

CHAPTER XVI

Christ our Savior is Dragged to the House of the High Priest Caiphas, where He is Falsely Accused and Asked Whether He is the Son of God; St. Peter Denies Him Two More Times; what Most Holy Mary Did on This Occasion, and Other Hidden Mysteries.

557. After our Savior Jesus had received reproaches and blows in the house of Annas, He was sent bound and fettered as He was to the son-in-law of Annas, Caiphas (Jn. 18:24), who in that year officiated as the prince and high priest. With him were gathered the scribes and lords of the people in order to urge the condemnation of the most innocent Lamb (Mt. 26:57). The invincible patience and meekness of the Lord of all virtues (Ps. 23:10) astounded the demons, and they were filled with such great confusion and fury as no words can describe. Since they could not penetrate into the interior of the sanctuary of his humanity, and did not notice in the most meek Lord any inordinate movement, nor any sign of complaint, nor any sighing, nor the least attempt at human relief by which they are accustomed to search the hearts of other men, the dragon was in the utmost torment and surprise as at something altogether new and unheard of among weak and imperfect mortals. In his fury he redoubled his efforts to irritate the scribes and servants of the priests against Him and excite them to shower their abominable insults and affronts upon Him. In all the demon suggested to them they showed themselves most eager, and they executed it as far as the divine will permitted.

558. That entire mob of infernal spirits and inhuman men left the house of Annas and dragged our Savior through the streets to the house of Caiphas, treating Him most ignominiously by their implacable cruelty. Entering amid scandalous uproar into the house of the high priest, he and the entire gathering received the Creator and Lord of the whole universe with great laughter and mockery upon seeing Him subject and surrendered to their power and jurisdiction and seemingly without power to defend Himself. O secret of the most exalted wisdom of heaven! O foolishness and ignorance of hell, and blind stupidity of mortals! What an immeasurable distance do I see between the doings of the Most High and yours! At the very time when the King of glory and mighty in battles (Ps. 23:8), as the Lord of all virtues, is vanquishing vice, death and sin by the virtues of patience, humility and charity, the world thinks it has conquered Him and subjected Him by its arrogant pride and presumption. What a distance there was between the thoughts of Christ our Lord and these ministers and workers of wickedness! The Author of life offered up to the eternal Father the triumph which his meekness and humility won over sin; He prayed for the priests, scribes and servants, presenting his patience and sufferings as a compensation for their persecutions, and excusing them because of their ignorance. The same prayer and petition was offered at the same time by his Blessed Mother for her enemies and the enemies of her divine Son, thus following and imitating the Lord in all his doings, for as I have said many times She saw all as if personally present (279, etc.). Between the actions of the Son and the Mother there was a most sweet and wonderful harmony and correspondence most pleasing to the eyes of the eternal Father.

559. The high priest Caiphas, filled with mortal envy and hatred against the Master of life, was seated in his chair of state or throne. Assisting him was Lucifer with all the demons who had come from the house of Annas. The scribes and Pharisees like bloodthirsty wolves surrounded the gentle Lamb; they were all full of the exultation of the envious who see the object of their envy confounded and brought down. By common consent they sought for witnesses whom they could bribe to bring false testimonies against Jesus our Savior (Mt. 26:59). Those who had been

procured advanced to proffer their accusations and testimonies, but their accusations neither agreed with each other (Mk. 14:56), nor could any of their slander be made to apply to Him who of his very nature was innocence and sanctity (Heb. 7:26). In order not to be confounded they brought two other false witnesses (Mt. 26:60-1) who testified against Jesus, deposing that they heard Him say He would destroy the temple of God made by the hands of men, and build up another one in three days not made by hands (Mk. 14:58). This testimony did not seem to be of much value, although they founded upon it the accusation that He arrogated to Himself divine power. Even if this testimony had not been false in itself, the saying, if uttered by the Lord Almighty, would have been infallibly true and could not have been presumptuous or false; however, the testimony was false, since the Lord had not uttered these words in reference to the material temple of God as the witnesses wished to inculcate. At the time when He expelled the buyers and sellers from the temple, and when asked by what power He did it, He answered *destroy this temple*, that is, destroy this sacred humanity, *and in three days I shall raise it up* (Jn. 2:19), which He certainly did at his Resurrection in testimony of his divine power.

