The Glories of Mary

Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

A fresh English translation made directly from the Italian of the Remondini edition, Bassano and Venice, 1789

About this translation

This is a new English translation of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori's *Le Glorie di Maria*, first published in Naples in 1750. It was made directly from public-domain page images of the Italian, and from no English edition. No previous English translation was used as translation input — not as a draft, not for phrasing, and not to settle a difficult passage. Where the Italian was hard, it was resolved against the page images and against a second Italian witness, never against an English one.

The primary witness is the two-part Remondini edition printed at Bassano at the expense of the Remondini house of Venice in 1789, two years after the author's death — the house that had printed the work under his own supervision. A second Italian witness, the Naples edition of 1838, was used for collation and to repair the primary witness where its pages are missing. Both are identified in full, with their sources and checksums, in the accompanying *SOURCE_AND_RIGHTS* document.

Nine pages are absent from the primary witness. Every one of them was located, documented, and supplied from the second witness; each such passage is fenced in the text so that the reader always knows which witness is speaking. The 1838 edition proved to be a revised redaction rather than a plain reprint, and where it diverges from the 1789 text the divergence is flagged rather than smoothed over.

Citations are reproduced as the witness prints them. Saint Alphonsus quotes from memory and at speed, and his printers were not always careful; a good number of his chapter-and-verse references do not point where they claim to. Not one has been silently corrected. Each is given as printed, with a bracketed note recording the discrepancy, and each is logged in *CITATION_LEDGER.csv*. The same rule governs the printer's own slips — a misnumbered example, a running head naming the wrong Sorrow, a catchword taken from the wrong line. These are the witness's, and they are kept.

Latin is left standing in the text, as Saint Alphonsus left it, and a fresh English rendering follows each quotation. Nothing is minimized. The Marian claims of this book are strong ones, and they are translated at their full strength; no hedging language has been introduced that is not in the Italian.

[0000 | cover]

Binding board in the digitized copy. No printed text.

[0001 | flyleaf]

Flyleaf. No printed text: it carries only a few manuscript ownership notes, in badly bled ink and not confidently legible, and two pen strokes. Not transcribed: these are copy-specific additions, not text of the edition.

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Mary Most Holy revealed to a devout soul of hers that she is greatly pleased to be honoured by her servants with the following devotion.

I thank you, O Eternal Father, for the Power given to Mary your daughter. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.*

I thank you, O Eternal Son, for the Wisdom given to Mary your mother. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.*

I thank you, O Eternal Holy Spirit, for the Love given to Mary your spouse. *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.*

To you we cry, O Queen of mercy: turn back to us, that we may behold you lavishing benefits, conferring remedies, bestowing strength. Show us the face of your mercies, and we shall be saved. (St. Bernard — or whoever the author may be — on the Salve Regina, Sermon 1.)

Lady of all things, Holy of Holies, our strength and our Refuge, Splendour of the world, Glory of Heaven: acknowledge those who love you; hear us, for your Son honours you and denies you nothing. (The same, in the place cited, Sermon 3.)

Run, hasten, O Lady, and with your pardon help your most unworthy servant who cries to you, and snatch him from the hand of the enemy. (St. Bernard on the Salve Regina; St. Bonaventure, Stimulus Amoris, ch. 19, part 3.)

Who will not sigh to you? We sigh with love and with sorrow. How then shall we not sigh to you, consolation of the wretched, refuge of the outcast, deliverance of captives?

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We do not doubt that, if you look upon our miseries, your compassion will not be able to hold back its effect. (The same, in the place cited.)

O our Lady, our advocate, commend us to your Son. Bring it to pass, O blessed one, by the grace you have merited, that he who through you deigned to become a partaker of our infirmity and misery may, through your intercession also, make us partakers of his blessedness and his glory. (The same St. Bernard on the Salve Regina.)

May Jesus our Love live always, and Mary our Hope.

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THE AUTHOR'S SUPPLICATION TO JESUS AND TO MARY

My most loving Redeemer and Lord Jesus Christ, I, your wretched servant, knowing the pleasure you take in whoever seeks to glorify your Most Holy Mother, whom you love so much, and whom you so much desire to see loved and honoured by all, have thought to bring to light this book of mine, which speaks of her glories. I know no one, then, to whom I could better commend it than to you, who have the glory of this Mother so much at heart. To you, therefore, I dedicate and commend it. Accept this little homage of the love I bear to you and to this your beloved mother. Protect it, and upon everyone who reads it rain down lights of confidence and flames of love toward this immaculate Virgin, in whom you have placed the hope and the refuge of all the redeemed. And as the wage of this poor labour of mine, grant me, I beg you, that love toward Mary which by this little work I have desired to see kindled in all who shall read it.

Next I turn to you, my most sweet Lady and my mother Mary: you well know that after Jesus I have placed in you all the hope of my eternal salvation; for all my good, my conversion, my vocation to leave the world, and every other grace I have received from God — all of them I acknowledge as given to me through your hands. You know already that, in order to see you loved by all as you deserve, and to give you some further sign of gratitude for the many benefits you have conferred on me, I have always sought to preach you everywhere, in public and in private, and to instill in everyone your sweet and saving devotion. I hope to continue doing so to the last breath of the life that remains to me; but I see, from my advanced years and my worn-

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out health, that the end of my pilgrimage and my entrance into eternity are already drawing near; and so I have thought, before I die, to leave to the world this book of mine, that it may continue in my place to preach you, and to stir up others to publish your glories and the great compassion that you show to your devoted servants. I hope, my dearest Queen, that this poor gift of mine, though far too scanty for your merit, may yet be welcome to your most grateful heart, since it is a gift made wholly of love. Stretch out, then, that most sweet hand of yours with which you have delivered me from the world and from hell; accept it, and protect it as a thing of your own. But know, too, that for this little homage of mine I want my reward, and let it be this: that from this day forward I may love you more than

before; and that everyone into whose hands this little work shall come may be set aflame with your love, so that there may at once grow within him the desire to love you and to see you loved by others as well, and he may devote himself with all his affection to preaching and promoting, as far as he can, your praises and confidence in your most powerful intercession. So I hope; so may it be.

Your most loving though most worthless servant, Alphonsus de Liguori, of the Most Holy Redeemer.

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THE AUTHOR'S PROTESTATION

In obedience to the Decrees of Urban VIII of holy memory, I protest that to all the miracles, revelations, graces, and incidents included in this book, as also to the titles of Saint or Blessed given to servants of God not yet canonized, I do not intend to attribute any authority other than a merely human one, except for those things which have been confirmed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church and by the Holy Apostolic See, of which I profess myself an obedient son; and therefore to her judgment I submit myself and all that I have written in this book.

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NOTICE TO THE READER

So that this little work of mine may not meet with censure from the over-critical, I have thought it well to set in a clearer light certain propositions that may be met with in it and may appear advanced, or perhaps obscure. I have noted some of them here; as for the others, if ever (charitable reader) they should come under your eye, I beg you to judge that they are said and meant by me in the sense of true and solid theology, and of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, of which I profess myself a most obedient son. In the Introduction, then, at page XXII, referring to chapter 6 of the book, I have said that God wills that all graces should come to us by the hand of Mary. Now this is a truth of great consolation for souls tenderly attached to Mary Most Holy, and for poor sinners who wish to be converted. Nor should it seem to anyone foreign to sound theology; for the Father of that science, St. Augustine (1), declares as a

(1) *Book De sancta Virginitate, ch. 6:* "Mother indeed in the Spirit — not of our Head, who is the Saviour himself, of whom she herself was rather born spiritually,

since all who believe in him, among whom she too is numbered, are rightly called children of the bridegroom —

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general judgment that Mary, by means of her charity, cooperated in the spiritual birth of all the members of the Church. And a celebrated author, in no way suspect of being too extravagant, or falsely devout out of heated fancy, adds (1) that it was properly on Calvary that Jesus Christ formed his Church. It is clear that the holy Virgin cooperated in an excellent and singular way in that formation. And in the same way it may be said that if she had brought forth Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, without pain, she did not afterward bring forth without pain the Body of that Head. Hence on Calvary she began to be, in a particular way, the Mother of the whole Church. Therefore, to say everything briefly: God Most Holy, in order to glorify the Mother of the Redeemer, has determined and disposed that the great charity of this Mother should pray for all those for whom his divine Son paid and offered the superabundant price of his precious Blood, in which alone *est salus, vita, & resurrectio nostra* — is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection. And on the foundation of this doctrine, and of whatever accords with it, I have intended my propositions (2),

but plainly the mother of his members (which is what we are), because she cooperated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head." (1) Monsig. Nicole, *Istruzioni Teologiche e Morali* on the Lord's Prayer, the Angelic Salutation, etc., Instruction 5, ch. 2. (2) Part I, pages 122, 124, 140, 153, 173, etc.

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which even the saints, in the affectionate colloquies they have made with Mary and in the fervent discourses they have made about Mary, have not hesitated to assert. Hence an ancient Father, cited by the most celebrated Vincent Contenson (1), has written: *In Christo fuit plenitudo gratiae sicut in capite influente; in Maria vero sicut in collo transfundente* — "In Christ there was the fullness of grace as in the head, which pours it forth; in Mary as in the neck, which passes it on." This is clearly taught by the Angelic Master St. Thomas (2), who confirms it all: *Dicitur autem Beata Virgo plena gratiae, quantum ad tria...* — "Now the Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace in three respects ... thirdly, as to its overflowing upon all men. For it is a great thing in any saint to have so much grace as suffices for the salvation of many; but to have so much as would suffice for the salvation of all the men in the world would be the greatest of all — and this is found in Christ, and in the Blessed Virgin. For in every danger you can obtain salvation from this glorious Virgin;

whence the Canticle (ch. 4) says: *A thousand shields* — that is, remedies against dangers — *hang upon her*. Likewise in every work of virtue you can have her as your helper; and therefore she herself says (Ecclus. 24): *In me is all hope of life and of virtue*."

(1) *Theolog. Mentis & Cordis*, Tom. 2, bk. 10, Dissert. 6, ch. 1, Specul. 2, in the Reflections. (2) *Opusc. Exposition on the Angelic Salutation*, about the middle.

All page references throughout this Index are to the pagination of W1 (Remondini, 1789), not to that of the present edition. They are retained as printed: they can be found in the text at the «[scan ... | p. ...]» markers.

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O little Virgin,
how fair you are!
Mother of God,
this heart of mine
has fallen in love with your goodness.

Deo gratias, & Mariæ. — Thanks be to God, and to Mary.

Let all be to the eternal glory of the Most Holy Trinity, and of Mary Immaculate.

Long live always Jesus our love, and Mary our hope, with Joseph and Teresa our Advocates.

Here W1 prints a typographic ornament. End of the Index.

INTRODUCTION

My dear reader and brother in Mary: since the devotion which moved me to write, and now moves you to read this book, makes us both happy children of this good mother, if ever you should hear anyone say that I might have spared myself this labour, there being already so many learned and celebrated books that treat of this subject, answer him, I beg you, with the words that the Abbot Franco left written in the Library of the Fathers: that the praise of Mary is a fountain so full that the more it is widened, the more it is filled, and the more it is filled, the more it widens: *Laus*

Mariae fons est indeficiens, quanto amplius tenditur, tanto amplius impletur, quanto amplius impletur, tanto amplius dilatatur — "The praise of Mary is an unfailing fountain: the more it is extended, the more it is filled; and the more it is filled, the more it is enlarged." That is to say, this Blessed Virgin is so great and so sublime that the more she is praised, the more there remains to be praised. So much so that St. Augustine says (cited by Denis the Carthusian) that all the tongues of men would not suffice to praise her as she deserves, even though all their members were turned into tongues: *Etiamsi omnium nostrum membra verterentur in linguas, eam laudare sufficeret nullus* — "Even if the members of us all were turned into tongues, no one would suffice to praise her."

