

CHAPTER IV

St. Joseph Asks Pardon of His Spouse Most Holy Mary, and the Heavenly Lady Consoles Him with Great Prudence.

407. The spouse of most holy Mary, St. Joseph, now better informed, waited until his most holy Spouse had finished her contemplation, and at the hour known to him he opened the door of the humble room which the Mother of the celestial King occupied. Immediately upon entering the holy man threw himself on his knees, saying with the deepest reverence and veneration: “My Lady and Spouse, true Mother of the incarnate Word, here is thy servant prostrate at the feet of thy clemency. By the same God and our Lord whom Thou dost bear in thy virginal womb I beseech Thee to pardon my audacity. I am certain, O Lady, that none of my thoughts is hidden to thy wisdom and divine light. Great was my temerity in resolving to leave Thee, and no less has been the rudeness by which until now I have treated Thee as my inferior instead of serving Thee as the Mother of my Lord and God. Yet Thou also knowest that I have done all in ignorance because I knew not the sacrament of the celestial King and the greatness of thy dignity, though I venerated in Thee other gifts of the Most High. Do not reflect, my Lady, upon the ignorance of such a vile creature, who now better instructed consecrates his heart and his whole life to thy attendance and service. I shall not rise from my knees before being assured of thy favor, nor until I have obtained thy pardon, thy good will, and thy blessing.”

408. Most holy Mary, hearing the humble words of St. Joseph, felt diverse effects. With tender joy in the Lord She saw how fit he was to be entrusted with the sacraments of the Lord, since he acknowledged and venerated them with such exalted faith and humility; yet She was somewhat troubled by his resolve of treating Her henceforth with the esteem and self-abasement which he had offered, for the humble Lady feared by this new arrangement to lose the occasions of obeying and humbling Herself as a servant of her spouse. Like one who suddenly finds herself in danger of being deprived of some jewel or treasure highly valued, most holy Mary was saddened by the thought that St. Joseph would no longer treat Her as an inferior and as subject to him in all things, having now recognized Her as the Mother of the Lord. She raised her holy spouse to his feet and knelt before him, and though he tried to hinder it he could not succeed, because in humility She was invincible. Responding to St. Joseph She said: “I myself, my master and spouse, should ask thee to forgive me, and thou art the one who must pardon me the sorrows and bitterness which thou hast received on my account; and therefore I ask this forgiveness prostrate at thy feet, and supplicate thee to forget thy concerns since the Most High has accepted thy desires and the afflictions thou hast suffered because of them.”

409. It seemed good to the heavenly Lady to console her spouse, and therefore, not in order to excuse Herself, She added: “Regarding the hidden sacrament which the power of the Almighty enclosed within me, I could not give thee any information by my inclination alone, since as a slave of His Majesty it was my duty to await the manifestation of his holy and perfect will. I did not remain silent because I failed to esteem thee as my master and spouse; I am and always shall be thy faithful servant, eager to correspond to thy holy desires and affection. Yet from my inmost heart, and by the Lord whom I bear in my womb, I beseech thee not to change the order and manner of thy conversation and dealings with me thou hast followed until now. The Lord has not

made me his Mother in order to be served and be Lady in this life, but to be the servant of all* and thy slave, obeying thy will. This is my duty, my master, and outside of it I would live afflicted and without consolation. It is just for thee to allow this, since thus has it been ordained by the Most High, giving me thy protection and solicitude so under the shadow of this security and with thy help I may raise the fruit of my womb, my God and my Lord.” With these words and others most sweet and persuasive most holy Mary consoled and quieted St. Joseph, and he raised Her from her knees in order to confer with Her upon all that would be necessary for this purpose. Since on this occasion the heavenly Lady was not only full of the Holy Ghost, but moreover bore within Her as his Mother the incarnate Word who proceeds from Her and from the Father, St. Joseph received special enlightenment and the plenitude of divine graces. Altogether renewed in fervor and spirit he said:

