

CHAPTER IV

Three Days after Mary Most Holy Descended from Heaven She Manifests Herself and Speaks in Person to the Apostles; Christ our Lord Visits Her; and Other Mysteries until the Coming of the Holy Ghost.

39. Again I remind those who shall read this History not to be astonished at the hidden sacraments therein recorded of most holy Mary, nor to hold them unworthy of belief because they have not until now been revealed to the world; for even setting aside the fact that they are all worthy and befitting this great Queen, we cannot deny that though we have until now no written record of her wonderful doings after the Ascension of the Lord, yet we must suppose Her to have wrought many and exceeding great wonders in her office as Teacher, Protectress and Mother of the new evangelical Church, which was to be introduced into the world under her assistance and supervision. And if the Lord renovated Her in all her powers (as I have stated), and if He exerted his entire omnipotence through Her, no favor or blessing, no matter how great, may consistently in Catholic truth be disputed as pertaining justly to one so unique and singular.

40. The Blessed Mother was three days in heaven enjoying the beatific vision (as I said in the first chapter [3]), and She came back from her heavenly seat on the day which corresponds to the Sunday after the day of the Ascension, called in the holy Church the Sunday within the Octave of that feast. She remained in the Cenacle three succeeding days enjoying the after-effects of the beatific vision. During this time the heavenly splendors which still clothed Her were tempered, and only the Evangelist St. John had full knowledge of the mystery since it was inopportune for it to become known to the rest of the Apostles at that time because they were scarcely as yet capable of such sacraments. Although She remained in their company it was necessary for her glory to be hidden from them, for even the Evangelist, though he was specially strengthened by grace for the privilege of looking upon Her with that veil withdrawn, fell prostrate upon the ground as soon as he came into her presence (6); nor on the other hand was it appropriate for the Lord to suddenly deprive our great Queen of her refulgence and the other exterior and interior effects of her admission into the glory of his throne. He ordained in his infinite wisdom for the effects of those divine gifts and favors to diminish by degrees, and for her virginal body to return gradually to the more common visible state for conversing with the Apostles and the rest of the faithful of the holy Church.

41. I have also said above (*Tran.* 801) this miracle of most holy Mary being personally admitted into heaven does not conflict with what is written in the Acts of the Apostles, although we there read the Apostles *were persevering with one mind in prayer with the holy women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren* (Acts 1:14) after His Majesty had ascended into heaven. The concordance of this passage with what I have recorded is clear, for St. Luke writes his history according to what he and the Apostles saw in the Cenacle of Jerusalem and irrespective of the mystery of which they were ignorant. Since her sacred body was in two places at the same time, though the attention and use of the senses and faculties was more perfect and real in heaven, nevertheless it could be truly said She was in the company of the Apostles and was seen by all. Moreover it was true that most holy Mary persevered with them in prayer, for She saw them from her place in heaven and from there She united her prayers and petitions with those of all the holy refugees of the Cenacle; She presented them to her divine Son, at whose right hand She was seated, and obtained for them perseverance and many other great favors from the Most High.

