

CHAPTER V

Most Holy Mary Returns from Ephesus to Jerusalem, Called by the Apostle St. Peter; She Continues the Battle with the Demons; She Suffers Great Hardships at Sea; and Stating Other Mysteries in Connection with These Events.

456. With the just chastisement and condemnation of the wretched Herod the primitive Church of Jerusalem recovered some measure of relief and tranquility for many days, the great Queen of the world meriting and earning all of this by her supplications, works, and solicitude of a Mother. During this time St. Barnabas and St. Paul preached with admirable fruit in the cities of Asia Minor, Antioch, Lystra, Perge, and many others, as related by St. Luke in chapters XIII and XIV of the Acts of the Apostles, accompanied by the miracles and prodigies performed by St. Paul in those cities and provinces. St. Peter the Apostle, after his liberation from prison, fled from Jerusalem and withdrew to a part of Asia in order to leave the jurisdiction of Herod and come to the aid of the new faithful who had been converted in Asia, as well as those who remained in Palestine. All of them acknowledged and obeyed him as the Vicar of Christ and head of the Church, believing that all he ordained and enacted upon earth was confirmed in heaven.* With this firm faith they came to him with all their doubts and difficulties as to their supreme Pontiff. Among other matters they gave him notice of the questions brought to St. Paul and St. Barnabas by some of the Jews in Antioch and Jerusalem regarding the observance of circumcision and the law of Moses, as I shall relate later on (496) and which is referred to by St. Luke in chapter XV of the Acts of the Apostles.

457. On this occasion the Apostles and disciples of Jerusalem begged St. Peter to return to the holy city in order to settle these controversies and establish order so the preaching of the faith would not be hindered, for since the death of Herod the Jews had no one to assist them in their persecutions, and thus the Church enjoyed greater peace and tranquility in Jerusalem. They also asked him to urge the Mother of Jesus to return to Jerusalem for the same reasons, where the faithful longed for Her with heartfelt affection, and by her presence would be consoled in the Lord and all matters pertaining to the Church would prosper. Because of these appeals St. Peter resolved to return at once to Jerusalem, and before setting out he wrote the following letter to the most holy Queen.

LETTER OF ST. PETER TO MOST HOLY MARY

*“To the Virgin Mary, Mother of God:
Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ, thy servant and the servant of the servants of God.”*

458. “Lady, among the faithful some doubts and differences have arisen concerning the doctrine of thy Son and our Redeemer, and if along with it the ancient law of Moses is to be kept. They desire to know from us what is proper, and that we state to them what we heard from the mouth of our divine Teacher. In order to consult with my brethren the Apostles I am now departing for Jerusalem, and we beseech Thee, for the consolation of all and by thy love for the Church, to return to that city, where the Hebrews, after the death of Herod, are more peaceful

* cf. Mt. 16:19 [Ed.]

and the faithful live in greater security. The multitude of the followers of Christ desire to see Thee and console themselves with thy presence. When we arrive in Jerusalem we shall notify the other cities, and with thy assistance establish what shall be proper in the matters concerning the holy faith and the excellence of the law of grace.”

459. This was the tenor and style of the letter which was commonly observed by the Apostles, writing first the name of the person or persons to whom they were writing, then mentioning the writer, or inversely as is apparent in the Epistles of St. Peter, St. Paul, and the other Apostles. To call the Queen *Mother of God* was agreed among the Apostles after they had composed the Creed, and in speaking of Her they used indiscriminately the term Virgin or Mother because it was important for the Holy Church to establish in the hearts of all the faithful the doctrine of the virginity and maternity of this great Lady. Some of the other faithful called Her *Mary of Jesus*, or *Mary of Jesus the Nazarene*; others less significantly called Her *Mary, the daughter of Joachim and Anne*. Such were the titles given to our Queen by the faithful in their conversation. The holy Church, preferring the names given to Her by the Apostles, calls Her Virgin and Mother of God, and to these it has added other titles still more illustrious and mysterious. A messenger brought the letter of St. Peter to the heavenly Lady, and in giving it to Her he mentioned it was from the Apostle. She received it on her knees out of reverence for the Vicar of Christ, and kissed it; but She would not open it since St. John was in the city preaching. As soon as the Evangelist returned She as usual asked his benediction on her knees (368) and handed him the letter, telling him it was from St. Peter, the Pontiff of all. St. John asked Her what it contained, but the Mistress of all virtues answered: “Do thou, master, first read it, and then tell me what it contains.” This the Evangelist proceeded to do.

