

The Mystical City of God

by Ven. Mary of Jesus of Ágreda (1602-1665)

Volume 2

The Incarnation

Second of Four Volumes

PART II of III Parts

Books 3 and 4 of 8 Books

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the Religious Superior and Biographer of Ven. Mary of Jesus of Ágreda

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The Incarnation

Books 3 and 4

The Mysteries of the Life of the Holy Mother of God from the Incarnation of the Divine Word in Her Virginal Womb to the Return of the Holy Family from Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

to the Second Part of the Divine History and Most Holy Life of Mary, the Mother of God.

1. At the time of obediently presenting before the Divinity the little service and labor of having written the first Part of the most holy life of Mary, the Mother of God, I wished to subject it to the scrutiny and correction of the divine light by which I had been guided in my shortcomings. I was very anxious to be consoled by the renewed assurance and benign approval of the Most High, and to know whether He desired me to continue or to abandon this work which is so far above my lowliness. The Lord responded saying: "Thou hast written well, and according to our pleasure; yet We desire thee to understand that in order to manifest the mysteries and most high sacraments enclosed in the rest of the life of our only and beloved Spouse, Mother of the onlybegotten Son, thou hast need of a new and more exalted disposition. We desire thee to die to all that is imperfect and visible, and live according to the spirit, renouncing all the operations and habits of an earthly creature, and instead having those of an angel, with greater purity and conformity with what thou dost understand and write."

2. In this answer of the Most High I understood that such a new mode of exercising the virtues, and such a high perfection of life and habits, was intimated and asked of me that, mistrustful at my continued trouble and fearful of undertaking a work so arduous and difficult for an earthly creature, I felt within myself great repugnance rising up in the flesh against the spirit. The spirit called me with interior force, urging me to strive after the disposition which was required of me, providing as reasons the pleasure of the Lord and the benefits accruing to myself. On the other hand the law of sin (Rom. 7:23) which I felt in my members opposed the divine promptings and discouraged me by the fear of my own inconstancy. I felt in this conflict a strong hindrance which deterred me and a cowardice which terrified me. In this agitation I began to believe that I was not capable of treating about such high things, especially since they were so foreign to the condition and estate of a woman.

3. Overcome by fears and difficulties I resolved not to continue this work, and to use all possible means to adhere to this determination. The common enemy knew my fear and cowardice, and since his utmost cruelty is more aroused against the weak and destitute he made use of this very disposition to attack me with incredible fury. It seemed to him I was left without help in his hands. In order to conceal his malice he sought to transform himself into an angel of light, pretending to be very solicitous for my soul and my welfare. Under this false pretext he perfidiously hurled at me his suggestions and doubts; he represented to me the danger of damnation and frightened me with punishments similar to those of the chief of the angels (Is. 14:12), since I had sought in my pride to comprehend what was above my powers and in opposition to God himself.

4. He pointed out to me many souls who professing virtue were deceived by some secret presumption and by giving place to the fabulations of the serpents, and he made me believe that since I sought to scrutinize the secrets of the divine Majesty (Prov. 25:27) I must be guilty of pride and presumption, thus being already judged. He urged very strongly that the present times were ill suited for such matters, and sought to confirm his assertion by what happened to some well known persons who were found to labor under deceit and error. He reminded me of the

dread of the spiritual life in others, how great would be the discredit which would arise by any mistake of mine, and what evil effect it would have on those who have little piety. All this I would know by experience and to my regret if I persisted in writing about this matter. And it being true that all the contradiction suffered by those trying to live the spiritual life, and when virtue in that which is mystical is little welcomed in the world, is caused by that mortal enemy, thus for the purpose of doing away with Christian devotion and piety in many souls he succeeds in deceiving some and sowing cockle among the good seed of the Lord (Mt. 13:25). Thus he causes confusion and obscures the true sentiment concerning the spiritual life, making it more difficult to distinguish the darkness from the light. I am not surprised to see him succeed therein, since true discernment is the special work of God and of those who participate in his true wisdom and do not govern themselves only by earthly insight.

