

CHAPTER XXII

Most Holy Mary Offers to the Eternal Father Her Onlybegotten Son for the Redemption of the Human Race; in Return for This Sacrifice He Grants Her a Clear Vision of the Divinity; She Takes Leave of Her Son as His Majesty Departs for the Desert.

240. The love of our great Queen and Lady for her divine Son must always remain the standard by which we must measure her actions as well as all her emotions either of joy or sorrow during her earthly life. But we cannot measure the greatness of her love itself, nor can the holy angels measure it, except by the love which they see in God by the beatific vision. All that can ever be expressed by our inadequate words, similes and analogies is but the least portion of what this heavenly furnace of love really contained, for She loved Jesus as the Son of the eternal Father, equal to Him in essence and in all the divine attributes and perfections; She loved Him as her own natural Son, and her only Son in the human existence formed of her own flesh and blood; and She loved Him because as man He was the Saint of saints (Dan. 9:24) and the meritorious cause of all sanctity. He was the most beautiful among the sons of men (Ps. 44:3); He was the most obedient Son of his Mother (Lk. 2:51), and her most glorious Honorer and Benefactor, since it was He who by being her Son had raised Her to the highest dignity possible among creatures. He had exalted Her among all and above all by the treasures of the Divinity, and by conferring upon Her the dominion over all creation together with favors, blessings and graces such as were never to be conferred upon any other being.

241. These motives and incentives of love were deposited and as it were comprehended in the wisdom of the heavenly Lady, together with many others which only her exalted knowledge could fathom. She had no impediment in her Heart, since it was candid and most pure; She was not ungrateful, because She was most profound in humility and most faithful in corresponding; not negligent, because She was ardent in working with grace and all its efficacy; not slow but most diligent; not careless, since She was most studious and solicitous; not forgetful, because her memory was constant and fixed in remembering benefits, reasonings, and the laws of love. In the presence of the Divinity She remained in the sphere of the fire of divine love itself, and in the school of the true God of love in company with her most holy Son, seeing his works and operations and copying that living image. Nothing was lacking to her most exquisite love to prevent Her from arriving at the manner of loving without measure. This most beautiful moon then, being at its fullness, and having gazed upon this Sun of justice with closest attention for the space of nearly thirty years; He having risen like a divine aurora to the highest height of light and to the ardent splendor of the burning love of the clearest day of grace; She having been withdrawn from all material creatures and entirely transformed in her beloved Son; having corresponded to his favors, gifts, and reciprocal love, in the height of her blessedness; at a time when the loss of all these blessings in her Son made it most arduous; She, at this very time, heard the voice of the eternal Father calling Her, as once He had called upon her prototype Abraham, to sacrifice the deposit of all her love and hope, her beloved Isaac (Gen. 22:1ff.).

242. The most prudent Mother was not unaware that the time of her sacrifice was approaching, for her sweetest Son had already entered the thirtieth year of his life, and the time and place for satisfying the debt He had assumed was at hand. Yet with the possession of the Good which made Her so blessed She was still considering its loss as far off, not having as yet experienced it. The hour therefore drawing near, She was rapt in a most exalted ecstasy and felt She was being called and placed in the royal presence of the throne of the most blessed Trinity, from whom

issued a voice which with admirable force said to Her: “Mary, my Daughter and Spouse, offer to Me thy Onlybegotten in sacrifice.” By the living power of these words came to Her the light and intelligence of the will of the Almighty, and in it the Blessed Mother understood the decree of the Redemption of man through the Passion and Death of her most holy Son, together with all that from now on would precede it by the commencing of the preaching and teaching of the Lord himself. Since this knowledge was renewed and perfected in Her, She felt her soul overpowered by sentiments of subjection, humility, love of God and man, compassion, and most tender sorrow for all her Son was to suffer.