I have indeed examined innumerable books, great and small, that treat of the glories of Mary; but considering that these were either rare, or voluminous, or not suited to my purpose, I have endeavoured to gather briefly, from all the authors I could lay my hands on — as I have done in this book — the choicest

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and most vivid sayings of the Fathers and of the theologians, so as to give devout souls the convenience of inflaming themselves with the love of Mary by reading, at the cost of little labour and expense; and especially to furnish priests with matter for promoting, by their sermons, devotion toward this divine mother.

It is the custom of worldly lovers to speak often of the persons they love, and to praise them, so that by this their love too may be praised and applauded by others. Scanty indeed, then, must we suppose the love of those to be who boast of being lovers of Mary, and yet think little of speaking of her and of making her loved by others as well. Not so the true lovers of this most amiable Lady: they would praise her everywhere, and see her loved by the whole world; and therefore, whenever they can, in public or in private, they seek to kindle in every heart those blessed flames with which they themselves feel consumed with love for their beloved Queen.

And that everyone may be persuaded how much the promoting of devotion to Mary matters, both for his own good and for that of the peoples, it will help to hear what the Doctors say of it. St. Bonaventure says that those who devote themselves to publishing the glories of Mary are certain of Paradise. And Richard of Saint-Laurent confirms it, saying that to honour this Queen of the Angels is the same as to lay up the treasure of eternal life: *Honorare Mariam, est thesaurizare vitam aeternam* (*De Laud. Virg.* bk. 2); for this most grateful Lady, the same author adds, *Honorificantes se in hoc seculo honorificabit in futuro* — those who honour her in this world, she will honour in the world to come. She will indeed take it upon herself to honour in the next life whoever in this life takes it upon himself to honour her. And who does

not know the promise

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made by Mary herself to those who labour to make her known and loved on this earth? *Qui elucidant me, vitam aeternam habebunt* (*Eccl. 24. 31.*) — "They that make me known shall have life everlasting" — as Holy Church applies these words to her on the feast of her Immaculate Conception. *Exulta* — so said St. Bonaventure, who laboured so much in publishing the praises of Mary — *exulta, anima mea, & laetare in illa, quia multa bona sunt laudatoribus praeparata* — "Exult, my soul, and rejoice in her, for many good things are prepared for those who praise her." And since all the divine Scriptures, he added, speak in praise of Mary, let us strive always, with heart and with tongue, to celebrate this divine mother, that by her we may one day be led to the kingdom of the blessed: *Si enim omnes Scripturae loquuntur de ea, Deiparam perpetuo corde & lingua celebremus, ut ab ipsa ad gaudia aeterna perducamur* — "If, then, all the Scriptures speak of her, let us celebrate the Mother of God perpetually with heart and tongue, that by her we may be led to eternal joys."

We have it from the Revelations of St. Bridget that, as Blessed Hemming the Bishop used to begin his sermons with the praises of Mary, the Virgin herself appeared one day to the saint and said to her: "Tell that prelate who is accustomed to begin his sermons with my praises, that I will be a mother to him, and that I will present his soul to God, and he shall die a good death." (*Rivel. cap. 14.*) And in fact he died the death of a saint, praying, and in a peace like that of Paradise. To another religious, a Dominican, who used to end his sermons by speaking of Mary, she likewise appeared at his death, defended him from the demons, comforted him, and bore his happy soul away with her. (Cited by Fr. Auriemma.) The devout Thomas à Kempis represents Mary commending to her Son the one who publishes her praises, in these words: *Fili, miserere animae amatoris tui, & laudatoris mei* — "Son, have mercy on the soul of him who loved you, and who praised me." (*Serm. 20. an. Nov.*)

As for the profit of the peoples, St.

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Anselm said that, since the sacrosanct womb of Mary was made the way for saving sinners, it cannot but happen that by sermons on Mary sinners are converted and saved: *Quomodo fieri potest, ut ex memoria laudum ejus salus non proveniat peccatorum, cujus uterus factus est via ad peccatores salvandos?* (*S. Anselm. lib. 3. de Exc. V. cap. 1.*) — "How can it be that salvation should not come to sinners from the remembrance of her praises, whose womb was made the way for saving sinners?" And if that judgment is true — as I hold it for true and beyond doubt, and as I shall

prove in chapter VI of this book — that all graces are dispensed solely through the hand of Mary, and that all who are saved are saved only by means of this divine mother, then by necessary consequence it may be said that the salvation of all depends upon preaching Mary, and confidence in her intercession. Thus we know that St. Bernardine of Siena sanctified Italy; that St. Dominic converted so many provinces; that St. Louis Bertrand, in all his sermons, never failed to urge devotion to Mary; and so with many others.

I find that Fr. Paolo Segneri the Younger, the celebrated missionary, in all his missions always preached the sermon on devotion to Mary, and this he called his beloved sermon. And we, in our missions — where we hold it an unbreakable rule never to omit the sermon on the Madonna — can attest with all truth that no sermon, as a rule, brings the peoples so much profit and compunction as this one on the mercy of Mary. I say on the *mercy of Mary*; for St. Bernard says that we do indeed praise her humility and admire her virginity, but, because we are poor sinners, what allures and pleases us more is to hear her mercy spoken of: this we embrace more dearly,

this we remember more often, and more often invoke: *Laudamus humilitatem, miramur virginitatem; sed miseris sapit dulcius misericordia; Misericordiam amplectimur carius, recordamur saepius, crebrius invocamus.* (*Ser. 4. de Ass.*) — "We praise her humility, we marvel at her virginity; but to the wretched, mercy tastes sweeter; her mercy we embrace more dearly, remember more often, invoke more frequently." For this reason, in this little book of mine, leaving to other authors the describing of Mary's other prerogatives, I have undertaken chiefly to speak of her great compassion and of her powerful intercession, having gathered, as far as I have been able, with the labour of many years, all that the holy Fathers and the most celebrated authors have said of the mercy and of the power of Mary. And because in the great prayer of the *Salve Regina* — long since approved by the Church herself, and enjoined by her to be recited through the greater part of the year by all the clergy, regular and secular — the mercy and the power of the holy Virgin are found described to admiration, I have therefore set myself first of all to expound this most devout prayer in distinct discourses. Besides this, I have thought to do a thing welcome to the devoted servants of Mary by adding the lessons, or discourses, on her principal feasts and on the virtues of this divine mother; and by placing at the end the practices of homage most used by her servants and most approved by the Church.

Devout reader, if this little work of mine should please you, as I hope, I beg you to commend me to the holy Virgin, that she may give me a great confidence in her protection. Seek this grace for me; and this same grace I promise to seek for you, whoever you may be, who do me this charity. Oh, blessed is he who clings with love and confidence to these two anchors of salvation — I mean Jesus and Mary! Certainly he will not be lost. Let us

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both say from the heart, then, my reader, with the devout Alphonsus Rodriguez: *Jesus, & Maria, amores mei dulcissimi, pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus* — "Jesus and Mary, my most sweet loves, for you may I suffer, for you may I die; may I be wholly yours, and nothing my own." (*Ap. Auriem. Aff. sc.*) Let us love Jesus and Mary, and let us become saints; for there is no greater fortune than this that we can claim or hope for. Farewell — until we see each other one day in Paradise, at the feet of this most sweet mother and of this most loving Son, there to praise them, to thank them, and to love them together, face to face, for all eternity. Amen.

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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

To obtain a good death.

O Mary, sweet refuge of wretched sinners: when my soul must depart from this world, my most sweet Mother, by that sorrow which you endured in standing by the death of your Son upon the Cross, assist me then with your mercy. Drive far from me the enemies of hell, and come yourself then to take my soul, and to present it to the eternal Judge. My Queen, do not abandon me. You, after Jesus, are to be my comfort in that terrible moment. Beg your Son that in his goodness he may grant me to die then embracing your feet, and to breathe out my soul within his holy Wounds, saying: Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

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PRAYERS

OF DEEP DEVOTION, BY CERTAIN SAINTS, TO THE DIVINE MOTHER.

The following Prayers are added here, not only that they may be used, but also that we may understand the great conception the Saints had of Mary's Power and Mercy, and the great confidence they had in her Patronage.

Prayer of St. Ephrem.

O Immaculate and wholly pure Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of the Universe, our most good Lady: you are above all the Saints; you are the only Hope of the Fathers, the Gladness of the Saints. Through you we have been reconciled to our God. You are the only Advocate of sinners, the safe harbour of those who have suffered shipwreck. You are the consolation of the World, the ransom of captives, the gladness of the sick, the refreshment of the afflicted, the refuge and the salvation of the whole World. O great Princess, mother of God, cover us with the wings of your Mercy; have pity on us. To us no other hope is given but in you, O most pure Virgin. We are given to you and consecrated to your service; we bear the name of your servants: do not permit Lucifer to drag us down to Hell. O immaculate Virgin, we are under your protection; therefore we have had recourse to you alone, and we beg you to prevent your Son, angered by our sins, from abandoning us to the power of the Devil.

O full of grace, enlighten my understanding; loose my tongue to sing your praises, and above all that Angelic Canticle so worthy of you. I greet you, O peace, O joy, O salvation and consolation of the whole World. I greet you, O greatest miracle that ever was in the World, Paradise of delights, safe harbour of those in danger, Fountain of grace, Mediatrix between God and Men.

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Prayer of St. Bernard.

We lift our eyes to you, O Queen of the World. We must appear before our Judge after so many sins: who will appease him? There is no one who can do it better than you, O holy Lady, who loved him so much and were so tenderly loved by him. Open then, O Mother of Mercy, the ears of your heart to our sighs and to our

prayers. We flee beneath your Protection: appease the anger of your Son, and restore us to his Grace. You do not abhor the sinner, however foul he may be; you do not despise him if he sighs to you and, repentant, asks your Intercession; with your compassionate hand you deliver him from despair; you encourage him to hope, and comfort him, and do not abandon him until you have reconciled him with his Judge.

You are that one Woman in whom the Saviour found his rest, and in whom he laid up without measure all his treasures. Therefore the whole World, O my holy Lady, honours your chaste Womb as the Temple of God, in which the Salvation of the World was begun. There the reconciliation between God and Man was made. You are the enclosed garden, O great Mother of God, into which the hand of the sinner has never entered to pluck the flower. You are the fair Garden in which God has set all the flowers that adorn the Church — among them the violet of your Humility, the Lily of your Purity, and the Rose of your Charity. To whom shall we compare you, O Mother of grace and of beauty? You are the Paradise of God. From you has come forth the Fountain of living water that waters the whole Earth. Oh, how many benefits you have done the World by deserving to be so healthful an Aqueduct!

Of you it is spoken when it is said: Who is she that rises like the Dawn, fair as the Moon, chosen as the Sun? You came, then, into the World, O Mary, as a shining Dawn, foreshowing by the light of your Holiness the coming of the Sun of Justice. The day on which you appeared in the World may well be called a day of Salvation, a day of Grace. You are fair as the Moon: for as there is no Planet more like the Sun, so there is no Creature more like God than you. The Moon lights the

night with the light it receives from the Sun, and you light our darkness with the splendour of your virtues; but you are fairer than the Moon, because in you is found neither spot nor shadow. You are chosen as the Sun — I mean that Sun which created the sun. He was chosen among all Men, and you chosen among all Women. O sweet, O great, O wholly lovable Mary: your Name cannot be uttered by a heart without your kindling it with your love; nor can those who love you think of you without feeling themselves strengthened to love you more.

