

## CHAPTER XIX

*Some Conferences which Most Holy Mary Held with Her Angels in the House of St. Elizabeth, and Others which She Held with the Saint.*

243. The plenitude of the wisdom and grace of most holy Mary with her immense capacity could not remain idle at any time, place or occasion, always producing the fullness of the highest perfection, working at all times and seasons that which was asked and was possible, without ever falling short of the holiest and the most excellent in virtue. And since in all places She was both a wayfarer on earth and as it were an inhabitant of heaven, and since She herself was the intellectual and most glorious heaven, and the living temple of the habitation of God himself, so She also carried her own oratory and sanctuary with Her, and in this respect there was for Her no difference between her own house and that of her cousin Elizabeth, nor could any other place, time or occupation be a hindrance to Her in this regard. She was superior to all, and without restraint She incessantly devoted Herself to the force of love within her gaze. Yet at the same time She conversed with creatures at opportune times and treated with them as the occasion required, giving as much attention to them as the most prudent Lady could fittingly spare for each in particular. And since her most frequent conversation during the three months in which She remained in the house of Zacharias was with St. Elizabeth and her holy Guardian Angels, I shall relate in this chapter something of that which formed the subject of her conferences with them, and also mention other things which happened in her interaction with the Saint.

244. When She was left alone and free to Herself our heavenly Princess passed many hours ravished and elevated in divine contemplations and visions. Sometimes during them and sometimes outside of them She was accustomed to converse with her Angels about the sacraments and mysteries of her interior love. One day, soon after She had arrived at the house of Zacharias, She spoke to them in the following manner: “Heavenly spirits, my guardians and companions, ambassadors of the Most High and luminaries of his divinity, come and strengthen my heart, which is captured and wounded by his divine love, for it is afflicted with its own limitations in that it cannot properly respond to the obligations which are known to it and which dictate its desires. Come, ye supernal princes, and praise with me the admirable Name of the Lord, and let us magnify his holy judgments and operations. Help this poor little worm to praise its Maker, who condescends kindly to look upon its insignificance. Let us talk of the wonders of my Spouse; let us discuss the beauty of my Lord, of my most beloved Son. Let my heart find relief in uniting its inmost aspirations to thy own, my friends and companions, for thou knowest the secrets of my Treasure which the Lord has deposited within me in the narrowness of so fragile and constrained a vase. Great are these sacraments and admirable these mysteries, and I contemplate them with sweet affection; but their sovereign greatness annihilates me, their profundity inundates me, and the same activity of my love causes me both to pine away and to be renewed. Never is my inflamed heart satisfied, neither do I reach entire repose, for my desires surpass all I can accomplish, and my obligations are greater than my desires. I am dissatisfied with myself because I do not exert myself as much as I desire, neither do I desire to accomplish as much as I should, and I always find myself vanquished and limited in the return I give. Supernal Seraphim, listen to my loving anxieties, *because I languish with love* (Cant 2:5). Open to me thy bosoms, from whence the beauty of my Master is reflected, so the splendors of his light and the signs of his beauty may sustain the life which wastes away in his love.”

245. “Mother of our Creator and our Lady,” answered the holy Angels, “Thou dost truly possess the Almighty and our highest Good, and since Thou hast Him so closely bound to Thee and art his true Spouse and Mother rejoice in Him and keep Him with Thee for all eternity. Thou art the Spouse and the Mother of the God of love, and since in Thee is the only cause and fountain of life, no one shall live with Him as Thou, our Queen and Lady. But do not seek to find repose in a love so inflamed, for thy state and condition of a pilgrim do not permit thy love to attain the repose of perfect consummation, nor shall it cease to aspire to new and greater increase of merit and triumph. Thy obligations surpass without compare those of all the nations, yet they are to increase and grow continually. Never shall thy so vastly inflamed love equal its Object, since He is eternal and infinite and without measure in his perfections. Thou shalt always be happily vanquished by his greatness, for no one can comprehend Him; only He himself comprehends Himself and loves Himself in the measure in which He deserves to be loved. Eternally, O Lady, shalt Thou find in Him more to desire and more to love, since that is required by the essence of his greatness and our beatitude.”

