

CHAPTER XXIX

Christ our Redeemer Ascends into Heaven with All the Saints in His Company; He Raises His Most Holy Mother with Him in order to Put Her in Possession of Glory.

798. The most felicitous hour had arrived in which the Onlybegotten of the eternal Father, after descending from heaven in order to assume human flesh, was to ascend by his own power and in a most wonderful manner to the right hand of the Father as the Heir of his eternities, one and equal with Him in nature and infinite glory. He was to ascend also because He had previously descended to the lowest regions of the earth, as the Apostle says (Eph. 4:9), having fulfilled all that had been written and prophesied concerning his coming into the world, his life, death, and the Redemption of man, and having penetrated as the Lord of all to the very center of the earth. He put the seal to all of his mysteries by this mystery of his Ascension, which would permit the fulfillment of his promise to send the Holy Ghost, who could not come unless the Lord himself had first ascended (Jn. 16:7), who with the Father was to send the Holy Ghost upon his Church. In order to celebrate this festive and mysterious day Christ our Lord selected as witnesses the one hundred twenty persons to whom, as related in the preceding chapter, He had spoken in the Cenacle. They were most holy Mary, the eleven Apostles, the seventy-two disciples, Mary Magdalen, Martha, and Lazarus their brother, the other Marys, and certain faithful men and women completing the number of one hundred twenty mentioned above.

799. With this little flock our divine Shepherd Jesus left the Cenacle, leading all of them through the streets of Jerusalem with his most blessed Mother at his side. The Apostles and all the rest in their order proceeded in the direction of Bethany, which was less than half a league over the brow of mount Olivet. The company of Angels and Saints from limbo and purgatory followed the Victor with new songs of praise, though most holy Mary alone was privileged to see them. The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth was already divulged throughout Jerusalem and Palestine, although the perfidious and malicious princes and priests had spread about the false testimony that his body had been stolen by the disciples (Mt. 28:13); yet many would not accept their testimony nor give it any credit. Nevertheless by the disposition of divine Providence none of the inhabitants of the city, nor unbelievers nor doubters, took any notice of that holy procession which left the Cenacle, nor hindered it on its way, because all of them were justly allowed to be inattentive as being incapable of recognizing such a wonderful event; moreover Jesus, the Head and Master of this procession, was invisible to all of them except the one hundred twenty just whom He had chosen to witness his Ascension into heaven.

800. The Lord having thus secured them this privacy they all ascended mount Olivet to its highest point. There they formed three choirs, one of the Angels, another of the Saints, and a third of the Apostles and faithful, which again divided into two bands, while Christ the Savior presided. Then the most prudent Mother prostrated Herself at the feet of her Son, and worshipping Him with admirable humility She adored Him as the true God and as the Redeemer of the world, asking his last blessing. In imitation of the great Queen all the faithful there present did the same, and with great sobs and sighs they asked the Lord whether at that time He would restore the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6). His Majesty responded that secret was of his eternal Father and not proper for them to know, but for now it was necessary and suitable that upon receiving the Holy Ghost they preach in Jerusalem, Samaria, and all the world the mysteries of human Redemption (Ib. 7-8).

801. His divine Majesty, having taken leave of this holy and fortunate gathering of the faithful, his countenance beaming forth peace and majesty, joined his hands and by his own power began to raise Himself from the earth, leaving thereon the imprints of his sacred feet. With a most gentle motion He directed Himself toward the aerial region, drawing after Him the eyes and the hearts of those firstborn children, who amid sighs and tears vented their affection. And since at the movement of the First Mover are also moved the lower heavens which comprise his extensive sphere, so our Savior Jesus drew after Him the celestial choirs of the Angels, the holy Patriarchs, and the rest of the glorified Saints, some of them with body and soul, others with only their soul. All of them in heavenly order were raised up together from the earth, accompanying and following their King, Captain, and Head. The new and mysterious sacrament which the right hand of the Most High wrought on this occasion for his most holy Mother was that He raised Her up with Him* in order to put Her in possession of the glory which He had assigned to Her as his true Mother, and which She had by her merits prepared and earned for Herself. Of this favor the great Queen was capable even before it happened, for her divine Son had offered it to Her during the forty days which He spent in her company after his Resurrection. So this sacrament could be kept secret from all other human and wayfaring creatures at that time, and so the heavenly Teacher could also be present in the gathering of the Apostles and the faithful in their prayerful waiting upon the coming of the Holy Ghost (as it says in the Acts of the Apostles [1:14]), the divine power enabled the Blessed Mother miraculously to be in two places at once, remaining with the children of the Church for their comfort during their stay in the Cenacle and at the same time ascending with the Redeemer of the world to his heavenly throne, where She remained for three days. There She enjoyed the perfect use of all her powers and faculties, whereas She was more restricted in the use of them during that time in the Cenacle.