5. It is not easy during this mortal life to discern true prudence from false, since sometimes even good intention and zeal confuse human judgment when understanding and light from on high are lacking. I had occasion to learn this in the execution of that which I am about to undertake, for some persons well known as devout, not only those who loved me due to their piety and desired my welfare, but also those who were less loving and considerate, all alike at one time wished to deter me from this undertaking and also from the path on which I was going, as if I was proceeding upon it by my own choice. Their fear of drawing discredit or confusion upon those who were striving after piety with me, or upon religion or my neighbors, and especially upon the convent in which I lived, caused anxiety to them and affliction to me. I was much enamored by the security which the ordinary paths of the other nuns seemed to offer; I acknowledged this suited more my own insight and my inclination and desires, and was urged upon me still more by my timidity and great fears.

6. Cast about upon these impetuous waves my heart sought to reach the port of obedience in order to reassure myself in the bitter sea of my confusion. To add to my tribulation it began to be rumored about in our order that my spiritual father and superior, who had for many years directed my soul and who well understood my interior trials, who moreover had commanded me to write the preceding Part of this History, and who would most likely encourage, quiet and console me, was suggested for removal to a higher office. The suggestion was not acted upon, but it occasioned his absence for many days, and the dragon took advantage of all this in order to pour out against me the furious river of his wrath (Apoc. 12:15). Thus on this occasion as on others he labored with highest malice to divert me from the obedience and teaching of my superior and master, though his efforts were in vain.

7. In addition to all the contradictions and temptations already mentioned, and many others not possible to describe, the demon sought to deprive me of my health, causing many aches, indispositions, and disorders of the whole body. He harassed me with insurmountable sadness and conflicting thoughts; he seemed to confuse my understanding, hinder correct thinking, weaken my will power, and sift me in body and soul. It happened that in the midst of this confusion I committed some faults which were serious enough in me, though they were committed not so much in malice as from human frailty. Nevertheless the serpent sought to use them for my destruction more than any other means, for thus having interrupted the flow of good works his fury was let loose to cause still greater faults in this embarrassment by enticing me to exaggerate my guilt. To this he drove me by impious and most insidious suggestions, seeking to persuade me that all I had experienced in the path which I had trodden was false and erroneous.

8. Since these insinuations, because of the faults committed and my continual consternation and fears, began to appear plausible, I resisted them less than others, and it was only through the

special mercies of the Lord that I did not fall entirely from all belief and hope in a remedy. But I found myself so entangled in difficulties and surrounded by darkness that I can say the groanings of death surrounded me and *the sorrows of hell encompassed me* (Ps. 17:5-6), leading me to recognize the ultimate peril. I determined to burn the manuscripts of the first Part of this divine History and to desist from writing the second. To this determination the angel of Satan who administered these suggestions added also the proposal to withdraw myself from the whole undertaking, not to tread the path of the spiritual life, nor attend to the interior life, nor communicate about it with anyone, for thus would I be able to do penance for my sins, appease the Lord, propitiate Him, and retain his friendship. In order to make sure of the effects of his concealed malice he proposed I make a vow not to write anymore because of the danger of being deceived and of deceiving, but instead amend my life, sever my imperfections, and embrace penance.

9. With this mask of seeming virtue the dragon pretended to establish his damnable counsels and cover himself with the skin of a sheep, while in reality he acted as a bloodthirsty and devouring wolf. He persevered for some time in this attack, and all alone I remained for fifteen days in a night of darkness, without relief or consolation either human or divine; the former because I was without the help and the counsel of obedience, and the latter because the Lord had interrupted the flow of his favors, enlightenments, and continual inspiration. Above all was I distressed by despair of salvation, and in it the persuasion that death and the danger of my eternal damnation was approaching. All this was instigated and fostered in me by the enemy.