42. During the three days in which the great Lady was in the Cenacle enjoying the after-effects of glory, and in the interim while the splendors of her overflowing refulgence gradually lessened, She occupied Herself in most ardent and divine sentiments of love, gratitude, and ineffable humility beyond all the terms or words which I can find for manifesting what I have been made to understand concerning this sacrament, for they fall far short of the truth. In the Angels and Seraphim themselves, who attended upon Her, She caused new admiration, and they discussed among themselves which was the greatest miracle, that the Most High had raised a mere creature to such favors and greatness, or that anyone, after having been raised to such heights of grace and glory, would abase Herself beneath the lowest of creation and deem Herself the most insignificant of all that is created. I perceived that the highest Seraphim stood as it were with bated breath in beholding the doings of their Queen. Speaking to each other they said: "If the demons before their fall had been privileged to behold this example of humility, it would have been impossible for them to yield to their pride. This our great Lady is She who without any defect or deficiency, not only in part but in all plenitude, has filled up the vast void of humility in all creatures. She alone has worthily conceived the majesty and supereminent greatness of the Creator and the littleness of all creation; She it is who knows when and how He must be obeyed and revered, and She faithfully acts on her knowledge. Is it possible that among the thorns sown by sin among the children of Adam the earth has produced such a pure Lily (Cant. 2:2), emitting such fragrance for the delight of the Creator and for mortals? That from the desert of the world, void of grace and full of earthliness, such a heavenly creature would arise (Ib. 8:5), affluent with the delights of the Almighty? Let Him be eternally praised in his wisdom and goodness who formed such a creature, so ordered and admirable, for the holy emulation of our nature and for an example and the glory of the human kind. And Thou, blessed among women, distinguished and chosen among all creatures, be Thou congratulated, known and praised by all generations (Luke 1:48). Mayest Thou enjoy for all eternity the excellence given to Thee by thy Son and Creator. May He find his pleasure and complaisance in Thee because of the beauty of thy works and gifts; may his immense charity for the justification of all men be satiated in Thee. Thou for all of them dost render Him satisfaction, and looking upon Thee He shall not repent of having called into existence ungrateful man. If they grieve and irritate Him, Thou dost appease Him and turnest Him to mercy and kindness. We do not wonder that He favors men so much, since Thou, our Lady and Queen, livest among them and callest them thy people."

43. With these praises and many other hymns the holy Angels celebrated the humility and the works of most holy Mary after She descended from heaven, and to some of these praises She herself joined her responses. After dismissing the host of the Angels who had accompanied Her from heaven, and after having remained in seclusion still filled with the splendors of heaven perceived only by St. John, She knew it was time to communicate and converse with the faithful. She therefore left her retirement, and like a loving Mother began to hold tender conversation with the Apostles and disciples. With them She offered tearful prayers to her divine Son, including them and all who in future ages were to receive the grace of the holy Catholic faith. And from that day, and every day for the rest of her life, She asked the Lord to hasten the times when the feasts of the sacred mysteries would be celebrated in the Church on earth in the same way as had been manifested to Her they would be celebrated in heaven. She also asked the Lord to send men of exalted and distinguished holiness for the conversion of sinners, having at the same time a foreknowledge of their sending. In these prayers her burning charity for men rose to such a pitch that according to the natural course it would have taken away her life. In order to sustain Her and moderate the force of these desires her divine Son frequently sent one of his

highest Seraphim in order answer Her and promise Her the fulfillment of her desires and petitions, at the same time revealing to Her in what order divine Providence would arrange all this for the greater advantage of mortals.

44. By the abstractive vision of the Divinity, which as I have said She continued to enjoy, the conflagration of love which swept through that most chaste and pure Heart became so ineffable that it exceeded beyond all comparison that of the most love-inflamed Seraphim next to the throne of the Divinity. If at times She permitted these flames of divine love to abate somewhat it was in order to contemplate the humanity of her most holy Son, for no other image of visible things was ever allowed to occupy her interior faculties except when She actually employed her senses in communicating with creatures. At the consciousness and memory of her absent Son She felt some natural fondness, but this was always a moderate and reasonable one since She was the Mother most prudent; and because the Heart of the Son re-echoed in response to this love, He permitted Himself to be wounded by the loving desires of his Mother, and the words of the Canticles were literally fulfilled, that the eyes of his beloved Spouse and Mother drew Him down to the earth (Cant. 6:4).

