

CHAPTER XVIII

How the Desires and Longings of Most Holy Mary to See God Increased during Her Last Days; She Takes Leave of the Sacred Places and of the Catholic Church; She Makes Her Testament Witnessed by the Most Holy Trinity.

713. I find myself even more poor in reasonings and words in the great necessity of relating something regarding the state where the love of most holy Mary arrived in the last days of her life, the impetus and flights of her purest spirit, and the incomparable desires and yearnings to arrive at the close embrace of the Divinity. I find no similarity in all of nature, yet if anything could serve for a comparison it might perhaps be the element of fire due to its correspondence with love. Admirable is the activity and the force of that element above all others; none is more impatient of bounds, for it will either die in confinement, or burst its bonds in order to rise up unconstrained to its proper sphere. If it finds itself imprisoned in the earth it will tear up the surface, break in two the mountains and shatter the rocks, hurling them with irresistible violence aside until its fury is spent. And though the prison is of bronze as in the cannon, if it does not burst it, it at least forces an opening for itself with marvelous violence and shock to those near it, and by this violence it sends forth the metal ball, overcoming with such violence all that hindered it, as taught by experience. Such is the activity of this insensible creature.

714. But if in the Heart of Mary most holy the element of the fire of divine love was concentrated to its point (I cannot explain myself by other words), then clearly the effects corresponded to their cause, and the effects of fire are not more wonderful in the order of nature than the effects of her love in the order of grace, and of such immense grace. Our great Queen was always a pilgrim in the world in her mortal body, and the only phoenix upon earth; but when She was ready to depart for heaven, and assured of the happy end of her pilgrimage, although her virginal body still lingered upon earth the flame of her most pure love with irresistible flight pressed upward to her proper sphere, that is, the Divinity. She could not withhold or constrain the impetus of her Heart, nor seemed to be master of her interior activities, or hold dominion over them, for She had yielded all her liberty to the sway of love and to her desire of possessing the highest Good, in whom She lived transformed and forgetful of earthly mortality. Her love did not burst the narrow prison walls of natural life because it was preserved more by a miracle than by natural forces, nor did it bear up with it her mortal body because it had not yet arrived at its destined end, although the activity of her spirit and her love was sufficient to ravish it from the earth. But in this sweet and contentious struggle of love all the vital operations of nature were suspended, such that this so deified soul seemed to receive her life only from divine love, and in order for her natural life to not be consumed it was necessary to preserve it miraculously and have another superior cause intervene so it could be vivified and not dissolved at each instant.

715. It happened many times during these last days that in order to give some expansion in these excesses of love and prevent her bosom from being rent asunder, She withdrew alone and broke her silence, and speaking with the Lord She said: "My sweetest Love, Good and Treasure of my soul, draw me after the odor of thine ointments (Cant. 1:3) of which Thou hast given a taste to this thy handmaid and Mother on her pilgrimage in this world. My will always found its rest entirely in Thee, who art the highest Truth and my true Good; never have I known the love of anything outside of Thee. O my only hope and glory! Let not my course be lengthened, nor the term of my life extended, delaying my desired freedom. Free me from the prison of mortality which detains me (Ps. 141:8); let the term of my life be fulfilled; let the end come toward which I

have travelled from the first instant in which I received my being from Thee. My dwelling has been prolonged among the inhabitants of Cedar (Ps. 119:5); yet all the powers of my soul and all its faculties look toward the Sun which gives them life, follow the fixed North Star which leads them on, and faint away in longing for the Good they are awaiting. O ye supernal spirits, by the most noble condition of thy spiritual and angelic nature, by the happiness which thou dost enjoy in the vision and beauty of my Beloved, who shall never absent Himself from thee, I beseech thee to have pity on me, my friends; have pity on this stranger among the children of Adam, captive in the fetters of the flesh. Present to my and thy Lord the cause of my sorrow (Cant. 5:8), of which He is not ignorant. Tell Him for his sake I embrace suffering in my banishment, and I desire it so. But I cannot desire to live in my own self; and if I am to live in Him in order to live, how can I live in the absence of my Life?* Love it is which gives me life, and at the same time deprives me of it. Life cannot live without love; hence, how can I live without the Life which alone I love? In this sweet violence I am perishing; at least describe to me the qualities of my Beloved, so by these aromatic flowers the languishings of my impatient love may be comforted” (Ib. 2:5).

