

CHAPTER XV

Most Holy Mary Celebrates other Feast Days of the Circumcision, the Adoration of the Kings, Her Purification, the Baptism of the Lord, His Fast, the Institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and His Passion and Resurrection.

662. In renewing the memory of the mysteries, life and death of Christ our Savior, our great Queen sought not only to render worthy gratitude for Herself and for the whole human race in order to lead the Church as the Teacher of all holiness and wisdom to this holy science of gratitude, but also, by fulfilling this debt of gratitude, She sought to draw down the infinite bounty and merciful clemency of God to meet the frailty and human misery of men. The most prudent Mother knew her divine Son and the eternal Father were much repelled by the sins of mortals, and at the tribunal of his mercy they had no other claim than the infinite charity by which God had lovingly reconciled them to Himself though they were sinners and his enemies (Rom. 5:8-9). And since this reconciliation was accomplished by Christ our Repairer by his works, life, death and mysteries, for this reason the days on which all of these blessings were accomplished were judged by the heavenly Lady appropriate for multiplying her supplications and inclining the Omnipotent toward mercy. She beseeched Him to show his love for love's sake, to call them to his faith and friendship for the sake of his mercy, and to effect their justification because He had gained for them this justification and life everlasting (Ib. 10).

663. Never shall either men or angels fully know what a debt the world owes to the maternal piety of this Lady and great Queen. The many favors which She received from the right hand of the Omnipotent each time She was admitted to the beatific vision in her mortal flesh were blessings not only for Her but also for us,* for on those occasions her divine knowledge and charity reached the highest possible degree in a created being, and in the same degree She desired the glory of the Most High in the salvation of the rational creatures. And since together with this She remained in the state of a viator in order to merit and gain their salvation, the fire of love which burned in her most pure Heart exceeded all bounds, desiring that no one who could come to the enjoyment of God would condemn himself. Hence this resulted in a prolonged martyrdom She suffered in her life, which would have consumed Her each hour and moment if the power of God had not preserved Her or prevented it, caused by the thought that so many souls would damn themselves and remain eternally deprived of the vision and enjoyment of God, and in addition suffer the eternal torments of hell without further hope of the remedy which they had despised.

664. This so lamentable unhappiness was felt by the sweetest Mother with immense sorrow because She alone recognized and weighed it fully in her wisdom. She was filled with a corresponding charity, and would have suffered without any relief if She had been left only to the influences of her love and to the consideration of what the Lord had done and suffered to rescue men from eternal damnation. But the Lord foresaw and provided against this deadly sorrow in his most faithful Mother. Thus He at times miraculously preserved her life, at others He withdrew her mind from it by diverse enlightenments, and at others He again revealed to Her the secrets of eternal predestination so her Heart would be quieted by seeing into the equity of the divine justice. All these expedients and other different ones were applied by Christ our Savior

* cf. Eccclus. 24:47 [Ed.]

so his Blessed Mother would not die at the sight of the sins and the eternal damnation of the reprobate. And if this unhappy and calamitous fate, foreseen by the divine Lady, could afflict so much her most sincere Heart, and in her Son and true God had such effects that in order to remedy the perdition of men He offered his Passion and Death of the cross, what words can describe the blind foolishness of these same men who with such impetuosity and such insensitive hearts surrender themselves to such irreparable and never sufficiently considered ruin?

665. But what our Savior and Master Jesus did to most alleviate the sorrows of his beloved Mother was to listen to her petitions and prayers for mortals, show his appreciation of her love, offer Her his treasures and infinite merits, constitute Her his principal almoner, and consign into Her hands the free and loving distribution of all the treasures of his mercy and grace, for thus She could help the souls whom in her deep science She knew to be in greatest need of it. These promises of the Lord to his Blessed Mother, as well as the solicitude and prayers of the loving Queen, were of ordinary and constant occurrence, and they were still more notable on the feast days commemorating the mysteries of her divine Son. For the day of the Circumcision She began her exercises at the same hour as on the other feasts, and the incarnate Word descended to her oratory with the majesty and accompaniment of Angels and Saints as at other times (618, 633). Since this mystery consisted in his beginning to shed his blood for men and subjecting Himself to the law of sinners as if He was one of them, the acts of his most pure Mother in commemoration of that great condescension and clemency were ineffable.

