

CHAPTER XXIX

The Most Holy Mother Clothes the Infant Jesus in the Seamless Tunic and Sandals; the Actions and Exercises which the Lord Himself Did.

691. In order to clothe the divine Infant in the small tunic and put on his feet the sandals made by Her, the most prudent Lady cast Herself on her knees before her sweetest Son and addressed Him in the following words: “Most high Lord and Creator of heaven and earth, I would desire to clothe Thee, if possible, according to the dignity of thy divine Person, and I would gladly have made these garments, which are to cover Thee, from my heart’s blood; but I know that the poor and insignificant coverings I now offer Thee are according to thy desires. Pardon me my faults, my Lord and Master, and accept my loving affection, I who am but useless dust and ashes, and give me permission to clothe Thee.” The infant Jesus was pleased with the loving service of his purest Mother, and thereupon She clothed and shod Him, setting Him upon his feet. The tunic fitted Him perfectly, covering his feet without hindering them in walking, and the sleeves extended to the middle of his hands, although She had taken no measurements beforehand. The collar was round, without being open in front, and was somewhat raised around the neck, adjusting itself to the throat. Through this opening the heavenly Mother passed it over the head of the Infant, for the garment gracefully adjusted itself according to her desires. He never took this tunic off until the executioners themselves tore it off to scourge and afterwards to crucify Him, for this garment continually grew with Him, adjusting itself to his body. The same happened also with the sandals and the loincloth which the solicitous Mother made for Him. None of these articles of clothing wore away or became old in the thirty-two years He wore them, nor did the tunic lose its color or its newness, but remained just as it had left the hands of the great Lady; nor did any of them become soiled or filthy, but they preserved their first cleanliness. The garment which the Redeemer of the world laid aside in order to wash the feet of his Apostles (Jn. 13:4) was a mantle or cape which He wore over his shoulders, also made by the Virgin herself, but after they had returned to Nazareth. Like the other clothing it grew with the Lord, was of the same color, only a little darker, and was woven in the same way.

692. Thus the Infant and Lord of the eternities was placed on his feet after having since his birth been wrapped in swaddling clothes and held for most of the time in the arms of his most holy Mother. He was the most beautiful among the sons of men (Ps. 44:3). The Angels were astounded at the humble and poor raiment chosen by Him who clothes the heavens in light and the fields with beauty. He walked freely on his feet in the presence of his Parents, but before strangers this wonder remained for a time concealed since the Queen took Him in her arms when outsiders approached or whenever they travelled about. Incomparable was the joy of the heavenly Lady and the holy spouse Joseph upon seeing their Infant walking about and exhibiting such rare beauty. He received nourishment at the breast of his most pure Mother until He was a year and a half old and no longer. His meals thereupon were most frugal as well in quantity as in quality. At first they consisted in broths mixed with oil, and some fruits or fishes. While He was still in the process of growth She fed Him three times a day, as often as She had formerly given Him her milk, in the morning, afternoon, and at night. The divine Child never asked for food, yet the loving Mother carefully and with rare caution provided Him his meals at the proper time until later on when He was already grown up and would not consent to eat more often or at other hours than the heavenly Spouses themselves. This was his rule until He reached adult age, of

which I shall speak later on. Whenever He took his meals with his Parents they always waited until He pronounced the blessing at the beginning and gave thanks at the end.

693. From the time the infant Jesus was on his feet He began to retire and spend certain hours of the day in the oratory of his Mother. As the most prudent Mother was anxious to know the will of her most holy Son in his solitude or with Her, the Lord responded to her mute appeal, saying: "My Mother, enter and remain with Me always so Thou mayest imitate Me in my works, for I desire that in Thee be modeled and exhibited the high perfection which I desire to see accomplished in souls, for if they had not resisted my first intentions they would have been endowed with my most abundant and copious gifts (I Tim. 2:4). But since the human race has hindered this, I have chosen Thee as the vessel of all perfection and of the treasures of my right hand which the rest of creatures have abused and lost. Observe Me therefore in all my actions for the purpose of imitating Me."

