

## CHAPTER XXIII

*Confession of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Graces which I, the Least of the Mortals, Sister Mary of Jesus, have Received from the Lord and His Most Holy Mother for Writing this Divine History According to the Teaching of the same Lady and Queen of Heaven.*

786. I confess to Thee, eternal God, Lord of heaven and earth, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the one and true God, one substance and majesty in the Trinity of Persons; because without having received anything from anyone that Thou shouldst repay him (Rom. 11:35), solely through thy ineffable condescension and clemency Thou dost reveal thy mysteries and sacraments to the little ones (Mt. 11:25), and because Thou dost this with immense bounty and infinite wisdom, pleasing Thyself and doing all things well.\* In thy works Thou dost magnify thy holy Name, exalt thy omnipotence, manifest thy grandeur, spread thy mercies, and ensure the glory which is due to Thee as holy, wise, powerful, benignant, generous, and the sole beginning and Author of all good. None is so holy as Thee, none so strong (I Kg. 2:2), none so exalted, who dost lift the poor from the dust, raise them from nothing, and enrich the poor needy one (Ps. 112:7). Thine are, O most high God, the ends and the poles of the earth and all the celestial orbs (Ps. 88:12). Thou art truly the Lord and God of all knowledge (I Kg. 2:3). Thou dost kill and give life; Thou dost humiliate and cast down the proud into hell (Ib. 6); Thou dost raise up the humble according to thy will; Thou maketh rich and maketh poor (Ib. 7), so in thy presence no flesh may boast (I Cor. 1:29), nor the strongest presume upon his strength (I Kg. 2:9), nor the weakest become dismayed or discomfited in his fragility and lowliness.

787. I confess to Thee, true Lord, King and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. I confess and praise thy holy Name, and give glory to Thee, who givest wisdom. I confess to Thee, the sovereign Queen of heaven, Mary most holy, worthy Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, living temple of the Divinity, Depositary of the treasures of his grace, beginning of our remedy, Restoratrix of the general ruin of the human race, new joy of the saints, glory of the works of the Most High, and singular instrument of his omnipotence. I confess Thee as the sweetest Mother of Mercy, Refuge of the miserable, Helper of the poor, and Comforter of the afflicted. All that the angelic spirits and the saints proclaim in Thee, for Thee, and of Thee I also confess, and I join them in whatever glory and praise they render in Thee and through Thee to the Divinity, blessing, magnifying, confessing and believing with them all things concerning Thee. O Queen and Mistress of all creation, through Thee alone and through thy powerful intercession, and because Thou hast looked upon me with eyes of mercy, thy most holy Son has turned toward me in his mercy; and looking upon me as a Father, for thy sake He did not disdain to choose this vile wormlet of the earth and the least of his creatures to manifest his venerable secrets and mysteries. The multitudinous waters of my faults, ingratitude and miseries could not extinguish his immense charity (Cant. 8:7), and my sluggishness and gross dullness could not dry up or choke the stream<sup>†</sup> of the divine light and wisdom communicated to me.

788. I confess, O most kind Mother, in the presence of heaven and earth, I have struggled with myself and with my enemies, and my interior has been sadly troubled in hesitating between my unworthiness and my desire of wisdom. *I stretched forth my hands and bewailed my ignorance*

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\* cf. Mk. 7:37 [Ed.]

† cf. Ps. 45:5 [Ed.]

*of her* (Ecclus. 51:26); *I directed my heart to her, and in knowledge I found her* (Ib. 27); with knowledge I possessed quietude (Ib. 28); and when I loved her and sought her, I found her a *good possession* (Ib. 29) and I was not confounded. The sweet and strong force of wisdom worked within me (Wis. 8:1); it manifested to me the most hidden things and the human knowledge most uncertain (Ps. 50:8). I placed Thee before my eyes, O beautiful image of the Divinity and Mystical City of his habitation, so in the night and darkness of this mortal life Thou could guide me as a star and enlighten me as the moon of the immense light, so I could follow Thee as a Captainess, love Thee as a Mother, obey Thee as a Mistress, hear Thee as a Teacher, and see myself in Thee as in an immaculate and pure mirror, and by the notice and new example of thy ineffable virtues and works adorn myself with the highest perfection and sanctity.

