

BOOK EIGHT

SECOND AND LAST OF PART III

Contains the Journey of Mary Most Holy with St. John to Ephesus; the Death and Chastisement of Herod; the Destruction of the Temple of Diana; the Return of Most Holy Mary from Ephesus to Jerusalem; the Instruction She Gave to the Evangelists; the Exalted State of Her Most Pure Soul before Her Death; Her Most Blessed Transition, Assumption into Heaven, and Coronation.

CHAPTER I

Mary Most Holy Departs with St. John from Jerusalem for Ephesus; St. Paul Goes from Damascus to Jerusalem; St. James Visits the Great Queen in Ephesus, and then Arrives in Jerusalem; the Mysteries Associated with All of These Journeys.

365. In the hands of the Seraphim most holy Mary returned to Jerusalem from Saragossa, leaving that city and the kingdom of Spain enhanced and enriched by her presence, protection and promises, and by the temple which under her title and as a monument to her sacred name St. James had built with the assistance and favor of the Holy Angels. As soon as the great Lady of heaven and Queen of the Angels had left the cloud or throne upon which the Angels had carried Her, and set her foot upon the floor of the Cenacle, She prostrated Herself upon it, humbling Herself to the dust in order to praise the Most High for the favors conferred upon Her, upon St. James, and upon the kingdom of Spain in this miraculous journey. At the thought of a temple built in her honor and for her invocation She in her ineffable humility so annihilated Herself in her own estimation as seemingly to have entirely forgotten She was the Mother of God, a sinless creature, and superior in sanctity above the highest Seraphim, exceeding them without measure. She humbled Herself and rendered gratitude for these benefits as if She was a mere worm of the earth, of less value and guilty of more sins than all the creatures. This new debt seemed to Her so great She felt obliged to aspire to new and more exalted degrees of sanctity in recompense; this She resolved to do and truly accomplished, arriving at a degree of wisdom and humility which goes beyond our capacity to understand.

366. In these exercises, and in praying with great fervor for the defense and increase of the Church, She spent the greater part of four days after her return to Jerusalem. In the interim the evangelist St. John made preparations to embark on the journey for Ephesus, and on the fourth day, which was the sixth of January of the year forty, St. John notified Her it was time to leave, for there would be a ship and all things had been arranged for the journey. The great Teacher of obedience, without reply or delay, knelt down and asked permission of the Lord to leave the Cenacle and Jerusalem, and then proceeded to take leave of the owner of the house and its inhabitants. It can easily be imagined how sorrowful they were at this farewell, for by the most sweet conversation of the Mother of Grace, and the favors and blessings received at her generous hands, all were rendered captives and prisoners by their love and veneration of Her, whereas now all at once they were to be left without consolation and bereft of the most rich Treasure of heaven from whom they had received so many blessings. All of them offered to follow and accompany

Her, but since this was not opportune they asked Her to hasten her return and not to forsake forever this house which was entirely at her disposal. The heavenly Mother thanked them for these pious and loving wishes by expressing her own humble love, and She somewhat allayed their grief by giving them hope of her return.

367. Then She asked permission from St. John to visit the Holy Places of our Redemption and there to worship and adore the Lord, who had consecrated them by his presence and his precious blood. With the Apostle She made these sacred stations, exhibiting incredible devotion and tears of reverent love, and St. John, deeply consoled at being permitted to accompany Her, exercised himself in heroic acts of virtue. The Blessed Mother saw at each of the Holy Places the Angels who had been deputed to guard and defend them, and anew She charged them to resist Lucifer and his demons lest they destroy or profane by irreverence those Sacred Places as they desired and intended to do through the unbelieving Jews. For this defense She instructed the holy Angels to drive away by holy inspirations the evil thoughts and diabolical suggestions by which the infernal dragon sought to excite the Jews and other mortals to erase the memory of Christ our Savior in those Holy Places, and She charged them with this duty for all future times, since the wrath of the evil spirits against the places and the works of the Redemption would last until the end of the world. The holy Angels obeyed their Queen and Mistress in all She ordained.

