

CHAPTER XVI

How Most Holy Mary Celebrated the Feasts of the Ascension of Christ our Savior, the Coming of the Holy Ghost, of the Angels and Saints, and other Memorials of Her Own Benefits.

680. In each one of the works and mysteries of our great Queen and Lady I find new secrets to penetrate and new reasons for admiration and appreciation, yet I am running short of new words to make known what I see. From what I have been made to understand regarding the love of Christ our Lord for his most pure Mother and most worthy Spouse, it seems to me for the sake of this love the Lord would have resigned his throne of glory and the company of the saints to be with his most beloved Mother (123) if for other reasons it was not more suitable for the Son to be in heaven and the Mother upon earth during the time of this separation and bodily absence. And let this high praise of the excellence of the Queen not be understood as derogating from that of her most holy Son, nor of the saints; for the divinity of the Father and the Holy Ghost existed in Christ indivisible in its highest individual unity, since the three Persons exist entirely in each one by an inseparable mode of existence, and the Person of the Word could never exist without the Father and the Holy Ghost. And the company of the angels and saints, compared with that of most holy Mary, was for her most holy Son certainly less than the company of his worthy Mother, especially considering the force of reciprocal love between Christ and most pure Mary. But for other reasons it was proper for the Lord, after accomplishing the Redemption of man, to return to the right hand of the Father, and for his most happy Mother to remain in the Church in order to implement the efficacy of that Redemption through her industry and merits, and announce and bring forth to the light* the fruit of the Passion and Death of her most holy Son.

681. With ineffable and mysterious providence Christ our Savior arranged his works, showing in them his divine wisdom, magnificence and glory, confiding entirely in this strong Woman, as described by Solomon (Prov. 31:11). And He was not frustrated in his confidence, since the most prudent Mother, by the treasures of the Passion and blood of the Lord himself, applied through her own merits and solicitude, purchased for her Son the field in which was planted the vineyard of the Church (Ib. 16) until the end of the world. These were the souls of the faithful propagated in the Church on earth, and the predestined, in whom the Church was to be transplanted to the triumphant Jerusalem forever and ever. If it was befitting the glory of the Most High for all this great work to be entrusted to most holy Mary so our Savior Jesus could after his miraculous Resurrection enter into the glory of his Father, then it was also befitting that with his most blessed Mother, whom He loved without measure and had left in the world, He would maintain all possible correspondence and interaction to which He was obliged, not only by his own love He had for Her but also by the state and the undertaking itself with which She was engaged on earth, where the grace, the means, the favors and benefits must necessarily be in proportion with the cause and with the exalted end of such hidden mysteries. All these requirements were gloriously fulfilled by the frequent visits of the Son to his Mother, and by her being raised to the throne of his glory, for thus neither would the invincible Queen be totally deprived of her court, nor would the courtiers for so many years be deprived of the delightful sight of their Queen and Lady. Hence as this delight was possible it was proper for all those concerned to enjoy it as well.

* cf. Apoc. 12:5 [Ed.]

682. One of the days (in addition to those already mentioned) on which the celestial wonders were renewed was that on which She celebrated each year the Ascension of her divine Son. This day was a great feast day for Her and for all of heaven. She prepared for it during forty days from the day on which She solemnized the Resurrection of her Son. During all this time She renewed the memory of the favors and blessings She had received from her divine Son, the glorious company of the ancient Patriarchs and Saints delivered from limbo, and all that had transpired day after day during those forty days, giving thanks in new hymns and devotions as if they were again transpiring before Her, for all these events were indelibly impressed upon her memory. I shall not enter upon the particulars of what She did during those times because I have written about them sufficiently in the last chapters of the second Part. I shall only say that during this preparation our great Queen received incomparable favors and experienced new influences of the Divinity by which She was made ever more and more deified and prepared for the extraordinary favors She was to receive on the feast itself.

