

## CHAPTER XXII

*Most Holy Mary Offers to the Eternal Father Her Onlybegotten Son for the Redemption of the Human Race; in Return for This Sacrifice He Grants Her a Clear Vision of the Divinity; She Takes Leave of Her Son as His Majesty Departs for the Desert.*

240. The love of our great Queen and Lady for her divine Son must always remain the standard by which we must measure her actions as well as all her emotions either of joy or sorrow during her earthly life. But we cannot measure the greatness of her love itself, nor can the holy angels measure it, except by the love which they see in God by the beatific vision. All that can ever be expressed by our inadequate words, similes and analogies is but the least portion of what this heavenly furnace of love really contained, for She loved Jesus as the Son of the eternal Father, equal to Him in essence and in all the divine attributes and perfections; She loved Him as her own natural Son, and her only Son in the human existence formed of her own flesh and blood; and She loved Him because as man He was the Saint of saints (Dan. 9:24) and the meritorious cause of all sanctity. He was the most beautiful among the sons of men (Ps. 44:3); He was the most obedient Son of his Mother (Lk. 2:51) and her most magnificent Benefactor, since it was He who by being her Son had raised Her to the highest dignity possible among creatures. He had exalted Her among all and above all by the treasures of the Divinity, and by conferring upon Her the dominion over all creation together with favors, blessings and graces such as were never to be conferred upon any other being.

241. These motives and incentives of love were deposited and as it were comprehended in the wisdom of the heavenly Lady, together with many others which only her exalted knowledge could fathom. She had no impediment in her Heart, since it was candid and most pure; She was not ungrateful, because She was most profound in humility and most faithful in her correspondence; not negligent, because She was ardent in working with grace and all its efficacy; not slow but most diligent; not careless, since She was most studious and solicitous; not forgetful, because her memory was constant and fixed in retaining the benefits, reasons and laws of love. She moved in the sphere of divine love itself, since She remained in his visible presence and attended the school of the divine love of her Son, copying his works and his doings in his very company. Nothing was lacking in this most refined lover for entertaining love without limitation of measure or manner. This most beautiful moon then, being at its fullness, and having gazed upon this Sun of justice with closest attention for the space of nearly thirty years; He having risen like a divine aurora to the highest height of light and to the ardent splendor of the burning love of the clearest day of grace; She having been withdrawn from all material creatures and entirely transformed in her beloved Son; having corresponded to his favors, gifts, and reciprocal love, in the height of her blessedness; at a time when the loss of all these blessings in her Son made it most arduous; She, at this very time, heard the voice of the eternal Father calling Her, as once He had called upon her prototype Abraham, to sacrifice the deposit of all her love and hope, her beloved Isaac (Gen. 22:1ff.).

242. The most prudent Mother was not unaware that the time of her sacrifice was approaching, for her sweetest Son had already entered the thirtieth year of his life, and the time and place for satisfying the debt He had assumed was at hand. But with the possession of the Good which made Her so blessed, She was still considering its loss as far off, not having as yet experienced it. The hour therefore drawing near, She was rapt in a most exalted vision and felt that She was being called and placed in the presence of the throne of the most blessed Trinity. From it issued a

voice of wonderful power, saying to Her: “Mary, my Daughter and Spouse, offer to Me thy Onlybegotten in sacrifice.” By the living power of these words came to Her the light and intelligence of the will of the Almighty, and in it the Blessed Mother understood the decree of the Redemption of man through the Passion and Death of her most holy Son, together with all that from now on would happen in the preaching and public life of the Savior. Since this knowledge was renewed and perfected in Her, She felt her soul overpowered by sentiments of subjection, humility, love of God and man, compassion, and most tender sorrow for all her Son was to suffer.