10. Yet since the aftertastes of his temptations are so bitter and end but in despair, the very disturbance by which he upset the whole republic of my powers and acquired habits made me more wary of fulfilling anything which he urged upon me and proposed to me. He availed himself of the continual fear which tormented me, that is the dread of offending God and losing his friendship, and when in my doubts I applied myself to works of piety he sought to draw me away. This very fear, however, made me doubt that which the astute dragon suggested, and this stopped me from giving assent to it. Helping me also was regard for obedience by which I had been commanded to write, and all the contrary sentiments I felt regarding these suggestions and persuasions by which I resisted and anathematized them. Above all the assistance of the Most High defended me and did not permit the beasts to snatch my soul, which amid sighs and groans confessed Him. I cannot describe in words the temptations, combats, troubles, dismays and afflictions which I suffered in this battle, for I saw myself placed in such a state that in my judgment there was really no great difference between my condition and that of the damned, except in hell there is no redemption, while in mine it was still possible.

11. One day in order to get some respite I cried out from the bottom of my heart saying: “O woe is me, that I have come to such a state! And woe is my soul to see itself in it! Where shall I go, since all the portals of my salvation are closed?” Then a strong and sweet voice responded in my interior: “Where dost thou desire to go outside of God himself?” I understood in this response my remedy was at hand in the Lord, and by the encouragement of this light I began to raise myself from that confused dejection in which I was oppressed, and I felt a powerful force inciting my desires and the acts of faith, hope and charity. I humbled myself in the presence of the Most High, and in firm confidence in his goodness I wept over my faults with bitter sorrow. I confessed them many times, and sighing from the depth of my soul I began to seek again the former light and truth.* And since divine Wisdom comes forth to meet those by whom He is

* cf. Ps. 42:3; *Prayers at the Foot of the Altar of Holy Mass* [Ed.]

invoked (Wis. 6:17), He advanced toward me in delight and cleared away the night of my confusion and tormenting afflictions.

12. Presently that bright day broke which I had desired so much, and the quiet possession of peace returned, enjoying the sweetness of the love and sight of my Lord and Master, and with it I again perceived why I should believe, accept and esteem the benefits and favors which his mighty arm wrought in me. I gave Him thanks as far as was in my power; I saw who I was and who God is, and that all a creature can do by itself is nothing,* because sin is nothing. I saw also what man can do when raised up and assisted by the divine right hand, being much more than can be imagined by our earthly faculties. Humbled in the perception of these truths and in the presence of the inaccessible light (which is vast and strong, without deceit or falsehood), my heart overflowed in sweet affections of love, praise and gratitude, for now I understood He had guarded and defended me so in the confused night of temptations my lamp might not be extinguished (Prov. 31:18), and in the depth of my gratitude I annihilated myself to the dust and humiliated myself as a worm of the earth.

13. To make this benefit more certain I immediately heard an interior exhortation without knowing clearly from whence it proceeded. While it severely reprehended me for my disloyalty and my wrongful ways, it at the same time admonished and enlightened, instructed and corrected me. It furnished me with a deep understanding of good and evil, of virtue and vice, of what was secure, useful and beneficial, as well as their opposites; it laid open to me the way of eternity, gave me a knowledge of the means and of the end, the value of life everlasting, and the miserable unhappiness and the so little considered ruin of endless perdition.

14. In the profound knowledge of these two extremes I confess I was dumbfounded and cast about between the fear of my dreadful infirmity and the desire of reaching the happiness of which I was unworthy because of my demerits. I was full of the thought of the kindness and mercy of the Most High and the fear of losing Him. I beheld the two different ends awaiting the creatures, eternal glory and eternal misery, and it seemed a small matter to me to suffer all the pains and torments of the world, of purgatory and hell itself, in order to attain the one and avoid the other. And though I perceived the divine help is assured to those who seek to make use of it, yet I also saw by this light that life and death are in our hands (Ecclus. 15:18), that our weakness or malice may prevent the proper use of grace, and the tree will lie for all eternity as it has once fallen (Eccles. 11:3). For this reason I was overcome by the deepest sorrow which penetrated my heart.

