

CHAPTER XXIII

The Occupations of the Virgin Mother During the Absence of Her Most Holy Son, and Her Colloquies with Her Holy Angels.

254. When the Redeemer of the world had left the bodily presence of his most loving Mother, She felt Herself as it were in an eclipse or under a shadow, caused by the transposition of the clear Sun of justice which had illumined and rejoiced Her; however, the interior gaze of her most holy soul lost not a single degree of the divine light in which it was entirely bathed and in which it was raised above the burning love of the Seraphim. Since all the operations of her faculties during the absence of the most holy humanity of her Son concerned themselves with the incomparable Divinity, She ordered all her doings so retired within her dwelling and separated from all human interaction She could apply Herself to the contemplation and praise of the Lord. She desired to give Herself up entirely to the exercise of prayer and petition so the seed of the divine word and doctrine which the Lord was to plant into the hearts of men might not be lost because of their hardness and ingratitude, and so it might not fail to give abundant fruit of eternal life and the salvation of souls. By means of her infused knowledge She knew the intentions of the incarnate Word, and therefore the most prudent Lady resolved not to converse with any human creature in order to imitate Him in his fasting and retirement in the desert, as I shall relate farther on (279), for in all things She was a living image of his works whether He was absent or present.

255. Secluded in her house during all the days in which her divine Son was absent, the heavenly Lady spent her time in exercises of devotion. Her prayers were so ardent that She shed tears of blood in weeping over the sins of men. She genuflected and prostrated Herself upon the ground more than two hundred times each day, and this was an exercise which She practiced with special earnestness during all her life as an exterior manifestation of her humility, charity, reverence, and worship of God; of this practice I shall speak many times in the course of this History (*Inc.* 180; *Cor.* 614; etc.). Thus cooperating with her absent Son and Redeemer She interceded so powerfully and efficaciously with the eternal Father that because of her merits and her presence here upon this earth (according to our way of speaking) He forgot the sins of all mortals who were then making themselves unworthy of the preaching and doctrine of his most holy Son. Hence it was most holy Mary who cleared away this hindrance by the clamors of her burning charity; She was the Mediatrix who merited and gained for us the blessing of being taught by our Lord himself and receiving the law of the Gospel from the mouth of the Redeemer himself.

256. The time which remained to the great Queen after She descended from her most exalted and eminent contemplation and petitions She spent in conferences and colloquies with her holy Angels, to whom the Lord had given anew the command to attend upon Her in bodily forms during all the time in which He was to be absent, so in that form they could serve his Tabernacle and guard the holy City of his habitation. The ministers of God obeyed most diligently and served their Queen with admirable and befitting reverence. Since love is so active and so impatient of the absence and privation of the object beloved, it finds its greatest comfort in speaking of its sorrow and rehearsing the cause of it, in renewing again and again the memory and discussing the excellences and conditions of the beloved, and by these conferences it distracts its sorrow and curbs or diverts its grief, substituting for the original the images of the well-beloved retained in the memory. Such was also the course pursued by the most loving

Mother of our truest and highest Good, for while her faculties were overwhelmed by the immense ocean of the Divinity She did not feel the bodily absence of her Son and Lord; yet as soon as She again recovered the use of her senses, which had been accustomed to his amiable presence and now found Herself deprived of it, She immediately felt the irresistible force of her most intense, chaste and sincere love, unfathomed by any creature. It would have been impossible for nature to suffer such pain and still retain life had it not in Her been divinely comforted.

257. In order to give some relief for the natural sorrow of her Heart, She turned to the holy Angels and said: "Diligent ministers of the Most High, made by the hands of my Beloved, my friends and companions, give me information about my cherished Son and Master; tell me where He is, and tell Him He is my own life and I am dying in his absence. O sweet Good and Love of my soul! Where art Thou, *beautiful above the sons of men* (Ps. 44:3)? Where dost Thou recline thy head? Where dost Thou rest thy most delicate and holy humanity from its fatigues? Who is there to attend upon Thee, light of my eyes? And how can my eyes cease their tears without the clear Sun which illumined them? Where, O my Son, canst Thou take some rest? And where shall this lonely and poor little bee find Thee? What port can this little storm-tossed ark find in solitude upon the waves of love? Where shall I find tranquility? O Beloved of my desires, to forget thy presence which gives life to me is not possible! Thus how shall I live with thy memory alone without possessing thy true presence? What shall I do? Oh! who shall console me and keep me company in my bitter solitude? Yet whom shall I seek among creatures if Thou alone art lacking to me, who art the entire and only love of my heart? Sovereign spirits, tell me what my Lord and my Beloved is doing; relate to me his exterior occupations, and hide nothing of his interior doings which are manifested to thee in the mirror of his divine being and in his face. Recount to me his footsteps so I may follow and imitate them."

258. The holy Angels obeyed their Queen, consoling Her in the sorrows of her mournful love, speaking of the Most High and repeating to Her most exalted praises of the most sacred humanity of her Son and of all his perfections. They informed Her of all his occupations, works, and the place where He then was. This they did by enlightening her understanding in the same way a higher angel is accustomed to enlighten those of an inferior order, for this was her manner of communication with the angels, unhindered by the body and without use of the senses. The heavenly spirits communicated to Her the prayers of the incarnate Word, his teachings, his visits to the poor and the sick, and other actions, so the heavenly Lady was enabled to imitate Him in all these proceedings according to her condition. She thus engaged in most excellent and magnanimous undertakings as I shall presently describe, and by this means She rested in part from her pain and sorrow.