243. Yet with a magnanimous Heart and without disturbance She responded to the Most High and said: “Eternal King and omnipotent God of infinite wisdom and goodness, all that has being outside of Thee received and possesses it from thy generous mercy and grandeur, and of all things Thou art the independent Master and Lord. How then dost Thou command me, an insignificant wormlet of the earth, to sacrifice and deliver to thy divine disposition the Son whom I have received by thy ineffable condescension? He is thine, eternal God and Father, since from thy eternity before the day star Thou hast begotten Him (Ps. 109:3; 2:7), and Thou dost engender Him and shall always engender Him for infinite ages. If I clothed Him in the form of a servant (Philip. 2:7) in my womb and from my own blood, and if I have nourished Him at my breast and ministered to Him as a Mother, yet also his most holy humanity is entirely thine, and so am I, since I have received from Thee all that I am and could give Him. Hence what is left to offer Thee that is not more thine than mine? Yet I confess, most high King, that Thou dost enrich creatures with thy infinite treasures with such magnificence and benignity that, although thy Onlybegotten is engendered of thy own substance and the light of thy divinity, Thou dost ask thy creatures to make a voluntary offering of Him to Thee in order to be obliged by it. *All good things came to me together with Him* (Wis. 7:11), and from his hands I have received immense gifts and integrity. He is the virtue of my virtue, the substance of my spirit, the life of my soul and the soul of my life, who sustains the joy in which I live. It would be a sweet offering to deliver Him solely to Thee, who alone knowest his value, but to deliver Him to the disposition of thy justice so it may be executed by the hands of his cruel enemies at the cost of his life, more precious than all the works of creation, is indeed, most high Lord, a great sacrifice which Thou askest of his Mother; yet not my will but thine be done. Let the freedom of the human race be thus bought; let thy justice and equity be satisfied; let thy infinite love become manifest; let thy Name and magnificence be known by all creatures. I deliver into thy hands my beloved Isaac, so He may be truly sacrificed. I offer the Son of my womb so according to the immutable decree of thy will He can pay the debt contracted not by his fault but by the children of Adam, and in order that all thy holy Prophets have written and declared by thy inspiration be fulfilled.”

244. This sacrifice, with all its conditions, was the greatest and the most acceptable that ever had been made to the eternal Father since the creation of the world, or ever will be made to the end, outside of that made by his own Son, our Savior; and her sacrifice was most intimately connected with and similar to that which He offered. If the greatest charity consists in offering one’s life for the beloved (Jn. 15:13), without a doubt most holy Mary far surpassed this limit and summit of love toward men, since She loved the life of her Son much more than her own. Her love for Him was without measure, since in order to preserve the life of her Son She would have died as many times as there are men, and countless more. Among men there is no measure by which to estimate the love of that heavenly Lady, and it can be estimated only by the love of the eternal Father for his Son. Just as Christ our Lord said to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:16) *God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, so*

this can also be said in its degree of the love of the Mother of Mercy, and in the same way do we proportionately owe to Her our rescue; for She also loved us so much that She gave her Onlybegotten for our remedy, and if She had not given Him in this manner when it was asked of Her by the eternal Father on this occasion, human Redemption could not have been executed by this same decree, since this decree was to be fulfilled on the condition that the will of the Mother coincide with that of the eternal Father. Such is the obligation which the children of Adam owe to most holy Mary.

245. Having accepted the offering of the great Lady, it was appropriate for the most blessed Trinity to reward and immediately recompense Her by some favor which would comfort Her in her sorrow and manifest more clearly the will of the eternal Father and the reasons for his command. Therefore to the heavenly Lady, still rapt in the same vision and raised to a more exalted ecstasy in which She was prepared and enlightened in the manner elsewhere described (*Con.* 623-6), the Divinity manifested Himself by an intuitive and clear vision; in the serenity and light of the essence of God She comprehended anew the inclination of the highest Good to communicate his infinite treasures to rational creatures by means of the Redemption to be wrought by the incarnate Word, and the glory which would result from this wonder among creatures themselves for the name of the Most High. Filled with jubilation of soul at the prospect of all these sacramental mysteries, the heavenly Mother renewed the offering of her divine Son to the Father, and the infinite power of the Lord himself comforted Her with that bread of life and understanding* so She could with invincible fortitude assist the incarnate Word in the work of Redemption as his Coadjutrix and Helper in the manner in which divine Wisdom disposed it, and as the great Lady actually carried out in all that shall be related going forward (279-80, 290, 508, 665, etc.).