560. Our Savior Jesus answered not a word to all the calumnies and falsehoods testified against his innocence. Caiphas, provoked by the patient silence of the Lord, rose up from his seat and said to Him (Mk. 14:60): “Why dost Thou not answer to what so many witnesses testify against Thee?” But even to this the Lord made no response, for Caiphas and the rest were not only indisposed to believe Him, but they treacherously wished to make use of his answer in order to calumniate Him and satisfy the people* in their proceedings against the Galilean so they might not be thought to have condemned Him to death without cause. This humble silence, which should have appeased the wicked priest, only infuriated him so much the more because it frustrated his evil purpose. Lucifer, who incited the high priest and all the rest, intently watched the conduct of the Savior. But the intention of the dragon was different from that of the high priest; he merely wanted to irritate the Lord, or hear some word by which he could determine whether He was true God.

561. With this purpose Lucifer stirred up Caiphas to the highest pitch of rage and to ask in great wrath and haughtiness: *I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God* (Mt. 26:63). This question of the high priest certainly convicted him at once of the deepest temerity and of dreadful blasphemy, for if it was sincere he had permitted Christ to be brought before his tribunal in doubt whether He was the true God or not, which would make him guilty of the most formidable and audacious crime. The doubt in such a matter should have been solved in quite another way, conformable to the demands of right reason and justice.† Christ our Savior, hearing Himself adjured by the living God, inwardly adored and revered the Divinity, though appealed to by such sacrilegious lips. And in virtue of this reverence He responded and said: *Thou hast said it: I am He.*^Δ *Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man, who I am, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven* (Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62). At this divine answer the demons and men were affected in different ways. Lucifer and his demons could not bear it, but immediately felt a superior force which hurled them down into the abyss and oppressed them by the truth it contained; and they would not have dared to come again into the presence of Christ our Savior if divine Providence had not allowed them to fall again into doubts whether this man

* cf. Mt. 23:5 [Ed.]

† cf. Num. 20:8-12 [Ed.]

Δ cf. Jn. 10:24 [Ed.]

Christ had really spoken the truth or had merely sought this means of freeing Himself from the hands of the Jews. This uncertainty gave them new courage and they came forth once more to the battlefield. The ultimate triumph over the demons He reserved for the cross, upon which the Savior was to vanquish both them and death as Habacuc had prophesied and as will we shall see later (712).

562. But the high priest Caiphas, furious at the answer of the Lord, instead of looking upon it as a solution of his doubt, rose once more from his seat, and rending his garments as an outward manifestation of his zeal for the honor of God, loudly cried out (Mt. 26:65-6): *He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: What think you?* The real blasphemy, however, consisted rather in these words of Caiphas, since he denied the certain fact that Christ was the Son of God by his very nature, and since he attributed to Him sin, which is directly repugnant to the nature of his divine Person. Such was the stupidity of the wicked priest, who by his office should have recognized and proclaimed the universal truth. He made of himself an execrable blasphemer by maintaining that He, who is sanctity itself, had blasphemed. And having shortly before prophesied by divine inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in virtue of his dignity as high priest, that *it is expedient that one man should die that the whole nation perish not* (Jn. 11:50), he now was hindered by his sins from understanding his own prophecy. Since the example and opinions of princes and prelates powerfully stirs up the flattery and subservience of inferiors, that whole gathering of wickedness was incensed at the Savior Jesus. All exclaimed in a loud voice: *He is guilty of death* (Ib. 66), “let Him die, let Him die!” At the same time, irritated by the demon, they lashed out against the most meek Master and vented upon Him their diabolical fury. Some of them struck Him in the face, others kicked Him, others tore out his hair, others spat upon his venerable countenance, while others slapped or struck Him in the neck, which was a treatment reserved among the Jews only for the most abject and vile of criminals.