259. She also several times sent the holy Angels to visit her sweetest Son in her name. On such occasions She gave them most prudent instructions, full of deep and reverential love, also supplying them with linen cloths and towels prepared by her own hands so they could wipe the venerable countenance of the Savior when they saw Him exhausted and covered with a bloody sweat, for the heavenly Mother knew that He was thus overcome more and more often as He approached the fulfillment of all the works of the Redemption. The holy Angels obeyed their Queen therein with incredible reverence and holy fear because they knew the Lord himself permitted it in order to yield to the ardent desires of his most holy Mother. At other times, informed by the Angels or by a special vision or revelation of the Lord, She knew of his prayers and petitions for mankind in the mountains; She would then perform the same prayers in her house in the same posture and with the same words. Sometimes when She saw the Lord of all

creation was lacking food She also sent Him by the hands of the Angels some nourishment, though this happened but rarely, for the Lord, as I have indicated in the preceding chapter (247), did not always permit his Mother to act according to the promptings of her love. Hence during the forty days of his fast She did not send any food since this was the will of the Lord himself.

260. At other times the heavenly Lady occupied Herself in composing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High; this She did by Herself or in the company of the Angels, alternating with them. All these canticles were most exalted in style and most profound in meaning. At other times She hastened to the assistance of her neighbors in imitation of her most holy Son. She visited the sick, consoled the sorrowful and afflicted, enlightened the ignorant, brought relief to them, and enriched them with divine grace and bounty. Only during the time of the great fast of our Lord did She retire and remain in her house, as I have already mentioned (279). During this retirement our Queen and Lady separated Herself from all human company, and She was favored by almost continual ecstasies in which She received peerless gifts and treasures of the Divinity, for the hand of God imprinted and painted, as upon an admirably prepared canvas, the outlines and images of his infinite perfections. All these new graces and gifts She employed in working for the salvation of men, and all her occupations and thoughts followed closely the doings of the Savior, as was appropriate for the Coadjutrix of the Lord in his labors for the Redemption of mortals. Although these benefits and this close communication with the Lord could not but bring Her a great and ever new joy and rejoicing of soul in the Holy Ghost, yet in the inferior and sensible parts of her being She experienced the pains which She had sought and asked of the Savior in union with Him and in imitation of his sufferings as related above (249). In this desire of following Him in his sufferings She was insatiable, and She besought the eternal Father for this privilege with incessant and burning love. She renewed that most pleasing sacrifice of the life of her Son and her own which She had made in accordance with the will of God, and She was consumed with the desire of suffering with her Beloved, enduring the greatest pains precisely because of the lack of such suffering.

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

261. My dearest daughter, the wisdom of the flesh has made men ignorant, foolish, and enemies of God, because it is diabolical, fraudulent, earthly (James 3:15), and *is not subject to the law of God* (Rom. 8:7). The more the children of Adam study and exert themselves in striving after the wicked goals of their carnal and animal passions, and the means to obtain them, the more they ignore the divine things of the Lord by which they can arrive at their true and last end. This ignorance and carnal prudence in the children of the Church is even more deplorable and odious in the eyes of God. By what title can the children of this world call themselves sons of God, brethren of Christ, and inheritors of his goods? The adopted son must be in all things possible similar to the natural son. A brother is not of a lineage or qualities contrary to his brother; the heir is not thus called by just any part of the goods of his father, if he does not enjoy the principal goods and inheritance. Hence how can they be heirs of Christ who love, desire and seek only earthly goods, and are satisfied with them? How can they be his brothers who deviate so widely from his standards, his teachings, and his holy law? How can they be similar and conformable to his image who blot it out so many times, and allow themselves to be sealed so many times with the image of the infernal beast (Apoc. 16:2)?

262. In the divine light thou knowest these truths, my daughter, and how I labored to assimilate myself to the image of the Most High, who is my Son and my Lord. Do not think I have given thee such exalted knowledge of my works for nothing; for my desire is for this memorial to remain written in thy heart, and this pendant always before thy eyes, and with it compose thy life and regulate thy works for the rest of thy life, which cannot be much longer. In the communication and interaction with creatures do not allow hindrances or snares to delay thee in following me; leave them alone, avoid them, and despise them insofar as they can hinder thee on thy way. In order for thee to advance in my school I desire thee to be poor, humble, despised, abased, and yet always with a cheerful heart and countenance. Do not repay thyself with the applause and affections of anyone, nor indulge human will; for the Most High does not desire thee to pay attention to anything so useless, nor occupations so base and incompatible with the state to which He calls thee. Consider with humble attention the demonstrations of love thou hast received from his hand, and that in order to enrich thee He has applied great treasures of his gifts. Lucifer and his ministers and minions do not ignore this; they are armed with rage and cunning against thee, and will leave no stone unturned in order to destroy thee. The greatest warfare shall be against thy interior, where he aims the artillery of his astuteness and sagacity. Live prepared and vigilant, and close the doors of thy senses and reserve thy will, without giving way to any human matter, however good and upright it may seem; for if in anything there is a defect in the love which God desires from thee, this little bit that you love Him less shall open a door to thy enemies. *The kingdom of God is within thee* (Lk. 17:21); possess it there, and thou shalt find it, and all the good thou dost desire. Do not forget my discipline and instruction; seal it within thy bosom, and be warned that great is the danger and damage from which I desire to withdraw thee. That thou dost participate in my imitation and image* is the greatest good thou couldst desire; and I am inclined with heartfelt clemency to grant it to thee, if thou dispose thyself with exalted thoughts, holy words, and perfect works which can raise thee to the state in which the Almighty and I desire to place thee.

* This seems to indicate what St. Louis de Montfort says in *True Devotion*, that the easiest and surest way to attain sanctity is to be *molded in her image*. [Ed.]