368. Having satisfied her piety She asked St. John on her knees to bless Her for the journey just as She had been accustomed to do with her divine Son (*Inc.* 698), for She always exercised the same august virtues of obedience and humility toward the beloved disciple who was left in his place. Many of the faithful of Jerusalem offered Her money, jewels and carriages for the road to the sea, and all things necessary for her journey to Ephesus. The most prudent Lady humbly showed her appreciation to all but accepted nothing. For her journey to the sea She made use of an unpretentious beast of burden upon which She was carried along as the Queen of virtues and of the poor. She recalled the journeys and pilgrimages She had made with her divine Son and with her spouse Joseph, and these recollections, together with the heavenly love which had induced Her once more to travel, awakened in her dove-like Heart tender and devout affections. In order to be in all things most perfect She made new acts of resignation to the divine will in being deprived, for the glory and exaltation of his Name, of the company of her Son and of her spouse (whose consoling presence She had enjoyed on her former journeys), and in leaving the quietude of the Cenacle, the Holy Places, and the company of so many of the faithful and devout children of the Church. She also praised the Most High because He had given Her the beloved disciple as a companion in her banishment.

369. For her greater alleviation and comfort during this journey all of her holy Angels at her departure from the Cenacle appeared to Her in visible and corporeal forms, surrounding Her and protecting Her in their midst. With this escort of the celestial host, and the human company of St. John, She journeyed to the port where the vessel was ready to sail for Ephesus. She spent this entire journey in repeated and sweet colloquies and canticles with the sovereign spirits in praise of the Most High, and sometimes She was joined in this by St. John, who was most careful and diligent in serving Her with admirable reverence in all that occurred and all the most happy Apostle knew to be necessary. This solicitude of St. John was met by the heavenly Mother with incredible humility, for the two virtues of gratitude and humility made all the favors She received appear to Her very great, and though all such services were owed to Her by so many titles of obligation and justice, She nevertheless acknowledged them as favors and very much freely given.

370. They came to the harbor and immediately boarded the ship with the other passengers. The great Queen of the world was now for the first time upon the sea. She saw and comprehended with clearness the vast Mediterranean and its communication with the great ocean. She beheld its depth and height, its length and breadth, the caverns it contained and their hidden arrangement, its sands and minerals, its ebb and tide, its animals, whales, and variety of fishes large and small, and any other marvelous creatures it enclosed. She knew how many men had drowned and perished in traversing it, and She remembered the saying of Ecclesiasticus, *those who sail on the sea tell the dangers thereof* (Ecclus. 43:26), and of David, *wonderful are the surges of the sea* (Ps. 92:4) and pride of the swollen waves. The divine Mother could easily know all this by the special dispensation of her most holy Son as well as by her supreme angelic privilege and grace, and her singular participation in the divine attributes, which resembled those of the most sacred humanity of Christ our Savior. In virtue of these gifts and privileges her knowledge extended to all these things, not only as they are in themselves and without deceit but far beyond the sphere of angelic knowledge.

371. When this great panorama of creatures, in which were reflected as from a most clear mirror the greatness and omnipotence of the Creator, was presented to her faculties filled with heavenly wisdom, her spirit winged its ardent flight to the very being of God, so wonderfully reflected in these creatures, and for all of them and in all of them She gave praise, glory and magnificence to the Most High. With the compassion of a most loving Mother for all who deliver themselves to the indomitable fury of the sea in order to navigate it at such great peril to their lives She most fervently besought the Almighty to defend in those dangers all who would invoke her intercession and name, devoutly pleading for her help. The Lord immediately granted this petition, and He gave his word He would favor in the perils of the sea those who would carry some image of Her and with affection call upon this Star of the Sea, most holy Mary, during the storms which endanger them. Hence it can be understood if faithful Catholics encounter evil events and perish in navigation it is because they ignore the favors to be obtained from the Queen of the Angels, or because of their sins they fail to remember Her in the raging storms, or fail to seek her favors with sincere faith and devotion; for neither can the word of the Lord ever fail (Mt. 24:35), nor shall the great Mother ever deny assistance to the necessitous and afflicted upon the sea who piously invoke Her.