O holy Lady, help our weakness. And who is fitter to speak to our Lord Jesus Christ than you, who enjoy so closely his most sweet converse? Speak, speak, O Lady, for your Son listens to you, and you will obtain whatever you ask of him.

Prayer of St. Germanus.

O my only Lady, who are the only consolation I receive from God; you who are the one heavenly dew that gives refreshment to my pains; you who are the light of my Soul when it is surrounded by darkness; you who are my Guide on my journeys, my Strength in my weaknesses, my Treasure in my poverty, my medicine for my wounds, my Consolation in my tears; you who are my Refuge in my miseries and the Hope of my salvation: hear my prayers, have pity on me, as befits the Mother of a God who has such affection toward Men. Grant me what I ask of you, you who are our Defense and our Joy. Make me worthy to enjoy with you that great happiness which you enjoy in Heaven. Yes, my Lady, my Refuge, my Life, my Help, my Defense, my Strength, my Gladness, my Hope: bring it about that I may come with you into Paradise. I know that, since you are the mother of God, you can indeed obtain it for me if you will. O Mary, you are all-powerful to save sinners, nor have you need of any other recommendation, because you are the Mother of the true life.

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Prayer of the Abbot of Celles, called the Idiot.

Draw me after you, O Virgin Mary, that I may run to the fragrance of your perfumes. Draw me, for I am held back by the weight of my sins and by the malice of my enemies. As no one goes to your Son unless the Divine Father draws him, so I dare in some manner to say that no one goes to him unless you draw him by your holy prayers. You are she who teaches true wisdom; you she who obtains Grace for sinners, because you are their Advocate; you she who promises Glory to those who honour you, because you are the Treasurer of graces.

You have found Grace with God, O most sweet Virgin, because you were preserved from the original stain, filled with the Holy Spirit, and conceived the Son of God. You received all these graces, O most humble Mary, not only for yourself but for us also, that you might assist us in all our needs. And this you indeed already do: you succour the good, preserving them in grace, and the wicked, bringing them back to receive the Divine Mercy; you help the dying, protecting them against the snares of the Devil, and you help them even after death, receiving their Souls and leading them to the Blessed Kingdom.

Prayer of St. Methodius.

Your Name, O Mother of God, is filled with all Divine graces and blessings. You have contained him who is incomprehensible, and nourished him who nourishes all

things. He who fills Heaven and Earth, and is Lord of all, willed to have need of you, since you gave him that garment of flesh which before he had not. Rejoice, O Mother and Handmaid of God. Gladly, gladly — you have as your debtor him who gives being to all creatures: we are all debtors to God, but God is a debtor to you. Hence it is, O most Holy Mother of God, that you have greater goodness and greater charity than all the other Saints, and more than all of them you have access to God in Heaven, since you are his Mother. Ah, we beg you — we who cele-

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brate your glories and know how great your goodness is — to remember us and our miseries.

Prayer of St. John Damascene.

I greet you, O Mary: you are the Hope of Christians. Receive the petition of a sinner who tenderly loves you, honours you particularly, and places in you all the hope of his salvation. From you I hold my life. You restore me to the grace of your Son; you are the sure Pledge of my salvation. I beg you, then, to free me from the weight of my sins: destroy the darkness of my mind, drive earthly affections from my heart, repress the temptations of my enemies, and so govern my life that through you, and under your guidance, I may come to the eternal happiness of Paradise.

Prayer of St. Andrew of Crete (or of Jerusalem, since it is not known whether these are two Prelates or one).

I greet you, O full of Grace, the Lord is with you. I greet you, O Instrument of our gladness, through whom the sentence of our condemnation has been revoked and changed into a judgment of blessing. I greet you, O Temple of the glory of God, Sacred House of the King of the Heavens. You are the Reconciliation of God with Men. I greet you, O Mother of our gladness. Truly you are blessed, since you alone among all Women were found worthy to be the Mother of your Creator. All Nations call you blessed.

O Mary, if I place my confidence in you, I shall be saved; if I am under your Protection, I have nothing to fear, because to be devoted to you is to have certain arms of Salvation which God does not grant except to those whom he wills to save.

O Mother of Mercy, appease your Son. While you were on Earth you occupied only a little part of it; but now that you are raised above the highest of the Heavens, the whole World regards you as the common Mercy Seat of all Peoples. We beg you,

then, O holy Virgin, to grant us the succour of your Pray-

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ers with God: Prayers that are dearer and more precious to us than all the treasures of the Earth; Prayers that make God favourable to our sins and obtain for us a great abundance of graces to receive pardon and to practice virtue; Prayers that halt our enemies, confound their designs, and triumph over their efforts.

Prayer of St. Ildephonsus.

I come to you, O Mother of God; I beg you to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, and to ordain that I be purified from all the faults of my life. I pray you to grant me the grace that I may be united in affection to your Son and to you: to your Son as to my God, to you as to the Mother of my God.

Prayer of St. Athanasius.

Hear, most Holy Virgin, our prayers, and remember us. Dispense to us the gifts of your riches and of the abundance of graces with which you are filled. The Archangel greets you and calls you full of grace. All Nations call you blessed; all the Hierarchies of Heaven bless you; and we, who are of the Earthly Hierarchy, say to you likewise: God save you, O full of grace, the Lord is with you; pray for us, O Mother of God, our Lady and our Queen.

Prayer of St. Anselm.

We pray you, O most Holy Lady, by that grace which God has shown you in so exalting you and in making all things possible to you with him, to bring it about that the fullness of grace which you have merited may make us partakers of your glory. Labour, O most merciful Lady, to procure for us that good for which God was pleased to become Man in your chaste womb. Do not make yourself hard to hear us. If you deign to pray to your Son, he will hear you at once. It is enough that you will us to be saved, and then we cannot but be saved. Now who could narrow the bowels of your Mercy? If you have no compassion on

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us — you who are the Mother of Mercy — what will become of us when your Son comes to judge us?

Succour us, then, O most compassionate Lady, without regarding the multitude of our sins. Think and think again that our Creator took human flesh from you not

to damn sinners but to save them. If you had not been made Mother of God, it might be said that, for your own advantage, you cared little whether we are saved or damned; but God clothed himself with your flesh for your salvation and for that of all Men. What will it profit us that you are so powerful and so glorious, if you do not make us partakers of your happiness? Help us and protect us: you know what need we have of your assistance. We commend ourselves to you: bring it about that we may not be damned, but may serve and love eternally your Son Jesus Christ.

Prayer of St. Peter Damian.

Holy Virgin Mother of God, succour those who implore your assistance. Turn to us. Can it be that, for having been deified, you have forgotten Men? Ah, certainly not. You know well in what dangers you have left us, and the wretched state of your Servants; no, it does not befit a Mercy so great as yours to forget a misery so great as ours. Turn to us with your power, for he who is powerful has given you Omnipotence in Heaven and on Earth. Nothing is impossible to you, since you can raise even the despairing to hope for Salvation. The more powerful you are, the more merciful you ought to be.

Turn to us also in love. I know, my Lady, that you are all kindness, and that you love us with a love that cannot be surpassed by any other love. How many times do you appease the anger of our Judge when he is on the point of chastising us! All the treasures of God's mercies are in your hands. Ah, let it not happen that you cease to do us good — you who seek nothing but the occasion of saving all the wretched and of pouring out your mercy upon them; since your glory is increased when through you penitents are pardoned, and the pardo-

ned reach Paradise. Turn to us, then, that we may come to see you in Heaven; since the greatest glory we can have is to see you after God, to love you, and to be under your protection. Ah, hear us, since your Son wills to honour you by denying you nothing of what you ask of him.

Prayer of St. William, Bishop of Paris.

O Mother of God, I have recourse to you, and I put it to you not to drive me away, since the whole Church of the Faithful calls you and proclaims you Mother of Mercy. You are she who, being so dear to God, are always heard: your compassion has never failed anyone; your most kindly affability has never despised any sinner, however enormous, who has commended himself to you. Or does the Church

perhaps name you its Advocate and the Refuge of the wretched falsely or in vain? Let it never be that my faults should hold you back from fulfilling the great office of compassion that is yours, by which you are the Advocate and the mediatrix of peace, the one Hope and the most sure Refuge of the wretched. Let it never be that the Mother of God — who for the benefit of the whole World brought forth the Fountain of mercy — should then refuse her compassion to any wretched creature who has recourse to her. Your office is to be the Peacemaker between God and Men: let your great compassion, then, which is far greater than all my sins, move you to succour me.

Prayer to Mary most holy, to be made to her every day at the end of the Visit.

Most holy Immaculate Virgin, and my Mother Mary: to you, who are the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the World, and the Advocate, the Hope, the Refuge of sinners, I have recourse this day — I, who am the most wretched of all. I adore you, O great Queen, and I thank you for all the graces you have granted me until now, and especially for having delivered me from hell, which I have so many times deserved. I love you, most lovable Lady; and by the love I bear you I promise always to serve you, and to do all I can that you may be loved by others too. I place

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in you all my hopes, all my salvation. Accept me for your servant, and receive me beneath your mantle, you Mother of Mercy. And since you are so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations — or rather obtain for me strength to overcome them until death. Of you I ask true love for Jesus Christ; from you I hope to die a good death. My Mother, by the love you bear to God, I beg you to help me always, but most of all at the last moment of my life. Do not leave me until you see me already saved in Heaven, blessing you and singing your Mercies for all eternity. Amen. So I hope, so may it be.

End of the first part.

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CHAPTER I

Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae — Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy

§I. How great our confidence in Mary ought to be, because she is the Queen of Mercy.

Since the great Virgin Mary was exalted to be Mother of the King of kings, with just reason Holy Church honours her, and wills that she be honoured by all, with the glorious title of Queen. If the Son is King, says St. Athanasius (*Serm. de Deip.*), the Mother must rightly be esteemed and named Queen: *Si ipse Rex est qui natus est de Virgine, Mater, quae eum genuit, Regina & Domina proprie ac vere censetur* — "If he who was born of the Virgin is himself King, then the Mother who bore him is properly and truly accounted Queen and Lady." From the moment Mary gave her consent, adds St. Bernardine of Siena, to be the Mother of the eternal Word, from that moment she merited to be made Queen of the world and of all creatures: *Haec autem Virgo in illo consensu meruit primatum orbis, dominium mundi, sceptrum regni super omnes creaturas* (Tom. 2, §51). If the flesh of Mary, reasons St. Arnold the Abbot, was not divided from that of Jesus, how then can the Mother be separated from the Son's monarchy? *Neque a dominatione filii Mater potest esse sejuncta. Una est Mariae & Christi caro* — "Nor can the Mother be severed from the dominion of the Son: the flesh of Mary and of Christ is one." Hence we must judge the glory of the Kingdom to be not merely shared between the Mother and the Son, but the very same: *Filii gloriam cum Matre, non tam communem judico, quam eandem* (*S. Arnol. de Laud. Virg.*).