243. But with an undismayed and magnanimous Heart She answered the Most High: “Eternal King and omnipotent God of infinite wisdom and goodness, all that has being outside of Thee received and possesses it from thy generous mercy and greatness, and Thou art the undiminished Lord of all. How then dost Thou command me, an insignificant wormlet of the earth, to sacrifice and deliver over to thy will the Son whom thy condescension hast given me? He is thine, eternal Father, since from all eternity before the day star Thou hast begotten Him (Ps. 109:3; 2:7), and Thou dost engender Him and shall engender Him through all the eternities. If I have clothed Him in the form of a servant (Philip. 2:7) in my womb and from my own blood, and if I have nourished his humanity at my breast and ministered to Him as a Mother, this most holy humanity is also thy property, and so am I, since I have received from Thee all that I am and that I could give Him. What then can I offer to Thee that is not more thine than mine? I confess, most high King, that thy magnificence and beneficence are so liberal in heaping upon thy creatures thy infinite treasures that in order to bind Thyself to them Thou dost desire to receive from them as a voluntary offering even thy Onlybegotten, He whom Thou dost beget from thy own substance and from the light of thy divinity. With Him came to me all blessings together (Wis. 7:11), and from his hands I have received immense gifts and graces. He is the virtue of my virtue, the substance of my spirit, the life of my soul and the soul of my life, the sustenance of all my joy in living. It would be a sweet sacrifice indeed to yield Him up to Thee who alone knowest his value, but to yield Him for the satisfaction of thy justice into the hands of his cruel enemies at the cost of his life, more precious than all the works of creation, this indeed, most high Lord, is a great sacrifice which Thou askest of his Mother; however, let not my will but thine be done. Let the freedom of the human race be thus bought; let thy justice and equity be satisfied; let thy infinite love become manifest; let thy Name and magnificence be known by all creatures. I deliver into thy hands my beloved Isaac, so He may be truly sacrificed. I offer the Son of my womb so according to the unchangeable decree of thy will He can pay the debt contracted not by his fault but by the children of Adam, and by his death fulfill all thy holy Prophets, inspired by Thee, have written and foretold.”

244. This sacrifice, with all its conditions, was the greatest and the most acceptable that ever had been made to the eternal Father since the creation of the world, or ever will be made to the end, outside of that made by his own Son, the Redeemer; and her sacrifice was most intimately connected with and similar to that which He offered. If the greatest charity consists in offering one’s life for the beloved (Jn. 15:13), without a doubt most holy Mary far surpassed this highest degree of love toward men, since She loved her Son much more than her own life; for in order to preserve the life of her Son She would have given the lives of all men if She had possessed them, yea and countless more. Among men there is no measure by which to estimate the love of that heavenly Lady, and it can be estimated only by the love of the eternal Father for his Son. Just as Christ our Lord said to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:16) *God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish*, so this can also be said in its degree of the

love of the Mother of Mercy, and in the same way do we proportionately owe to Her our rescue; for She also loved us so much that She gave her Onlybegotten for our remedy, and if She had not given Him in this manner when it was asked of Her by the eternal Father on this occasion, human Redemption could not have been executed by this same decree, since this decree was to be fulfilled on the condition that the will of the Mother coincide with that of the eternal Father. Such is the obligation which the children of Adam owe to most holy Mary.

245. Having accepted the offering of the great Lady, it was appropriate for the most blessed Trinity to reward and immediately recompense Her by some favor which would comfort Her in her sorrow and manifest more clearly the will of the eternal Father and the reasons for his command. Therefore the heavenly Lady, still rapt in the same vision and raised to a more exalted ecstasy in which She was prepared and enlightened in the manner elsewhere described (*Con.* 623-6), the Divinity manifested Himself to Her by an intuitive and direct vision. In this vision, by the clear light of the essence of God, She comprehended the inclination of the infinite Good to communicate his fathomless treasures to the rational creatures by means of the works of the incarnate Word, and the glory which would result from this wonder among creatures themselves for the name of the Most High. Filled with jubilation of soul at the prospect of all these sacramental mysteries, the heavenly Mother renewed the offering of her divine Son to the Father, and the infinite power of the Lord himself comforted Her with that bread of life and understanding\* so She could with invincible fortitude assist the incarnate Word in the work of Redemption as his Coadjutrix and Helper in the manner in which divine Wisdom disposed it, and as the great Lady actually carried out in all that shall be related going forward (279-80, 290, 508, 665, etc.).