563. Never among men were such outrageous and boundless insults ever attempted as were then wrought against the Redeemer of the world. St. Luke (22:64) and St. Mark (14:65) say they covered his face and then struck Him with their hands and fists, saying: *Prophecy, prophecy unto us* (Mt. 26:68), thou prophet, *who is it that struck Thee?* The reason for their doing this was mysterious, namely, the joy* with which our Savior suffered these injuries and blasphemies (as I shall yet relate) caused in his venerable face an extraordinary beauty and resplendence which filled all those workers of wickedness with most painful amazement and confusion. They sought to attribute it to sorcery and magic, and by a resolution befitting their unworthiness they covered the face of the Lord with an unclean cloth so they would not be hindered and tormented by its divine light in venting their diabolical wrath. All these affronts, insults, and abominable ignominies were seen and felt by most holy Mary, causing in Her the same pains and wounds in the same parts of her body at the same time as inflicted upon the Lord; the only difference was that in our Lord the blows and torments were inflicted by the Jews themselves, while in his most pure Mother they were caused by the Almighty in a miraculous manner and upon the request of the Lady. Although naturally the force of her sorrows and interior anguish would have brought Her near death, She was strengthened by divine power in order to be able to continue to suffer with her beloved Son and Lord.

564. The interior acts performed by the Savior on this occasion of such inhuman and unheard-of affronts cannot fall within the domain of human reason or capacity. Only most holy Mary

* cf. Col. 1:11 [Ed.]

knew them with plenitude in order to be able to imitate them with the highest perfection. But since the divine Master now experienced in his own Person how necessary his compassion would be for those who were to follow Him and practice his doctrine, He exerted Himself so much the more in procuring for them grace and blessings on this occasion in which He was teaching them by his own example the narrow way of perfection. In the midst of these injuries and torments, and those which followed thereafter, the Lord established for his perfect and chosen souls the beatitudes which He had promised and proposed to them some time before. He looked upon the poor in spirit, who were to imitate Him in this virtue, and said (Mt. 5:3ff.): “Blessed shall they be who are stripped of earthly things, since by my Passion and Death I shall bestow upon them the kingdom of heaven as a secure and certain possession of voluntary poverty. Blessed shall they be who meekly suffer and bear adversities and tribulations, for besides the joy of having imitated Me, they shall possess the land of the hearts and the good will of men through the peacefulness of their conversation and the sweetness of their virtues. Blessed shall they be who weep while they sow in tears (Ps. 125:5), for in them they shall receive the bread of understanding and life, and they shall afterwards harvest the fruits of everlasting joy and bliss.

565. “Blessed also shall they be who hunger and thirst for justice and truth, for I shall earn for them satiation far beyond all their desires, as well in the reign of grace as in the reign of glory. Blessed shall they be who mercifully pity those who offend and persecute them as I have done, pardoning them and offering them my friendship and grace, if they desire to accept it; for I promise them in the name of my Father abundant mercy. Blessed shall be the pure of heart, who imitate Me and crucify their flesh in order to preserve purity of spirit; I promise them the vision of peace and of my divinity by becoming like unto Me and partaking of Me. Blessed shall be the peaceful, who without self-seeking do not resist the wicked and deal with them with a sincere and tranquil heart without vengeance; they shall be called my children because they imitate the character of their celestial Father, and I shall know them and write them in my memory and in my mind in order to adopt them as mine. Those who suffer persecution for justice’ sake shall be blessed and heirs of my celestial kingdom, since they suffer with Me, and where I am I desire them to be in eternity (Jn. 12:26). Rejoice, ye poor; be consoled all you who are and shall be sorrowful; delight in your happiness, ye little ones and despised ones of this world; ye who suffer with humility and patience, suffer with interior joy, since all of you are following Me in the paths of truth. Renounce vanity, despise the pomp and arrogance of the pride of the false and lying Babylon; pass through the fires and the waters of tribulation (Ps. 65:12) until you reach Me, who am the light, the truth, and your guide to eternal rest and refreshment.”

566. In such divine acts and in other aspirations for the good of sinners our Savior Jesus occupied Himself while He was surrounded by his malignant enemies like ravenous dogs as David said (Ps. 21:17), who pursued Him and satiated Him with insults, affronts, blasphemies and wounds. The Virgin Mother, who was most attentive to all that passed, accompanied Him in what He did and suffered, for in her petitions She offered the same prayer for his enemies, and in the blessings which her most holy Son bestowed upon the just and predestined the heavenly Queen constituted Herself as their Mother, Helper and Protectress. In the name of all of them She composed hymns of praise and thanksgiving because to the despised and poor of this world the Lord conceded such an exalted position in his divine acceptance and pleasure. And for this cause, and because of what She knew of these interior works of Christ our Lord, with incomparable fervor She chose anew labors and contempt, tribulations and pains for the remainder of the Passion and the rest of her most holy life.

