

CHAPTER XXVIII

Christ our Redeemer Begins to Receive and Call His Disciples in the Presence of the Baptist, and Commences to Preach; the Most High Commands the Heavenly Mother to Follow Him.

306. Our Savior, having visited the villages in Judea for ten months after his fast, now resolved to manifest Himself to the world; not that He had spoken exclusively in private of the truths of eternal life, but He had not until then proclaimed Himself publicly as the Messiah and the Master of life, whereas now the time for doing so, according to the decrees of infinite Wisdom, had arrived. Hence the Lord sought again the presence of his Precursor and Baptist John, so by his testimony (since such was his office in the world) the light would be manifested in the darkness (Jn. 1:5). By divine revelation the Baptist knew of this visit of the Savior and of his intention to make Himself known to the world as the Redeemer and the true Son of the eternal Father. When therefore St. John saw Him coming he exclaimed in wonderful joy of his spirit to his disciples: *Ecce Agnus Dei, behold the Lamb of God* (Ib. 29, 36). This testimony referred not only to his previous identical words in regard to Christ, but also presupposed the more particular instructions which he had given to his close disciples. It was as if he said to them: Here now you see the Lamb of God, of whom I have spoken to you, who has come to redeem the world and open the way to heaven. This was the last time the Baptist saw the Savior in the natural way; however, Christ appeared to him just before his death, as I shall relate further on (362).

307. The two first disciples of Christ, who were with St. John the Baptist at the time, heard this testimony, and moved by it and by the light and grace interiorly imparted to them they began to follow the Lord. Benignantly turning to them the Lord asked them what they sought (Jn. 1:38); they answered that they wished to know where He lived, and the Lord bade them follow. They were with Him that day as St. John the Evangelist tells us (Ib. 39). One of them, he says, was St. Andrew, the brother of St. Peter, but the other he does not mention; but according to the understanding given me it was St. John the Evangelist himself, who in his great modesty did not desire to give his name. So St. John and St. Andrew in this first calling were the first fruits of the apostolate of the Baptist, being the first to follow the Savior solely by the exterior testimony of the Baptist, of whom they were disciples, without being audibly called by the Lord himself. Then St. Andrew sought his brother Simon, telling him how he had found the Messiah, who is called Christ (Ib. 41ff.), and brought him to the Lord. Looking upon Peter He said: *Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter*. All this happened within the confines of Judea, and on the next day the Lord entered Galilee. There He found St. Philip and called him to his following. Philip then found Nathanael and gave him an account of what had happened and how they had found the Messiah who was Jesus of Nazareth, and he brought him into the presence of Christ. Nathanael, having spoken with the Lord as recorded by St. John at the end of chapter one of his Gospel, entered into the discipleship of Christ our Lord in the fifth place.

308. With these five disciples, the first stones in the foundation of the new Church, Christ our Savior entered Galilee for the purpose of beginning his public preaching and baptizing. From the moment they joined their Master He enkindled in the Apostles thus called a new light and fire of divine love, and showered upon them the sweetness of his blessings (Ps. 20:4). It is not possible worthily to describe the labors undergone by the divine Teacher in the vocation and education of these and the other disciples in order to found upon them the Church. He sought them out with great diligence and solicitude; He urged them on frequently by the powerful and efficacious help

of his grace; He enlightened their hearts and enriched them with incomparable gifts and blessings; He received them with admirable kindness; He nourished them with the sweetest milk of his doctrines; He bore with them with invincible patience; He cherished them as a most loving Father cherishes his tender little children.* Since our nature is clumsy and rude material for the exalted, spiritual and delicate operations of the interior, and since these disciples were to be not only perfect but consummate masters of perfection in the world and in the Church, the work of transforming and raising them from their rough natural state into such a heavenly and divine position by his instructions and example was necessarily a vast undertaking. In the performance of this work the Lord has left a most exalted example of patience, meekness and charity for all prelates, princes, and whoever is charged with the guidance of subjects. Not less significant for us sinners are the proofs of his fatherly kindness, for He was not satisfied with simply bearing with their faults and defects, their natural inclinations and passions; rather He first displayed toward them the force of his admirable sweetness so we could lift up our hearts and not become discouraged amid the innumerable imperfections of our earthly and fragile condition.