246. Then most holy Mary issued forth from this exalted rapture, in the description of which I shall not further detain myself since it was accompanied by the same circumstances as the other intuitive visions already mentioned. By its effects and the strength imparted through it She was now prepared to separate from her divine Son, who then resolved to depart for his Baptism and fasting in the desert. His Majesty therefore called Her and spoke to Her as a most loving Son and with demonstrations of most sweet compassion, saying: "My Mother, my existence as man I derived entirely from thy substance and blood, from which I have taken the form of a servant in thy virginal womb (Philip. 2:7). Thou also nursed Me at thy breast and hast taken care of Me by thy sweat and labor. For these reasons I acknowledge Myself more thy Son and thine own than any other has or shall acknowledge himself as the son of his mother. Give Me thy permission and consent to go to accomplish the will of my eternal Father. Already the time has arrived in which I must leave thy sweet company and begin the work of the Redemption of man. The time of rest has come to an end, and the hour of suffering for the rescue of the sons of Adam has arrived; yet I desire to perform this work of my Father with thy assistance, and Thou art to be my Companion and Coadjutrix in preparing for my Passion and Cross. Although I must now leave Thee alone, my blessing and my loving and powerful protection shall remain with Thee. I shall afterwards return to claim thy assistance and company in my labors, for I am to undergo them in the form of man which Thou hast given Me."

247. With these words, while both Mother and Son were overflowing with abundant tears, the Lord placed his arms around the neck of his most tender Mother; yet both maintained a majestic composure such as befitted these Masters in the art of suffering. The heavenly Lady fell at the feet of her divine Son, and with ineffable sorrow and reverence answered: "My Lord and eternal

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\* cf. Mt. 4:4 [Ed.]

God, Thou art indeed my Son, and in Thee is fulfilled all the force of love which I have received from Thee. My inmost soul is laid open to the eyes of thy divine wisdom. I would account my life but little if I could thereby save thy own, or if I could die for Thee many times. But the will of the eternal Father and thy own must be fulfilled, and I offer my own will as a sacrifice for this fulfillment. Receive it, my Son, and as Master of all my being let it be an acceptable offering, and let thy divine protection never be lacking to me. It would be a much greater torment for me not to be allowed to accompany Thee in thy labors and thy cross; may I merit this favor, my Son, and I ask it of Thee as thy true Mother in return for the human form which Thou hast received from me.” The most loving Mother also besought Him to take along some food from the house, or that He allow it to be sent to where He was to go, but the Savior would not accept this alleviation, giving light to his Mother as to what was suitable for the occasion. They went together to the door of their poor house, where She again fell at his feet to ask his blessing and kiss his feet. The divine Master gave Her his benediction and then began his journey to the Jordan, issuing forth as the Good Shepherd to seek his lost sheep and bring them back on his shoulders (Lk. 15:5) to the way of eternal life from which they had strayed by deceit and error (Ps. 118:176).\*

248. When our Redeemer sought St. John in order to be baptized He had already entered his thirtieth year, although not much of it had yet passed, for He went directly to the banks of the Jordan where St. John was baptizing (Mt. 3:13), and He received Baptism at his hands about thirteen days after He had finished the twenty-ninth year of his life, on the same day as is set aside for its celebration by the Church. I cannot worthily describe the sorrow of most holy Mary at his departure, nor the compassion of the Savior for Her. All appreciation and reasonings are far too inadequate to manifest what passed in the Hearts of the Son and Mother; since this was to be part of their meritorious sufferings it was not appropriate for the natural effects of their mutual love to be diminished. God permitted these effects to work in them to their full extent and as far as was compatible with the sanctity of both Mother and Son. Neither did our divine Teacher moderate this sorrow in hastening his steps to seek our remedy, driven by the force of his immense charity, nor was the thought of what He intended a lessening of the sense of loss which She sustained at his departure, for all this only made more certain and more conspicuous the torments which He was to undergo. O my dearest Love! Dost Thou not know the ingratitude and hardness of our hearts which Thou shalt encounter in meeting us? Why does the perfect uselessness of man, and still more, his ingratitude, not influence Thee to desist? Without us, O eternal Good and my life, Thou wouldst be just as happy as with us, just as infinite in perfections, sanctity and glory; we can add nothing to that which Thou hast in Thyself, since Thou art entirely independent of creatures. Why then, O my Love, dost Thou so anxiously seek us out and care for us? Why dost Thou, at the cost of thy Passion and Cross, purchase our happiness? Without doubt it is because thy incomprehensible love and goodness esteem it as thy own, and we alone insist in treating our own happiness as alien to Thee and to ourselves.

