

CHAPTER XVII

The Magi Kings Return a Second Time to See and Adore the Infant Jesus; They Offer Him their Gifts, and Depart Taking a Different Route to their Kingdoms.

565. From the grotto of the Nativity, into which the three Kings had entered directly on their way from Jerusalem, they went to a lodging inside the town of Bethlehem. They retired to a room where, in an abundance of affectionate tears and aspirations, they spent the greater part of the night speaking of what they had seen, the feelings and affections aroused in each, and what each had noticed for himself in the divine Child and his Mother. During this conference they were more and more inflamed with divine love, amazed at the majesty and divine effulgence of the infant Jesus, the prudence, modesty and reserve of his Mother, the holiness of her spouse Joseph, the poverty of all three, and the lowliness of the place where the Lord of heaven and earth desired to be born. The devout Kings felt a divine fire which flamed up in their hearts, and not being able to restrain themselves they broke forth into exclamations of sweet affection and acts of great reverence and love. They said: “What is this that we feel? What influence of this great King is it which moves us to such desires and affections? After this, how shall we converse with men? What can we do, who have been instructed in such new, hidden and supernatural mysteries? O grandeur of the Omnipotent, hidden to men and concealed beneath so much poverty (Is. 45:15)! O humility unimaginable for mortals! Would that all be drawn to it in order not to be deprived of such happiness!”

566. During these divine colloquies the Magi remembered the dire destitution of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their cave, and they resolved immediately to send them some gifts in order to show their affection and satisfy their desire of serving them, since they could not do anything else for them. They sent through their servants many of the presents which they had already set aside for them and others which they could procure. Most holy Mary and Joseph received these gifts with humble acknowledgment, and they made a return not of barren thanks (as others usually give) but of many efficacious blessings for the spiritual consolation of the three Kings. These gifts enabled our great Queen to prepare for her ordinary guests, the poor, an abundant meal, for the needy ones customarily received alms from Her, and attracted still more by her sweet words were accustomed to come and visit Her. The Kings went to rest full of incomparable joy in the Lord, and in their sleep the Angels advised them regarding their journey homeward.

567. On the following day at dawn they returned to the cave of the Nativity in order to offer to the heavenly King the special gifts which they had provided. Arriving they prostrated themselves anew in profound humility, *and opening their treasures*, as Scripture relates, *they offered Him gold, frankincense and myrrh* (Mt. 2:11). They spoke with the divine Mother about many mysteries and practices of faith, and consulted regarding matters pertaining to their consciences and to the government of their countries, for they desired to return completely informed and capable of governing themselves with holiness and perfection in their works. The great Lady heard them with exceeding pleasure, and She conferred interiorly with the divine Infant concerning all they had asked in order to answer and properly instruct these sons of the new Law. As a Teacher and instrument of divine Wisdom She answered all their questions, giving them such high precepts of sanctity they could scarcely part from Her due to the sweetness and attraction of her words; however, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them, reminding them of the necessity and of the will of the Lord that they return to their native lands. No wonder her words

so deeply affected these Kings, for all her words were inspired by the Holy Ghost and full of infused science regarding all they had inquired about and many other matters.

568. The heavenly Mother received the gifts of the Kings, and in their name offered them to the infant Jesus. His Majesty showed by signs of highest pleasure that He accepted their gifts, and they themselves became aware of the exalted and heavenly blessings with which He repaid them more than a hundredfold (Mt. 19:29). According to the custom of their country they also offered to the heavenly Princess some gems of great value, but because these gifts had no mysterious signification and referred not to her divine Son She returned them to the Kings, reserving only the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In order to send them away more rejoiced She gave them some of the clothes in which She had wrapped the infant God, for She neither had nor could have had any greater visible pledges of esteem with which to enrich them at their departure. The three Kings received these relics with such reverence and esteem that they encased them in gold and precious stones in order to keep them ever after. As a proof of their value these relics spread about such a copious fragrance that they revealed their presence a league away;* however, only those who believed in the coming of God into the world were able to perceive it, while the incredulous perceived none of the fragrance emitted by the relics. In their own countries the Magi performed great miracles with these relics.