683. Then when the mysterious day arrived each year which corresponded to the day on which our Saviour Jesus ascended into heaven, He came down in person to the oratory of his Blessed Mother, accompanied by innumerable Angels and by the Patriarchs and Saints He had taken up with Him to heaven. The great Lady awaited his visit prostrate upon the ground as usual, annihilated in the utmost self-debasement of her ineffable humility, yet elevated above all human and angelic thought to the highest pinnacle of divine love possible to a mere creature. Then her divine Son manifested Himself in the midst of the choirs of Saints, and renewing in Her the sweetness of his blessings the Lord himself commanded the Angels to raise Her from the dust and place Her at his right hand. They executed the will of the Savior, and the Seraphim placed Her on the throne, She who had given Him human existence. Thereupon He asked Her what was her request and her desire. To this question most holy Mary answered: "My Son and eternal God, I desire the glory and exaltation of thy holy Name; by it I desire to render Thee gratitude for the whole human race, and acknowledge the blessings of having on this day, through thy almighty power, raised our nature to glory and eternal happiness. I beg that all men may know, praise and magnify thy divinity and most sacred humanity."

684. The Lord answered: "My Mother and Dove, chosen from among all creatures for my habitation, come with Me to my celestial fatherland, where thy desires shall be fulfilled, thy petitions granted, and where Thou mayest enjoy the solemnity of this day not among the mortal children of Adam but in the company of my courtiers and inhabitants of heaven." Immediately that whole celestial procession traversed the regions of the air, as had happened on the day of the Ascension, and arrived at the empyrean heaven, the Virgin Mother always remaining at the right hand of her most holy Son. But upon arriving at the highest place, where that entire company was arranged in an orderly fashion, there was realized in heaven as it were a new silence and attention, not only in the Saints, but also in the Saint of Saints himself. Then the Queen asked permission of the Lord to descend from the throne, and prostrate before the footstool of the most blessed Trinity She sang an admirable song of praise in which She included the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, with all the triumphs and victories of her divine Son up to his glorious Ascension to the right hand of his eternal Father.

685. The Most High manifested his pleasure and complacency at this hymn of praise, and all the saints responded with songs of glory, extolling the Omnipotent in this wonderful creature and being filled with new joy by the presence and exaltation of their Queen. Then at the command of the Most High the Angels again placed Her at the right hand of her divine Son, and having as on other occasions been illumined and adorned for that purpose (*Con.* 623ff.; *Tran.* 812) She gazed

upon the Divinity in glorious and intuitive vision. In this beatific vision the Queen spent part of the day, and during it the Lord again confirmed upon Her the possession of that place which from all eternity He had destined for Her and which was mentioned on the day of the Ascension. For our greater admiration and obligation I give notice that each year on that day the Lord himself asked Her whether She would prefer to remain in that eternal joy forever or return again to the earth for the benefit of the Church. The decision being thus left entirely in her hands, She answered that if it was the will of the Almighty She would return to labor for men, who were the fruit of the Redemption and Death of the Son of God.

686. This answer so full of resignation, repeated each year, was just as often accepted by the most holy Trinity to the wonder of all the Blessed. Hence the divine Mother not only once but many times deprived Herself of the beatific vision, descending for a new period of time to the world in order to direct the Church and enrich it with her incomparable merits. And since the proper appreciation of these merits can never be attained by our curtailed faculties, it will be no blemish in this History not to attempt to estimate them, but rather defer it until we shall reach the vision of God. Yet all the rewards corresponding to these sacrifices were kept in reserve for Her according to the divine acceptance of her merits, so afterwards in the eternal possession of these rewards She would be like unto the humanity of her Son as one who was to worthily occupy the place at his right hand on his throne. Upon all these wonders followed the petitions which the great Queen made in heaven for the exaltation of the name of the Most High, the propagation of the Church, the conversion of the world, and for victories against the demon; and all her petitions were granted and successively executed in their time, and shall be executed in all the ages of the Church. These favors would be greater if the sinners of the world would not hinder them and make mortals unworthy of receiving them. Then the Angels brought their Queen back to her oratory in the Cenacle amid celestial music and harmony, and She prostrated Herself in deepest humility to give thanks for these new favors. I also give notice that St. John the Evangelist had some knowledge of these mysteries and participated in some of their effects, for he usually saw the Queen so refulgent with heavenly light that he could not look upon her face. And since the great Teacher of humility always took her place as it were kneeling at the feet of the Evangelist asking his permission to remain on her knees, it gave the Saint many occasions to see Her, and along with reverential fear it many times caused him to become embarrassed in the presence of the great Lady, though this was mixed with admirable joy and effects of sanctity.