246. Then most holy Mary issued forth from this exalted rapture, in the description of which I shall not further detain myself since it was accompanied by the same circumstances as the other intuitive visions already mentioned. By its effects and the strength imparted through it She was now prepared to separate from her divine Son, who then resolved to depart for his Baptism and fasting in the desert. His Majesty therefore called Her and spoke to Her as a most loving Son and with demonstrations of most sweet compassion, saying: "My Mother, the being I have as a true man I received entirely from thy substance and blood, from which I have taken the form of a servant in thy virginal womb (Philip. 2:7); then Thou didst raise Me at thy breast and nourish Me by thy labor and sweat. For these reasons I acknowledge Myself more thy Son and thy own than any other has or shall acknowledge himself as the son of his mother. Give Me thy permission and consent to go to accomplish the will of my eternal Father. Already the time has arrived in which I must leave thy delightful and sweet company and begin the work of human Redemption. The time of rest has come to an end, and now the hour to commence suffering for the rescue of the children of Adam has arrived. Yet I desire to perform this work of my Father with thy assistance, and in it Thou art to be my Companion and Coadjutrix, taking thy part in my Passion and Cross. Although I am now forced to leave Thee alone, my eternal blessing shall remain with thee, along with my careful, loving and powerful protection. I shall afterwards return so Thou mayest assist and accompany Me in my labors, since I am to undergo them in the form of man which Thou hast given Me."

247. With these words the Lord placed his arms around the neck of his most tender Mother, both of them shedding many tears with incomparable majesty and gentle composure as Masters

* cf. Mt. 4:4 [Ed.]

in the science of suffering. The heavenly Mother knelt, and with incomparable sorrow and reverence responded to her most holy Son, saying: "My Lord and eternal God, Thou art my true Son, and for Thee is employed all the love and powers I have received from Thee, and my inmost soul is open to thy divine wisdom. My life would be a small sacrifice in order to preserve thine, if it was appropriate for me to die for Thee many times; yet the will of the eternal Father and thy own must be fulfilled, and for this I offer and sacrifice my own will. Receive it, my Son and Master of all my being, as an acceptable offering and sacrifice, and may thy divine protection never fail me. It would be a much greater torment for me to see Thee suffer without accompanying Thee in thy labors and cross; merit for me this favor, my Son, and I ask it of Thee as thy true Mother in return for the human form which I gave Thee and in which Thou shalt suffer." The most loving Mother also besought Him to take along some food from the house, or that He allow it to be sent to where He was to go, but the Savior would not accept this alleviation, giving light to his Mother regarding what was suitable for the occasion. They went together to the door of their poor house, where for a second time She knelt before Him and asked his benediction and kissed his feet. The divine Master gave Her his benediction and then began his journey to the Jordan, going forth as the Good Shepherd to seek his lost sheep and bring them back on his shoulders (Lk. 15:5) to the way of eternal life from which they had strayed by deceit and error (Ps. 118:176).*

248. On this occasion, when our Redeemer went to be baptized by St. John, He had already entered his thirtieth year, although not much of it had yet passed, since He went directly to the banks of the Jordan where St. John was baptizing (Mt. 3:13), and He received Baptism at his hands about thirteen days after He had finished the twenty-ninth year of his life, on the same day as is set aside for its celebration by the Church. I cannot worthily describe the sorrow of most holy Mary at his departure, nor the compassion of the Savior for Her. All appreciation and reasonings are far too inadequate to manifest what passed in the Hearts of the Son and Mother; since this was to be part of their meritorious sufferings it was not appropriate for the natural effects of their mutual love to be diminished. God permitted these effects to work in them to their full extent and as far as was compatible with the sanctity of both Mother and Son. Neither did our divine Teacher moderate this sorrow in hastening his steps to seek our remedy, driven by the force of his immense charity, nor was the thought of what He intended a lessening of the sense of loss which She sustained at his departure, for all this only made more certain and more conspicuous the torments which He was to undergo. O my dearest Love! Dost Thou not know the ingratitude and hardness of our hearts which Thou shalt encounter in meeting us? Why does the being of man, unprofitable[†] for Thee, and still more his rude correspondence, not detain Thee? Without us, O eternal Good and my life, Thou wouldst be just as happy as with us, just as infinite in perfections, sanctity and glory; we can add nothing to that which Thou hast in Thyself, since Thou art entirely independent of creatures. Why then, O my Love, dost Thou so anxiously seek us out and care for us? Why dost Thou, at the cost of thy Passion and Cross, purchase our happiness? Without doubt it is because thy incomprehensible love and goodness esteem it as thy own, and we alone insist in treating our own happiness as alien to Thee and to ourselves.

