

CHAPTER XII

How Most Holy Mary Celebrated Her Immaculate Conception and Nativity, and the Benefits which She Received on Those Days from Her Son and Our Savior Jesus.

611. All the offices and titles of honor which most holy Mary held in the Church, that of Queen, Lady, Mother, Governess, Mistress, and the rest, were given to her by the Omnipotent not as empty titles like those given by men, but with the plenitude of superabundant grace required by each title and which the Almighty could communicate to Her. This plenitude consisted in this, that as Queen She knew all that concerned her reign and its extent; as Lady She knew from whence came her dominion; as Mother She knew all her children and domestics of her household, without any being hidden from Her in any succeeding age of the Church; as Governess She knew all for which She was responsible; and as Teacher full of all wisdom She was fully capable of all the knowledge with the holy Church in all times and ages, through her intercession,* was to be instructed and taught by the Holy Ghost, who was to guide and govern the Church until the end of the world.

612. Hence our great Queen had a clear knowledge not only of all the Saints who preceded or followed Her in the Church, their lives, works, death, and rewards they attained in heaven, but together with this She had knowledge of all the rites, ceremonies, decisions and feast days which in the course of the ages the Church would ordain, and the reasons, motives, necessities and opportune times in and for which they were to be established with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, who gives us spiritual nourishment in the time most suitable for the glory of the Lord and the increase of the holy Church. Since I have spoken of this matter in the course of this History, especially in the second Part (*Tran.* 23, 78), I need not repeat it here. Yet in the plenitude of this knowledge and the sanctity which corresponded to it there arose in the heavenly Instructress a holy emulation of the gratitude, worship, veneration and remembrance which the Angels and Saints had in the triumphant Jerusalem, desiring to introduce all of it into the Church Militant so as far as possible the faithful on earth could imitate all She had so often seen done in heaven for the praise and glory of the Most High.

613. In this more than Seraphic spirit She began to practice by Herself many of the ceremonies, rites and practices which were afterwards introduced in the Church, and these She also inculcated and impressed upon the Apostles so they could introduce them as far as the circumstances then allowed. She not only invented the exercises of the Passion, of which I have spoken above (577), but many other customs and actions which were later on practiced in the temples, congregations, and religious orders, for whatever She knew pertained to the worship of the Lord or the practice of virtue She performed, and being so wise She was ignorant of nothing that ought to be known. Among the exercises and rites She invented was the celebration of the feasts of the Lord and of Herself, in order to renew the memory of the benefits for which She stood indebted, not only those relating in general to the human race but especially those referring to Herself, thus striving to render gratitude and adoration for all. Although She had spent her whole life in this pursuit without relaxation or forgetfulness, yet when She entered upon this new and mysterious phase of her life She prepared to signalize these feast days by celebrating them with exercises founded on a deeper insight. Since I shall speak of the other feast days in the

* cf. Ecclus. 24:46 [Ed.]

following chapters, I shall here describe only how She celebrated her Immaculate Conception and Nativity, the first mysteries of her life. These commemorations or feasts She had begun to celebrate since the Incarnation of the Word, yet She celebrated them especially after the Ascension, and more so in the last years of her life.

614. On the eighth day of December each year She celebrated her Immaculate Conception with singular joy and gratitude beyond all appraisal, for this privilege was for the great Queen of the highest estimation and appreciation, and She imagined Herself the least capable of corresponding to it with the gratitude due to it. She began her exercises on the evening before and spent the entire night in admirable devotions, shedding tears of joy, humbling and prostrating Herself, and singing the praises of the Lord. She deeply reflected how She was formed of the same earth and descended from Adam according to the common order of nature, yet only She was chosen, set apart, and among all others preserved from the common law,* exempted from the heavy tribute of guilt, and conceived with such plenitude of gifts and grace. She invited her Angels to help Her be grateful, and with them alternated new canticles which She composed. She then asked the same favor of the rest of the angels and saints in heaven; yet all this happened in such a manner that She was so inflamed with divine love that it was necessary for the Lord to console Her lest the radical humors of her Heart be consumed and death ensue.†

615. After She had spent nearly the entire night in these exercises Christ descended from heaven, and the Angels raised Her to his royal throne and carried Her to the empyrean heaven where the celebration of the feast was continued with new rejoicing and accidental glory of the courtiers of the heavenly Jerusalem. There the most blessed Mother prostrated Herself and adored the most holy Trinity, again giving thanks for the benefit of her immunity from sin and her Immaculate Conception. Then She again took her place at the right hand of Christ her Son, and the Lord himself as it were acknowledged the goodness of the eternal Father in having given Him a Mother so worthy and so full of grace, exempt from the common guilt of Adam. Anew the three divine Persons confirmed upon Her this privilege, as it were ratifying and approving it and pleasing Themselves in thus having distinguished Her among all creatures. In order to give repeated testimony to this truth a voice proceeded from the throne in the name of the Father, saying: “*How beautiful are thy steps, O Prince’s Daughter* (Cant. 7:1), conceived without the stain of sin.” Another voice, that of the Son, said: “Most pure and without the contagion of guilt is my Mother, who gave Me the form in which to redeem man.” And the Holy Ghost said: “*Thou art all fair, my Spouse, Thou art all fair* and without stain of the common guilt” (Ib. 4:7).