694. Thus the heavenly Lady was installed anew as the Disciple of her most holy Son. From then on such great and hidden mysteries passed between the two that not until the day of eternity will they be known. Many times the divine Child prostrated Himself on the ground, while at others He was raised from the ground in the form of a cross, earnestly praying to the eternal Father for the salvation of mortals. In all this his most loving Mother imitated Him, for to Her were manifest the interior operations of his most holy soul just like the exterior movements of his body. Of this knowledge of most pure Mary I have spoken in other parts of this History (481, 534, 546), and it is necessary to point it out often because this was the source of the light which guided Her in her holy life. It was such a singular blessing that all creatures together will not be able to understand or describe it by their united powers. The great Lady did not always enjoy visions of the Divinity, but She always had the sight of the humanity and most holy soul of her Son with all his works. In a special manner She was witness of the effects of the hypostatic and beatific union of the humanity with the Divinity. Although She did not always see this glory and this union substantially, yet She perceived the interior acts by which his humanity revered, loved and magnified the Divinity to whom He was united, and this privilege was reserved solely for most holy Mary.

695. On these occasions it often happened that the child Jesus in the presence of his most holy Mother wept and perspired blood, for this happened many times before his agony in the garden (*Tran.* 137, 201). Then the heavenly Lady would wipe his face, interiorly perceiving and knowing the cause of this agony, which was always the perdition of the reprobate, ungrateful for the benefits of their Creator and Redeemer, and in whom the works of the infinite power and goodness of the Lord would be wasted. At other times the Blessed Mother would find Him refulgent with heavenly light and surrounded by Angels who sang sweet hymns of praise, and She was made aware that the heavenly Father was pleased in his only and beloved Son (Mt. 17:5). All these wonders began from the time when the Child God was placed on his feet at the age of one year, witnessed only by his most holy Mother, into whose Heart they were deposited (Lk. 2:19), uniquely chosen by her Son and Creator for this. The works of love, praise, reverence and gratitude which the child Jesus accomplished in her company, and his petitions for the human race, all exceed my ability to describe what I know; I refer it to Christian faith and piety.

696. The child Jesus grew in the admiration and esteem of all who came to know Him.* Having reached the age of six years He began now and then to visit the sick in the hospitals, seeking out the stricken ones and mysteriously comforting and consoling them in their afflictions. Many of

* cf. Lk. 2:40, 52 [Ed.]

the inhabitants of Heliopolis began to know Him; by the force of his divinity and sanctity He attracted toward Himself the hearts of all, and many persons offered Him gifts. According to the reasons and motives for the gifts, which in his science He knew, He refused or accepted for distribution among the poor. The admiration caused by his wise counsels and his modest and considerate behavior caused many to congratulate and bless his Parents, who had such a Son. Though all of them were ignorant of the mysteries and the dignity of the Son and the Mother, yet the Lord of creation, being desirous of honoring his Mother, permitted them to reverence Her as far as was possible under the circumstances without their learning the special reason for doing so.

697. Many of the children of Heliopolis gathered around the child Jesus as is natural with children of similar age and condition. Since they were free from great malice and were not given to inquire whether He was more than man, but freely admitted the heavenly light, the Master of truth welcomed them as far as was appropriate. He instilled into them the knowledge of God and of the virtues; He taught and catechized them in the way of eternal life even more abundantly than the adults. Since his words were full of life and strength (Heb. 4:12) He won their hearts and impressed his truths so deeply upon them that all those who had this good fortune afterwards became great and saintly men, for in the course of time they ripened in themselves the fruit of this heavenly seed sown so early into their souls (Lk. 8:8).

698. The heavenly Mother was well informed of all these admirable works. Whenever her most holy Son returned from these errands in which He had fulfilled the will of his eternal Father by looking after his flock (Jn. 6:38-9), the Queen and the Angels prostrated themselves before her divine Son and gave Him thanks for the benefits given to those innocents who did not yet know Him as their true God, and She kissed his feet as those of the High Priest of heaven and earth (Heb. 4:14). This She also did whenever the Child was about to go forth. On such occasions He would raise Her up from the earth in filial reverence and love. The Mother also asked for his blessing upon all her undertakings, and She never lost an occasion for practicing virtue with all the intensity of her love and divine grace. Never was grace in Her void, but operated in all plenitude, increasing what She rendered to Him. The great Lady sought new ways and means of humiliating Herself, adoring the incarnate Word by her genuflections, prostrations, and other most loving and profound ceremonies as outward tokens of her sanctity and prudence. This She attended to with such wisdom that She excited the admiration of the Angels who assisted Her; and these, alternating the divine praises one to another, said: "Who is this pure creature, so full of delight to our Creator and her Son (Cant. 8:5)? Who is this One who so wisely and attentively honors and reverences the Most High, far exceeding all of us in her loving alertness and attention?"