15. This sorrow was increased by a most severe answer or inquiry which came from the Lord; for while I found myself thus annihilated in the consciousness of my weakness and danger, and of having offended his justice, not daring to raise my eyes in his presence, in that muteness his mercy met my groans, saying to me in response to them: "Soul, which dost thou desire? Which dost thou seek? Which of these ways shalt thou choose? What is thy resolve?" This question was an arrow to my heart, for though I knew for certain the Lord knew my desires better than I myself, the delay between the question and the answer was incredibly painful to me. I desired if possible for the Lord to anticipate my answer and not show Himself ignorant of the response which I would give. Yet moved by a great force I responded in words coming from the depth of my soul and said: "Almighty Lord and God, the path of virtue, the way of eternal life, this I desire, this I choose, so Thou mayest lead me upon it; and if I do not merit it in thy justice, I appeal to thy mercy, and I present on my behalf the infinite merits of thy most holy Son and my

* cf. Jn. 15:5 [Ed.]

Redeemer Jesus Christ.”

16. I was made aware this highest Judge remembered the promise which He gave to his Church that He would grant all that is asked in the name of his Onlybegotten (Jn. 16:23), that in Him and on his account my petition was granted and its fulfillment hastened according to my poor desires. Certain conditions were made and proposed to me by an intellectual voice, saying to me interiorly: “Soul, created by the hand of the omnipotent God, if thou dost intend as one of the elect to follow the way of the true light and attain the position of a most chaste spouse of the Lord who calls thee, it is proper for thee to observe the laws and precepts of love which thou dost desire. First it is required of thee to reject entirely all earthly inclinations, renouncing each and every affection toward transient things, so thou dost retain no love or affection toward any created being, no matter how useful, beautiful or agreeable it may appear to thee. Cherish no created image, harbor no earthly affection; let thy will rest in no created object, except insofar as thy Lord and Spouse shall command thee for the well ordering of thy love, or insofar as thou canst be aided thereby to love Him alone.

17. “And when, after thus reaching this perfect abnegation and renunciation of thyself, thou shalt have freed and disentangled thyself from all earthly things, seek the Lord, raising thyself with the swift wings of the dove toward the high habitation in which He in his condescension desires to place thy spirit, so there thou mayest live in his presence and have a secure dwelling. This great Lord is a most jealous Spouse, and his love and emulation are strong as death (Cant. 8:6). He desires to adorn thee and set thee in a secure place so thou mayest not issue from it, nor leave his presence for another where thou shalt not find Him nor enjoy his caresses. He with whom thou art to converse without mistrust desires to sign thee with his own hand, and this is a most equitable law which the spouses of the great King must observe, for even those in the world observe it in order to show their faithfulness. It is due to the nobility of thy Spouse to behave in a manner corresponding to the dignity and position conferred by Him, without descending to anything not befitting this state or making thee unworthy of the adornment lavished upon thee for entrance into his bridal chamber.

18. “Second, thou must with diligence divest thyself of the vileness of thy vestments tattered by thy faults and imperfections, soiled by the effects of sin, and made odious by the inclinations of nature. His Majesty desires to wash off the stains and purify and renew thee with his beauty, but under the condition that thou never lose sight of the poor and despicable vestments of which thou hast been divested, so in the memory and knowledge of this benefit thou mayest spread the odor of sweetness for this great King by the spikenard of thy humility (Ib. 1:11), never forgetting the return which thou owest to the Author of thy salvation. Thus shall He by the precious balsam of his blood purify thee, heal thy wounds, and enlighten thee copiously.

