

## CHAPTER XXI

### *St. Elizabeth Asks the Queen of Heaven to Assist at Her Childbirth, and is Enlightened Regarding the Birth of St. John.*

261. Already two months had passed since the coming of the Princess of heaven into the house of St. Elizabeth, and the discreet matron was even now filled with grief at the thought of the departure and absence of the great Lady of the world. She dreaded the loss of such a great blessing as her presence was, and with reason, since she knew it could not come within the range of human merits. In her holy humility she scrutinized her heart, fearing lest any fault of hers might be the cause of the setting of that beautiful moon and of the Sun of justice within the virginal womb. Sometimes she wept and sighed in private because she could find no means of prolonging their stay which had shed so much clear light of grace in her soul. She asked the Lord with many tears to inspire her cousin and Lady, most holy Mary, not to forsake her, or at least not to withdraw so soon her sweet company. She served Her with great reverence and solicitude, and studied to oblige Her. It is no wonder that so saintly, attentive and prudent a woman would ask for that which even the angels coveted, for in addition to the divine light which she had received from the Holy Ghost concerning the supreme dignity and sanctity of the Virgin Mother, she had the personal experience of her most sweet and divine conversation, and all this combined had ravished her heart, and thus without divine aid she could not have survived the parting after once having known and conversed with Her.

262. In order to find some consolation St. Elizabeth resolved to open her heart to the heavenly Lady, who was, however, not ignorant of her sorrow, and she said to Her in great submission and humility: "My cousin and Lady, due to the respect and consideration with which I am bound to serve Thee I have not until now dared to speak of my desire and of the sorrow in my heart; give me now thy permission to relieve it by making them known. The Lord has condescended in his mercy to send Thee here so I would have the unmerited blessing of conversing with Thee and knowing the mysteries which his divine Providence has entrusted to Thee, my Lady. Unworthy am I to praise Him eternally for this favor (Dan. 3:53). Thou art the living temple of his glory, the Ark of the Testament (Heb. 9:4), containing the Manna by which the angels live (Ps. 77:25). Thou art the tablet of the true law, written in his own Being (Ex. 31:18). I appreciate in my lowliness how rich His Majesty has made me, that without my merit I entertain in my own house the Treasure of heaven and Her whom He has chosen as his Mother among all women. I justly fear that I displease Thee and the Fruit of thy womb by my sins, and that therefore thou shalt forsake thy slave, withdrawing the great blessing which I now enjoy. Possibly, if it be thy pleasure, I might have the happiness of serving Thee and remaining with Thee all the rest of my life. If it is a hardship for Thee to return to thy dwelling, it shall be most convenient for Thee to stay in my house. If Thou shalt call thy holy spouse Joseph and live with him here as my masters I shall serve Thee with affectionate readiness of heart. Although I do not merit what I ask, I beseech Thee not to despise my humble petition, since the Lord can surpass by his mercies all my merits and desires."

263. Most holy Mary heard with sweetest complacency the petition of her cousin Elizabeth and answered her: "Dearest friend of my soul, thy holy desires are acceptable in the eyes of the Most High. I also thank thee from my heart. But in all our undertakings and resolves it is necessary for us to conform to the divine will and entirely subject ourselves to it. Although this is the duty of all creatures, thou knowest that it is my duty before all others, since by the power of his arm (Lk.

1:51) He has raised me from the dust and in boundless love has looked upon me. All my words and movements must be guided by the divine will of my Lord and Son, and I must not desire anything except what is according to his pleasure. Let us present to His Majesty thy desires, and whatever He in his goodness shall ordain let us execute. I must also obey my spouse Joseph (Eph. 5:22), for without his order and consent I can neither decide upon my occupations nor upon my dwelling place. It is just, my dearest, for us to obey our superiors.”

264. St. Elizabeth yielded to the persuasive words of the Princess of heaven and answered with humble submission: “My Lady, I am ready to obey thy will and revere thy teaching. I desire only once more to commend to Thee my sincere affection and heartfelt devotion to thy service. If my desires cannot be fulfilled and are contrary to the will of God, I desire at least, if possible, for Thee, my Queen, to not forsake me until my son shall come forth to the light, so just as within my womb he has adored and recognized his Redeemer in thy own he may enjoy his divine presence and enlightenment before any other creature, and may receive thy blessing for the first advances in life by the presence of Him who is to direct his footsteps (Prov. 16:9). And do Thou, who art the Mother of Grace, present him to the Creator and obtain from his goodness the perseverance in that grace which he received at the sound of thy sweetest voice when it came to my unworthy ears. Let me behold my child in thy arms, where the God who made and preserves heaven and earth (Is. 42:5) is likewise to rest. Let not thy maternal kindness be strained or diminished by my sins; deny not this consolation to me, nor to my son this great happiness which as a mother I ask and unworthily desire for him.”