802. The most blessed Lady was raised up with her divine Son and placed at his right hand in fulfillment of what David said (Ps. 44:10), that the Queen was at his right hand in vestments gilded by the splendors of his glory and surrounded by the variety of his gifts and graces in the sight of the Angels and Saints who ascended with the Lord. So the admiration of this great mystery might awaken in the faithful greater devotion, inflame their living faith, and induce them to magnify the Author of such a rare and unheard-of miracle, I again inform those who read of it that from the time in which the Most High commissioned me to write this History, and afterwards repeatedly through many years expressly commanded me to write it, He has revealed to me many diverse mysteries and great sacraments, both already written and yet to be written, since the exalted nature of this History demanded such a preparation and predisposition. I have not received all these revelations at once, for the limitation of a creature is not capable of such abundance; rather, so I would be enabled to write new enlightenment was given to me for each mystery in particular. The enlightenments concerning each mystery were usually given to me on the feasts of Christ our Lord and of the great Queen of heaven, and particularly this great sacrament of the taking of the most pure Mother to heaven with Him by her most holy Son on the day of his Ascension (and of her remaining in the Cenacle in a wonderful and miraculous manner) was shown to me in several consecutive years on that feast day.

803. When the divine truth is known and contemplated in God himself, in whom there is all light without mixture of darkness (I Jn. 1:5), and where as well the object as its cause is evident, it creates a certainty without a touch of doubt; however, those who hear these mysteries told by

* cf. Ps. 131:8; St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* (Brooklyn, NY: Redemptorist Fathers, 1931), p. 425 [Ed.]

others must excite their piety in order to ask for belief in what is obscure. For this reason I would hesitate to write of the hidden sacrament of this celestial visit of our Queen if the omission of such a great and important wonder and prerogative would not be such a serious defect in this History. This hesitation occurred to me when I was made aware of this mystery for the first time; but now, after I have already related in the first Part that at her birth the infant Princess of the heights was elevated to the empyrean heaven (*Con.* 330), and in this second Part that She was twice thus elevated during the nine days of preparation for the Incarnation of the divine Word (*Inc.* 72, 90), I have no such hesitation in writing of this miracle. If the divine power conferred such admirable favors on the Blessed Virgin before She became the Mother of God, and in preparation for this dignity, it is much more credible that He would repeat it after She had been consecrated by bearing Him in her virginal womb, giving Him human form from her own purest blood, nursing Him at her breast with her milk, raising Him as a true Son, and after serving Him for thirty-three years, following and imitating Him in his Life, Passion and Death with a fidelity inexpressible to human tongue.

804. In the investigation of these mysteries and special favors of the Blessed Mother, the reason why the Most High operated them is quite a different thing from the cause of their being kept secret for so many centuries in the Church. The first must be regulated by the power of God and the immense love He has for his Mother, and the dignity He gave Her above all creatures. Since men in their mortal flesh can never perfectly know the dignity of that Mother, nor her love, nor the love of her Son or of the blessed Trinity for Her, nor the merits and sanctity to which his omnipotence raised Her, this ignorance tends to set limits to the divine power in doing with his Mother all He could, which was as much as He desired. If to Her alone He gave Himself in such a special manner as to become her Son of her substance, it consequently follows that in the order of grace He dealt with Her in a singular manner and as befitted no one else, not even the whole human race. Not only must the favors, benefits and blessings which the Most High worked for his most holy Mother be singular, but the general rule is that after his own most holy humanity nothing that could in any manner redound to her glory and sanctity was denied Her.