567. St. Peter had followed our Savior Jesus from the house of Annas to that of Caiphas, though he took care to walk at some distance behind the crowd of enemies for fear the Jews might seize him. He partly repressed this fear because of the love of his Master and the natural courage of his heart. Among the great multitude which crowded in and out of the house of Caiphas, and in the darkness, it was not difficult for the Apostle to find entrance into the house of Caiphas. In the gates of the courtyard a servant maid, who was a portress as in the house of Annas, likewise noticed St. Peter. She immediately went up to the soldiers who stood at the fire with him and said: "This man is one of those who accompanied Jesus of Nazareth" (Mk. 14:67). One of the bystanders said: "Thou art truly a Galilean and one of them" (Lk. 22:58). St. Peter denied it and added an oath that he was not a disciple of Jesus (Mt. 26:70, 72), immediately leaving the company at the fire. Yet in his eagerness to see the end, although he left the courtyard he did not leave the neighborhood. His natural love and compassion for the Lord still caused him to linger in the place where he saw Him suffer so much; thus the Apostle moved about, sometimes nearer, sometimes farther from the hall of justice for nearly an hour (Lk. 22:59). Then a relative of Malchus, whose ear he had severed, recognized him and said: "Thou art a Galilean and a disciple of Jesus; I saw thee with Him in the garden" (Jn. 18:26). Then St. Peter, deeming himself discovered, was seized with still greater fear, and he began to deny it, cursing himself and asserting he knew not that Man (Mt. 26:74). Immediately the cock crowed the second time, and the prediction of his divine Master, that he would deny Him thrice before the cock crowed twice, was fulfilled to the letter (Mk. 14:30).

568. The infernal dragon was very anxious to destroy St. Peter. It was Lucifer who incited the two maids, whom he could more easily influence, and afterwards the soldiers, to molest the Apostle by their attention and inquiries. At the same time, as soon as he saw him in his dangerous hesitation and vacillation of mind, he tried to disturb St. Peter by vivid imaginations of impending cruelty. In this vehement temptation he first simply denied the Lord, added an oath to the second denial, and curses and execrations against himself at the third. Hence from one sin he fell into another greater one, yielding to the cruelty of our enemies. But St. Peter, now hearing the crowing of the cock, remembered the warning of his divine Master (Lk. 22:61), for the great Queen in her gentle love having interceded for him, the Lord now cast upon him a look of boundless mercy. From her oratory in the Cenacle She had witnessed the denials together with all the circumstances and the causes which had brought the Apostle to fall so deeply. She had seen him beset with natural fear, and much more by the merciless assaults of Lucifer. She prostrated Herself upon the ground and tearfully interceded for him, alleging his frailty and appealing to the merits of her divine Son. The Lord himself moved the heart of Peter, and by means of the light sent to him gently reproached him, exhorting him to acknowledge his fault and deplore his sin. Immediately the Apostle left the house of the high priest, bursting with inmost sorrow into bitter tears over his fall. In order to weep in the bitterness of his heart he fled to a cave, even now called that of the Crowing Cock; there he poured forth his sorrow and confusion in a flood of tears. At the end of three hours he had obtained pardon for his crimes, and the holy impulses and inspirations had continued during that whole time until he was again restored to grace. The most pure Mother and Queen sent to him one of her Angels, who secretly consoled him and excited in him the hope of forgiveness so he might not delay his full pardon by a lack of trust in the goodness of God. The Angel was ordered not to manifest himself because the Apostle had so recently committed his sin, and hence fulfilled his commission without being seen by the Apostle. St. Peter was consoled and strengthened in his great sorrow by these inspirations, and thus obtained full pardon through the intercession of most holy Mary.

