

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 two most 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 penalties of depraved nature. In this meditation St. Joseph greatly admired the works of the Lord, and was inflamed in affections of gratitude and praise of the love of Christ. On this occasion the infant 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 to the 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 thee both to be children of the light (Jn. 12:36), since thou hast it 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 infant God with the most profound 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. Yet though St. Joseph was not the natural but the putative father of the infant 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 must be measured the joy of his most pure soul upon hearing himself called the father of the Son of God himself, the Son of the eternal Father, and in seeing Him so beautiful and full of grace, and in hearing Him begin to speak with such exalted doctrine and wisdom.

683. That entire 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

* cf. *Transfixion* 166 [Ed.]

inconvenience otherwise not required of Him. The most prudent Mother, judging the time 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 already spent much time oppressed by swaddling clothes, thereby demonstrating thy exquisite love for men; yet it is time to change this manner of clothing. Tell me, my Master, what shall I do in order to place Thee on thy feet?”

684. “My Mother (responded the infant Jesus), by the love which 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 at my perfect age I must be bound, imprisoned, and delivered over to my enemies and by them be put to death (Mt. 20:18). If this knowledge is sweet to Me because it is the will of my Father (Heb. 10:7), all the rest shall be easy for Me. I desire to possess only one garment in this world, since I seek only what is necessary to cover Me. Though all created things are mine because I have given them being (Ps. 23:1), yet I turn them all over to men so they shall owe Me so much the more, and also to teach them how, by my example and for my love, they must deny and despise all that is superfluous for natural life. Clothe Me, my Mother, in a full-length tunic of a humble and ordinary color. This alone shall I wear, and it shall grow with Me. Over this garment they shall cast lots at my death (Ps. 21:19), for even this shall not be left to my disposition, but the disposition of others, so men shall see I was born poor and desired to live bereft of visible things, which being earthly oppress and darken the human heart. At the very moment I was conceived in thy virginal womb I made this renunciation and abdication of all that is enclosed and contained in the world, though all is mine due to the union of my human nature with the divine Person of the Son (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 only of that required to sustain my natural life, which I shall afterwards give for men (Jn. 10:15). By this example I desire to teach and reprimand the world so it learns to love poverty and not despise it; for when I, who am Lord of all, have renounced and turned away from all possessions, it shall cause confusion in those who know Me by faith and yet covet that which I taught them to despise.”

685. The words of the divine Child 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 abnegation 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. Knowing the infant Jesus did not desire more clothing nor any footwear, She said to His Majesty: “My Son and my Lord, thy Mother has neither the heart nor the spirit to allow Thee to go barefoot upon the ground at such a tender age; permit me, my Love, to provide some kind of covering to protect them. I also recognize the rough garment which Thou askest of me shall hurt much thy tender body at thy age without another garment of linen worn beneath.” The infant Jesus responded: “My Mother, I permit for the feet a poor covering 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 incites the flesh and many vices in men. By my example I desire to teach many to renounce it for my imitation and love.”

686. The celestial Queen then began with great diligence in fulfilling the will of her most holy Son. Collecting natural and undyed wool She spun it very delicately with her own hands, and from it She wove a tunic 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 like 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). It had two miraculous qualities: 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 infant 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, after they had arrived in Egypt, occurred respectively the anniversary of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity of the divine Word. 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 these magnificent 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 with 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 much favored and regaled by the Most High, since 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 stripped 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 greatest 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 and waited for thee, pardoned and concealed thy faults, and beyond 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 pleased by a faithful and grateful heart, and on the contrary is highly offended if his benefits and works are not esteemed and incite no gratitude, for since He confers them in the fullness of his love He desires a dutiful, loyal and affectionate return on the part of his creatures.

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