616. While these voices spoke were heard the choirs of all the angels and saints, singing in sweetest harmony: “Mary most holy, conceived without original sin.” To all these honors the most prudent Mother answered by gratefulness, worship and praise of the Most High, rendered with such profound humility that it surpassed all angelic understanding. In order to conclude the solemnity She was raised to the beatific vision of the most holy Trinity, and after enjoying this glory for some hours She was brought back by the Angels to the Cenacle. This was the manner in which her Immaculate Conception was solemnized after the Ascension of her divine Son. Now this feast is celebrated in a different manner, as I shall describe in another book which I have been ordered to write concerning the holy Jerusalem, the Church Triumphant, if the Lord shall concede this grace to me. This feast and others She began to celebrate from the time of the Incarnation, for finding Herself to be the Mother of God She began to renew the benefits She had

* cf. Esther 15:13 [Ed.]

† cf. *Coronation* 741 [Ed.]

received because of this dignity; thus She kept these feast days with her holy Angels, and by the worship and thanksgiving She gave to her own Son, from whom She had received such graces and favors. The rest of her devotions She offered in her oratory upon returning from heaven were of the same kind as I have related at other times after other similar favors (4, 388, etc.), for in all of them did her admirable humility grow.

617. The feast of her Nativity She celebrated on the eighth of September, the day on which She was born. She began the evening before with the same prostrations and canticles as at the feast of her Immaculate Conception. She gave thanks for having been born to life into the light of this world, and for the favor of having been raised to heaven at the hour of her birth to look upon the Divinity intuitively, as I have narrated in the first Part of this History (*Con.* 330, 332). She resolved anew to spend her whole life in fulfilling the pleasure of the Lord, acknowledging that for this purpose alone life was given to Her. Although in the first beginning and entrance into her life She had surpassed in merits the highest Saints and Seraphim, toward the end of her life She resolved to begin to labor anew as if She was just beginning the practice of virtue, and anew She asked the Lord to assist Her, govern Her in all her actions, and lead Her to the highest end proposed for his glory.

618. As for the rest concerning this feast, though She was not raised to heaven as on the day of her Immaculate Conception, yet her divine Son descended from heaven with many choirs of Angels, with the Patriarchs and Prophets, and with St. Joachim, St. Anne, and St. Joseph. With this company Christ our Savior descended in order to celebrate the Nativity of his Blessed Mother upon earth; and this purest of creatures, in the presence of that celestial company, adored the Lord with wonderful reverence and worship, and again expressed her grateful acknowledgment for having been placed upon the earth and for the benefits connected therewith. Then the Angels did the same, and sang *Nativitas tua Dei Genetrix Virgo*,* etc., which means: Thy birth, O Virgin Mother of God, announced to all the universe a great joy, for of Thee was born the Sun of justice, Christ our God. The Patriarchs and Prophets also sang their canticles of glory and thanksgiving, as well as Adam and Eve, because the Reparatrix of the damage they had wrought was born, and the Parents and Spouse of the Queen, because they had been given such a Daughter and Spouse. Then the Lord himself raised the divine Mother from the ground upon which She lay prostrate and placed Her at his right hand, and there new mysteries of the Divinity were manifested to Her. This vision, though not intuitive but abstractive, gave Her a still deeper insight and participation in the Divinity.

619. By these unspeakable favors She was transformed anew in her most holy Son, inflamed and spiritualized in order to labor for the Church, as if for a new beginning. On these occasions the Evangelist St. John merited some measure of participation in the feast, for he heard some of the music of the Angels and was privileged to offer Mass while the Lord and the Angels were present in the oratory, and gave Holy Communion to the great Queen while Jesus her Son, whom She was receiving sacramentally, was Himself at her side. These spectacles were the source of new joy to the Saints, who also served as witnesses to this Communion, more worthy than was ever seen since Christ lived, or ever shall be seen upon earth. Upon receiving Holy Communion her divine Son remained with the great Lady in sacramental form, while in his glorious and natural form He ascended to heaven. O hidden marvels of the divine omnipotence! If with all the saints God manifests Himself as great and wonderful (Ps. 67:36), what would He have done with his worthy Mother, whom He loved above all, and for whom He had reserved the great and

* cf. 2nd Vespers of Sept. 8, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Antiphon at the Magnificat* [Ed.]

special manifestations of his wisdom and power? Let all the creatures confess Him and give Him glory, power and magnificence.

