

CHAPTER XXI

The Soul of Mary Most Holy Enters the Empyrean Heaven, and in Imitation of Christ our Redeemer She Returns to Resuscitate Her Sacred Body; in It She Again Rises to the Right Hand of the Lord on the Third Day.

760. Regarding the glory and happiness of the saints in the beatific vision St. Paul says with Isaias (I Cor. 2:9; Is. 64:4) regarding mortals *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him* and hope in Him. In accordance with this Catholic truth we should not wonder at what is related of St. Augustine, the great light of the Church, that in setting out to write a book on the glory of the Blessed he was visited by his friend St. Jerome, who had just died and entered into the glory of the Lord, and was admonished by his visitor that he could not achieve his intention, since no tongue or pen of man could describe the least part of the blessings enjoyed by the saints in the beatific vision. Thus spoke St. Jerome. And if through the divine Scriptures we had no other testimony than this glory is eternal, it would be beyond all our comprehension; for however much our intellect may expand it shall never comprehend eternity, and since this is infinite and boundless it is also inexhaustible and incomprehensible, no matter how much it may be known and loved. Just as God, the Infinite and the Almighty, created all things without being thereby exhausted, and even if He had created endless worlds ever anew would still remain infinite and immutable, so also He shall remain an infinite source of new knowledge and love though seen and enjoyed by countless saints, for in creation and in glory all creatures participate in Him only to a limited extent, each according to its condition, while He is in Himself without limitation or end.

761. Thus the glory of any of the saints is ineffable, even the least among them.* What then shall we say of the glory of most holy Mary, since among the saints She is the most holy, and She by Herself is more like to her Son than all the saints together, and since her grace and glory exceed those of all the rest as those of an Empress or Queen over her vassals? This truth can and should be believed, but in mortal life it cannot be understood or the least part of it be explained, since the inadequacy and deficiency of our words and expressions tend rather to obscure than to set forth its greatness. Hence let us labor in this life not in seeking to comprehend it but to merit its manifestation in glory, where according to our works we shall comprehend more or less of this happiness for which we hope.

762. Our Redeemer Jesus entered into the empyrean heaven conducting the most pure soul of his Mother at his right hand. And only She among mortals gave no cause to go through the particular judgment, and hence She did not undergo it, neither was She asked to account for what She had received, nor was any charge made against Her; for thus was it pledged to Her when She was exempted from the common guilt as chosen for the Queen and privileged above the laws of the children of Adam.† For the same reason, instead of being judged with the rest She shall be seated at the right hand of the Judge to judge with Him all the creatures.‡ If in the first instant of her Conception She was the clearest and most refulgent Aurora, highlighted with the rays of the sun of the Divinity beyond all the brightness of the most ardent Seraphim, and afterwards was so

* cf. Mt. 11:11 [Ed.]

† cf. Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

‡ cf. Mt. 19:28 [Ed.]

elevated that She herself touched with her most pure substance the humanity of Christ in his union with the Word, She consequently became for all eternity his Companion, with all the similarity possible between the Son and the Mother, He being God and Man, and She a mere creature. With this title the Redeemer himself presented Her before the throne of the Divinity, and speaking to the eternal Father in the presence of all the Blessed, who were attentive to this wonder, the most sacred humanity spoke these words: “Eternal Father, my most beloved Mother, thy beloved Daughter and the cherished Spouse of the Holy Ghost, now comes to take possession of the crown and glory which We have prepared as a reward for her merit. This is She who was born as the rose among thorns, untouched, pure and beautiful, worthy to be received in our hands and onto the seat which none of our other creatures can attain, and to which those conceived in sin cannot aspire. This is our chosen One, unique and singular, to whom We communicated our grace and our perfections beyond the measure accorded to other creatures, and in whom We have deposited the treasure of our incomprehensible divinity and its gifts; who most faithfully preserved and made fruitful the talents We gave Her, who never swerved from our will, and who found grace and pleasure in our eyes (Lk. 1:30). My Father, most equitable is the tribunal of our justice and mercy, and in it the services of our friends are repaid in the most superabundant manner. It is just for my Mother to be given the reward of a Mother; and if during her whole life and in all her works She was as like to Me as is possible for a creature to be, let Her also be as like to Me in glory and on the throne of our Majesty, so where sanctity is in essence there it may also be found in its highest participation.”