460. I cannot restrain my wonder and confusion at the humility and obedience manifested by most holy Mary in a matter which seems of small importance, for only her heavenly prudence could inspire Her, the Mother of God, with the thought that it would be more humble and submissive not to read this letter of the Vicar of Christ except in the presence and under the obedience of the one to whose guidance She had submitted Herself as her superior. Her example reproves and stigmatizes the presumption of inferiors who try to find excuses and pretenses for evading the humility and obedience due to their superiors, whereas most holy Mary was always a teacher and model of sanctity, whether in small matters or those of greater importance. Having read the letter to Her he asked Her what She thought best to write to the Vicar of Christ; yet also in this She did not desire to give any appearance of her being his equal or superior, preferring to obey, and therefore She answered: “My son and master, do thou ordain whatever shall be most proper, for here is thy servant ready to obey.” The Evangelist said it seemed right to him to obey St. Peter and return immediately to Jerusalem. Most pure Mary responded: “It is just and a duty,” responded most pure Mary, “to obey the head of the Church; let us arrange for immediate departure.”

461. With this determination St. John immediately went out to seek passage for Palestine and prepare whatever was necessary for a speedy departure. In the interim, at the request of the Evangelist, most holy Mary called together the women who were her acquaintances and disciples in Ephesus in order to bid farewell to them and leave them instructions in what they must do to persevere in the faith. There were seventy-three of them, many of them virgins, most notably the nine mentioned above (445) who were saved from the destruction of the temple of Diana. These and many others most holy Mary herself had converted and catechized in the faith, and formed of them a community in the house where She lived in Ephesus with the women who had given Her hospitality in it. Through this congregation of women the heavenly Lady had begun to

compensate for the sins and abominations which for so many ages had been committed in the temple of Diana, giving a beginning to the observance of chastity in community life in that very city of Ephesus where the demon had profaned it. Of all this these women were informed, though they did not know the great Lady had destroyed the temple of Ephesus; it was proper to guard this secret so the Jews would not have cause against the merciful Mother, nor the gentiles become outraged against Her due to their insane love of Diana. Hence the Lord provided that the ruin of the temple be looked upon as an accident and be soon forgotten, and thus the secular authors wrote nothing about it, though they had written about the burning of the first temple.

462. Most holy Mary spoke to these women, her disciples, in most sweet words in order to console them in her absence. She left them a paper upon which She had written with her own hand: "My daughters, by the will of the Lord almighty I am obliged to return to Jerusalem. In my absence keep present the doctrine which you have received from me and which I heard from the mouth of the Redeemer of the world. Recognize Him always as your Lord, your Master, and the Spouse of your souls, serving Him and loving Him with all your heart. Keep in mind the commandments of his holy law and the instructions which his ministers and priests shall give you, whom you must hold in great veneration. Obey their orders with humility, without hearing or accepting other teachers who are not disciples of Christ my most holy Son, followers of his doctrine. I shall always take care that they assist and protect you, and I shall never forget you or cease to commend you to the Lord. In my place shall remain Mary the Elder; obey her in all things, respecting her and loving her, and she will care for you with the same love and vigilance as I have done. Observe inviolate retirement and recollection in this house, and no man shall ever enter it. If necessity compels you to speak to anyone it shall be in the portal in the presence of three of your number. Your prayer shall be continual and in private, reciting and singing those I have left you written in my chamber. Observe silence and meekness, and do not do anything to your neighbors which you would not wish done to yourselves. Always speak the truth, and keep Christ crucified continually present in all your thoughts, words and actions. Adore Him and confess Him as the Creator and Redeemer of the world, and in his name I give you his blessing, and I beseech Him to assist you in your hearts."