246. In these colloquies and conferences the fire of divine love was more and more enkindled in the Heart of most holy Mary. In Her was exactly fulfilled the command of the Lord (Lv. 6:12) that in his tabernacle and upon his altar must burn continually the fire of the holocaust, and that the priest of the ancient law must see to its perpetual nourishment and maintenance. This precept was executed to the letter in most holy Mary, for in Her were jointly contained the altar and the new High Priest, Christ our Lord, who nourished and augmented its flame day by day by administering new material in favors, benefits, and influences of his divinity, while the exalted Lady on her part contributed her ceaseless exertions, which were ineffably enhanced in value by the continual flow of the graces and sanctity of the Lord. From the moment in which this Lady entered into the world this conflagration of his divine love took its rise in order never to be extinguished on this altar through all the eternities of God himself, for as lasting as this eternity and as continuous was and will be the fire of this living sanctuary.

247. At other times She spoke and conversed with the holy Angels when they appeared to Her in human forms, as I have said in several places (*Con.* 328, 420, 758; *Inc.* 181, 202, etc.). Most frequently this conversation revolved around the mystery of the incarnate Word, and in this She manifested so profound a knowledge in citing Holy Scriptures and the Prophets that She caused wonder even in the Angels. On one occasion, in speaking to them of these venerable sacraments, She said: “My lords, servants of the Most High and his friends, my heart is pierced and torn by arrows of grief when I meditate upon what the Sacred Scriptures say of my most holy Son (Gen. 22:2; Num. 21:8; Ps. 21; Dan. 9:26), or what Isaias and Jeremias wrote (Is. 53:2ff.; Jer. 11:18ff.) concerning the most bitter pains and torments in store for Him. Solomon says they shall condemn Him to a most ignominious death (Wis. 2:20), and the Prophets always speak in weighty and superlative terms of his Passion and Death, which are all to be fulfilled in Him. O it would be the will of His Majesty for me to live at that time in order to offer myself to die instead of the Author of my life! My soul is sorely afflicted in the consideration of these infallible truths, that my God and my Lord shall come forth from my womb only in order to suffer. O who shall guard Him and defend Him against his enemies! O tell me, ye heavenly princes, by what services or by what means can I induce the eternal Father to divert the rigor of his justice upon me so the Innocent, who cannot have any guilt upon Him, may be freed from punishment? Well do I know that in order to satisfy the infinite God for the offenses of men the satisfaction of the incarnate God is required; but by his first act my most holy Son has merited more than the entire human race can lose or demerit by its offenses. Since this is sufficient, tell me, is it not possible for me

to die in order to relieve Him from his death and torments? My humble desires shall not be annoying to my God, and my anxieties shall not be displeasing to Him. Yet, what am I saying, and whither does the fullness of sorrow and affection lead me? For I desire the fulfillment of the divine will in all things which I see approaching.”

248. These and other similar colloquies did most holy Mary hold with her Angels, especially during the time of her pregnancy. The heavenly spirits responded to all her concerns and comforted Her with great reverence, consoling Her by renewing the memory of the very sacraments which She already knew, and by reminding Her of the reasonableness and propriety of the death of Christ for the rescue of the human race, for the conquest of the demons and spoliation of their power, and for the glory of the eternal Father and the exaltation of the most holy and highest Lord his Son (Titus 2:14; Jn. 12:31, 14:13; Lk. 24:26). So great and exalted were the mysteries touched upon in these discourses of the Queen with the holy Angels that neither can the human tongue describe them nor our capacity comprehend them in this life. When we shall enjoy the Lord we shall see what we cannot at present conceive. From this little which I have said our piety can help us to draw conclusions in regard to others much greater.

249. St. Elizabeth was likewise well versed and enlightened in the divine Scriptures, and much more so since the Visitation, and hence our Queen conversed with her concerning these heavenly mysteries which were known and understood by the matron, instructing and enlightening her by heavenly teachings, for through her intercession the Saint was enriched with many blessings and gifts of heaven. Many times she wondered at the profound wisdom of the Mother of God, and blessed Her over and over again, saying: “Blessed art Thou, my Lady and Mother of my Lord, among all women (Lk. 1:42), and may the nations know and magnify thy dignity. Most fortunate art Thou due to the rich Treasure whom Thou bearest in thy virginal womb. I tender to Thee my humble and most affectionate congratulations for the joy with which thy spirit shall be filled when Thou shalt hold in thy arms the Sun of justice and nurse Him at thy virginal breast. Remember me thy servant, O Lady, in that hour, and offer my heart in sacrifice to thy most holy Son, my true and incarnate God. O who shall merit to serve Thee from now on and attend upon Thee! But if I am unworthy of this good fortune, may I enjoy that of being borne in thy Heart, for I fear (not without cause) that mine will be torn asunder when I must part from Thee.” Many other sentiments of sweetest and most tender love St. Elizabeth uttered in her personal conversation with most holy Mary, and the most prudent Lady consoled, strengthened and enlivened her by her divine and efficacious reasonings. Among such excellent works as these, and many other supreme acts of humility and self-abasement, She served not only her cousin Elizabeth but also the servants of her house. Whenever She could find an occasion She swept the house of her relative, and always her oratory at regular times; with the servants She washed the dishes, and She performed other acts of profound humility. Let no one think it strange that I particularize in these small matters, for the greatness of our Queen has made them of importance for our instruction, and thus by knowing them our pride might vanish and our vileness come to shame. When St. Elizabeth learned of the humble services performed by the Mother of piety she was deeply moved and tried to prevent them, and therefore the heavenly Lady concealed them from her cousin wherever it was possible.