And if Jesus is King of the universe, Queen of the universe also is Mary — *Regina constituta, totum jure possidet filii Regnum* — "constituted Queen, she possesses by right the whole Kingdom of her Son" (Rupert the Abbot). Hence, says St. Bernardine of Siena, as many creatures as serve God, so many must serve Mary too; for the angels and men, and all things that are in heaven and on earth, being subject to the empire of God, are subject also to the dominion of the Virgin: *Tot Creaturae serviunt gloriosae Virgini, quot serviunt Trinitati; Omnes namque Creaturae sive Angeli, sive homines, & omnia, quae sunt in Caelo & in Ter-*

ra, quia omnia sunt divino Imperio subjecta, gloriosae Virgini sunt subjectae (Tom. 2, ch. 61). And so Guerric the Abbot, turning to the Divine Mother, speaks to her thus: *Perge Maria, perge secura in bonis filii tui; fiducialiter age tanquam Regina, Mater Regis, & Sponsa; tibi debetur Regnum, & potestas.* Go on, then, O Mary; go on ruling in security; dispose at your pleasure of the goods of your Son; for, being Mother and Spouse of the King of the world, there is owed to you, as Queen, the kingdom and dominion over all creatures.

Mary, then, is Queen; but let everyone know, for our common consolation, that she is a Queen all sweetness, clemency, and inclined to the good of us wretched ones. Therefore Holy Church wills that in this prayer we salute her and call her the *Queen of Mercy*. The very name of Queen, as Blessed Albert the Great observes, signifies compassion and provision for the poor — unlike the title of empress, which signifies severity and rigour. The magnificence of kings and queens consists in relieving the wretched, as Seneca says: *Hoc Reges habent magnificum, prodesse miseris* — "This is the magnificence of kings: to do good to the miserable." So that whereas tyrants, in reigning, have their own good for their end, kings must have for their end the good of their vassals. Hence it is that at the consecration of kings their heads are anointed with oil, the symbol of mercy, to denote that in reigning they must above all cherish thoughts of compassion and beneficence toward their subjects.

Kings, then, ought principally to occupy themselves in works of mercy — yet not so as to forget to exercise justice against the guilty when it is due. Not so Mary, who, although a Queen, is nevertheless not the Queen of Justice, intent upon the punishment of evildoers, but the Queen of Mercy, intent only upon compassion and pardon for sinners. And therefore the Church wills that we expressly call her Queen of Mercy. The great Chancellor of Paris, Jean Gerson, considering the words of David — *Duo haec audivi, quia potestas Dei est, & tibi, Domine, misericordia* (Ps. 61:12) — says that, since the Kingdom of God consists in justice and in mercy, the Lord has divided it: the Kingdom of Justice he has reserved for himself, and the Kingdom of Mercy he has

ceded to Mary, ordaining that all the mercies dispensed to men should pass through the hands of Mary, and be dispensed at her pleasure. These are Gerson's words: *Regnum Dei consistit in potestate, & misericordia: potestate Deo remanente, cessit quodammodo misericordiae pars Matri regnanti* (P. 1, Tr. 4, S. Magn.) — "The Kingdom of God consists in power and mercy: the power remaining with God, the part of mercy has in a certain manner been yielded to the reigning Mother." And St.

Thomas confirms it in his Preface to the Canonical Epistles, saying that the holy Virgin, when she conceived the Divine Word in her womb and brought him forth, obtained half of the Kingdom of God, she becoming Queen of Mercy, and Jesus Christ remaining King of Justice: *Quando filium Dei in utero concepit, & postmodum peperit, dimidiam partem Regni Dei impetravit, ut ipsa sit Regina misericordiae, ut Christus est Rex justitiae.*

The Eternal Father constituted Jesus Christ King of Justice, and therefore made him universal Judge of the world; whence the Prophet sang: *Deus judicium tuum Regi da: & justitiam tuam filio Regis* (Ps. 72:2) — "Give to the King, O God, your judgment, and to the King's Son your justice." Here a learned interpreter takes up the word and says: Lord, you have given justice to your Son, *quia misericordiam tuam dedisti Matri Regis* — "because you have given your mercy to the King's Mother." And St. Bonaventure aptly turns that passage of David, saying: *Deus judicium tuum Regi da, & misericordiam tuam matri ejus* — "Give your judgment to the King, O God, and your mercy to his Mother." So likewise Ernest, Archbishop of Prague, says that the Eternal Father has given to the Son the office of judging and punishing, and to the Mother the office of compassionating and relieving the wretched: *Pater omne judicium dedit filio, & omne officium misericordiae dedit Matri.* Wherefore the same prophet David foretold that God himself, so to speak, consecrated Mary Queen of Mercy, anointing her with the oil of gladness — *Unxit te Deus oleo laetitiae* (Ps. 44) — that all of us, miserable children of Adam, might rejoice at the thought of having in heaven this great Queen, all full of the unction of mercy and of compassion toward us; as St. Bonaventure says: *Maria plena unctione misericordiae, & oleo pietatis, propterea unxit te Deus oleo laetitiae* (*S. Bon. in Spec.* ch. 7).

And how well, in this regard, does Blessed Albert the Great apply the history of Queen Esther, who of old was a figure of our Queen Mary. We read in the Book of Esther, chapter 4, that in the reign of Ahasuerus there went out through his realms a decree command-

ing the death of all the Jews. Then Mordecai, who was one of the condemned, committed their salvation to Esther, that she might interpose with the King to obtain the revocation of the sentence. At first Esther refused the office, fearing to provoke Ahasuerus the more; but Mordecai rebuked her, and sent word to her that she must not think of saving herself alone, since the Lord had placed her upon the throne to obtain salvation for all the Jews: *Ne putes, quod animam tuam tantum liberes, quod in domo Regis es prae cunctis Judaeis* (Esth. 4:13). So said Mordecai to

Queen Esther; and so may we poor sinners say to our Queen Mary, if ever she should draw back from obtaining for us from God deliverance from the chastisement we have justly deserved: *Ne putes, quod animam tuam tantum liberes, quia in domo Regis es per cunctis hominibus.* Do not think, O Lady, that God has exalted you to be Queen of the world only to provide for your own good, but so that you, made so great, might the more compassionate and the better succour us wretched ones.

When Ahasuerus saw Esther in his presence, he asked her lovingly what she had come to seek of him: *Quae est petitio tua?* — "What is your petition?" The Queen answered: *Si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, o Rex, dona mihi populum meum, pro quo obsecro.* My King, she said, if ever I have found favour in your eyes, give me my people, for whom I entreat. And Ahasuerus heard her, at once commanding that the sentence be revoked. Now if Ahasuerus granted Esther the salvation of the Jews because he loved her, how shall God fail to hear Mary — he who loves her immeasurably — when she prays to him for the miserable sinners who commend themselves to her, and says to him: *Si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, o Rex* — My King and my God, if ever I have found favour with you (and well does the Divine Mother know that she was the Blessed one, the only one among all mankind to find the grace lost by men; well does she know that she is the beloved of her Lord, loved more than all the saints and angels together) — *Dona mihi populum meum, pro quo obsecro.* If ever you love me, she says to him, give me, Lord, these sinners for whom I supplicate you. Is it possible that God should not hear her?

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And who does not know the power that the prayers of Mary have with God? *Lex clementiae in lingua ejus* (Prov. 31) — "The law of clemency is on her tongue." Every prayer of hers is like a law established by the Lord, that mercy be shown to all for whom Mary intercedes. St. Bernard asks why the Church names Mary *Queen of Mercy*; and he answers: because we believe that she opens the abyss of God's mercy to whom she wills, when she wills, and as she wills; so that there is no sinner, however enormous, who is lost, if Mary protects him: *Quod divinae pietatis abyssum cui vult, quando vult, & quomodo vult creditur aperire, ut nemo tam enormis peccator pereat, cui Sancta Sanctorum patrocinii suffragia praestat* (*S. Bern. in Salve Reg.*).

But have we perhaps to fear that Mary would disdain to interpose for some sinner because she sees him too laden with sins? Or ought the majesty and holiness of this great Queen to terrify us? No, says St. Gregory: the higher and holier she is, the sweeter and the more compassionate she is toward sinners who desire to amend

and have recourse to her: *Maria quanto altior, & sanctior, tanto clementior & dulcior circa conversos peccatores* (Bk. 1, Ep. 47). Kings and queens, with the majesty they display, inspire dread, and make their subjects afraid to enter their presence. But what fear, says St. Bernard, can the wretched have of going to this Queen of Mercy, since she shows nothing terrible or austere to those who come to seek her, but is all sweetness and courtesy? *Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidat humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile, tota suavis est, omnibus offerens lac, & lanam* (*Super Sign. Magn.*) — "Why should human frailty tremble to approach Mary? There is nothing austere in her, nothing terrible: she is all sweetness, offering to all milk and wool." Mary not only gives: she herself offers to us all milk and wool — the milk of mercy, to animate us to confidence; and the wool of refuge, to shelter us from the thunderbolts of divine justice.

Suetonius relates of the Emperor Titus that he could not deny any favour to whoever asked it of him — so much so that at times he promised more than he could perform; and to one who admonished him about this he replied that a prince ought not to send away discontented anyone whom he had once admitted to speak with him. Titus said so; but in fact he must often either have lied, or failed of his

promises. But our Queen cannot lie, and she can obtain whatever she wills for her devoted servants. And she has a heart so benign and compassionate that she cannot bear to send away discontented anyone who prays to her: *Ita benigna est* (says Louis Blosius, bk. 4, ch. 12), *ut neminem tristem redire sinat* — "So benign is she, that she suffers no one to go back from her in sadness." But how — St. Bernard says to her — could you, O Mary, refuse to succour the wretched, when you are the Queen of Mercy? And who are the subjects of mercy, if not the miserable? *Tu es Regina misericordiae, & qui subditi misericordiae, nisi miseri? Tu Regina misericordiae, & ego miserrimus peccator, subditorum maximus. Rege nos ergo, o Regina misericordiae* (*In Salv. Reg.*). You are the Queen of Mercy, and I the most miserable sinner of all: since, then, I am the greatest of your subjects, you must have more care of me than of all the others.

Have pity on us, then, O Queen of Mercy, and see to our salvation. And do not say to us, O most holy Virgin — so St. George of Nicomedia W1 prints "S. Gregorio Nicomediense"; see citation ledger seems to add — that you cannot help us because of the multitude of our sins; for you have such power and such compassion that no number of sins can ever overcome them: *Habes vires insuperabiles, ne clementiam tuam superet multitudo peccatorum. Nihil tuae resistet potentiae; tuam enim gloriam creator existimat esse propriam* (*Or. de exitu B. V.*) —

"You have invincible strength, lest the multitude of sins overcome your clemency. Nothing resists your power; for the Creator counts your glory as his own." Nothing resists your power, because your Creator and ours, in honouring you who are his Mother, counts your glory as his own. *Et filius in ea exultans, quasi exolvens debitum, implet petitiones tuas* — "And the Son, exulting in her, as if discharging a debt, fulfills your petitions." This means that although Mary is under an infinite obligation to her Son for having destined her to be his Mother, yet it cannot be denied that the Son too is greatly obligated to this Mother for having given him his human being; whence Jesus, as if to repay what he owes to Mary, rejoicing in her glory, honours her especially by always hearing all her prayers.