463. These and other exhortations most holy Mary left for the congregation which She had dedicated to her Son and true God. The one She had appointed their superior was one of the pious women who had offered hospitality to Her and who owned the house. This woman was well able to govern, for she had conversed at length with the Queen and had been well informed concerning the law of God and its mysteries. She was called Mary the Elder because the heavenly Lady had given her own name to many others in Baptism, communicating without envy (as the Wise Man says [Wis. 7:13]) the excellence of her name; and since this Mary was the first thus baptized in Ephesus she was called Mary the Elder to distinguish her from the later ones. The Blessed Mother also left them in writing the Our Father, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, together with other prayers which they were to recite vocally. To encourage them in these and other exercises She also left them a large cross made quickly at her request by the hands of the Angels and set up in her oratory. Besides all this, as a kind Mother, and in order to bind them to Her still more, She distributed the things in her possession, which although of trifling human value were nevertheless rich and inestimable to them as being pledges and proofs of her maternal love.

464. She bid farewell to all with much compassion upon leaving them alone, having engendered them in Christ. They all prostrated themselves at her feet with great weeping and abundant tears, for now they were to lose in one moment the consolation, refuge and joy of their

hearts. Yet due to the care which the Blessed Mother always had for her devout congregation all seventy-three afterwards persevered in the fear of God and the faith of Christ our Lord; however, the demon raised up violent persecutions against them and against the inhabitants of Ephesus. Foreseeing this the prudent Queen fervently prayed for them before leaving, asking her divine Son to guard and preserve them and appoint some Angels for the defense of this small flock. The Lord granted all of these petitions, and She afterwards often consoled them by sending exhortations from Jerusalem and charging the disciples and Apostles who journeyed to Ephesus to watch over these virgins and retired women. The great Lady continued this loving care during her whole life.

465. The day arrived to depart for Jerusalem, and the Humble among the humble asked St. John for his blessing, and with it they left together to embark on the ship, having remained in Ephesus two and a half years. At their departure from their dwelling all her thousand Angels manifested themselves in visible human forms; however, all of them were armed for battle and formed into squadrons. This new sight was a warning which gave Her to understand She must prepare Herself to continue the conflict with the great dragon and his allies. And before She arrived at the sea She saw a great multitude of the infernal legions who came to Her in hideous and various shapes, all of great terror; in the midst of them came a dragon with seven heads, so horrible and monstrous as to exceed the size of a large ship, and so fierce and abominable as to cause torment by its mere presence. Against these formidable hosts the invincible Queen fortified Herself by the most fervent faith and charity, with the words of the Psalms, and with the sayings from the mouth of her most holy Son. She ordered her holy Angels to assist Her, for such hideous figures naturally caused some sensible fear and dread. The Evangelist knew nothing of this conflict until the heavenly Lady afterwards informed him and gave him insight into it.

466. Her Highness embarked with the Saint and the ship's sails were set. But it had proceeded only a short distance from the port when those dragons of hell, making use of the permission given to them, stirred up the sea by such a tempest as had never been seen before that time nor until now, for the Almighty desired to exalt the power of his arm and the sanctity of Mary, and hence He permitted such liberty to the malice and powers of the demons in this battle. The waves rose with terrible howlings, piling themselves upon the winds and seemingly even upon the very clouds, forming with them mountains of water and foam as if they were preparing for an onset to break the bounds of the abysses which imprisoned the ocean (Ps. 103:9). The ship was lashed and battered to and fro, and it seemed a miracle it was not shattered to splinters at each shock. Sometimes it was hurled up into the clouds, at others sent to plow up the sand of the ocean's abysses; often its sails and masts were buried in the foaming waves. During some of the onsets of this unspeakably furious hurricane the ship was held in the air by the Angels in order to save it from some of the vaster billows which would inevitably have overwhelmed it and sent it to the bottom.