45. This happened many times, as will be said later on (213, 347, etc.), and it took place the first time on one of the few days which passed after the great Lady descended from heaven and before the coming of the Holy Ghost, not even six days after her descent and when She had begun to converse with the Apostles. Christ our Savior would not permit Himself a longer delay than these few days before He again descended personally to visit and fill Her with new gifts and ineffable consolation. The most candid Dove was fainting with love and with that languishing which, as She confesses, causes well-ordered charity in the wine cellar of the King (Cant. 2:4-5). And His Majesty, coming to Her on this occasion, permitted Her to recline upon his breast on the left arm of his deified humanity, and with the right arm of his divinity (Ib. 6) He illumined Her, enriched Her, and filled Her anew with vivifying and strengthening influences. Once again the loving anxieties of this wounded Deer (Ps. 41:2) were quieted, drinking to her satisfaction from the fountains of the Savior (Is. 12:3). She was refreshed and strengthened anew so She could be inflamed still more by the fires of her inextinguishable love (Cant. 8:7). She was made whole by being so much the more deeply wounded, healed by a new sickness, and vivified by delivering Herself over so much the more completely to the agonies of her affection, for this kind of sickness neither knows nor admits of any other kind of remedy. When the sweetest Mother by these favors had regained strength, and the presence of the Savior was revealed to her senses, She prostrated Herself before His royal Majesty in order to ask Him humbly for his blessing and render Him most fervent gratitude for the favor of his visit.

46. The most prudent Lady was surprised at this favor, not only because it was such a short time since She had deprived Herself of the humanity of her most holy Son, but also because the Lord had not informed Her of the time of his visit, nor had her most profound humility permitted Her to expect such divine condescension in giving Her relief. Since this was the first favor of this kind She was so much the more abashed and annihilated in her own mind. She spent five hours enjoying the presence and regalements of her most holy Son, and none of the Apostles at that time knew of the favor, though they knew from what they noticed in the countenance and bearing of the heavenly Queen that something wonderful was transpiring; however, none of them presumed to inquire further into the cause due to their fear and reverence. When She became aware her divine Son desired to return to heaven, in order to take leave of Him She prostrated Herself again to the ground, asking Him for his blessing and guidance in correcting any deficiency in her behavior until the time when He would return to visit Her in the future. She

asked this favor because the Lord himself had offered to visit Her sometimes in her loneliness; moreover, often before his Ascension She had prostrated Herself at his feet in acknowledgment of her unworthiness and lack of fervor in thanking Him for his favors, as I have narrated in the second Part (*Inc.* 698; *Tran.* 210, 317). Although She could not accuse Herself of any fault because as the Mother of sanctity She never committed any, and as the Mother of Wisdom She could not commit any, yet the Lord permitted full sway to her humility and love in the worthy acknowledgment of her debt to God as a mere creature. In her most exalted knowledge and humility all She did seemed small in recompense for such sovereign benefits; She attributed this inequality to Herself, and though this could not be called a fault She desired to acknowledge the inferiority of earthly things in comparison with the divine excellence.

47. But among the ineffable mysteries and favors which She received from the day of the Ascension of her divine Son our Savior were those connected with the worthy preparation of the Apostles and disciples for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The great Queen well knew how estimable and divine was to be the blessing which was held in store for them by the Father of lights, but She also considered the sensible affection of the Apostles for the humanity of their Master Jesus, and that their sadness due to his absence would be somewhat of a hindrance to this blessing. In order to reform in them this defect and refine them in all things, upon arriving in heaven with her divine Son She, as a most kind Mother and most powerful Queen, dispatched some of her Angels to the Cenacle in order to declare unto them her will and that of her Son that they raise themselves above themselves and live more where they love than where they live, more by trust in the being of God than in their senses; that they not permit themselves to be carried away solely by the sight of the humanity of her Son, but rather let it serve them as a portal and path to the Divinity, where they would find appropriate satisfaction and repose. Such advice and exhortation the heavenly Queen ordered the Angels to give to the Apostles, and after She descended from the heights She consoled them in their sorrow and soothed them in their dismay, speaking to them for one hour every day and explaining to them the mysteries of the faith taught to Her by her divine Son; however, She did this not by any formal instruction but in the manner of a conference, exhorting them also to spend another hour during the day discussing among themselves the admonitions, promises, doctrine and teaching of their divine Master Jesus, and to occupy themselves during some other part of the day in reciting vocally the Our Father and some psalms, while the rest of the time they were to spend in mental prayer. Towards evening they were to partake of bread and fish and then indulge in moderate sleep. Through this prayer and fasting they were to dispose themselves for the reception of the Holy Ghost when He would come upon them.