How great, then, must be our confidence in this Queen, knowing how powerful she is with God, and, at the same time, how rich and full of mercy — so much so that there is no one living on earth who does not share in the compassion and the favours of Mary. This the Blessed Virgin herself revealed to

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St. Bridget (*Riv.* bk. 1, ch. 6): "I am," she said to her, "the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of Mercy; I am the joy of the just, and the gate to bring sinners to God. Nor is there living on earth any sinner so accursed as to be deprived of my mercy; for everyone, if he receive nothing else, receives through my intercession the grace of being less tempted by the demons than he otherwise would be": *Ego Regina Caeli, ego mater misericordiae: Ego justorum gaudium, & aditus peccatorum ad Deum. Nullus est adeo maledictus, qui quandiu vivit careat misericordia mea; quia propter me levius tentatur a daemonibus, quam alias tentaretur.* "No one, moreover" — she added — "provided he has not been altogether accursed (that is, with the final and irrevocable malediction pronounced upon the damned), no one," she said, "is so cast off by God that, if he has invoked my aid, he shall not return to God and enjoy his mercy": *Nullus est ita abjectus a Deo, nisi fuerit omnino maledictus, qui, si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum, & habiturus sit misericordiam.* "I am called by all the Mother of Mercy; and truly the mercy of God toward men has made me so merciful toward them": *Ego vocor ab omnibus Mater misericordiae, & vere misericordia illius misericordem me fecit.* And she concluded by saying: *Ideo miser erit, qui ad misericordem, cum possit, non accedit* — "Therefore he shall be miserable who, when he can, does not come to one so merciful." He will be miserable, and miserable for ever in the next life, who in this life — able as he is to have recourse to me, who am so compassionate to all and so greatly desire to help sinners — miserably fails to have recourse, and is damned.

Let us then have recourse — and let us always have recourse — to the feet of this most sweet Queen, if we would be saved with certainty; and if the sight of our sins frightens and disheartens us, let us understand that Mary was made Queen of Mercy for this very end: to save, by her protection, the greatest and most lost sinners who commend themselves to her. These are to be her crown in heaven, according to the words of her divine Spouse: *Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni, coronaberis .... de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum* (Cant. 4) — "Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come: you shall be crowned ... from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards." And what are these dens of wild beasts and mon-

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sters, if not miserable sinners, whose souls become dens of sins — monsters more deformed than any that can be found? Now precisely by these miserable sinners, as Rupert the Abbot comments, saved through your means, O great Queen Mary, you shall be crowned in Paradise; for their salvation shall be your crown — a crown well worthy of, and proper to, a Queen of Mercy: *De talium leonum cubiculis tu coronaberis. Eorum salus corona tua erit* (*Rup. Vid.* bk. 3, *in Cant.*). And on this subject let the following example be read.

Example

It is related in the life of Sister Catherine of St. Augustine that in the place where this servant of the Lord lived, there lived a woman named Mary, who in her youth had been a sinner, and who, having reached old age, persisted obstinately in her perversity — so much so that, driven out by the townspeople and reduced to living in a cave outside her village, she died there half rotten, abandoned by all, and without the sacraments; and for this reason she was buried in the open country like a beast. And Sister Catherine, who used with great affection to commend to God the souls of all who passed to the other life, on learning of the wretched death of this poor old woman, did not think of praying for her at all, holding her — as everyone already held her — for damned. Four years had passed, when behold, one day there appeared before her a soul from Purgatory, which said to her: "Sister Catherine, how unhappy is my lot! You commend to God the souls of all who die, and on my soul alone you have had no pity." "And who are you?" said the servant of God. "I am," she answered, "that poor Mary who died in the cave." "What — you are saved?" replied Sister Catherine. "Yes, I am saved," she said, "by the mercy of the Virgin Mary." "And how?" "When I saw myself near the point of death, seeing myself so

full of sins and abandoned by all, I turned to the Mother of God and said to her: Lady, you are the refuge of the abandoned. Behold, at this moment I am abandoned by all; you are my only hope; you alone can help me; have pity on me. The holy Vir-

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gin obtained for me an act of contrition; I died, and I was saved; and she, my Queen, obtained for me also the grace that my punishment should be shortened, by my suffering intensely what I ought to have purged through many more years. Only some Masses are needed to free me from Purgatory; I beg you to have them said for me, and I promise to pray always to God and to Mary for you." Sister Catherine at once had the Masses celebrated; and behold, within a few days that soul appeared to her again, more radiant than the sun, and said to her: "I thank you, Catherine: see, now I go to Paradise, to sing the mercies of my God, and to pray for you."

Prayer

O Mother of my God and my Lady Mary: as a poor wretch, wounded and loathsome, presents himself before a great queen, so do I present myself before you, who are the Queen of Heaven and earth. From the lofty throne on which you sit, do not disdain, I beg you, to turn your eyes upon me, a poor sinner. God has made you so rich in order to relieve the poor, and has constituted you Queen of Mercy so that you might raise up the wretched. Look upon me, then, and have compassion on me. Look upon me, and do not leave me until you have changed me from a sinner into a saint. I see well that I merit nothing — rather, that for my ingratitude I should deserve to be stripped of all the graces that through your means I have received from the Lord. But you, who are the Queen of Mercy, do not go seeking merits, but miseries, that you may succour the needy. And who is poorer and more needy than I?

O exalted Virgin, I know already that you, being Queen of the universe, are my Queen also; yet I wish in a more particular way to dedicate myself wholly to your service, that you may dispose of me as you please. And so I say to you with St. Bonaventure: *Domina, me tuae dominationi volo committere, ut mea plenarie regas & gubernes, non mihi me relinquas* — "O Lady, to your dominion I wish to commit myself, that you may fully rule and govern all that is mine; do not leave me to myself." Rule me, my Queen, and do not leave me to myself. Command me, employ me at your pleasure, and chastise me too when I do not obey you; for most salutary

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for me will be the chastisements that come from your hands. I count it more to be your servant than to be lord of the whole earth. *Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac* — "I am yours; save me." Accept me, O Mary, as your own, and, as your own, see to my salvation. I will no longer be my own: to you I give myself. And if in the past I have served you so ill, having lost so many fair occasions of honouring you, for the time to come I will unite myself to the most loving and most faithful of your servants. No — from this day forward no one shall outstrip me in honouring and loving you, my most amiable Queen. So I promise, and so I hope to perform, with your help. Amen, amen.

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§II. How much greater our confidence in Mary ought to be, since she is our Mother.

Not without reason, and not in vain, do the devoted servants of Mary call her Mother; indeed they seem unable to invoke her by any other name, and are never satisfied with calling her, over and over, Mother, Mother. And rightly so — for she truly is our mother: not indeed of our flesh, but of our souls and of our salvation, in the order of the spirit. Sin, when it stripped our souls of the divine grace, stripped them of life as well. And so, when they lay miserably dead, Jesus our Redeemer came, in an excess of mercy and of love, to recover this lost life for us by his death upon the Cross, as he himself declared: *Veni, ut vitam habeant, & abundantius habeant. Joann. 10.* — "I came that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." *More abundantly*, because — so the theologians say — Jesus Christ brought us more good by his redemption than was the harm that Adam did us by his sin. Thus, reconciling us with God, he made himself the Father of souls in the new law of grace, as the Prophet Isaiah had long since foretold: *Pater futuri saeculi, princeps pacis. Is. c. 9.* — "Father of the world to come, Prince of peace." But if Jesus was the Father of our souls, Mary was the Mother; for in giving us Jesus she gave us the true life, and afterward, in offering upon Calvary the life of her Son for our salvation, she then brought us forth to the life of divine grace.

At two moments, then, as the holy Fathers tell us, Mary became our spiritual mother: and first,

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when she merited to conceive in her virginal womb the Son of God, as Blessed Albert the Great says. And St. Bernardine of Siena teaches it more expressly still.

When the Most Holy Virgin, at the Angel's Annunciation, gave the consent that the eternal Word awaited from her in order to become her Son — in giving that consent, says the Saint, she asked of God from that very hour, with an immense affection, our salvation; and she so set herself to procure our salvation that from that hour she carried us in her womb as a most loving Mother: *Virgo per hunc consensum in Incarnatione Filii omnium salutem vigorosissime expetiit, & procuravit; & omnium salvationi per hunc consensum se dedicavit, ita ut ex tunc omnes in suis visceribus bajulat, tanquam verissima mater filios suos. Tr. de B. V. Ser. 6.* — "By this consent to the Incarnation of the Son, the Virgin sought and obtained with all her might the salvation of all; and by this consent she dedicated herself to the salvation of all, so that from that time she carried them all in her womb, as a most true mother carries her children." W1 prints *bajulat*; the expected reading is *bajularet*. St. Luke, at *chapter 2*, speaking of the birth of our Saviour, says that Mary brought forth her firstborn: *Peperit Filium suum primogenitum* — "She brought forth her firstborn Son." Then, says an author, if the Evangelist asserts that the Virgin at that time brought forth the Firstborn, must we suppose that afterward she had other children? *Si primogenitus, ergo alii filii secuti sunt secundogeniti?* — "If he is the firstborn, then did other sons follow, second-born?" But the same author adds: it is of faith that Mary had no other children of the flesh besides Jesus; therefore she must have had other children of the spirit — and these are all of us. *Carnales nullos habet B. Virgo praeter Christum, ergo spirituales habeat, necesse est* — "The Blessed Virgin has no children of the flesh besides Christ; therefore she must needs have spiritual ones." This same thing the Lord revealed to St. Gertrude, who, reading one day the passage of the Gospel just cited, remained perplexed, not being able to understand how, since Mary was mother of Jesus Christ alone, he could be called her firstborn. And God explained to her that Jesus was her firstborn according to the flesh, but that men were her second-born children according to the spirit.

And by this we understand what is said of Mary in the sacred Canticles: *Venter tuus sicut acervus tritici vallatus liliis. Cant. 7.* — "Your womb is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies." St. Ambrose explains it, and says that although in the most pure womb of Mary there was but one grain of wheat, which was Jesus Christ, it is nevertheless called a heap of grain, because in that single grain were all the elect, of whom Mary too was to be mother: *Unum granum frumenti fuit in utero Virginis, Christus Dominus, & tamen acervus tritici dicitur; quia

granum hoc virtute omnes electos continent, ut ipse sit primogenitus in multis fratribus. S. Ambr. de Inst. Virg. — *"One grain of wheat was in the Virgin's womb, Christ the Lord; and yet it is called a heap of wheat, because this grain contains in its power all the elect, that he himself may be the firstborn among many brethren." W1 prints* continent*; the expected reading is* continet*. Whence William the Abbot wrote:* In illo uno fructu, in uno Salvatore omnium Jesu plurimos Maria peperit ad salutem. Pariendo vitam, multos peperit ad vitam. In Cant. 4. 13.* — "In that one fruit, in Jesus the one Saviour of all, Mary brought forth very many unto salvation. By bearing Life, she bore many unto life." In bringing forth Jesus, who is our Saviour and our life, Mary brought forth us all unto salvation and unto life.