805. But in regard to revealing these wonders to his Church, God attends to other reasons of his exalted providence by which He governs it and procures new splendors for it according to the circumstances of the times, for the happy day of grace which dawned upon the world in the Incarnation of the Word and the Redemption of man has its morning, its noon, as also its evening, and all this the divine Wisdom disposes when and how it becomes opportune. Though all the mysteries of Christ and his Mother are revealed in the divine Scriptures, yet not all of them are manifested at the same time, but little by little the Lord withdraws the veil of figures, metaphors and enigmas under which many of the sacraments have been hidden. Like the rays of the sun under a passing cloud they were covered and concealed until some of the many rays of divine light would fall upon men, for even the angels, though they were made aware of the Incarnation in a general way as being the purpose for all their ministry to man, were not informed of all the conditions, effects and circumstances of this mystery; they gradually came to know many of them during the five thousand two hundred years from the creation to the Incarnation. This acquisition of new knowledge gave occasion for continued admiration and renewed praise and glory to the Author of these mysteries, as I have shown in the whole course of this History (*Inc.* 631, 692, etc.). I mention this example in answer to any wonder which might be caused in those who hear of this mysterious exaltation of most holy Mary, which along with many others already described and to be described was hidden until the Most High desired to manifest it.

806. Before I was capable of these reasonings, and when I first came to know of this mystery of Christ our Savior taking his Blessed Mother to heaven with Him at his Ascension, not small was my astonishment, not only on my own account but for the others who would come to hear of it. Among other things which I then heard the Lord tell me was I should remember what St. Paul has left recorded of himself in the Church when he refers to his rapture into the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2), which is that of the Blessed, and how he was in doubt whether he was taken there in the body or out of the body, daring to affirm neither the one nor the other, but supposing it could have happened in either manner. This at once cleared up my difficulties, for if such a thing as being taken bodily to heaven could happen to the Apostle in the beginning of his conversion, and when he had no merits but only sins to his credit, and if the concession of this miracle of the divine power entailed no danger or obstacle to the Church, how could anyone doubt the Lord showed the same favor to his Mother, especially after She attained such ineffable merits and sanctity? The Lord also added that if other Saints who rose in their body with the resurrected Christ were privileged to ascend in their body with the Savior, surely there was more reason for showing this favor to his most pure Mother. Even if no other mortal would ever have enjoyed this distinction it was due to most holy Mary in some manner because She had suffered with the Lord; hence it was reasonable for Her to share with Him his triumph and glory with which He ascended to take possession of his place at the right hand of his eternal Father, since She as his Mother had from her own substance given Him his human nature in which He now triumphantly ascended into heaven. And just as it was proper for Her not to be separated from her Son in glory, so it was also due to Her that none of the human race come body and soul to the enjoyment of eternal glory before most holy Mary, not even excepting her father and mother, or her spouse Joseph, or any of the rest. All of them, and the Lord himself, her most holy Son Jesus, would have been deprived of this accidental increase of their joy if most holy Mary, as the Mother of the Redeemer and Queen of all creation, who merited such a favor and blessing more than all the rest, had not ascended with them into heaven on that day.

807. These arguments seem to me sufficient for the rejoicing and consolation of Catholic piety in the tidings of this mystery, and of those regarding the state which She attained and which shall be related in the third Part. Returning now to the discourse of this History, I say the Lord took with Him his Blessed Mother in his Ascension into heaven, and amid incredible rejoicing and admiration filled Her with splendor and glory in the sight of the Angels and Saints. It was also very appropriate for the Apostles and the other faithful to remain ignorant of this mystery for the time being, for if they had seen their Mother and Mistress ascend with Christ their affliction would have been beyond all bounds and without recourse or relief. Nothing could ever console them for the departure of Christ more fully than to realize they still had with them their most blessed Lady and kindest Mother; even then their sighs, sobbing and tears welled up from their inmost hearts when they saw their beloved Master and Redeemer disappearing through the aerial region. And when they had almost lost sight of Him a most resplendent cloud interposed itself between Him and those He had left upon earth (Acts 1:9), intercepting Him altogether from their view; in it the Person of the eternal Father descended from heaven to the region of the air in order to meet the Son and the Mother who had furnished the new mode of existence in which He now returned. Coming to them the eternal Father received them into his embrace of infinite love to the joy of the Angels who had accompanied the Father in innumerable choirs from his heavenly seat. In a short space of time, penetrating the elements and the celestial orbs, that whole divine procession arrived at the supreme region of the empyrean heaven. At their entrance the Angels who had ascended from the earth with their Sovereigns Jesus and Mary, and those who