687. The effects and benefits of this great festivity of the Ascension prepared the great Queen to celebrate more worthily the coming of the Holy Ghost, and by means of them She prepared Herself for it during the nine days which intervene. She continued her exercises unceasingly, with most ardent desires for the Lord to renew in Her the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And when the day of Pentecost arrived these desires were fulfilled in Her by the works of the Omnipotent, for at the same hour in which He had descended the first time to the Cenacle upon the sacred College He descended each year upon the Mother of Jesus, the Spouse and temple of the Holy Ghost. And though this coming was not less solemn than the first, since He came in the visible form of fire, with admirable brightness and thunder, yet these signs were not manifest to all as had happened at the first coming, since this was necessary for that first time, but afterwards it was not proper for anyone except most holy Mary and to a certain extent St. John to know of this miracle. Myriads of Angels attended upon Her at such times, singing the canticles of the Lord in sweetest harmony, and the Holy Ghost entirely inflamed and renewed Her with superabundant gifts and increase of the blessings She already possessed. Then the great Lady gave humble thanks not only for this favor but because He had filled the Apostles with wisdom and charisms

to make them worthy ministers of the Lord and founders of his holy Church, and because through his coming He had sealed the works of human Redemption. In a prolonged prayer She then asked the divine Spirit to continue the influences of his grace and wisdom through the present and future ages, and not to suspend it because of the sins and unworthiness of men at any time. All these petitions the Holy Ghost granted to his only Spouse, and the holy Church is now reaping the fruit of them and shall enjoy them until the end of the world.

688. To all these mysteries and celebrations of the feasts of the Lord and of Herself our great Queen added two others which She celebrated with special jubilation and devotion on other days in the course of the year. The first was the feast of the holy Angels, and the other was the feast of the Saints of the human nature. In order to celebrate the excellences and sanctity of the angelic nature She prepared Herself for some days by exercises such as mentioned for some of the other feasts, adding new songs of glory and praise, summarizing in them the work of the creation of the Angels, and especially their justification and glorification with all the mysteries and secrets known to Her of all of them and of each one in particular. When the day She had assigned for this feast arrived She invited them all, and many thousands from the various orders and celestial choirs descended and manifested themselves in wonderful beauty and glory in her oratory. Then forming two choirs, one of which was our Queen and the other all the supernal spirits, the great Lady and the Angels sang songs of celestial harmony in alternate verses during that entire day. If it was possible to make known to the world the mysterious canticles composed on those days by most holy Mary and the Angels they would no doubt be reckoned among the great miracles of the Lord and astonish all mortals. I cannot find words nor time to describe what I have come to know concerning this mystery, for they began by praising the essence of God in Himself and in all his perfections and attributes known to them. Then the Queen proceeded to bless and magnify Him for having manifested his majesty, wisdom and omnipotence in the creation of so many and beautiful spiritual beings, for having favored them with so many gifts of nature and grace, and for appointing them as ministers and executors of his will in the government of men and of all the lower and visible creation. The Angels on their part responded by due and grateful acknowledgment of their indebtedness, and all of them sang to the Almighty wonderful songs of praise for having created and chosen for his Mother a Virgin so pure, so holy, and so worthy of his greatest gifts, and for having given Her dominion and empire so all could proclaim and honor Her as the worthy Mother of God and Restoratrix of the human race.

