

## CHAPTER III

*Most Holy Mary and St. Joseph Go to Jerusalem Every Year according to the Requirement of the Law, and They Take with Them the Child Jesus.*

26. Some days after our Queen and Lady with her most holy Son and St. Joseph had settled in Nazareth, the time of the year in which the Jews were obliged to present themselves before the Lord in the temple of Jerusalem was at hand. This commandment obliged the Jews to this duty three times each year, as can be seen in Exodus (34:18ff.) and Deuteronomy (16:1ff.); however, it obliged only the men, not the women (Ex. 23:17), and therefore the women could go or not, according to their devotion, for it was neither commanded nor prohibited to them. The heavenly Lady and her spouse conferred with each other regarding what they should do in this regard. The Saint was inclined to take with him the great Queen his spouse and her most holy Son in order to offer Him anew to the eternal Father in the temple as they had always done. The most pure Mother was also drawn by her piety to worship the Lord in the temple, but since in matters of that kind She did not permit Herself to decide without the counsel and direction of the incarnate Word her Teacher, She asked his advice about this matter. They finally arranged that two times a year St. Joseph was to go to Jerusalem by himself, while on the third occasion they would go together. The Israelites visited the temple on the feast of Tabernacles (Dt. 16:13), the feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Ib. 9), and the feast of Unleavened Bread or the Pasch of Parasceve (Ib. 8); to this latter the sweetest Jesus, most pure Mary, and St. Joseph went up together. It lasted seven days, and during that time happened what I shall relate in the next chapter. For the other solemnities St. Joseph went alone, leaving the Child and the Mother at home.

27. When twice a year the holy spouse Joseph went alone to Jerusalem he made this pilgrimage for himself and his heavenly Spouse in the name of the incarnate Word, by whose doctrine and favors the Saint went filled with grace, devotion, and celestial gifts to present to the Eternal Father, along with the offering reserved for deposit in his temple. Being the substitute of the Son and Mother, who remained at home praying for him, he offered up the mysterious sacrifices of his prayers, and since he therein represented Jesus and Mary his offering was more acceptable to the eternal Father than the offerings of the whole Jewish people. But whenever he was accompanied by the incarnate Word and the Virgin Mother at the feast of the Pasch, the journey was a most wonderful one for him and for the heavenly courtiers, who as I have already recorded on similar occasions formed for them a most solemn procession. The ten thousand Angels accompanied the three pilgrims Jesus, Mary and Joseph in human forms, refulgent in their beauty and full of most profound reverence, serving their Creator and their Queen. The distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem was in the neighborhood of thirty leagues, and the holy Angels, according to the command and disposition of the incarnate Word, observed the same mode of accompaniment both in going and returning.

28. They consumed more time in these journeys than in previous ones, for after they had come back from Egypt the child Jesus desired them to journey on foot, and thus did all three travel, the Son and the most holy Parents. It was also necessary to proceed slowly, for already the child Jesus began to assume hardships in the service of his eternal Father and for our benefit. He refused to make use of his immense power for lessening the difficulties of the journey, but undertook it as a man subject to suffering, allowing all the natural causes to produce their effects, one of which was the fatigue and exhaustion caused by travel. Although in his first journey the heavenly Mother and St. Joseph eased his fatigue by sometimes carrying Him in their arms, yet

this was but a slight alleviation, and later on He always made the entire journey on foot. The most sweet Mother did not interfere since She knew his desire for suffering, but ordinarily She led Him by the hand, and sometimes this was also done by St. Joseph. Many times when the Child was fatigued and overheated the loving and prudent Mother was moved to most tender and tearful compassion. She inquired about his sufferings and fatigue, and wiped his divine face, which was more beautiful than the heavens and all its stars. She was accustomed to do this on her knees and with ineffable reverence. The divine Child would respond with much pleasure and speak of the delight with which He accepted these hardships for the glory of the eternal Father and for the good of men. With these conversations and conferences of canticles and divine praises they occupied themselves for a great part of the way, as I have already mentioned in other places (*Inc.* 627, 637).

29. At other times when the great Queen and Lady beheld on the one hand the interior activity of the soul of Christ, and on the other hand the perfection of his deified humanity, the beauty and activity of which manifested itself in the operations of divine grace and in his growth as true man, and when She pondered upon all this in her Heart (Lk. 2:19), She exercised Herself in heroic acts of all the virtues and was inflamed with divine love. She also beheld the Child as the Son of the eternal Father and as true God; without ever failing in the love of a true and natural Mother, She showed Him all the reverence due to Him as her God and Creator. All this flowed naturally from her spotless and pure Heart. Very often the wind would flutter through the hair of the child Jesus as He walked along; such little incidents were noticed by the sweetest Mother and they provided Her subjects for affectionate and sweet meditation. His hair grew to no greater length than was necessary and He lost none of it, except what the executioners tore out later on. In all her interior and exterior conduct She was wonderful to the Angels and pleasing to her most holy Son and Creator.

30. In all these journeys which the Son and Mother made to the temple they performed heroic works of charity for the benefit of souls. They converted many to the knowledge of the Lord, freed them from their sins, and justified them, leading them on the way of eternal life, though all this was done in a hidden manner since it was not yet time for Him to manifest Himself as the Teacher of truth (Jn. 12:49). Since the heavenly Lady knew such activity was enjoined upon her Son by the eternal Father, and for the present it was to remain hidden, She concurred therein as the instrument of the will of the Redeemer, though in a covered and hidden manner. In order to govern Herself according to the dictates of the highest wisdom the most prudent Lady always consulted the divine Child concerning all her doings on the way and their stopping places and lodging houses on their journey. The heavenly Princess well knew her Son prearranged the occasions for his admirable works, which He foresaw and predetermined in his wisdom.