309. By the means already mentioned (279) the Queen of heaven was informed of all the wonderful doings of our Savior in the vocation of the Apostles and disciples and in his public preaching. She gave thanks to the eternal Father for these first disciples, acknowledging and admitting them in imitation of her Son as her spiritual children, and offering them to His divine Majesty with new songs of praise and joy. On this occasion of the choice of the first disciples She was favored by a new revelation of the Most High in which She was informed again of his holy and eternal decree concerning the Redemption of man and of the manner in which it was to be executed in the preaching of his most holy Son. He said to Her: “My Daughter and my Dove, chosen out of thousands, it is necessary for Thee to accompany and assist my Onlybegotten and thine in the labors which He is about to undertake in the work of the Redemption. The time of his suffering is come, and I am about to open up the stores of wisdom and goodness in order to enrich men by my treasures. Through their Redeemer and Teacher I desire to free them from the slavery of sin and of the demon, and pour out the abundance of my grace upon the hearts of all mortals who prepare themselves to know my incarnate Son and follow Him as their Head and Guide upon the way of eternal salvation. I desire to raise the poor from the dust and enrich them, cast down the proud, exalt the humble, and enlighten the blind in the shadows of death (Is. 9:2). I desire to exalt my friends and chosen ones and make known the greatness of my Name. In the execution of this, my holy and eternal will, I desire Thee, my cherished and chosen One, to cooperate with my Son, accompany Him, follow and imitate Him, and I shall be with Thee in all Thou shalt do.”

310. “Supreme King of the universe (responded most holy Mary), from whom all creatures receive their being and preservation, though I am but vile dust and ashes I shall speak in thy presence according to thy condescension (Gen. 18:27). Accept, O most high Lord and God, the heart of thy handmaid, which is prepared to sacrifice itself for the accomplishment of thy pleasure. Receive the holocaust not only of my lips but of my inmost soul in obedience to the orders of thy eternal wisdom manifested to thy slave. Behold me prostrate before thy presence and supreme majesty; fulfill in me entirely thy will and pleasure. But if it is possible (O Thou whose power is infinite) that I alone suffer and die, or die with thy Son and mine, or die in order to spare Him from death, this would be the fulfillment of all my desires and the plenitude of my joy, to see the sword of thy justice strike me instead, since I am closer to guilt. His Majesty is

* cf. I Jn. 2:2 [Ed.]

impeccable by nature as well as by the gifts of his divinity. I know, most just King, that being offended by the insult of sin thy equity demands satisfaction by a Person equal to Thy Majesty. All creatures are infinitely distant from his dignity; yet it is also true that any of the acts of thy Onlybegotten is abundantly sufficient for the Redemption, and that He has done much for men. If because of this it is possible for me to die in order to save his priceless life I am prepared to die; yet if thy decree is unchangeable, grant me, highest God and Father, if possible, to pour out my life with his. But in this I shall also submit to thy will, just as I am ready to obey Thee in following Him and in sharing his labors. Do Thou assist me with the power of thy right hand so I may hasten to imitate Him and fulfill thy pleasure and my own longings.”

311. I cannot further manifest with greater reasonings what has been given to me to understand concerning the heroic and wonderful acts performed by our Queen and Lady on this occasion, and the most ardent fervor with which She desired to suffer and die, either in order to spare her most holy Son from his Passion and Death or to die with Him. Hence if fervent acts of love, even when they are directed toward things impossible, so highly oblige God that if they arise from a true and upright heart He accepts them as truly effective and worthy of full reward, what must have been the merits of the Mother of Grace and of love in thus offering her life as a sacrifice of her love? It is beyond the reach of human or angelic thought to comprehend such an exalted sacrament of love, in which it would have been sweet to Her to suffer and die; and it became in Her a much greater pain not to be permitted to die with her Son and to be alive while She saw Him suffer and die, as I shall record later on (665). Hence by this truth one can come to understand the similarity which the glory of most holy Mary has with that of Christ, and likewise the grace and sanctity of this great Lady with her Exemplar, for in all things She corresponded to his love and rose to the highest point imaginable in a mere creature. In these sentiments our Queen issued forth from her vision, and the Most High again commanded her Angels to assist and serve Her in what She was to do. As most faithful ministers of the Lord they obeyed, ordinarily accompanying Her in visible forms and serving Her wherever She went.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN AND LADY HERSELF.