372. Another wonder also happened at this departure, for when Mary most holy saw the sea with the fishes and other maritime animals She gave them all her blessing and commanded them to acknowledge and praise their Creator in the manner of which they were capable.* Then something admirable happened: The fish of the sea, obeying this word of their Lady and Queen, with incredible speed placed themselves in front of the ship. None of the species of sea animals was missing, each being represented by an innumerable multitude. All of them surrounded the ship and showed their heads above the water, and for a long time by extraordinary and pleasant movements and wiggles acknowledged Her as the Queen and Mistress of creatures and showed themselves grateful to Her for coming upon the waters and visiting them in their place of habitation. This strange event astonished all the passengers as something never before seen. The multitudes of large and small fishes, so crowded and packed together, somewhat impeded the progress of the vessel, and the passengers gazed upon this spectacle and wonderingly discussed it since they did not know the cause of this miracle. St. John alone understood it, and for awhile he could not restrain his tears of devoted joy. After some time he asked the heavenly Mother to give

* cf. Dan. 3:79 [Ed.]

them her blessing and her permission to depart, since they had so promptly obeyed Her when asked to praise the Most High. The sweetest Mother complied, and immediately that army of fishes disappeared and churned the sea into foam by their quick motion. Then the ship pursued its way over the tranquil and serene bosom of the waters, arriving at Ephesus in a few days.

373. When they landed the great Queen continued to work miracles equal to those wrought upon the sea. She cured the sick and the possessed, who as soon as they came into her presence were set free. I shall not tarry to relate all these wonders, for many books and much time would be necessary to describe all the doings of most holy Mary and the favors of heaven which She dispensed as the instrument and Dispensatrix of the omnipotence of the Most High. I shall record only those which are necessary for this History and shall suffice to manifest in some measure the unknown and wonderful works of our great Queen and Lady. In Ephesus lived some Christians who had come from Jerusalem. There were few of them, but upon learning of the arrival of the Mother of Christ our Savior they hastened to visit Her and offer their dwellings and their possessions for her use. But the great Queen of virtues, who sought neither ostentation nor temporal commodities, chose for her dwelling the house of a few retired and poor women who were living by themselves without the company of men. They offered it to Her by the disposition of the Lord with charity and benevolence. And examining their house, with all of the Guardian Angels of the Queen intervening, they selected a very retired room for the Queen, and another for St. John. In this lodging they lived while they stayed in the city of Ephesus.

374. For this benefit most holy Mary thanked the owners and the neighbors of this house. Then She retired to her room, and prostrate upon the ground as was usual in her prayers She adored the immutable essence of God, offering to sacrifice Herself in his service in this city, saying: "Lord God omnipotent, by the immensity of thy divinity and grandeur Thou dost *fill heaven and earth* (Jer. 23:24). I, thy humble handmaid, desire to fulfill entirely thy holy will on all occasions, in all places, and at all times in which thy divine Providence shall place me; and since Thou art my entire Good, my being, and my life, direct to Thee alone my desires and the affections of my will. Govern, most high Lord, all my thoughts, words and deeds, so all may be for thy pleasure and approval." The most prudent Mother perceived the Lord accepted this prayer and offering, and responded to her desires with divine power, ready to assist and govern Her always.

375. She continued her prayer, supplicating for the holy Church and arranging what She desired to do to help the faithful from Ephesus. She called her Holy Angels and sent some of them to aid the Apostles and disciples, whom She knew to be much afflicted in the persecutions which by means of the infidels the demon was stirring up against them. In those days St. Paul fled from Damascus due to the persecution he there received from the Jews, as he himself mentions in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians where he says he was let down from the walls of the city in a basket (II Cor. 11:33). To defend him from these perils and those with which Lucifer threatened him on his way to Jerusalem, the great Queen sent Angels to be his guard and protection, for the wrath and fury of hell was roused against St. Paul more than against any of the other Apostles. This is the journey the Apostle himself refers to in his Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 1:18), where he says after three years he went to Jerusalem to visit St. Peter. These three years are not to be counted from the time of his conversion but from the time he had returned from Arabia to Damascus, and this may be inferred from the text itself, for after stating he returned from Arabia to Damascus he immediately adds that after three years he went up to Jerusalem. If those three years are counted from the time before his sojourn in Arabia the text would occasion much confusion.