had joined them in the aerial region, spoke to those who had remained in the heavenly heights, and repeated those words of David, adding others referring to this mystery, saying:

808. Open, ye princes, open your eternal gates (Ps. 23:7); let them be raised and opened up, and receive into his dwelling the great King of glory, the Lord of virtues, the Powerful in battle, the Strong and Invincible, who comes triumphant and victorious over all his enemies. Open the gates of the heavenly paradise, and let them remain open and free forever, since the new Adam is coming, the Repairer of the entire human race, rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4), overflowing with the merits of his copious Redemption wrought by his death in the world. He has restored our loss and has raised human nature to the supreme dignity of his own immensity. He comes with the reign of the elect and the redeemed given to Him by his eternal Father. Now his liberal mercy has given to mortals the power of regaining in justice the right which they lost by sin, to merit by the observance of his law eternal life as his brothers and heirs of the goods of his Father, and for his greater glory and our greater rejoicing He brings with Him and at his side the Mother of Piety, who gave Him the form of man for overcoming the demon. She comes as our charming and beautiful Queen, delighting all who behold Her. Come forth, come forth, ye heavenly courtiers, and you shall see our most beautiful King with the diadem given to Him by his Mother (Cant. 3:11), and his Mother crowned with the glory conferred upon Her by her Son.

809. Amid this jubilation and other rejoicings exceeding all our conceptions that new procession thus organized arrived at the empyrean heaven. Between the two choirs of Angels and Saints passed Christ our Redeemer and his most blessed Mother, and all in their order gave supreme honor to each one and to both respectively, singing new canticles of praise to the Authors of grace and life. The eternal Father placed at his right hand upon the throne of the Divinity the incarnate Word with such glory and majesty that He filled with new admiration and reverential fear all the inhabitants of heaven. In clear and intuitive vision they recognized the Divinity of infinite glory and perfections enclosed and substantially united in one Person to the most holy humanity, beautified and exalted to the preeminence and glory due to this union such as eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor ever has entered into created thought (Is. 64:4).

810. On this occasion the humility and wisdom of our most prudent Queen reached their highest point, for overwhelmed by such divine and admirable favors She hovered at the footstool of the royal throne, annihilated in the consciousness of being a mere earthly creature. Prostrate She adored the Father and broke out in new canticles of praise for the glory communicated to his Son and for elevating in Him the deified humanity to such greatness and splendor. Again the Angels and Saints were filled with admiration and joy to see the most prudent humility of their Queen, whose living example of virtue as exhibited on that occasion they emulated among themselves in copying. Then the voice of the eternal Father was heard saying: "My Daughter, ascend higher." Her divine Son also called Her, saying: "My Mother, rise up and take possession of the place which I owe Thee for having followed and imitated Me." The Holy Ghost said: "My Spouse and Friend, come to my eternal embraces." Immediately was proclaimed to all the Blessed the decree of the most holy Trinity by which the most happy Mother, for having furnished her own blood toward the Incarnation, and for having nourished, served, imitated and followed Him with all the perfection possible to a creature, was exalted and placed at the right hand of her Son for all eternity. No one else in the human race could ever hold that place or position, nor rival Her in the unending glory connected with it, for it had been reserved for the Queen to be her possession by right after her earthly life as one who preeminently excelled all the rest of the Saints.

