

CHAPTER XXVIII

At the Age of One Year the Infant Jesus Begins to Speak to St. Joseph, and Requests His Mother to Clothe Him and Place Him on His Feet; She Commences to Celebrate the Days of His Incarnation and Nativity.

681. During one of the conversations and talks which most holy Mary and her spouse Joseph had concerning the mysteries of the Lord, it happened one day the infant Jesus, having reached the age of one year, resolved to break his silence and speak in a clear and formed voice to the most faithful Joseph, who so carefully fulfilled the duties of a foster-father, as He had conversed with his heavenly Mother from the time of his birth according to what I said in chapter X (480). The most two holy Spouses were speaking of the infinite being of God, of his goodness and excessive love which induced Him to send his Onlybegotten (Jn. 3:16) as the Teacher and Redeemer of men (Is. 55:4), clothing Him in human form (Philip. 2:7) so He could converse with them (Bar. 3:38) and suffer the punishments of depraved nature. St. Joseph was lost in wonder at the works of the Lord and inflamed by affectionate gratitude and exaltation of the Lord. On this occasion the Child God, resting upon the arms of his Mother, thus making them the first chair of the Master, began to speak to St. Joseph in an intelligible voice, saying: "My father,* I came from heaven upon this earth (Jn. 18:37) in order to be the light of the world (Jn. 8:12) and rescue it from the darkness of sin (Is. 9:2), to seek and know my sheep as the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:14), to give them the pasture and nourishment of eternal life (Jn. 6:69), teaching them the way toward it (Jn. 10:4) and opening its gates (Ps. 23:7) which had been closed by their sins. I desire both of ye to be children of the light (Jn. 12:36), which ye have so near."

682. These words of the infant Jesus, being full of divine life, filled the heart of the patriarch St. Joseph with new love, reverence and joy. He fell on his knees before the Child God with the profoundest humility and thanked Him for having called him *Father* by the very first word spoken to him. He besought the Lord with many tears to enlighten and enable him to fulfill entirely his most holy will and teach him to be grateful for the incomparable benefits flowing from his generous hands. Parents who love their children very much receive great consolation and delight when they discover in them a certain prospect that they will have wisdom or greatness in virtue; and even when this is not the case, they are naturally inclined to extol and make much of their childish pranks and sayings, for all this is the result of their tender affection for their young offspring. Although St. Joseph was not the natural but the putative father of the Child God, his love for Him exceeded without measure all the love of natural parents for their children, since in him grace and even nature were more powerful than in others, yea than in all parents together; and by this love and appreciation he had as being the foster father of the infant Jesus is to be measured the joy of his most pure soul in hearing himself called the father of the Son of God himself, the Son of the eternal Father, in seeing Him so beautiful and full of grace, and in hearing Him begin to speak with such exalted doctrine and wisdom.

683. During the whole of this first year his sweetest Mother had wrapped the Infant God in clothes and coverings usual with other children, for He did not desire to be distinguished from others in this, and He desired to bear witness to his true humanity and love for mortals, enduring this inconvenience otherwise not required of Him. The most prudent Mother, judging the time

* cf. *Transfixion* 166 [Ed.]

had now come to free Him from swaddling clothes and place Him on his feet, knelt down before the Child in his cradle and said: “My Son and sweetest Love of my soul, my Lord, I desire as thy slave to be punctual in fulfilling thy desires. O Light of my eyes, Thou hast been for a long time oppressed by swaddling clothes, and thereby gone to the extreme of thy love for men; yet it is time Thou change this manner of clothing. Tell me, my Master, what shall I do to place Thee on thy feet?”

