

CHAPTER X

Most Holy Mary Receives New Enlightenment Regarding the Ten Commandments, and what She Did having Received This Benefit.

106. Just as the doctrines of the Catholic faith pertain to the activity of the intellect, so the Ten Commandments pertain to the activity of the will. Though all free acts in all the infused and acquired virtues depend upon the will, yet they are not equal in issuing from it. Acts of faith are freely born immediately from the intellect which produces them, and depend on the will only insofar as it embraces them with a pure, holy, pious and reverential affection; moreover, it is not necessary for the intellect to understand the obscure objects and truths of faith in order to generate acts of faith without consulting the will, waiting only for the desire of the will. But in the exercise of the other virtues the will acts for itself and consults the intellect only for the proposal of what is to be done, as one who carries the light ahead. The will is so sovereign and free that it permits no commands of the intellect or any kind of violence. This is the order established by the Lord so no one could be forced to serve Him unwillingly, through necessity, or by compulsion or violence, but so each one may serve God candidly, freely, and with joy, as the Apostle teaches (II Cor. 9:7).

107. After most holy Mary had been so divinely instructed in the articles and dogmas of our holy faith, She was favored by another vision of the Divinity similar to the one mentioned in the last chapter (97). It was vouchsafed to Her for the purpose of renewing in Her the understanding of the ten precepts of the Decalogue. In it were manifested to Her with great clearness and fullness all the mysteries of the Commandments as they were propounded by the divine clemency for the guidance of men to eternal life, and as they had been given to Moses on the two tablets (Ex. 31:18; Dt. 5:22). On the first of these tablets were written the three precepts concerning the honor and worship of God, and on the second the seven pertaining to our dealings with our neighbors. The Redeemer of the world, her most holy Son, was to renew all of them in the hearts of men (Jer. 31:33), while our Queen and Lady was to commence the practice of all that each one contained. She also understood their relation to each other, and how necessary they are to men in order to attain to the participation of the Divinity. She had a clear comprehension of the equity, justice and wisdom with which the Commandments were established by the divine will, and that it was a holy (Rom. 7:12), immaculate (Ps. 18:8), sweet, lightsome (Ib. 9; Mt. 11:30), pure, unerring (Ps. 118:142) and convenient law for mortals because it was so righteous and conformable to the natural capacity of reason, how well it can and ought to be embraced with joy and appreciation (Rom. 7:22), and how its Author offered the help of his grace for its observance. Our great Queen knew in this vision many other most exalted mysteries and secrets concerning the state of the holy Church, including those in it who would keep its divine precepts, and those who would break and despise them, who would not receive, keep, or admit them.

108. The most sincere Dove issued from this vision transformed by an ardent and zealous love for the divine law. Immediately She went to her most holy Son, in whose soul She saw the divine laws clearly mirrored, in order to reproduce them in her own self according to the order of grace. At the same time by abundant enlightenment She knew the desire of His Majesty and how it pleased Him that She would be the living model of the observance of all these precepts. It is true (as I have said several times [*Con.* 487, 633, etc.]) that our great Lady possessed a habitual infused knowledge of all these mysteries for her continual guidance, yet this habitual knowledge was renewed and intensified day by day. Since the extension and profundity of the objects of

these mysteries was almost infinite, there always remained a measureless field of new secrets open for her interior vision. On this occasion many new points were explained to Her by the divine Master, propounding to Her his holy law and precepts with the order and arrangement most convenient for them to be held in the Church Militant of his Gospel. She also obtained copious and singular enlightenments concerning each one of them separately, along with particular circumstances surrounding them. Though our limited capacity and understanding cannot comprehend such high and sovereign sacraments, none of them were concealed from the heavenly Lady, for we must not measure her profound knowledge with the capacity of our shortsighted understanding.