699. In his treatment of and conversation with his Parents this most wonderful and beautiful Child, after He had begun to walk and grow larger, showed more gravity than when He was younger. The tender caresses (which always had been tempered and measured) were now withheld, for in his countenance shone forth such majesty as a reflection of his hidden deity that if He had not mixed it with a certain sweetness and affability many times it would have caused such great and reverential fear that no one would have dared to speak with Him. The heavenly Mother and St. Joseph felt the effects of a divine power and efficacy proceeding from his countenance, as well as the kindness and devotedness of a loving Father. Joined with this grave majesty and magnificence He showed himself as Son of his heavenly Mother, and treated St. Joseph as one who had the name and office of a father toward Him, and therefore He obeyed them both as a most humble son obeys his parents (Lk. 2:51). In his whole behavior the incarnate

Word practiced the virtues of obedience, humility, and human kindness with such an admirable mixture of majesty and gravity that his divine wisdom shone forth in all his actions, and yet none of his grandeur was impaired by triviality. The celestial Lady was most attentive to all these sacraments, and She alone penetrated supremely and worthily (as far as possible for a mere creature) the works of her most holy Son, and the manner in which they were wrought by his immense wisdom. I would attempt the impossible to try to describe in human words the effects of all his doings on her most pure and prudent soul, or how closely She imitated his ineffable sanctity. The souls who were converted and saved in Heliopolis and in all of Egypt, the sick who were cured, and the wonders wrought during their stay of seven years in that country cannot be enumerated; such a blessed crime did the cruelty of Herod turn out to be for Egypt. Such is the force of the infinite goodness and wisdom of God that He draws from the very wickedness and evils of sin the greatest good; and if on the one hand men cast away and close the door on his mercies, He calls upon others to open their hearts and admit his blessings (Job 34:24). His ardent desires to benefit the human race cannot be quenched by the floods of our sins and ingratitude (Cant. 8:7).

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

700. My daughter, from the very beginning of this History of my life thou wast made to understand that among other purposes the Lord desires to call the attention of mortals to the debt contracted by their unfeeling forgetfulness of his divine love and of my love toward them. It is true that all his love is included and made manifest in his having died on the cross for them, for this was the extremity of his immense charity (Jn. 3:16), but many ungrateful men are loathe to remember even this blessing. For such and for all others the knowledge of what He did for them during thirty-three years must be a new incentive and spur of love, since each of his acts was worth an infinite price and merited our eternal gratitude. The Almighty established me as a witness of all of them, and I assure thee that from the first instant of his conception in my womb He ceased not to clamor to the Father for the salvation of men. From that moment He began to embrace the cross (Heb. 10:5), not only in desire but also insofar as possible in effect, placing Himself in the position of one crucified from his infancy and continuing these exercises during his whole life. I also imitated Him in this, joining Him in his prayers and labors for mankind after his first act in which He rendered gratitude for the benefits conferred upon his most sacred humanity.*

701. Let mortals now see that if I was a witness and Cooperatrix of his salvation, I shall likewise have these roles on Judgment Day, proclaiming how well justified is the cause of God with them. If I most justly refuse my intercession to those who have foolishly despised and forgotten so many and such sufficient favors and blessings, the results of the divine love of my Son and my own love, what answer, excuse or evasion shall they then bring forward who have been so well informed, so much admonished, and so enlightened by the truth? How can these ungrateful and pertinacious mortals expect mercy from the most just and righteous God when He has given them sufficient and opportune time, invited them so often, called them, waited and worked for them, and conferred upon them immense blessings, while they abused and wasted all of them in the pursuit of vanity? Fear this, my daughter, the greatest of all blindness;† refresh

* cf. *Incarnation* 147 [Ed.]

† cf. Mt. 15:14 [Ed.]

always the memory of the most holy works of my Son and of me, and imitate them with all thy fervor. Continue the exercises of the cross, under the guidance of obedience, in order to keep thyself mindful of what thou must imitate and be grateful for. Take notice at the same time that my Son and Lord could have redeemed the human race without suffering so much, and that He desired to increase his sufferings only because of the immensity of his love for souls. The return for such condescension should be that mortals not content themselves with little, as is ordinarily the case with ignorant men. Add thou virtue to virtue,* and seek thereby evermore to meet all thy obligations, imitating the Lord and me in our labors for the salvation of the world. All thy merits offer up for souls, uniting them with his merits in the presence of the eternal Father.

* cf. Ps. 83:8 [Ed.]