

CHAPTER IX

The Evangelists Begin to Write Their Gospels; what Most Holy Mary Did Regarding This; She Appears to St. Peter in Antioch and in Rome; and Other Similar Favors Shown to Other Apostles.

557. I have described, insofar as I was able, the state in which our great Queen and Lady remained after the first Council of the Apostles, and also her victories over the infernal dragon and his demons. And though the wonderful works which She accomplished during these and at all times cannot be reduced into a history, nor even briefly summarized, yet among all of these works I have been given light in order to describe the beginning which the four Evangelists gave to their Gospels, how most holy Mary labored in this, the care with which She guided the absent Apostles, and the miraculous manner in which She accomplished all of this. In the second Part and on many occasions I have stated the heavenly Mother was informed of all the mysteries of the law of grace, and of the Gospels and Holy Scriptures which in order to ground and establish the Church were to be written in it (*Tran.* 79, 86, 135; *Cor.* 210). In this knowledge She was confirmed many times, especially when She was raised up to heaven on the day of the Ascension by her most holy Son (*Tran.* 813). From that day on, without forgetting anything, She often prostrated Herself in prayer before the Lord, asking Him to send his divine light upon the sacred Apostles and writers, and ordain that they write when the time was most opportune.

558. After this, on the occasion when the Queen herself was taken to heaven and descended from it with the Church having been delivered to Her (as related in chapter VI of this Book [494-5]), the Lord made known to Her the time for beginning to write the holy Gospels had arrived, and hence She should make her arrangements for this purpose as the Lady and Instructress of the Church. But in her profound humility and discretion She obtained the consent of the Lord that this would be attended to by St. Peter, his vicar and the head of the Church, and that he would be specially assisted by divine enlightenment for a matter of such importance. All this was granted by the Most High, and when the Apostles met in the Council mentioned by St. Luke in chapter XV of the Acts (v. 6), after they had settled the doubts about circumcision as I described in chapter VI,* St. Peter proposed to all of them the necessity of recording in writing the mysteries of the life of Christ our Savior and Teacher so they could be preached to all the faithful in the Church without variation or difference, thus doing away with the old law and establishing the new.

559. Regarding this intention St. Peter had already consulted with the Mother of Wisdom, and the entire Council having approved of his proposal they called upon the Holy Ghost to point out the Apostles and disciples who would write the life of the Savior. Immediately a light was seen descending upon St. Peter, and a voice was heard saying: "The Pontiff and head of the Church shall name four who shall write the works and doctrine of the Savior of the world." St. Peter and all present prostrated themselves, giving thanks to the Lord for this favor; and when all of them had risen St. Peter spoke and said: "Matthew, our beloved brother, shall immediately begin to write his Gospel in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mark shall be the second, who shall likewise write the Gospel in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Luke shall write the third in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

* cf. *Coronation* 496 [Ed.]

Holy Ghost. Our most beloved brother John shall be the fourth and last to write the mysteries of our Savior and Teacher in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This decision the Lord confirmed by permitting the heavenly light to remain until these words were repeated and formally accepted by all those appointed.

560. Within a few days St. Matthew determined to write his Gospel, which was the first. And being in prayer one night in a retired room in the house of the Cenacle, beseeching light from the Lord in order to give a beginning to his History, most holy Mary appeared to him seated on a throne of great majesty and splendor, without having opened the doors of the room where the Apostle was praying. The great Lady commanded him to arise, which he did, asking for her blessing. Then She spoke to him and said: “Matthew, my servant, the Almighty sends me with his blessing so with it thou mayest begin the writing of the Gospel with which thou hast the good fortune to be entrusted. In this thou shalt have the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and I shall beg it for thee with all my heart. But concerning myself it is not proper for thee to write anything except what is absolutely necessary for manifesting the Incarnation and other mysteries of the incarnate Word, and for establishing his faith in the world as the foundation of his Church. This faith being established, other times shall arrive in which the Almighty shall inform the faithful regarding the mysteries and favors which his powerful arm worked in me, when it shall become necessary to manifest them.” St. Matthew offered to obey this mandate of the Queen, and while consulting with Her regarding the order of his Gospel the Holy Ghost came down upon him in visible form, and in the presence of the Lady he began to write the words as they are still extant in his Gospel. The Blessed Mother then left him and St. Matthew continued the History, although he finished it afterwards in Judea. He wrote it in the Hebrew language in the year forty-two of the Lord.

