

CHAPTER IX

Christ our Savior Parts from His Most Holy Mother in Bethany in order to Go to His Sufferings on the Thursday of the Last Supper; the Great Lady Asks to Partake of Holy Communion when It is Instituted, and Follows Christ to Jerusalem with Magdalen and Other Holy Women.

430. In order to continue the discourse of this History let us return to the Savior of the world in Bethany, where He had returned accompanied by his Apostles after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In the preceding chapter we anticipated the course of events in relating what was undertaken by the demons before the betrayal of Christ, and what resulted from the infernal consultation, the treachery of Judas, and the council of the Pharisees. We will now take up the thread of events in Bethany, where the great Queen attended upon and served her divine Son during the three days intervening between Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday. All this time, except what was spent on Monday and Tuesday in going to Jerusalem and teaching in the temple, the Author of life spent with his heavenly Mother, for on Wednesday He did not go to Jerusalem as I have already said (424). On these last journeys He instructed his disciples more clearly and fully concerning the mysteries of his Passion and human Redemption; nevertheless, although they listened to the teachings and forewarnings of their God and Master, each one was affected by them only insofar as his disposition allowed and according to the motives and sentiments of his heart. They were always tardy in their response, and in their weakness they fell short of their protestations of zealous love as the events afterwards showed and as we shall see later on.

431. In those days immediately preceding his Passion our Savior conversed with his most blessed Mother and communicated such exalted sacraments and mysteries of human Redemption and the new law of grace that many of them shall remain hidden until revealed in the beatific vision, and of those which I have understood I can say very little. Yet into the most prudent Heart of our great Queen her Son deposited all that David calls uncertain and hidden of his wisdom (Ps. 50:8), namely the greater part of the secrets of his works *ad extra*, such as our reparation, the glorification of the predestined, and by them the exaltation of his holy Name. His Majesty instructed the most prudent Mother in all She was to do during his Passion and Death, and illumined Her anew with divine light. In all these conferences her most holy Son spoke to Her with a new and kingly reserve such as was in harmony with the greatness of the matter at hand, for now the tenderness and caresses of a Son and Spouse had entirely ceased; and since the natural love of the sweetest Mother and the burning charity of her most pure soul had now reached a degree above all comprehension of the human mind, and as the conversation and interaction with her divine Son was now drawing to a close, no created tongue can describe the tender and mournful affections of that most candid Heart and the sighs of her inmost soul. She was like the mysterious turtledove which already began to feel that solitude which no creature of heaven or earth could ever recompense.

432. Thursday, the eve of the Passion and Death of the Savior, had arrived. Before dawn the Lord called his most beloved Mother; She responded prostrate at his feet, as was her custom, and said: "Speak, my Lord and Master, for thy servant heareth." Her most holy Son raised Her from the ground where She had remained prostrate and spoke to Her with great love and serenity, saying: "My Mother, the hour decreed by the eternal wisdom of my Father for the work of human Redemption and salvation, and entrusted to Me by his most holy and acceptable will, has

now arrived. It is reasonable that our sacrifice, which we have so many times offered to fulfill, be now executed. Give Me thy permission to enter upon my suffering and death for men, and for their good, as a true Mother, consent that I deliver Myself over to my enemies in obedience to my eternal Father, and in this same obedience do Thou also willingly cooperate with Me in this work of eternal salvation, since I have received from Thee in thy virginal womb the form of a passible and mortal man in which I am to redeem the world and satisfy divine justice. Just as Thou of thy own free will didst give the *fiat* for my Incarnation (Lk. 1:38), so now I desire Thee to give consent also for my Passion and Death of the cross. To sacrifice Me of thy own free will to my eternal Father shall be the return I ask of Thee for having made Thee my Mother, since He has sent Me so by means of the passibility of my flesh I can recover the lost sheep of his house, the children of Adam” (Mt. 18:11).

433. These and other reasonings of our Savior pierced the most loving Heart of the Mother of life, and cast Her into the throes of a sorrow greater than She had ever suffered before, because now that hour had arrived in which her sorrowing grief found no appeal, neither to time nor to another superior tribunal above the effective decree of the eternal Father which destined the date for the death of his Son. When now the most prudent Mother looked upon Him as her God, infinite in his attributes and perfections, and as the true Godman in hypostatic union with the Person of the Word, and beheld Him sanctified and ineffably exalted by this union with the Divinity, She remembered the obedience He had shown Her as his Mother during so many years, and the favors He had conferred upon Her during his long interaction with Her; that soon She was to be deprived of them and of the beauty of his countenance and the vivifying sweetness of his words; and that She was not only to lose this all at once, but even beyond this She herself was to deliver Him over into the hands of such wicked enemies, to ignominies, torments, and the bloody sacrifice of the death of the cross. How deeply must all these considerations and circumstances, now so clearly before her mind, have penetrated into her tender and loving Heart and filled it with a sorrow immeasurable! But with the magnanimity of a Queen, overcoming her invincible sorrow, She prostrated Herself at the feet of her divine Son and Master, and in deepest reverence, kissing his feet, answered:

434. “Lord and God most high, Author of all that has being, I am thy slave, though Thou art the Son of my womb, since the condescension of thy ineffable love has raised me from the dust to the dignity of being thy Mother; it is reasonable that this vile wormlet acknowledge and thank thy liberal clemency by obeying the will of the eternal Father and thy own. I offer myself and resign myself to his divine satisfaction in order that in me as in Thee, my Son and Lord, be fulfilled his eternal will and pleasure. The greatest sacrifice which I could offer shall be not to die with Thee and that these lots be not exchanged, for to suffer in imitation of Thee and in thy company would be a great alleviation of my pains, and all torments would be sweet if undergone in union with thine. Accept my sorrow in not being able to alleviate the torments which for human salvation Thou shalt suffer. Receive, O my Good, the sacrifice of my desires, and that I shall remain alive while seeing Thee die, Thou who art the most innocent Lamb and figure of the substance of thy eternal Father (Heb. 1:3). Receive also the sorrow in seeing the inhuman cruelty of the sins of the human race executed upon thy most honorable Person by the hand of thy cruel enemies. O ye heavens and elements and all creatures within them, ye sovereign spirits, ye holy Patriarchs and Prophets, help me all of ye to mourn the death of my Beloved who gave thee being, and bewail with me the wretched misery of the men who shall be the cause of this death, and afterward lose eternal life which Thou shalt merit for them, for they shall not avail themselves of such a great benefit! O unhappy reprobate, and O happy predestined, who shall

wash their stoles in the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 7:14)! Ye who knew how to take advantage of this good, praise the Almighty. O my Son and infinite Good of my soul, give fortitude and strength to thy afflicted Mother, and admit her as thy disciple and companion so she may participate in thy Passion and Cross, and so the eternal Father may receive the sacrifice of thy Mother in union with thine.”

435. With these and other expressions of her sentiments, which I cannot all record in words, the Queen of heaven answered her most holy Son, and offered Herself as the Cooperatrix and Coadjutrix of our Redemption. Being thoroughly prepared with the knowledge She would need regarding all the mysteries which the Master of life would work to accomplish the Redemption, She sought permission to propose another desire and petition. His Majesty giving permission, the most pure Mother said: “Beloved of my soul and light of my eyes, I am not worthy, my Son, of that which my heart longs to ask Thee; yet Thou, O Lord, art the life of my hope, and in this faith I beseech Thee, if it shall serve Thee, to make me a participant in the ineffable Sacrament of thy sacred body and blood, since Thou hast resolved to institute it as a pledge of thy glory, and so again possessing Thee within me Thou mayest communicate to me the effects of such a new and admirable Sacrament. Well do I know, my Lord, that no creature can merit or be worthy of such an exquisite benefit, which Thou hast prepared above all thy works through thy magnificence alone; and in order to oblige Thee I have nothing else to offer Thee except thy own Self with thy infinite merits. And if thy most holy humanity to which these merits are linked, and which Thou hast received in my womb, engenders a certain right for me, this shall not be so much in making Thee mine in this Sacrament as making me thine by this new possession which restores to me thy sweet company. I have dedicated my works and desires toward this most honorable and divine Communion from the hour in which thy condescension gave me notice of its institution* and of thy will and decree to remain in the holy Church under the species of consecrated bread and wine. Do Thou then, my Lord and my Good, return to the first and former habitation of thy Mother, thy friend and thy slave, whom in order to receive Thee in her womb Thou didst free and exempt from the common contagion of sin. Then shall I receive within my bosom the humanity which I have communicated to Thee from my own blood, and in it we shall be united in a new and close embrace which shall encourage my heart and inflame my affections, and thus shall we be united in a renewed and close embrace so I may never be separated from Thee, who art the infinite Good and Love of my soul.”

436. Many words of incomparable love and reverence were spoken on this occasion by the great Lady, since She spoke with her most holy Son with admirable affection of her Heart, beseeching from Him participation in his sacred body and blood. His Majesty likewise responded with great tenderness, granting her petition by offering to give Her the favor and benefit of Holy Communion when the hour of its institution would arrive. Having been granted her petition the purest Mother from that time on, with renewed devotion, made magnificent acts of humility, gratitude, reverence, and living faith in order to dispose and prepare Herself for the desired Communion of the Holy Eucharist. What happened at her Holy Communion I shall describe later (486).

