

CHAPTER XVIII

How the Desires and Longings of Most Holy Mary to See God Increased during Her Last Days; She Takes Leave of the Sacred Places and of the Catholic Church; She Makes Her Testament Witnessed by the Most Holy Trinity.

713. I find myself even more poor in reasonings and words in the great necessity of relating something regarding the state where the love of most holy Mary arrived in the last days of her life, the impetus and flights of her most pure spirit, and the incomparable desires and yearnings to arrive at the close embrace of the Divinity. I find no similarity in all of nature, yet if anything could serve for a comparison it might perhaps be the element of fire due to the correspondence it has with love. Admirable is the activity and force of this element above all others; none is more impatient of bounds, for it will either die in confinement, or burst its bonds in order to rise up unconstrained to its proper sphere. If it finds itself imprisoned in the earth it will tear up the surface, break in two the mountains and shatter the rocks, hurling them with irresistible violence aside until its fury is spent. And though the prison is of bronze as in the cannon, if it does not burst it, it at least forces an opening for itself with marvelous violence and shock to those near it, and by this violence it sends forth the metal ball, overcoming with such violence all that hindered it, as taught by experience. Such is the activity of this insensible creature.

714. But if in the Heart of Mary most holy the element of the fire of divine love was concentrated to its point (I cannot explain myself by other words), then clearly the effects corresponded to their cause, and the effects of fire are not more wonderful in the order of nature than the effects of her love in the order of grace, and of such immense grace. Our great Queen was always a pilgrim in the world in her mortal body, and the only phoenix upon earth; but when She was now ready to depart for heaven, and assured of the happy end of her pilgrimage, though her virginal body was still upon earth the flame of her most pure spirit with swiftest flights pressed upward to her proper sphere, which was the Divinity himself. She could not withhold or constrain the impetus of her Heart, nor seemed the arbiter of her interior activities, or have the control of will over them, since She had delivered her entire liberty to the sovereignty of love and the desires of her hope of possessing the highest Good, in whom She lived transformed and forgetful of earthly mortality. Her love did not burst the bonds of this mortality because it was preserved more by a miracle than by nature, nor did it raise with it her mortal body because our great Queen was yet a pilgrim in the weight of the mortality and the term of her life had not yet arrived, though the force of her spirit and her love was sufficient to ravish it from the earth. Yet in this sweet and contentious struggle all the vital operations of nature were suspended, such that this so deified soul seemed to receive life only from divine love, and so this love would not consume her mortal life it was necessary to preserve it miraculously and have another superior cause intervene so it could be vivified and not dissolved at each instant.

715. It happened many times during these last days that in order to give some expansion in these violent yearnings of love and prevent her bosom from being rent asunder, She withdrew alone and broke her silence, and speaking with the Lord She said: "My sweetest Love, Good and Treasure of my soul, draw me after the odor of thine ointments (Cant. 1:3) of which Thou hast given a taste to this thy handmaid and Mother on her pilgrimage in this world. My will was always engaged entirely in Thee, who art the highest Truth and my true Good; never have I known the love of anything outside of Thee. O my only hope and glory! Let not my course be lengthened, nor the term of my life extended, delaying my desired freedom. Free me now from

the prison of mortality which detains me (Ps. 141:8); let now the term of my life be fulfilled; let the end come toward which I have travelled from the first instant in which I received from Thee the being I have. My dwelling hath been prolonged among the inhabitants of Cedar (Ps. 119:5); yet all the strength* of my soul and its faculties look toward the Sun which gives them life, follow the fixed North Star which guides them, and faint away without the possession of the Good which they expect. O ye supernal spirits, by the most noble condition of thy spiritual and angelic nature, by the happiness thou dost enjoy in the vision and beauty of my Beloved, whom ye shall never be without, I beseech thee to have pity on me, my friends; have pity on this wanderer among the children of Adam, captive in the fetters of the flesh. Tell my and thy Lord the cause of my sorrow (Cant. 5:8), of which He is not ignorant; tell Him for his good pleasure I embrace suffering in my banishment, and I desire it so. Yet I cannot desire to live in my own self; and if in order to live I must live in Him, how can I live in the absence of my Life?† Love gives me life, and yet takes it away. Life cannot live without love;^Δ hence, how can I live without the Life which alone I love? In this sweet violence I am weakening; at least describe to me the conditions of my Beloved, so by these aromatic flowers the languishings of my impatient love may be comforted” (Ib. 2:5).