561. The Evangelist St. Mark wrote his Gospel four years later, in the year forty-six of the birth of Christ. He likewise wrote it in Hebrew and while in Palestine. Before beginning he asked his Guardian Angel to notify the Queen of heaven of his intention and implore her assistance for obtaining the divine enlightenment for what he was about to write. The kind Mother heard his prayer and immediately the Lord commanded the Angels to carry Her with the usual splendor and ceremony to the Evangelist, who was still in prayer. The great Queen appeared to him seated on a most beautiful and resplendent throne. Prostrating himself before Her he said: “Mother of the Savior of the world and Mistress of all creation, I am unworthy of this favor, though I am a servant of thy divine Son and of Thyself.”* The heavenly Mother answered: “The Most High, whom thou dost serve and love, sends me to assure thee thy prayers are heard, and his divine Spirit shall direct thee in the writing of the Gospel with which He has charged thee.” Then She told him not to write of the mysteries pertaining to Her, just as She had asked of St. Matthew. At that point the Holy Ghost descended in visible form of splendid refulgence, exteriorly enveloping the Evangelist and filling him with new interior light, and in the presence of the Queen herself he gave a beginning to his Gospel. At that time the Princess of heaven was sixty-one years old. St. Jerome says St. Mark wrote his brief Gospel in Rome at the request of the faithful residing there, yet I desire to give notice this was a translation or copy of the one he had written in Palestine, because the Christians in Rome possessed neither his nor any other Gospel, and therefore he rewrote his in the Latin language, which was that of the Romans.

562. Two years later, in the year forty-eight and of the Virgin the sixty-third, St. Luke wrote his Gospel in the Greek language, and in order for him to begin writing it Mary appeared to him

* cf. Ps. 85:16; 115:16 [Ed.]

as to the other Evangelists. He conferred with the heavenly Mother how in order to manifest the mysteries of the Incarnation and life of her most holy Son it was necessary to declare the manner and order of the conception of the incarnate Word, and other things which touched upon the truth of Her Highness being the natural Mother of Christ; for this reason St. Luke expatiated more than the other Evangelists in that which he wrote concerning most holy Mary, reserving the secrets and wonders which touched upon Her being the Mother of God as She herself had ordered the Evangelist. The Holy Ghost descended upon him, and in the presence of the great Queen he began his Gospel as Her Majesty had principally informed him. St. Luke continued to be a most devoted servant of this Lady, and never permitted to be erased from his mind the image therein impressed of the vision he had of the most sweet Mother seated on the throne and the majesty with which She had appeared to him on this occasion, keeping it present to him throughout his whole life. St. Luke was in Achaia when this apparition happened to him, and there also he wrote his Gospel.

563. The last of the four Evangelists who wrote his Gospel was the Apostle St. John in the year fifty-eight of the Lord. During his stay in Asia Minor after the glorious transition and Assumption of most holy Mary he wrote his Gospel in the Greek language against the errors and heresies which the demon immediately began to sow (as related above [522]) principally in order to destroy the faith in the Incarnation of the divine Word; for since Lucifer had been humiliated and vanquished by this mystery he immediately tried to direct the barrage of heresy against it. For this reason the evangelist St. John wrote so sublimely and with many arguments to prove the true and authentic divinity of Christ our Savior, far surpassing the other Evangelists in this regard.

564. Although when the Evangelist was about to begin his Gospel most holy Mary was already in heaven, She descended in person, resplendent with ineffable glory and majesty and surrounded by thousands of Angels of all choirs and hierarchies. Appearing to St. John She said: "John, my son and servant of the Most High, now is the opportune time for writing the Life and mysteries of my divine Son and giving more express notice of his divinity to the world so all mortals may know Him as the Son of the eternal Father and as true God as well as true Man. Yet regarding the mysteries and secrets which thou knowest of me it is not now time for them to be written, nor to be manifested to a world so accustomed to idolatry, lest Lucifer trouble those who are now to receive the holy faith in their Redeemer and in the blessed Trinity. For this thou shalt be assisted by the Holy Ghost, and I desire thee to begin writing in my presence." The Evangelist revered the great Queen of heaven and was filled with the divine Spirit as the others had been. He then gave a beginning to his Gospel, being encouraged thereto by the kind Mother. He asked for her blessing and help, and She gave it and offered her help for all the rest of the life of the Apostle, and then returned to the right hand of her most holy Son. This was the beginning which the sacred Evangelists gave to their Gospels through the intervention of most holy Mary so the Church could acknowledge all of these benefits as having been given through her hands. After having thus anticipated the history of the Evangelists in order to relate the beginnings of the Gospels, we shall now return to our narrative.