376. With greater clearness this may be proved by computing the time of the death of St. Stephen (198) and the journey of most holy Mary to Ephesus, for counting from the day of the Nativity of Christ St. Stephen died at the end of the thirty-fourth year of Christ, but counting them from the day of the Circumcision, as the holy Church does now, St. Stephen died seven days before the completion of the thirty-four years, subtracting the seven days before the first of January. The conversion of St. Paul happened in the year thirty-six on the twenty-fifth of January. If he had come to Jerusalem three years afterwards he there would have found most holy Mary and St. John, while he himself says he had not seen any of the Apostles there except St. Peter and St. James the Less (Gal. 1:19), who was called Alpheus. If the holy Queen and St. John had at that time been in Jerusalem St. Paul would certainly not have missed seeing them, and he would have mentioned at least St. John; yet he says he had not seen him. The explanation is that St. Paul came to Jerusalem in the year forty, four years after his conversion and a little less than a month after Mary most holy had departed for Ephesus. St. Paul had entered the fifth year of his conversion, and the other Apostles, except the two he saw, had already left Jerusalem and were preaching the Gospel of Christ, each one in his appointed province.

377. According to this account we must assume St. Paul spent the first year after his conversion, or the greater part of it, journeying to Arabia and preaching the Gospel there, then the three following years in Damascus. Hence the evangelist St. Luke in chapter IX of the Acts of the Apostles, though he says nothing of the journey of St. Paul to Arabia, nevertheless says that many days after his conversion the Jews of Damascus plotted to take his life (Acts 9:23), these many days referring to the four years thus passed. Then he adds his disciples, aware of the plots of the Jews, on a certain night lowered him in a basket from the city walls and thus sent him on his journey to Jerusalem (Ib. 24-5). There the Apostles and the new disciples, though knowing of his miraculous conversion, nevertheless retained a certain fear and suspicion of his not persevering because he had been such a professed enemy of Christ our Savior. Hence they at first held themselves aloof from St. Paul until St. Barnabas spoke to them and introduced him to St. Peter, St. James, and other disciples (Ib. 26-7). St. Paul prostrated himself at the feet of the Vicar of Christ, kissed them in acknowledgment of his errors and sins, and begged to be admitted as one of his subjects and as a follower of his Master, whose holy Name and faith he desired to preach at the cost of his blood.

378. From the fear and suspicion of St. Peter and St. James concerning the perseverance of St. Paul we can likewise deduce he arrived in Jerusalem when neither Mary most holy nor St. John were there, for he would have presented himself first of all to Her to allay suspicion against him, and the two Apostles would likewise have first asked Her whether they could trust St. Paul. All of them would have been set at ease by the most prudent Lady since She was so solicitous and attentive in consoling and instructing the Apostles, especially St. Peter. But since the great Lady had already left for Ephesus they had no one to assure them of the constancy of St. Paul until St. Peter reassured himself of it by seeing him thus prostrate at his feet. Thereupon he was received with great joy of soul by St. Peter and the other disciples.* All of them rendered humble and fervent gratitude to the Most High and commissioned St. Paul to preach in Jerusalem. This he gladly did to the astonishment of all the Jews who knew him. Since his words were like burning arrows which penetrated into the hearts of all who heard him they were struck with terror, and in two days all of Jerusalem was roused by the news of his arrival, flocking to see him with their own eyes.

* cf. Mt. 18:21-22 [Ed.]

379. Lucifer and his demons were not inattentive on this occasion in which for their greater torment the scourge of the Almighty was visited upon them, for at the entrance of St. Paul into Jerusalem these infernal dragons were made to feel the divine power in the Apostle which tormented, oppressed and ruined them. But as the pride and malice of these enemies shall never be extinguished through all eternity (Ps. 73:23), when they felt such a violent force arrayed against them they were greatly irritated against St. Paul in whom they recognized this divine power. With incredible rage Lucifer called together many legions of his demons and exhorted them anew to rouse themselves and exert all the forces of their malice for the entire destruction of St. Paul, and not to leave any stone unturned in Jerusalem and in all the world for the attainment of this object. The demons without delay set about this work, exciting Herod and the Jews against the Apostle and directing their attention to the burning zeal with which he began to preach in Jerusalem.