437. The Savior commanded the holy Angels of her guard to attend upon Her in visible forms and serve and console Her in her sorrow and loneliness, and they complied most faithfully with this command. The Lord also expressed his desire that after his departure for Jerusalem with his disciples She follow shortly after in company with the holy women who had accompanied them

* cf. par. 124 above [Ed.]

from Galilee, and instruct and encourage them so they might not be scandalized in seeing Him suffer the great ignominies and torments of the frightful death of the cross. Closing this conference the Son of the eternal Father gave his blessing to his beloved Mother and prepared to enter upon that last journey which would lead to his suffering and death. The sorrow which filled the Hearts of both Son and Mother surpasses all conception of man, for it was proportioned to the love they had for each other, and this love again was proportioned to the dignity and greatness of the persons concerned. Yet though we can so little describe it in words, we are not free to exempt ourselves from meditating upon it and following them on their sorrowful journey with the deepest compassion, for if we neglect to do so as far as our strength and ability permit we cannot avoid being reprehended as hardhearted ingrates.

438. Our Savior, having thus parted with his most beloved Mother and sorrowful Spouse, and taking along with Him all his Apostles, a little before midday of the Thursday of the Last Supper, departed on his last journey from Bethany to Jerusalem. At the first steps His Majesty took on this journey (which was to be the last of his earthly pilgrimage) He raised his eyes to the eternal Father, and confessing Him in words of gratitude and praise again professed his most ardent love, and most lovingly and obediently offered to suffer and die for the Redemption of the entire human race. This prayer and sacrifice of our Savior and Master sprang from such ineffable love and ardor of his spirit that it cannot be described; all I could say of it seems to me rather a gainsaying of the truth and of what I desire to say. “Eternal Father and my God (said Christ our Lord), I go by thy will and love to suffer and die for the liberty of men, my brethren and the creatures of thy hands. I deliver Myself up for their remedy and to gather into one fold* those who have been scattered and divided by the sin of Adam (Jn. 11:52). I go to prepare the treasures by which the souls created in thy image and likeness are to be adorned and enriched in order to restore them to the dignity of thy friendship and eternal happiness, and so thy holy Name be known and magnified by all creatures. As far as shall depend upon Thee and Me no soul shall remain without a most abundant remedy, and thy inviolate equity shall stand justified in those who despise this copious Redemption.”

439. Following the Author of life the most blessed Mother then departed Bethany in the company of Magdalen and the other holy women who had attended upon and followed Christ our Savior from Galilee. In the same manner as the divine Master instructed his Apostles and prepared them for his Passion so they might not waver due to the ignominies they were to witness and the temptations of Satan they were to encounter, so also the Queen and Mistress of all virtues exerted Herself in consoling and preparing her holy congregation of disciples for witnessing courageously the frightful scourging, torments and death of their divine Master. Though because of their feminine nature these women were naturally more frail and weak than the Apostles, yet some of them showed much more fortitude in adhering to the teachings and relying on the previous exhortations and examples of their great Mistress and Lady. Among them all St. Mary Magdalen distinguished herself, as the Evangelists relate (Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; Lk. 24:10; Jn. 19:25), for she was entirely consumed in the flames of her love, and even by her own temperament she was magnanimous, courageous and vigorous, of high moral character and respected. Before all others of the apostolate she had taken it upon herself to accompany the Mother of Jesus and attend upon Her during the entire Passion, and this she fulfilled as a most faithful friend.

* cf. Jn. 10:16 [Ed.]

440. In the prayer and offering which our Savior made on this occasion his most holy Mother imitated and joined Him, for all the works of her most holy Son were reflected in the clear mirror of that divine light by which She knew them in order to imitate them, as I have many times related (*Inc.* 481, etc.). Her holy Guardian Angels, obeying the orders of the Savior, accompanied and attended upon Her in visible forms. With these sovereign spirits She conferred about the great sacrament of the Passion of her most holy Son, which could not be perceived by her companions or any human creatures. The holy Angels well perceived and deeply pondered the measureless conflagration of love in the pure and candid Heart of the Mother, and the force with which they saw Her drawn after the sweet ointments of mutual love (*Cant.* 1:3) between Herself and Christ, her Son, Spouse and Redeemer. They presented to the eternal Father the sacrifice of praise and expiation offered to Him by his firstborn and only Daughter among the creatures. And since all mortals were ignorant of this benefit and of the debt in which they were placed by the love of Christ our Lord and his most holy Mother, the Queen ordered the holy Angels to give benediction, glory and honor to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and they eagerly fulfilled everything according to the will of their great Princess and Queen.