763. This decree of the incarnate Word was approved by the Father and the Holy Ghost. The most holy soul of Mary was immediately raised to the right hand of her Son and true God and placed on the same royal throne as the most holy Trinity possesses, which neither men nor angels nor the Seraphim themselves have attained nor will attain for all eternity. This is the most exalted and supereminent privilege of our Queen and Lady, that She is seated on the throne with the three divine Persons* and holds her place as Empress, while all the rest are set as servants and ministers to the highest King. To the eminence or majesty of that place, inaccessible for all the rest of creatures, correspond in most holy Mary the gifts of glory of comprehension, vision and fruition, because regarding that infinite Object, which by innumerable degrees and variety the Blessed enjoy, She enjoys above all and more than all. She knows, penetrates and understands much deeper the divine Being and his infinite attributes; She lovingly delights in his mysteries and most hidden secrets more than all the rest of the Blessed. Although there is an infinite distance between the glory of the divine Persons and that of Mary most holy, since the light of the Divinity (as says the Apostle [I Tim. 6:16]) is inaccessible, and in it alone dwells immortality and glory by essence, and though the most holy soul of Christ also without measure exceeds in his gifts those of his Mother, yet the great Queen surpasses inaccessibly all the saints in glory, and has a likeness to that of Christ which cannot be understood in this life nor ever described.

764. Neither can it be comprehended what extra joy the Blessed experienced on that day in singing new songs of praise to the Omnipotent, and in celebrating the glory of his Daughter, Mother and Spouse, for He had exalted all the works of his right hand in Her. Though to the Lord himself could come no new or essential glory since He possessed and possesses it immutably infinite through all eternity, yet the exterior manifestations of his pleasure and satisfaction at the fulfillment of his eternal decrees were greater on that day, for there issued a voice from the royal throne as of the eternal Father which said: “In the glory of our beloved and

* cf. Apoc. 19:5 [Ed.]

most loving Daughter all the pleasure of our holy will is fulfilled to our entire satisfaction. We have given existence to all the creatures, creating them out of nothing so they could participate in our infinite goods and treasures according to the inclination and pleasure of our immense bounty. The very ones who were made capable of our grace and glory have abused this blessing. Our cherished Daughter alone had no part in the disobedience and prevarication of the rest, and She has earned what the unworthy children of perdition have despised. Our Heart has not been disappointed in Her at any time or moment. To Her belong the rewards which according to our conditional decree We had prepared for the disobedient angels and for their followers among men if they had been faithful to their grace and vocation. She has recompensed Us for their falling away by her subjection and obedience, and has given Us the plenitude of complaisance in all her operations, meriting the seat on the throne of our Majesty.”

765. On the third day after the most pure soul of Mary had taken possession of this glory never to leave it, the Lord manifested to the saints his divine will that She return to the world and resuscitate her sacred body by uniting Herself with it, so She could in body and soul be again raised to the right hand of her divine Son without waiting for the general resurrection of the dead. The appropriateness of this favor and its consistency with the others received by the Queen of heaven, along with her supereminent dignity, the saints could not but acknowledge, since even to mortals it is so credible that even if the Church had not sanctioned it we would judge those impious and foolish who would dare deny it. But the Blessed saw it with greater clearness, together with the determined time and hour as manifested to them in God himself. When the time for this wonder arrived Christ our Savior himself descended from heaven, bringing with Him at his right hand the soul of his Blessed Mother and accompanied by many legions of Angels, and the Fathers and ancient Prophets. They came to the sepulchre in the valley of Josaphat, and all being gathered with the virginal temple in sight, the Lord spoke these words:

766. “My Mother was conceived without stain of sin so from her virginal substance I could vest Myself most pure and without stain in the humanity in which I came to the world and redeemed it from sin. My flesh is her flesh, and She cooperated with Me in the works of the Redemption; hence I must raise Her just as I rose from the dead, and this shall be at the same time and hour, since I desire to make Her like Me in all things.” Then all the ancient Saints of the human nature rendered gratitude for this new favor in songs of praise and glory to the Lord. Those who especially distinguished themselves in their thanksgiving were our first parents Adam and Eve, St. Anne, St. Joachim, and St. Joseph, as being the more close partakers in this miracle of his omnipotence. Then the most pure soul of the Queen at the command of the Lord entered the virginal body, reanimated it, and raised it up, giving it a new life of immortality and glory, and communicating to it the four gifts of clearness, impassibility, agility and subtlety, corresponding to those of the soul and overflowing from it into the body.