716. With these and other more heartfelt reasonings the Blessed Mother joined the fires of her inflamed spirit to the admiration and joy of the holy Angels who attended upon and served Her. And as intelligent beings so attentive and full of divine science, on one of these occasions they responded to her desires with the following descriptions: “Our Queen and Lady, if Thou dost desire anew to hear us speak of the tokens of thy Beloved of which we know, consider that He is beauty itself, and contains within Himself all perfections exceeding all desire. He is amiable without defect, delightful without equal, pleasant without suspect. In wisdom He is inestimable, in goodness without measure, in power boundless, immense in his being, in grandeur incomparable, in majesty inaccessible, and everything He contains in Himself is infinite. In his judgments He is terrible (Ps. 65:5),‡ in his counsels inscrutable (Rom. 11:33), in his justice most upright (Ps. 118:137), in his thoughts unsearchable, in his words most true, in his works holy (Ps. 144:13), and in his mercies rich (Eph. 2:4). Space is not wide enough for Him, nor can narrowness limit Him, nor sorrow disturb Him, nor joy alter Him, nor can He err in his wisdom, or change in his will (James 1:17). Abundance cannot exceed Him, or necessity diminish Him; memory adds nothing, nor does forgetting take away; what was is not past for Him, and what is to come never happens to Him. The beginning gave no origin to his Being, nor shall time bring Him to an end. Without being caused He gave a beginning to all things (Ecclus. 18:1), not because anything is necessary to Him, (II Mach. 14:35), but all things need participation in Him. He preserves them without labor, and governs them without confusion. Those who follow Him walk not in darkness (Jn. 8:12); those who know Him are happy; those who love Him and gain Him are Blessed, for He exalts his friends, and at the end glorifies them by his eternal vision and company (Jn. 17:3). This, O Lady, is the Good which Thou lovest, and whose embraces Thou shalt enjoy very shortly without intermission through all his eternity.” Thus far spoke the Angels.

717. Such colloquies took place frequently between the great Queen and her ministers. Yet just as one thirsty from a burning fever does not quench but rather ignites his thirst by a few drops of

* cf. Mk. 12:30 [Ed.]

† cf. Jn. 14:6 [Ed.]

Δ cf. *Transfixion* 16 [Ed.]

‡ cf. also Ps. 75:12-13 [Ed.]

water, so neither did these poultices mitigate the flame of divine love in the most loving Mother, but renewed in her bosom the cause of her infirmity. And though during the last days of her life She not only enjoyed the favors which I left written above (601ff.; 615ff.), namely those of the Sundays and feast days, and many other favors impossible to enumerate, yet in order to stave off death and nourish Her amid these anguishes of love her most holy Son personally visited Her more frequently than He had until then. In these visits He recreated Her and comforted Her with wonderful favors and caresses, assuring Her anew that her banishment would now be short, that He would raise Her to his right hand where She would be placed by the Father and the Holy Ghost upon his royal throne and be absorbed in the abyss of his divinity, and be new joy to the saints, all of whom were hoping for and desiring her presence. On these occasions the kind Mother multiplied her petitions and prayers for the holy Church, for the Apostles and disciples, for all the ministers who in the coming ages would serve in the preaching of the Gospel and the conversion of the world, and for all mortals who would admit and come to the knowledge of eternal life.

718. Among the wonders which the Lord wrought with his most blessed Mother during these last years, there was one which was manifest not only to the Evangelist St. John but to many of the faithful, which was when the great Lady received Holy Communion She remained for some hours full of splendors and a clearness so admirable She seemed to be transfigured and with the gifts of glory. This effect was communicated to Her by the sacred body of her most holy Son who, as I have said above (607), manifested Himself to Her transfigured and more glorious than on mount Tabor. All who thus beheld Her were left filled with joy and with effects so divine they could be more felt than described.