48. The vigilant Mother, empowered by the right hand of her divine Son, took care of that happy family in order to elevate all their works to the highest perfection. After her descent from heaven She instructed the Apostles, yet She never entered upon this duty without it first being requested by St. Peter or St. John. Through her prayers She moved her divine Son to inspire them with these commands so She could obey them as his representatives and priests. Hence all things happened as arranged by the Mother of Humility, and She obeyed as a handmaid. Laying aside all pretense to her dignity as Queen and Lady, and making no use of her sovereignty and dominion, She obeyed as a servant* and conducted Herself as if She were an inferior, and in this spirit She conferred with the Apostles and the other faithful. During those days She explained to them the mystery of the blessed Trinity in terms most exalted and mysterious, yet suited to the

*cf. Mt. 20: 25-28 [Ed.]

understanding of all. She explained also the mystery of the hypostatic union and all those regarding the Incarnation, adding many others which they had already heard from their Master, telling them at the same time they would be enlightened by the Holy Ghost for a greater understanding when they received Him.

49. She taught them how to pray mentally, insisting on the excellence and necessity of that kind of prayer; how the principal duty and the most noble occupation of the rational creature is to raise itself by the understanding and the will above all that is created to the knowledge and love of God; and that no other object or occupation should ever be preferred to this duty or interrupt it, in order not to deprive the soul of this supreme benefit, the beginning of eternal life and happiness. She taught them also how to thank the eternal Father for having given us his only Son for our Redeemer and Master, and for the love with which the Lord redeemed us at the cost of his Passion and Death. She exhorted them to give thanks to God for having singled them out as his Apostles, his companions, and the founders of his holy Church. Such were the exhortations and teachings with which the heavenly Mother at that time enlightened the hearts of the eleven Apostles and the other disciples, and by which She prepared and disposed them for the reception of the Holy Ghost and his divine effects. Since She saw into the inmost recesses of their hearts and knew the natural condition and character of each one, She accommodated Herself to the necessities, the bent of mind, and the graces of each one in order to fill them with joy, consolation and constancy in the practice of virtue. She exhorted them to persevere in humble prostrations and other actions of worship and reverence in adoring the greatness and majesty of the Most High.

50. Every morning and evening She approached the Apostles to receive their benediction, first that of St. Peter as their head, then of St. John, and the rest according to their age. At first they all shrank from performing this ceremony, beholding in Her their Queen and the Mother of their Master Jesus, but the most prudent Lady insisted that all bless Her as ministers and priests of the Most High, explaining to them how the highest reverence and respect was due to them because of their supreme dignity and office. Since this was a contest of humility it was certain the Mother of Humility would be victorious and the disciples overcome and instructed by her example; moreover, the words of most holy Mary were so sweet, ardent and efficacious in moving the hearts of all those first faithful that with a divine and most sweet force She enlightened them and reduced everything to the practice of what is most holy and perfect in the virtues. Recognizing these admirable effects in themselves they conferred with each other, and amazed they said: "Truly in this pure creature we have found again the teaching and consoling doctrine of which we are deprived by the absence of her Son, our Master. Her words and doings, her counsels, and her sweet and gentle conversation teach us and draw us on in the same way as the conversation with the Lord when He lived in our midst. Our hearts are inflamed by the teachings and exhortations of this admirable creature as with those of Jesus our Savior. There is no doubt He, as the omnipotent God, has deposited in the Mother of the Onlybegotten divine wisdom and grace. We can now dry our tears, since for our instruction and consolation He has given us such a Mother and Teacher, and has left with us this living Ark of the Testament wherein He has placed for us his law, his wonderful staff, and the sweetest manna for our sustenance and comfort" (Heb. 9:4).