565. Regarding the state in which the great Lady was placed after the Council of the Apostles, the more She was exalted by the knowledge and abstractive vision of the Divinity so also the greater was her care and solicitude for the welfare of the Church, which each day was growing all over the world. As a true Mother and Teacher She lavished her special attention upon the

Apostles, whose names and whose welfare She bore written in her Heart.* And since after that Council was held they left Jerusalem, with only St. John and St. James the Less remaining there, the most kind Mother was deeply concerned at the thought of the hardships and difficulties connected with their preaching. She looked upon them with tender pity in their journeys and held them in highest veneration due to their sanctity and dignity as priests and Apostles of her divine Son, founders of the Church, preachers of his doctrine, and chosen by divine Wisdom for such high ministries for the glory of the Most High. It was truly necessary in order to attend to and take care of so many matters in the entire sphere of the holy Church for the great Lady and Mistress to be raised by God to the state She now held, for in any lower condition She could not have so easily and properly attended in her interior to so many cares and at the same time enjoy the tranquility, peace and serenity She possessed.

566. In addition to the knowledge which the great Queen had in God of the state of the Church, She charged anew her Angels to take care of all the Apostles and disciples who were preaching, to console them in all their tribulations, and to hasten to their aid in all their difficulties, for by the subtlety of their spiritual nature they could attend to all this without losing sight of the face of God and enjoying the beatific vision.† She thus charged them because it was so important to establish the Church, and because they were the ministers of the Most High and the works of his hands. She told them also to inform Her of all the Apostles and disciples were doing, and especially when they were in need of any clothing, for to this matter the watchful Mother desired to attend in particular so they could travel about clothed uniformly such as they were when they departed from Jerusalem, as was said in its place (237). By this prudent foresight the Apostles showed no difference in their garments as long as the great Lady was alive; all of them wore clothes of the same form and color, similar to that which had been worn by her divine Son. Assisted by the holy Angels She wove with her own hands the tunics for this purpose and sent them through the Angels to the Apostles on their journeys. In thus making it possible for them to wear vestments similar to those which had been worn by Christ our Savior the great Mother provided that even in their exterior appearance the Apostles preached his doctrines and his most holy life. In regard to the other necessities of life such as food She left them to begging and to the labor of their hands, or to the alms which were offered to them.

567. At the orders of the Queen the Angels frequently assisted the Apostles in their travels and tribulations, and in the persecutions of the gentiles, the Jews, and the demons, who continually excited evil-minded men against the preachers of the Gospel. The Angels often visited them in visible shapes, conversing with them and consoling them on behalf of most holy Mary; at other times they performed the same office interiorly without manifesting themselves. Sometimes they freed them from prison, warned them of dangers and snares, accompanied them on their way or carried them from one place to another where they were to preach, or informed them of what they must do according to the times, places and nations. Of all these things they also kept the heavenly Lady informed, for She took care of all of them and labored with them and more than all of them. It is not possible to recount in particular the cares, solitudes, and diligent doings of this kind Mother, for not a day or a night passed in which She did not perform many miracles for the Apostles and for the Church. Besides all this She wrote to them many times, animating them with heavenly exhortations and doctrines, and filling them with consolation and strength.

* cf. Apoc. 21:14 [Ed.]

† cf. Mt. 18:10 [Ed.]