811. In fulfillment of this decree most holy Mary was raised to the throne of the blessed Trinity at the right hand of her Son.* At the same time She was informed, along with all the Saints, that She was given possession of this throne not only for all the ages of eternity, but it was left to her choice to remain there even now without returning to the earth, since as far as the conditional will of the divine Persons was concerned She could now remain in that state. So She could make her own choice She was shown anew the state of the Church upon earth and the orphaned and necessitous condition of the faithful, whom She was left free to assist. This proceeding of the admirable providence of the Most High was meant to give the Mother of Mercy an occasion of exceeding and surpassing even her own self in doing good and in obliging the human race with an act of piety and clemency similar to that of her Son in assuming a passible state and in suspending the glory due to his body during and for our Redemption. His Blessed Mother imitated Him also in this respect so She could be in all things like the incarnate Word. Therefore the great Lady, having clearly before her eyes all the sacrifices included in this proposition, left the throne, and prostrating Herself at the feet of the three Persons, said: "Eternal and almighty God, my Lord, to accept at once this reward which thy condescending kindness offers me would be to secure my rest; yet to return to the world and continue to labor in mortal life for the good of the children of Adam and the faithful of thy holy Church would be for the glory and according to the pleasure of thy Majesty, and would benefit my sojourning and banished children upon earth. I accept this labor and renounce for the present the peace and joy of thy presence. Well do I know what I possess and receive, but I shall sacrifice it to further the love Thou hast for men. Accept, Lord and Master of all my being, this sacrifice, and let thy divine strength govern me in the undertaking confided to me. Let faith in Thee be spread, let thy holy Name be exalted, and let thy holy Church be enlarged, for Thou hast acquired it by the blood of thy Onlybegotten and mine. I offer myself anew to labor for thy glory and to gain all the souls I possibly can."

812. Such was the sacrifice made by the most loving Mother and Queen, one greater than ever was conceived by creatures, and it was so pleasing to the Lord that He immediately rewarded it by operating in Her those purifications and enlightenments which I have at other times mentioned as necessary for the intuitive vision of the Divinity (*Con.* 620ff.), for up to this point in this vision She had not had more than the abstractive vision of God with all its prerequisites. Thus elevated She partook of the beatific vision and was filled with glory and celestial gifts altogether beyond the power of man to describe or conceive in mortal life.

813. The Most High renewed in Her all the gifts which until then He had communicated to Her, and confirmed and sealed them anew in the degree then proper in order to send Her back as Mother and Instructress of the holy Church, confirming all the titles He had conferred upon Her as the Queen of all creation and the Advocate and Lady of all the faithful. And just as wax receives the form of the seal, so most holy Mary, by the divine omnipotence, became the image of the humanity of Christ so She could thus return to the Church Militant and be the true garden, locked and sealed to preserve the waters of grace (*Cant.* 4:12). O mysteries, as venerable as they are exalted! O secrets of the most high Majesty, worthy of all reverence! O charity and clemency of most holy Mary, never imagined by the ignorant children of Eve! Not without mystery did God leave the aid of his children the faithful to the free choice of this unique and most kind Mother, since it was to manifest to us in this wonder that maternal love which perhaps in her other great deeds we would not come to know; it was by divine ordainment, so neither would She be deprived of this excellence, nor we of this debt, inciting us by such an admirable

* cf. Mt. 20:23 [Ed.]

example. To whom can it now seem much, in seeing this refinement of virtue, to see the works of the Saints and the sufferings of the Martyrs, depriving themselves of some momentary contentment in order to arrive at their eternal rest, when our most loving Mother has deprived Herself of the true rejoicing in order to return to help her little children? How can we avoid our confusion when neither in gratitude for this benefit, nor to imitate this example, nor in order to oblige this Lady, nor in order to acquire her eternal company and that of her Son, we on our part will not deny ourselves of a slight and deceitful pleasure which earns us their enmity and death itself? Blessed be such a Woman; let all the heavens praise Her, and let all generations call Her happy and blessed (Lk. 1:48).

