

CHAPTER XVI

The Age of the Queen of Heaven at the Death of St. Joseph, and Some of the Privileges of Her Holy Spouse.

175. The most happy of men, St. Joseph, reached an age of sixty years and a few days, for at the age of thirty-three he espoused most holy Mary and lived in her company until just past sixty years of age. When the holy spouse St. Joseph died She had reached an age of forty-one years and nearly half of her forty-second year, for She was espoused to St. Joseph at the age of fourteen (as stated in the Part I, Book Two, chapter XXII). The twenty-seven years of her married life completed her forty-first year, to which must be added the time from the eighth of September until the death of her most holy spouse. The Queen of heaven still remained in the same disposition of natural perfection as in her thirty-third year, for as already stated in chapter XIII of this Book (145) She showed no signs of decline, or more advanced age, or weakness, but always remained in that same most perfect state of womanhood. She felt the natural sorrow due to the death of St. Joseph, for She loved him as her spouse, as a Saint so excellent in perfection, and as her protector and benefactor. This sorrow in the most prudent Lady was well ordered and most perfect, but it was far from being therefore less deep, for her love was great, yea so much the greater as She was well informed of the high rank he held among the saints who are written in the book of life and in the mind of the Most High; and if we do not lose without sorrow what we love in an ordinary manner, so much the greater will be our sorrow for losing what we love very much.

176. It does not pertain to the intent this History to write the excellences of the sanctity of St. Joseph, nor have I been ordered to do so except generally in order to manifest more clearly the dignity of his spouse and our Queen, to whose merits (after those of her most holy Son) must be attributed the gifts and graces the Most High gave to this glorious Patriarch. The heavenly Lady was either the instrumental or meritorious cause of the sanctity of her spouse, or at least the final object or purpose of this sanctity, for all the fullness of virtues and grace was conferred upon St. Joseph for the purpose of making him her worthy protector and spouse, She whom God selected as his Mother. According to this standard and according to the love of God for his most holy Mother is to be measured the sanctity of St. Joseph, and from my understanding of this matter if there had been in the world another man more perfect and more worthy the Lord would have chosen this other one for the spouse of his Mother. Since he was chosen by God, St. Joseph was no doubt the most perfect man upon earth. Having created and destined him for such high ends, it is certain God in his almighty power prepared and perfected him in proportion to the loftiness of those ends; and this proportion (according to our way of understanding) had to be established by the divine light by the sanctity, virtues, gifts, graces, and infused and natural inclinations of St. Joseph.

177. I perceive a certain difference in the graces given to this great Patriarch and those vouchsafed to other saints, for many saints were endowed with graces and gifts which were intended not for the increase of their own sanctity but for the advance of the service of the Most High in other souls; they were, so to say, gifts and graces freely given and not dependent upon the sanctity of the receiver. But in our blessed Patriarch all the gifts added to his virtues and sanctity, for the effect toward which they were destined and directed was the mystery of his sanctity and works. The more angelic and holy he grew to be, so much the more worthy was he to be the spouse of most holy Mary and the depository and treasure house of heavenly

sacraments. He was to be a miracle of sanctity, as he really was. This marvelous holiness began with the formation of his body in the womb of his mother, since in her the particular providence of God assisted, regulating the composition of the four humors of his body with extreme refinement of proportion and securing for him that evenly tempered disposition which made his body a blessed earth fit for the abode of an exquisite soul and well-balanced mind (Wis. 8:19). He was sanctified in the womb of his mother seven months after his conception, and the *fomes peccati** was destroyed in him for the whole course of his life; thus he never felt any impure or disorderly movement. Although he did not receive the use of his reason together with this first sanctification, which consisted principally in justification from original sin, yet his mother at the time felt a wonderful joy of the Holy Ghost. Without understanding entirely the mystery she elicited great acts of virtue and believed her son, or whomever she bore in her womb, would be wonderful in the sight of God and men.

178. The holy child Joseph was born most beautiful and perfect in body, and caused in his parents and in his relations an extraordinary delight, something like that caused by the birth of St. John the Baptist, though the cause of it was more hidden. The Lord hastened in him the use of his reason, perfecting it in his third year, endowing it with infused science and augmenting his soul with new graces and virtues. From that time the child began to know God by faith, and also by natural reasoning and science, as the cause and Author of all things. He eagerly listened to and understood profoundly all that was taught to him regarding God and his works. At this premature age he already practiced the highest kinds of prayer and contemplation, and eagerly engaged in the exercise of the virtues proper to his youth, and thus at the time when others come to the use of reason, at the age of seven years or more, St. Joseph was already a perfect man in the use of it and in sanctity. He was of a kind disposition, loving, affable, sincere, showing inclinations not only holy but angelic, growing in virtue and perfection, and advancing toward his espousal with most holy Mary by an altogether irreproachable life.

