

CHAPTER XXVI

The Wonders which the Infant Jesus, His Most Holy Mother, and St. Joseph Wrought at Heliopolis in Egypt.

664. When Isaias said *the Lord will enter Egypt upon a swift cloud* (19:1) in order to work miracles for that country, in calling most holy Mary, or as others think the humanity derived from Her, a cloud, he no doubt wishes to indicate the Lord was to fertilize and water the barren land of the hearts of its inhabitants so henceforth they could produce the fruits of sanctity and divine knowledge. And so it truly happened after that heavenly cloud had overshadowed this land, for immediately belief in the true God began to spread and idolatry to be destroyed; the paths of eternal life began to be opened, which until then had been held closed by the demons. To such an extent was all this true that there was scarcely any province in that land in which the true God remained unknown as soon as the incarnate Word arrived therein. Although some of the people came to this knowledge through communication with the Hebrews which existed between these two nations at that time, yet a great many errors, superstitions, and worship of the demons were mixed up with it, just as it was with the Babylonians, who at another time came to live in Samaria (IV Kg. 17:24ff.). But after the Sun of justice began to illumine Egypt, and Mary most holy, the taintless cloud, began to overshadow that land, it became so fertile in holiness and grace that it gave forth abundant fruit for many centuries, as can be seen by the Saints afterwards produced there, and by the thousands of hermits who made its mountains gather up and distill such sweet honey of sanctity and Christian perfection.

665. As I said, in order to secure these blessings to the Egyptians the Lord took his dwelling in the city of Heliopolis. Since it was so full of idols, temples and altars of the demons, which at his entrance all fell to the dust with great crashing and noise, the whole city was set in commotion and confusion by the suddenness of this ruin (Is. 19:1). People rushed about astonished and as if crazed in mind. Curiosity brought to the newly arrived Strangers numbers of men and women who sought to speak to the great Queen and St. Joseph. The heavenly Mother, who was aware of the mysterious designs of God, spoke to their inmost hearts with great wisdom, prudence and sweetness. They were filled with wonder at her incomparable gentleness and her exalted teachings which undeceived them from their errors, and since She immediately cured some of their sick She quieted and encouraged them so much the sooner. These miracles were so rapidly noised abroad that in a short time an immense concourse of people gathered to see the heavenly Strangers, and the most prudent Lady was forced to consult her most holy Son regarding her further conduct toward this great multitude. The infant God answered that She should instruct them in the truth and knowledge of the Divinity, teach them his true worship, and exhort them to depart from sin.

666. In this office of preaching to and teaching the Egyptians our heavenly Princess served as the instrument of her most holy Son, who gave power to her words. There was so much fruit in those souls that many books would be required to describe the wonders and the conversions of souls which took place during the seven years of their stay in this province, for in her ministry She was filled with the benedictions of sweetness (Ps. 20:4). Whenever the heavenly Lady listened to and answered those who came to Her, She held in her arms the infant Jesus as the One who was the Author of all the graces to be dispensed to sinners. She spoke to all and to each one according to their capacity and necessity so they could perceive and understand the doctrine of eternal life. She enlightened them concerning the Divinity and made them understand that there

cannot be more than one God; She explained to them the several articles of truth pertaining to the Creation and Redemption of the world; She impressed upon their minds the commandments of the Decalogue, founded upon the natural law itself; and She showed them the manner of adoring and worshipping God, and how they were to expect the regeneration of the human race.

667. Regarding the demons, She explained how they were enemies of God and men; how deeply they kept men in error by their idol worship and the false answers of their oracles; how they induced men to commit the vilest abominations, and afterwards secretly tempted them by exciting the disorderly passions. Although the Queen of heaven was so pure and free from all that is imperfect, nevertheless for the glory of the Most High She did not deem it beneath Her to speak to them of those impure and vile sins into which all Egypt was plunged. She also declared to them the Repairer of so many ills, who was to overcome the demons as it was written of Him, was already come into the world, though She did not say She held Him in her arms. So her teachings might be accepted so much the more readily and the truth become more apparent, She confirmed her words by great miracles, curing all sorts of people who were sick or possessed by the devil, and who came from all parts of the country. A few times the Queen went to the infirmaries and conferred admirable blessings upon the sick. Everywhere She consoled the sorrowful and brought relief to the afflicted and the unfortunate, winning all by loving kindness and beneficence and admonishing them with sweet earnestness.

