

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 oblige the Lord, inclining his infinite goodness to the mercy and clemency which She knew was necessary for the human frailty and misery of men. The most prudent Mother knew her most holy Son and the eternal Father were much disobliged 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 benefits were accomplished were judged by the heavenly Lady appropriate for multiplying her supplications and inclining the Omnipotent toward mercy. She besought Him to love men 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 eternal life (Ib. 10).

663. Never shall either men or angels worthily weigh the debt the world owes to the maternal compassion of this Lady and great Queen. The many favors which She received from the right hand of the Omnipotent each time He manifested Himself to Her in the beatific vision in mortal flesh were not benefits only for Her but also for us,* for on those occasions her divine knowledge and charity reached the highest possible degree in a mere creature, 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 surpassed all bounds, desiring that no one who could come to the enjoyment of God would condemn himself. From this resulted 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 condemn themselves and remain eternally deprived of the vision and enjoyment of God, and in addition suffer the eternal torments of hell without hope of the remedy which they had despised.

664. This so lamentable unhappiness was felt by the most sweet Mother with immense sorrow because She alone recognized, weighed and pondered it with commensurate wisdom; and since to this corresponded her most ardent charity, She would have suffered without any relief in these pains if She had been left to the force of her love and the consideration of what our Savior had done and suffered in order to rescue men from eternal perdition. But the Lord prevented the effects of this mortal sorrow in his most faithful Mother; sometimes He miraculously preserved her life, at other times He diverted her attention by various enlightenments, and at others He revealed to Her the hidden secrets of eternal predestination, so knowing the reasons and equity of

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

divine justice her Heart could rest. All these expedients and other different ones were applied by Christ our Savior so his most holy Mother would not die at the sight of the sins and eternal condemnation of the reprobate. And if this unhappy and calamitous fate, foreseen by the heavenly Lady, could so afflict her most sincere Heart, and in her Son and true God have 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 insensate blindness of these same men who with such impetuosity and such insensitive hearts deliver themselves to such irreparable and never-duly-considered ruin of their own selves?

665. Yet what our Savior and Master Jesus did to most alleviate the sorrows of his beloved Mother was to listen to her prayers and petitions 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 graces, 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 most 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 (615, 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 humbled Herself to the lowest depths; She tenderly pitied the sufferings of the infant God at such a delicate age; She thanked Him for this benefit conferred upon all the children of Adam; and She wept over the common forgetfulness and ingratitude in not esteeming that blood shed at such an early age for the rescue of all. And as if She had not paid her debt for this benefit She found Herself drawn to the presence of her divine Son, offering to die and give her own blood and life in satisfaction for this debt and in imitation of her Model and Master. And in addition to these desires and petitions She held most sweet colloquies with the Lord himself during that entire day. Yet although His Majesty accepted this sacrifice, it was not appropriate to actually execute the inflamed desires of the most loving Mother; hence She added other inventions of her charity toward mortals. She besought her most holy Son to distribute 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 though incapable of sin. After She had thus exercised acts of incomparable perfection and adored Him as true God and man, her most holy Son gave Her his blessing and returned to the right hand of his eternal Father in heaven.

667. To prepare for the feast of the adoration of the Three Kings She began her devotions some days before, as if gathering some presents to offer to the incarnate Word. The principal offering, which the most prudent Queen called gold, were the souls brought to the 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 abasements, and other exercises of penance by which She prepared to present Herself as myrrh before her Son. The third offering, which She called incense, were the flames and flights of her love, her words and aspiring prayers, and other affections most sweet and full of wisdom.

668. In order to receive this offering her most holy 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 help Her, She made her offering with admirable worship, adoration and love, and with this offering She combined a fervent prayer for all mortals. Then She was taken up to the throne of her Son and true God and participated in the glory of his most sacred humanity in an ineffable manner, remaining divinely united with it and as it were transfigured by its splendors and clarity. Sometimes, in order to grant Her rest from her most ardent affections, She was permitted to recline upon the arms of the Lord himself. These favors were so exquisite that there are not terms to describe them, since the Omnipotent each day brought forth out of his treasures new benefits and old (Mt. 13:52).