666. The great Mother humiliated Herself to the lowest depths; She lovingly compassionated the sufferings of the Infant God at such a tender age; She thanked Him for this blessing conferred upon all the children of Adam; and She bewailed the universal forgetfulness and lack of appreciation of the blood shed at such an early age for the rescue of all. And as if ashamed in the presence of her divine Son for not having paid her debts, She offered her own life and blood in satisfaction and imitation of her Model and Master. She spent that whole day in sweet converse and colloquy reiterating her desires and petitions. Yet though the Lord accepted her offerings, it was not appropriate to let Her actually pay all the sacrifices of her inflamed love; hence She added other inventions of her charity toward mortals. She besought her divine Son to divide his gifts, caresses and favors among all the children of men; She begged that She alone be singled out to suffer for his love; that all share in the reward and taste the sweetness of the divine Spirit; that all be induced to enter the path of eternal life, and none be lost in eternal death, since their God himself became man and suffered for the very purpose of drawing all men to Himself (Jn. 12:32). Then She offered to the eternal Father the blood which his Son Jesus shed in his Circumcision, and his humility in allowing Himself to be circumcised in his sinlessness. After She had thus exercised acts of incomparable perfection and adored Him as true God and man, her divine Son gave Her his blessing and returned to the right hand of the eternal Father in heaven.

667. To prepare for the feast of the adoration of the Three Kings She began her devotions some days before in order as it were to prepare some presents to offer to the incarnate Word. The principal offering, which the most prudent Queen called gold, were the souls brought to a state of grace; and for this gift of such great worth She employed beforehand the ministry of the Angels, giving them orders to help Her prepare this gift by entreating many souls with great inspirations and many particulars so they might come to the knowledge of the true God and be converted to Him. This result was brought about by their ministry, and much more by her own prayers and petitions, withdrawing many from sin, bringing others to the faith and Baptism, and snatching others from the talons of the infernal dragon at the hour of death. To this gift She added the gift

of myrrh, which consisted of her prostrations in the form of a cross, her humiliations, and other exercises of penance by which She prepared to present Herself as myrrh before her God. Her third offering was the incense of her inflamed and soaring love, her words and aspirations, and other promptings of her affection, so full of wisdom and sweetness.

668. In order to receive these offerings her divine Son on the day and hour of the feast of the Epiphany descended with innumerable Angels and Saints. In their presence, and inviting all the courtiers of heaven to assist, She made her offering, accompanying it with wonderful worship, adoration and love, and with the offering She combined a fervent prayer for all mortals. Then She was taken up to the throne of her Son and true God and made to share the glory of his sacred humanity in an ineffable manner. She was divinely united with it and as it were transfigured by its splendors and translucency. A few times, in order to moderate the conflagration of her love, the Lord himself embraced Her and permitted Her to recline upon his arms. These favors are such as cannot be described in words, for the Omnipotent sought each day to exhaust upon Her the treasures of his blessings new and old (Mt. 13:52).

669. After receiving these favors She descended from the throne and supplicated the Lord for mercy upon mankind. She concluded her petitions by a canticle of praise for all of this, and She asked the Saints if they would accompany Her in all of this. On this day also a wonderful thing happened, namely at the end of this feast She asked all the Patriarchs and Saints present to intercede for Her with the Almighty so He would assist and govern Her in all her works. For this purpose She went from one to the other repeating this petition, humiliating Herself before them as one who came to kiss their hands. And so the Teacher of humility could exercise this virtue with her Parents and the Patriarchs and Prophets, who were of her own nature, her most holy Son allowed this with incomparable pleasure. But She did not perform this act of humiliation with the Angels, because they were her ministers and did not share with the great Lady the parentage of nature as the holy Fathers; rather, the heavenly spirits assisted and accompanied Her by another manner of courtesy which along with Her they demonstrated in that exercise.

670. Then the Queen celebrated the Baptism of Christ our Lord with magnificent thanksgiving for this Sacrament, and because the Lord himself condescended to receive it in order to give a beginning to the law of grace. After offering her prayers for the Church She withdrew to fast for the forty following days in order to commemorate the fast of the Lord and of Herself after his Baptism, as I have recorded in its place (*Tran.* 279). During these forty days She did not sleep, or eat, or leave her retreat unless some great necessity of the Church demanded her presence. Her only communication was with St. John when receiving Holy Communion, or when She was obliged to dispatch some business for the government of the Church. The beloved disciple was also more solicitous in his attendance upon Her, rarely absenting himself from the Cenacle. He relieved the numerous persons who sought help in their necessities, and he cured the sick by applying some article which had been used by the powerful Queen. Many possessed by demons also came, and some of them were freed before arriving, for the demons dared not linger within the bodies of those who approached the dwelling of most holy Mary. Others of the demons cast themselves into the abyss as soon as the possessed were touched by the cloak or veil or some other article belonging to the Queen. If any of the demons were still rebellious the Evangelist called Her, and at the point in which She came into the presence of the possessed the demons fled without waiting for further commands.