51. If the holy Apostles and the other firstborn children of the Church had recorded in writing what they saw as eyewitnesses of her deeds of eminent wisdom, what they heard and what passed in their conversation with Her for so long a time, then we would be filled with higher conceptions of the holy and heroic works of the sovereign Lady. We would then see in the

doctrine which She taught,* as well as the wonders which She wrought, that her most holy Son had communicated to Her a virtue which, although coming from the Lord as from its fountain, yet in the heavenly Lady was in a certain manner divine and was distributed from Her as from an aqueduct† to all the mortals. The Apostles however had the happiness and good fortune of drinking the waters of the Savior and of the teachings of his purest Mother from their very fount, receiving them in a sensible manner and thus preparing them for their office and ministry in founding the holy Church and planting the faith of the Gospel throughout the world.

52. By the treason and death of Judas, that unhappy one among all those born of women,‡ his episcopacy had become vacant as David had prophesied (Ps. 108:8), and it was necessary to provide someone else worthy of the apostolate, for it was the will of the Most High that the number twelve, which had been determined upon by the Master of life as the proper number when He chose his Apostles (Lk. 6:13), would also be their number at the coming of the Holy Ghost. This decree of the Lord was explained to the Apostles by most holy Mary in one of her instructions; all of them acceded to it, and they asked Her as their Mother and Mistress to choose one who seemed worthy and most fit for the apostolate. The heavenly Lady knew beforehand who was to be chosen, for the names of the twelve, including St. Matthias, were written in her Heart, as is said in the third chapter (28). But in her profound humility and wisdom She judged it right to leave this to St. Peter so he could begin to exercise in the new Church the office of Pontiff and head, as Vicar of Jesus Christ, its Author and Master. She therefore instructed the Apostle to hold this election in the presence of all the disciples and other faithful so all would see him act as the supreme head of the Church. St. Peter thereupon arranged it all according to her directions.

53. The proceedings of this first election in the Church are related by St. Luke in chapter I of the Acts of the Apostles (v. 15ff.). He says that in the days intervening between the Ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost the Apostle St. Peter, having called together the one hundred twenty who had been present at the Ascension, reminded them that the prophecy of David concerning the treason of Judas in Psalm XL (v. 10) had been fulfilled; that Judas, having been chosen as one of the twelve Apostles, had unhappily prevaricated and made himself the leader of those who captured Jesus; that with the price of his treason had been bought the field called Haceldama in their tongue; that in the end, as unworthy of divine mercy, he had hung himself, had burst in the middle, and his entrails had fallen out, as was known to all who lived in Jerusalem; that therefore it was appropriate for another to be chosen to the apostolate in his place in order to give testimony to the resurrection of the Savior in accordance with another prophecy of David (Ps. 108:8); and that the one to be chosen must be from the number of those who had followed Christ the Master in his preaching ever since his Baptism by St. John.

54. Having thus persuaded all the faithful of the propriety of electing the twelfth Apostle, they left it to St. Peter to determine the manner of this election. The Apostle then determined that from the seventy-two disciples two, Joseph, called the just, and Matthias would be selected. Between these two lots were to be drawn, and the one who would draw and hold the proper lot would be admitted as an Apostle. All approved of this manner of election, which at that time was a very secure way since the divine power wrought great miracles for the foundation of the Church. They wrote the two names, with the title of disciple and Apostle of Christ, upon two

*cf. Eccclus. 24:44 [Ed.]

† cf. Eccclus. 24:41 [Ed.]

‡ cf. Mt. 26:24 [Ed.]

cards and placed them in an urn where they could not be seen; then all began to pray, asking God to choose the one pleasing to Him, since as the Lord He knew the hearts of all (Acts 1:24). St. Peter thereupon drew out one of the lots, upon which was written Matthias, disciple and Apostle of Christ. Joyfully Matthias was accepted and acknowledged as the legitimate Apostle, and the eleven embraced him. Most holy Mary, who was present at all these proceedings, asked his blessing, and in imitation of Her all the other faithful did the same. Then all of them continued their prayers and fasting until the coming of the Holy Ghost.