767. Endowed with these gifts most holy Mary issued from the tomb in body and soul, without raising the stone cover or disturbing the position of the tunic and the mantle which had enveloped her sacred body. Since it is impossible to describe her beauty and refulgent glory I shall not make the attempt. It is sufficient to say that just as the heavenly Mother had given to her divine Son in her womb the form of man, pure, unstained and sinless, for the Redemption of the world, so in return the Lord in this resurrection and new regeneration gave to Her a glory and beauty similar to his own. In this mysterious and divine interchange each did what was possible, since most holy Mary engendered Christ, assimilating Him as much as possible to Herself, and Christ raised Her from the dead, communicating to Her his glory insofar as She was capable as a creature.

768. Then from the sepulchre was arranged a most solemn procession, moving with celestial music through the region of the air, from whence it moved toward the empyrean heaven. This happened at the same hour in which Christ our Savior arose, on a Sunday past three o'clock in the morning,* and hence not all of the Apostles could perceive this sign at that time, but only some of them who were present and keeping vigil at the sacred sepulchre. The Saints and Angels entered heaven in the order in which they had started, and in the last place came Christ our Savior and at his right hand the Queen, clothed in the gold of variety as David says (Ps. 44:10), and so beautiful that She was the admiration of the courtiers of heaven. All of them turned toward Her to look upon Her and bless Her with new jubilation and songs of praise. Thus were heard those mysterious eulogies recorded by Solomon: Come, daughters of Sion, to see thy Queen, who is praised by the morning stars and celebrated by the sons of the Most High.† *Who is She that goeth up from the desert*, like a pillar of all the aromatic perfumes (Cant. 3:6)? *Who is She who rises like the aurora, more beautiful than the moon, elect as the sun,*‡ terrible as many serried armies (Ib. 6:9)? *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, resting upon her Beloved* (Ib. 8:5)? Who is She in whom the Divinity himself finds so much pleasure and delight above all other creatures, and whom He exalts above them all to the throne of his inaccessible light and majesty? O wonder never before seen in these heavens! O novelty worthy of the infinite Wisdom! O prodigy of his omnipotence, which so magnifies and exalts Her!

769. Amid this glory most holy Mary arrived body and soul at the royal throne of the most blessed Trinity, and the three divine Persons received Her upon it with an eternally indissoluble embrace. The eternal Father said to Her: “Ascend higher, my Daughter and my Dove.” The incarnate Word said: “My Mother, from whom I have received human being and the return of my works in thy perfect imitation, receive now from my hand the reward Thou hast merited.” The Holy Ghost said: “My most beloved Spouse, enter into the eternal joy which corresponds to thy most faithful love; rejoice and love without solicitude, for past is the winter of suffering (Ib. 2:11), and Thou hast arrived at our eternal embraces.” There most holy Mary was absorbed among the divine Persons, and as it were submerged in that boundless ocean and abyss of the Divinity, while the saints were filled with admiration and new accidental joy. And since in this work of the Omnipotent other wonders occurred, I shall speak of them as far as possible in the following chapter.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO ME BY THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, MARY MOST HOLY.

770. My daughter, lamentable and inexcusable is the ignorance of men in so deliberately forgetting the eternal glory which God has prepared for those who dispose themselves to merit it. I desire thee to weep bitterly and lament over this so pernicious forgetfulness, for there is no doubt whoever willfully forgets eternal glory and happiness is in evident danger of losing it. No one is free from this guilt, not only because men do not apply much labor or effort in seeking and retaining the remembrance of this happiness, but rather labor with all their powers in things which make them forget the end for which they were created. Undoubtedly this forgetfulness arises from their having entangled themselves in the pride of life, the covetousness of the eyes, and the desires of the flesh (I Jn. 2:16), since employing therein all the forces and faculties of

* cf. *Transfixion* 755 [Ed.]

† cf. Job 38:7 [Ed.]