568. But what is even more wonderful, She not only visited them by means of her Angels and by letters, but appeared to them Herself whenever they called upon Her or were in some tribulation or necessity. Although She appeared to many of the Apostles (besides appearing to the Evangelists, regarding which I have already spoken), I shall here speak only of her apparitions to St. Peter, who as head of the Church stood in greater need of the counsels and assistance of most holy Mary. Hence to him She sent her Angels more frequently, and the Saint sent to Her those who were assigned to him as Pontiff of the Church, and he wrote to Her and communicated with Her more often than the other Apostles. Soon after the Council of Jerusalem St. Peter was journeying to Asia Minor and came to Antioch, where he first established his pontifical See. And when faced with overcoming the difficulties which he encountered regarding this, the Vicar of Christ found himself in a certain predicament and affliction, and most holy Mary knew of this and that he needed the favor of the great Lady. In order to confer it upon him in the manner suited to the importance of the occasion the Angels carried Her into the presence of St. Peter on a throne of majesty as at other times (193, 399). She appeared to the Apostle, who was in prayer, and when he saw Her so refulgent he prostrated himself on the ground with his accustomed fervor. And speaking with the great Lady he said, bathed in tears: "From whence is this favor to me, a sinner, that the Mother of my Redeemer comes to where I am?" The heavenly Teacher of the humble descended from her throne, and moderating the splendors which surrounded Her She fell on her knees and asked the blessing of the Pontiff of the Church. With none of the other Apostles, but only with St. Peter, did She observe this conduct in her apparitions to them, although outside of these apparitions, when She conversed with them in the natural way, She asked for their blessing on her knees.

569. But because St. Peter was the Vicar of Christ and the head of the Church She descended from her royal throne and showed him reverence, acting as one of the members of the Church yet in mortal flesh. Speaking familiarly with the holy Apostle She conferred with him about the weighty matters then under consideration. One of them was the advisability of beginning to celebrate some of the feasts of the Lord. After they had resolved on the course to be taken the holy Angels took Her back from Antioch to Jerusalem. Later on when St. Peter, in obedience to the orders of the Savior, had gone to Rome with the intention of transferring the Apostolic See to that city, the Blessed Mother appeared once more to him. There it was ordained that in the Roman Church would thenceforth be celebrated the feast of the Nativity of her divine Son, of the Passion, and of the institution of the most Blessed Sacrament as the Church does on Holy Thursday. Later on after many years was established also the feast of Corpus Christi, to be celebrated on the first Thursday after the octave of Pentecost as it is now celebrated. But the first feast of the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday was instituted by St. Peter, as also the feast of the Resurrection, the Sundays, the Ascension, and the Paschal and other customs which the Roman Church has observed from that time until now, and all of these were instituted by the direction and counsel of most holy Mary. After these doings St. Peter went to Spain, visiting some of the churches founded by St. James and establishing others before returning to Rome.

570. On another occasion, before and very near the glorious transition of the divine Mother, St. Peter being again at Rome, a dispute arose among the Christians which greatly distressed and afflicted both himself and all those concerned. The Apostle remembered the favors he had received in his tribulations at the hands of the great Queen, and grieved very much that he would now be deprived of her counsel and assistance. He therefore besought the Angels of his office to manifest his troubles and necessity to the Blessed Mother in order to obtain help in his difficulties by her powerful intercession with her Son. The Queen, who knew the fervor and

humility of St. Peter, failed not in responding to his desires. She commanded the Angels of the Apostle to bring him to Jerusalem where She then was. They immediately executed her command and brought St. Peter to the Cenacle into the presence of his Queen and Lady. This singular favor inflamed the fervent affections of the Apostle, and he prostrated himself before most holy Mary, full of joy and tears to see the prayer of his heart fulfilled. The great Lady commanded him to arise, and She prostrated Herself before him, saying: "My master, give thy servant thy blessing as Vicar of Christ my Lord and most holy Son." St. Peter obeyed and gave Her his blessing. Then they gave thanks to the Lord for having fulfilled their wishes, and though the humble Mistress of virtues was not unaware of the tribulations of St. Peter and the faithful of Rome, She listened to his account of what had happened.

