

CHAPTER XII

How Most Holy Mary Celebrated Her Immaculate Conception and Nativity, and the Benefits which She Received on Those Days from Her Son and Our Savior Jesus.

611. All the offices and titles of honor which most holy Mary held in the Church, that of Queen, Lady, Mother, Governess, Mistress, and the rest, were given to her by the Omnipotent not as empty titles like those given by men, but with the plenitude of superabundant grace required by each title and which the Almighty could communicate to Her. This plenitude consisted in this, that as Queen She knew all that concerned her reign and its extent; as Lady She knew from whence came her dominion; as Mother She knew all her children and domestics of her household, without any being hidden from Her in any succeeding age of the Church; as Governess She knew all for which She was responsible; and as Teacher full of all wisdom She was fully capable of all the knowledge with the holy Church in all times and ages, through her intercession,* was to be instructed and taught by the Holy Ghost, who was to guide and govern the Church until the end of the world.

612. Hence our great Queen had a clear knowledge not only of all the Saints who preceded or followed Her in the Church, their lives, works, death, and rewards they attained in heaven, but together with this She had knowledge of all the rites, ceremonies, decisions and feast days which in the course of the ages the Church would ordain, and the reasons, motives, necessities and opportune times in and for which they were to be established with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, who gives us spiritual nourishment in the time most suitable for the glory of the Lord and the increase of the holy Church. Since I have spoken of this matter in the course of this History, especially in the second Part (*Tran.* 23, 78), I need not repeat it here. Yet in the plenitude of this knowledge and the sanctity which corresponded to it there arose in the heavenly Instructress a holy emulation of the gratitude, worship, veneration and remembrance which the Angels and Saints had in the triumphant Jerusalem, desiring to introduce all of it into the Church Militant so as far as possible the faithful on earth could imitate all She had so often seen done in heaven for the praise and glory of the Most High.

613. In this more than Seraphic spirit She began to practice by Herself many of the ceremonies, rites and practices which were afterwards introduced in the Church, and these She also inculcated and impressed upon the Apostles so they could introduce them as far as the circumstances then allowed. She not only invented the exercises of the Passion, of which I have spoken above (577), but many other customs and actions which were later on practiced in the temples, congregations, and religious orders, for whatever She knew pertained to the worship of the Lord or the practice of virtue She performed, and being so wise She was ignorant of nothing that ought to be known. Among the exercises and rites She invented was the celebration of the feasts of the Lord and of Herself, in order to renew the memory of the benefits for which She stood indebted, not only those relating in general to the human race but especially those referring to Herself, thus striving to render gratitude and adoration for all. Although She had spent her whole life in this pursuit without relaxation or forgetfulness, yet when She entered upon this new and mysterious phase of her life She prepared to signalize these feast days by celebrating them with exercises founded on a deeper insight. Since I shall speak of the other feast days in the

* cf. Ecclus. 24:46 [Ed.]

following chapters, I shall here describe only how She celebrated her Immaculate Conception and Nativity, the first mysteries of her life. These commemorations or feasts She had begun to celebrate since the Incarnation of the Word, yet She celebrated them especially after the Ascension, and more so in the last years of her life.

614. On the eighth day of December each year She celebrated her Immaculate Conception with singular joy and gratitude beyond all appraisal, for this privilege was for the great Queen of the highest estimation and appreciation, and She imagined Herself the least capable of corresponding to it with the gratitude due to it. She began her exercises on the evening before and spent the entire night in admirable devotions, shedding tears of joy, humbling and prostrating Herself, and singing the praises of the Lord. She deeply reflected how She was formed of the same earth and descended from Adam according to the common order of nature, yet only She was chosen, set apart, and among all others preserved from the common law,* exempted from the heavy tribute of guilt, and conceived with such plenitude of gifts and grace. She invited her Angels to help Her be grateful, and with them alternated new canticles which She composed. She then asked the same favor of the rest of the angels and saints in heaven; yet all this happened in such a manner that She was so inflamed with divine love that it was necessary for the Lord to console Her lest the radical humors of her Heart be consumed and death ensue.†

615. After She had spent nearly the entire night in these exercises Christ descended from heaven, and the Angels raised Her to his royal throne and carried Her to the empyrean heaven where the celebration of the feast was continued with new rejoicing and accidental glory of the courtiers of the heavenly Jerusalem. There the most blessed Mother prostrated Herself and adored the most holy Trinity, again giving thanks for the benefit of her immunity from sin and her Immaculate Conception. Then She again took her place at the right hand of Christ her Son, and the Lord himself as it were acknowledged the goodness of the eternal Father in having given Him a Mother so worthy and so full of grace, exempt from the common guilt of Adam. Anew the three divine Persons confirmed upon Her this privilege, as it were ratifying and approving it and pleasing Themselves in thus having distinguished Her among all creatures. In order to give repeated testimony to this truth a voice proceeded from the throne in the name of the Father, saying: “*How beautiful are thy steps, O Prince’s Daughter* (Cant. 7:1), conceived without the stain of sin.” Another voice, that of the Son, said: “Most pure and without the contagion of guilt is my Mother, who gave Me the form in which to redeem man.” And the Holy Ghost said: “*Thou art all fair, my Spouse, Thou art all fair* and without stain of the common guilt” (Ib. 4:7).

