

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 jubilation than its prophetic figure was placed 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 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. Having given him this notice, the Angel brought him from Italy to the Cenacle, where the Queen of the world had retired, somewhat surrendering the forces of her body to those of divine love, for since She was so near to her last end She participated in the conditions of this love with greater efficacy.

733. The great Lady came to the entrance of her oratory to receive the Vicar of Christ our Savior, and 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 in order to assist me in the hour of my death." Then came St. Paul, to whom the Queen showed the same reverence with the same demonstrations of joy in seeing him. The Apostles saluted Her as the Mother of God himself, as their Queen and Mistress of all creation, yet with no less sorrow than reverence since they knew they had come for her happy Transition. After them the other Apostles came, along with the disciples still living, and three days before her Transition they were all together in the Cenacle. The heavenly Mother received them all with profound humility, reverence and affection, asking each one to bless Her; all of them complied and saluted Her with admirable reverence. By order of the Lady given to St. John, who was aided by St. James the Less, they were all given hospitality and accommodation.

734. Some of the Apostles who had been brought by the ministry of the Angels, and had already been informed of the purpose for which they were brought to the Cenacle, were incited to great tenderness and shed copious tears in the consideration of losing their only protection and consolation. Others were as yet ignorant of their impending loss, especially the disciples, who had not been audibly advised by the Angels, but by interior inspirations and a sweet and efficacious impulse knew it to be the will of God to go to Jerusalem, which they did. They immediately conferred with St. Peter about the reason they were called to come, desiring to know what new event had occasioned this meeting; for all of them were convinced if there had been no special occasion the Lord would not have called them to come with the force they had felt. 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: "Dearest children and my brethren, the Lord has called and brought us to Jerusalem from remote regions not without great cause of highest sorrow for 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 disposition wills that all of us be present at her most happy and glorious Transition. When our Master and Redeemer ascended to the right hand of his eternal Father, though He left us bereft of his desirable sight, we still had his most holy Mother for our refuge and true consolation in this mortal life; yet now that our Mother and our light leaves us, what shall we do? What help and

what 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, being interrupted by tears and weeping he could not contain; neither could the rest of the Apostles answer for a long time in which, with inmost sighs from the heart, they shed copious and tender tears. After some time the Vicar of Christ recovered himself enough to speak and added: “My children, let us go into the presence of our Mother and Lady; let us spend the time left of her life in her company and ask Her to leave us her holy blessing.” They all went with St. Peter to the oratory of the great Queen and found Her kneeling on a small couch which She used to recline for a short rest. They all saw Her most beautiful and filled with celestial splendor and in the company of the thousand Guardian Angels who assisted Her.

736. The natural condition of her sacred and virginal body and countenance was the same as when She was thirty-three years old, since from that age, as I said in the second Part (*Tran.* 145), there was no change in her natural state. She did not feel the effects of the passing years, showing no signs of old age, no wrinkles in her face or body, nor becoming more weak, debilitated or emaciated as happens with the rest of the children of Adam, whose youth and perfect maturity fades and becomes marred with old age. This unchangeableness was the unique privilege of most holy Mary because it corresponded with the stability of her most pure soul, as well as corresponding to and being consequent upon her immunity from the original sin of Adam, the effects of which reached neither her sacred body nor her most pure soul. The Apostles and disciples with some of the other faithful were in the oratory of most holy Mary, all of them preserving 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 speaking to them said: “My dearest children, give permission to thy servant to speak in thy presence and manifest my humble desires.” St. Peter answered that all listened to Her with attention and would obey her instructions, and he supplicated Her to seat Herself upon the couch while speaking to them. It seemed to St. Peter She was somewhat fatigued from kneeling so long and had taken that posture in praying to the Lord, while in speaking to them it was just for Her to be seated as their Queen.

