

CHAPTER IV

St. Joseph Asks Pardon of His Spouse Most Holy Mary, and the Heavenly Lady Consoles Him with Great Prudence.

407. The spouse of most holy Mary, St. Joseph, now better informed, waited until his most holy Spouse had finished her contemplation, and at the hour known to him he opened the door of the humble room which the Mother of the celestial King occupied. Immediately upon entering the holy man threw himself on his knees, saying with the deepest reverence and veneration: “My Lady and Spouse, true Mother of the incarnate Word, here am I thy servant prostrate at the feet of thy clemency. For the sake of thy God and Lord, whom Thou dost bear in thy virginal womb, I beseech Thee to pardon my audacity. I am certain, O Lady, that not one of my thoughts is hidden to thy wisdom and heavenly insight. Great was my presumption in resolving to leave Thee, and not less great was my rudeness in treating Thee until now as my inferior instead of serving Thee as the Mother of my Lord and God. But Thou also knowest that I have done all in ignorance because I knew not the sacrament of the heavenly King and the greatness of thy dignity, though I revered in Thee other gifts of the Most High. Do not reflect, my Lady, upon the ignorance of such a lowly creature, who now better instructed consecrates his heart and his whole life to thy service and attendance. I shall not rise from my knees before being assured of thy favor, nor until I have obtained thy pardon, thy good will, and thy blessing.”

408. Most holy Mary, hearing the humble words of St. Joseph, feeling diverse effects. With tender joy in the Lord She saw how fit he was to be entrusted with the sacraments of the Lord, since he acknowledged and venerated them with such deep faith and humility; yet She was somewhat troubled by his resolve of treating Her henceforth with the respect and self-abasement alluded to in his words, for the humble Lady feared by this new situation to lose the occasions of obeying and humiliating Herself as a servant of her spouse. Like one who suddenly finds herself in danger of being deprived of some jewel or treasure highly valued, most holy Mary was saddened by the thought that St. Joseph would no longer treat Her as an inferior and as subject to him in all things, having now recognized Her as the Mother of the Lord. She raised her holy spouse to his feet and knelt before him, and though he tried to hinder it he could not succeed, because in humility She was invincible. Responding to St. Joseph She said: “I myself, my master and spouse, should ask thee to forgive me, and thou art the one who must pardon me the sorrows and the bitterness which I have caused thee; and therefore I ask this forgiveness prostrate at thy feet, and supplicate thee to forget thy concerns since the Most High has looked upon thy desires and afflictions in divine pleasure.”

409. It seemed good to the heavenly Lady to console her spouse, and therefore, not in order to excuse Herself, She added: “As much as I desired, I could not on my own account give thee any information regarding the sacrament hidden within me by the power of the Almighty, since as his slave it was my duty to await the manifestation of his holy and perfect will. Not because I failed to esteem thee as my lord and spouse did I remain silent, for I have been and always will be thy faithful servant, eager to correspond to thy holy desires and affection. From my inmost heart and in the name of the Lord, whom I bear within me, I beseech thee not to change the manner of thy conversation and dealings with me. The Lord has not made me his Mother in order to be served

and to command in this life, but in order to be the servant of all* and thy slave, obeying thy will in all things. This is my duty, my master, and outside of it I would lead a life without joy and full of sorrow. It is just for thee to give me the opportunity of fulfilling it, since thus has it been ordained by the Most High. He has furnished me with thy protection and devoted assistance so I may live securely in the shadow of thy provident solicitude, and with thy aid raise the fruit of my womb, my God and my Lord.” With these words and others most sweet and persuasive most holy Mary consoled and quieted St. Joseph, and he raised Her from her knees in order to confer with Her upon all that would be necessary for this purpose. Since on this occasion the heavenly Lady was not only full of the Holy Ghost, but moreover bore within Her as his Mother the incarnate Word who proceeds from Her and from the Father, St. Joseph received special enlightenment and the plenitude of divine graces. Altogether renewed in fervor and spirit he said:

410. “Blessed art Thou, Lady, among all women, fortunate and preferred before all nations and generations. May the Creator of heaven and earth be extolled with eternal praise, since from his exalted kingly throne He has looked upon Thee and chosen Thee for his dwelling place, and in Thee alone has fulfilled the ancient promises made to the Patriarchs and Prophets. Let all generations bless Him, for in no one has He magnified his Name as He has done in thy humility; and in his divine condescension He has selected me, the most insignificant of the living, for thy servant.” In these words of praise and benediction St. Joseph was enlightened by the Holy Ghost in the same manner as St. Elizabeth when she responded to the salutation of our Queen and Lady. The light and inspiration received by the most holy spouse was wonderfully adapted to his dignity and office. The heavenly Lady, upon hearing the words of the blessed Saint, answered in the words of the *Magnificat*, as She had done on her visit to St. Elizabeth, and She added other canticles. She was all aflame in ecstasy and was raised from the earth in a globe of light which surrounded Her and transfigured Her with the gifts of glory.

411. At this heavenly vision St. Joseph was filled with admiration and unspeakable delight, for never had he seen his most blessed Spouse in such eminence of glory and perfection. Now he beheld Her with a full and clear understanding, since all the integrity and purity of the Princess of heaven and the mystery of her dignity manifested themselves to him. He saw and recognized in her virginal womb the humanity of the infant God and the union of the two natures of the Word. With profound humility and reverence he adored Him and recognized Him as his Redeemer, offering himself to His Majesty. The Lord looked upon him in benevolence and kindness as upon no other man, for He accepted him as his foster father and conferred upon him that title. In accordance with this dignity He gave him such a plenitude of science and celestial gifts as Christian piety can and must acknowledge. I do not dilate upon this vast excellence of St. Joseph made known to me because it would extend this History beyond the prescribed bounds.

412. But if it was a proof of the magnanimity of the glorious St. Joseph and clear evidence of his great sanctity that he did not wither away and die of the grief sustained at the thought of the loss of his beloved Spouse, it is yet more astonishing that he was not overwhelmed by the unexpected joy of this revelation of the true mystery connected with his Spouse. In the former he proved his high sanctity, but in the latter he showed himself worthy of such gifts, which if the Lord had not expanded his heart he could neither have been capable of receiving nor survived in the joy of his spirit. In all things he was renewed and elevated in order to be able to treat Her worthily, She who was the Mother of God himself and his Spouse, and cooperate with Her in the mystery of the Incarnation and in taking care of the Word made man, as I shall relate farther on.

* cf. Lk. 22:27 [Ed.]

So he would be still more capable of receiving celestial gifts, and recognize so much the more his obligation to serve his heavenly Spouse, it was also made known to him that he had received all these gifts and blessings of the Most High through Her and for Her; those before his espousal because the Lord had chosen him for this dignity, and those afterward because he had earned and merited them. He also perceived the prudence with which the great Lady had acted toward him, not only in serving him with such inviolate obedience and profound humility, but also in consoling him in his affliction, soliciting for him the grace and assistance of the Holy Ghost, hiding her feelings with such discretion, and tranquilizing and soothing his sorrow, thus fittingly disposing him for the influences of the divine Spirit. Just as the Princess of heaven had been the instrument for the sanctification of St. John the Baptist and his mother, so also was She instrumental in procuring for St. Joseph the plenitude of graces in still greater abundance. All this the most happy Spouse of our Lady recognized and understood, and he cooperated with all these graces as a most faithful and grateful servant.