716. To these and other most heartfelt reasonings the Blessed Mother joined the fires of her inflamed spirit to the admiration and joy of the holy Angels who attended upon and served Her. And since by means of their high intelligence and heavenly science they were able to understand these excesses, they on one occasion answered Her as follows: “Our Queen and Lady, if Thou dost desire again to hear us speak of the tokens of thy Beloved of which we know, consider that He is beauty itself, and contains within Himself all perfections beyond all desire. He is amiable without defect, delightful beyond compare, pleasing without the least flaw; in wisdom He is inestimable, in goodness without measure, in power boundless, in greatness immeasurable, in essence infinite, in majesty inaccessible, and all his perfections are infinite. In his judgments He is terrible (Ps. 65:5), in his counsels inscrutable (Rom. 11:33), in his justice most upright (Ps. 118:137), in his thoughts unsearchable, in his words most true, in his works holy (Ps. 144:13), and in mercies rich (Eph. 2:4). Space cannot overreach Him, narrowness cannot confine Him, sorrow cannot disturb Him, joy cannot cause any change in Him, nor does He ever fail in his wisdom or change in his will (James 1:17); abundance cannot overwhelm Him, or necessity diminish Him; memory adds nothing to his knowledge, neither does forgetting take anything away; what was is not past for Him, and what is to come never happens to Him; the beginning gave no origin to his Being, and time will bring to Him no end. Without being caused He causes all things (Ecclus. 18:1); He has no need of anything (II Mach. 14:35), but all things need participation in Him; He preserves them without labor, and governs them without confusion. Those who follow Him walk not in darkness (Jn. 8:12), those who know Him are happy, those who love and extol Him are Blessed, for He exalts his friends, and at last glorifies them by his eternal vision and communication (Jn. 17:3). This, O Lady, is the Good which Thou lovest, and whose embraces Thou shalt shortly enjoy without intermission through all his eternities.” Thus spoke the holy Angels.

717. Such colloquies took place frequently between the great Queen and her ministers. Yet just as the thirst of one laboring under a burning fever is not allayed by small drops of water but rather increased, so neither did these incitements mitigate the flame of divine love in the most loving Mother, but renewed in her bosom the cause of her ailment. During the last days of her life She not only enjoyed the favors mentioned above (601ff.; 615ff.), namely those of the feast

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

days and the Sundays, and many other favors impossible to enumerate, but in order to sustain and nourish Her in her anguishes of love her divine Son visited Her more frequently than before. During these visits He recreated Her and comforted Her with wonderful favors and caresses, assuring Her again and again her banishment would now be short, that He would bear Her up to his right hand where She would be placed on her royal throne by the Father and the Holy Ghost and be absorbed in the abyss of his divinity, and She would be new joy to the saints, all of whom were hoping and desiring to see Her. On these occasions the loving Mother multiplied her petitions and prayers for the holy Church, for the Apostles and disciples, for all the ministers who in the coming ages were to serve in the preaching of the Gospel and the conversion of the world, and for all mortals who were to accept its teachings and come to the knowledge of the divine truth.

718. Among the wonders which the Lord wrought for his Blessed Mother during these last years, there was one which was manifest not only to the Evangelist but to many of the faithful, which was when the great Lady received Holy Communion She remained for some hours full of splendors and a clearness so wonderful She seemed transfigured and gifted with glory. This was caused by the sacred body of her Son, who as I have stated before (607) showed Himself to Her in a transfigured and more glorious state than on mount Tabor. All who then beheld Her were filled with joy and with effects so divine they could be indeed felt but not described.

