

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, who by his Incarnation in human flesh had descended from heaven, by his admirable Ascension was to raise Himself by his own power in order to seat Himself at 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 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 said that was the secret of his eternal Father and not proper for them to know, but for now it was necessary and proper that upon receiving the

* cf. Ps. 18:7 [Ed.]

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 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 dilated sphere,† so our Savior Jesus drew after Him the celestial choirs of Angels, 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 Head, their Captain, and their King. 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^Δ 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 operated in a miraculous and wonderful manner that most holy Mary could be in two places at once, remaining with the children of the Church, following them to the Cenacle and assisting them, yet also ascending in the company of the Redeemer on his very throne to heaven, where She remained for three days. There She had the perfect use of all her powers and faculties, while at the same time being in the Cenacle with the curtailed use of them.

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

* cf. par. 772 above

† *dilatada esfera*; cf. I Thess. 4:16 [Ed.]

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

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.

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 the object as well as its cause is evident, it creates a certainty without a touch of doubt; however, those who hear these mysteries told by 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 worked such admirable favors as these with most holy Mary 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 most holy Mary, the reason why the Most High operated them is quite different from the cause of their being kept secret for so many centuries in the Church. The first must be determined 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 fully know the dignity of that Mother, nor the love which her Son and the entire blessed Trinity had and has 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 gifts which the Most High worked for his most holy Mother be singular, but the general rule is that He denied nothing that He could work in Her and which would redound to her glory and sanctity, except what was proper only to his most holy humanity.

805. Yet in manifesting 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 made flesh and the Redemption of man has its morning and midday, and the eternal Wisdom decrees the revelation of these mysteries when and how it becomes opportune and proper. Though all the mysteries of Christ and his Mother are revealed in the divine Scriptures, yet not all of them are manifested equally at the same time, but little by little the Lord withdraws the veil of the figures and metaphors or enigmas under which many sacramental mysteries are revealed, though hidden and reserved for its time, like the rays of the sun shine forth under the cloud which hid them until the cloud clears away. And it is no wonder that to men some of the many rays of this divine light are communicated only in parts, since the angels themselves, though after their creation they knew the mystery of the Incarnation in substance and as it were in a general way as the purpose for which was ordained their entire

ministry to man, yet the conditions, effects and circumstances of this mystery were not all manifested to the heavenly spirits; they gradually came to know many of them during the five thousand two hundred years from the creation of the world to the Incarnation. This new knowledge which they had not known in particular was the cause of new admiration in them, and they gave renewed praise and glory to the Author of these mysteries, as in the entire course of this History I have repeated many times (*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 most holy Mother to heaven with Him at his Ascension, my astonishment was not small, 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, not daring to affirm either the one or 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 preceding it he had no merits but only sins, 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 given Him from her own substance 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 to the enjoyment of eternal glory in body and soul 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 incidental 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 most holy 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, the Conqueror, who comes victorious and triumphant over all his enemies. Open the gates of the sovereign paradise, and let them remain open and free forever, since the new Adam ascends, the Repairer of the entire human race, rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4), abundant in the treasures of his own merits, laden with the spoils and first fruits of the copious Redemption which by his death He wrought in the world. He has restored the ruin of our nature,* and has raised human nature to the supreme dignity of his own immense Being. He returns with the reign of the redeemed and elect which his Father gave Him.* Now his liberal mercy has left to mortals the power of regaining in justice the right which they lost by sin, to merit eternal life by the observance of his law as his brethren and heirs of the goods of his Father; and for his greater glory and our rejoicing He brings with Him and at his side the Mother of Piety, who gave Him the form of man in which He conquered the demon. Our Queen comes so pleasing and beautiful, 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 given 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 united substantially 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

* cf. Ps. 109:6

* cf. Jn. 10:29 [Ed.]

