

CHAPTER XIX

The Most Happy and Glorious Transition of Mary Most Holy, and how the Apostles and Disciples Arrived Beforehand in Jerusalem and were Present at Her Death.

732. Already the day determined by the divine will approached in which the true and living Ark of the Covenant was to be placed in the temple of the celestial Jerusalem with greater glory and higher jubilation than its prophetic figure was installed by Solomon in the sanctuary beneath the wings of the Cherubim (III Kg. 8:6). Three days before the most happy Transition of the great Lady the Apostles and disciples gathered in Jerusalem in the house of the Cenacle. The first one to arrive was St. Peter, who was transported from Rome by the hands of an Angel. There the Angel appeared to him and told him the Transition of most holy Mary was imminent, and the Lord commanded him to go to Jerusalem in order to be present at that event. Then the Angel took him up and brought him from Italy to the Cenacle. There the Queen of the world had retired, somewhat weakened in body by the force of her divine love, for since She was so near to her last end She participated in its conditions with greater efficacy.

733. The great Lady came to the entrance of her oratory in order to receive the Vicar of Christ our Savior. Kneeling at his feet She asked his blessing and said: "I give thanks and praise to the Almighty for bringing to me the Holy Father for assisting me in the hour of my death." Then came St. Paul, to whom the Queen showed the same reverence with similar tokens of her pleasure in seeing him. The Apostles saluted Her as the Mother of God, as their Queen and as Mistress of all creation, but with a sorrow equal to their reverence because they knew they had come for her happy Transition. After these the other Apostles came, along with the disciples still living. Three days later they were all assembled in the Cenacle. The divine Mother received them all with profound humility, reverence and love, asking each one to bless Her. All of them complied and saluted Her with admirable reverence. By orders of the Lady given to St. John, and with the assistance of St. James the Less, they were all hospitably entertained and accommodated.

734. Some of the Apostles who had been transported by the Angels and informed by them of the purpose of their coming were seized with most tender grief and shed abundant tears at the thought of losing their only protection and consolation. Others were as yet ignorant of their approaching loss, especially the disciples, who had not been positively informed by the Angels, but were moved by interior inspirations and a sweet and forcible intimation of the will of God to come to Jerusalem. They immediately conferred with St. Peter, desiring to know the occasion of their meeting, for all of them were convinced if there had been no special occasion the Lord would not have urged them so strongly to come. The Apostle St. Peter, as the head of the Church, called them all together in order to inform them of the cause of their coming, and all being gathered together he said: "My dearest children and brethren, the Lord has called and brought us to Jerusalem from remote regions not without a cause most urgent and sorrowful to us. His Majesty desires now to raise up to the throne of eternal glory his most Blessed Mother, our Mistress, all our consolation and help. His divine decree is for all of us to be present at her most happy and glorious Transition. When our Master and Redeemer ascended to the right hand of his Father, though He left us orphaned of his most delightful presence we still retained his most holy Mother for our refuge and true consolation in this mortal life. Since our light now leaves us, what shall we do? What help or hope do we have to encourage us on our pilgrimage? I find none except the hope that we shall all follow Her in due time."

735. St. Peter could speak no further because uncontrollable tears and sighs interrupted him. Neither could the rest of the Apostles answer for a long time, during which with inmost sighs of the heart they poured forth copious and most tender tears. After some time the Vicar of Christ recovered himself and added: "My children, let us seek the presence of our Mother and Lady; let us spend the time left of her life in her company and ask Her to bless us." They all went to the oratory of the great Queen and found Her kneeling on a couch upon which She was accustomed to recline for a short rest. They saw Her full of beauty and celestial light, surrounded by her thousand Guardian Angels.