380. The great Lady of heaven took notice of all this from her retirement in Ephesus, for in addition to the knowledge of all things through her heavenly science She received information of all that happened to St. Paul from the Angels She had sent for his defense. And since the most blessed Mother had been forewarned regarding the disturbance of Jerusalem by the malice of Herod and the Jews, and on the other hand knew the importance of preserving the life of St. Paul for the exaltation of the Name of the Most High and the spread of the Gospel, and knowing his danger in Jerusalem, the great Queen was filled with new solicitude at being absent from Palestine where She could have rendered more immediate assistance to the Apostles. Therefore She sought to furnish it so much the more abundantly from Ephesus by multiplying her prayers and petitions, her ceaseless tears and sighs, and by other measures through the hands of her holy Angels. In order to relieve Her in these cares the Lord one day in her prayer assured Her He would fulfill her petitions and protect the life of St. Paul in this danger and these assaults of the demon. And so He did, for one day St. Paul while praying in the temple was raised to an ecstatic rapture and filled with most exalted enlightenment and understanding wherein the Lord commanded him to leave Jerusalem immediately and save his life from the hatred of the Jews, who would not receive his doctrine and preaching.

381. For this reason St. Paul did not stay in Jerusalem more than fifteen days on this journey, as he himself says in his Epistle to the Galatians (1:18). After some years he returned from Miletus and Ephesus to Jerusalem where he was taken prisoner, and on that occasion he relates this ecstasy in the temple and the command of the Lord to leave Jerusalem, as recorded in chapter XXII of the Acts of the Apostles (v. 17-18). Of this vision and command he informed St. Peter as the head of the Apostolic College, and after consultation concerning his mortal danger he was secretly sent to Caesarea and Tarsus (Acts 9:30) with orders to preach indiscriminately to the gentiles, which he did. Most holy Mary was the instrument and Mediatrix of all these miraculous favors, for it was through her intercession her most holy Son operated them, and She gave thanks for them in her name and that of the whole Church.

382. Having thus been reassured regarding the life of St. Paul, the loving Mother hoped that through the assistance of divine Providence She could favor her cousin James, of whom She took particular care and who was still in Saragossa assisted by the hundred Angels She had appointed for his company and defense at Granada, as I said (326). These holy Angels frequently went back and forth, bringing the petitions of our Apostle to most holy Mary and her counsels back to him; in this way St. James learned of the sojourn of the great Queen in Ephesus. When he had brought the chapel or small temple of Our Lady of the Pillar in Saragossa to a sufficient state of completion, he consigned it to the care of the bishop and disciples appointed by him there as in

other cities in Spain. Some months after the apparition of the Queen he departed from Saragossa, continuing to preach throughout different provinces. Having come to Catalonia he embarked for Italy, where without much delay he pursued his journey overland, always preaching until he again embarked for Asia, ardently desiring to see there most holy Mary, his Lady and Protectress.

383. St. James happily attained his object and reached Ephesus. There he prostrated himself at the feet of the Mother of his Creator, shedding copious tears of joy and veneration. From his inmost heart he thanked Her for the peerless favors obtained at her hands from the Most High during his travels and preaching in Spain, and especially for her having visited him and conferred such blessings upon him during her visits. The heavenly Mother, as the Mistress of humility, immediately raised him from the ground and said to him: "My master, remember thou art the anointed of the Lord and his minister, and I am a humble wormlet." With these words the great Lady fell on her knees and asked the blessing of St. James as a priest of the Most High. He remained for some days in Ephesus in the company of most holy Mary and his brother St. John, to whom he gave an account of all that had happened to him in Spain. With the most prudent Mother during those days he held most exalted colloquies and conferences, of which it shall suffice to record the following.

384. In order to bid farewell to James, most holy Mary spoke to him one day and said: "James, my son, these shall be the last few days of thy life. Thou knowest how from my heart I love thee in the Lord, desiring to raise thee to his intimate embrace of his charity and eternal friendship for which He has created thee, redeemed thee, and called thee. In the few days still remaining of thy life I desire to manifest to thee this love, and I offer thee all that by divine grace I can do for thee as a true Mother." To such an ineffable favor St. James responded with incredible veneration and said: "My Lady and Mother of my God and Redeemer, from the depth of my soul I thank Thee for this new benefit, worthy of thy measureless charity alone. I beseech Thee, my Lady, to give me thy blessing in order to go to suffer martyrdom for thy Son, my true God and Lord. If it shall be his will and for his glory, my soul desires and begs Thee not to abandon me in the sacrifice of my life, but rather see Thee with my own eyes in that transition, so Thou mayest offer me as an acceptable victim in his divine presence."