684. “My Mother (responded the infant Jesus), by the love I have for souls, whom I have created and come to redeem, the swaddling clothes of my infancy have not seemed annoying to Me, since when I shall be grown up I shall be bound and delivered over to my enemies unto death (Mt. 20:18). If this prospect is sweet to Me for the love of my Father (Heb. 10:7), all the rest is certainly easy for Me. I desire to possess only one garment during my entire life, for I seek nothing more than what is sufficient to cover Me. Although all created things are mine because I have given them being (Ps. 23:1), I turn them all over to men so they shall owe Me so much the more, and so I can teach them, according to my example and for my love, to repudiate and despise all that is superfluous for natural life. Clothe Me, my Mother, in a tunic of a lowly and ordinary color. This alone shall I wear, and it shall grow with Me. Over this garment shall they cast lots at my death (Ps. 21:19), for even this shall not be left at my disposal but at the disposal of others, and thus men shall see I was born poor and desired to live destitute of visible things, which being earthly oppress and darken the heart of man. At the very moment I was conceived in thy virginal womb I made this renunciation and abdication of all that is contained in the world, though all is mine due to the union of my human nature with the Divinity (Jn. 3:35). I shall not have anything to do with visible things except to offer them up to the eternal Father, renouncing them for his love, and making use of only so much as is sufficient to sustain my natural life, which I shall afterwards yield up for the sake of man (Jn. 10:15). By this example I desire to impress upon the world the doctrine that it must love poverty and not despise it, for I, who am the Lord of the whole world, entirely repudiated and rejected its possessions. Those who know Me by faith should be filled with confusion upon seeing themselves desire what I taught them to despise.”

685. The words of the Child God produced in the Heart of the heavenly Mother diverse wonderful effects. The allusion to the seizure and death of her most holy Son transfixed her pure and compassionate Heart, and the doctrine and example of such extreme poverty and destitution excited her admiration and urged Her to imitate it. His boundless love for mortals inflamed Her with loving gratitude toward the Lord, and produced in Her heroic acts of many virtues. Seeing the infant Jesus desired no footgear and only one garment, She said to Him: “My Son and my Lord, thy Mother has not the heart to allow Thee to go barefoot upon the ground at thy tender age; permit me, my Love, to provide some kind of covering to protect them. I also fear the rough garment which Thou askest of me shall wound thy tender body if Thou permit no linen to be worn beneath.” The infant Jesus responded: “My Mother, I shall permit a slight and ordinary covering for my feet until the time of my public preaching shall come, for this I must do barefoot. But linen I do not desire to use because it foment carnal pleasures and is the cause of many vices in men. I desire to teach many by my example to renounce it for love and imitation of Me.”

686. The heavenly Queen then began with great diligence in fulfilling the will of her most holy Son. Procuring some wool in its natural and uncolored state, She spun it very finely with her own hands, and of it She wove a garment of one piece without any seam, in the manner of that which is made with a needle, or more appropriately it seemed like that which is called ticking, for it was

woven of thin cords, and was not as smooth cloth. She wove it upon a small loom, like the work which is called knitting, mysteriously extracting it entirely of one seamless piece (Jn. 19:23). Two things were wonderful about it: First, it was entirely even and uniform, without any seams; and second, according to the petition and will of the heavenly Lady, the natural color was changed to a more suitable one, which was a mixture of brown and a most exquisite silver-gray, and hence it could not be called any of them, appearing to be neither entirely brown, nor silver, nor gray, but having a mixture of them all. She also wove a pair of sandals of strong thread, like hempen shoes, with which She covered the feet of the Child God. Besides these She made a half tunic of linen which was to serve as a loincloth.* In the next chapter I shall tell what happened when She clothed the infant Jesus.

687. During this first year occurred the anniversary of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity of the divine Word, each one respectively, after they had arrived in Egypt. The celestial Queen celebrated these feasts, so joyous for the Mother of God, commencing a custom observed by Her during all the rest of her life, as shall be seen in the third Part (*Cor.* 642ff.) which treats of the mysteries happening later on. She began to prepare for the feast of the Incarnation nine days before, in accordance with the nine days of preparation in which She had been visited with such admirable and magnificent graces as I said at the beginning of this second Part (4ff.). At the anniversary of the Annunciation and Incarnation She invited the holy Angels of heaven, together with those of her guard, to assist Her in the celebration of those great mysteries, and to acknowledge and render worthy gratitude to the Most High. She prostrated Herself on the ground in the form of a cross before the Infant Jesus himself, beseeching Him to praise for Her the eternal Father and thank Him for that which his divine right hand had favored Her, and had worked for the human race, in giving this same Onlybegotten (Jn. 3:16). The same petition She made on the anniversary of her divine parturition. On these days the heavenly Lady was regaled with many graces and joys by the Most High because He renewed the unbroken remembrance and understanding of these exalted sacraments. Since She had received knowledge how much the eternal Father was pleased and obliged by this outward manifestation of sorrow exhibited in her prostration in the form of a cross, and by her mindfulness of the crucifixion of the divine Lamb, She practiced this devotion on all the feast days, seeking to appease divine justice and soliciting mercy for sinners. Inflamed with charity She rose up and ended her celebration with wonderful hymns, singing them alternately with the holy Angels; together they formed a choir of celestial and harmonious music by which the holy Angels sang their verse and the Queen responded even more sweetly to the ears of God (*Cant.* 2:14), and with more acceptance than all the choirs of the most exalted Seraphim and the other Blessed, because therein resonated the echoes of his eminent virtues reaching unto the consistory of the most blessed Trinity and the tribunal of the eternal God.