250. O Queen and Mistress of heaven and earth, my Protectress and Advocate, since Thou art the Teacher of all sanctity and perfection, with admiration of thy humility I dare, O my Mother, to ask Thee: Knowing the Onlybegotten of the Father was within thy virginal womb, and desiring in all things to conduct Thyself as his Mother, how could thy greatness abase itself to such lowliness as sweeping the floor and similar occupations, since according to our notions

Thou, because of the reverence due to thy most holy Son, couldst easily have excused Thyself without failing in the duties of thy most perfect Motherhood? My desire is, O Lady, to understand how Thy Majesty governed Thyself in this matter.

*ANSWER AND INSTRUCTION OF THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.*

251. My daughter, in order to solve thy difficulty more explicitly than already noted in the foregoing chapter thou must remember that no occupation or exterior act pertaining to virtue, no matter how lowly it may be, if it is well-ordered, can impede the worship, reverence and exaltation of the Creator of all things, for these acts of virtue do not exclude one another, but they are all compatible with one another in the creature, and much more in me, who lived in the continual presence of the highest Good without ever losing Him out of sight by exterior activity. I adored and remembered God in all my actions, referring them all to his greater glory, and the Lord himself, who orders and creates all things, despises none of them, nor is He offended or irritated by their smallness. The soul who loves Him is not disconcerted by any of these little things in his divine presence, for it seeks and finds Him as the beginning and the end of all creatures. And because terrestrial creatures cannot exist without these humble chores, and without others which are inseparable from our lowly condition and the preservation of our nature, it is necessary to understand this doctrine well so we can be governed by it; for if we engage in these thoughts and occupations without reference to their Creator, they shall cause many and great interruptions in the practice of virtue and in our merits, as well as in the right use of interior advantages. Our whole life will be blameworthy and full of reprehensible defects, little removed from the earthliness of creatures.

252. According to this doctrine thou must regulate thy terrestrial occupations, whatever they may be, in order not to lose thy time, which can never be recovered. Whether thou eat, labor, rest, sleep or watch, in all times and places and in all occupations adore, reverence, and look upon thy great and powerful Lord who fills all things and conserves all things (I Cor. 10:31). I also desire thee to pay special attention to that which moved and incited me most to perform all acts of humility, namely the thought that my divine Son came in humility in order to teach by doctrine and example this virtue in the world (Mt. 11:29), to inculcate the banishment of vanity and pride, and to root out its seed sown by Lucifer among mortals in the first sin. His Majesty gave me such a deep knowledge of how much He is pleased with this virtue that in order to be allowed to perform only one of the acts mentioned by thee, such as sweeping the floor or kissing the feet of the poor, I would have been ready to suffer the greatest torments of the world. Thou shalt never find words to express the love for humility which I had, nor to describe its excellence and nobility; in the Lord thou shalt know and understand what thou cannot describe in words.

253. Hence write this doctrine in thy heart and observe it as the rule of thy life; continue to exercise thyself in the contempt of all things belonging to human vanity, and esteem them as odious and execrable in the eyes of the Most High. But in connection with this humility of thy life, let thy thoughts always be of the noblest and thy conversation in heaven and with the angelic spirits (Philip. 3:20); treat with them and converse with them in order to obtain new light concerning the Divinity and the mysteries of Christ my most holy Son. With creatures let thy dealings be such as shall continually increase thy fervor and serve thee as means of awakening and moving thee to humility and divine love. In thy own mind assume the lowest place beneath all creatures, so when the occasion and the time of exercising the acts of humility arrive thou mayest be found prompt and willing to exercise them. Thus shalt thou be the mistress of the

passions if first thou hast acknowledged thyself in thy heart as the least, the weakest, and the most useless of all creatures.