719. The devout Queen resolved to take leave of the Holy Places before her departure for heaven, and having asked permission of St. John She left the house in his company and with the thousand Angels who assisted Her. Although these sovereign princes had always served and accompanied Her on all her errands, occupations and journeys, without having left Her for one moment since the instant of her birth, yet on this occasion they manifested themselves to Her with greater beauty and refulgence as ones already participating in the new joy that She was on her last journey before departing for heaven. The heavenly Princess, bidding goodbye to human occupations in order to journey to her own and true fatherland, visited all the Holy Places of our Redemption, departing each with abundant and sweet tears, with pitying memories of what her Son there suffered, with fervent operations and admirable effects, with clamors and petitions for all the faithful who would come with devotion and reverence to these Holy Places for all the future ages of the Church. On Calvary She remained a longer time, beseeching her most holy Son that his death and the Redemption He wrought at this place would be efficacious for all redeemed souls. During this prayer the ardor of her ineffable charity was so inflamed it would have consumed her life if it had not been preserved by divine power.

720. Then her most holy Son descended in person from heaven and manifested Himself to Her at that place where He had died. Responding to her petitions He said: "My Mother and my most beloved Dove, Coadjutrix in the work of human Redemption, thy desires and petitions have come to my ears and my Heart. I promise Thee I shall be most generous with men, and shall give them from my grace continuous helps and favors, so with their own free will they may merit the glory I have prepared for them by virtue of my blood, if they themselves do not despise it. In heaven Thou shalt be their Mediatrix and Advocate, and all those who shall earn thy intercession I shall fill with my treasures and infinite mercies." This promise was renewed by the Lord on the same place upon which He redeemed us. The most blessed Mother, prostrate at his feet, rendered

Him gratitude for this, and besought Him to give Her his last benediction on this very spot consecrated by his precious blood and death. His Majesty gave it, and having ratified his royal word in all He had promised He returned to the right hand of his eternal Father. Most holy Mary remained comforted in her loving anguish, and continuing her acts of sacred piety She kissed the ground on Calvary and venerated it, saying: "Holy earth and Sacred Place, from heaven I shall look upon thee with the veneration I owe thee in that light in which all is manifested in its very fount and origin, from whence the divine Word issued in mortal flesh to enrich thee." She then charged anew the holy Angels to assist Her in the custody of those Sacred Places and inspire with holy inspirations all the faithful who with veneration would visit them, so they might know and esteem the admirable benefit of the Redemption wrought upon them. She also entrusted them with the defense of those sanctuaries. And if the temerity and sins of men had not demerited this favor, without doubt the holy Angels would have defended them so the infidels and pagans would not profane them. Nevertheless, the Angels defend these Sacred Places in many ways up to the present day.

721. The Queen also asked the Angels of the Holy Places and the Evangelist to give Her their blessing in this last parting, and receiving it She returned to her oratory full of tears and affection for what She loved so tenderly upon earth. There She prostrated Herself with her face mingling with the dust, and poured forth another long and most fervent prayer for the Church, and She persevered in it until in an abstractive vision of the Divinity the Lord responded that He had heard and granted her petitions at the tribunal of his mercy. And in order to give in all things the plenitude of sanctity to her works, She asked permission of the Lord to take leave of the holy Church, saying: "Most high Lord and my highest Good, Redeemer of the world, Head of the saints and the predestined, Justifier and Glorifier of souls, I am a daughter of the holy Church acquired and planted by thy blood. Give me, O Lord, permission to take leave of such a compassionate Mother, and of all the brethren thy children belonging to it." She was made aware of the consent of her Son, and with it turned to the Mystical Body of the Church, addressing it in sweet tears in this manner:

722. "Holy Catholic Church, which in the future ages shall be called Roman, my Mother and Mistress, true treasure of my soul, thou hast been the only consolation in my banishment; the refuge and alleviation of my labors; my recreation, my joy and my hope. Thou hast sustained me in my course; in thee I have lived a pilgrim to my fatherland; thou hast supported me after I received in thee existence in grace through thy Head and mine, Jesus Christ, my Son and my Lord. In thee are the treasures and the riches of his infinite merits. Thou shalt be for his faithful children the secure passage to the promised land, and thou shalt safeguard them on their difficult and dangerous pilgrimage. Thou shalt be the Mistress of the nations to whom all owe reverence. In thee are the rich jewels of inestimable price, which are anxieties, labors, affronts, sweat, torments, the cross and death, all of them consecrated by those of my Lord, thy Father, thy Master, and thy Head, and are reserved for his greatest servants and his most beloved friends. Thou hast adorned and enriched me with thy jewels for entrance into the nuptials of the Spouse; thou hast made me rich, prosperous and happy, and thou containest within thee thy Author in the most Blessed Sacrament. My happy Mother, Church Militant, rich art thou and abundant in treasures! In thee I have always kept my entire heart and all my cares; but now the time has come to part from thee and leave thy sweet companionship in order to reach the end of my earthly course. Apply to me the efficacy of so many goods; bathe me copiously in the sacred liqueur of the blood of the Lamb deposited in thee, powerful to sanctify many worlds. At the cost of my life a thousand times would I desire to make thine all the nations and generations of mortals so they

could rejoice in thy treasures. My beloved Church, my honor and my glory, I am now to leave thee in mortal life; yet in eternal life I shall find thee joyful in that existence which encloses all good. From there I shall look upon thee with affection, and pray always for thy increase, thy success, and thy progress in all things.”

723. This was the parting of most holy Mary from the Mystical Body of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the Mother of the faithful, in order to teach its members (when they would come to notice this) the veneration, love and esteem in which She held that holy Church, testifying this by such sweet tears and endearments. After thus taking leave the great Lady, as the Mother of Wisdom, arranged her last will and testament. When She manifested this most prudent desire to the Lord, His Majesty desired to approve it by his own royal presence. For this the most blessed Trinity descended to the oratory of their Daughter and Spouse, with thousands of Angels who assisted at the throne of the Divinity; and when the pious Queen had adored the infinite essence of God, a voice issued from the throne and said: “Our Spouse and chosen One, declare thy last will as thou dost desire, for We shall entirely confirm and fulfill it by our infinite power.” The most prudent Mother hesitated a little in her profound humility, since She desired to know first the will of the Most High before She would manifest her own. The Lord responded to this desire and timidity, and the Person of the Father said to Her: “My Daughter, thy will shall meet with my approval and pleasure, for since Thou art not lacking in the merit of thy works in ordering thy soul for departure from this mortal life, I shall satisfy thy desires.” The same was confirmed by the Son and the Holy Ghost. And with these promises most holy Mary ordained her last will and testament in this manner:

724. “Most high Lord and eternal God, I, a vile wormlet of the earth, confess and adore Thee with all the reverence of my inmost soul as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons distinct in one undivided and eternal Being, one substance, one Majesty infinite in attributes and perfections. I confess Thee as the one, true, and only Creator and Preserver of all that has being. In thy royal presence I declare and say my last will is this: Of the goods of mortal life and of the world in which I live I possess none that I can leave, for never have I possessed or loved anything apart from Thee, who art my Good and my only possession. To the heavens, the celestial bodies, the stars and planets, to the elements and all thy creatures I give thanks, because obeying thy will they have sustained me without my merit, and with the affection of my soul I desire and ask them to serve and praise Thee in the offices and ministries assigned to them, and to sustain and benefit my brethren and fellowmen. So they may better do this I renounce and transfer to mankind the possession of them and, as far as possible, the dominion over them which Thy Majesty has given me over these irrational creatures so they may serve my fellowmen and sustain them. Two tunics and a mantle, which I have used to cover myself, I leave to John at his disposal, since I hold him in the position of a son. My body I ask the earth to receive again in thy service, since it is the common mother and serves Thee as thy creature. My soul, divested of its body and of all visible things, I deliver into thy hands, my God, in order to love and magnify Thee for all thine eternity. My merits, and the treasures which by thy divine grace and my works and labors I have acquired, all this I leave to the holy Church* as my universal heiress, my Mother and my Mistress, and with thy permission I there deposit them, desiring them to be much greater. And I desire in the first place that they be for the exaltation of thy holy Name, so thy holy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and so all nations come to the knowledge, love, worship and veneration of Thee, the true God.