* This seems to counter the desire of Our Lord just expressed that He did not wish to wear linen. The explanation is found in *Transfixion* par. 627 and 668 which relate that Christ left it up to His Mother whether He would be scourged and crucified entirely despoiled of His garments. The Mother of holy modesty deemed this to be inappropriate, and hence the executioners' attempts to remove this linen loincloth were miraculously prevented. We must then assume Our Lady, foreseeing this extreme cruelty of His executioners, asked and received permission of the Christ Child to clothe Him in this linen loincloth at this time, and that it too grew with Him. This is also why all proper Catholic crucifixes show Christ wearing this same linen loincloth. [Ed.]

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN AND LADY OF HEAVEN.

688. My daughter, neither thyself nor all creatures together can ever comprehend the spirit of poverty of my most holy Son and what He has taught me concerning it. But from what I have told thee thou canst understand much of the excellence of this virtue which its Author and Teacher loved so much, and of the horror in which He holds the vice of covetousness. The Creator cannot hate the beings which He has created, yet He knows by his immense wisdom the incomparable damage caused in mortals by avarice and covetousness of visible things, and that this insane love would pervert the greater part of human nature. His horror of this vice was in proportion to the number of sinners and foreknown as damned who are lost by the vice of avarice and greed.

689. In order to meet this evil and provide some remedy against it my most holy Son chose poverty and taught it by word and by the example of his admirable abnegation. Thus would the Physician justify his cause before men if they, for whom He prepared this means of safety and restoration, would neglect to take advantage of it. This same doctrine I taught and practiced during all my life, and upon it the Apostles founded the Church; and the same has been done and taught* by the Patriarchs and Saints who have reformed and sustained the Church, for all of them have loved poverty as the only and efficacious means of sanctity, and have abhorred riches as the incentive to evil and the root of all vices (I Tim. 6:10). This poverty I desire thee to love and seek after with all diligence, for it is the adornment of the spouses of my most holy Son without which, I assure thee my dearest, He will disavow and repudiate them as unworthy and far removed from Him, for it is preposterous to see a bride overflowing in riches and bedecked with jewels at the side of a poor and destitute bridegroom, nor can true love exist with such inequality.

690. And if as a legitimate daughter thou dost desire to imitate me perfectly according to thy powers, as thou must, it is clear that I, as poor, shall not recognize thee as my daughter if thou art not poor, nor shall I love in thee that which I abhorred for myself. I remind thee also not to forget the blessings of the Most High which thou hast received in such abundance, for if thou art not very attentive and solicitous in this duty thou shalt be drawn into forgetfulness and gross rudeness by the dullness and sluggishness inherent in human nature. Renew many times a day the memory of his blessings, always giving thanks to the Lord with humble and loving affection. And among all his memorable benefits toward thee are that He has called thee, waited for thee, hidden thee, concealed thy faults, and above all this has multiplied such repeated favors. This remembrance shall cause in thee sweet and strong movements of love, and thou shalt find new grace and favor before the Lord, since He is so much pleased by a faithful and grateful heart. On the other hand, He is much offended if his kindnesses and blessings are not esteemed and appreciated, for since He confers them in the fullness of his love He desires a dutiful, loyal and loving return on the part of his creatures.

* cf. Mt. 5:19 [Ed.]