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

249. My daughter, I desire thee to ponder and penetrate more and more this mystery of which thou hast written, thus fixing it in thy soul in order to be drawn to imitate my example, at least some part of it. Consider then that in the vision of the Divinity which I had on this occasion I

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\* cf. also Is. 53:6 [Ed.]

was made to comprehend the high value which the Lord sets upon the labors, Passion and Death of my Son, and upon all those who were to imitate and follow Him on the Way of the Cross. Knowing this I not only offered to deliver my Son over to his Passion and Death, but I asked Him to make me his companion and partaker of all his sorrows, sufferings and torments, which request the eternal Father granted. Then, in order to begin following in the footsteps of his bitterness, I besought my Son and Lord to deprive me of interior delights, and this petition was inspired in me by the Lord himself because He desired it to be so, and because my own love taught me and urged me thereto. This yearning for suffering and that given me by His Majesty as my Son and my God led me to desire labors, and because He loved me so tenderly He granted my desires, for those whom He loves He chastises and afflicts (Prov. 3:12). I as his Mother was not to be deprived of this blessed distinction of being entirely like unto Him, which alone makes this life most estimable. Then was fulfilled in me this will of the Most High, and my desire and petition; I began to feel the lack of his delightful caresses, and He began to treat me with greater reserve. That was one of the reasons why He did not call me Mother, but Woman, at the marriage feast at Cana and at the foot of the Cross (Jn. 2:4; 19:26), and also on other occasions when He abstained from words of tenderness. So far was this from being a sign of a diminution of his love, that it was rather an exquisite refinement of his affection to assimilate me to Him in the sufferings which He chose for Himself as his precious treasure and inheritance.

250. From this thou shalt understand the ignorance and error of mortals, and how far they drift from the way of light, when as a rule nearly all of them strive to avoid labor and suffering, and are frightened by the royal and secure road of the cross and mortification. Full of this deceitful ignorance, not only do they abhor resemblance to the sufferings of Christ and my own, and deprive themselves of the true and highest blessing of this life, but they make their recovery impossible since all of them are weak and afflicted by many sins for which the only remedy is suffering. Sin is committed by deliberately dwelling upon an unlawful pleasure, and is excluded by penal suffering, while tribulation earns the pardon of the just Judge. By suffering bitterness and affliction the fomenters of sin are refrained; the excesses of the concupiscible and irascible passions are crushed; pride and haughtiness are humiliated; the flesh is subdued; the inclination to evil, to the sensible and earthly creatures, is repressed; the judgment is cleared; the will is moderated; all the powers of the creature are reduced to reason; and above all, divine love and pity are drawn down upon the afflicted who embrace suffering with patience, or who seek it to imitate my most holy Son. All the true happiness of mortals is gathered in this science of suffering; those who flee from this truth are insane, and those who know nothing of this science are fools.