736. The natural condition of her sacred and virginal body and countenance was the same as at her thirty-third year, for as I have previously stated (*Tran.* 145) from that age onward it experienced no change. It was not affected by the passing years, showing no signs of age, no wrinkles in her face or body, nor giving signs of weakening or fading as in other children of Adam, who gradually fall away and drop from the natural perfection of early man or womanhood. This unchangeableness was the privilege of most holy Mary alone because it corresponded with the stability of her most pure soul, as well as being the natural consequence of her immunity from the sin of Adam, the effects of which in this regard touched neither her sacred body nor her purest soul. The Apostles and disciples with some of the other faithful occupied her chamber, all of them preserving the utmost order in her presence. St. Peter and St. John placed themselves at the head of the couch. The great Lady looked upon them all with her accustomed modesty and reverence and spoke to them as follows: "My dearest children, give permission to thy servant to speak in thy presence and disclose my humble desires." St. Peter answered that all listened with attention and would obey Her in all things, and he begged Her to seat Herself upon the couch while speaking to them. It seemed to St. Peter She was exhausted from kneeling so long and had taken that position in order to pray to the Lord, and in speaking to them it was proper for Her to be seated as their Queen.

737. But She, who was the Teacher of humility and obedience unto death, practiced both these virtues in that hour. She answered She would obey in giving them all her blessing, and asked them to permit Her the consolation of kneeling. With the permission of St. Peter She left the couch, and kneeling before the Apostle said to him: "My lord, I beseech thee, who art the universal pastor and head of the holy Church, to give me thy blessing in thy own name and that of the holy Church. Pardon me thy handmaid for the smallness of the service I have rendered in my life. Grant that John dispose of my vestments, the two tunics, giving them to the two poor maidens who have always obliged me by their charity." She then prostrated Herself and kissed the feet of St. Peter as the Vicar of Christ, eliciting by her abundant tears not only the admiration but the tears of the Apostle and all the bystanders. From St. Peter She went to St. John, and likewise kneeling at his feet said: "Pardon, my son and my master, my not having fulfilled toward thee the duties of a Mother as I ought and as the Lord had commanded me, when from the Cross He appointed thee as my son and me as thy mother (Jn. 19:27). I humbly and from my heart thank thee for the kindness which thou hast shown to me as a son. Give me thy benediction for entering into the company and eternal vision of my Lord who created me."

738. The sweetest Mother proceeded in her parting, speaking to each of the Apostles in particular and to some of the disciples, and then to all the assembly together, for there were many. She rose to her feet and addressed them all, saying: "Dearest children and my masters, always have I kept thee in my soul and written in my heart. I have loved thee with that tender love and charity which was given to me by my divine Son, whom I have seen in thee, his chosen friends. In obedience to his holy and eternal will I now go to the eternal mansions, where I

promise thee as a Mother I shall look upon thee by the clearest light of the Divinity, the vision of which my soul hopes and desires in security. I commend to thee my Mother the Church, the exaltation of the name of the Most High, the spread of the evangelical law, the honor and veneration for the words of my divine Son, the memory of his Passion and Death, and the practice of his doctrine. My children, love the Church, and love one another with that bond of charity which thy Master has always inculcated upon thee (Jn. 13:34). To thee, Peter, holy Pontiff, I commend my son John and all the rest.”

739. The words of most holy Mary, like arrows of a divine fire, penetrated the hearts of all the Apostles and hearers, and as She ceased speaking all of them were dissolved in streams of tears, and seized with irreparable sorrow they cast themselves upon the ground with sighs and groans sufficient to move to compassion the very earth. All of them wept, and with them wept also the sweetest Mary,* who could not resist this bitter and well-founded sorrow of her children. After some time She spoke to them again and asked them to pray with Her and for Her in silence, which they did. During this peaceful calm the incarnate Word descended from heaven on a throne of ineffable glory, accompanied by all the Saints of the human nature and innumerable Angels from their choirs, and the house of the Cenacle was filled with glory. Most holy Mary adored the Lord and kissed his feet. Prostrate before Him She made the last and most profound act of faith and humility in her mortal life. On this occasion this most pure creature and Queen of the heavens shrank within Herself and clung to the dust more profoundly than all men together ever have or ever will humiliate themselves for all their sins. Her divine Son gave Her his blessing, and in the presence of the courtiers of heaven spoke to Her these words: “My dearest Mother, whom I have chosen for my dwelling place, the hour is come in which Thou art to pass from the life of this death and of the world into the glory of my Father and mine, where Thou shalt possess the throne prepared for Thee at my right hand and enjoy it through all eternity. And since as my Mother I have caused Thee to come into the world free and exempt from sin, therefore also death shall have no right or permission to touch Thee at thy departure from this world. If Thou dost not desire to pass through it, come with Me now to partake of my glory which Thou hast merited.”