410. “Blessed art Thou, Lady, among all women, happy and fortunate among all nations and generations. May the Creator of heaven and earth be magnified with eternal praise, since from the height of his royal throne He has looked upon Thee and chosen Thee for his dwelling place, and in Thee alone has fulfilled the ancient promises He made to our Fathers and Prophets. Let all generations bless Him, for in no one has He magnified his Name as He has done in thy humility; and by his divine condescension He has selected me, the most insignificant of the living, for thy servant.” In these words of praise and benediction St. Joseph was enlightened by the Holy Ghost in the same manner as St. Elizabeth when she responded to the salutation of our Queen and Lady. The light and inspiration received by the most holy spouse was wonderfully adapted to his dignity and office. The heavenly Lady, upon hearing the words of the blessed Saint, answered in the words of the *Magnificat*, as She had done on her visit to St. Elizabeth, and She added other canticles. She was all aflame in ecstasy and was raised from the earth in a globe of light which surrounded Her and transfigured Her with the gifts of glory.

411. At this heavenly vision St. Joseph was filled with admiration and unspeakable delight, for never had he seen his most blessed Spouse in such eminence of glory and perfection. Now he beheld Her with a full and clear understanding, since all the integrity and purity of the Princess of heaven and the mystery of her dignity manifested themselves to him. He saw and recognized in her virginal womb the humanity of the infant God and the union of the two natures in the Person of the Word. With profound humility and reverence he adored Him and recognized Him as his Redeemer, offering himself to His Majesty. The Lord looked upon him in benevolence and kindness as upon no other man, for He accepted him as his foster father and conferred upon him that title. In accordance with this dignity He gave him such a plenitude of science and celestial gifts as Christian piety can and must acknowledge. I do not dilate upon this vast excellence of St. Joseph made known to me because it would extend this History beyond the prescribed bounds.

412. But if it was a proof of the magnanimity of the glorious St. Joseph and clear evidence of his great sanctity that he did not wither away and die of the grief sustained at the thought of the loss of his beloved Spouse, it is yet more astonishing that he was not overwhelmed by the unexpected joy of this revelation of the true mystery connected with his Spouse. In the former he proved his high sanctity, but in the latter he showed himself worthy of such gifts, which if the Lord had not expanded his heart he could neither have been capable of receiving nor survived in the joy of his spirit. In all things he was renewed and elevated in order to be able to treat Her worthily, She who was the Mother of God himself and his Spouse, and cooperate with Her in the mystery of the Incarnation and in taking care of the Word made man, as I shall relate farther on.

* cf. Lk. 22:27 [Ed.]

So he would be still more capable of receiving celestial gifts, and recognize so much the more his obligation to serve his heavenly Spouse, it was also made known to him that he had received all these gifts and blessings of the Most High through Her and for Her; those before his espousal because the Lord had chosen him for this dignity, and those afterward because he had earned and merited them. He also perceived the prudence with which the great Lady had acted toward him, not only in serving him with such inviolate obedience and profound humility, but also in consoling him in his affliction, soliciting for him the grace and assistance of the Holy Ghost, hiding her feelings with such discretion, and tranquilizing and soothing his sorrow, thus fittingly disposing him for the influences of the divine Spirit. Just as the Princess of heaven had been the instrument for the sanctification of St. John the Baptist and his mother, so also was She instrumental in procuring for St. Joseph the plenitude of graces in still greater abundance. All this the most happy Spouse of our Lady recognized and understood, and he cooperated with all these graces as a most faithful and grateful servant.

