

## Chapter XXIX

CHRIST OUR REDEEMER ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN FOLLOWED BY ALL THE SAINTS IN HIS COMPANY; HE ASSUMES WITH HIM HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER AND PUTS HER IN POSSESSION OF GLORY.

798. The most auspicious hour, in which the Onlybegotten of the eternal Father, after descending from heaven in order to assume human flesh, was to ascend by his own power and in a most wonderful manner to the right hand of God, the Inheritor of his eternities, one and equal with Him in nature and infinite glory. He was to ascend, also, because He had previously descended to the lowest regions of the earth, as the Apostle says (Ephes. 4, 9), having fulfilled all that had been written and prophesied concerning his coming into the world, his Life, Death and the Redemption of man, and having penetrated, as the Lord of all, to the very centre of the earth. By this Ascension he sealed all the mysteries and hastened the fulfillment of his promise, according to which He was, with the Father, to send the Paraclete upon his Church after He himself should have ascended into heaven (John 16, 7). In order to celebrate this festive and mysterious day, Christ our Lord selected as witnesses the hundred and twenty persons, to whom, as related in the foregoing chapter, He had spoken in the Cenacle. They were the most holy Mary, the eleven Apostles, the seventy-two disciples, Mary Magdalen, Lazarus their brother, the other Marys and the faithful men and women making up the abovementioned number of one hundred and twenty.

799. With this little flock our divine Shepherd Jesus left the Cenacle, and, with his most blessed Mother at his side, He conducted them all through the streets of Jerusalem. The Apostles and all the rest in their order, proceeded in the direction of Bethany, which was less than half a league over the brow of mount Olivet. The company of angels and saints from limbo and purgatory followed the Victor with new songs of praise, although Mary alone was privileged to see them. The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth was already divulged throughout Jerusalem and Palestine. Although the perfidious and malicious princes and priests had spread about the false testimony of his being stolen by the disciples, yet many would not accept their testimony, nor give it any credit. It was divinely provided, that none of the inhabitants of the city, and none of the unbelievers or doubters, should pay any attention to this holy procession, or hinder it on its way from the Cenacle. All, except the one hundred and twenty just, who were chosen by the Lord to witness his Ascension into heaven, were justly punished by being prevented from noticing this wonderful mystery, and the Chieftain and Head of this procession remained invisible to them.

800. The Lord having thus secured them this privacy, they all ascended mount Olivet to its highest point. There they formed three choirs, one of the angels, another of the saints, and a third of the Apostles and faithful, which again divided into two bands, while Christ the Savior presided. Then the most prudent Mother prostrated Herself : at the feet of her Son and, worshipping Him with admirable humility, She adored Him as the true God and as the Redeemer of the world, asking his last blessing. All the faithful there present imitated Her and did the same. Weeping and sighing, they asked the Lord, whether He was now to restore the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1, 6). The Lord answered, that this was a secret of the eternal Father and not to be made known to them; but, for the present, it was necessary and befitting, that they receive the Holy Ghost and preach, in Jerusalem, in Samaria and in all the world, the mysteries of the Redemption of the world.

801. Jesus, having taken leave of this holy and fortunate gathering of the faithful, his countenance beaming forth peace and majesty, joined his hands and, by his own power, began to raise Himself from the earth, leaving thereon the impression of his sacred feet. In gentlest motion He was wafted toward the aerial regions, drawing after Him the eyes and the hearts of those firstborn children, who amid sighs and tears vented their affection. And as, at the moving of the first Cause of all motion, it is proper that also the nether spheres should be set in motion, so the Savior Jesus drew after Him also the celestial choirs of the angels, the holy Patriarchs and the rest of the glorified saints, some of them with body and soul, others only as to their soul. All of them in heavenly order were raised up together from the earth, accompanying and following their King, their Chief and Head. The new and mysterious sacrament, which the right hand of the Most High wrought on this occasion for his most holy Mother, was that He raised Her up with Him in order to put Her in possession of the glory, which He had assigned to Her as his true Mother and which She had by her merits prepared and earned for Herself. Of this favor the great Queen was capable even before it happened; for her divine Son had offered it to Her during the forty days which He spent in her company after his Resurrection. In order that this sacrament might be kept secret from all other living creatures at that time, and in order that the heavenly Mistress might be present in the gathering of the Apostles and the faithful in their prayerful waiting upon the coming of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1, 14), the divine power enabled the blessed Mother miraculously to be in two places at once; remaining with the children of the Church for their comfort during their stay in the Cenacle and at the same time ascending with the Redeemer of the world to his heavenly throne, where She remained for three days. There She enjoyed the perfect use of all her powers and faculties, whereas She was more restricted in the use of them during that time in the Cenacle.

807. ... the Lord took with Him his blessed Mother in his Ascension into heaven and, amid incredible rejoicing and admiration, filled Her with splendor and glory in the sight of the angels and saints. It was also very appropriate, that the Apostles and the other faithful, for the time being, should be ignorant of this mystery; for if they had seen their Mother and Mistress ascend with Christ, their affliction would have been beyond all bounds and without recourse or relief. Nothing could ever console them for the departure of Christ more fully than to feel that they had still with them their most blessed Lady and kindest Mother. Even then their sighs and sobbing, and their tears welled up from their inmost hearts, when they saw their beloved Master and Redeemer disappearing through the aerial regions. And when they had almost lost sight of Him, a most resplendent cloud interposed itself between Him and those He had left upon earth (Acts 1, 9), intercepting Him altogether from their view. In it the Person of the eternal Father descended from heaven to the regions of the air in order to meet the Son and the Mother, who had furnished the new mode of existence in which He now returned. Coming to Them the eternal Father received Them in his embrace of infinite love, to the joy of the angels, who had accompanied the Father in innumerable choirs from his heavenly seat. In a short space of time, penetrating the elements and the celestial orbs, that whole divine procession arrived at the supreme regions of the empyrean. At their entrance the angels, who had ascended from the earth with their Sovereigns Jesus and Mary, and those who had joined them in the aerial regions, spoke to those who had remained in the heavenly heights and repeated those words of David and many others referring to this mystery, saying:

808. “Open, ye princes, open your gates eternal; let them be raised and opened up, and receive into his dwelling the great King of glory, the Lord of virtues, the Powerful in battle, the Strong and Invincible, who comes triumphant and victorious over all his enemies. Open the gates of the heavenly paradise, and let them remain open and free forever, since the new Adam is coming, the Repairer of the whole human race, rich in mercy, overflowing with the merits of his copious Redemption wrought by his Death in the world. He has restored our loss and has raised human nature to the supreme dignity of his own immensity. He comes with the reign of the elect and the redeemed, given to Him by his eternal Father. Now his liberal mercy has given to mortals the power of regaining in justice the right lost by their sin, to merit, by the observance of his law, as his brothers and coinheritors of the goods of his Father eternal life; and, for his greater glory and to our greater rejoicing, He brings with Him and at his side the Mother of piety, who gave Him the form of man for overcoming the demon; She comes as our charming and beautiful Queen delighting all that behold Her. Come forth, come forth, ye heavenly courtiers, and you shall see our most beautiful King with the crown given to Him by his Mother, and his Mother crowned with the glory conferred upon Her by her Son.”

809. Amidst this jubilee and other rejoicings exceeding all our conceptions that new divinely arranged procession approached the empyrean heavens. Between the two choirs of angels and saints, Christ and his most blessed Mother made their entry. All in their order gave supreme honor to Each respectively and to Both together, breaking forth in hymns of praise in honor of the Authors of grace and of life. Then the eternal Father placed upon the throne of his Divinity at his right hand, the incarnate Word, and in such glory and majesty, that He filled with new admiration and reverential fear all the inhabitants of heaven. In clear and intuitive vision they recognized the infinite glory and perfection of the Divinity inseparably and substantially united in one personality to the most holy humanity, beautified and exalted by the preeminence and glory due to this union, such as eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor ever has entered into the thoughts of creatures (Is. 54, 4).

810. On this occasion the humility and wisdom of our most prudent Queen reached their highest point; for, overwhelmed by such divine and admirable favors, She hovered at the footstool of the royal throne, annihilated in the consciousness of being a mere earthly creature. Prostrate She adored the Father and broke out in new canticles of praise for the glory communicated to his Son and for elevating in Him the deified humanity to such greatness and splendor. Again the angels and saints were filled with admiration and joy to see the most prudent humility of their Queen, whose living example of virtue, as exhibited on that occasion, they emulated among themselves in copying. Then the voice of the eternal Father was heard saying: “My Daughter, ascend higher!” Her divine Son also called Her, saying: “My Mother, rise up and take possession of the place, which I owe Thee for having followed and imitated Me.” The Holy Ghost said: “My Spouse and Beloved, come to my eternal embraces!” Immediately was proclaimed to all the blessed the decree of the most holy Trinity, by which the most blessed Mother, for having furnished her own lifeblood toward the Incarnation and for having nourished, served, imitated and followed Him with all the perfection possible to a creature, was exalted and placed at the right hand of her Son for all eternity. None other of the human creatures should ever hold that place or position, nor rival Her in the unfailing glory connected with it; but it was to be reserved to the Queen and to be her possession by right after her earthly life, as of one who preeminently excelled all the rest of the saints.

811. In fulfillment of this decree, the most blessed Mary was raised to the throne of the holy Trinity at the right hand of her Son. At the same time She, with all the saints, was informed, that She was given possession of this throne not only for all the ages of eternity, but that it was left to her choice to remain there even now and without returning to the earth. For it was the conditional will of the divine Persons, that as far as they were concerned, She should now remain in that state. In order that She might make her own choice, She was shown anew the state of the Church upon earth, the orphaned and necessitous condition of the faithful, whom She was left free to assist. This admirable proceeding of the divine Providence was to afford the Mother of mercy an occasion of going beyond, so to say, even her own Self in doing good and in obliging the human race with an act of tenderest love similar to that of her Son in assuming a passable state and in suspending the glory due to his body during and for our Redemption. The most blessed Mother imitated Him also in this respect, so that She might be in all things like the incarnate Word. The great Lady therefore, having clearly before her eyes all the sacrifices included in this proposition, left the throne and, prostrating Herself at the feet of the Three Persons, said: "Eternal and almighty God, my Lord, to accept at once this reward, which thy condescending kindness offers me, would be to secure my rest; but to return to the world and continue to labor in mortal life for the good of the children of Adam and the faithful of thy holy Church, would be to the glory and according to the pleasure of thy Majesty and would benefit my sojourning and banished children on earth. I accept this labor and renounce for the present the peace and joy of thy presence. Well do I know, what I possess and receive, but I will sacrifice it to further the love Thou hast for men. Accept, Lord and Master of all my being, this sacrifice and let thy divine strength govern me in the undertaking confided to me. Let faith in Thee be spread, let thy holy name be exalted, let thy holy Church be enlarged, for Thou hast acquired it by the blood of thy Onlybegotten and mine; I offer myself anew to labor for thy glory and for the conquest of the souls, as far as I am able."