109. She humbly offered Herself to her most holy Son with her Heart ready to obey Him in the observance of all his Commandments, and petitioned Him to instruct Her and grant his divine favor in order to execute all that He commanded in them. His Majesty answered Her as follows: “My Mother, chosen and predestined by my eternal will and wisdom for the greater pleasure and approbation of my Father, one in Divinity with Me: Our eternal love, which obliges Us to communicate our Divinity to creatures, raising them to the participation of our glory and happiness, has ordained this holy and pure law by which mortals may come to attain the end for which they were created through our clemency (Ez. 20:11). This desire which We have shall rest upon Thee, my Dove and my Friend, leaving engraved in thy Heart our divine law with such efficacy and clarity that from the very beginning of thy existence to all eternity it cannot be obscured or effaced, and its efficacy shall not be impeded nor in anything remain void as with the rest of the children of Adam. Take notice, Sulamitess and most Beloved, that this law is entirely pure and immaculate, and hence We desire to deposit it in Thee, who art also most pure and immaculate, in whom all our thoughts and works are glorified.”

110. These words, which were accomplished in the heavenly Mother without any hindrance, enriched and deified Her with the full understanding and acceptance of the Ten Commandments and the mysteries contained therein. Directing her intellect by the celestial light and conforming her will to that of her divine Teacher, She entered into the meaning of the first and greatest precept: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind*, for in these words it was given afterwards by the Evangelists (Mt. 22:37-38; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27), and long before by Moses in Deuteronomy (6:5-8). Her mind grasped it with all the qualifications added thereto by the Lord, that men must preserve it in their hearts and fathers teach it to their children, that all should meditate upon it in their houses and outside of them, sitting and traveling, sleeping and watching, and should always have it before the interior vision of the soul. Just as our Queen understood it so also did She fulfill this Commandment of the law of God, with all the conditions and efficacy commanded by His Majesty; and if none of the other children of men fulfilled it with all plenitude in this life, yet most holy Mary accomplished this perfection in mortal flesh, and more completely than the highest and most inflamed Seraphim and all the Saints and Blessed of heaven. I shall not now enlarge upon this, for I have somewhat expiated upon the charity of the great Queen in the first Part of this History when speaking of her virtues (*Con.* 519ff.). On this particular occasion She shed the most bitter tears because of the sins which were to be committed against this great Commandment, and She took it upon Herself to satisfy by her love for the defects and faults of mortals.

111. Upon the first precept of the love of God follow the other two, which are the second Commandment, not to dishonor Him by vain swearing, and the third Commandment, to honor Him in his feasts, keeping and sanctifying them. These Commandments the Mother of Wisdom

understood and penetrated, engraving them in her pious and humble Heart, and resolving to render supreme veneration and worship to the Divinity. Deeply She pondered upon the injuries committed by creatures against the immutable being of God and his infinite goodness by false and vain oaths, or by blasphemies against God and his Saints. In her sorrow due to the presumptuous transgression of these Commandments by the rational creatures She asked the holy Angels who assisted Her in her name to charge the Guardian Angels of all men to prevent the committing of this outrage against God, and to restrain men by holy inspirations and the fear of God (Ps. 118:120) from perjuring or blaspheming his holy Name; moreover, She besought the Almighty to shower his benedictions of sweetness upon those who abstained from vain oaths and who revered his holy Name.

112. In regard to the sanctification of feast days (which is the third Commandment) the great Queen of the Angels had knowledge by these visions of all the feast days which were to be included under those of precept in the holy Church and the manner of their celebration and observance. Although from the time when She was in Egypt (as I have said in its place [*Inc.* 687]) She had begun to celebrate those feasts involving the mysteries which had already occurred, yet after this notice She celebrated other feasts, such as that of the most holy Trinity and those pertaining to her most holy Son and the Angels. To celebrate these and other mysteries afterwards solemnized by the Church She invited the heavenly court, and in union with them She sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. The days which are specially assigned for the worship of God She spent entirely therein, not because her bodily activity ever interfered with her admirable interior attention, or impeded her spirit, but in order to execute what She understood would be done, sanctifying the feasts of the Lord and seeing into the future of the law of grace, and with holy emulation and prompt obedience She desired to anticipate all it contained as the first Disciple of the Redeemer of the world.