413. These great sacraments and many others connected with our Queen and her spouse St. Joseph the sacred Evangelists passed over in silence, not only because they desired to treasure them in their hearts, but also because neither the humble Lady nor St. Joseph had spoken about them to anyone, nor was it necessary to mention these wonders in the life of Christ our Lord, which they wrote in order to establish our belief in the new Church and the law of grace, for such things might give rise to many inconveniences among the heathens in their first conversion. The admirable providence of God, in his hidden judgments and inscrutable secrets, reserved these mysteries in order to *bring forth from his treasures new things and old* (Mt. 13:52) in the most opportune time foreseen by his divine wisdom, when the Church, being already established, and the Catholic faith laid down, the faithful in their necessities could avail themselves of the intercession, help and protection of their great Queen and Lady. Perceiving by new enlightenment what a loving Mother and powerful Advocate they have in heaven with her most holy Son, to whom the Father has given the power to judge (Jn. 5:22), let them flee to Her for help as to the only and sacred Refuge of Sinners. Let the tribulations and the tears of the Church themselves give witness whether such times of affliction have come upon us in our days, for never were her trials greater than now, when her own sons, reared at her breast, afflict Her, seek to destroy Her, and dissipate the treasures of the blood of her Spouse with a greater cruelty than was done by her most embittered enemies. But when such necessity cries to heaven, as do the voices of the blood shed by the children of the Church, and much more loudly the blood of our high priest Christ (Heb. 12:24), trampled underfoot and polluted under various pretexts of justice, what are the most faithful children of the Church doing, the most faithful Catholics and steadfast children of this afflicted Mother? Why are they so speechless? Why do they not call upon most holy Mary? Why do they not invoke her aid and urge Her to help? What wonder if help is delayed, since we postpone seeking Her and acknowledging Her as the true Mother of God? I give witness that great mysteries are enclosed in this City of God (Ps. 86:3), and that in lively faith we must confess and extol them. They are so great that the deeper insight into them is reserved for the time after the general resurrection, when all the saints shall know them in the Most High. But until then let the pious and faithful souls acknowledge the condescension of this their most loving Queen and Lady in revealing some of the great and hidden sacraments through me, a most unworthy instrument, for I, in my weakness and insignificance, could be induced to attempt this work only by the repeated command and encouragement of the Mother of Piety, as I have intimated several times.

INSTRUCTION OF THE HEAVENLY QUEEN, OUR LADY.

414. My daughter, in the desire I manifest to thee that thou compose thy life by the mirror of mine, and for my works to be the inviolable standard of thine, I declare to thee in this History not only the sacraments and mysteries which you write, but many others which thou cannot declare or manifest; yet all of them should remain engraven in the tablets of thy heart, and by this means I renew in thee the memory of the instruction whereby thou must learn the science of eternal life, and I fulfill the office of thy Teacher. Be prompt in obeying and putting my teachings into practice as an obedient and solicitous disciple. Let the humble care and watchfulness of my spouse St. Joseph, and his submission and the esteem he had for the divine light and instruction, now serve thee as an example; for since he was found with a heart prepared and with a good disposition to fulfill with alacrity the divine will, he was entirely changed and renovated by the plenitude of grace as was suitable for the ministry to which the Most High destined him. Hence let the consciousness of thy faults serve to humble thee with submissiveness, and not hinder, under the pretext that thou art unworthy, what He desires from thee in serving Him.

415. Yet on this occasion I desire to manifest to thee a just complaint and the grave indignation of the Most High against mortals, so by the divine light thou mayest better understand thy glimpse of the humility and meekness which I exercised toward my spouse Joseph. This grievance the Lord and I have is due to the inhuman perversity of men in treating each other without charity and humility, by which they commit three sins which greatly disoblige the Most High and myself with regard to exercising mercy toward them. The first is that men, knowing they are all children of one Father who is in heaven, works of his hands (Is. 64:8), formed of one and the same nature (Acts 17:26), graciously nourished, vivified by his providence (Mt. 6:25ff.), and raised at one table of divine mysteries and Sacraments (Ps. 127:3), especially by his own body and blood, nevertheless forget and postpone remembrance of all this, passing it by for a trivial and earthly interest; and like men without reason they disturb themselves, become indignant and full of discords, disputes, betrayals and murmurings, and sometimes of wicked and inhuman vengeance, or even mortal hatred of each other. The second is, when through human frailty and lack of mortification, disturbed by the temptation of the demon, they fall into any of these sins, they do not at once seek to cast it from them and be reconciled among themselves as brothers who are in the presence of the just Judge (Mt. 18:35), but instead deny Him as their merciful Father, forcing Him to judge their sins strictly and severely, since no other sins irritate his justice more than hatred and vengeance. The third offense, which greatly outrages Him, is sometimes when someone desires to reconcile himself with his brother, he who judges himself as offended will not receive him, and asks greater satisfaction than that which he knows would satisfy the Lord (Ib. 32-3), even the satisfaction he desires to suffice for His Majesty; for they all want to be received, acknowledged and pardoned by God as contrite and humble, thus offending Him even more, while they, who are but dust and ashes, call for vengeance upon their brother, and are not satisfied with that which the supreme Lord contents Himself in pardoning them.