265. Most holy Mary did not desire to refuse, and She promised to pray to the Lord for the fulfillment of this request of her cousin, asking her at the same time to unite her prayers with hers in order to know his most holy will. Accordingly the two mothers of the two most holy sons born into the world went to the oratory of the heavenly Princess and presented their petitions to the Most High. Most pure Mary fell into an ecstasy wherein She was enlightened anew concerning the mysterious life and dignity of the Precursor and his work in preparing the hearts of men for the reception of their Redeemer and Teacher (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23), and She made known to St. Elizabeth these sacraments insofar as it was proper. She was informed of the great sanctity of her saintly cousin, and also that she had only a short while to live, and that Zacharias would die before her. The kind Mother lovingly besought the Lord to assist her at her death and fulfill her wishes in regard to her son. In regard to the other fond desires the most prudent Virgin made no request, for in her heavenly wisdom She immediately saw that to live always in the house of her cousin was not advisable nor according to the will of the Most High.

266. To these petitions His Majesty answered: “My Spouse and my Dove, it is my pleasure for Thee to assist and console my servant Elizabeth at her childbirth, which is to be very soon, for there are only eight days left before this event. After her son shall be circumcised, Thou shalt return to thy home with thy spouse Joseph. After his birth Thou shalt offer to Me my servant John in pleasing sacrifice, and continue, my Beloved, to pray to Me for the salvation of souls.” St. Elizabeth united her prayers with those of the Queen of heaven and earth, beseeching the Lord to command his Mother and Spouse not to forsake her during her confinement. During this prayer the Lord revealed to her that her confinement was close at hand, and informed her also of many other things for her relief and consolation in her cares.

267. Most holy Mary issued from her rapture, and having finished their prayer the two mothers conferred upon the nearness of the confinement of St. Elizabeth as made known to them by the Lord; and anxious to make sure of her good fortune, the holy matron asked our Queen: “My Lady, pray tell me whether I shall have the happiness of thy assistance at my impending

confinement?” Her Majesty answered: “My beloved cousin, the Most High has heard our prayers and deigned to command me to assist on that occasion. This I shall do, not only remaining until then, but also until the circumcision of thy child, which shall take place in fifteen days.” At this resolve of most holy Mary the joy of her cousin was renewed, and she acknowledged this great favor in humble gratitude to the Lord and to the holy Queen. Thus rejoiced and enlivened by mutual conferences the holy matron began to prepare for the birth of her son and for the departure of her sovereign cousin.

*INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO ME BY THE HEAVENLY QUEEN  
AND OUR LADY, MARY MOST HOLY.*

268. My daughter, whenever our desires arise from loving affection and are accompanied by a good intention, the Most High is not offended at our making them known, as long as it is done with submission and resignation to the dispositions of his divine Providence. When the soul presents itself before the Lord with such sentiments, He looks upon it as a Father (Ps. 33:16) and grants to it what is proper, and withholds what is improper or does not conduce to its true welfare. The desire of my cousin to remain with me all her life arose from a pious and praiseworthy zeal, but it was not in harmony with the plans of the Most High by which He had already arranged the conduct, travels and events of my life. Though the Lord denied her this request He was not displeased, but granted her whatever would not hinder the decrees of his infinite wisdom and whatever would benefit her or her son John. Due to the love shown toward me by the mother and son, and because of my intercession, the Almighty enriched them with many blessings and favors, for to ask Him with an upright intention and through my mediation is always the most efficacious means of moving His Majesty.

269. I desire thee to offer up all thy petitions and prayers in the name of my most holy Son and my own, and be assured without doubt they shall be heard if they are joined with the upright intention of pleasing God. Look upon me with loving affection as thy Mother, thy refuge, and thy help. Trust thyself to my devoted love, and remember, my dearest, that my desire for thy greater good urges me to teach thee the means of obtaining great blessings and favors of divine grace at the most liberal hands of God. Do not make thyself unfit for them, nor hinder them by thy timidity. And if thou dost desire to induce me to love thee as my much beloved daughter, rouse thyself to the fulfillment of what I tell thee and manifest to thee. Toward this direct thy careful efforts, resting satisfied only when thou hast labored hard to put my teachings into practice.