669. After having received these benefits She descended from the throne and begged mercy for men, and then concluded her petitions by a canticle of praise for all of this, asking 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 who assisted Her to pray to 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, humbling 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. However, 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 Savior with magnificent thanksgiving for this Sacrament, and because the Lord himself had received 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 required 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; and though many needy and infirm persons came he relieved and cured them, applying some garment 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 works and wonders 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 in support of the Apostles and disciples who wandered throughout the world preaching the Gospel. Upon completing this Lent her most holy Son regaled Her with a feast 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, with many thousands of Angels, some of them serving and others singing in celestial and divine harmony; but the Lord Himself furnished from his own hand what was eaten by the most loving Mother. This day was very sweet to Her, due more to the presence of her divine Son and his tokens of love than the sweetness of those delicacies and supernal 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 be obliged to measure the sanctity of the Mistress of virtues and grace, the reciprocal love of such a Mother and Son, and tell us how excessive these favors are by the ruler with which they measure them, when faith and reason tell us they are immeasurable by human judgment. For myself it is enough to find no doubt in what I relate, 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 sacramentally at the hands of the priest who consecrates validly 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 do not deny or dispute, yet the Catholic truth teaches me the same Christ is actually present and remains in an ineffable manner in the consecrated Host. This wonder the Lord performs thus frequently for men and for their welfare, though so many are unworthy, and some even among those who consecrate. And if anyone can oblige Him to continue this benefit it could only be most holy Mary, for whom He worked this wonder and principally instituted it, as I have explained elsewhere (19). Thus it does not seem much that He visited Her personally so many times, since She alone was able and knew how to merit it for Herself and for 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 long 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 remained there for three hours. She renewed all the prayers of the Lord, with all the sorrows and mysteries of that day. 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 feast days would be celebrated, not only so the memory of the divine mysteries may be renewed, along with the works of human Redemption, of my most holy life, and of the other Saints, and so men may render gratitude to their Creator and Redeemer, and not forget the benefits for which they can never be properly grateful, but also these solemnities were ordained so on those days men would cease work in order to attend to holy exercises, and interiorly withdraw themselves to gather what on other days they have poured out in the solicitude of temporal matters, and by the exercise of the virtues and good use of the Sacraments compensate what they have lost by diversions, imitate the virtues and lives of the Saints, solicit my intercession, and merit the remission of their sins and the grace and benefits which by these means the divine mercy has prepared for them.

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 the Mother of all, sought to oblige them and draw them along this path to the security of their salvation. But the council of the infernal serpent has always sought, and more so in the unhappy times in which thou livest, to prevent these holy ends of the Lord and myself; and when he cannot pervert the mandate of the holy Church he exerts himself so at least its fruit is not attained by the majority of the faithful, and so many convert these benefits into a greater accusation for their condemnation. And the demon himself shall accuse them at the tribunal of divine Justice; for on the most holy feast days not only did they not follow the spirit of the holy Church, employing them in works of virtue and worship of the Lord, but on those very days they committed the most grave sins, as ordinarily happens with carnal and worldly men. Certainly serious and very reprehensible is the forgetfulness and contempt of this truth commonly exhibited by the children of the Church, profaning the holy and sacred days by ordinarily occupying themselves in games, pleasures and excesses, eating and drinking with the greatest disorder; when they should be placating the Omnipotent they instead irritate his justice even further, and instead of conquering their invisible enemies they are conquered by them, giving this triumph to their haughty pride and malice.

677. Weep, my daughter, over this damage, since I can now no longer do so as I did and would do in mortal life; and seek to recompense the Lord as much as by divine grace shall be granted thee, and labor to assist thy brethren in this general neglect. And though the life of religious should differ from that of seculars by not having distinction of days, in order to occupy themselves every day in divine worship, prayer, and holy exercises, and this I desire thee to teach to thy subjects, yet I particularly desire thee and them to distinguish themselves in celebrating feast days, and especially those of the Lord and myself, with greater preparation and purity of conscience. I desire thee to fill all thy days and nights with works holy and pleasing to thy Lord, but on feast days add other interior and exterior exercises. Stir up the fervor of thy heart, wholly

recollect thy interior, and if it seems to thee thou art doing much, labor 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 solicitous in order not to be found devoid of merits and works holy and perfect. To each hour give its legitimate occupation, as thou dost understand I did, and as I have many times admonished and taught thee.

678. For all this I caution thee to live very attentive to the holy inspirations of the Lord, and above all other benefits do not neglect what thou dost receive by them; and let this attention be such that no work of virtue or greater perfection which comes to thy mind fails to be executed in the manner possible to thee. I assure thee, my dearest, that by this disregard and forgetfulness mortals lose immense treasures of grace and glory. All I knew and saw that my most holy Son did when I lived with Him I imitated, and all that was most holy which the Holy Ghost inspired in me I executed, as thou hast understood. In this eager solicitude I lived, as though by natural breathing; and by these affections I obliged my most holy Son to grant the favors and visits which He so frequently did for me in mortal life.

679. I also desire thee, in order for thee and thy religious to imitate me in the retreats and solitude I practiced, to establish in thy convent the manner in which these customary exercises are to be kept, with those making the retreat remaining secluded for the days which obedience grants to them. Thou hast experienced the fruit which can be gathered in this solitude, since in it thou hast written nearly all of my Life, and the Lord has visited thee with greater benefits and favors to augment thine and conquer thy enemies. And in order for thy nuns to understand how they must govern themselves in retreat for their greater fruit and advantage, I desire thee to write for them a special treatise, pointing out to them the occupations, hours and times in which they are to divide them. These must 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 which must be placed before all the particular ones. As for the rest, they must keep inviolable silence and go about veiled so they may be known as making the retreat, and hence no one may speak a word to them. Those who have particular duties must not for that reason be deprived of this benefit; thus charge others in obedience to do them during that time. Ask the Lord for light in order to write this treatise, and I shall then assist thee to understand more in particular what I did in retreat, so thou mayest write it into doctrine.