740. The most prudent Mother prostrated Herself at the feet of her Son, and with a joyous countenance answered: “My Son and my Lord, I beseech Thee to let thy Mother and thy servant enter into eternal life by the common portal of natural death like the other children of Adam. Thou, who art my true God, hast suffered death without being obliged to do so; hence it is proper that as I have followed Thee in life I also follow Thee in death.” Christ our Savior approved of the decision and the sacrifice of his Blessed Mother and consented to its fulfillment. Then all the Angels began to sing in celestial harmony some of the verses of the Canticles of Solomon and other new ones. Though regarding the presence of Christ our Savior only some of the Apostles with St. John received special enlightenment, and the rest felt in their interior divine and powerful effects, yet the music of the Angels was heard by the Apostles and disciples as well as by many others of the faithful there present. A divine fragrance also spread about, which penetrated even to the street. The house of the Cenacle was filled with a wonderful brightness, visible to all, and many people of Jerusalem gathered in the streets in order to witness this new miracle, this being ordained by the Lord.

741. At the intonation of the music by the Angels, most holy Mary reclined back upon her couch or bed. Her tunic was folded about her sacred body, her hands were joined, her eyes were

* cf. Rom. 12:15 [Ed.]

fixed upon her divine Son, and She was entirely inflamed with the fire of divine love. And when the Angels arrived at and sang those verses of chapter II of the Canticles (10ff.): *Surge, propera, amica mea*, that is to say, *arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come, for winter is now passed*, etc., She pronounced those words of her Son on the Cross (Lk. 23:46): *O Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. Then She closed her virginal eyes and expired. The sickness which took away her life was love, without any other weakness or accidental intervention of any kind. She died at the moment when the divine power suspended the assistance which until then had counteracted the sensible ardors of her burning love of God; as soon as this miraculous assistance was withdrawn the fire of her love consumed the radical humors of her Heart and thus caused the cessation of her earthly existence.

742. Then that most pure soul passed from her virginal body to be placed in boundless glory on the throne at the right hand of her divine Son. Immediately the music of the Angels seemed to withdraw to the upper air, for that whole procession of Angels and Saints accompanied the King and Queen to the empyrean heaven. The sacred body of most holy Mary, which had been the temple and sanctuary of God in life, remained full of light and splendor, and gave forth such a new and wonderful fragrance all the bystanders were filled with interior and exterior sweetness. Her thousand Guardian Angels remained to watch over the inestimable treasure of her virginal body. The Apostles and disciples, amid the tears and the joy of the wonders they had seen, were absorbed in admiration for some time, and then sang many hymns and psalms in honor of most holy Mary now deceased. This glorious Transition of the great Queen of the world took place in the corresponding hour in which her divine Son had died, at three o'clock in the afternoon on a Friday, the thirteenth day of August, She being seventy years of age, less the twenty-six days intervening between the thirteenth of August, on which She died, and the eighth of September, the day of her birth, which would have completed the seventy years. After the death of Christ our Savior the divine Mother lived in the world twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days, and it was the year fifty-five of the virginal Birth of Christ. This reckoning can be easily made in the following manner: When Christ our Savior was born his virginal Mother was fifteen years, three months and seventeen days old. The Lord lived thirty-three years and three months; hence at the time of his sacred Passion most holy Mary was forty-eight years, six months and seventeen days old; adding to this another twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days, at her death She was seventy years old, less twenty-five or twenty-six days.