737. Yet She who was the Teacher of humility and obedience unto death practiced both these virtues in that hour. She responded that She would obey in giving them all her blessing, and asked them to permit Her the consolation of kneeling. With the consent of St. Peter She left the couch, and kneeling before the Apostle said to him: “My master, as the universal pastor and head of the holy Church I beseech thee in thy name and that of the Church to give me thy sacred blessing. Pardon me thy servant for the smallness of the service I have rendered the Church in my life, so from it I may depart for eternal life. If such be thy will, give permission for John to distribute my clothing, 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 me, my son and my master, for not having fulfilled toward thee the office of mother as I ought and as the Lord commanded me, when from the Cross He appointed thee as my son and me as thy mother (Jn. 19:27). I give thee humble and grateful acknowledgment for the kindness with which thou hast assisted me as a son. Give me thy blessing to go up to the company and eternal vision of my Lord who created me.”

738. The most sweet Mother proceeded in her parting, speaking to each of the Apostles individually and to some of the disciples, and then to the rest of the assembly together, for there were many. This being done She rose to her feet, and speaking to that entire holy congregation She said: “My dearest children and my masters, always have I kept thee in my soul and written in my heart, where I have loved thee tenderly with the charity and love which was communicated to me by my most holy Son, whom I have always seen in thee as his chosen ones and friends. By his holy and eternal will I now go to the celestial dwellings, where I promise thee as a Mother I shall keep thee present in the most clear light of the Divinity, whose vision my soul hopes for and desires with confidence. I commend to thee my Mother the Church along with the exaltation of the Holy Name of the Most High, the spread of his evangelical law, esteem and appreciation for the words of my most holy Son, the memory of his Life and Death, and the practice of his entire doctrine. My children, love the holy Church, and with all thy heart love one another with that bond of charity and peace which thy Master always taught thee (Jn. 13:34). To thee, Peter, holy Pontiff, I commend my son John and all the rest.”

739. Most holy Mary finished speaking, whose words were like arrows of a divine fire which penetrated and melted the hearts of the Apostles and all those present; all broke into streams of tears, and with irreparable sorrow they prostrated themselves upon the ground with sighs and sobs sufficient to move to compassion the very earth. All of them wept, and with them wept also the sweetest Mary,* who did not desire to resist such bitter and well-founded weeping 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, and prostrate before Him She made the last and most profound act of self-abasement 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 ever have or ever will humble themselves for their sins. Her most holy 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 habitation, the hour has arrived in which Thou art to pass from mortal life and from the world into the glory of my Father and mine, where Thou shalt possess the seat 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 guilt, therefore at thy departure from it death has no right or permission to touch Thee. If Thou dost not desire to pass through it, come with Me now to participate in my glory which Thou hast merited.”

740. The most prudent Mother prostrated Herself before her Son, and with a joyful countenance answered: “My Son and my Lord, I beseech Thee to let thy Mother and thy handmaid enter into eternal life by the common portal of natural death like the rest of the children of Adam. Thou, who art my true God, hast suffered death without having any obligation to die; it is therefore reasonable that as I have sought to follow Thee in life I also follow Thee in death.” Christ our Savior approved of the will and sacrifice of his most holy Mother and said it would be done as She desired. Then all the Angels began to sing with celestial harmony some 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

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

felt in their interior divine and powerful effects, yet the music of the Angels was heard by all the Apostles and disciples, as well as by many others of the faithful there present. A divine fragrance also spread about, which along with the music was perceived even to the street. The house of the Cenacle was filled with admirable brightness, visible to all, and many people of Jerusalem came together and gathered in the streets as witnesses of this wonder, 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 fixed upon her most holy Son, and She was entirely engulfed in the flame of her divine love. And when the Angels began to sing 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 most holy 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 infirmity which took away her life was love, without any other ailment or bodily failure. She died at the moment when the divine power suspended the miraculous assistance by which her natural faculties were preserved from dissolution by the sensible ardor and conflagration caused by her divine love; as soon as this miraculous assistance was withdrawn, the fire of her love consumed the radical humors of her Heart, causing the cessation of her natural life.*