616. While these voices spoke were heard the choirs of all the angels and saints, singing in sweetest harmony: “Mary most holy, conceived without original sin.” To all these honors the most prudent Mother answered by gratefulness, worship and praise of the Most High, rendered with such profound humility that it surpassed all angelic understanding. In order to conclude the solemnity She was raised to the beatific vision of the most holy Trinity, and after enjoying this glory for some hours She was brought back by the Angels to the Cenacle. This was the manner in which her Immaculate Conception was solemnized after the Ascension of her divine Son. Now this feast is celebrated in a different manner, as I shall describe in another book which I have been ordered to write concerning the holy Jerusalem, the Church Triumphant, if the Lord shall concede this grace to me. This feast and others She began to celebrate from the time of the Incarnation, for finding Herself to be the Mother of God She began to renew the benefits She had

* cf. Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

† cf. *Coronation* 741 [Ed.]

received because of this dignity; thus She kept these feast days with her holy Angels, and by the worship and thanksgiving She gave to her own Son, from whom She had received such graces and favors. The rest of her devotions She offered in her oratory upon returning from heaven were of the same kind as I have related at other times after other similar favors (4, 388, etc.), for in all of them did her admirable humility grow.

617. The feast of her Nativity She celebrated on the eighth of September, the day on which She was born. She began the evening before with the same prostrations and canticles as at the feast of her Immaculate Conception. She gave thanks for having been born to life into the light of this world, and for the favor of having been raised to heaven at the hour of her birth to look upon the Divinity intuitively, as I have narrated in the first Part of this History (*Con.* 330, 332). She resolved anew to spend her whole life in fulfilling the pleasure of the Lord, acknowledging that for this purpose alone life was given to Her. Although in the first beginning and entrance into her life She had surpassed in merits the highest Saints and Seraphim, toward the end of her life She resolved to begin to labor anew as if She was just beginning the practice of virtue, and anew She asked the Lord to assist Her, govern Her in all her actions, and lead Her to the highest end proposed for his glory.

618. As for the rest concerning this feast, though She was not raised to heaven as on the day of her Immaculate Conception, yet her divine Son descended from heaven with many choirs of Angels, with the Patriarchs and Prophets, and with St. Joachim, St. Anne, and St. Joseph. With this company Christ our Savior descended in order to celebrate the Nativity of his Blessed Mother upon earth; and this purest of creatures, in the presence of that celestial company, adored the Lord with wonderful reverence and worship, and again expressed her grateful acknowledgment for having been placed upon the earth and for the benefits connected therewith. Then the Angels did the same, and sang *Nativitas tua Dei Genetrix Virgo*,* etc., which means: Thy birth, O Virgin Mother of God, announced to all the universe a great joy, for of Thee was born the Sun of justice, Christ our God. The Patriarchs and Prophets also sang their canticles of glory and thanksgiving, as well as Adam and Eve, because the Reparatrix of the damage they had wrought was born, and the Parents and Spouse of the Queen, because they had been given such a Daughter and Spouse. Then the Lord himself raised the divine Mother from the ground upon which She lay prostrate and placed Her at his right hand, and there new mysteries of the Divinity were manifested to Her. This vision, though not intuitive but abstractive, gave Her a still deeper insight and participation in the Divinity.

619. By these unspeakable favors She was transformed anew in her most holy Son, inflamed and spiritualized in order to labor for the Church, as if for a new beginning. On these occasions the Evangelist St. John merited some measure of participation in the feast, for he heard some of the music of the Angels and was privileged to offer Mass while the Lord and the Angels were present in the oratory, and gave Holy Communion to the great Queen while Jesus her Son, whom She was receiving sacramentally, was Himself at her side. These spectacles were the source of new joy to the Saints, who also served as witnesses to this Communion, more worthy than was ever seen since Christ lived, or ever shall be seen upon earth. Upon receiving Holy Communion her divine Son remained with the great Lady in sacramental form, while in his glorious and natural form He ascended to heaven. O hidden marvels of the divine omnipotence! If with all the saints God manifests Himself as great and wonderful (Ps. 67:36), what would He have done with his worthy Mother, whom He loved above all, and for whom He had reserved the great and

* cf. 2nd Vespers of Sept. 8, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Antiphon at the Magnificat* [Ed.]

special manifestations of his wisdom and power? Let all the creatures confess Him and give Him glory, power and magnificence.