113. The same understanding and knowledge most holy Mary possessed in regard to the seven Commandments which concern our duties toward our neighbor. Regarding the fourth Commandment, to honor father and mother, She understood well who were to be included under the name of parents; how after the honor due to God that due to parents comes next; how children are to render them this honor in all reverence; and also what the obligations of parents are toward their children. She saw the justice of the fifth Commandment, forbidding murder, since the Lord is the Master of life and being of man, and withheld power over it even from its owner,* and therefore much more from any of his fellow men. As life is the very first of the natural goods and the foundation of grace, She gave thanks to the Lord for having by this Commandment so bountifully protected it. She looked upon all men as creatures of his hand (Wis. 2:23), capable of his grace and glory (Ecclus. 15:14ff.) and purchased by the blood of her Son (I Peter 1:9), and therefore She earnestly prayed for the faithful observance of this Commandment in the Church. Our most pure Lady understood the nature of the sixth Commandment in the same manner as the Blessed, who do not look upon the danger of human weakness in itself but rather in mortals themselves, and can know it without being touched by it. The most blessed Lady, altogether preserved from the taint of sin, understood the nature of this Commandment from an even higher standpoint of grace than the saints. Such were the sentiments awakened in this great honorer of chastity that while She excited love for it and sorrow for the sins committed by men against it She wounded anew the Heart of the Almighty (Cant. 4:9), and according to our way of speaking consoled her divine Son for the offenses of

* thus forbidding suicide [Ed.]

mankind against this precept. Since She knew that in the new law of the Gospel the observance of this Commandment was to be carried so far as to make possible congregations of virgins and men who would promise inviolate chastity by vow, She besought the Lord to guarantee them his unbroken blessings. The Lord granted this request of his purest Mother, and He assured Her that as a reward of virginal purity its devotees would have the privilege of being her followers, She who was the Virgin Mother of the Lamb (Ps. 44:15). With incomparable joy She gave thanks to the Lord for thus extending the practice of virginity which She herself had inaugurated in the new law. I will not stop to descant upon the priceless value of this virtue since I have already spoken of it in the first Part (*Con.* 433, 457-9) and in other places (*Inc.* 133, 347).

114. Equally remarkable was her understanding of the other Commandments; of the seventh, *thou shalt not steal*; of the eighth, *thou shalt not bear false witness*; of the ninth, *thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife*; and of the tenth, *thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods and possessions*. In regard to each of them She excited great acts of interior compliance with them, and for each of them She praised and thanked the Lord in the name of the entire human race for guiding them so wisely and efficaciously toward their eternal salvation by a law so well ordered for the benefit of men. She saw that by their observance men would not only secure the eternal reward due to them, but would also enjoy true peace and tranquility adapted to each one's state and circumstances; for if all rational creatures would submit to the just requirements of the law of God, and would resolve to follow and observe his Commandments, they would enjoy that most delightful and exquisite happiness which is produced by the testimony of a good conscience (II Cor. 1:12). All human delight cannot be compared to the consolation of having been faithful to the divine law in all things great and small (Mt. 25:21). For this benefit we owe a great debt to Christ our Redeemer, who binds us to Him in good works and grants contentment,* tranquil rest, consolation, and much happy togetherness in this present life; and if not all of us attain them it is because we do not observe his Commandments. The labors, calamities and unhappiness of the people are the inseparable effects of the transgressions of mortals, and though each one contributes his share in causing such misfortunes, yet we are so senseless that as soon as we are overtaken by any adversity we begin to lay the blame on others, while we should lay it only on ourselves.

115. Who can estimate the evils of this life springing from dishonest dealings, forbidden by the seventh Commandment, or from the lack of contentment with one's own lot in reliance on the help of the Lord, who forgets not the birds of the air (Mt. 6:26) or the smallest worm of the earth? What miseries and afflictions do Christian nations suffer merely because their rulers are not satisfied with the territories given into their charge by the highest King? Seeking to extend their sway and influence they have left in the world neither calm nor peace, nor estates, nor lives or souls for their Creator. No less evil and discord is caused by false testimony and lies, which offend the highest Truth[†] and hinder human communication, sowing the seeds of strife and destroying peace and tranquility in human hearts. Both the one as well as the other indispose the Creator from entering in and dwelling with them, which is what He desires from them (I Cor. 3:17). Coveting another's wife and adultery violate the holy law of matrimony, confirmed and sanctified by the Sacrament (Mt. 19:4ff.); and how many hidden and manifest evils have they caused and do cause among Catholics? If we consider how many transgressions are manifest to the eyes of the world, and how many more remain hidden to men, while they are not hidden to

* cf. I Tim. 6:6 [Ed.]