413. These great sacraments and many others connected with our Queen and her spouse St. Joseph the sacred Evangelists passed over in silence, not only because they desired to treasure them in their hearts, but also because neither the humble Lady nor St. Joseph had spoken about them to anyone, nor was it necessary to mention these wonders in the life of Christ our Lord, which they wrote in order to establish our belief in the new Church and the law of grace, for such things might give rise to many inconveniences among the heathens in their first conversion. The admirable providence of God, in his hidden judgments and inscrutable secrets, reserved these mysteries in order to *bring forth from his treasures new things and old* (Mt. 13:52) in the most opportune time foreseen by his divine wisdom, when the Church, being already established, and the Catholic faith laid down, the faithful in their necessities could avail themselves of the intercession, help and protection of their great Queen and Lady. Perceiving by new enlightenment what a loving Mother and powerful Advocate they have in heaven with her most holy Son, to whom the Father has given the power to judge (Jn. 5:22), let them flee to Her for help as to the only and sacred Refuge of Sinners. Let the tribulations and the tears of the Church themselves give witness whether such times of affliction have come upon us in our days, for never were her trials greater than now, when her own sons, reared at her breast, afflict Her, seek to destroy Her, and dissipate the treasures of the blood of her Spouse with a greater cruelty than was done by her most embittered enemies. But when such necessity cries to heaven, as do the voices of the blood shed by the children of the Church, and much more loudly the blood of our high priest Christ (Heb. 12:24), trampled underfoot and polluted under various pretexts of justice, what are the most faithful children of the Church doing, the most faithful Catholics and steadfast children of this afflicted Mother? Why are they so speechless? Why do they not call upon most holy Mary? Why do they not invoke her aid and urge Her to help? What wonder if help is delayed, since we postpone seeking Her and acknowledging Her as the true Mother of God? I give witness that great mysteries are enclosed in this City of God (Ps. 86:3), and that in lively faith we must confess and extol them. They are so great that the deeper insight into them is reserved for the time after the general resurrection, when all the saints shall know them in the Most High. But until then let the pious and faithful souls acknowledge the condescension of this their most loving Queen and Lady in revealing some of the great and hidden sacraments through me, a most unworthy instrument, for I, in my weakness and insignificance, could be induced to attempt this work only by the repeated command and encouragement of the Mother of Piety, as I have intimated several times.

INSTRUCTION OF THE HEAVENLY QUEEN, OUR LADY.

414. My daughter, my desire in revealing to thee in this History so many sacraments and secrets, both those which thou hast written and many others which thou art unable to manifest, is for thou to use them as a mirror of my life and as an inviolable rule of action for thy own. All of them should be engraven in the tablets of thy heart, and I recall to thy mind the teachings of eternal life, thereby complying with my duty as thy Teacher. Be ready to obey and fulfill all commands as a willing and careful pupil. Let the humble care and watchfulness of my spouse St. Joseph, his submission to divine direction and his esteem for heavenly enlightenment, serve thee as an example; for only because his heart had been well disposed and prepared for the execution of the divine will was he entirely changed and remodeled by the plenitude of grace for the ministry assigned to him by the Most High. Let therefore the consciousness of thy faults serve thee as a motive to submit in all humility to the work of God, not as a pretext to withdraw from the performance of that which the Lord desires of thee.

415. Yet I also desire on this occasion to reveal to thee the just reproach and indignation of the Most High against mortals, that by comparing the conduct of other men with the humility and meekness which I exercised toward my spouse St. Joseph thou mayest understand it better in divine enlightenment. The cause of this reproach which the Lord and I have to make is the inhuman perversity of men in continuing to treat each other without charity and humility. In this they commit three faults which displease the Most High very much, and which cause the Almighty and me to withhold many mercies. The first is that men, knowing they are all children of the same Father in heaven, works of his hands (Is. 64:8), formed of the same nature (Acts 17:26), graciously nourished and kept alive by his providence (Mt. 6:25ff.), raised at the same table of divine mysteries and Sacraments (Ps. 127:3), especially of his own body and blood, nevertheless forget and despise all these advantages, concentrating all their interest upon earthly and trivial affairs, exciting themselves without reason, swelling with indignation, creating discords and quarrels, indulging in detractions and harsh words, sometimes rising up to most wicked and inhuman vengeance or mortal hate of one another. The second is when through human frailty and lack of mortification, disturbed by the temptation of the demon, they happen to fall into one of these faults, they do not at once seek to rid themselves of it nor strive to be again reconciled as should be done by brothers in the presence of a just judge (Mt. 18:35). Thus they deny Him as their merciful Father and force Him to become the severe and rigid Judge of their sins, for no faults excite Him sooner to exercise his severity than the sins of revenge and hatred. The third offense which causes his great indignation is sometimes when a brother comes in order to be reconciled, he who deems himself offended will not receive him, and asks a greater satisfaction than that which he knows would be accepted by the Lord (Ib. 32-3), and which he himself offers as satisfaction to His Majesty, for all of them desire God, who is most grievously offended, to receive and pardon them whenever they approach Him with humility and contrition, while those who are but dust and ashes ask to be revenged upon their brother and will not content themselves with the satisfaction which the supreme Lord readily accepts in pardoning them.