689. In this manner the sovereign spirits rehearsed the great prerogatives of their Queen and blessed God in Her, while She recounted those of the Angels for the same purpose. Hence this day was one of admirable rejoicing and sweetness for the great Lady and accidental joy for the Angels, especially for the thousand Angels of her ordinary guard, for they participated in the glory given to their Lady and Queen. Since there was no obstacle of ignorance neither on one side nor the other, nor any lack of appreciation for the mysteries rehearsed, this interchange of heavenly songs was full of incomparable reverence; and such it shall also be for us when we shall experience it in the Lord.

690. The other feast which She celebrated was that of all the Saints of the human nature, for which She first prepared Herself by many prayers and exercises of devotion as on the other feast days. All the Patriarchs, Prophets, and the rest of the Saints, including those who had died after the Resurrection, came from heaven in order to celebrate with their Reparatrix this joyful day. She composed new canticles of thanksgiving for the glory of the Saints and the efficacy of the death of her divine Son. Great was the jubilation of the Queen on this occasion since She knew the secret of their predestination, and because in spite of the dangers of mortal life they had now

attained secure and eternal happiness. For this blessing She extolled the Lord and Father of mercies, and summarized in her thanksgiving the favors, graces and benefits which each of the Saints had received at his hands. She asked them to pray for the holy Church and for those who were active in it and engaged in battle with the danger of losing the crown which they, the Saints, already possessed. After this She also remembered and gave thanks for the victories and triumphs She herself had attained through the divine power over the demons. And for all these favors, and for the souls who had been rescued from the power of darkness, She added new canticles and humble and fervent acts of gratitude.

691. It is a subject of astonishment to men, as it was to the angels, that a mere creature in mortal flesh accomplished so many incessant wonders which would have appeared impossible to multitudes of souls united together, even if they had been as ardent as the highest Seraphim; but our great Queen had a certain participation in the omnipotence of God, which made easy for Her what for other creatures would have been impossible. In these last years of her most holy life this activity in Her increased in such a manner that we are incapable in our limited capacity of pondering her works, which were without intermission or rest day or night, for She was no longer hindered by the mortality and weight of human nature, but rather operated like an indefatigable Angel, and more than all of them together. She had become one single flame and conflagration of immense activity. With this divine virtue all days seemed short to Her, all occasions few, and all her exercises limited, since her immense love always extended beyond that which She was doing, though this was without measure. In comparison with what her activity was in reality all I have said is little or nothing, and I am bound to confess and assert my deficiency in this regard since I see as it were an infinite abyss or distance between what has been shown to me and what I am capable of understanding in this life. And if I cannot form an idea of what has been manifested to me, how shall I speak of that of which I am ignorant, and without knowing more than my ignorance permits? Let us beware lest we make ourselves unworthy of the light which awaits us in heaven for seeing all in God, for this reward and joy by itself, even if we receive no other, should make us willing to endure all the labors, pains and torments of the martyrs to the end of the world. We would be richly repaid by the delight of understanding the dignity and excellence of most holy Mary, seated at the right hand of her Son and true God, and raised above all the angels and saints of heaven.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE GREAT QUEEN OF THE ANGELS GAVE ME.

692. My daughter, while thou dost advance on the way in writing the discourse of my works and mortal life I desire thee also to advance in the perfect following and imitation of me. This desire increases in me in proportion to the growth of thy enlightenment and admiration of what thou dost see and write. It is now time for thee to make up for what thou hast thus far missed and wing the flight of thy spirit to the heights to which the Almighty calls thee and to which I invite thee. Fill thy works with all perfection and sanctity. And take notice that impious and cruel is the opposition thou hast from thy enemies the devil, the world, and the flesh,* and thou canst not overcome so many difficulties and temptations if thou dost not enkindle in thy heart a most fervent emulation and a most ardent fervor so with invincible vigor thou trample upon and crush the head of the venomous serpent, who with diabolical astuteness avails himself of many

* cf. I Jn. 2:16 [Ed.]

deceptive means to cast thee down or at least detain thee in thy course so thou mayest not gain the end thou dost desire nor attain the state which the Lord hast chosen for thee.