467. The mariners and passengers perceived the effects of this assistance yet remained ignorant of the cause; in their distress they were beside themselves, bemoaning their ruin which they deemed inevitable. The demons added to this affliction, for assuming human shapes they shouted with loud voices as if from the other ships travelling in convoy on this journey, urging those who were on the ship upon which the great Lady was to forsake their ship and save themselves in the others; for though all the vessels suffered in this storm, yet the wrath of the demons and their power of doing harm was confined principally to the ship upon which their Enemy sailed, and the distress and peril of the other vessels was not so great. The malicious designs of the demons were known only to most holy Mary and not to the sailors, and hence they believed these voices

were those of true passengers and sailors; thus deceived, they at times gave up caring for their own ship and left it to the fury of the sea, expecting to save themselves on one of the other ships, but the Angels supplied their place, directing and steering it when the sailors gave it up in despair to the destruction of the waves.

468. In the midst of such confusing tribulation and weeping most holy Mary was in extreme tranquility, serenely borne up by the ocean of her magnanimity and virtue, while at the same time practicing all the virtues by acts heroic in proportion to the exigencies of the occasion and the dictates of her wisdom. Since during this tempestuous voyage She personally experienced the dangers of navigation which She had understood on her former voyage by divine inspiration, She was moved to new compassion for all voyagers at sea and renewed her former prayers and petitions (371). The most prudent Virgin also admired the indomitable forces of the sea and was led to consider the wrath of divine justice, so well represented by this insensible creature; and passing from these considerations to that of the sins of mortals, who drew such wrath upon themselves from the Almighty, She entered into most ardent prayers for the conversion of the world and the increase of the Church. For this She offered up the hardships of this voyage, since notwithstanding the tranquility of her soul She suffered much in her body, yet incomparably more knowing all those who were there were being persecuted by the demon because they were afflicting and persecuting Her.

469. A large share of this tribulation fell to the evangelist St. John due to his deep solicitude for his true Mother and the Mistress of the world. To this pain was added that which the Saint himself suffered because of his own hardship. All this was so much the more dreadful to him because at that time he did not know what was passing in the interior of the most blessed Virgin. He sought a few times to console Her and console himself by assisting and comforting Her. Although the voyage from Ephesus to Palestine usually lasted six days or a little more, this one lasted fifteen, of which fourteen were tempestuous. One day St. John was very much afflicted at the continuance of such a measureless hardship, and no longer able to restrain himself he said "My Lady, what is this? Are we to perish here? Beseech thy most holy Son to look upon us with the eyes of a Father and defend us in this tribulation." Most holy Mary answered him: "Do not be disturbed, my son, since it is time to fight the battles of the Lord and overcome his enemies by fortitude and patience. I shall beseech Him that no one travelling with us perish, and that *He neither slumber nor sleep who keepeth Israel* (Ps. 120:4). The strong ones of his court assist us and defend us; let us suffer for Him who placed Himself upon the Cross for the salvation of all." By these words St. John received the new strength he needed.

470. Lucifer and his demons with increasing fury threatened the powerful Queen by telling Her She would perish in this torment and be freed from the sea; but these and other threats were but spent arrows and the most prudent Mother despised them, not even listening to them, or looking upon the demons, or speaking to them a single word. They themselves on the other hand could not bear even to glance at her face due to the virtue of the Most High shining from it (449), and the more they strove to overcome this virtue the weaker they became and the more they were tormented by those offensive weapons with which the Lord had clothed his most holy Mother. But in all of this protracted conflict He concealed from Her his purpose and also his countenance, never showing Himself to Her in visions as had been usual.