743. Great wonders and prodigies happened at the precious death of the Queen, for the sun was eclipsed* as I said above (706), and its light was hidden in sorrow for some hours. At the house of the Cenacle many birds of various kinds gathered, and for some time poured forth their sad songs and moans, moving to tears and clamoring those who heard them. All Jerusalem was in commotion, and many of the inhabitants collected in astonished crowds, confessing loudly the power of God and the greatness of his works. Others were astounded and as if beside themselves. The Apostles and disciples, with others of the faithful, broke forth in tears and sighs. Many sick persons came, who were all cured. The souls in purgatory were released. But the greatest miracle was that three persons, a man in Jerusalem and two women living in the immediate neighborhood of the Cenacle, died in sin and impenitent in that same hour, subject to eternal damnation; but when their cause came before the tribunal of Christ, his sweetest Mother interceded for them and they were restored to life. They so amended their conduct that afterwards they died in grace and were saved. This privilege was not extended to others who died

* cf. Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23:44 [Ed.]

on that day in the world, but was restricted to those three who happened to die in that hour in Jerusalem. What then happened in heaven, and how this day was a festival in the triumphant Jerusalem, I shall relate in another chapter, because this must not be mixed up with the mourning of mortals.

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

744. My daughter, above what thou hast understood and written of my glorious Transition, I desire to inform thee of another privilege which was conceded to me by my divine Son in that hour. Thou hast already recorded how the Lord left to my choice whether I desired to permit death or pass without this labor into the eternal and beatific vision (739). If I had declined death without doubt the Most High would have conceded this to me, because sin had no part in me and neither did its punishment, which is death.* Thus it would also have been with my divine Son, and with a greater claim, if He had not taken upon Himself the satisfaction of the divine justice for men through his Passion and Death (Is. 53:11). Hence I chose death freely in order to imitate and follow Him, as I also did during his grievous Passion. Since I had seen my Son and true God die I would not have satisfied my love for Him if I had refused death, and I would have left a great gap in the similarity and conformity I desired with the same Lord made man, and His Majesty desired me to conform in all things with his most holy humanity. Since it would not be possible thereafter to make up for this defect, my soul would not have enjoyed the plenitude of the delight of having died as did my Lord and God.

745. Hence my choosing to die was so pleasing to Him, and my prudent love thus obliged Him to such an extent, that in return He immediately conceded to me a singular favor for the benefit of the children of the Church and conformable to my desires. It was this, that all those devoted to me who shall call upon me at the hour of death, interposing me as their Advocate in order to gain my assistance in memory of my happy death and of the choice by which I desired to die in imitation of Him, shall be under my special protection in that hour, so I can defend them from the demon, assist and help them, and at the end present them before the tribunal of his mercy, and in it I shall intercede for them. For this the Lord gave me a new power and commission, and He promised to confer great helps of his grace for a good death and a purer life on all those who in veneration of this mystery of my precious death would invoke my aid. Hence I desire thee, my beloved daughter, from this day forward to keep in thy inmost heart a devout and loving memory of this mystery, and to bless, praise and magnify the Omnipotent because He wrought such sacred miracles for me and for mortals. By this solicitude thou shalt oblige the Lord and me to come to thy aid in that last hour.

746. And since death follows upon life and ordinarily corresponds with it, therefore the surest pledge of a good death is a good life, a life in which the heart is freed and detached from earthly love, for it is this which in that last hour afflicts and oppresses the soul, and which is like a heavy chain restraining its liberty and preventing it from rising above the things loved in this world. O my daughter! How greatly do mortals misunderstand this truth, and how far they err from it in their actions! The Lord gives them life so they may free themselves from the effects of original sin in order to be unhampered by them at the hour of their death, and the ignorant and miserable

* cf. Gen. 3:19; I Cor. 15:56 [Ed.]

children of Adam spend all their life in loading upon themselves new burdens and fetters* so they die captives of their passions and in the tyranny of their hellish foes. I had no part in the original guilt, and neither did its evil effects have any right over my faculties; yet despite all this I lived most strictly, poor, holy and perfect, without any affection for any earthly thing, and this holy liberty I did indeed experience at the hour of my death. Consider then, my daughter, and be mindful of this living example. Free thy heart more and more each day, so with advancing years thou mayest find thyself more free, unobstructed, and without affection for any visible thing for when the Spouse calls thee to his nuptials, for then thou shalt not have to go and seek the liberty and prudence which thou wouldst not find.†

* cf. Mt. 11:30 [Ed.]

† cf. Mt. 25:1-13 [Ed.]