* cf. also Is. 53:6 [Ed.]

† cf. Lk. 17:10 [Ed.]

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

249. My daughter, I desire thee to ponder and penetrate more the mysteries of which thou hast written, raising them in thy estimation for the good of thy soul, and attaining in some part the imitation of me. Thus take notice that in the vision of the Divinity which I had on this occasion, which thou hast described, I knew in the Lord the value which his most holy will places upon the labors, Passion and Death of my Son, and upon all those who were to imitate and follow Him on the Way of the Cross. Knowing this I not only offered Him of my own will to deliver my Son over to his Passion and Death, but I implored the Most High to make me his companion and participant in all his sorrows and sufferings, and his entire Passion, and the eternal Father granted it to me. Then I besought my Son and Lord to immediately deprive me of his interior delights, beginning to follow his footsteps in bitterness; and this petition was inspired in me by the Lord himself because He desired it, and love taught me and urged me to it. These yearnings for suffering, and the desire given me by His Majesty as my Son and my God, directed me to desire labors; and since He loved me so tenderly He granted them to me, for those whom He loves He chastises and afflicts (Prov. 3:12). As his Mother He did not want me to lack this benefit and excellence of being entirely similar to Him in what He valued most in human life. Immediately this will of the Most High, and my desire and petition, was fulfilled in me, and I was deprived of the favors and delights I was accustomed to receive, and from then on He did not treat me with such endearment; and this was one of the reasons why He did not call me Mother, but Woman, at the wedding at Cana and at the foot of the Cross (Jn. 2:4; 19:26), and on other occasions when He tried me by this severity, denying me words of endearment. So far was this from being a sign of disaffection, that it was rather the greatest refinement of love to make me his likeness in the sufferings which He chose for Himself as a legacy and precious treasure.

250. From this thou shalt understand the common ignorance and error of mortals, and how far they stray from the way and the light, when in general nearly all of them labor in order not to labor, and suffer in order not to suffer, and abhor the royal and secure Way of the Cross and mortification. By this dangerous deceit they not only abhor resemblance to Christ their Exemplar and mine, and deprive themselves of this, the true and highest good of human life, but together with this they render their remedy impossible, since all of them are sick and afflicted by many sins, and their medicine must be suffering. Sin is committed with deliberative delectation, and is excluded by penal suffering, and in tribulation the just Judge pardons them. By suffering bitterness and afflictions the foments of sin are restrained; the disordered impulses of the concupiscible and irascible passions are crushed; pride and haughtiness are humbled; the flesh is subdued; the pleasure of evil, sentient and earthly, is turned away; the judgment is undeceived; the will is moderated; all the powers of the creature are reduced to reason; and above all, divine love is moved to compassion for the afflicted who embrace sufferings with patience, or who seek them with the desire to imitate my most holy Son. In this science of suffering is compiled all the good fortune of the creature; those who flee from this truth are insane, and those who ignore this science are fools.

