her sincerity resound in the ears of the Lord, and those charming and sacred words remain in the bosom of the Divinity: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum, be it done to me according to thy word* (Lk. 1:38).

82. Then they spread over her garment inscriptions which at the same time served as embroidery or borders of the finest colors mixed with gold. Some of them said "Mary, Mother of God"; and others, "Mary, Virgin and Mother." Yet these inscriptions were not intelligible to Her, nor were they explained to Her, but their meaning was known to the holy angels. The different colors symbolized the habits of all the virtues in the most excellent degree and active exercise, surpassing all that was ever practiced by the rest of the intellectual creatures. And as a complement of all this beauty they furnished Her as if with lotions for her face by illuminating Her with the light drawn from the proximity and participation of the infinite being and perfection of God himself; for in order to actually and truly receive Him within her virginal womb, it was appropriate for Her to receive Him by grace in the highest degree possible to a mere creature.

83. In this adornment and beauty our Princess Mary stood before the Lord so beautiful and charming that even the supreme King could desire Her as Spouse (Ps. 44:12). I do not detain myself here in repeating what I have already said and what I will yet say in this History about her

virtues (*Con.* 225-234, 480-608); I only say that this adornment was accompanied by new features and effects altogether divine. All this was possible by the infinite power of God and within the immense field of perfection and sanctity, where there is always more which can be added and understood above that which we acquire and know. And when there is the question of this ocean of perfection in most holy Mary, we certainly can only hope to skirt its shores, and my understanding of that which I perceive is always pregnant with concepts which I cannot explain.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO ME BY MARY, THE MOST HOLY QUEEN.

84. My daughter, the hidden workshops and bridal chambers of the Most High are those of a divine King and omnipotent Lord, and therefore without measure and number are the rich jewels which they contain to compose the adornment of his spouses and chosen ones. Just as He enriched my soul, He can do the same with innumerable others, and yet infinitely more will remain. And though He will give to no creature as much as his liberal hand conferred upon me, it is not because He is not able or does not desire to do so, but because no one will dispose himself for his grace as I did. But the Almighty is most generous with some souls, and enriches them munificently because they impede his gifts less and dispose themselves better than others.

85. I desire thee, my beloved, to place no obstacle to the love of the Lord for thee; rather, I desire thee to dispose thyself to receive the gifts and treasures He has prepared for thee in order to make thee worthy of his bridal chamber. Be aware that all just souls receive this adornment from his hand; yet each one receives according to his degree of friendship and grace which makes them capable of receiving them. If thou dost desire to attain the most lofty carats of this perfection, and be worthy of the presence of thy Lord and Spouse, seek to grow and become robust in love; yet this grows in proportion as mortification and self-denial increase. Thou must deny and forget all that is earthly; all thy inclinations toward thyself and to what is visible must be extinguished in thee, and only in divine love must thou increase and advance. Wash and purify thyself in the blood of Christ thy Repairer, and apply this cleansing many times, repeating the loving sorrow of contrition for thy sins. By this thou shalt find grace in his eyes, thy beauty shall be desired by Him (Ps. 44:12), and thy adornment shall be replete with all perfection and purity.

86. And since thou hast been so favored and distinguished by these benefits of the Lord, it is reasonable for thee to be grateful more than many generations, and with incessant praise magnify Him for all He has deigned to give thee. If this vice of ingratitude is so ugly and reprehensible in the creatures who owe Him less, when they as earthly and rude forget with disdain the benefits of the Lord, greater shall be the guilt of this villainy regarding thy obligations. Do not deceive thyself with the pretext of being humble; for there is a great difference between thankful humility and humiliating, deceitful ingratitude. Thou must take notice that many times the Lord grants great favors to the unworthy in order to manifest his goodness and grandeur, and so no one might exalt himself by them, knowing his own unworthiness which must be a counterweight and antidote against the poison of presumption; yet gratitude shall always be compatible with these favors, knowing that *every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights* (James 1:17), and could never be merited by the creature himself, but is given him solely by the goodness of God to which he must surrender and be held captive by gratitude.