671. It would be necessary to write many books if all the miracles and works of the great Queen during these forty days were to be recorded; for if She did not sleep, eat or rest, who can estimate what She in her great solicitude and activity accomplished during so long a time? It is

enough to know that She applied and offered up all for the increase of the Church, the justification of souls, the conversion of the world, and the assistance of the Apostles and disciples preaching the Gospel throughout the earth. At the end of this Lent her divine Son regaled Her with a banquet similar to the one brought by the Angels to Him at the end of his fast, as I have described in its place (*Tran.* 289), only this one was more splendid, since at it was present the glorified Savior, full of majesty, who Himself furnished what was eaten by his Blessed Mother, and attended also by many thousands of Angels, some of them serving and others singing in divine and celestial harmonies. This day was very delightful to Her, due more to the presence of her divine Son and his tokens of love than the sweetness of those delicacies and unrivaled nectars. In thanksgiving She prostrated Herself and asked his benediction, adoring the Lord, and having given it to Her He returned to the celestial regions. During all these apparitions of Christ our Lord the pious Mother performed great and heroic acts of humility, submission and veneration, kissing the feet of her Son, acknowledging Herself unworthy of those favors, and asking for new graces in order to serve Him better in the future.

672. There may possibly be some who in their human prudence might judge as rather frequent these apparitions of the Lord which I have described for so many occasions; yet those who think this will have to show us the measure of the sanctity of the Mistress of virtues and grace, and the reciprocal love of such a Mother and Son, and they will be obliged to tell us how far these favors exceed the measure due to the circumstances. They forget that both faith and reason convince us this measure goes far beyond all human estimation. As for myself it is enough to find no doubt in what I say, nor in the light in which I know it, and to know that each day, each hour, and each moment Christ our Savior comes down from heaven consecrated at the hands of the priest wherever this consecration is performed legitimately anywhere in the world. I say He descends not by a bodily motion, but by the change of bread and wine into his sacred body and blood. Though this descent happens in a different manner, which I will not gainsay or dispute, yet the holy Catholic faith teaches me the same Christ is actually present and remains in the consecrated Host. This wonder the Lord performs thus frequently for men and for their welfare, notwithstanding that there are so many unworthy ones, and some even among those who consecrate. And if anyone can oblige Him to continue this benefit it is none other than most holy Mary, whom He favored in this way and for whom He principally ordained it, as I have explained elsewhere (19). Thus it is not astonishing that He visited Her personally so many times, since She alone was able and knew how to merit it not only for Herself but for all the rest of us.

673. After the fast the great Lady celebrated the feast of her Purification and the Presentation of the Infant God in the temple. So She could make this offering and have it accepted by the Lord himself, the most blessed Trinity appeared in her oratory with his heavenly court. To prepare Her for offering up the incarnate Word, the Angels vested and adorned Her with the same garments and jewels as I have described for the feast of the Incarnation (652). Then She offered up a comprehensive prayer in which She pleaded for the whole human race, and especially for the Church. The reward for this prayer and for the humility with which She subjected Herself to the law of purification, as well as for her other exercises, was a new increase of grace, and new gifts and favors for Herself, and for others great helps and blessings.

674. The memory of the Passion of her most holy Son, the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Resurrection She celebrated not only every week, as described above (577ff.), but also on the anniversaries of their occurrence. Each year She observed their commemoration in the manner as is now done in the Church during Holy Week. Besides the

exercises of each week She added many others, and on Good Friday, at the hour in which Christ was crucified, She placed Herself upon a cross and there remained for three hours. She renewed all the prayers of the Lord, with all the sorrows and mysteries of that day. But on the following Sunday, which corresponds to the Resurrection, She was raised by the holy Angels to the empyrean heaven, where during that day She enjoyed the beatific vision, while on the ordinary Sundays her vision of the Divinity was abstractive.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE QUEEN OF THE ANGELS GAVE ME.