251. Exert thyself then, my dearest daughter, to advance in this knowledge; welcome labors and suffering, and give up ever desiring human consolations. Remember also that in the spiritual consolations the demon conceals his pitfalls for thy ruin and destruction, for thou dost know his continual attempts to ruin the spiritually inclined; for as the pleasure of the contemplation and vision of the Lord is so sweet and appealing, and his caresses (great or small) result in such delight and consolation for the faculties of the soul, some souls tend to become accustomed to it so much that they become as it were inept regarding other occupations necessary for human life, even though they are duties of charity and appropriate interaction with their fellow creatures. And when they have an obligation to attend to these duties, they inordinately afflict themselves and are disturbed by impatience, lose peace and interior joy, remain sad, intractable, and full of disgust with their fellowmen, with neither true humility nor charity. When they then perceive their own restlessness and its consequences they blame all on their exterior occupations in which

the Lord has placed them for the exercise of their obedience and charity, failing to see or acknowledge that all their troubles arise from their lack of mortification and subjection to that which God ordains, and from their attachment to their own selfish inclinations. In all this the demon hides his deception under the color of their desired good in repose and retirement, and their interaction with the Lord in solitude, for they imagine that in retirement all is good and holy, and that the damage to their spiritual life results from the inability to follow their pious desires in solitude.

252. Thou hast sometimes incurred this fault, and from now on I desire thee to guard against it especially. For all things there is a time (as the Wise Man says), both for enjoying delightful embraces and for abstaining therefrom (Eccles. 3:1, 5). To seek to prescribe to the Lord a time for his intimate embraces is the error of souls only beginning imperfectly to serve the Lord and strive after virtue, and similar is the fault of feeling too deeply the lack of these consolations. I do not tell thee therefore to purposefully seek distractions and exterior occupations, nor to find thy pleasure in them, for this is nothing short of dangerous, but rather to obey with peace of mind whenever thy superiors command, and willingly to leave the delights of the Lord in order to find Him again in useful labor and the service of thy neighbor; this must supersede thy solitude and the hidden consolations thou receivest in it, and thou must not love these consolations too much, for in the solicitude proper to a superior thou must learn to believe, hope and love so much the more deeply. In this manner thou must find thy Lord at all times and in all places and occupations as thou hast already experienced. I desire thee never to consider thyself deprived of his most sweet vision and presence, or of his most loving conversation, or to doubt with pusillanimity whether thou canst find and enjoy God outside of thy retirement. All creation is full of his glory (Ecclus. 42:16), and there is no void, and thou livest and movest and hast thy being in God (Acts 17:28). Enjoy thou thy solitude whenever He does not oblige thee to these exterior occupations.

253. All this thou shalt still more fully understand in the nobility of the love which I require of thee for the imitation of my Son and of me. With Him thou must rejoice sometimes in his youth, sometimes accompany Him in procuring the eternal salvation of men, sometimes imitate Him in retiring into his solitude, sometimes be transfigured with Him to a new creature, and sometimes embrace with Him tribulations and the cross, following up the divine lessons which He taught thereby. In summary, I desire thee to understand well that in me there was a continual desire to imitate or an actual imitation of all that was most perfect in his works. In this consisted my greatest perfection and sanctity, and therein I desire thee to follow me insofar as thy weak strength assisted by grace will allow. For this purpose thou must first die to all the inclinations of a daughter of Adam, without reserving in thee the choice whether to desire or not to desire, to admit or reject anything as a daughter of Adam or by any other title, for thou dost not know what is appropriate, and thy Lord and Spouse, who knows it and who loves thee more than thou dost thyself, shall decide all this for thee if thou shalt resign thyself entirely to his will. He gives thee a free hand only in regard to thy love of Him and in thy desire to suffer for Him, while in all the rest thy desires shall only make thee drift away from his will and mine. This will surely be the result of following thy own will and inclinations, desires and appetites. Deny and sacrifice them all, raising thyself above thyself up to the high and exalted habitation of thy Master and Lord. Attend to his interior lights and to the truth of his words of eternal life (Jn. 6:69); and so thou mayest follow them, take up thy cross (Mt. 16:24), tread in his footsteps, walk in the odor of his ointments (Cant. 1:3), and be diligent until thou hast attained Him, and possessing Him do not let Him go (Ib. 3:4).