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

620. My daughter, first of all I desire to enlighten thee concerning certain doubts of thy heart regarding the exalted and extraordinary mysteries of this History. Two misgivings have disturbed thy interior. The first is whether thou, who knowest thyself to be such an insignificant, useless and ignorant woman, art a fit instrument for recording these mysteries, and whether it would be better to let some other person more learned and perfect in virtue write them and thus give them more authority, since thou art the least of all, the most useless and ignorant. The second doubt is whether those who read of these mysteries shall believe them, for they are very rare and unheard of, particularly the beatific and intuitive visions of the Divinity which I had so many times in my mortal life. To thy first doubt I answer that in truth thou art the least and most useless of all, since thou hast heard it from the mouth of the Lord and I confirm it, and thus thou must understand it; yet take notice that giving credit to this History and all it contains does not depend on the instrument but on its Author, who is the highest Truth,* and upon the contents of thy writing, and in this regard not even the most supreme Seraphim could add thereto, nor canst thou detract from it or diminish it.

621. For an Angel to write this History would not be appropriate; yet if he would the incredulous and slow of heart would nevertheless find a way to slander him. It was necessary for the instrument to be a human person, but it was not proper for this person to be the most learned or wise, for then this work might be ascribed to his knowledge and thus occasion the danger of having the divine light esteemed no higher, or even lower, than human knowledge, or it might be attributed entirely to human forethought and ingenuity. It is to the greater glory of God that this person be a woman, who can rely neither on her own knowledge nor her own ingenuity. I also take special glory and pleasure in this, and that thou art this instrument, since thou and all others shall know there is nothing of thy own in this History, and thou must not attribute more to thyself than to the pen with which thou writest, since thou art but an instrument in the hands of the Lord and the manifestor of my words. And since thou art so insignificant and a sinner, thou must not be disturbed in seeing mortals refuse to believe, since in disbelieving what thou writest they will not do any wrong to thee, but by their unbelief fail in proper reverence for my words. Although thy faults and shortcomings are many, they can all be extinguished by the charity of the Lord and his immense kindness, who for that reason has not desired to choose another instrument greater than thee, but has raised thee from the dust and manifested in thee his generous power, utilizing thee in whom the truth and efficacy which the doctrine in this History contains in itself can be better known. Hence I desire thee to confine thyself to this doctrine,† execute it in thyself, and become what thou dost desire.

622. Regarding the second doubt and concern, whether others shall believe what thou writest due to the greatness of these mysteries, I have responded many times throughout the entire course of this History. Whoever shall attain a worthy concept and appreciation of me shall find no difficulty in believing me, since he shall understand the proportion and correspondence which

* cf. Jn. 14:6 [Ed.]

† cf. I Tim. 4:15 [Ed.]

all the benefits of which thou writest have to the dignity of Mother of God, to which they all correspond. Since all the works of His Majesty are perfect, if anyone doubts in these matters it is certain he does not know who God is or who I am. And if God has shown Himself so powerful and liberal in the rest of the Saints, many of whom in the opinion of the Church are held to have seen the Divinity in mortal life, and it is certain they have seen Him, how or on what basis can that be denied to me what is conceded to so many others inferior to me? All that my divine Son merited and did for them was ordained for his glory, and after that for my glory. The end must be esteemed and loved more than the means to attain it; hence greater was the love which inclined the divine will to favor me than all the rest, whom He has benefited for my sake. It is no wonder that what God did one time for others He did many times for Her whom He chose for his Mother.

623. Let the pious and the prudent keep in mind what has been taught in the Church, that the measure of the favors I received from the hands of my divine Son is his omnipotence and my capacity, for He has conceded to me all the favors which He could confer and which I was capable of receiving. These graces were in me not barren, but always fruitful to the fullest extent possible in a creature. The Lord himself was my Son, all-powerful to operate as far as the creature placed no obstacle; and since I placed no such obstacle, how can anyone dare to limit his works of love toward me his Mother, whom He himself had made worthy of his benefits and favors above all the rest of his saints, not one of whom deprived himself as I did of the enjoyment of Him in the beatific vision, even for one hour, in order to help his Church? And if all the rest He did for me seems much, I desire thee and all the rest to understand that all his favors were founded upon and included in my being conceived without sin; for it was a greater favor to make me worthy of his glory when I could not merit it, than to show me his glory when I had merited it and had placed no hindrance.

624. By these considerations thy doubts will be solved; as for the rest, let that be my concern, and let it be thine to follow and imitate me, for as far as thou art concerned this is the purpose of all thou dost understand and write. This must be thy solicitude, to omit the practice of no virtue made known to thee. I desire thee also to attend to what the other saints have done in following my divine Son and me, for thou dost not owe less than they owed to his mercy, and with none have I been more kind and generous. In my school I desire thee to learn the love, the gratitude, and the humility of a true disciple of mine, for I desire thee to distinguish thyself and advance thyself exceedingly. Do thou celebrate all my feast days with a sincere devotion, and invite the saints and angels to assist thee therein, especially the feast of my Immaculate Conception, in which I was so highly favored by the divine power and from which I derived so much joy. In these times, more than in those past, I am solicitous to see it acknowledged by men and to see them praise the Most High for this extraordinary miracle. On the day of thy own birth into the world thou shouldst render special gratitude to the Lord in imitation of me and perform some extra work in his service; above all thou must resolve thenceforth to amend thy life and to begin to labor anew in this; and all mortals, instead of spending the anniversary of their birth in demonstrations of vain earthly joy, should make similar resolutions.