19. “Above all this (added that voice), in order to forget all earthly things and have thy beauty desired by the highest King (Ps. 44:11-12), seek to adorn thyself with the jewels which He in his pleasure has prepared for thee. The vestments which shall cover thee are to be whiter than snow, more brilliant than the diamond, more resplendent than the sun, yet so delicate they shall easily be stained if thou art careless, making thee abhorrent to thy Spouse. But if thou preserve them in the purity which He desires, thy steps shall be beautiful as the Prince’s daughter (Cant. 7:1), and His Majesty shall be pleased with thy affection and works. As a cincture of thy vestment He shall give thee the knowledge of his divine power and his holy fear, that having bound thy inclinations thou mayest direct thyself by his pleasure. The jewels of thy necklace which adorn thy neck, signifying thy humble submission, shall be the costly stones of faith, hope and charity. For thy hair, which are the high and exalted thoughts and thy heavenly intelligences, thou shalt have for

a clasp wisdom and infused science which He shall communicate to thee, and the embroideries of thy vestments shall be all the beauty and richness of the virtues. Thy diligence in performing what is most perfect shall serve thee as sandals, and the laces shall be the avoidance and restraints thou shalt use in order to keep from evil. The rings which shall beautify thy fingers shall be the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the beauty of thy face shall be the participation of the Divinity, which shall shine from it due to his holy love. To this thou shalt add the blush of confusion for having offended Him, giving thee a sense of shame in offending Him hereafter, comparing at the same time the coarse and sordid habits of the past with those which now adorn thee.

20. “And because thy own merits would make but a poor and miserable return for such a high espousal, the Most High desires to ratify this contract by singling out, as if for thee alone, the infinite merits of thy Spouse Jesus Christ, and He makes thee a partaker of all his possessions and treasures contained in heaven and upon earth. All belongs to this supreme Lord (Esther 13:11), and of all this thou shalt be mistress as his spouse for thy own use and for the greater love of Him. But remember, soul, that in order to obtain such a gift thou must hide all this within thyself without ever losing thy secret, for I warn thee of the danger of soiling thy beauty with the least imperfection. But if at any time thou dost commit such an imperfection out of weakness, rise from it at once like a strong one and weep over it, acknowledging the small fault as if it had been the most grave.

21. “And in order for thee to have a dwelling place and habitation befitting such a great state, thy Spouse does not desire to set any limit for thee; rather it is his pleasure for thee to dwell in the interminable regions of his divinity, where thou mayest tarry and roam with ease through the vast fields of his attributes and perfections, where the view of the intellect is without restraint, the will is delighted without shadow of misgiving, and the inclinations are satiated without bitterness. This is the paradise always delightful, where the most beloved brides of Christ find their recreation, where they gather the fragrant flowers and myrrh, and where the infinite is found for those who have renounced the imperfect nothing; there shall thy habitation be secure. And so thy communication and companionship may be in correspondence with it, He desires thee to converse with the Angels, holding them as friends and companions, and copying from them their virtues by faithful imitation during their frequent conversations and dealings with thee.

22. “Take notice, O soul” (continued the voice), “of the greatness of this benefit, for the Mother of thy Spouse and the Queen of heaven adopts thee anew for her daughter, receives thee as her disciple, and constitutes Herself thy Mother and Teacher. Through her intercession thou receivest such singular favors, and they are all granted to thee so thou mayest write her most holy Life; for this reason thou hast been pardoned without thy merit, and that which otherwise thou wouldst not have attained has been conceded to thee. What would become of thee, O soul, if it were not for the Mother of Mercy? Thou wouldst already have perished if her intercession had failed thee. Poor and useless would have been thy works if by divine condescension thou hadst not been selected to write this History; but the eternal Father chose thee for his daughter in view of this work, and for a spouse of his onlybegotten Son, and the Son received thee to his close embraces, and the Holy Ghost selected thee for his enlightenments. The document of this contract and espousal is written and imprinted on the white parchment of the purity of most holy Mary, written by the finger of the Most High by his power. The ink is the blood of the Lamb; the executor is the eternal Father; the tie which binds thee to Christ is the Holy Ghost; and the guarantor is the merits of the same Jesus Christ and his Mother, since thou art but a vile worm,

having nothing to offer and being expected merely to give thy free consent.”