* cf. Eccclus. 24:47 [Ed.]

725. “In the second place I offer these merits for my masters the Apostles and priests, present and future, so thy ineffable clemency may make them apt ministers in their office and state, with all wisdom, virtue and sanctity by which they may edify and sanctify the souls redeemed by thy blood. In the third place I apply them for the spiritual good of my devotees who serve me, invoke me, and call upon me, so they may receive thy grace and protection, and afterwards eternal life. In the fourth place I desire my merits, works and labors to oblige Thee toward all the sinful children of Adam, so they may come out of the unhappy state of sin; and from this hour I propose and desire to pray always for them in thy divine presence as long as the world shall last. This is, my Lord and my God, my last will, always submissive to thine.” The Queen concluded this testament, and the most holy Trinity approved and confirmed it; and Christ our Redeemer, as if authorizing it entirely, witnessed it by writing in the Heart of his Mother these words: “Be it done as Thou dost desire and ordain.”

726. If the children of Adam, and especially we who are born in the law of grace, had no other obligation to most holy Mary than having been constituted heirs of her immense merits, and of all that is mentioned in this short and mysterious testament, we could never repay our debt, even if in return we offer our lives and endure all the sufferings of the most valiant martyrs and saints. I make no comparison, since none could be made, with the infinite merits and treasures left by Christ our Savior in the Church; yet what excuse or defense do the reprobate have when they do not avail themselves of the merits of Christ or of his most holy Mother? All of them they despise, forget and waste. What torment and despair will be theirs when, without hope of a remedy, they realize they have lost forever such great benefits and treasures for a momentary delight? Let them confess the justice and rectitude by which they are deservedly and most justly chastised and cast away from the face of the Lord and from his most kind Mother, whom they despised in such foolish temerity.

727. When the great Queen had ordained her testament, She gave thanks to the Omnipotent and asked permission to add another petition; this granted, She said: “My most merciful Lord and Father of mercies, if it is according to thy glory and pleasure my soul desires that at its passing be present the Apostles, my masters and thine anointed, together with the other disciples, so they may pray for me and with their blessing I part from this life to that which is eternal.” To this her most holy Son responded: “My most beloved Mother, my Apostles are already on the way to thy presence; those who are near shall shortly arrive, while those who are very far away shall be brought by my Angels, since it is my will that all of them assist at thy glorious transition for thy consolation and theirs, that they see Thee depart for my eternal mansions,* and for my greater glory and thine.” For this new favor and for the others most holy Mary rendered gratitude prostrate upon the ground, and then the three divine Persons returned to the empyrean heaven.

*INSTRUCTION WHICH THE QUEEN OF THE
ANGELS, MOST HOLY MARY, GAVE ME.*

728. My daughter, since thou dost admire the esteem in which I held the holy Church, and the great love I had for it, I desire to further foster thy affections in order for thee to conceive new appreciation and veneration for it. Thou cannot in mortal flesh understand what passed in my interior in gazing upon the holy Church. Beyond what thou hast already come to know, thou shalt understand more if thou dost consider the causes which moved my heart, which were the

* cf. Jn. 14:2 [Ed.]

love and works of my most holy Son for the Church itself; they must be thy meditation day and night, since in what His Majesty did for the Church thou shalt know the love had for it. In order to be its Head in this world and forever (Col. 1:18), and Head of the predestined (Rom. 8:29), He descended from the bosom of the eternal Father and assumed human flesh in my womb; to recover his children lost through the first sin of Adam (Lk. 19:10), He took mortal and passible flesh; to leave the example of his blameless life (I Peter 2:21) and his true and salutary doctrine, He lived and conversed with men thirty-three years (Bar. 3:38); to redeem them effectually, and merit for them infinite goods of grace and glory, which the faithful could not merit, He suffered his excessively severe Passion, and shed his blood, and accepted the sorrowful and ignominious death of the cross (Philip. 2:8); and in order that from his sacred body, now deceased, would mysteriously issue his Church, He allowed his side to be cleft by the lance (Jn. 19:34).