416. Of all the sins which the children of the Church commit, none is more abhorrent than these in the eyes of the Most High. This thou shalt know in God himself and in the force with which He imposed his divine law, commanding men to pardon their brethren though they sin against them *seventy times seven times*;^{*} and though each day there are many offenses, the Lord commands the offended brother to pardon them as many times without number. Against the one

^{*} cf. Mt. 18:22 [Ed.]

who refuses to forgive He threatens most severe punishments because they scandalize others, as can be deduced from the statement of that threat by God himself: Woe to him who scandalizes (Mt. 18:7), and through whom the scandal comes and occurs! *It were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea* (Ib. 6), which was to signify the danger of these sins and the difficulty of obtaining deliverance from them, like one who falls into the sea with a grinding stone hanged around his neck. It also signalizes the chastisement which these sins incur in the abyss of eternal pains; hence the sound counsel given to the faithful that they should rather pluck out their eyes and cut off their hands, as commanded by my most holy Son (Ib. 8-9), rather than scandalize the little ones by these sins.

417. O my dearest daughter, how thou must weep with tears of blood over the hideousness of this sin and the harm it causes! It grieves the Holy Ghost (Eph. 4:30), provides proud triumphs to the demon, makes monsters of rational creatures, and wipes out in them the image of the eternal Father. What is more incongruous, horrid and monstrous than to see an earthly man, the prey of putrefaction and worms, rise up against his fellow man in pride and arrogance! Thou shalt not find words strong enough with which to weigh this wickedness in order to persuade mortals to fear it and guard against the wrath of the Lord (Mt. 3:7). But thou, dearest, preserve thy heart from this contagion, and stamp and engrave in it a doctrine so useful and profitable in order to put it into practice. And never judge that in offending thy neighbors and scandalizing them there is little guilt, for all these sins weigh heavily in the presence of God. Place a powerful guard around all thy faculties and senses (Ps. 140:3-4) and silence them in order to rigorously observe charity with all the works of the Most High. Give me this satisfaction, since I desire thee to be most perfect in such an excellent virtue. I impose upon thee as my most rigorous precept that thou never think, speak or do anything offensive to thy neighbors; neither for any reason consent that thy subjects do this, and if thou canst any other person in thy presence. Ponder well what I ask of thee, my dearest; for this is a science most divine and little understood by mortals. Let it serve thee as a unique and efficacious remedy for thy passions, and as a compelling example, my humility and meekness, and the effect of my sincere love by which I loved not only my spouse, but all the children of my Lord and celestial Father, for I esteemed them and looked upon them as redeemed (I Peter 1:18) and *bought with a great price* (I Cor. 6:20). With truth and fidelity, kindness and charity, warn thy religious that although the divine Majesty is gravely offended by all who do not fulfill this commandment which my Son called his own (Jn. 15:12) and a new one,* his indignation is incomparably greater against religious who offend in this, for though they should be the perfect children of their Father and Teacher of this virtue (Mt. 5:48), yet there are many who destroy it just like worldly persons, becoming more odious than they are.

* cf. Jn. 13:34 [Ed.]