† cf. Jn. 14:6 [Ed.]

God, the exact and just Judge (Ps. 7:12), who punishes them even now, shall we not be convinced that He will be so much the more severe in his punishments the more He has overlooked our sins at present (Rom. 2:5), and the longer He has patiently allowed the Christian commonwealths to continue in existence?

116. All these truths our great Queen perceived in the Lord. Although She was aware of the wickedness of men in thus lightly throwing aside the respect and reverence due to their God after He had so kindly provided for them such necessary laws and precepts, yet the most prudent Lady was neither scandalized at human frailty, nor did She wonder at man's ingratitude, but like a kind Mother She pitied mortals, and with most ardent love She thanked the Almighty for his benefits, trying to satisfy for the transgressions against the evangelical law and asking for the grace to observe them perfectly. The summary of all these Commandments, to love God above all and our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:40), most holy Mary comprehended perfectly, as well as the truth that the proper understanding and practice of these two Commandments is the perfection of true virtue (Rom. 13:10). He that practices them is not far from the kingdom of God (Mk. 12:34), and the observance of them is to be preferred to the offering of holocausts, as the Lord himself teaches us in the Gospel (Ib. 33). In the proportion our Queen understood these precepts so did She put them into practice, fulfilling them as they are contained in the Gospel without the omission of the least of its precepts or counsels. This heavenly Princess put the teachings of the Redeemer more perfectly into practice than all the saints and faithful of the holy Church.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE DIVINE LADY AND QUEEN OF HEAVEN GAVE ME.

117. My daughter, when the Word of the eternal Father descended from the bosom of the Father to take in my womb the humanity in which He was to redeem the human race, *to enlighten them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death* (Lk. 1:79) and raise them to the happiness which they were losing, it was necessary that His Majesty come to be their light, their way, their truth, and their life (Jn. 14:6), and give them a law so holy it would justify them, so clear it would enlighten them, so secure they would trust in it, so powerful it would move them, so efficacious it would help them, and so truthful it would give joy and wisdom to all who would keep it. The immaculate law of the Gospel in its precepts and counsels has in it the power to produce all these and other such admirable effects, and God has composed and constituted rational creatures in such a way that all their happiness, corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, depends entirely upon keeping this law. Hence thou canst judge the blind ignorance of mortals by which their deadly enemies have enthralled them (Gal. 3:1), for though men incline so much to their own happiness, and all earnestly desire it, there are so few who find it because they do not seek it in the divine law where alone it can be found.

118. Knowing this, prepare thy heart so the Lord can write in it his holy law. Forget and put away from thee all that is visible and earthly so all thy faculties may be free and unencumbered by other images and species, and there may be found only those which are fixed there by the finger of the Lord according to his doctrine and consent, such as those which are contained in the truths of the Gospel. So thy desires will not be frustrated, beseech the Lord day and night to make thee worthy of the blessings and promises of my most holy Son. Remember that negligence is more abominable in thee than in all the other mortals, for no one else has the divine love of God so urgently called or assisted with such might and blessings as thee. In the days of abundance, as well as in the days of affliction and temptation, remember thy debt to the Lord and his jealous zeal, so neither favors may exalt thee nor sufferings and pain oppress thee. Whether

thou art in either state, do thou turn to the divine law written in thy heart, observing it inviolably and incessantly with all attention and perfection. And regarding the love of thy neighbor always apply that first rule of doing unto others as thou dost desire to be done to thyself.* If thou dost desire them to think and act well toward thee, thou thyself must do the same with thy brethren. If thou dost feel they offend thee in little things, do thou avoid giving them any such offense. If thou dost see others doing what seems evil and disagreeable to their neighbor avoid it thyself, for thou knowest how much it offends against the law established by the Most High. Weep over thy faults and those of thy neighbor because they are against the law of God, for this is true charity toward the Lord and toward thy neighbor. Lament over the afflictions of others as over thy own,† for thus shalt thou imitate me.

* cf. Mt. 7:12 [Ed.]

† cf. Gal. 6:2 [Ed.]