814. I finished up the first Part of this History with chapter XXXI of the Proverbs of Solomon, setting forth in its explanation the exalted virtues of this great Lady, the only strong Woman of the Church, and by referring to the same chapter I shall close this second part, for the Holy Ghost includes all concerning Her in the mysterious fecundity of the words of that passage. In the great sacrament of which I have here spoken that fecundity is verified more particularly in the supreme exaltation of most holy Mary consequent upon this blessing; but I will not tarry to repeat what I have there said, for much of what I could say can be understood by the perusal of that portion. There I said that this Queen is the strong Woman whose price and value comes from afar (Prov. 31:10), and from the ultimate ends of the empyrean heaven, measured by the esteem shown Her by the most blessed Trinity; and the Heart of her Man was not deceived, since She failed in nothing that He had expected of Her. She was the ship of the merchant who brought from heaven the sustenance of his Church; She it was who planted it by the fruit of her hands; who girded Herself with strength; it was She who put forth her arm to great things; who extended her palms to the poor and opened her hands to the destitute; who tasted and saw how good was this traffic, seeing with her own eyes the reward of eternal beatitude; who clothed her servants in double garments; whose light was not extinguished in the night of tribulation, and had no need to fear the rigor of temptations. To fulfill all this, before descending from heaven, She besought the eternal Father for his power, the Son for his wisdom, and the Holy Ghost for the fire of his love, and all three Persons for their assistance and their blessing for her descent. This They gave Her as She prostrated Herself before the throne, and They filled Her with new influences and communications of the Divinity; then They lovingly permitted Her to depart, filled with the ineffable treasures of their grace. The holy Angels and Saints magnified Her in wonderful exaltation and praise, and She returned to the earth, as I shall relate in the third Part (*Cor.* 3) along with what She accomplished in the holy Church during the time of her stay, for her doings were the admiration of heaven and of exceeding benefit to men, and all her labors and sufferings were undergone to secure eternal happiness for her children.* Since She had come to know the excellence of charity in its origin and source, namely in the eternal God who is charity (I Jn. 4:16), She continued to be inflamed by its ardors, and her bread day and night was charity. Like a busy bee She descended from the Church Triumphant to the Church Militant, charged with the flower-dust of charity to construct the honeycomb of the love of God for the nourishment of the little children of the primitive Church. She raised them up to manhood, so robust and consummate in perfection that they formed a foundation abundantly strong enough for the high edifice of the holy Church (Eph. 2:20).

815. In order to finish this chapter, and with it this second Part, I return to the congregation of the faithful whom we left so sorrowful on mount Olivet. Most holy Mary did not forget them in

* cf. Ecclus. 24:47 [Ed.]

the midst of her glory; as they stood weeping and lost in grief, and as it were absorbed in looking into the aerial region into which their Redeemer and Master had disappeared, She turned her eyes upon them from the cloud upon which She had ascended in order to send them her assistance. Moved by their sorrow, She besought Jesus lovingly to console these little children whom He had left as orphans upon the earth. Moved by the prayers of his Mother the Redeemer of the human race sent down two Angels in white and resplendent garments, who appeared to all the disciples and the faithful and spoke to them: “Ye men of Galilee, do not look up to heaven with such amazement; for this Lord Jesus, who departed from you and has ascended into heaven, shall again return with the same glory and majesty in which you have just seen Him” (Acts 1:11). By such words and others which they added they consoled the Apostles, disciples, and all the rest so they might not grow faint, but in their retirement hope for the coming and the consolation of the Holy Ghost promised by their divine Master.

816. Yet I must remark that these words of the Angels, though they consoled these men and women, yet at the same time contained a reproach of their lack of faith, for if their faith had been well founded and permeated by pure love and charity it would not have been necessary to remain there with their gaze so intently fixed on the aerial region, since they could neither see their Master nor detain Him by the outward and sensible demonstration of their love which they showed in looking up into the air where they had seen Him disappear, but rather by faith they should have looked for Him and sought Him where He was, and by faith they would certainly have found Him. Theirs was a useless and imperfect manner of seeking Him, for in order to obtain the presence and assistance of his grace it was not necessary for them to see and converse with Him corporally; that they did not understand this truth was a blamable defect in men so enlightened and perfected. For a long time had the Apostles and disciples attended the school of Christ our God, and they had drawn the doctrine of perfection from its very fount, from a source so pure and exquisite that they should have been far advanced in spirituality and highest perfection. Thus our nature becomes so unhappy in serving the senses and contenting itself with what is sensible, loving and enjoying in a sensible manner even the most heavenly and spiritual things. Accustomed to this grossness it is very tardy in shaking off and cleansing itself from it; sometimes it deceives itself even in loving the highest object with great security and satisfaction. For our instruction this truth was experienced by the Apostles, to whom Our Lord has said clearly He is the truth and the light, and at the same time the way (Jn. 14:6), and they were to come to the knowledge of his eternal Father through Him; that light shines not merely for its own self, and a road is not made for the purpose of resting upon it.