*INSTRUCTION WHICH THE GREAT
QUEEN AND LADY GAVE ME.*

569. My daughter, the mysterious sacrament of the reproaches, affronts and contempt which my most holy Son suffered is a sealed book which can be opened and understood only by the divine light. Thou hast come to the knowledge of it since it has been partly manifested to thee, though due to thy limited powers thou dost write much less than thou hast seen. Yet since this mystery is being made clear and intelligible to thee in the secret of thy heart, I desire thee also to write it there and study by this living example that divine science which neither flesh nor blood can teach thee, for the world does not know, nor does it merit to know, this science. This philosophy consists in recognizing and loving the happy lot of the poor, the humble, the afflicted, the despised, and those unknown among the children of vanity. This school my most holy and loving Son established in his Church when He proclaimed and set up the eight beatitudes (Mt. 5:2ff.). Afterwards, as a Teacher who practices what He teaches, He put this doctrine into practice when in his Passion and the reproaches He suffered He reaffirmed this science of the beatitudes by executing them Himself, as thou hast written. Nevertheless, although this is set before the eyes of Catholics, and can be plainly read by them in this book of life during their whole earthly pilgrimage, there are but few and scattered souls who enter into this school and study this book, while countless are the wayward and foolish who ignore this science in their unwillingness to be taught.

570. All abhor poverty and thirst after riches, none of them being willing to recognize their emptiness. Infinite* is the number of those who are carried away by their anger and vengeance, despising meekness. Few deplore their real miseries, and struggle merely for earthly consolations; scarcely any love justice, or loyally pursue it in their dealings with their neighbors. Mercy is extinguished, purity of heart is sullied and violated, peace is ravaged. None grant pardon; none desire to suffer, not only for justice' sake, but having justly merited many punishments and torments all unjustly flee from them. Thus, my dearest, there are few who attain the blessings promised by my divine Son and by me. Many times the just indignation and anger of the Almighty is roused against those who profess the Catholic faith, since in the very sight of the living example of their Master they live almost like infidels, many of them being even more detestable since they are in truth those who despise the fruits of the Redemption which they know and confess. In the land of the saints they impiously work wickedness (Is. 26:10), and make themselves unworthy of the remedy which is placed in their hands with greater mercy.

571. I desire thee, my daughter, to labor to become one of the Blessed, following me by perfect imitation according to the strength of the graces thou receivest to understand this doctrine hidden from the prudent and wise of this world (Mt. 11:25). Day by day I manifest to thee new secrets of my wisdom so it may be established in thy heart, and so thou mayest extend thy hands to valiant deeds (Prov. 31:19). And now I will tell thee of an exercise which I practiced and which thou canst imitate to a certain degree. Thou knowest already that from the very first instant of my Conception I was full of grace, without the least stain or participation in the least effect of original sin. Due to this singular privilege I was blessed in all the virtues, without feeling any repugnance or opposition in the exercise of them, and without being conscious of owing

* cf. Eccles. 1:15 [Ed.]

satisfaction for any sins of my own. Nevertheless the divine enlightenment taught me that by being a daughter of Adam in the nature in which he sinned, though not sharing in the guilt of that sin, I was bound to humble myself to the very dust. And since I possessed senses of the same kind as those through which disobedience had been committed, the evil effects of which were then and afterwards experienced in the human condition, solely because of this parentage from Adam I owed the debt of mortifying my senses, humiliating them, and depriving them of the enjoyment proper to their nature. I acted like a most faithful daughter of a family, who assumes the debt of her father and of her brothers as her own, though she had no share in contracting it, and who strives to pay and satisfy for it more earnestly the more she loves her family and the more they are unable to satisfy and free themselves from it, not giving herself any rest until she succeeds. This I have done for the entire human race, whose miseries and transgressions I bewailed. Because I was a daughter of Adam I mortified in myself the senses and faculties by which he sinned, and I humbled myself as one who had fallen and one guilty of his sin and disobedience, even though I was entirely free from them. All this I did not only for Adam but for all who by nature are my brethren. Thou canst not imitate me under like conditions, since thou art a partaker in his sin and guilt; yet this same guilt obliges thee to imitate me in laboring in all the rest in which I labored though guiltless, since thou indeed hast this guilt and the obligation to satisfy the divine justice. Moreover this guilt must compel thee to labor without ceasing for thyself and for thy neighbor, humbling thyself to the dust, since a contrite and humbled heart (Ps. 50:19) inclines the truly pious to exercise mercy.