719. The devout Queen resolved to take leave of the Holy Places before her departure for heaven, and having obtained the consent of St. John She left the house with him and with the thousand Angels of her guard. Although these sovereign princes had always served and accompanied Her on all her errands, occupations and journeys, without having absented themselves for one moment since the instant of her birth, yet on this occasion they manifested themselves to Her with greater beauty and refulgence, as if they felt special joy in seeing themselves already at the beginning of her last journey into heaven. The heavenly Princess, setting aside human occupations in order to enter upon her journey to the real and true fatherland, visited all the Holy Places of our Redemption, marking each with abundant and sweet tears, with pitying memories of what her Son there suffered, with fervent operations and admirable effects, with clamors and petitions for all the faithful who would come with devotion and reverence to these Holy Places for all the future ages of the Church. On Calvary She remained a longer time, asking her divine Son for the full effects of his redeeming death for all the multitudes of souls there snatched from destruction. The ardor of her ineffable charity during this prayer rose to such a pitch it would have destroyed her life if She had not been sustained by divine power.

720. Then her divine Son descended in person from heaven and manifested Himself to Her on that place where He had died. Answering her petitions He said: "My Mother and my Dove, Coadjutrix in the work of human Redemption, thy petitions have come to my hearing and have touched my Heart. I promise Thee I shall be most generous with men, and give them from my grace continuous helps and favors so with their own free will they may merit the glory earned for them by my blood, if they do not of their own accord despise this happiness. In heaven Thou shalt be their Mediatrix and Advocate, and all those who shall obtain thy intercession I shall fill with my treasures and infinite mercies." This promise was renewed by the Lord on the same place upon which He redeemed us. The Blessed Mother, prostrate at his feet, rendered Him gratitude for this, and beseeched Him to give Her his last benediction on this very spot consecrated by his precious blood and death. His Majesty gave it, and having ratified his royal word in all He had promised He returned to the right hand of his eternal Father. Most holy Mary

was comforted in her loving anguish, and continuing her devotions She kissed the ground on Calvary and adored it, saying: "Holy earth and Sacred Place, from heaven I shall look upon thee with the reverence I owe thee in that light in which all is manifested in its very fount and origin, from whence came forth the divine Word in mortal flesh to enrich thee." Then She again charged the holy Angels to assist Her in the custody of those Sacred Places and inspire with holy thoughts all the faithful who would visit them with devotion, so they might know and properly esteem the admirable blessing of the Redemption wrought thereon. She charged them also with the defense of those sanctuaries; and if the temerity and crimes of men had not demerited this favor, without doubt the holy Angels would have warded off the profanations of the heathens and the infidels. Even as it is they defend them in many ways to the present day.

721. The Queen also asked the Angels of the Holy Places and the Evangelist to give Her their blessing in this last parting, and then She returned to her oratory, shedding tears of most tender affection for what She loved so much upon earth. There She prostrated Herself with her face upon the earth and poured forth another long and most fervent prayer for the Church, and She persevered in it until in an abstractive vision of the Divinity the Lord gave Her assurance He had heard and conceded her petitions at the throne of his mercy. And in order to give in all things the plenitude of sanctity to her works, She asked permission of the Lord to take leave of the holy Church, saying: "Exalted and most high God, Redeemer of the world, Head of the saints and the predestined, Justifier and Glorifier of souls, I am a child of the holy Church planted and acquired by thy blood. Give me, O Lord, permission to take leave of such a loving Mother, and of all my brethren, thy children, belonging to it." She was made aware of the consent of the Lord, and therefore turned to the Mystical Body of the Church, addressing it in sweet tears as follows:

722. "Holy Catholic Church, which in the coming ages shall be called the Roman, my Mother and Mistress, true treasure of my soul, thou hast been the only consolation of my banishment, the refuge and ease of my labors, my recreation, my joy and my hope. Thou hast sustained me in my course, and in thee have I lived as a pilgrim to the fatherland; thou hast nourished me after I had received in thee my existence in grace through thy Head and mine, Christ Jesus, my Son and my Lord. In thee are the treasures and the riches of his infinite merits. Thou shalt be for his faithful children the secure way to the promised land, and thou shalt safeguard them on their dangerous and difficult pilgrimage. Thou shalt be the Mistress of the nations to whom all owe reverence. In thee are the rich jewels of inestimable price of anxieties, labors, affronts, sweat, torments, the cross and death, all of them consecrated by those of my Lord, thy Father, thy Master, and thy Head, and are reserved for his greatest servants and his most beloved friends. Thou hast adorned and enriched me with thy jewels so I can enter into the nuptials of the Spouse; thou hast made me wealthy, prosperous and happy, and thou containest within thee thy Author in the most Blessed Sacrament. My happy Mother, Church Militant, rich art thou and abundant in treasures! For thee have I always reserved my heart and my solicitude; but now the time has come to part from thee and leave thy sweet companionship in order to reach the end of my course. Make me partaker of thy great goods; bathe me copiously in the sacred liqueur of the blood of the Lamb deposited in thee, powerful to sanctify many worlds. At the cost of my life a thousand times have I desired to make thine all the nations and tribes of mortals so they could enjoy thy treasures. My beloved Church, my honor and my glory, I am about to leave thee in mortal life; but in eternal life I shall find thee joyful in an existence which includes all good. From that place I shall look upon thee with love, and pray always for thy increase and for thy good success and progress in all things."

723. This was the parting of most holy Mary from the Mystical Body of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the Mother of the faithful, in order to teach them (when they would come to notice this) the veneration, love and esteem in which She held that holy Church, * testifying this by such sweet tears and caresses. After thus taking leave, the great Lady, as the Mother of Wisdom, prepared to make her last will and testament. When She manifested this most prudent desire to the Lord, He deigned to approve of it by his own royal presence. For this the three Persons of the most blessed Trinity descended to the oratory of their Daughter and Spouse, with thousands of Angels who assisted at the throne of the Divinity; and when the pious Queen had adored the infinite essence of God, a voice issued from the throne and said: “Our chosen Spouse, make thy last will as thou dost desire, for We shall confirm it and execute it entirely by our infinite power.” The most prudent Mother remained for some time lost in her profound humility, seeking to know first the will of the Most High before She would manifest her own. The Lord responded to this desire and timidity, and the Person of the Father said to Her: “My Daughter, thy will shall be to my pleasure and delight, for since Thou art not lacking in the merit of thy works in arranging thy departure from this mortal life I shall satisfy thy desires.” The same encouragement was given to Her by the Son and the Holy Ghost. And with these promises most holy Mary ordained her last will and testament in this manner:

724. “Highest Lord and eternal God, I, a vile wormlet of the earth, confess and adore Thee with all the reverence of my inmost soul as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons distinct in one undivided and eternal essence, one substance, one in infinite majesty of attributes and perfections. I confess Thee as the one true Creator and Preserver of all that has being. In thy kingly presence I declare and say my last will is this: Of the goods of mortal life and of the world in which I live I possess none that I can leave, for never have I possessed or loved anything besides Thee, who art my Good and all my possession. To the heavens, the heavenly bodies, the stars and planets, to the elements and all thy creatures I give thanks, because obedient to thy will they have sustained me without my merit, and lovingly I desire and ask them to serve and praise Thee in the offices and ministries assigned to them, and continue to sustain and benefit my brethren and fellowmen. So they may do this so much the better I renounce and assign to mankind the possession of them and, as far as possible, the dominion over them which thy Majesty has given me over these irrational creatures so they may now serve and sustain my fellowmen. Two tunics and a cloak which served to cover me I leave to John for his disposal, since I hold him in the position of a son. My body I ask the earth to receive again for thy service, since it is the common mother and serves Thee as thy creature. My soul, despoiled of its body and of all visible things, I resign, my God, into thy hands, so it may love and magnify Thee through all thy eternities. My merits, and the treasures which by thy divine grace and through my works and labors I have acquired, all this I leave to the holy Church[†] as my universal heiress, my Mother and my Mistress, and with thy permission I there deposit them, desiring them to be much greater; and I desire before all else for them to redound to the exaltation of thy holy Name and procure the fulfillment of thy holy will on earth as it is in heaven, and for all nations to come to the knowledge, love, worship and veneration of Thee, the true God.

