

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 failing to find new words with which to manifest what I know. From what has been given to me to understand regarding the love of Christ our Savior for his most pure Mother and most worthy Spouse, it seems to me that according to the inclination and force of this charity His Majesty would have deprived Himself of his eternal throne of glory and the company of the Saints in order to be with his most beloved Mother (123), if for other reasons it was not more appropriate for the Son to be in heaven and the Mother upon earth during the time of this separation and bodily absence. Yet it must not be understood that this high praise of the excellence of the Queen derogates from that of her most holy Son, nor from the saints; for the divinity of the Father and the Holy Ghost is in Christ indivisible with consummate individual unity, all three Persons exist in each one by an inseparable mode of existence, and hence the Person of the Word could never exist separate from the Father and the Holy Ghost. 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. Yet 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. And if it was proper for the glory of the Most High for this entire work to be entrusted to most holy Mary so our Savior Jesus, after his miraculous Resurrection, could enter into the glory of his Father, it was also proper 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 undertaking itself in which the great Lady was occupied on earth, where the grace, means, favors and benefits must be proportionate with the cause and with the most exalted purpose of such hidden mysteries. All these requirements were gloriously fulfilled by the frequent visits of the Son to his Mother, and by raising Her to the throne of his glory, for thus neither would the invincible Queen be always excluded from the court of heaven for so many years, nor the courtiers of heaven be deprived of the delightful sight of their Queen and Lady, since this joy was possible and proper for all.

682. One of the days (in addition to those already mentioned) on which these wonders were renewed was when She celebrated each year the Ascension of her most holy Son into heaven. This was a special and very festive day for Her and for all of heaven, since 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 benefits She had received from her most precious Son, the company of the ancient Patriarchs and Saints whom He had delivered from limbo, and all that had transpired day after day during those forty days, giving particular thanksgiving for each with new hymns and devotions as if they were again transpiring before Her, since She held all these events present in her unfailling memory. I shall not detain myself in referring to the particulars of what She did during those times because I have left written what is sufficient in the last chapters of the second Part. I shall only say that during this preparation our great Queen received incomparable favors and new influences of the Divinity by which She constantly became more and more deified and prepared for the what She would receive on the day of the Ascension.

683. Then when the mysterious day arrived each year which corresponded to the day on which our Saviour Jesus ascended into heaven, His Majesty came down in person to the oratory of his most blessed Mother, accompanied by innumerable Angels and by the Patriarchs and Saints He had raised up with Him in his glorious Ascension. The great Lady awaited his visit prostrate upon the ground as usual, annihilated and abased in the profundity 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 most holy 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 his throne, She who had given Him human existence. Then He asked Her what was her request and 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 for the benefit of having on this day by thine omnipotence raised our nature to glory and eternal happiness. I implore that all men may know, praise and magnify thy divinity and most sacred humanity."

684. The Lord answered: "My Mother and my 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." Then that entire 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. Yet 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 great Queen asked permission of the Lord to descend from the throne, and prostrate before the footstool of the Blessed Trinity* She composed an admirable canticle of praise in which She included the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, with all the triumphs and victories gained by her most holy Son until He returned glorious to the right hand of the eternal Father on the day of his admirable Ascension.

685. The Most High manifested his pleasure and satisfaction at this hymn of praise, and all the saints responded with other new songs of praise, glorifying the Omnipotent in that creature so admirable, and receiving new joy by the presence and excellence of their Queen. Then at the command of the Most High the Angels again raised Her to the right hand of her most holy Son,

* cf. Ps. 98:5 [Ed.]

and having as on other similar occasions been illumined and adorned for that purpose (*Con.* 623ff.; *Tran.* 812) the Divinity manifested Himself by glorious and intuitive vision. In this beatific vision the Queen rejoiced for part of that day, and during it the Lord again gave Her the possession of that place which from his eternity He had prepared for Her as was said on the day of the Ascension. And 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 in order to benefit the holy Church. Leaving this choice entirely up to Her, 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 her most sacred Son.