471. But on the fourteenth day of this tormenting voyage her divine Son deigned to descend from the heights and visit Her in person, appearing to Her upon the sea, saying: "My dearest Mother, I am with thee in tribulation." This vision and the words of the Lord, though ineffably consoling on all occasions, were even more estimable to the most blessed Mother in this

tribulation, because help is more welcome in necessity. She adored her Son and God and answered: "My God and only Good of my soul, Thou art He whom the winds and the sea obey (Mt. 8:27). Behold, my Son, our affliction; let not the works of thy hands perish." The Lord said to Her: "My Mother and my Dove, from Thee I received the form of man I possess; hence I desire all my creatures to obey thy rule. Command them as the Mistress of all, for they are subject to thy will." The most prudent Mother had desired the Lord to command the waves on this occasion as He had done in the storm which overtook the Apostles on the sea of Galilee (Ib. 26); however, the situation was different, since at that time there was no one else but He to command the winds and the sea. Most holy Mary obeyed, and by the power of her most holy Son She first commanded Lucifer and his hosts instantly to leave the Mediterranean sea and cease to harass it; immediately they fled in the direction of Palestine, for at that time She had not commanded them to hell, not wishing to put an end to the battle. The enemies having retreated, She commanded the sea and the winds to be calm. They immediately obeyed, becoming tranquil and serene in the shortest space of time to the great astonishment of the passengers, who knew not the cause of this sudden change. Christ our Savior left his most holy Mother, having filled Her with blessings and joy, and told Her to disembark the next day. Thus it also happened, for on the fifteenth day after their departure they arrived happily at port and left the ship. Our Queen and Lady rendered gratitude to the Omnipotent for these benefits and offered Him songs of thanksgiving and praise for having saved Her from the dreadful dangers. The Evangelist also joined in this, and the heavenly Mother thanked him for having accompanied Her in her hardships. She asked for his blessing, and then they both set out for Jerusalem.

472. The holy Angels accompanied their Queen and Lady in battle array as I have said, for the demons also wished to continue the battle as soon as She reached the shore where they awaited Her. With incredible fury they led on the assault by suggesting various temptations against all the virtues. But all their darts fell back upon themselves; they could make no breach in this Tower of David (Cant. 4:4), of which the Spouse says *a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men*, and of the wall that it is built with *bulwarks of silver* (Ib. 8:9). After arriving in Jerusalem the Heart of the great Lady was drawn to the Holy Places consecrated by our Redemption, yearning to visit them before going to her house, which was also the last thing She had done on leaving the city; but since St. Peter was waiting, at whose call She had returned, and as She knew the proper order to be maintained in all the virtues, She preferred obedience to the Vicar of Christ to her private devotions. Thus She went directly to the house of the Cenacle, where St. Peter was then staying, and falling on her knees before him She asked for his blessing and begged his pardon for not having complied sooner with his command. She sought his hand in order to kiss it as that of the High Priest, yet She did not lay the blame for her delay on the storm, nor did She mention any other circumstance as an excuse; only from the accounts furnished to him afterwards by St. John did St. Peter learn of the hardships encountered on the voyage. The Vicar of Christ our Savior and all the disciples and faithful of Jerusalem received their Teacher and Lady with indescribable joy, reverence and love, and they prostrated themselves at her feet, thanking Her for having come to fill them with gladness and consolation and live where they could see and serve Her.

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

473. My daughter, I desire thee to continually renew in thy memory the exhortation I have given thee from the beginning in writing these venerable secrets of my life; for it is not my will

for thee to be only an insensible instrument for manifesting them to the Church, but rather I desire thee to be the one who first and foremost attains the perfection of this new benefit, practicing within thyself my instruction and the example of my virtues. For this purpose the Lord has called thee, and I have chosen thee as my daughter and disciple. And because of the worthy observation thou hast made regarding the humility I showed in not opening the letter of St. Peter without the consent of my son St. John, I desire to manifest to thee in more detail the doctrine contained in what I did, giving thee notice that in these two virtues, humility and obedience, which are the foundation of Christian perfection, there is nothing small, and all works done through them are most pleasing to the Most High, and have copious reward from his generous mercy and justice.