The second moment in which Mary begot us to grace was when upon Calvary she offered to the Eternal Father, with such sorrow of her heart, the life of her beloved Son for our salvation. Whence St. Augustine attests that, having then cooperated by her love that the faithful might be born to the life of grace, she thereby became likewise the spiritual mother of all of us, who are members of our Head, Jesus Christ: *Illa spiritu mater est membrorum Salvatoris, quia cooperata est charitate, ut Fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur. De Virg. cap. 6.* — "She is in spirit the mother of the members of the Saviour, because she cooperated by charity that the faithful should be born in the Church." This is precisely the meaning of what is said of the Blessed Virgin in the sacred Canticles: *Posuit me custodem in vineis; vineam meam non custodivi. Cant. 1. 5.* — "They set me as keeper in the vineyards; my own vineyard I have not kept." To save our souls, Mary was content to sacrifice by death the life of her Son; so William comments: *Ut multas animas salvas faceret, animam suam morti exposuit* — "That she might make many souls safe, she exposed her own soul to death." And what was the soul of Mary, if not her Jesus, who was her life and all her love? For this reason Saint Simeon announced to her that one day her blessed soul was to be pierced by a sword too sorrowful: *Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit. Luc. 2. 55.* — "And a sword of sorrow shall pierce through your own soul." W1 prints *55*; the place is Luke 2. 35. Such was that very lance which pierced the side of Jesus, who was the soul of Mary. And from that hour she, by her sorrows, brought us forth to eternal life; so that we may all of us be called children of the sorrows of Mary. This most loving Mother of ours was always, and wholly, united to the Divine will; whence St. Bonaventure observes that, seeing the love of the Eternal Father toward men, who willed his Son dead for our salvation, and the love of the Son in willing to die for us, then — to conform herself to this excessive love of the Father and of the Son toward the human race — she too, with her whole will, offered and consented that her Son should die, so that we might be

saved. *Nullo modo dubitandum est, quia Mariae animus voluit etiam tradere Filium suum pro salute generis humani, ut mater per omnia conformis fieret Patri, & Filio. S. Bonav.* — "It is in no way to be doubted that Mary's soul willed also to deliver up her Son for the salvation of the human race, that the mother might be made in all things conformed to the Father and to the Son."

It is true that in dying for the Redemption of the human race Jesus willed to be alone: *Torcular calcavi solus. Is. 63. 3.* — "I have trodden the winepress alone." But seeing Mary's great desire to spend herself too for the salvation of men, he disposed that she, by the sacrifice and the offering of the life of that same Jesus, should cooperate in our salvation, and so become the Mother of our souls. And this our Saviour signified when, before expiring, looking from the Cross upon his Mother and upon the disciple St. John, who stood beside him, he said first to Mary: *Ecce filius tuus. Joan. c. 10.* — "Behold your son." W1 prints *c. 10*; the place is John 19. As though he had said to her: Behold the man who, by the offering you are making of my life for his salvation, is even now born to grace. And then, turning to the Disciple: *Deinde dicit discipulo: Ecce mater tua* — "Then he says to the disciple: Behold your mother." By these words, says St. Bernardine of Siena, Mary was then made Mother not of St. John only, but of all men, by reason of the love she had for them: *In Joanne intelligimus omnes, quorum B. Virgo per dilectionem facta est mater. Tom. 1. Serm. 55.* — "In John we understand all those of whom the Blessed Virgin was made mother by love." The final numeral is unclear in W1: 53 or 55; to be checked against W2. And on this account Silveira observes that St. John himself, in recording this event in his Gospel, wrote: *Deinde dicit discipulo: Ecce mater tua. Joan. 19.* Let it be noted that Jesus Christ did not say this to John, but to the disciple, to signify that the Saviour assigned Mary as Mother to all those in common who, being Christians, bear the name of his Disciples: *Joannes est nomen particulare, discipulus commune, ut denotetur, quod Maria omnibus detur in Matrem* — "John is a particular name, disciple a common one, that it may be shown that Mary is given as Mother to all."

Ego sum mater pulchrae dilectionis. Prov. 14. — "I am the mother of fair love." W1 prints *Prov. 14*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 24. I am the Mother of fair love, says Mary; for her love — as an author says (*Paciuchelli, de B. V.*) — which makes our souls fair in the eyes of God, brings it about that, like a loving Mother, she receives us as her children: *Quia tota est amor erga nos, quos in filios recepit* — "Because she is wholly love toward us, whom she has received as her children." And what mother loves her children, and looks to their good, as much as you, our most sweet Queen,

love us and procure our advancement? *Nonne plus sine comparatione nos diligis, ac bona nostra procuras, quam mater carnalis?* — "Do you not love us, and procure our good, beyond all comparison more than a mother of the flesh?" — says St. Bonaventure.

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O blessed are they who live under the protection of a Mother so loving and so powerful! The Prophet David, although Mary was not yet born in his day, nevertheless sought salvation from God by dedicating himself as a son of Mary, and prayed: *Salvum fac filium ancillae tuae. Psal. 85.* — "Save the son of your handmaid." *Cujus ancillae?* says St. Augustine — "Of what handmaid?" — *quae ait, ecce ancilla Domini. In Psal. 85.* — "of her who said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord." And who, says Cardinal Bellarmine, will ever have the boldness to tear these children from the bosom of Mary, once they have fled there to be saved from their enemies? What fury of hell, or of passion, can overcome them, if they place their confidence in the patronage of this great Mother? *Quam bene nobis erit sub praesidio tantae Matris? Quis detrahere audebit de sinu ejus? Quae nos tentatio, aut turbatio superare poterit, confidentes in patrocinio Matris Dei & nostrae? Bell. de Sept. Verb.* — "How well it shall be with us under the protection of so great a Mother! Who will dare to drag us from her bosom? What temptation or trouble shall be able to overcome us, while we trust in the patronage of the Mother of God and our own Mother?" It is told of the whale that, when she sees her young in danger, whether from storms or from hunters, she opens her mouth and takes them back into her body. Just so says Novarino: *Fidelium piissima Mater, furente tentationum tempestate, materno affectu eos velut intra viscera propria receptos protegit, donec in beatum portum reponat. V. Cap. 14. Exc. 81.* — "The most loving Mother of the faithful, when the storm of temptations rages, receives them with a mother's affection as though within her own womb, and protects them there until she sets them in the blessed harbour." Our Mother, when she sees her children in the greatest danger from the storm of temptations that rages about them — what does she do? Then she hides them with love as within her own heart; there she protects them, and does not cease to guard them until she has set them in the safe harbour of Paradise. O most loving Mother, O most compassionate Mother, be forever blessed; and forever blessed be that God who has given you to us for a Mother and for a sure Refuge in all the dangers of this life. The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget (*bk. 4, ch. 38*) that, just as a mother, if she saw her son among the swords of his enemies, would make every effort to save him: *Ita ego facio, & faciam omnibus peccatoribus misericordiam meam petentibus* — "So do I, and so will I do, for all sinners who ask

my mercy." So, she said, I do and will do for my children, sinners though they be, whenever they have recourse to me to be helped. See, then, how in every battle with hell we shall always conquer, and conquer surely, by having recourse to the mother of God and our mother, saying and repeating always: *Sub tuum praesidium confugimus Sancta Dei Genitrix* — "We fly to your protection, O holy Mother of God."

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W1 reprints the whole formula *sub tuum praesidium confugimus sancta Dei genitrix* at the head of p. 15, having already set it at the foot of p. 14; it is given here once. Oh, how many victories over hell have the faithful won by having recourse to Mary with this short but most powerful prayer! That great servant of God, Sister Maria Crocifissa the Benedictine, always overcame the demons in this way.

Be of good cheer, then, you who are children of Mary: know that she accepts as her children all who wish to be such. Be of good cheer — what fear have you of being lost, when this mother defends and protects you? *Dic, anima mea, cum magna fiducia: Exultabo & laetabor, quia quicquid judicabitur de me, pendet ex sententia fratris, & matris meae* — "Say, my soul, with great confidence: I will exult and rejoice, for whatever shall be judged concerning me depends upon the sentence of my brother and of my mother." Thus says St. Bonaventure; and thus ought whoever loves this good mother, and trusts in her protection, to take heart and speak: What do you fear, my soul? No — the cause of your eternal salvation shall not be lost, since the sentence rests in the hands of Jesus, who is your brother, and of Mary, who is your mother. And upon the same thought St. Anselm cries out for gladness, and gives us courage, saying: *O beata fiducia, o tutum refugium, mater Dei est mater mea! Qua certitudine igitur debemus sperare, quoniam salus de boni fratris, & piae matris pendet arbitrio? In Depr. ad V.* — "O blessed confidence! O safe refuge! The Mother of God is my mother. With what certainty, then, ought we to hope, since our salvation hangs upon the judgment of a good brother and a loving mother?" Behold, then, our mother, who calls to us and makes us hear: *Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me. Sap. 9.* — "If any one is a little child, let him come to me." W1 prints *Sap. 9*; the place is Prov. 9. 4. Little children always have their mother's name on their lips; and in every danger they meet, in every fright they take, at once their voice is heard to rise and cry: Mother, mother! Ah, most sweet Mary, ah, most loving mother — this is exactly what you desire: that we, become little children, should always call upon you in our dangers, and always have recourse to you, because you will to help and to save us, as you have saved all the children who have fled to you.

Example.

It is related in the *History of the Foundations made by the Society of Jesus in the Kingdom of Naples* (*bk. 5, ch. 7*) that there was a noble young Scotsman named William Elphinstone. He was a kinsman of King James. Born in heresy, he followed that false sect; but, enlightened by the divine light, which was gradually

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uncovering its errors to him, he came into France, where, with the help of a good Jesuit Father, likewise a Scot, and still more by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, he came at last to know the truth, abjured his heresy, and became a Catholic. He passed afterward to Rome, where a friend of his, finding him one day much afflicted and weeping, and asking him the cause, was answered that in the night his mother had appeared to him damned, and had said to him: My son, it is well for you that you have entered the true Church; but I, because I died in heresy, am already lost. Thereupon he grew still more fervent in devotion to Mary, choosing her for his only mother; and from her he received the inspiration to become a religious, and made a vow to do so. But being ill, he came to Naples to recover his health by a change of air; and in Naples the Lord willed that he should die, and die a religious. For, having fallen mortally ill shortly after his arrival, he obtained by his prayers and his tears from the Superiors that they should receive him; and so, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, when he received Communion as Viaticum, he made his Vows and was declared a member of the Society. After this he moved all who heard him by the affection with which he thanked his mother Mary for having torn him from heresy and brought him to die in the true Church, and in the House of God, in the midst of his religious brethren. Therefore he would exclaim: Oh, how glorious it is to die in the midst of so many Angels! Being urged to try to rest, he answered: Ah, this is no time for resting, now that the end of my life is already drawing near. Then, before dying, he said to those about him: Brothers, do you not see here the Angels of Heaven who assist me? And when one of those religious heard him murmuring some words between his teeth and asked what he was saying, he answered that his Guardian Angel had revealed to him that he was to remain a very short time in Purgatory, and that he would pass at once to Paradise. Then he returned to his converse with his sweet mother Mary; and repeating *Mother, Mother*, just like an infant who abandons himself to rest in his Mother's arms, he peacefully breathed his last. And shortly afterward a devout religious learned by revelation that he was already in Paradise.

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Prayer.

O my most holy Mother, how is it possible that, having a mother so holy, I should be so wicked? A mother who burns wholly with love toward God — and I should love creatures? A mother so rich in virtue — and I should be so poor? Ah, my most amiable mother, it is true, I do not deserve to be your son any longer, for by my evil life I have made myself all too unworthy of it. I am content that you should accept me as your servant; and to be admitted among the lowliest servants you have, I am ready to renounce all the kingdoms of the earth. Yes, I am content; but for all that, do not forbid me to call you my mother. This name consoles me utterly, it softens my heart, and it reminds me of my obligation to love you. This name gives me courage to trust greatly in you. The more my sins and the Divine Justice terrify me, the more I feel myself wholly comforted in thinking that you are my mother. Permit me, then, to say to you: my mother, my most amiable mother. So I call you, and so I will always call you. You, after God, are to be always my hope, my refuge, and my love in this valley of tears. So do I hope to die, giving up in that last moment my soul into your holy hands, and saying: My mother, my mother Mary, help me, have pity on me. Amen.