571. Most holy Mary advised him of all that he needed to know and do in order to allay the trouble and restore peace in the Church of Rome. She spoke to St. Peter with such wisdom that, although he already had a most high concept of the most prudent Mother, on this occasion he experienced such light that he was beside himself with admiration and joy, and he rendered humble gratitude for this new favor. Having thus informed him of many things for establishing the Church in Rome, She again asked for his blessing and bid him farewell. The Angels brought him back to Rome, and most holy Mary remained prostrate upon the ground in the form of a cross, as was her custom, asking the Lord to quiet this disturbance. Her prayer was heard, for on arriving back in Rome St. Peter found matters in a better state, and soon the consuls permitted the faithful freely to follow the law of Christ. By these miracles to which I have referred some understanding is given of that which most holy Mary did in the government of the Apostles and of the Church, for if all were to be recorded more volumes would be required than I am now writing lines. Hence I refrain from enlarging upon them so in the rest of this History I may describe the unheard-of and admirable favors which Christ our Redeemer conferred upon the divine Mother in the last years of her life, though I confess I cannot give more than some indication of that which I have understood so Christian piety may have motives to contemplate and praise the Omnipotent, the Author of such venerable sacraments.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE QUEEN OF THE ANGELS GAVE ME.

572. My dearest daughter, at other times I have spoken to thee of a complaint which I have against the children of the Church, and especially against the women, in whom the fault is greater. In my sight it is abominable because it is so much opposed to my own conduct in life. I repeat it here so thou mayest imitate me and keep away from what the foolish women and daughters of Belial are guilty of, namely treating the priests of the Most High without reverence, esteem or respect. This fault increases day by day in the Church, and hence I renew this warning already several times recorded. Tell me, my daughter, what must be thought of the fact that priests, the anointed of the Lord, appointed to represent Christ and consecrate his body and blood, are serving vile, impure and earthly women? That they stand uncovered and do reverence to a proud and miserable woman, only because she is rich and they are poor? I ask, has the poor priest less dignity than the rich? Or do riches confer a greater or equal dignity, power and excellence than the one given to priests and ministers by my divine Son? The angels have no regard for the rich because of their possessions, but they respect priests for their exalted dignity. How then could such an abuse and perversity creep into the Church, that the anointed of the Lord are insulted and despised by the faithful, who know and confess them to be sanctified by Christ himself?

573. It is true the priests themselves are very guilty and reprehensible when, disregarding their dignity, they enslave themselves to the service of other men, and much more of women. But if priests have some excuse in their poverty, the rich have none in their pride when they oblige the priests, due to their poverty, to be servants when in reality they are masters. This monstrosity is very abominable to the saints and very displeasing in my eyes due to the veneration I had for the priests. Great was my dignity as Mother of God himself, yet I often prostrated myself at their feet and considered it a great happiness to kiss the ground on which they trod. But the blindness of the world has obscured the sacerdotal dignity, mixing the precious with the vile (Jer. 15:19); it has lowered the priests to the position of the common people by its laws and disorderly customs (Is. 24:2), making use of the one as well as the other for their degradation; and the same minister who now at the altar offers the tremendous sacrifice of the sacred body and blood afterward leaves it to serve and subject himself to the service even of women, who by nature and by condition are so inferior, and sometimes are made even more unworthy by their sins.

574. I therefore desire thee, my daughter, to seek to make reparation as far as possible for this fault and abuse among the children of the Church. I give thee to understand that even from my throne in heaven I look with veneration and respect upon the priests who are on earth. Thou must always regard them with the same veneration as if they were at the altar, or holding the most Blessed Sacrament in their hands or at their breast; and even the ornaments and all their vestments thou must hold in great veneration, just as I with reverence provided garments for the Apostles. Regarding the sacred Gospels and all of divine Scriptures, in addition to the reasons for esteeming them which thou hast written and understood, thou must base thy estimation of them on what they enclose and contain, and by the manner in which the Evangelists wrote them, this being ordained by the Most High. In the writing of the Gospels and other Holy Scriptures the Holy Ghost assisted so the Church would be rich and prosperous in the abundance of doctrine, science and light concerning the mysteries of the Lord and his works. To the supreme Pontiff of Rome thou must render highest obedience and veneration before all other men, and when thou hearest him mentioned show reverence by inclining thy head as if thou didst hear the name of my divine Son or my own named in thy presence, for on earth he takes the place of Christ; and when I lived in the world I showed my reverence whenever the name of St. Peter was pronounced. In order for thee to practice my doctrine and find grace in the eyes of the Most High, whom all these works please very much and who considers none of them small if done for his love, I desire thee to be very attentive and a most faithful follower of my footsteps.