474. Therefore be aware, my dearest, that just as for human nature no effort is more strenuous than for one person to subject his will to that of another, yet nothing is more necessary than this in order to bend his haughty neck, which the demon seeks to raise up in all the children of Adam. For this reason the enemies work with highest vigilance to make men cling to their own opinion and will; by this deceit the demon gains many triumphs, and destroys innumerable souls in diverse ways, because in all states and conditions of mortals he spreads this poison of pride, secretly urging everyone to follow his own opinion, so no inferior and subordinate will subject himself to the will and laws of his superior, but rather to despise and break them, perverting the order of divine Providence, which arranges all things in good order.* And because all of them destroy this government of the Lord, the world is filled with confusion and darkness, disturbing all things, each one governing himself by his own whim, without attention or respect for God and his laws.

475. Yet although this damage is widespread and odious in the eyes of the supreme Governor and Lord, it is of much greater weight in religious, who being bound by the vows of religion go about struggling to loosen these bonds or free themselves from them. And I am not now speaking of those who boldly break them, and violate their vows in small or in great matters; this is tremendous temerity, and brings with it the sentence of eternal condemnation. In order to keep away this danger, I warn those who in the religious state desire to assure their salvation to guard themselves from seeking opinions or declarations by which to lessen or loosen the obedience they have vowed and owe to God in their superiors, examining it and their other vows to find out how far they can go without committing sin in doing the will of the superior, and whether they can dispense with little or much without permission and according to their own judgment. These attempts are never made in order to keep their vows but to break them, without listening to their conscience which bothers them. I warn them that the demon seeks to get them to swallow these poisonous gnats, so little by little they come to swallow the camels of greater sins,† after becoming accustomed to those which seem minor. Those who always want to reach the brink of the death of mortal sin by pulling at the rope of their binding vows, at the very least deserve afterwards to have their consciences examined and scrutinized by the just Judge in order to reward them as little as possible, just as they have desired and studied all their lives to do for God as little as possible to oblige Him.

476. These tendencies to seek extensions in the law of God, which only serve for pleasure and for the flesh, are very abominable to my most holy Son and to myself; for it is a great lack of love to obey the divine law because one cannot do otherwise, in such a way that one labors only

* cf. Wis. 11:21 [Ed.]

† cf. Mt. 23:24 [Ed.]

out of fear of punishment and not out of love for the one who commands, and hence nothing would be done if there was no threat of punishment. Many times in order for the subject not to humble himself before the immediate superior, he has recourse to the higher authority, and sometimes with only general information, and asks permission from one who is less able to know and understand the danger of the one who asks. It cannot be denied this is still a type of obedience; yet it is also certain that all these circumventions are done in order to act with more liberty and incur danger, with less merit; for without doubt there is greater merit in obeying and subjecting oneself to the inferior authority, who is less conditioned and accommodated to one's own opinion and liking. In the school of my most holy Son I learned not to seek dispensation, nor did I utilize them in my works, for in all things I sought the permission of those I held as superiors, and was never without them (as thou hast known); hence for opening and reading the letter of St. Peter, who was the head of the Church, I waited for the will of his inferior, who was my more immediate superior.