729. And because the eternal Father was so well pleased with his life, Passion and Death, the Redeemer himself instituted in the Church the sacrifice of his body and blood (Lk. 22:19), in which his memory would be renewed, and the faithful may offer Him in order to appease and satisfy divine justice; and together with this, so He could remain perpetually present in the Church in the Blessed Sacrament for the spiritual nourishment of his children, and so they could have with them the very fount of grace, their Viaticum, and a certain pledge of eternal life. In addition to all this He sent upon the Church the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:2) to fill it with his gifts and his wisdom, promising He would always guide and govern it without error, without uncertainty, and without danger (Jn. 15:26). He enriched the Church with all the merits of his life, Passion and Death, applying them by means of the Sacraments, establishing all that would be necessary for men, from their birth to their death, to cleanse themselves from their sins, to help themselves persevere in his grace, to defend themselves from the demons, to conquer them by the weapons of his Church, and to crush their own natural passions, leaving appropriate and suitable ministers for all He established. In the Church Militant He communicates familiarly with the holy souls; He makes them participants of his hidden and secret favors; He works miracles and wonders for them, and when proper for his glory He obliges Himself by their works; He hears their prayers for themselves and for others, so in the Church the communion of saints is preserved.

730. He left in it also other founts of light and truth, which are the holy Gospels and the Sacred Scriptures dictated by the Holy Ghost, the determinations of the sacred Councils, and the certain and ancient Traditions.* At opportune times He sends holy doctors full of wisdom; He gives it teachers and learned men, preachers and ministers in abundance. He makes the Militant Church illustrious with his admirable Saints; beautifies it with a variety of religious orders in which the perfect and Apostolic life is professed and preserved; and He governs it by many prelates and dignitaries. And so all may proceed with order and harmony, He placed over it a supreme head, who is the Roman Pontiff, his Vicar, with the plenitude of supreme and divine authority, as the head of this mystical and most beautiful body, defending and preserving it to the end of the world against the powers of earth and hell (Mt. 16:18). And among all these benefits which He did and does for his beloved Church, not the least was to leave me in it after his wondrous Ascension into heaven, so it could be directed and planted by my merits and presence. From that time and forever I hold as mine this Church, for the Most High consigned it to me,[†] and commanded me to take care of it as its Mother and Lady.

* cf. II Thes. 2:14 [Ed.]

† cf. *Coronation* 494-5 [Ed.]

731. These are, my dearest, the great titles and motives I had and still have for my love of the holy Church which thou hast recognized in me, and I desire them to rouse and enkindle thy heart to imitate me in all that pertains to thee as my disciple, my daughter, and a daughter of the holy Church. Love it, respect it, and esteem it with all thy heart; enjoy its treasures, gathering the riches of heaven, which together with its Author are deposited in the Church. Seek to unite it with thee and thyself with it, since in it thou hast a refuge and a remedy, consolation in thy labors, hope in thy banishment, light and truth which guides thee in the darkness of the world. For this holy Church I desire thee to labor during all the rest of thy life, since for this purpose life has been given thee, and in order to imitate and follow me in the untiring solicitude which I had for it in mortal life; this is thy greatest happiness, for which thou owest gratitude eternally. And I desire thee, my daughter, to be aware that with this intention and desire I have applied to thee a great part of the treasures of the Church so thou mayest write my Life, and the Lord has chosen thee as an instrument and secretary of its hidden mysteries and sacraments for the ends of his greater glory. And do not understand that having done some work in this thou hast given Him part of the return for this debt; rather, thou art now more bound and obligated to put into practice all the doctrine thou hast recorded, and as long as thou dost not do so thou shalt remain poor, not having discharged thy debt, and shall be asked with rigor to account for what thou hast received. Now is the time to labor, so thou mayest find thyself prepared and unburdened at the hour or death, not being hindered from receiving the Spouse. Be attentive to the detachment by which I was withdrawn and free from all earthly things; by this rule I desire thee to govern thyself, and let not the oil of light and love fail thee (Mt. 25:3), so thou mayest enter the nuptials of the Spouse, opening to thee the gates of his infinite mercy and clemency.