686. This submissive response, repeated each year, was just as often accepted by the most holy Trinity with the admiration of all the Blessed. Hence the heavenly Mother not only once but many times deprived Herself of the joy of the beatific vision for a time in order to descend to the world to spiritually govern the Church and enrich it with these ineffable merits. And since the proper appreciation of them cannot be accommodated by our curtailed faculties, it will be no flaw in this History to leave the knowledge of them to the beatific vision. Yet all the rewards corresponding to these merits were held in reserve for Her in the divine acceptance, so afterwards in the possession of these rewards She would be similar to the humanity of her Son in the degree possible as one who would worthily occupy the place at his right hand on his throne. All these wonders were followed by 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 just as they have been 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 by making 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 and humbled Herself in new thanksgiving for these favors. I will also mention that St. John the Evangelist took notice of some of these wonders and merited some participation in their effects, for he usually saw the Queen so filled with refulgence that he could not look upon her face due to the heavenly light which beamed forth. 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 caused him many times to become embarrassed in the presence of the great Lady, though this was mixed with admirable joy and sanctifying effects.

687. The effects and benefits of this great festivity of the Ascension prepared the great Queen to celebrate more suitably 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 by the works of the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost, since at the same hour in which He had descended the first time to the Cenacle upon the sacred Apostolic 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. Attending upon Her during this favor were many thousands of Angels singing the canticles of the Lord in sweetest harmony, and the Holy Ghost entirely inflamed and renewed Her with superabundant gifts and new increases of those She already

possessed in such an eminent degree. Then the great Lady gave humble thanks for this benefit and for having filled the Apostles with wisdom and charisms so they would be worthy ministers of the Lord and such ideal 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 in the holy Church, through the present and future ages, the influences of his grace and wisdom, and not to suspend it at any time due to the sins of men which would disoblige Him and make them unworthy of his influence. All these petitions the Holy Ghost granted to his only Spouse, and the holy Church has enjoyed the fruit of them and shall enjoy it until the end of the world.

688. To all these mysteries and feast days of the Lord and of Herself our great Queen added two others which She celebrated with special joy 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 with new canticles of glory and praise, summarizing in them the work of the creation of these heavenly spirits, 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 wonders of the Lord and astonish all mortals. I cannot find terms, nor do I have time, to declare even a small part of what I have come to know of this sacrament, for they began by praising the essence of God in Himself and in all his perfections and attributes known to them. Then the great Queen proceeded to bless and magnify Him for having manifested his majesty, wisdom and omnipotence in the creation of so many and such beautiful spiritual and angelic beings, for having favored them with so many gifts of nature and grace, and for their ministries, exertions and service in fulfillment of the will of God and in assisting and governing men and all lower and visible nature. To these praises the Angels responded with the return and discharge of their debt of gratitude, and all of them sang wonderful songs and praises to the Omnipotent for having created and chosen for his Mother a Virgin so pure, so holy and worthy of his greatest gifts and favors, and because He had raised Her above all creatures in sanctity and glory and had given Her dominion and sovereignty so all could serve, honor and proclaim Her as the worthy Mother of God and Restoratrix of the human race.

689. In this manner the sovereign spirits commented on the great prerogatives of their Queen and blessed God in Her, and Her Highness recounted those of the Angels and offered similar praises. Hence this day was one of admirable joy and sweetness for the great Lady and accidental joy for the Angels, especially for the thousand Angels of her ordinary guard, while all participated in their own way in the glory they gave to their Queen and Lady. And since there was no impediment of ignorance on either side, nor any lack of wisdom and appreciation for the mysteries they professed, this colloquy was replete with incomparable veneration, as it shall be in heaven when the Lord shall make it known to us.

690. The other feast day which She celebrated was that of all the Saints of the human nature, preparing Herself first many prayers and exercises of devotion as on the other feast days; and on

the day of the feast all the ancient Fathers, Patriarchs and Prophets, and the rest of the Saints, including those who had died after the Redemption, descended from heaven in order to celebrate it with their Reparatrix. On this day She composed new canticles of thanksgiving for the glory of those Saints, and because in them was manifested the efficacy of the Redemption and death of her most holy Son. Great was the joy of the Queen on this occasion, knowing the secret of the predestination of the Saints, who having lived in mortal flesh amid such dangers were now in possession of the secure happiness of eternal life. For this benefit She blessed the Lord and Father of mercies, and summarized in these praises the favors, graces and benefits which each of the Saints had received from 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 all this She recalled and rendered new gratitude for the victories and triumphs which She herself had gained over the demon in the battles She had with him. For these favors, and for the souls who had been rescued from the power of darkness, She offered new canticles along with humble and fervent acts of gratitude.