179. For the confirmation and increase of his good qualities was then added the intercession of the heavenly Lady, for as soon as She was informed the Lord desired Her to enter the married state with him She earnestly besought the Lord to sanctify St. Joseph and inspire him with most chaste thoughts and desires in conformity with her own. The Lord listened to her prayer and permitted Her to see what great effects his right hand wrought in the mind and spirit of the patriarch St. Joseph; they were so copious that they cannot be described in human words. He infused into his soul the most perfect habits of all the virtues and gifts; He balanced anew all his faculties and filled him with grace, confirming him in it in an admirable manner. In the virtue and perfection of chastity the holy spouse was elevated higher than the Seraphim, for the purity which they possessed without body St. Joseph possessed in his earthly body and in mortal flesh. Never did an image of the impurities of the animal and sensible nature engage even for one moment any of his faculties. This freedom from all such imaginations and his angelic simplicity fitted him for the companionship and presence of the most pure among all creatures, and without this excellence he would not have been worthy of such a great dignity and rare excellence.

180. Also in the other virtues he was wonderfully distinguished, especially in charity, for he dwelt at the fountainhead of that living water which flows on to eternal life (Jn. 4:14); he was in close proximity to that sphere of fire and was consumed without resistance. The best that can be said of the charity of our loving Saint is what I have already said in the preceding chapter, namely that the love of God was his infirmity and the instrument which cut the thread of his

* Instead of this Latin term used by Ven. Mary, Rev. Blatter uses "leaven of sin" in his translation. [Ed.]

mortal life. The manner of his death was a privilege of his singular love, for his sweet sighs of love surpassed and finally put an end to those of his sickness, being far more powerful. As the objects of his love, Christ our Lord and his Mother, were present with him always, and as both of them were more closely bound to him than to any other mortal, his most pure and faithful heart was unavoidably consumed by the loving effects of such a close union. Blessed be the Author of such great wonders, and blessed be Joseph, the most happy of mortals, who was worthy of all that was wrought in him. He deserves to be known and extolled by all the generations of men and all nations, since the Lord has wrought such things with no other man, and to none has He shown such love.

181. The divine visions and revelations vouchsafed to St. Joseph I have particularly mentioned in the course of this History (*Inc.* 422, 472; *Tran.* 164), but there were many more than can be described, and the greatest of them all was having known the mysteries of the relation between Christ and his Mother, and having lived in their company for so many years as the putative father of the Lord and as the true spouse of the Queen of heaven. But I have been given to understand certain other privileges which because of his great sanctity were conceded to St. Joseph by the Most High for those who would ask his intercession in a worthy manner. The first is for attaining the virtue of purity and for overcoming the sensual inclinations of the flesh; the second, for procuring powerful help to escape sin and return to the friendship of God; the third, for increasing the love and devotion to most holy Mary; the fourth, for securing the grace of a happy death and protection against the demons in that hour; the fifth, for inspiring the demons with terror at the mere mention of his name by his clients; the sixth, for gaining health of body and assistance in all kinds of difficulties; the seventh, for securing issue of children in families. These and many other favors God confers upon those who properly and with good disposition seek the intercession of St. Joseph, the spouse of our Queen. I beseech all the faithful children of the Church to be very devoted to him, and they shall experience these favors in reality if they dispose themselves as they should in order to receive and merit them.

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

182. My daughter, although thou hast described my spouse St. Joseph as the most noble among the princes and saints of the heavenly Jerusalem, yet neither canst thou properly manifest his eminent sanctity, nor can any of the mortals know it fully before they arrive at the vision of the Divinity. Then all of them shall be filled with wonder and praise, since the Lord shall make them capable of understanding this sacrament. On the Last Day, when all men shall be judged, the damned shall bitterly bewail their sins which prevented them from appreciating this powerful means of their salvation, and for failing to avail themselves, as they easily could have, of this intercessor to gain the friendship of the just Judge. The whole human race has much undervalued the privileges and prerogatives conceded to my blessed spouse, and they know not what his intercession with God is able to do. I assure thee, my dearest, that in the presence of the divine justice he is one of the greatly favored personages, and has immense power to stay the arms of divine vengeance against sinners.

183. I desire thee to be very grateful to the divine condescension for vouchsafing thee so much light and knowledge regarding this mystery, and also for the favor which I am doing thee therein. From now on, during the rest of thy mortal life, make sure to advance in devotion and in heartfelt love toward my spouse, and bless the Lord for thus having favored him with such high privileges

and for having rejoiced me so much in the knowledge of all his excellences. In all thy necessities thou must avail thyself of his intercession. Thou shouldst induce many to venerate him, and see that thy own religious distinguish themselves in their devotion to him. That which my spouse asks of the Lord in heaven is granted on earth, and upon his intercession depend many and extraordinary favors for men if they do not make themselves unworthy of receiving them. All these privileges correspond to the dovelike perfection and exceedingly great virtues of this admirable Saint, since the divine clemency inclines toward them and looks upon St. Joseph most generously in order to grant admirable mercies for his sake to those who avail themselves of his intercession.