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§III. How great is the love this mother bears us.

If, then, Mary is our mother, we may consider how greatly she loves us. Love toward one's children is a necessary love; and this is the reason why (as St. Thomas observes, *Opusc. 60, ch. 4*) the Divine Law lays upon children the precept of loving their parents, while on the other hand there is no express precept given to parents to love their children. For love toward one's own offspring is a love implanted with such force by Nature herself that even the wildest beasts, as St. Ambrose says, cannot cease to love their young: *Natura hoc bestiis infundit, ut catulos parvulos ament. l. 6. Exa. c. 4.* — "Nature pours this into the beasts, that they should love their little ones."

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Whence the historians report that tigers, too, on hearing the cry of their young taken by hunters, will set themselves to swim the sea until they reach the ships in which they are held. If, then — says our most loving Mother Mary — not even tigers can forget their young, how can I forget to love you, my children? *Nunquid oblivisci potest mulier infantem suum, ut non misereatur figlio uteri sui? Et si illa*

oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui. Is. 44. 15. — "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have compassion on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget you." W1 prints *figlio* for *filio*, and *Is. 44. 15* for Is. 49. 15. And if ever — she adds — the case were supposed impossible, that a mother should forget a child, it is not possible that I should cease to love a soul that is my daughter.

Mary is our mother, not of the flesh (as we said) but of love: *Ego mater pulchrae dilectionis. Prov. 24. 24.* — "I am the mother of fair love." Here too the reference is given as *Prov.*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 24. And so the love alone that she bears us makes her become our mother; and for this reason she glories, says an author (*Paciuchelli*), in being the mother of love, since, having taken us for her children, she is all love toward us: *Se dilectionis esse matrem gloriatur, quia tota est amor erga nos, quos in Filios recepit* — "She glories in being the mother of love, because she is wholly love toward us, whom she has received as her children." And what could ever explain the love that Mary bears to us wretched creatures? Arnold of Chartres says that at the death of Jesus Christ she desired, with immense ardour, to die together with her Son for love of us: *Flagrabat Virgo aestuante charitate incensa, ut pro humani generis salute simul cum prole profunderet vitam. Tract. Verb. Dom.* — "The Virgin burned, set ablaze with surging charity, to pour out her life together with her offspring for the salvation of the human race." So that, adds Saint Ambrose, just as the Son hung dying upon the Cross, so Mary offered herself to the executioners, to give her life for us: *Pendebat in Cruce Filius, Mater persecutoribus se offerebat. De Inst. Virg. cap. 7.* — "The Son hung upon the Cross; the Mother offered herself to his persecutors."

But let us consider the reasons for this love, since by them we shall the better understand how greatly this good Mother loves us. The first reason for the great love Mary bears to men is the great love she bears to God. Love toward God and love toward our neighbour, as St. John wrote, fall under the same Precept: *Hoc mandatum habemus a Deo: ut qui diligit Deum, diligat & fratrem suum. 1. Jo. 4. 41.* — "This commandment we have from God: that he who loves God should love his brother also." W1 prints *41*; the place is 1 John 4. 21. So that as much as the one grows, so much does the other advance. Hence we know that the Saints, because they loved God greatly, what have they not done for love of their neighbour? They have gone so far as

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to expose and lose their liberty, and their very lives, for his salvation. Let a man read what St. Francis Xavier did in the Indies, where, to help the souls of those

barbarians, he went clambering over the mountains, hazarding himself among a thousand dangers, in order to find those wretched people within their caves, where they lived like wild beasts, and to bring them to God. Or a St. Francis de Sales, who, to convert the heretics of the province of the Chablais, ventured for a whole year to cross the river every day on all fours over a frozen beam, in order to reach the other bank and preach to those obstinate men. Or a St. Paulinus, who gave himself up as a slave in order to obtain the freedom of the son of a poor widow. Or a St. Fidelis, who, to draw the heretics of a certain place to God, was content to lose his life in preaching. The Saints, then, because they loved God greatly, came to do so much for love of their neighbours. But who has loved God more than Mary? She loved God more in the first moment of her life than all the Saints and all the Angels have loved him in the whole course of theirs — as we shall consider at length later, when we speak of the virtues of Mary. The Virgin herself revealed to Sister Maria Crocifissa (*Life, bk. 2, ch. 5*) that so great was the fire of the love with which she burned toward God that, if all Heaven and Earth were set within it, they would be consumed in a moment; and she said that, compared with it, all the ardours of the Seraphim were like cool breezes. Therefore, just as among all the blessed Spirits there is none who loves God more than Mary, so we neither have nor can have anyone who, after God, loves us as this most loving Mother of ours does. And if one were to unite all the love that all mothers bear their children, all husbands their wives, and all the Saints and Angels their devoted servants, it would not come up to the love that Mary bears to a single soul. Fr. Nieremberg says that the love which all mothers have borne their children is a shadow beside the love that Mary bears to any one of us; she alone, he adds, loves us more than all the Angels and Saints together.

Besides this, our mother loves us greatly because we were commended to her as her children by her beloved Jesus, when, before expiring, he said to her: *Mulier,*

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ecce Filius tuus — "Woman, behold your son," signifying to her, in the person of John, all of us men, as we have considered above. These were the last words the Son spoke to her. The last remembrances left us by those we love, at the moment of their death, are prized above measure, and their memory can never be lost. Moreover, we are children all too dear to Mary, because we cost her all too much sorrow. Mothers indeed love those children more whose lives have cost them the greater hardship and pain. We are those children, for whom Mary, to obtain for us the life of Grace, had to endure the pain of herself surrendering to death the dear life of her Jesus, consenting for our sake to see him die before her eyes under the force of torments. From this great offering of Mary we were then born to the life of Divine Grace. And

so we are children all the dearer to her because we cost her so much anguish. Whence, as it is written of the love which the Eternal Father bore toward men, in giving over to death for us his own Son: *Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret. Joann. 3. 16.* — "So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son" — so too, says St. Bonaventure, may it be said of Mary: *Sic Maria dilexit nos, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret* — "So Mary loved us, that she gave her only-begotten Son." And when did she give him to us? She gave him, says Fr. Nieremberg, when she first granted him leave to go to his death; she gave him when, all others failing, whether from hatred or from fear, she alone might well have defended the life of her Son sufficiently before the Judges. And it may well be believed that the words of a mother so wise, and so tender toward her Son, would have carried great weight, at least with Pilate, so that he might have held back from condemning to death a man whom he himself knew and declared to be innocent. But no: Mary would not say so much as one word in favour of her Son, so as not to hinder that death upon which our salvation depended. She gave him at last a thousand and a thousand times at the foot of the Cross in those three hours during which she assisted at her Son's death; for then, in every instant, she did nothing else than sacrifice for us the life of her Son, with utmost sorrow and utmost love toward us, and with such constancy that St. Anselm and St. Antoninus say that, if

the executioners had then been wanting, she herself would have crucified him, in order to obey the will of the Father, who willed him dead for our salvation. And if a like act of fortitude — the willingness to sacrifice his son with his own hands — was performed by Abraham, we must believe that Mary would certainly have carried it out with greater constancy still, being holier and more obedient than Abraham. But to return to our point: how grateful ought we to live toward Mary for an act of such love — for the Sacrifice, I mean, which she made of her Son's life, with such sorrow of her own, in order to obtain salvation for us all? The Lord richly rewarded Abraham for the Sacrifice he prepared to make him of his Isaac; but what can we render to Mary for the life she has given us of her Jesus, a Son far more noble and more beloved than the son of Abraham? This love of Mary's, says St. Bonaventure, has bound us all too strongly to love her, seeing that she has loved us more than any other, because she has given us her only Son, whom she loved more than herself. *Nulla post eam creatura ita per amorem nostrum exardescet, quae Filium suum unicum, quem multo plus se amavit, nobis dedit, & pro nobis obtulit. S. Bon.* — "No creature after her will so burn with love for us: she who gave us her only Son, whom she loved far more than herself, and offered him up for us."

And from this arises the other motive for which we are so greatly loved by Mary: because she sees that we are the price of the death of Jesus Christ. If a mother were to see a servant ransomed by a beloved son of hers at the cost of twenty years of prison and hardship, how greatly would she prize that servant for this reason alone? Well does Mary know that her Son came upon Earth for no other end than to save us wretched creatures, as he himself declared: *Veni salvum facere quod perierat. Luc. 19. 10.* — "I came to save what had perished." And to save us he was content to spend even his life: *Factus obediens usque ad mortem. Phil. 2. 8.* — "Made obedient unto death." If, then, Mary loved us little, she would show little esteem for the blood of her Son, which is the price of our salvation. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth the Nun that Mary, from the time she was in the Temple, did nothing else but pray for us, praying that God would soon send his Son to save the world. How much more, then, must we think that she loves us, now that she has seen us so prized by her Son, who did not disdain to purchase us at so great a cost to himself?

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And because all men have been redeemed by Jesus, therefore Mary loves and favours all. She was seen by St. John clothed with the Sun: *Et Signum magnum apparuit in Caelo, mulier amicta sole. Apoc. 12. 1.* — "And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun." She is said to be clothed with the Sun for this reason: that as there is no one on Earth who can ever hide from the heat of the Sun — *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus. Psalm. 18.* — "There is none that can hide himself from its heat" — so there is no living creature on Earth deprived of the love of Mary. *A calore ejus*, the Idiot applies, *idest a dilectione Mariae* — "from its heat, that is, from the love of Mary." And who, says St. Antoninus, can ever comprehend the care that this loving Mother has for us all? *Oh quanta cura est Virgini Matri de nobis!* — "Oh, how great is the Virgin Mother's care for us!" Therefore she offers and dispenses her mercy to all: *Omnibus aperit sinum misericordiae suae* — "To all she opens the bosom of her mercy." For our Mother has desired the salvation of all, and to the salvation of all she has cooperated. *Constat* (affirms St. Bernard, *Ho. 2. Mis.*) *pro universo genere humano fuisse solicitam* — "It is certain that she was solicitous for the whole human race." Whence it comes that the practice of certain devoted servants of Mary proves most useful: they are accustomed, as Cornelius a Lapide relates, to pray the Lord to grant them those graces which the Blessed Virgin seeks for them, saying: *Domine, da mihi, quod pro me postulat SS. Virgo Maria* — "Lord, give me what the most holy Virgin Mary asks for me." And with reason, says the same a Lapide, since our mother desires greater goods for us than we ourselves are able to desire: *Ipsa enim majora optat, quam nos optare possumus* — "For she

desires greater things than we are able to desire." And the devout Bernardine de Bustis says that Mary loves to do us good and to dispense graces to us more than we desire to receive them: *Plus ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, & largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas. Mar. 1. Ser. 5.* — "She herself desires to do you good and to bestow grace upon you more than you desire to receive it." Whence Blessed Albert the Great applies to Mary the words of Wisdom: *Praeoccupat qui se concupiscunt, ut illis se prior ostentet. Sap. 6. 14.* — "She goes before those who desire her, showing herself to them first." Mary forestalls those who have recourse to her, letting herself be found by them before they seek her. So great, says Richard, is the love this good mother bears us that, when she perceives our needs, she comes to our aid: *Prius occurrit, quam invocetur. Ric. in Cant. 4. 5.* — "She comes to meet us before she is invoked."