668. Regarding the cure of the sick and wounded the heavenly Lady hesitated between two different sentiments: One of charity, which drew Her to nurse the wounded with her own hands, and the other of modesty, which forbade Her to touch anyone. So all propriety could be observed her most holy Son empowered Her to cure the men by her mere word and exhortations, while She would cure the women by the touch of her hands and cleansing their wounds. This course of action She maintained thenceforward, taking upon Herself the office of a mother as well as a nurse respectively; however, after they had lived two years in that place St. Joseph also began to cure the sick, as I shall narrate. The Queen then turned more toward the women with such incomparable charity that though She was so pure and delicate Herself, free from infirmities and ailments, yet She hesitated not to tend to their festering ulcers and apply with her own hands the coverings and bandages required. She so pitied each of these patients that it was as if She suffered their hardships. Sometimes it happened that in order to relieve and cure the poor She asked permission of her divine Son to place Him in the cradle, thus permitting the Lord of the poor to witness in another way the loving charity of this humble Lady (Mt. 25:40). But in all these occupations and cures (O wonderful to relate!) this most modest Lady never looked upon the face of either man or woman. Even when the wound was in the face her modesty was so exquisite that She would not have been able to recognize any of her patients by their features if She had not known all men by another interior kind of vision.

669. Because of the excessive heat prevailing in Egypt and the many disorders rampant among the people, the diseases of the Egyptians were widespread and grievous. During the years of the stay of the infant Jesus and his most holy Mother pestilence devastated Heliopolis and other places; because of this and the report of their wonderful deeds multitudes of people came to them from all parts of the country and returned home cured in body and soul. And so the grace of the Lord could be poured out upon them more abundantly, and the most kind Mother could have a helper in the mercies She worked as the living instrument of her Onlybegotten, His Majesty (at the petition of the heavenly Lady) ordained that St. Joseph take part in the ministry of teaching and the curing of the sick; for this purpose he was endowed with new light and the grace of healing. Holy Mary began to make use of his assistance in the third year of their stay in Egypt, so

from then on he ordinarily taught and cured the men while the blessed Lady attended to the women. By these benefits so continuous, and the efficacious graces poured abroad from the lips of our Queen (Ps. 44:3), the fruit which they bore was incredible due to the fondness which all felt toward Her, conquered by her modesty and attracted by the power of her sanctity. They offered Her many presents and large possessions, anxious to see Her make use of them, but never did She receive anything for Herself, or reserve it for her own use, for they continued to provide for their needs by the labor of her hands and the earnings of St. Joseph. When at times She received some gift which His Highness knew was just and proper, She distributed all of it to the poor and needy. Only for this purpose would She yield to the piety and for the consolation of certain devotees, and though this happened many times She always gave in return some item made by her own hands. From what I have related we can form some idea how great and how numerous were the miracles wrought by the Holy Family during their seven years' stay in Egypt and Heliopolis, for it would be impossible to enumerate and describe all of them.

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

670. My daughter, thou art full of wonder at the works of mercy which I exercised in Egypt, curing the sick of their infirmities and helping the poor in their necessities in order to relieve them in body and soul. Thou shalt be able to understand how all this was consistent with my love of modesty and retirement when thou dost take into consideration the immense love which urged my most holy Son to hasten immediately after his birth to the aid of these people and pour out over them his immense love in his longings for their salvation. This charity communicated to me made me an instrument of his power, without which I would not have dared on my own to undertake such works; for though I always preferred not to speak or communicate with anyone, yet the will of my Son and Lord governed me in all things.* I desire thee, my friend, to labor in imitation of me for the benefit and salvation of thy neighbor, seeking to follow me in this by the perfection and conditions with which I worked. Thou must not seek for such occasions, for the Lord shall send them, except when for some great reason it is necessary for thee to offer thy help. Yet for all of them thou must labor, advising and enlightening all you can by the light thou dost possess, not as one taking the office of a teacher, but as one who consoles her brothers, compassionates their hardships, and seeks to engender patience in them, exercising much humility and prudent reserve together with the practice of charity.

671. As for those under thy charge, exhort and reprove them, govern and direct them to greater and greater perfection of virtue and fulfillment of the divine pleasure, for next to seeking thy own perfection God wills for thee to encourage and teach those under thy charge according to thy strength and the grace thou hast received. Pray without ceasing for those with whom thou cannot speak, thus extending thy charity towards all men. And since thou cannot serve the sick outside thy convent, make up for it by taking care of those living with thee, treating and cleaning them thyself. Do not consider thyself above this service because thou art their superioress, for on this very account thou must act as their mother and show thy loving care as such toward all, while in other things thou must interiorly esteem thyself below them. Since the world ordinarily leaves the care of the sick to the most poor and despised simply because it does not know the

* cf. James 3:2-14 [Ed.]

high value of this service, I therefore assign to thee, as to one who is poor and the least of all, this office of infirmarian so thou mayest follow me in the performance of it.