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

620. My daughter, the first instruction relating to this chapter I desire to be a response to a misgiving which I recognize in thy heart regarding such lofty and singular mysteries which thou dost write in this History. Two concerns have assaulted thy interior. The first is if thou art a suitable instrument for recording these mysteries, or whether it would be better for some other person more wise and perfect in virtue to write them, who would give them more authority, since thou art the least of all, the most useless and ignorant. The second doubt is whether those who read these mysteries shall give them credibility, since they are very rare and unheard of, particularly the beatific and intuitive visions of the Divinity which I had so many times in mortal life. To the first of these doubts I answer that thou dost acknowledge thyself as the least and most useless of all; for thou hast heard it from the mouth of the Lord, and I confirm it to thee, and thus thou must understand it. Yet be aware that the credibility of this History, and all that it contains, does not depend upon the instrument but upon its Author, who is the highest Truth,* and upon what it contains in itself, which thou hast recorded; and in this regard not even the most supreme Seraphim could add anything, nor canst thou detract from it or diminish it.

621. It was not appropriate for an Angel to write this History; yet if he would the incredulous and slow of heart would still find a way to slander it. It was necessary for the instrument to be a human person; yet it was not proper for this person to be the most learned or wise, to whose knowledge it could be attributed, or equated with the divine light, or even considered less, or attributed to human thought and ingenuity. It is to the greater glory of God that this person be a woman, who could not have recourse to her knowledge or her own ingenuity.† I also take special glory and pleasure in this, and that thou art this instrument; for thou and all others shall know there is nothing of thy own in this History, and thou cannot attribute more to thyself than to the pen with which thou writest, since thou art only an instrument of the hand of the Lord and the manifester of my words. And because thou art so lowly and a sinner, do not fear that mortals will deny me the honor which they owe me; for if anyone does not give credibility to what thou writest, they shall not give offense to thee, but to me and to my words. Even though thy faults and sins are many, all of them can be extinguished by the charity of the Lord and his immense kindness, who for this History has not desired to choose another greater instrument, but has raised thee from the dust and manifested in thee his generous power, utilizing thee in whom the truth and efficacy which the doctrine this History contains in itself can be better known; and hence I desire thee to imitate it and practice it in thyself, and become what thou dost desire.

622. To the second doubt and concern thou hast, whether others shall give credibility to what thou writest due to the greatness of these mysteries, I have largely responded throughout the entire course of this History. Whoever shall attain a worthy concept and appreciation of me shall find no difficulty in believing me, since he shall understand the proportion and correspondence which all the benefits of which thou writest have to the dignity of Mother of God, to which they all correspond; for the works of His Majesty are perfect, and if anyone doubts in these matters it

* cf. Jn. 14:6 [Ed.]

† cf. I Cor. 1:27 [Ed.]

is certain he does not know what God is or what I am. And if God has manifested Himself so powerful and generous in the rest of the Saints, many of whom in the opinion of the Church have seen the Divinity in mortal life, and it is certain they have seen Him, how or on what basis can that be denied to me what is conceded to others so inferior to me? All that my most holy Son merited for them, and the favors He granted them, were ordained for his glory, and after that for my glory. The end is more esteemed and loved than the means to attain it; therefore greater was the love which inclined the divine will to favor me than all the rest, whom He has benefited because of me. It is no wonder that what God did one time for them He did many times for the one He chose for his Mother.

623. The pious and the prudent already know, and it has been taught in the Church, that the rule by which to measure the favors I received from the right hand of my most holy Son is his omnipotence and my capacity; for He granted me all the graces which He could confer upon me, and which I was capable of receiving. These graces were in me not idle, but always fruitful to the fullest extent possible in a mere creature. The Lord himself was my Son, and powerful to operate where the creature placed no obstacle; and since I placed no such obstacle, who would dare to limit his works and the love He had towards me his Mother, whom He himself made worthy of his benefits and favors above all the rest of the Saints, not one of whom deprived himself as I did of enjoying Him in the beatific vision, even for one hour, in order to help his Church? And if everything else He did for me seems much, I desire thee and everyone else to understand that all his benefits were founded upon and included in creating me conceived without sin; for it was greater to make me worthy of his glory when I could not merit it, than to manifest to me his glory when I had merited it, and was without any impediment to receive it.

624. By these explanations thy misgivings shall be overcome, and the rest remains my responsibility; thine is to follow me and imitate me, since for thee this is the purpose of all thou dost understand and write. This must be thy concern, resolving not to omit the practice of any virtue known to thee, or any labor in executing it. And for this I desire thee also to pay attention to what other Saints who have followed my most holy Son and me have done; for thou dost not owe less than they owed to his mercy, and with none have I been more merciful and generous. In my school I desire thee to learn the love, gratitude and humility of a true disciple of mine; for in these virtues I desire thee to distinguish thyself and make great progress. All my feast days thou must celebrate with heartfelt devotion, and invite the Saints and Angels to assist thee in this, and especially the feast of my Immaculate Conception, in which I was so favored by the divine power, and took so much joy in this benefit; and now I have a particular desire for men to acknowledge it, and praise the Most High for this rare miracle. On the day of thy own birth into the world render particular gratitude to the Lord in imitation of me, perform something special in his service, and above all thou must resolve from that day to amend thy life, and begin anew to labor in this; and all mortals should act likewise, and not use the remembrance of their birthdays in vain demonstrations of earthly joy.