

## CHAPTER XXIX

*Christ our Savior Returns with the Five First Disciples to Nazareth; He Baptizes His Most Holy Mother, and All that Happened at This Event.*

314. The mystical edifice of the Church Militant, rising unto the most exalted and hidden Divinity itself, is founded entirely upon the unyielding firmness of the holy Catholic faith in which our Redeemer and Master, as a prudent and wise Architect, established it. And in order to ensure this firmness of the first foundation stones, which were the first disciples He called (as I have related), He began immediately to imbue them with the truths and mysteries relating to his divinity and humanity. In order to make Himself known as the true Messiah and Redeemer of the world, who had descended from the bosom of his eternal Father to assume human flesh, it was consequently necessary to explain to them the manner of his Incarnation in the womb of his Blessed Mother; and being appropriate so they could know and venerate Her as a true Mother and Virgin, He gave them instruction regarding this divine mystery among the others which touched upon the hypostatic union and the Redemption. Hence the firstborn sons of the Savior were nourished with this heavenly doctrine, and before the Apostles came into the presence of the great Queen and Lady they had already conceived most exalted ideas of her celestial excellences. They had been informed that She was a Virgin before, during and after her parturition, and they had been inspired by Christ with the most profound reverence and love for Her, and filled with the desire of immediately seeing and knowing such a heavenly creature. Thus Christ intended not only to satisfy his own zeal in extending the honor of his holy Mother, but also excite in his Apostles the highest veneration and reverence toward Her. Though all of them were divinely enlightened, yet St. John began to distinguish himself in this love of Mary before all the rest; from the very first words of the Master concerning the dignity and excellence of his purest Mother he grew in the loving esteem of her sanctity, for he was selected and prepared for greater privileges in the service of his Queen, as I shall relate (683, 744; *Cor.* 5-7, 10ff.) and as is recorded in the Gospels.

315. The five disciples of the Lord begged Him to grant them the consolation of seeing and reverencing his Mother, and granting this petition He went straight to Nazareth after entering Galilee, continuing to preach and teach publicly on the way and proclaiming Himself as the Master of truth and eternal life. Many began to hear Him and accompany Him, transported by the force of his doctrines and the light and grace overflowing into their hearts, though He did not at that time call any more to follow Him than the five disciples He had already called. It is worthy of notice that although the five disciples had conceived such an ardent devotion to the heavenly Lady, and though they saw with their own eyes how worthy She was of her eminent position among creatures, yet they all maintained strict silence about their thoughts. They seemed as if mute and ignorant in all that concerned the publication of what they thought and felt in regard to her excellences, the divine Wisdom so disposing, for it was not convenient for these mysteries of faith to be published in the beginning of the preaching of Christ, nor to be proclaimed commonly among men. The Sun of justice was now dawning upon souls (Mal. 4:2), and it was necessary for his own splendor to shine forth to illumine all the nations; and though the moon, his most holy Mother, was now in the fullness of her sanctity, it was appropriate for Her to remain hidden in order to give light in the night in which the Church would be left when this Sun would rise up to the Father. And this office She fulfilled, as I shall relate in the third Part (*Cor.* 18-28), for then the splendor of the great Lady broke forth, while before that time her sanctity and excellence

were manifested only to the Apostles so they could know Her, reverence Her, and listen to Her as the worthy Mother of the Redeemer of the world and Teacher of all virtue and perfection.

316. The Savior then pursued his way to Nazareth, instructing his new children and disciples not only in the mysteries of faith, but in all virtues by word and example as He continued to do during the whole period of his evangelical preaching. With this in view He searched out the poor and afflicted, consoled the sick and sorrowful, and visited the infirmaries and prisons, performing miracles of mercy for body as well as soul. Yet He did not profess Himself as the Author of any miracles until He attended the marriage feast at Cana, as I shall relate in the next chapter. While our Savior proceeded on his journey his most holy Mother prepared to receive Him along with the disciples His Majesty was bringing; because the great Lady took notice of all, and in order to receive all hospitably, She set her poor dwelling in order, and was solicitous to procure the necessary food beforehand, for in all things She was most prudent and aware.

317. When the Savior of the world approached the house his Blessed Mother awaited Him at the door, and as He entered She prostrated Herself on the ground, adoring Him and kissing his hands and feet while She asked for his blessing. She then confessed her faith in the most holy and admirable Trinity, and in the humanity of her most holy Son, in the presence of the new disciples. Not without great mystery and prudence did the sovereign Queen thus act, for in addition to giving her most holy Son the worship and adoration due to Him as true God and man, She also desired to make a return for the praise with which He had exalted Her in the eyes of his disciples. Hence, just as the Son had in her absence instilled into their minds reverence for the dignity of his Mother, so the most prudent and faithful Mother in the presence of her Son desired to instruct them in regard to the worship due to their divine Master as their God and Redeemer. The profound humility and worship with which the great Lady received Christ our Savior filled the disciples with new devotion for and reverential fear of their divine Master; henceforth She served them as an example and model of true devotion, entering at once into her office as Instructress and spiritual Mother of the disciples of Christ by showing them how to converse with their God and Redeemer. They were immediately drawn toward their Queen and cast themselves on their knees before Her, asking to be received as her sons and servants. The first to do this was St. John, who from that time on distinguished himself in exalting and reverencing most holy Mary before all the Apostles, and the heavenly Lady admitted him with special charity because the Saint, over and above his gift of virginity, was affable, meek and humble.