251. Therefore labor, my dearest daughter, to advance thyself in this science, and exert thyself to go forth to meet the cross of sufferings, and give up ever allowing human consolations. And so thou mayest not stumble and fall in spiritual consolations, I warn thee that the demon also conceals in them a snare against the spiritually inclined, which thou cannot ignore; for as the pleasure of the contemplation and vision of the Lord is so sweet and appealing, and his caresses

(great or small) result in such delight and consolation for the faculties of the soul, some souls tend to accustom themselves to it in its sensitive aspect so much that they become as it were inept regarding other occupations necessary for human life, even though they are duties of charity and proper treatment of creatures. When they have an obligation to attend to these duties, they inordinately afflict themselves and disturb themselves by impatience, lose peace and interior control, become sad, intractable, and full of weariness with their fellow companions, without true humility or charity; and when they come to sense their own harm and restlessness, they immediately lay the blame on their exterior occupations in which the Lord has placed them for the exercise of their obedience and charity, refusing to recognize and confess that the guilt consists in their lack of mortification and submission to what God orders, and in being attached to their own pleasure. All this deceit the demon hides under the color of the good intention of their tranquility and retirement, and their interaction with the Lord in solitude; for in retirement it seems to them there is nothing to fear, that all is good and holy, and that harm results to them from being prevented from doing what they desire in solitude.

252. Thou hast sometimes incurred this fault, and I desire thee from now on to be aware of it, since for all things there is a time (as the Wise Man says), a time to enjoy embraces and a time to abstain from them (Eccles. 3:5). To determine designated times for intimate treatment from the Lord for the pleasure of the creature is the ignorance of the imperfect and beginners in virtue, and the same is true for those who feel too deeply the lack of the divine regalements. I do not tell thee by this counsel to willfully seek distractions and exterior occupations, nor to find in them thy contentment, for this is dangerous, but rather to obey with equanimity when thy superiors command such labors of thee, and leave the Lord in thy enjoyment in order to find Him in useful labor and in the good of thy neighbor; this must supersede thy solitude and the hidden consolations thou dost receive in it. For these reasons alone I do not desire thee to love them too much, because in the proper solicitude of a superior thou shalt know how to believe, hope and love with refinement. In this way thou shalt find the Lord in all times, places and occupations, as thou hast experienced. I desire thee never to take leave of his most sweet vision and presence, and his most affable conversation, childishly ignoring that outside of seclusion thou canst find and enjoy the Lord; for *all the earth is full of his glory** (Ecclus. 42:16), and there is no void, and in His Majesty thou dost live, and move, and exist (Acts 17:28). When He does not oblige thee to these exterior occupations, enjoy thy desired solitude.

253. All this thou shalt better understand in the nobility of the love which I desire of thee for the imitation of my most holy Son and of me. With Him thou must sometimes rejoice in his youth; sometimes accompany Him in procuring the eternal salvation of men; sometimes imitate Him in withdrawing into his solitude; sometimes be transfigured with Him to a new creature; sometimes embrace with Him tribulations and the cross, following his ways and the doctrine which as the divine Master He taught by them; in a word, I desire thee to understand how in me there was the most exalted imitation or intention to imitate Him always in all his works; this was my greatest perfection and consummate sanctity, and in this I desire thee to follow me insofar as thy weak forces assisted by grace can attain. In order to do this thou must first die to all the attachments of a daughter of Adam, without reserving to thyself the choice whether to desire or not to desire, to admit or reject anything for this or that reason; for thou dost not know what is suitable for thee, and thy Lord and Spouse, who knows it and loves thee more than thou lovest thyself, desires to take care of it, if thou shalt resign thyself entirely to his will. He gives thee

* cf. Is. 6:3 [Ed.]

permission only to love Him and to desire to imitate Him in suffering, since in other undertakings thou shalt withdraw from his pleasure and mine, which will occur by following thy own will, and the inclinations of thy desires and appetites. Cut them off and sacrifice them all, raise thyself above thyself, and place thyself in the exalted and eminent habitation of thy Master and Lord; attend to the light of his influences and the truth of his words of eternal life (Jn. 6:69). And so thou mayest obtain them, take up thy cross (Mt. 16:24), follow in his footsteps, walk in the odor of his ointments (Cant. 1:3), and be importunate until thou hast obtained Him, and possessing Him do not let Him go (Ib. 3:4).