742. That most pure soul passed from her virginal body to the right hand on the throne of her most holy Son, where in one instant She was established in immense glory. Immediately the music of the Angels seemed to withdraw to the upper air, for that whole procession of Angels and Saints, accompanying their King and Queen, proceeded toward the empyrean heaven. The sacred body of most holy Mary, which had been the temple and tabernacle of God in life, remained full of light and splendor, and gave forth such a new and wonderful fragrance that all the bystanders were filled with interior and exterior sweetness. The thousand Guardian Angels of most holy Mary remained to guard the inestimable treasure of her virginal body. The Apostles and disciples, amid tears of sorrow and joy at the wonders they had seen, remained as it were absorbed in admiration for some time, and then sang many hymns and psalms in service of most holy Mary now deceased. This glorious Transition of the great Queen of the world took place at the same hour in which her most holy Son had died, at three o'clock in the afternoon on a Friday, the thirteenth day of August, twenty-six days before her seventieth birthday, namely those 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 heavenly Mother lived in the world twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days, and died in the year fifty-five of the Virgin Birth of Christ. This computation 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), for as a sign of mourning its light was hidden for some hours. At the house of the Cenacle many birds of various kinds gathered, and with sorrowful songs and

* cf. *Coronation* 614 [Ed.]

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

groans clamored for some time, moving to tears those who heard them. All Jerusalem was moved, and many astonished inhabitants gathered, loudly confessing 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 wonder was that in the same hour in which most holy Mary expired three persons, a man in Jerusalem and two women living in the immediate neighborhood of the Cenacle, died in sin and impenitent, subject to eternal damnation; but when their cause came before the tribunal of Christ, the sweetest Mother pleaded for mercy for them and they were restored to life; afterward they so amended their lives that they died in grace and were saved. This privilege was not extended to others who died on that day in the world, but only to those three who died in that hour in Jerusalem. Regarding what happened in heaven, and how festive this day was 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 declare to thee another privilege which my most holy Son conceded to me in that hour. Thou hast already recorded how His Majesty 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 most holy Son, and with a greater claim, if He had not taken upon Himself the satisfaction of divine justice for men by means of his Passion and Death (Is. 53:11). I willingly chose to die in order to imitate and follow Him, just as I chose to feel the pains of his dolorous Passion; and since I had seen my Son and true God die, I would not have satisfied the love I owed Him if I had refused death, leaving a great void in the similarity and conformity I desired with the incarnate Lord, for 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 joy in having died as did my Lord and God.

745. Hence my choosing to die was so pleasing to Him, and his condescension was so obliged by my prudence and love, that in return He immediately granted 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 them and help them, and at the end present them at the tribunal of his mercy, and in it I shall intercede for them. For all this the Lord granted me a new power and commission, promising me He would give great helps of his grace for a good death, and in order to live with greater purity, if before death they invoke me, venerating this mystery of my precious death. Therefore I desire thee, my beloved daughter, from this day forward, with inmost affection and devotion, to keep continuously the memory of this promise, and to bless, magnify and praise the Omnipotent, who desired to work such venerable wonders with me for my benefit

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

and that of mortals. By this solicitude thou shalt oblige the Lord and me to help thee in that last hour.

746. And since death follows upon life and ordinarily corresponds with it, therefore the most secure pledge of a good death is a good life, a life in which the heart is detached and freed from earthly love, which in that last hour afflicts and oppresses the soul, and acts like heavy chains which prevent the soul's entire liberty and keep it from raising itself above what it has loved in this world. O my daughter, how greatly do mortals fail to understand this truth, and how contrary to it do they act! 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 death, and the ignorant and miserable children of Adam spend all their life in loading upon themselves new burdens and chains, so they die captives of their passions and left in the dominion of their tyrannical enemy. I had no part in the original guilt, nor did its evil effects have any right over my faculties; nevertheless I lived a most well-regulated life, poor, holy and perfect, without affection for any earthly thing, and this holy liberty I did indeed experience at the hour of my death. Take notice then, my daughter, and attend to this living example. Free thy heart more and more each day, so with advancing years thou mayest find thyself more free, prompt, and without affection for any visible thing for when the Spouse calls thee to his nuptials, for then it shall not be necessary to go and seek the liberty and prudence which thou wouldst not find.[†]

[†] cf. Mt. 25:1-13 [Ed.]