385. Most holy Mary promised to present his petition to the Lord, and would fulfill it if the divine will and condescension would so permit. By this hope of her assistance and other words of eternal life She comforted the Apostle and encouraged him regarding the martyrdom for which he hoped. Among other words She spoke to him as follows: "My son James, what torments and what sorrows can ever seem grievous at the prospect of entering the eternal joy of the Lord? The most violent is mild and the most terrible gentle and desirable to him who knows the infinite and highest Good whom he shall possess in return for a momentary sorrow (II Cor. 4:17). I congratulate thee, my master, for thy most happy lot in being so near to leaving these shackles of mortal flesh in order to enjoy the infinite Good as a comprehensor and gaze upon the joy of his divine countenance. In this happiness I lift up my heart, for thou art so shortly to attain what my soul desires for thee, exchanging temporal life for the unfailling possession of eternal rest. I give thee the blessing of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, so all three Persons in the unity of one essence assist thee in tribulation and guide thee in thy desires, and my own blessing shall be with thee in thy glorious martyrdom."

386. The great Queen added other words of admirable wisdom and highest consolation in parting from St. James. She charged him in her name and in the name of all creatures to praise God and intercede for the holy Church as soon as he would come to the vision of the most

blessed Trinity. St. James offered to do all She desired, and again asked her favor and protection in the hour of his martyrdom, and the divine Mother once more promised it. Among the last words at his farewell St. James said: “My Lady and blessed among women,^{*} thy life and thy intercession is the support upon which the holy Church now and through all the ages shall remain secure among the persecutions and temptations of the enemies of the Lord,[†] and thy charity shall be to Thee the instrument of thy genuine martyrdom. Remember always, as our sweetest Mother, the kingdom of Spain, where the holy Church and the faith of thy most holy Son and my Redeemer has been planted. Receive it under thy special protection and preserve in it thy sacred temple and the faith which I, though unworthily, have preached, and give me thy holy blessing.” Most holy Mary promised to fulfill his petition and desires, and gave him her blessing at his departure.

387. St. James took leave also of his brother St. John, who shed abundant tears not so much of sorrow as of joy due to the happy lot of the elder brother, since he was to be the first of the Apostles to attain eternal happiness and the palm of martyrdom. Then St. James journeyed without much delay to Jerusalem where he preached for some days before he died, as I shall relate in the next chapter. The great Mistress of the world remained in Ephesus, attentive to all that happened to St. James and all the other Apostles without losing them from her interior vision or interrupting her prayers for them and for all the faithful of the Church. At the thought of the martyrdom of St. James for the name of Christ such conflagrations of love and desires of giving her life for the Lord welled up in the most pure Heart of Mary that She merited many times over the crowns gained by the Apostle and all the others together, for with each one of the Martyrs She suffered many martyrdoms of love, more excruciating to her chaste and burning Heart than the torments of fire and sword to the bodies of the Martyrs.

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

388. My daughter, in the events of this chapter thou hast many rules for perfection and good works. Thus take notice that just as God is the beginning and origin of all the being and faculties of creatures, so also according to right reason He must be their end. For if all have received it without meriting it, then all is owed to Him who gave it by grace; and if it was given to creatures in order to work, then all works are owed to their Creator, and not to themselves or any other. This truth, which I understood without deception, and pondered in my heart, obliged me to the exercise which thou hast many times written and understood with admiration (*Con.* 784; *Inc.* 180; *Cor.* 4; etc.), that of prostrating myself upon the earth, clinging to it, and adoring the immutable being of God with profound reverence, veneration and worship. I considered how I had been created out of nothing, and formed of earth; and in the presence of the being of God I annihilated myself, acknowledging Him as the Author who gave me life, being and movement (Acts 17:28), that without Him I was nothing, and that all was due to Him as the sole beginning and end of all creation. In the consideration of this truth all I did and suffered seemed little to me, and though I ceased not to do good, I always yearned and aspired to do and suffer more; yet my

^{*} cf. Lk. 1:28 [Ed.]