23. Thus far proceeded the voice and admonition which I heard. Though I judged it to be that of an Angel, yet whether it was I could not ascertain clearly, for I did not perceive it in the same way as at other times. Such manifestations and disclosures accommodate themselves to the dispositions of the soul at the time of their reception, as for instance happened to the disciples at Emmaus (Lk. 24:16). Many other happenings occurred in order to overcome the contradiction of the serpent in the writing of this History, but it would draw out this introduction too far to mention them now. I continued my prayers for some days, asking the Lord to govern and direct me in order not to make a mistake, and representing to Him my incapacity and timidity. His Majesty always responded to me that I must order my life with all purity and great perfection, and by urging me to continue in it after having begun; and especially the Queen of the Angels intimated to me her will many times, and with great sweetness and tenderness commanded me to obey Her as her daughter and write her most holy Life which I had begun.

24. To all this I desired to add the security of obedience. Without saying anything of that which I had heard from the Lord and from his most holy Mother, I asked my confessor and superior what he would direct me to do in this matter. He answered by commanding me under obedience to continue and to write the second Part of this History. Finding myself thus compelled both by the Lord and by obedience, I returned again to the presence of the Most High where I found myself one day in prayer, and renouncing my whole self and recognizing my insignificance and danger of erring I prostrated myself before His Majesty and said: “My Lord, my Lord, what dost Thou desire to do with me?” To this proposal I received the following intelligence.

25. It seemed to me the divine light of the most blessed Trinity manifested to me my poverty full of defects, reprehending me for them and admonishing me with severity, giving me most exalted doctrine and salutary directions for a perfect life, and for this purpose God purified and enlightened me anew. I became aware that the Mother of Grace, most holy Mary, standing before the throne of the Divinity, was interceding and pleading for me. With such assistance my confidence took new life, and availing myself of the clemency of such a Mother I addressed myself to Her and spoke to Her only these words: “My Lady and my Refuge, take into account, as a true Mother, the poverty of thy slave.” It seemed to me as if She heard my prayer, and speaking with the Most High She said: “My Lord, I desire anew to receive this useless and poor creature as a daughter and adopt her as my own.” (This was the act of a most generous and powerful Queen.) But the Most High answered: “My Spouse, for such a great favor as this what does this soul bring in return? She does not merit it, being a useless and poor worm, ungrateful for our gifts.”

26. O wonderful power of the divine word! How shall I describe the effects produced in me by this answer of the Omnipotent? I humbled myself to my nothingness, and I was filled with the knowledge of the misery of creatures and my own ingratitude towards God. My heart sank within me in sorrow for my sins and in the desire of obtaining the unmerited happiness of being the daughter of that sovereign Lady. I raised my eyes full of dread to the throne of the Most High and my visage was transported in fear and hope. I turned toward my Advocate, and desiring to be admitted as her slave, since I did not merit the title of daughter, I spoke from the bottom of my heart without forming any words; and I heard the great Lady say to the Lord:

27. “Divine King and my God, it is true this poor creature has nothing on her part to offer to thy justice; but I present for her the merits and the blood which my most holy Son shed for her,

* cf. Acts 9:6 [Ed.]

and with them I present also the dignity of Mother of thy Onlybegotten which I received from thy ineffable kindness, all the works which I performed in thy service in having carried Him in my womb and nourished Him with the milk of my breast, and above all I present to Thee thy own divinity and goodness. I supplicate Thee to consider this creature as my adopted daughter and disciple for whom I shall stand as guarantor. By my instruction she shall amend her faults and perform her works according to thy pleasure.”

28. The Most High (may He be eternally praised for hearing the petition of the great Queen interceding for the least of his creatures) yielded to these prayers, and immediately in the joy of my soul I felt immense effects such as are impossible to describe. With my whole heart I turned toward all the creatures of heaven and earth, and not being able to contain my exultation I invited them to exalt for me and with me the Author of grace. It seemed to me that I addressed them in the following words: “O ye inhabitants and courtiers of heaven and all ye living creatures, formed by the hand of the Most High, behold this marvel of his liberality and mercy, and bless and exalt Him for all eternity, since He has raised from the dust the most vile of the universe and has enriched the most destitute; He has honored the most unworthy, though He is the most high God and powerful King. And since you sons of Adam see here the poorest orphan sheltered and the greatest sinner pardoned, issue forth from your ignorance, raise yourself from your listlessness, and renew your hope, for if his powerful arm has assisted me, if He has called and forgiven me, all of you can hope for your salvation; and if you desire to assure yourselves of it, seek, seek the protection of most holy Mary, ask Her for her intercession, and you shall find Her to be the Mother of ineffable mercy and clemency.”