31. Hence they passed their nights sometimes in lodging places and sometimes in the open fields, but the divine Child and his purest Mother never separated. At all times the great Lady attended upon her Son and Master, watching his actions in order to imitate and follow them in all things. The same She did in the temple, where She joined in the prayers and petitions of the incarnate Word to his eternal Father and was witness to the humble and profound reverence by which his humanity acknowledged the gifts flowing from the Divinity. A few times the Blessed Mother heard the voice of the Father saying: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Mt. 17:5). At other times She perceived and witnessed how her most holy Son prayed for Her to the eternal Father and how He offered Her to Him as his true Mother, and this knowledge was inexpressibly joyful to Her. She perceived also how He prayed for the whole human race,

offering up all his works and labors for all these ends. In these petitions and offerings She accompanied, imitated and followed Him at all times.

32. It also happened at other times the holy Angels intoned hymns of sweetest harmony in honor of the incarnate Word, as well when they entered the temple as on their journey. The most fortunate Mother saw them and listened to them, understanding all the mysteries and being filled thereby with new light and wisdom, and her most pure Heart was inflamed and blazed in divine love. The Most High showered upon Her new gifts and blessings such as my inadequate tongue cannot clothe in words; by them He prepared Her for the adversities which She was to suffer, for many times after these consolations She beheld as in a panorama all the affronts, ignominies and sufferings awaiting her most holy Son in that same city of Jerusalem. So She could already at that time see all this with so much the more vivid sorrow, He was accustomed to enter upon his prayers in the presence of his most sweet Mother; and since She gazed upon Him with the light of divine wisdom, and loved Him as her God who was at the same time her true Son, She was pierced with the sword of sorrow mentioned by Simeon (Lk. 2:35). She shed many tears in anticipation of the injuries to be borne by her most sweet Son (Is. 53:3ff), and at the thought of the sufferings and ignominious death to which He was destined (Wis. 2:20). Her soul was filled with anguish when She remembered that the beauty of the Son of God, greater than that of all men (Ps. 44:3), was to be disfigured worse than with leprosy (Is. 53:4), and that She herself was to see all this with her own eyes. In order to somewhat mitigate the sorrow the Child God was accustomed to turn toward Her, instructing Her to dilate her Heart with his charity for the human race, and together with Him to offer to the eternal Father all these sufferings for the remedy of men. Thus both Son and Mother made delightful offerings to the Holy Trinity, applying them for the benefit of the faithful and especially for the predestined who would profit by their merits and by the Redemption wrought by the incarnate Word. Principally in these occupations did most sweet Jesus and Mary spend the days of their visits to the temple of Jerusalem.

#### *DOCTRINE GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN, MARY MOST HOLY.*

33. My daughter, if with attention and profound consideration thou shalt ponder the burden of thy obligations, very light and sweet shall seem the labor with which I have charged thee in fulfilling the commandments and holy law of the Lord (Mt. 11:30). As the beginning and foundation of all Christian perfection, this must be the first step of thy pilgrimage. Yet many times I have taught thee that the fulfillment of the precepts of the Lord must not be done with tepidity and coldness, but with all fervor and devotion, because this shall move and compel thee not to content thyself only with what is common in virtue, but to press forward to many voluntary works, adding out of love what God does not impose by obligation. This is an expedient of His wisdom, in order to consider Himself obligated to his true servants and friends, as He desires to be to thee. Consider, dearest, that the way from mortal life to eternal life is long (III Kg. 19:7), painful and dangerous (Mt. 7:14): Long, because it lasts a lifetime; painful, due to the hardship; and dangerous, because of human frailty and the astuteness of the enemies. And above all this the time is short (I Cor. 7:29) and the end uncertain (Eccles. 9:2), being either very happy or most unhappy and miserable (Mt. 25:31), and the one and the other end is irrevocable (Eccles. 11:3). Since the sin of Adam the animal and earthly life of man is burdensome for all who for all who follow it (Job 7:20); the chains of the passions are strong, the warfare continual (Ib. 1); sensible pleasures are present to the senses and easily captivate them (Wis. 4:12); the

honorable is more hidden in its effects and perception; and all this together makes the success of the pilgrimage uncertain.

34. Among all these dangers not the least, due to human weakness, are those of the flesh, by which, being more continuous and enslaving, many are cast down from grace. The shortest and most secure way for thee and for all to conquer sins of the flesh shall be to take advantage of bitterness and sorrow in thy life, without allowing alleviation or pleasure of the senses; make an inviolable covenant with them (Job 31:1) that they not wander, nor incline themselves to more than the force and rule of reason permit. Above this care thou must add another, to always yearn for the greater good pleasure of the Lord, and for the ultimate end to which thou dost desire to arrive. To attain all this it is in thy best interest to attentively imitate me always, to which I call and invite thee, desiring thee to arrive at the plenitude of virtue and sanctity. Consider the punctuality and fervor with which I accomplished such works, not because the Lord commanded them of me, but because I knew it was for his greater pleasure. Multiply thy fervent works, devotions, and spiritual exercises, and in all of them thy prayers and offerings to the eternal Father for the remedy of mortals; and also help them by the example and admonitions of which thou art capable. Console the sorrowful, encourage the weak,\* help the fallen; and for all of them offer if necessary thy own blood and life. Above all this thank my most holy Son, who endures so kindly the rude ingratitude of men, without failing in his preservation and benefits. Be attentive to the invincible love He had and has for them, and how I joined Him in this charity, and still do so. I desire thee to follow thy sweet Spouse in such an excellent virtue, and also me, who am thy Teacher.

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\* cf. Is. 35:3-4 [Ed.]