[†] Reminiscent of the famous dream of St. John Bosco, who saw the Bark of Peter securely tied to two pillars or supports which kept the Church secure in the hurricane of persecution so evident in our day, these two pillars being Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament and the immaculate Virgin Mary. [Ed.]

heart was never satisfied, since I always found myself indebted and considered myself poor and more obligated. This knowledge is very closely bound to natural reason, and even more to the light of faith, if men would attend to it, for this debt is common and apparent. But amid this general forgetfulness I desire thee, my daughter, to be skillful in imitating me in these works and exercises I have manifested to thee; and in particular I advise thee to cling to the dust, and abase thyself more when the Most High raises thee up to the favors and gifts of his closest embraces. Thou hast this example clearly evident in my humility when I received any singular benefit, such as when the Lord commanded a temple to be dedicated in which I would be invoked and honored with veneration and reverence while yet in mortal life. This favor and others humbled me beyond all human estimation; and if I did this regarding so many works, consider what thou must do when the Lord is so generous with thee, and thy recompense has been so meager.

389. I also desire thee, my daughter, to imitate me in being very circumspect and poor in spirit* in satisfying thy necessities without using many comforts, even though offered to thee by thy nuns or those who are well fond of thee. In this always choose or allow what is poorer, modest, thrown away and humble, for otherwise thou cannot imitate me, nor follow my spirit, by which without going to extremes I excluded all the comforts, ostentation and abundance which the faithful offered to me in Jerusalem; and in Ephesus, for my journey and habitation, I accepted the least which was sufficient for me. In this virtue is contained much that will make the creature very happy, while the deceived and blind world repays itself and casts itself at everything contrary to this virtue and truth.

390. Seek also to guard thyself with all care from another common deception, which is that men, although they must acknowledge that all the goods of body and soul belong to the Lord, nevertheless they ordinarily seize them for themselves, and hold them so tightly that they not only do not offer them willingly to their Creator and Lord, but if at any time they are taken away they lament and complain, as if they were wronged, and God had inflicted some injury. Thus inordinately are parents accustomed to love their children and children their parents, husbands their wives and wives their husbands, and all of them their property, honor, health, and other temporal goods, and many souls even the spiritual goods, so if these are lost they have no moderation in their sorrow and emotions; and even if it is impossible to recover what they desire, they live restless and inconsolable, passing from disordered emotional feelings to irrationality and injustice.† By such vice they not only condemn the works of Divine Providence, and lose the great merit they would obtain by offering their loss to the Lord, and sacrificing to Him what is his, but imply they would have as their ultimate happiness to possess and enjoy those transitory goods they have lost, and would live many ages content with these apparent, transient and perishable goods.

391. None of the children of Adam could love anything visible more or as much as I loved my most holy Son and my spouse Joseph; and since this love was so well ordered while I lived in their company, I offered to the Lord with all my heart the lack of their companionship and conversation the entire time I lived in the world without them. This conformity and resignation to Divine Providence I desire thee to imitate whenever something is lacking to thee which thou shouldst love in God; for outside of His Majesty thou art permitted to love nothing. Only the longings and desires to see the highest Good and love Him eternally and forever in the fatherland must be perpetual in thee. For this happiness thou must yearn with tears and sighs from the

* cf. Mt. 5:3 [Ed.]

† the exact opposite of what Job did; cf. Job 1:21-22 [Ed.]

depths of thy heart; for it thou must suffer with joy all the hardships and afflictions of mortal life. In these affections thou must proceed in such a manner that from this day forward thou hast a lively desire to suffer all thou dost hear or understand the Saints have suffered, in order to make thyself worthy of God. Yet be assured that these desires of suffering, and the aspirations and endeavors to see God, must be of such a kind that by thy love of suffering thou dost compensate for the pain thou dost not attain, and the suffering due to not meriting that which thou dost so much desire. In the flights of longing for the beatific vision thou must not mingle any other motive, such as the relief given thee from the hardships of life by the joy of his vision; for to desire the vision of the highest Good in order to avoid labor is not love of God, but of thyself and thy own comfort, which does not merit reward in the eyes of the Omnipotent, who penetrates and weighs all. But if thou shalt labor in these matters without guile and with the plenitude of perfection, as a faithful servant and spouse of my Son, desiring to see Him in order to love Him, praise Him, and never more offend Him eternally, and shalt covet all labors and tribulations only for this end, believe and assure thyself thou shalt greatly oblige us, and arrive at the state of love which thou dost always desire, since for this purpose we are so generous with thee.