693. Thou must not ignore, my daughter, the vigilance and attention which the demon has for any carelessness, forgetfulness, or the least inadvertence of souls, and that he is constantly prowling around and lying in ambush (I Peter 5:8); and he takes advantage of any negligence, without losing any occasion of leading souls into his astute temptations, inclining and moving the passions of those whom he finds unwary so they might receive the wound of guilt before they fully realize their danger. When afterwards they come to know it and desire to rise from their fall they feel still greater difficulty and need much more abundant graces and efforts to resist the evil than before they fell. In guilt the soul weakens in virtue, the enemy acquires more influence, and the passions tend to become indomitable and invincible; hence many fall, but not so many rise from their sins. The remedy against these dangers is to live with vigilant attention, in yearnings and continual desires to merit divine grace, with incessant persistence in working what is greater, not giving the enemy any chance to find the soul off its guard or unoccupied with some exercise or work of virtue. Thereby the weight of lower human nature will be lightened, the passions and bad inclinations will be crushed, the demon intimidated, and the spirit raised up, gaining strength against the flesh and dominion over the inferior and sensitive part of its nature, subjecting it to the divine will.

694. For all this thou hast a living example in my works, and lest thou forget them write them down, and I shall manifest them to thee with great light such as thou hast already received. Attend then, my dearest, to all thou dost see in this clear mirror, and if thou dost know and confess me as thy Teacher and thy Mother, and as the Mistress of all sanctity and true perfection, do not delay in imitating me and following me. It is not possible for thou or any other creature to arrive at the perfection and excellence of my works, nor does the Lord bind anyone to that; yet with his divine grace thou canst fill thy life with works of virtue and sanctity, and spend in them all thy time and faculties, and thus adding exercise to exercise, prayer to prayer, petition to petition, and virtue to virtue,* let no time, day or hour of thy life be bare of good works learned from me. For this purpose I joined other works with those necessary for the government of the Church, and celebrated the feast days in the manner and with the preparations thou hast come to know and describe. As soon as one was solemnized I began to prepare for another, and hence not for one moment was my life void of works holy and pleasing in the sight of the Lord. All the children of the Church, if they so desire, can imitate me in this, and thou must do this more zealously than the others. This is the purpose for which the Holy Ghost ordained the solemnities and commemorations of my most holy Son, of myself, and of the other saints recurring in the holy Church.

695. As I have exhorted thee many times I desire thee to distinguish thyself by the devout celebration of these feast days, especially by the celebration of the mysteries of the Divinity and humanity of my divine Son and those of my life and glory. After this I desire thee to have a singular veneration and affection for the holy Angels due to their great excellence, sanctity, beauty and ministry, as well as for the great favors and blessings thou hast received through these celestial spirits. I desire thee to assimilate thyself to them in the purity of thy soul, the loftiness of holy thoughts, the fervor of thy love, and in living as if thou hadst neither an earthly body nor its passions. They are to be thy friends and companions in thy pilgrimage so they may be such also in the fatherland. With them thou must now maintain conversation and familiar

* cf. Ps. 83:8 [Ed.]

communication in which they shall show thee the attributes and tokens of thy Spouse, give thee certain knowledge of his perfections, lead thee to the straight ways of justice and peace, defend thee from the demon, and warn thee of his deceits. In the continued teaching of these spirits and ministers of the Most High thou shalt hear the laws of divine love; hear and obey them in all things.