569. The holy Kings also offered their estates and possessions to the Mother of the sweetest Jesus, or if She did not desire to accept them and preferred to live in this place where her most holy Son had been born they would build Her a house wherein She could live more comfortably. The most prudent Mother thanked them for their offers without accepting them. On taking leave of Her the three Kings besought Her from their inmost hearts not to forget them, which She promised and fulfilled; in the same way they spoke to St. Joseph. With the blessing of all three they departed, so moved by most tender affection that it seemed to them they had left their hearts all melted into sighs and tears in that place. They chose another way for their return journey in order not to meet Herod in Jerusalem, for thus they had been instructed by the Angel on the preceding night (Mt. 2:12). On their departure from Bethlehem the same or a similar star appeared in order to guide them home, conducting them on their new route to the place where they had first met, from whence each one separated to reach his own country.

570. For the rest of their lives these most fortunate Kings corresponded to their divine vocation, because in their kingdoms they lived and conducted themselves as true disciples of the Mistress of sanctity, by whose teaching they governed both their souls and the people of their reigns. By the example of their lives and the knowledge of the Messiah which they spread about they converted a great number of souls to the belief in the true God and to the way of salvation. Finally, full of days and merits, they closed their careers in sanctity and justice, having been favored both in life and in death by the Mother of Mercy. After dismissing the Kings the heavenly Queen and St. Joseph spent their time in new canticles of praise of the wonders of the Most High. Comparing the sayings of the Holy Scriptures and the prophecies of the Patriarchs, they understood how they were fulfilled in the infant Jesus. The most prudent Mother, who profoundly penetrated into the deepest meaning of these high sacraments, remembered them all and treasured them up in her bosom (Lk. 2:19). The holy Angels, who assisted at these holy mysteries, congratulated their Queen that her most holy Son had been manifested and His Majesty had been adored by men, and they sang to Him new canticles, magnifying his mercies wrought upon mankind.

* About 3 miles [Ed.]

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

571. My daughter, great were the gifts which the Kings offered to my most holy Son, but greater still was the affection with which they offered them and the mystery concealed beneath them; because of all this they were most acceptable to His Majesty. I desire thee also to offer up similar gifts, thanking Him for having made thee poor in condition and profession, for I assure thee, my dearest, there is no more acceptable gift to the Most High than voluntary poverty. There are very few in the world today who use well the temporal riches and offer them to their God and Lord with the generosity and love of these holy Kings. The poor of the Lord, so many as there are, truly experience and testify how cruel and avaricious human nature has become, since in their great necessities they are so little aided by the rich. This so discourteous impiety of men offends the holy Angels and grieves the Holy Ghost, seeing once noble souls so degraded and cast down in serving with their powers and faculties the foolish lust for money (Eccles. 10:19). As if all things had been created for the individual use of the rich, they appropriate them to themselves and deprive the poor, their brothers springing from the same nature and flesh, and deny them even to God, who created and preserves all things and who can give or take at will. It is most lamentable that while the rich could purchase eternal life with their possessions (Lk. 16:9), they instead draw upon themselves damnation by them, using this benefit of the Lord as senseless and foolish men.

572. This evil is common among the children of Adam, and therefore voluntary poverty is such an excellent and safe remedy, for by it, making man willing to part joyfully with his possessions for the sake of the poor, a great sacrifice is offered to the Lord. Thou mayest also make such an offering of the things necessary for sustenance, giving a part of it to the poor and desiring to help them all if it was possible by thy labor and sweat. Thy ceaseless offering, however, must be love, which is the gold; continual prayer, which is the frankincense;* and the patient acceptance of labors and true mortifications, which is the myrrh. All thou dost for the Lord thou must offer up to Him with fervent affection and promptitude, without negligence or fear; for negligent works, and those not enlivened by love, are not an acceptable sacrifice in the eyes of His Majesty. In order to offer incessantly these gifts in thy own actions it is necessary for divine faith and light to be always burning in thy heart, proposing to thee the Object whom thou must praise and magnify, along with the stimulus of love with which thou art always obliged by the right hand of the Most High, in order to never cease in this sweet exercise so proper to the spouses of His Majesty, for this title signifies love and the debt of continual affection.

* cf. Ps. 140:2 [Ed.]