29. I turned also to this most exalted Queen and said to Her: “Ah, my Lady, now I do not call myself an orphan, since I have a Mother, and a Mother who is the Queen of all creation; I shall not anymore be ignorant (except through my own fault), since I have a Teacher of divine wisdom; I shall not be poor, since I have Him as Lord who is Master of all the treasures of heaven and earth. I have a Mother who protects me, an Instructress who teaches and corrects me, and a Lady who commands and governs me. Blessed art Thou amongst all women, wonderful among all creatures, admirable in heaven and on earth, and let all confess thy greatness with eternal praises. Since it is not easy or possible for the least among creatures, the lowest worm of the earth, to give Thee any return, receive it from the divine right hand in the beatific vision where Thou art in God enjoying Thyself through all eternity. I shall remain thy acknowledged and bounden slave, praising the Almighty as long as my life shall last, since his generous mercy has so favored me as to give me my Queen as my Mother and Teacher. Let my loving muteness praise Thee, since my tongue has not words or terms adequate for doing it, for all of them are strained and limited.”

30. It is not possible to describe what the soul feels during such mysterious favors. They were the source of great good to my soul, for immediately I was made aware of a perfection of life and of works for which I fail to find terms. Yet all of this, the Most High told me, was given to me because of most holy Mary and in order to write her Life. It was intimated to me that by ratifying this blessing the eternal Father chose me to manifest the sacraments of his Daughter, the Holy Ghost poured out his light and inspirations so I could declare the hidden gifts of his Spouse, and the most holy Son appointed me to manifest the mysteries of his most pure Mother Mary. And so I could become capable of this work, the Holy Trinity enlightened and bathed my soul in a special light of the Divinity, and the divine power touched up my faculties as with a paintbrush, furnishing them with new habits for the perfect execution of this work.

31. The Most High also commanded me to strive to imitate with all my heart, according to my

weak powers, all that I would understand and write about the heroic virtues and most holy operations of the heavenly Queen, guiding my life according to her example. Knowing how unfit I am for the fulfillment of this obligation, the same most kind Queen offered to me anew her favor, help and instruction for all the Lord commanded and pointed out to me. Then I asked for the blessing of the most holy Trinity in order to begin the second Part of this divine History, and I perceived that all three Persons conferred it. Issuing from this vision I sought to wash my soul in the Sacraments, and full of contrition for my sins, in the name of the Lord and of obedience, I set myself about this work for the glory of the Most High and for his most holy Mother, the ever immaculate Virgin Mary.

32. This second Part comprises the life of the Queen of the Angels from the mystery of the Incarnation to the Ascension of Christ our Lord into heaven; this is the principal and most important part of this History, for it includes the whole life and mysteries of the Lord himself, with his Passion and most holy death. I wish only to remark here that the graces and blessings conceded to most holy Mary in preparation for the Incarnation began to flow from the moment of her Immaculate Conception; already at that time, in the intention and decree of God, She was the Mother of the incarnate Word. But to the extent the realization of the Incarnation drew nigh the favors and gifts of grace continued to increase. Although they seemed to be all of the same kind and nature from the beginning, yet they continued to augment and increase, and there are not terms new and varied enough to equal in their significance these increases and advances in the blessings conferred. Thus it becomes necessary in this entire History for us to refer to the infinite power of the Lord, who giving much retains enough to give infinitely more, while the capacity of each soul, and even more the soul of the Queen of heaven, is in its own way infinite, being able to receive ever more and more, which happened to Her until She arrived at the summit of sanctity and participation of the Divinity, to which no other mere creature has attained nor will ever attain for all eternity. May the Lord himself enlighten me so I may follow up this work according to his divine pleasure. Amen.