477. I do not desire thee, my daughter, to follow the tendencies of those who seek freedom and permissions to their liking; rather, I choose thee and urge thee to imitate me, and follow the perfect and secure path of perfection. Seeking dispensations and exemptions has perverted the state of religious and Christian life. Thou must always humble thyself and live subject to obedience, and not excuse thyself from this because thou art a superior, for thou hast thy confessors and superiors. If at any time they are absent and thou cannot act under their obedience ask counsel, and obey one of thy subjects or inferiors in office. For thee all of them must be superiors; and let this not seem too much for thee, since thou art the least of the human born, and must put thyself in this lowest place, humbling thyself before all, in order to be my true imitator, daughter and disciple. In addition to this thou must be punctual in telling me thy faults twice each day, ask my permission for all it is necessary for thee to do, and then go to Confession each day for the faults thou hast committed. I shall admonish thee and command thee in what is proper for thee, both through myself and through the ministers of the Lord; and thou must not hesitate to tell many of thy ordinary faults, so in everything and with everyone thou dost humble thyself before the eyes of the Lord and in my eyes. This science, hidden to the world and the flesh, I desire thee to learn and teach to thy nuns. In teaching it to thee I desire to reward thee for thy labor in writing my Life, giving thee these revelations of such important instruction in order for thee to understand that if thou art to labor in imitation of me as thou shouldst, thou must not communicate, or speak, or work, or write, or receive a letter, or move, or have any thought (if possible) except in obedience to me and to those who govern thee. Worldly and carnal men call these virtues irrelevant and ceremonial; but such prideful ignorance shall have its chastisement when in the presence of the Judge truths shall be revealed.* Then shall be seen who were the ignorant and the wise, and those shall be rewarded who as true servants have been faithful in small and in greater things (Mt. 25:21); and when there is no remedy left, the foolish ones shall know the damage wrought by their carnal prudence.†

478. And because it has awakened in thee a certain emulation in knowing that I myself governed that congregation of women gathered at Ephesus, I advise thee not to have it. Remember that thee and thy nuns have chosen me for thy Superioress and special Patroness so I can govern thee as Queen and Lady; and I desire them to understand that I have accepted this office, and have constituted myself as such forever, with the condition that they be perfect in

* cf. Lk. 12:2 [Ed.]

† cf. Wis. 5:3-5 [Ed.]

their vocation, and very faithful to their Master, my most holy Son, who chose them as his spouses. Remind them often of this, that they may be wary and retire from the world, and despise it with all their hearts; that they may stay recollected and preserve themselves in peace, and not fall away from being my daughters; that they follow and execute the instruction which I have given for thee and for them in this my History, esteeming it with highest veneration and gratitude, writing it in their hearts; for bestowing upon them my Life, written by thy hand, for their model and the government of their souls, I am fulfilling the office of Mother and Superior, so as subjects and daughters they may follow my footsteps, imitate my virtues, and correspond to my fidelity and love.

479. Another important instruction is contained in this chapter, which is that those who obey poorly immediately become upset, afflicted and disturbed when some adversity happens in what has been commanded of them; and in order to justify their impatience they will blame the one who commanded it, and discredit him, either with his superiors or others, as if he who commands was obliged to ward off the unexpected happenings affecting the subordinate, or had in his control the government of all things in the world in order to arrange them to the liking of the subordinate. This deception veers so far from the truth that many times, in reward for submissive obedience, God himself places adversities in the way, so the one who obeys may increase his merit and crown; at other times it happens that He punishes him for the repugnance with which he obeyed grudgingly; and for none of these things is the superior to be blamed. The Lord said simply: He who hears you and obeys you, hears and obeys Me (Lk. 10:16). The labor resulting from obedience is always for the benefit of the obedient; and if it does not profit him, it is not the fault of the one who commands. I made no complaint to St. Peter for commanding me to come from Ephesus to Jerusalem, though I suffered so much on the journey; on the contrary, I asked his pardon for not having fulfilled his command more promptly. Never be grievous or burdensome for thy superiors, for this is very hideous autonomy, and destroys the merit of obedience. Look upon them with reverence, as one who takes the place of Christ, and the merit of obeying them shall be copious. Follow my footsteps, my example, and my instruction, and thou shalt be perfect in all things.