789. Yet who could have ever inclined the divine Majesty to so vile a slave if not Thee, O powerful Queen, who art the grandeur of love, the breadth of piety, the encouragement of mercy, the prodigy of grace, and who has filled up the voids of the sins of all the children of Adam? Thine is, O Lady, the glory, and thine also is this Book I have written, not only because it is about thy most holy and admirable life, but because Thou hast given it the beginning, middle and end; and if Thou thyself hadst not been its Author and Teacher, it could never have entered into human thought. Mayest Thou, then, render the gratitude and the return due for this work, because Thou alone canst worthily render it to thy most holy Son and our Redeemer for such a rare and new blessing. I can only beg this of Thee in the name of the holy Church and mine. This I desire now to do, O Mother and Queen of virtues; and humbling myself in thy presence deeper than the lowest dust, I confess I have received this and other blessings as favors which I could never merit. I have written only that which Thou hast taught and commanded; I was only the mute instrument of thy tongue, moved and governed by thy wisdom. Perfect Thou this work of thy hands, not only by the worthy glory and praise of the Most High, but supply what is missing so I may practice thy doctrine, follow thy footsteps, obey thy commands, and run after the odor of thy ointments (Cant. 1:3), which is the sweetness and fragrance of thy virtues which with ineffable condescension Thou hast suffused in this History.

790. I acknowledge myself, O Empress of heaven, as the most unworthy and the most indebted of all the children of the holy Church. And so the monstrosity of my ingratitude may not be witnessed in the Church and in the presence of the Most High and Thee, I propose, offer, and desire all to take notice of my renunciation of all that is visible and earthly; anew I deliver captive my liberty into the divine will and into thine, in order not to use my free will except for the greater pleasure and glory of God. Thou Blessed among all creatures, just as by the clemency of the Lord and thine own I hold the title of his spouse without meriting it, and of thy daughter and disciple which Thou hast given me, and since the Lord thy Son has so often deigned to confirm these titles, I beseech Thee, O purest Lady, do not permit me to fall short of these titles. Thy protection and assistance has assisted me in the writing of thy miraculous Life; help me now to put into practice thy doctrine, wherein eternal life consists. Thou desirest and commandest me to imitate Thee; stamp and engrave within me thy living image. Thou hast sown in my earthly heart the holy seed; guard it and give it increase, my Mother, Lady and Mistress, so it may bring forth fruit a hundredfold (Lk. 8:8) and not be snatched from me by the birds of prey, the dragon and his demons, whose indignation I have known in all the words which I have written of Thee, my Lady. Guide me unto the end, command me as a Queen, instruct me as a Teacher, and correct me as a Mother. Receive in thanksgiving thine own life and the highest pleasure which Thou hast given to the most blessed Trinity as the summary of his marvels. May the angels and saints

praise Thee, may all nations and generations know Thee, may all creatures in Thee and through Thee bless their Creator eternally, and may my soul and all my faculties magnify Thee.

791. This divine History (as I have repeated throughout it) I have written in obedience to my superiors and confessors who govern my soul, by this means assuring me it is the will of God for me to have written it, and that I must obey his most holy Mother, who for many years has commanded me to write it. And though I have submitted all of it to the censure and judgment of my superiors, without there being a single word which they have not seen and conferred about with me, I nevertheless submit it anew to their better judgment. Above all do I submit it to the amendment and correction of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, to whose censure and teaching, as her daughter, I protest I shall be subject, in order to believe and to hold only that which this same holy Church, our Mother, approves and believes, and in order to condemn all that She condemns, for in this obedience I wish to live and to die. Amen.

END OF BOOK EIGHT

END OF PART III

END OF *The Mystical City of God*