441. Words fail me, along with worthy sentiments of sorrow, for expressing properly what I understood on this occasion concerning the amazement of the holy Angels, when on the one hand they saw the incarnate Word and his most holy Mother wending their way in most ardent love of mankind toward the accomplishment of the Redemption of man, and on the other beheld the vileness, ingratitude, neglect and callousness of these very men in recognizing this debt and obliging themselves to make a proper return for this benefit which would have moved even the demons if they were capable of receiving it. The amazement of the Angels arose not from any ignorance on their part, but from indignation at our unbearable ingratitude. I am but a weak woman and less than a wormlet of the earth, yet in the light which has been given me concerning this matter I wish to raise up my voice so it may be heard through all the world and rouse the children of vanity and lovers of deceit (*Ps.* 4:3) to a sense of their obligation toward Christ and his holy Mother. Prostrate on my face I implore all of us to not be so heavy of heart and such cruel enemies toward ourselves, that we shake ourselves from this lethargy in which we are so forgetful that it buries us in the danger of eternal death, and separates us from the celestial life and eternal happiness merited for us by Christ our Redeemer and Lord by such a bitter death of the cross.

INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE MOST HOLY QUEEN MARY.

442. My daughter, anew I call and invite thee so that, enlightened with special gifts of the divine light, thou mayest enter into the profound ocean of the mysteries of the Passion and Death of my most holy Son. Prepare thy faculties and exert all the strength of thy heart, so in some way thou mayest be worthy to know, ponder and feel the ignominies and sorrows the Son of the eternal Father himself deigned to suffer, humbling Himself unto death on a cross in order to redeem men, and also all I did and suffered accompanying Him in his most bitter Passion. This science, so forgotten by mortals, I desire thee, my daughter, to study and learn in order to follow thy Spouse and imitate me, who am thy Mother and Teacher. Both writing and feeling what I shall teach thee of these sacraments, I desire thee to divest thyself of all human and earthly affection and from thy own self, so removed from the visible thou mayest poor and destitute follow our footsteps. And because I now with special grace call thee aside for the fulfillment of the will of my holy Son and mine, and through thee we desire to teach others, it is necessary for

thee to consider thyself obligated to correspond with this copious Redemption as if it was for thy benefit alone, and as if it would be lost if thou dost not take advantage of it. This is how much thou must appreciate it; for with the love with which my most holy Son suffered and died for thee (Gal. 2:20), He looked upon thee with as much affection as if thou alone needed his Passion and Death for thy remedy.

443. By this standard thou must measure thy obligation and thy gratitude. And knowing the serious and dangerous forgetfulness there is in men regarding such an extreme benefit as having their God and Creator made man Himself die for them, do thou seek to recompense Him for this injury by loving Him in the name of all, as if the repayment of this debt depended solely upon thy gratitude and fidelity. Do thou likewise grieve over the blind imbecility of men in despising their eternal happiness and amassing the wrath of the Lord against themselves, frustrating the fondest affections of his infinite love for the world. For this reason I grant thee to know so many secrets and the sorrow without equal* I suffered from the hour my most holy Son departed from me to go to his sacred Passion and Death. There are no terms with which to describe the bitterness of my soul on that occasion; yet in view of it thou shalt not consider any hardship great, nor be able to crave rest or earthly delight, and only yearn to suffer and die with Christ. Have compassion for me, for thou owest me this faithful correspondence for having favored thee.

444. I also desire thee to notice how abhorrent in the eyes of the Lord, in mine, and in all the Blessed, is the forgetfulness and contempt of men regarding frequent reception of Holy Communion, and in not coming to it with proper disposition and fervent devotion. So thou mayest understand and record this warning I have manifested to thee what I did, disposing myself for so many years for the day when I could approach to receive my most holy Son sacramentally (124-5), and the rest which thou shalt write hereafter for thy instruction and confusion (486; *Cor.* 109, 583); for if I, who was innocent of any fault which could hinder me, and so full of all grace, sought to add new dispositions of fervent love, humility and gratitude, what should thou and the other children of the Church do, who each day and hour incur new faults and defects, in order to approach to receive the beauty of the very divinity and humanity of my most holy Son and my Lord? What excuse can men give at the Last Judgment, having had with them God himself sacramentally present in the Church, waiting for them to come to receive Him in order to fill them with the fullness of his gifts, yet have despised this ineffable love and benefit by busying themselves and amusing themselves in worldly pleasures, and serving manifest and deceitful vanity? Be astonished (as the Angels and Saints are) at such insanity, and guard thyself from falling into it.

* cf. Lam. 1:12 [Ed.]