675. My daughter, the divine Spirit, whose wisdom and prudence governs the holy Church, has ordained through my intercession that in it so many different feasts are celebrated, not only in order for proper gratitude to be rendered to the Creator and Redeemer for the works of the Redemption, of my life, and of the saints, and so the blessings, which never can be properly repaid, might not be forgotten by mankind, but also so these solemnities would give men an opportunity of attending to holy exercises and recollect themselves interiorly by withdrawing from the solitudes of temporal affairs, and so they might, by the exercise of virtue and the good use of the Sacraments, repair the losses sustained by their distractions, imitate the virtues and the lives of the saints, solicit my intercession, merit the forgiveness of their sins, and gain the graces and favors held in readiness by the divine mercy in these mysteries.

676. This is the spirit of the holy Church by which She desires to govern and nourish her children as a devoted Mother. And I, who am Mother of them all, sought to attract and bind them to the secure path of their salvation. But the council of the infernal serpent has always, and more so in the unhappy times in which thou livest, tended to hinder these holy ends of the Lord and mine; and even though he cannot pervert the order of the holy Church, he exerts himself to prevent the greater part of the faithful from being benefited by her institutions and strives to induce many to convert them into greater guilt for their condemnation. And the same demon shall stand as their accuser at the tribunal of the divine justice, for on the most holy and festive days not only do men not follow the spirit of the Church by employing them in works of virtue and worship of the Lord, but on those very days they commit the most grievous sins, as ordinarily happens with carnal and worldly men. Certainly most outrageous and reprehensible is the common forgetfulness and contempt of this duty in the children of the Church when they profane the sacred and holy days by spending them in diversion and play, in excessive and disorderly eating and drinking, irritating the justice of the Almighty instead of appeasing Him, succumbing to their invisible enemies instead of vanquishing them, and permitting them to triumph in their pride and malice.

677. Do thou, my daughter, bewail this damage, since I cannot bewail it now in the same way as I have done in mortal life, and exert thyself to assist thy brethren in overcoming this widespread carelessness. And though the life of ecclesiastics should differ from that of seculars in having no distinction of days, applying every day for the divine worship, for prayer and holy exercises, as thou must teach thy subjects, yet I desire thee to celebrate with them the feasts of the Lord and mine by a more careful preparation and purity of conscience. I desire thee to fill all thy days and nights with works holy and pleasing in the sight of the Lord, but on feast days thou shouldst add other interior and exterior exercises. Excite the fervor of thy heart, recollect thyself, and if it seems to thee thou art doing much, labor still more earnestly to *make sure thy calling and election* (II Peter 1:10), nor ever omit any exercise out of negligence. Consider that *the days are evil* (Eph. 5:16), and *life passes away like a shadow* (Ps. 143:4). Live very carefully in order

not to be found devoid of merits, holy deeds, and perfect works. To each hour assign its legitimate occupation as thou hast seen me do and as I have many times admonished and taught thee.

678. For this purpose I exhort thee to live attentive to the divine inspirations, and amid all the other blessings not to forget those contained in such enlightenments. Let thy care be such that no virtuous act or greater perfection which is possible to thee and comes to thy notice remains unexecuted. I assure thee, my dearest, through their negligence and forgetfulness mortals lose immense treasures of grace and glory. All the perfection I came to know concerning my divine Son when I lived with Him I imitated, and whatever the Holy Ghost pointed out to me as being most perfect I executed, as thou hast seen. In this insatiable solicitude I lived just as by natural breathing, and by these affections I obliged my divine Son to show me so many favors and visit me so often during my mortal life.

679. I likewise desire thee, so thou and thy religious may imitate me in my retirement and solicitude, to establish the manner in which the customary retreat is to be conducted, and those who make it must live retired in holy obedience during the days appointed for it. Thou knowest from experience what fruit is gathered in these retreats, since in it thou hast written nearly the whole of my Life, and in this solitude the Lord hast visited thee with greater blessings and favors for the betterment of thy own life and the conquering of thy enemies. In order for thy religious to understand how they must conduct themselves in the exercises of the retreat for their greater profit and advancement I desire thee to write for them a special treatise in which thou shalt assign all their occupations to certain hours and times. These should be arranged in such a way that the one who is in retreat does not miss the community exercises, for conformity to them is an obligation superseding all the particular ones. As for the rest, those in retreat must observe perfect silence and go about veiled so they may be known as making the retreat and hence not be spoken to by any of the others. Let none be deprived of this benefit due to their office, so let their duties be assigned to others in obedience. Ask enlightenment of the Lord for writing this treatise, and I shall assist thee to understand more thoroughly my practices in retirement so thou mayest teach it to others.