725. “In the second place I offer these merits for my masters the Apostles and priests of the present and future ages, so in view of them thy ineffable clemency may make them apt ministers, worthy of their office and state, filled with wisdom, virtue and holiness, by which they may edify

* cf. *Coronation* 494 [Ed.]

† cf. *Ecclus.* 24:47 [Ed.]

and sanctify the souls redeemed by thy blood. In the third place I offer them for the spiritual good of my devoted servants who invoke and call upon me, so they may receive thy protection and grace, and afterwards eternal life. In the fourth place I desire my services and labors to oblige Thee toward all the sinful children of Adam, so they may withdraw from their sinful state. From this hour on I propose and desire to continue my prayers for them in thy divine presence as long as the world shall last. This is, my Lord and my God, my last will, always submissive to thy own.” The Queen concluded this testament, and the most holy Trinity approved and confirmed it; and Christ our Redeemer, as if authorizing it all, witnessed it by writing in the Heart of his Mother these words: “Let it be done as Thou dost desire and ordain.”

726. If the children of Adam, and especially we who are born in the law of grace, had no other obligation to most holy Mary than having been constituted heirs of her immense merits, and of all that is mentioned in this short and mysterious testament, we could never repay our debt, even if in return we would offer our lives and endure all the sufferings of the most courageous martyrs and saints. I do not make comparison, for there could be none, with the infinite merits and treasures left by Christ our Savior in the Church; but what excuse or pretense have the reprobate, who avail themselves neither of the one nor the other? All of them they despise, forget and squander. What torment and despair will be theirs when they unavailingly come to know they have lost forever such great blessings and treasures for a momentary delight? Let them confess the justice and rectitude by which they are deservedly and most justly chastised and cast away from the face of the Lord and from his most loving Mother, whom they despised in such foolish temerity.

727. When the great Queen had made her testament She gave thanks to the Almighty and asked permission to add another petition, saying: “My most clement Lord and Father of mercies, if it is according to thy glory and pleasure my soul desires that at its passing be present the Apostles, my masters and thine anointed, together with the other disciples, so they may pray for me and bless me at my transition from this to the eternal life.” To this her divine Son answered: “My most beloved Mother, the Apostles are already on the way to come to Thee; those who are near shall shortly arrive, while those who are far off shall be carried by my Angels, since it is my will all of them assist at thy glorious departure for the eternal mansions for thy consolation and theirs, and for my greater glory and thine.” For this new favor and for the others most holy Mary rendered gratitude prostrate upon the ground, and then the three divine Persons returned to the empyrean heaven.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE QUEEN OF THE ANGELS, MOST HOLY MARY, GAVE ME.

728. My daughter, since thou dost admire the esteem I had for the holy Church, and the great love I had for it, I desire to assist thy affection in conceiving new appreciation and love for it. Thou cannot in thy mortal flesh understand what passed in my soul in contemplating the holy Church. In addition to what thou hast understood already, thou shalt see more if thou dost consider what moved my heart, namely the loving works of my divine Son in the interest of the holy Church. They should be thy meditation day and night, for in what He did for the Church thou shalt be able to estimate his love for it. In order to be the Head of the predestined in this world and forever (Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29) He descended from the bosom of the eternal Father and assumed flesh in my womb; to regain his children lost through the first sin of Adam (Lk. 19:10) He took passible and mortal flesh; to leave the example of his unblemished life (I Peter 2:21) and his true and salutary doctrine He lived and conversed with men thirty-three years (Bar. 3:38); to

redeem them effectually and merit for them infinite blessings of grace and glory, which the faithful could never merit, He suffered most cruelly and shed his blood, accepting the sorrowful and ignominious death of the cross (Philip. 2:8); and in order that from his sacred body just after his death would mysteriously issue his Church, He permitted it to be cleft by the lance (Jn. 19:34).