312. My daughter, all the doings of my most holy Son prove his divine love toward men and how different this love is from that which they have among themselves, for since they are so stingy, prone to making excuses, avaricious and feeble, they are ordinarily not moved to love anyone unless incited by some advantage they suppose is in the one they love, and therefore the love of a creature is born from the good thought to be in that which they love. But divine love, having its fountain within itself, and being capable of effecting its own desires, does not seek the creature because it is worthy, but it loves creatures in order to make them worthy of love, and thus no soul should despair of the divine goodness. Yet no one must on that account have a vain and presumptuous trust, expecting divine love to work in him effects of grace of which he is altogether unworthy, for in these gifts of his love the Most High follows a course of equity most mysterious to the creature. Although God loves them all and desires all to be saved (I Tim. 2:4), yet in the distribution of these gifts and effects of his love (which He denies to nobody) He undeniably applies a certain measure and weight of the sanctuary by which He dispenses them. Now as man cannot penetrate or comprehend this secret, he must take care not to forfeit or lose the first grace and calling, for he does not know whether he thus forfeits the second by his ingratitude, and he can only be certain of not losing the second grace by making use of the first grace. The soul can know for certain only this, that grace will not be denied if the soul does not

make itself unworthy. These workings of divine love in the soul are accompanied by interior enlightenment, and thus in the presence of this light men are reprov'd for their sins and convinced of their evil state and the danger of eternal death.* But human pride makes many of them so foolish and base of heart that they resist this light, while others are hard to move and never fail to have some vain excuse for their negligence; hence both counteract the first effects of the love of God and make themselves unfit for future graces. Now without the help of grace men cannot avoid evil, nor can they do good, or even know it. Thus many cast themselves from abyss to abyss (Ps. 41:8), for since they counteract and repel grace, and are thus unworthy of further help, they inevitably draw upon themselves ruin by falling from sin to sin.

313. Therefore be attentive, my dearest, to the light which in thy soul has brought forth the love of the Most High, for by the enlightenment which thou hast received in the History of my life, even if thou hadst no other light, thou art placed under such great obligations that if thou dost not correspond with them in the holiness of thy life thou shalt be more reprehensible in the eyes of God and in mine, and in the presence of angels and men, than all the other human born. Let also the conduct of the first disciples of my most holy Son, and the promptitude with which they followed Him, serve thee as an example. Although his forbearance and kind instruction were a special grace, they faithfully corresponded to it and followed the teachings of their Master. Their human nature was weak, yet they did not make themselves incapable of receiving further blessings of the right hand of God, and they extended their desires to much more than their strength could achieve. In order to bring this faithful love in thee to its greatest perfection, I desire thee to imitate me in all the works which I have performed on this occasion, and in my desire to die for my divine Son or with Him, if it had been permitted. Prepare thy heart for what I shall yet reveal to thee of the death of the Lord and of my own life so thou mayest in all things do what is perfect and holy. Consider, my daughter, that I have a complaint against the human race of which I have spoken to thee at other times (*Inc.* 701; *Tran.* 208, 219, 228), and which applies to nearly all men, namely that they neglect and forget to inform themselves of what I and my most holy Son have done for them, and do not weigh gratefully the blessings of each hour, nor seek to make a proper return. Do not thou give me this displeasure, since I am able to make thee a participator in such venerable secrets and magnificent sacraments in which thou dost find so much light and instruction, and the practice of the highest and most excellent virtues. Raise thyself above thyself and labor diligently in order to receive more and more grace, and by corresponding with it gather many merits and eternal rewards.

* cf. Jn. 1:9; Last Gospel of the Mass [Ed.]