817. This teaching, so often repeated in the Gospels, heard from the lips of its Author, and confirmed by the example of his life, should have raised the hearts and the understanding of the Apostles to its comprehension and practice. Yet the very pleasure which they found for their spirit and for their senses in the communication and conversation with their Master, and the security with which He loved them in justice, kept the forces of their will bound to their senses* so they did not know how to free themselves from the encroachments of their lower faculties, nor ever became aware how much self-seeking† there really was in their piety, and how much they were carried away by the spiritual delight coming only from the senses. If their divine Master had not left them by ascending into heaven they could not have separated from Him without great bitterness and sorrow, and therefore would not have been as fit to preach the Gospel, for

* cf. Jn. 16:7 [Ed.]

† cf. I Cor. 13: 5 [Ed.]

this was to be preached throughout the world at the cost of many labors and difficulties, and at the risk of life itself. This could not be the work of small-minded men, but of men courageous and strong in love, men not hampered or softened by sensible delights clinging to the spirit, but ready to go through abundance or need, infamy or renown, honors or dishonors, sorrows or joys, preserving throughout it all their love and zeal for the Lord with a magnanimous heart, superior to all prosperity and adversity (II Cor. 6:8). After they had thus been admonished by the Angels they left mount Olivet (Acts 1:12) and returned to the Cenacle with most holy Mary, persevering in prayer and in their expectation of the coming of the Holy Ghost, as we shall see in the last Part.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, MARY MOST HOLY.

818. “My daughter, thou shalt appropriately close this second Part of my life by remembering the lesson concerning the most efficacious sweetness of divine love and the immense liberality of God with those souls who do not hinder its flowing. It is in conformity with the inclinations of his holy and perfect will to regale creatures rather than afflict them, to console them rather than cause them sorrow, to reward them rather than chastise them, to rejoice rather than grieve them. But mortals ignore this divine science because they desire from the hands of the Most High such consolations, delights and rewards as are earthly and dangerous, and they prefer them to the true and more secure blessings. This pernicious error divine love reforms when He corrects creatures by tribulations, afflicts them with adversities, and teaches them by punishments. Human nature is slow, coarse and uneducated, and if it is not cultivated and softened it gives no fruit in season, and because of its evil inclinations shall never of itself become fit for the most loving and sweet communication with the highest Good; hence it must be shaped and reduced by the hammer of adversities and refined in the crucible of tribulation so it can become fit and capable of the divine gifts and favors, and may learn to despise terrestrial and fallacious goods wherein death is concealed.

819. “I counted for little all of my labors when I saw the reward which the eternal goodness had prepared for me, and therefore He disposed with admirable providence that I return to the Church Militant of my own free will and choice. This I knew would redound to my greater glory and to the exaltation of his holy Name, while it would provide assistance to his Church and his children in an admirable and holy manner. It seemed to me very proper to deprive myself during those years of the happiness I possessed in heaven, and return to the earth to gather new fruits of works pleasing to the Most High. All this I owed to the divine goodness which had raised me up from the dust. Learn therefore, my beloved, from my example, and excite thyself to imitate me most eagerly during these times in which the holy Church is so disconsolate and overwhelmed by tribulations, and in which there are none of her children to console Her.* In this cause I desire thee to labor strenuously, praying, beseeching and clamoring from the bottom of thy heart to the Almighty, and if necessary thou must be willing to give thy life. I assure thee, my daughter, thy solicitude shall be very pleasing in the eyes of my divine Son and in mine.”

Let it all be for the glory and honor of the Most High, the King of the ages, immortal and invisible (I Tim. 1:17), and for that of his Mother most holy Mary, through all his eternities.

* cf. Lam. 1:2 [Ed.]

END OF BOOK SIX

END OF PART II