318. The great Lady received them all as her guests, serving them their meals and combining the solicitude of a Mother with the modesty and majesty of a Queen, causing admiration even in the holy Angels. She served her divine Son on her knees with the most magnificent reverence; and to these acts of devotion She added certain reasonings of great weight which She spoke to the Apostles regarding the majesty of their Master and Redeemer in order to catechize them in truly Christian doctrine. During that night, when the Apostles had retired, the Savior went to the oratory of his most pure Mother as He had been accustomed to do, and She, the most Humble among the humble, placed Herself at his feet as in years gone by. In regard to the practice of humility all that She could do seemed little to the great Queen, and much less than She ought to do in view of his infinite love and the immense gifts received from his hands. She confessed Herself as useless as the dust of the earth. The Lord lifted Her from the ground and spoke to Her words of life and eternal salvation, yet quietly and serenely, for at this period He began to treat Her with greater reserve in order to give Her the chance to merit, as I have mentioned when I spoke of his departure for his Baptism and to the desert (249).

319. The most blessed Lady also asked Him for the Sacrament of Baptism which He had now

instituted, and which He had promised Her before (120). So this could be administered with a dignity becoming as well the Son as the Mother, an innumerable multitude of the angelic choirs descended from heaven in visible forms. Attended by them, Christ himself baptized his purest Mother. Immediately the voice of the eternal Father was heard saying: "This is my beloved Daughter, in whom I take delight." The incarnate Word said: "This is my Mother, much beloved, whom I have chosen and who shall assist Me in all my works." And the Holy Ghost added: "This is my Spouse, chosen among thousands." The most pure Lady felt and received such great and numerous effects of grace in her soul that no human words can describe them, for She was exalted to new heights of grace and her holy soul was made resplendent with new and exquisite beauty of heaven. She received the characteristic token impressed by this Sacrament, namely that of the children of Christ in his holy Church. In addition to the ordinary effects of this Sacrament (outside of the remission of sins, of which She had no need) She merited special graces due to the humility with which She submitted to this Sacrament of purification. By it She accumulated blessings like to those of her divine Son (269), with only this difference, that She received an increase of grace, which was not possible in Christ. Thereupon the humble Mother broke out in a canticle of praise with the holy Angels, and prostrate before her divine Son She thanked Him for the most efficacious graces She had received in this Sacrament.

*INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO ME BY THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.*

320. My daughter, I see thee much moved to emulation and desire by the great happiness of the disciples of my most holy Son, and especially St. John, my favored servant. It is certain I loved him in a special manner because he was most pure and candid as a dove, and in the eyes of the Lord he was very pleasing, both because of his purity and his love for me. His example should serve thee as an incentive to do that which my Son and I expect of thee. Thou art not ignorant, my dearest, that I am the Mother most pious, and that I receive with maternal affection all those who fervently and devoutly desire to be my children and servants in the Lord. By the love which He has given me I shall embrace them with open arms and shall be their Intercessor and Advocate. Thy poverty, uselessness and weakness shall be for me only a more urgent motive for manifesting toward thee my most generous kindness; hence I call upon thee to become my chosen and beloved daughter in the holy Church.

321. I shall, however, make the fulfillment of my promise depend upon a service on thy part, namely that thou have a true and holy emulation of the love with which I loved St. John, and of all the blessings flowing from it, by imitating him as perfectly as thy powers will allow. Thus thou must promise to fulfill all that I now command thee without failing in the least point. I desire then for thee to labor until all love of self dies within thee, to suppress all the effects of the first sin until all the earthly inclinations consequent upon it are totally extinguished, and to seek to restore within thee that dovelike sincerity and simplicity which destroys all malice and duplicity. In all thy doings thou must be like an angel, since the condescension of the Most High with thee was so great as to furnish thee with the light and intelligence more of an angel than of a human creature. I have procured for thee these great blessings, and therefore it is but reasonable on my part to expect thee to correspond with them in thy works and in thy thoughts. In regard to me thou must cherish a continual affection and loving desire of pleasing and serving me, being always attentive to my counsels and having thy eyes fixed upon me in order to know and execute what I command. Then shalt thou be my true daughter, and I shall be thy Protectress and loving Mother.

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