

## 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 for our salvation had descended from the bosom of his eternal Father to take human flesh, it was consequently necessary to explain to them the manner of his Incarnation in the virginal womb of his most holy 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, conceiving from this instruction knowledge of her divine excellences, and knowing She was a Virgin before, during and after childbirth, Christ our Lord infused into them a most profound reverence and love for Her, by which they desired to see and know 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 most pure 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 which flowed into overflowing into the hearts which accepted Him, 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 appropriate 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 the 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 taught them the dignity of his Mother and the veneration with which they must treat Her and respect Her, so the most prudent and faithful Mother in the presence of her Son desired to instruct them regarding 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, and 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 voice of the Holy Ghost said: "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 thy solicitude and holy emulation for the great happiness of the disciples of my most holy Son, and more so of St. John, my servant and favored one. It is certain I loved him especially, because he was most pure and candid as a simple dove, and in the eyes of the Lord he was very pleasing both for this reason and for his love for me. I desire this example to serve thee as a stimulus for what I desire thee to accomplish with the Lord himself and with me. Thou art not ignorant, my dearest, that I am the most pure Mother, who accepts and receives with maternal tenderness all those who with fervor and devout affection desire to be my children and servants of the Lord; and by the impulses of charity which His Majesty has communicated to me I shall embrace them with open arms, and shall be their Intercessor and Advocate. Since thou art more helpless, poor and destitute, thou givest me greater motive for my most generous kindness to manifest itself more, and thus I call thee and invite thee to be my dearest, chosen and devoted daughter in the holy Church.

321. This promise I shall fulfill with one condition I desire, which is if on thy part thou hast a truly holy emulation of what I loved in my son John, and of the return his holy love gave me, imitating him with all perfection according to thy strength. Hence thou must promise me this and fulfill it, without failing in what I command thee; rather, I desire thee to labor until self-love dies within thee, along with all the effects of the first sin, and the earthly inclinations which accompany the *fomes*\* are extinguished, and thou art restored to the state of dovelike sincerity and simplicity which destroys all malice and duplicity. In all thy actions thou must be like an angel, since the condescension of the Most High with thee is so generous that He has given thee the light and intelligence of an angel more than a human creature. I solicit these great benefits for thee, and it is reasonable that thy actions correspond to thy understanding. Towards me thou

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\* *fomes peccati*, the incitement to sin [Ed.]

must have a continual affection and loving solicitude to please me and serve me, being always attentive to my counsels, and having thine eyes on my hands\* in order to know what I command, and execute it promptly; by this thou shalt be my true daughter, and I thy Protectress and loving Mother.

## END OF BOOK FIVE

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\* cf. Ps. 122:2 [Ed.]