691. It is a subject of admiration to men, as it was to the angels, that a mere creature in mortal flesh could accomplish such and so many incessant wonders which seemed impossible for many souls working together, even if they had been as ardent as the highest Seraphim; yet 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 our capacity cannot contain the consideration of her works, which were without interruption or rest day or night, since She was now no longer impeded by the mortality and weight of nature,* but rather operated like an untiring Angel, and more than all of them together; all was one flame and conflagration of immense activity. With this most godlike virtue days seemed short to Her, occasions few, and her exercises limited, since her love always extended boundlessly beyond what She did, though this was itself beyond measure. I know and confess that all I have stated regarding these wonders is little or nothing compared to what her activity was in reality, since I see a nearly infinite abyss or distance between what has been declared to me and what I am incapable 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 understand and write. It is time for thee to eliminate what has detained thee until now and wing the flight of thy spirit to the state to which the Almighty calls thee and I invite thee. Fill

* cf. Wis. 9:15 [Ed.]

thy works with all perfection and sanctity, and take notice of the impious and cruel opposition thou dost face from thy enemies the devil, the world, and the flesh.* It is not possible for thee to overcome such difficulties and temptations if thou dost not enkindle in thy heart a most fervent desire to imitate me and a most ardent zeal in this imitation, so with invincible impetus thou run over and trample upon the head of the venomous serpent, who with diabolical astuteness uses many means to deceive thee, or cast thee down, or at least detain thee in thy course so thou mayest not attain the end thou dost desire and the state which the Lord hast prepared and 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 about and stalking souls (I Peter 5:8). He takes advantage of any negligence he recognizes, without losing any occasion of astutely presenting his temptations, inclining and moving the passions of those whom he finds incautious so they might receive the wound of guilt before they fully realize their danger. When afterwards they sense their guilt and desire to remedy it they find major difficulty, for in order to raise themselves after having already fallen a greater abundance of grace and effort is required to resist the evil than before they fell. By guilt the soul is weakened in virtue, its enemies gain greater vigor, and the passions become more indomitable and invincible; for these reasons many fall, but fewer 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 such light as thou hast received. Attend then, my dearest, to all that is represented to thee in this clear mirror, and if thou dost know and confess me as thy Teacher and Mother, and the Mistress of all sanctity and true perfection, do not be tardy in imitating and following me. It is not possible for thee or any other creature to arrive at the perfection and excellence of my works, nor does the Lord oblige anyone to that; yet it is quite possible with his divine grace for thee to fill thy life with works of virtue and sanctity, and occupy in them all thy time and faculties, adding extra holy exercises to thy other exercises, prayers to prayers, petitions to petitions, and virtues to virtues,† without any time, day or hour of thy life lacking good works, as thou knowest I did. For this purpose I joined other works with those necessary for the spiritual 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 feast was over 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 commanded thee at other times, I desire thee to distinguish thyself very much in commemorating these feast days, especially the mysteries of the Divinity and humanity of my

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

† cf. Ps. 83:8 [Ed.]

most holy 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 ministries, as well as for the great favors and benefits 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 fire of love, and in living as if thou hadst neither an earthly body nor its passions. The holy Angels are to be thy friends and companions in thy pilgrimage so afterwards they may be such in the fatherland. With them thou must now maintain conversation and familiar communication in which they shall manifest to thee the attributes and tokens of thy Spouse, give thee certain notice of his perfections, lead thee along the straight paths of justice and peace, defend thee from the demon, and warn thee of his deceits. In the everyday school of these spirits and ministers of the Most High thou shalt learn the laws of divine love; hear and obey them in all things.