

## 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 infant God 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 the flame of divine fire burning in their pious hearts, and unable to restrain themselves they broke forth in exclamations of great sweetness and acts of great veneration and love. They said: “What fire is this that we feel? What efficacy of this great King which moves us to such desires and affections? What shall we do when we must converse with men? How can we moderate and limit our groans and sighs? What shall we do, having come to know such a hidden, new, and supernatural mystery? O grandeur of the Omnipotent, hidden to men and concealed in such poverty (Is. 45:15)! O humility never imagined by mortals! Would that all be drawn to it so no one would deprive himself of this 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 do) 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 retired 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 prepared. 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 highest pleasure, and She conferred interiorly with the divine Infant concerning all they had asked in order to answer and properly instruct these new sons of his holy 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 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 did not pertain 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 veneration and appreciation that they encased them in gold and precious stones in order to preserve them. In testimony of their grandeur 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 most sweet 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 these most high sacraments, conserved them all and conferred with Herself regarding them in her Heart (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.

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\* 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; yet greater was the loving affection with which they gave them and the mystery concealed beneath them. For all these reasons they were very acceptable and pleasing to His Majesty. This I desire thee to offer Him, giving Him thanks because He made thee poor in state and profession; for I assure thee, friend, there is no other more precious gift or offering to the Most High than voluntary poverty. Yet there are very few in the world today who use temporal riches well, and who offer them to their God and Lord with the generosity and affection of these holy Kings. The poor of the Lord, so numerous as they are, fully experience and testify how cruel and avaricious human nature has become, since having so many necessities they are so little helped by the rich. Such rude impiety of men offends the Angels and grieves the Holy Ghost, seeing the nobility of souls so debased and degraded in serving with all their powers and faculties the despicable covetousness of money (Eccles. 10:19). As if riches had been created solely for themselves, they are seized for their own use and denied to the poor, their brothers of the same flesh and nature; and they are not even offered to God, who created and preserves them, and can give them or take them away at will. It is most lamentable that while the rich could obtain eternal life with their possessions (Lk. 16:9), they instead bring about their damnation by them, using this benefit of the Lord as senseless and foolish men.

572. This damage is common among the children of Adam; that is why voluntary poverty is so excellent and secure, for by it, joyfully sharing with the poor what is of little importance, a great offering is made to the Lord of all. Thou canst make this offering with what involves thy sustenance, giving a part of it to the poor, and desiring to help them all if it was possible by thy labor and sweat. But thy continual offering must be the works of love, which is the gold; ceaseless prayer,\* which is the frankincense;† and constant endurance in labors and true mortification in everything, which is the myrrh. All thou dost for the Lord thou must offer up to Him with fervent affection and promptitude, without fear or lukewarmness; for negligent or dead works<sup>Δ</sup> are not an acceptable sacrifice in the eyes of His Majesty. In order to offer these gifts incessantly 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 to which thou art always bound by the right hand of the Most High, in order to not cease in this sweet exercise, so proper to the spouses of His Majesty; for this title signifies love and the debt of continual affection.

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\* cf. I Thes. 5:17 [Ed.]

† cf. Ps. 140:2 [Ed.]

Δ cf. Heb. 9:14 [Ed.]