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 my Friend, come to my eternal embraces." Then was manifested to all the Blessed the decree of the most holy Trinity by which the place and seat of the most happy Mother was appointed at the right hand of her Son for all eternity for having given Him human existence from her own blood, and for having nourished, served, imitated and followed Him with the plenitude of perfection possible to a mere creature, and that no one else of human nature could take possession of that permanent place and state in the degree of glory which corresponded to it before the Queen could possess it and be placed upon it, as reserved for Her in justice after her earthly life and exalted to the highest distance from 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 most 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 now this reward which thy condescension offers me would be for my rest; to return to the world and engage in more labors in mortal life among the children of Adam, helping the faithful of thy holy Church, would be for the glory and pleasure of Thy Majesty, and would benefit my sojourning and exiled children upon earth. I accept this labor and decline for now this rest and the joy I receive from thy presence. Well do I know what I possess and receive, but I sacrifice it to the love Thou hast for men. Accept, Lord and Master of my entire being, my sacrifice, and may thy divine strength govern me in the undertaking Thou hast confided to me. May faith in Thee be spread, may thy holy Name be extolled, and may thy holy Church be increased, acquired by the blood of thy Onlybegotten and mine. I offer myself anew to labor for thy glory and to gain the souls I can."

812. This relinquishment made by the most pious Mother and Queen of virtues, never imagined among creatures, was so agreeable and acceptable to the Lord that He immediately rewarded it, disposing Her by the purifications and illuminations in preparation for the intuitive vision of the Divinity, referred to in other places of this History (Con. 620ff.), for until then on this occasion She had not had more than the abstractive vision of God with all its prerequisites. Being thus elevated the Divinity was manifested to Her by beatific vision, filling Her with glory and celestial gifts which cannot be described or even known in this life.

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

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 life (Cant. 4:12). O mysteries, so venerable and how 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 singular 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 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 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 singular 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 fecundity of mysteries enclosed in the words of that passage. In the great sacrament of which I have here spoken that fecundity is verified with greater excellence by the supreme exaltation in which most holy Mary remained after this benefit; 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 who 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

*cf. Mt. 18:3 [Ed.]

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 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 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 persevere in looking up to heaven with such amazement, since 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 seclusion 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 Good, 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 coarseness it is very tardy in shaking off and cleansing itself from it; sometimes it deceives itself in loving even the highest object with great security and satisfaction. For our instruction this truth was experienced by the Apostles, to whom Our Lord had expressed

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

† cf. also Apoc. 21:14 [Ed.]

it in this manner, stating He is the truth and the light which together form 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 advance from that state, nor take notice in that spiritual pleasure how much self-seeking* there was, 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 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, to this second Part of my life thou shalt give a happy conclusion by being well advised and instructed regarding the most efficacious sweetness of divine love, and his immense liberality with the souls who do not hinder it on their part. It is in accordance with the inclination of the highest Good, and his holy and perfect will, to regale creatures rather than afflict them; to give them consolations rather than afflictions; to reward them rather than punish them; to encourage them rather than grieve them. Yet mortals ignore this divine science, because they desire that from the hand of the highest Good come to them consolations, delights, and rewards which are earthly and dangerous, preferring them to the true and secure benefits. This pernicious error divine love amends in them when it corrects them by tribulations, afflicts them with adversities, and instructs them by punishments; for human nature is slow, coarse and unrefined, and if it is not cultivated and its hardness broken it gives no fruit in due season, nor by its inclinations is it well disposed for the most amiable and sweet treatment of the highest Good. Thus it necessary to work and smooth it with the hammer of hardships, and refine it in the crucible of tribulation, by which it becomes fit and capable of the divine gifts and favors, learning not to love earthly and fallacious goods, in which death is concealed.

819. “All of my labors seemed to me little when I knew the reward which the eternal goodness had prepared for me; and for this reason He provided with admirable providence that I could return to the Church Militant by my own free will and choice, since this arrangement would be for the exaltation of the holy Name of the Most High and for my greater glory, and would secure

* cf. I Cor. 13:5 [Ed.]

relief for the Church and its children, all in a manner most marvelous and holy. It seemed to me very proper to deprive myself during those years of the happiness I possessed in heaven, and return to the world to reap new fruits of works and please the Most High; for I owed all to the divine goodness, which had raised me from the dust. Therefore, my dearest, learn from my example, and encourage thyself to imitate me at a time when the holy Church is so disconsolate and surrounded by tribulations, *and there is none to comfort Her among all her children.** In this cause I desire thee to labor diligently, praying, petitioning, beseeching and suffering for them from the depths of thy heart to the Almighty, and if necessary giving thy life for them. I assure thee, my daughter, this shall be very pleasing in the eyes of my most holy 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 most holy Mother Mary, through all his eternities.

END OF BOOK SIX

END OF PART II

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