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

55. My daughter, thou hast rightly wondered at the hidden and supreme favors which I received at the hands of my Son, and at the humility and gratitude with which I received them; likewise the loving attention which I paid to the necessities of the Apostles and the faithful of the Church amid all my joy. It is time, my dearest, for thee to gather the fruits of this knowledge, for neither canst thou now understand more, nor do I desire less of thee, than thou be to me a faithful daughter who imitates me fervently and a disciple who listens to me and follows me with all her heart. Stir up thy faith then in order to be convinced that I am powerful to confer favors, and trust that I shall enrich thee in unstinted liberality with gifts beyond all thy desires. But at the same time do thou humiliate thyself to the very earth and shrink to the very last place among creatures, for of thyself thou art more useless than the most vile and despicable dust, and thou canst call nothing thy own except misery and want. Consider well within thyself how great and exquisite is the kindness and condescension of the Most High in regard to thee, and what degree of gratitude thou owest Him. If one who pays his debts, even entirely, cannot take to himself special credit, then it is just for thee, who cannot satisfy thy debt, to remain humble, for though thou labor ever so much and according to all thy powers thou shalt nevertheless remain a debtor. What shall then be thy indebtedness if thou remain remiss and negligent?

56. In this prudent alertness thou shalt understand how closely thou must imitate me in living faith, in confident hope, in fervent love, in profound humility, and in the worship and reverence due to the infinite grandeur of the Lord. I warn thee again of the cunning vigilance of the serpent, who seeks to induce mortals to neglect the veneration and worship due to God, and presumptuously to despise this virtue and what it implies. Into the minds of the worldly and the vicious he instills a most foolish forgetfulness of the Catholic truths so divine faith may not keep alive in them the fear and veneration of the Most High, and thus he succeeds in making them like to the heathens who do not know the true God. Others who strive after virtue and perform some good works the enemy leads into a dangerous lukewarmness and negligence wherein they overlook what they are losing due to their lack of fervor. Those who concern themselves more earnestly regarding perfection the dragon deceives with a certain coarse over-confidence, and thus due to the favors they receive and the divine mercy which they experience they begin to consider themselves as special favorites of the Lord, forgetting the humble fear and veneration which they ought to experience in the presence of Him before whom, according to the teaching of the holy Church, the powers of heaven tremble (*Preface* of the Mass). But since I have on other occasions reminded and admonished thee concerning this danger let my mentioning it here suffice.

57. In this manner I desire thee to be faithful and punctual in the practice of this doctrine, exercising it in all thy exterior actions without affectation or excess, and teaching others by thy own example the holy fear and veneration due from creatures to their Creator. I desire thee to

teach and impress this science especially upon thy religious so they may not be ignorant of the humility and reverence with which they are to converse with God. The most efficacious instruction thou canst give shall be thy example* in fulfilling all thy obligations, for these works thou must neither conceal nor ever omit for fear of vanity. This example is due in a much greater degree from those who govern others, since it is their duty to exhort, motivate and accompany their subjects in the holy fear of the Lord, which is done more efficaciously by example than by words. Admonish them particularly to hold in veneration the priests as the anointed of the Lord; in imitation of me do thou always ask for their blessing when thou dost approach or leave them. The more thou dost see thy own self favored by the divine condescension, so much the more bear in mind the necessities and afflictions of thy neighbor and the dangers of those in sin, praying for all with great faith and confidence; for thy love of God cannot be true if thou art content with enjoying only thyself and in the meanwhile dost forget thy brethren. That highest Good, which thou dost know and in whom thou dost participate, thou must solicit and pray to be communicated to all, for none is excluded therefrom and all need his communication and the divine assistance. Thou knowest thou must imitate my charity in all things.

* cf. Mt. 5:19 [Ed.]