729. Since the eternal Father was so well pleased with his life, Passion and Death, the Redeemer himself instituted in his Church the sacrifice of his body and blood (Lk. 22:19) in which his memory would be renewed, and which the faithful may offer to placate and satisfy the divine justice; and together with this He desired to remain perpetually present in his Church as a Sacrament for the spiritual nourishment of his children, and so they could possess in Him the very fount of grace, their Viaticum, and a certain pledge of eternal life. In addition to this He sent upon his holy Church the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:2) to fill it with his gifts and his wisdom, promising He would guide and govern it always without error, without uncertainty, and without danger (Jn. 15:26). The Savior enriched the Church with all the merits of his life, Passion and Death, applying them by means of the Sacraments, furnishing all that would be necessary for men from their birth to their death for cleansing them from their sins, for persevering in grace, for defending themselves against the demons and vanquishing them by the weapons of his Church, and for crushing their own natural passions; and at the same time He instituted fit and apt ministers for securing to his faithful all these blessings. In the Church Militant He communicates familiarly with the holy souls; He makes them participants of his hidden and secret favors; He works miracles and wonders for them, and when it is appropriate for his glory He binds Himself by their works; He hears their prayers for themselves or for others so in the Church the communion of saints is preserved.

730. He left in it also other founts of light and truth, which are the holy Gospels and the Sacred Scriptures dictated by the Holy Ghost, the decisions of the sacred Councils, and the certain and ancient Traditions.* He sends at opportune times holy doctors full of wisdom; He furnishes teachers and learned men, preachers and ministers in abundance. He makes the Church illustrious with his admirable Saints, beautifies it with a variety of religious orders wherein the perfect and Apostolic life is professed and preserved, and governs it by many prelates and dignitaries. So all may proceed in harmony He placed over it a supreme head, his Vicar the Roman Pontiff, with the plenitude of supreme and divine authority, as the head of this mystical and most beautiful body, defending and protecting it to the end of the world against all the powers of earth and hell (Mt. 16:18). Among all these blessings bestowed and still to be bestowed upon his beloved Church, not the least was that He left me in it after his wonderful Ascension so it could be spread and governed by my merits and my presence. From that time on and forever I hold this Church as my possession, for the Most High has consigned it to me as a gift and has commanded me to take care of it as its Mother and Lady.

731. These are, my dearest, the greatest titles and motives for my past and present love of the holy Church, here made known to thee, and I desire them to rouse and enkindle thy heart to an ardent performance of all pertaining to thee as my disciple and daughter, and that of the holy Church. Love it, respect it, and esteem it from thy whole heart; enjoy its treasures, gathering in the riches of heaven deposited together with its Author in his Church. Seek to unite it with thee and thyself with it, for in it thou shalt find thy refuge and thy salvation, consolation in thy labors,

* cf. II Thes. 2:14 [Ed.]

hope in thy banishment, and light and truth to guide thee* in the darkness of this world. For this holy Church I desire thee to labor during all the rest of thy life, since for this end has thy life been given thee. Thus shalt thou imitate and follow me in the tireless solicitude which I had for Her in mortal life, and this is thy greatest happiness, for which thou owest eternal gratitude. I desire thee, my daughter, to be mindful of the fact that with this desire and intention I have applied to thee a great portion of the treasures of the Church for the writing of my Life, and the Lord has chosen thee as an instrument and as secretary of its mysteries and hidden sacraments for the purposes of his greater glory. And do not understand that by having labored somewhat in this work thou hast made even a partial return, absolving thee of thy obligations, but rather feel thyself more deeply pledged and obliged to put into practice the doctrine thou hast recorded, and that as long as thou dost refuse to do so thou shalt remain poor, unrelieved of thy indebtedness, and subject to a rigorous account for all thou hast received. Now is the time to labor so thou mayest find thyself prepared, at leisure, and disengaged to receive the Spouse at the hour of death. Look upon my freedom and detachment from all earthly things, govern thyself by it, and let not the oil of light and love fail thee (Mt. 25:3), so thou mayest enter the nuptials of the Spouse through the open gates of his infinite mercy and clemency.

* cf. Ps. 42:3; *Prayers at the Foot of the Altar of Holy Mass* [Ed.]