‡ cf. 1st Vespers of Aug. 15, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Antiphon at the Magnificat* [Ed.]

their soul during the whole time of their life they have neither care, nor attention, nor time for the thoughts of eternal happiness. Let men acknowledge and confess whether this recollection costs them more labor than to follow their blind passions, seeking after honors, possessions, or transitory pleasures, all of which have an end with this life, and which after much striving and labor many men do not and can never attain.

771. How much easier it is for mortals to avoid such perversity, and even more so for the children of the Church, since they have at hand faith and hope, and who without labor have been taught this truth! Even if to gain eternal happiness was equally difficult as to obtain honors, riches, and other apparent advantages, it would be very foolish to labor as much for the false as for the true advantages, for eternal punishment as for eternal glory. This abominable stupidity thou shalt perceive and bewail with tears, my daughter, if thou shalt consider the age in which thou livest, how it is disturbed by wars and discords, and how many unhappy ones there are who devote themselves in seeking death for a short and vain stipend of honor, vengeance, and other most vile interests, while they do not think or care for eternal life any more than irrational animals. It would be a blessing for them if like animals they would completely end with temporal death; but since most of them act against justice, and others who possess it live forgetful of their end,* the ones as well as the others shall die eternally.

772. This is a sorrow beyond all sorrows, and a misfortune without equal and without remedy. Afflict thyself, lament and grieve without consolation over this ruin of so many souls bought by the blood of my divine Son. I assure thee, my dearest, if men would not make themselves so unworthy of it, my charity would urge me, in the celestial glory where thou knowest me to be, to send forth a voice through the whole world exclaiming: "Mortal and deceived men, what are you doing? For what purpose are you living? Do you realize what it is to see God face to face, and participate in his eternal glory and share his company? Of what are you thinking? Who has thus disturbed and captivated your judgment? What shall you seek if once you have lost this true blessing and happiness, since there is no other? The labor is short, the reward is infinite glory, and the punishment is eternal."

773. In connection with this sorrow, which I am trying to excite in thee, seek to labor assiduously in order to evade the danger. Thou hast a living example in my life, which was a continual suffering as thou knowest; but when I came to my reward all of it seemed as nothing, and I forgot it as if it had not occurred. Resolve, my friend, to follow me in exertion, and even if it exceeds that of all mortals look upon it as most insignificant; let no difficulties seem to thee grievous or very bitter, even to passing through fire and sword. Extend thy hand to great things, and shield thy domestics, the senses, with double vestments (Prov. 31:19, 21) against hardships and sufferings to the utmost of their powers. At the same time I desire thee to be free from another error, that of men who say: Let us secure salvation; greater or less glory does not matter; we shall all be together in that life. By this false principle, my daughter, eternal life is not made secure but rather put in jeopardy, since it arises from great foolishness and lack of divine love. Whoever seeks to make such a bargain with God offends Him and tempts Him to permit such souls to live in continual danger of perdition. Human weakness always tends to do less good than it desires to do, and when this desire is small then it will execute very little, and hence risks losing all.

774. He who contents himself with the mediocre or lowest in virtue always leaves room in his will and inclinations for the intentional admittance of other earthly affections and love of what is

* cf. Heb. 10:38; Ecclus. 7:40 [Ed]

transitory, and this attitude cannot be maintained without consequently clashing with divine love; hence it is inevitable for one to be lost and the other to become permanent.* When the creature resolves to love God with all his heart and with all his powers as He commands (Dt. 6:5), God overlooks his human defects and shortcomings, and is pleased with his resolve to reap the highest rewards; but to despise them or willfully undervalue them shows not the love of children or of true friends, but the base fear of slaves who are content to live and be left alone. If the saints could return to merit any new degree of glory by suffering all torments until Judgment Day they would doubtlessly return, because they have a true and perfect knowledge of the value of the reward, and they love God with perfect charity. It is not proper for this privilege to be granted to the saints, yet it was conceded to me as thou hast recorded in this History (2), and my example confirms this truth and reproves the dullness of those who in order to avoid suffering and embracing the cross of Christ are looking for a curtailed reward contrary to the inclination of the infinite goodness of the Almighty, who desires souls to gain merits in order to be rewarded most copiously in the happiness of eternal glory.

* cf. Mt. 6:24 [Ed.]