416. Of all the sins which the sons of the Church commit, none is more horrible than these in the eyes of the Most High. This thou shalt know in God himself and in the force with which He imposed his divine law, commanding men to pardon their brethren though they may have sinned against them *seventy times seven times*;^{*} and though a brother offend many times every day, as

^{*} cf. Mt. 18:22 [Ed.]

soon as he says he is sorry for it the Lord commands us to forgive the offending brother as many times without counting the number; and those who are unwilling to forgive He threatens with most severe punishment due to the scandal which they cause. This can be gathered from the threatening words of God himself: *Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh* (Mt. 18:7), and through whom scandal is caused! *It were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea* (Ib. 6). This was said in order to indicate the danger of this sin and the difficulty of obtaining deliverance therefrom, which must be compared to that of a man dropping into the sea with a grinding stone around his neck. It also points out the punishment is the abyss of eternal pains; hence the sound advice given to the faithful for them to pluck out their eyes and cut off their hands, as commanded by my most holy Son (Ib. 8-9), rather than scandalize the little ones by these sins.

417. O my dearest daughter! How thou must bewail the wickedness and evils of this sin with tears of blood! This is the sin which grieves the Holy Ghost (Eph. 4:30), provides proud triumphs to the demons, makes monsters of rational creatures, and wipes out in them the image of the eternal Father! What is more unbecoming, or hateful and monstrous, than to see creatures of the earth, the food of worms and corruption, rise up against one another in pride and arrogance? It is not possible for thee to find words strong enough to describe this wickedness in order to persuade mortals to fear it and guard against the wrath of the Lord (Mt. 3:7). But thou, dearest, preserve thy heart from this contagion, and stamp and engrave in it a doctrine so useful and profitable in order to execute it. Never think for a moment that in offending thy neighbor or scandalizing him in this way the guilt can be small, for all these sins weigh heavily in the sight of God. Silence and place a powerful guard around all thy faculties and senses (Ps. 140:3-4) in order to rigorously observe charity toward all creatures of the Most High. Give me this pleasure, since I desire thee to be most perfect in this virtue. I impose upon thee as my most vigorous precept to give no offense, either in thought, word or deed, to any of thy neighbors, and to prevent any of thy subjects, and as far as thou canst any other person in thy presence, from injuring their neighbor. Meditate well on this, my dearest, since I ask it of thee, for it is a doctrine most divine and least understood by mortals. Make use of the only and efficacious remedy against these passions, namely the compelling example of my humility and meekness, and the effect of my sincere love not only toward my spouse but toward all the children of my Lord and celestial Father, for I esteemed them and looked upon them as redeemed (I Peter 1:18) and *bought with a great price* (I Cor. 6:20). With truth and fidelity, kindness and charity, warn thy religious that although His divine Majesty is gravely offended by all who do not fulfill this commandment which my Son called his own (Jn. 15:12), and a new one,[†] his indignation is incomparably greater against religious who offend in this, for though He would have them to be the perfect children of their Father and Teacher of this virtue (Mt. 5:48), yet there are many who destroy it just like worldly persons, becoming more odious than they are.

[†] cf. Jn. 13:34 [Ed.]