Now if Mary is so good to all, even to the ungrateful and the negligent, who love her little and have little recourse to her, how much more loving will she be to those who love her and often invoke her? *Facile in-*

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venitur ab his qui diligunt illam. Sap. 6. 13. — "She is easily found by those who love her." Oh, how easy a thing it is, adds the same Blessed Albert, for those who love Mary to find her, and to find her full of tenderness and of love! *Ego diligentes me diligo. Prov. 8.* — "I love those who love me": she declares that she cannot but love those who love her. And although this most loving Lady loves all men as her children, yet — says St. Bernard — she *agnoscit & diligit*: "she knows and loves"; she knows how to recognize and love with a special mark those who love her more tenderly. These happy lovers of Mary, asserts the Idiot, are not only loved by her but also served: *Inventa Maria Virgine, invenitur omne bonum; Ipsa namque diligit diligentes se, immo sibi servientibus servit. De contemplat. Virgin. in Prolog.* — "When the Virgin Mary is found, every good is found; for she loves those who love her, and indeed she serves those who serve her."

Leonard, a Dominican, who two hundred times a day commended himself to this Mother of mercy, lay dying (as is related in the Chronicles of the Order). One day, behold, he saw beside him a most beautiful Queen, who said to him: Leonard, do you wish to die, and to come to my Son and to me? The religious answered: And who are you? I am, replied the Virgin, the mother of mercies: you have invoked me so many times — see, I have now come to take you; let us go to Paradise. And Leonard dying that same day, we hope that he followed her to the Blessed Kingdom.

Ah, most sweet Mary, blessed is he who loves you! Venerable Brother John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus used to say: *If I love Mary, I am sure of*

perseverance, and I shall obtain from God whatever I wish. And therefore the devout young man was never satisfied with renewing his resolution, and often repeating to himself: *I will love Mary, I will love Mary.* Oh, how far this good Mother surpasses all her children in love! Let them love her as much as they can: *Semper Maria cum amantibus est amantior*, says St. Ignatius Martyr (*Ep. ad Aur.*) — "Mary is always more loving than those who love her." Let them love her as much as a St. Stanislaus Kostka, who loved this dear mother of his so tenderly that, when he spoke of her, he made everyone who heard him wish to love her. He had coined new words and new titles for himself, with which he honoured her name. He began no action without first turning to some image of her and asking her Blessing. When he recited the Of-

fice, the Rosary, or other prayers to her, he said them with such affection and expression as though he were speaking face to face with Mary. When he heard the *Salve Regina* sung, he took fire wholly in his soul, and even in his countenance. Being asked once by a Father of the Society, as they were going together to visit an Image of the Blessed Virgin, how much he loved her, he answered: Father, what more can I tell you? She is my mother. But that Father afterward said that the holy young man uttered these words with such tenderness of voice, of look, and of heart, that he seemed not a young man at all, but an Angel speaking of the love of Mary.

Let them love her as much as a Blessed Hermann, who called her his bride of love; while by Mary herself he too was honoured with the name of Bridegroom. As much as a St. Philip Neri, who was wholly consoled by thinking only of Mary, and therefore called her his delight. As much as a St. Bonaventure, who called her not only his Lady and mother, but, to show the tenderness of the affection he bore her, went so far as to call her his heart, his soul: *Ave Domina mea, mater mea; imo cor meum, anima mea* — "Hail, my Lady, my mother; nay rather, my heart, my soul." Let them love her still as much as that great lover of Mary, St. Bernard, who so loved this sweet mother of his that he called her the thief of hearts: *Raptrix cordium*. Whence the Saint, to express to her the ardent love he bore her, would say to her: *Nonne rapuisti cor meum?* — "Have you not stolen away my heart?" Let them call her their Beloved, as a St. Bernardine of Siena named her, who went every day to visit her in a devout Image, to declare his love to her in the tender conversations he held with his Queen; and therefore, to anyone who asked him where he went every day, he would say that he was going to find his Beloved. Let them love her as much as a St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who burned so continually with love toward Mary that scarcely did he hear the most sweet name of his dear mother sound, than at once his heart took fire, and the flame appeared ruddy in his face for all to see. Let them love

her as much as a St. Francis Solano, who, almost mad (but with a holy madness) for love of Mary, would sometimes take up musical instruments and sing of love before an Image of hers,

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saying that, just as the lovers of this world do, he was singing his serenade to his beloved Queen.

Let them love her as much as she has been loved by those many servants of hers who no longer knew what to do to show her their love. Fr. Girolamo da Trexo of the Society of Jesus rejoiced to call himself the Slave of Mary, and as a sign of his slavery he often went to visit her in a church of hers; and there, what did he do? On reaching the church, he first bathed it with tears for the tenderness of the love he felt toward Mary; then he swept it with his tongue and with his face, kissing that pavement a thousand times, thinking that this was the House of his beloved Lady. Fr. Diego Martinez, of the same Society of Jesus, who for his Devotion to our Lady was carried by the Angels into Heaven on Mary's Feasts to see with what honour they were celebrated, used to say: I would that I had all the hearts of the Angels and the Saints, to love Mary as they love her. I would have the lives of all men, to spend them all for love of Mary. Let others go on to love her as much as Charles, the son of St. Bridget, loved her, who said he knew of nothing that consoled him more in this world than to know that Mary was so greatly loved by God. And he added that he would willingly have accepted any suffering to bring it about that Mary should not lose — if ever she could have lost it — one degree of her Greatness; and that if the greatness of Mary had been his own, he would have renounced it to her, since she was far more worthy of it than he. Let them desire, too, to give their lives in witness of their love for Mary, as Alphonsus Rodriguez desired. Let them go so far at last as to carve upon their breasts with sharp irons the lovely Name of Mary, as did a certain Francesco Binanzio, a religious, and a Radegund, bride of King Clothar. Let them go so far as to imprint the beloved Name upon their flesh with red-hot irons, to make it remain more distinct and more lasting, as did, driven by love, her devoted servants Battista Archinto and Agostino d'Espinosa, both of the Society of Jesus.

Let them do, then, or think to do, all that is possible for a lover to do who is bent on making his affection known as far as he can to the person he loves: the Lovers of Mary will never come to love her as much as she loves them. *Scio, Domina*, said

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St. Peter Damian, *quia amantissima es, & amas nos Amore invincibili* (*Serm. 1. de Nat. B. V.*) — "I know, my Lady, that you are most loving, and that you love us with an unconquerable Love." I know, my Lady (he said), that among all who love you,

you are the one who loves most, and that you love us with a Love that lets itself be overcome by no other love. The Venerable Alphonsus Rodriguez of the Society of Jesus was once at the feet of an Image of Mary, and there, feeling himself burn with love toward the holy Virgin, he burst out and said: My most amiable mother, I know that you love me; but you do not love me as much as I love you. Then Mary, as though offended on the point of love, answered him from that Image: What are you saying, Alphonsus, what are you saying? Oh, how much greater is the love I bear you than the love you bear me! Know, she told him, that there is not so great a distance from Heaven to Earth as there is between my love and yours.

St. Bonaventure has good reason, then, to cry out: blessed are they who have the happiness of being faithful servants and lovers of this most loving Mother! *Beati quorum corda diligunt Mariam! Beati qui Ei famulantur!* — "Blessed are they whose hearts love Mary! Blessed are they who serve her!" Yes — for this most grateful Queen never lets herself be outdone in love by her devoted servants. *Nunquam in hoc certamine a nobis ipsa vincitur. Amorem redhibet, & praeterita beneficia semper novis adauget.* (*Paciuchelli, de B. Virg.*) — "Never in this contest is she overcome by us. She repays love, and always increases her past favours with new ones." Mary, imitating in this our most loving Redeemer Jesus Christ, repays with her benefits and favours a doubled love to whoever loves her. *Vestri continuo amore* (so I too will cry out with the enamored St. Anselm) *langueat cor meum, liquefiat Anima mea* (*In Depr. ad V.*) — "May my heart faint with continual love of you; may my soul melt away." Let my heart burn always for you, and let my soul be wholly consumed with love, O my beloved Saviour Jesus, O my dear Mother Mary. *Date itaque supplicanti Animae meae, non propter meritum meum, sed propter meritum vestrum, date illi quantum dignis estis amorem vestrum* — "Give, therefore, to my pleading soul — not for my merit, but for yours — give it your love, as much as you are worthy of." Grant then, O Jesus and Mary, since without your Grace I cannot love you — grant to my soul, by your merits and not my own, that I may love you as much as you deserve. *O Amator Hominum, Tu potuisti Reos tuos usque ad mortem amare, & poteris roganti amorem Tui & Matris tuae negare?* — "O Lover of men, you were able to love your guilty ones even unto death: and can you deny to one who asks it the love of you and of your Mother?" O God enamored of men, you were able to die for your enemies: and can you deny to one who asks it the grace of loving you and your Mother?

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Example.

It is related by Fr. Auriemma (*Affetti Scambievoli, vol. 2, ch. 7*) that a poor shepherd girl, who kept the herds, so loved Mary that all her delight was to go off to a little Chapel of our Lady that stood on the mountain, and there to withdraw, while her sheep were grazing, to speak with her dear Mother and to pay her honours. Seeing that the Image of Mary there (which was carved in relief) stood unadorned, she set herself, with the poor labour of her hands, to make her a mantle. One day, having gathered some flowers from the field, she wove them into a garland; and then, climbing up on the Altar of that little Chapel, she set it upon the head of the Image, saying: My mother, I would gladly place upon your brow a crown of gold and gems; but because I am poor, receive from me this poor crown of flowers, and accept it as a sign of the love I bear you. In this way, and with other acts of homage, this devout young girl was always striving to serve and honour her beloved Lady. But let us now see how the good Mother in turn rewarded the visits and the affection of this daughter of hers. She fell ill and was brought near to death. It happened that two religious, passing through those parts and wearied by their journey, lay down to rest under a tree: one was sleeping, the other awake, but they had the same vision. They saw a company of most beautiful maidens, and among them was one who surpassed them all in beauty and Majesty. One of the two asked her: Lady, who are you? and where are you going by these roads? I, she answered, am the Mother of God, and with these holy Virgins we are going to visit, in the nearby village, a dying shepherd girl who has visited me so many times. So she spoke, and they vanished. After this, both those good Servants of God said: Let us go and see her too. They set out, and finding at last the house where the dying maiden lay, they entered a little hovel, and there upon a little straw they found her lying. They greeted her, and she said to them: Brothers, pray God to let you see the Company that assists me. They knelt at once, and saw Mary standing beside the dying girl with a crown in her

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hand, consoling her. And behold, those holy Virgins begin to sing; and at that sweet singing the blessed soul is loosed from the body. Mary sets the crown upon her head, and taking her soul, bears it away with her into Paradise.

Prayer.

O *Domina, quae rapis corda* — "O Lady, who ravish hearts" — I will say with St. Bonaventure: O Lady, who by the love and the favours you show your Servants carry off their hearts, carry off my wretched heart also, which desires to love you greatly. You, my Mother, by your Beauty have enamored a God and drawn him

from Heaven into your womb; and shall I live without loving you? No, I say with that other loving Son of yours, John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus: *Nunquam quiescam, donec habuero tenerum Amorem erga Matrem meam Mariam* — "Never will I rest until I have a tender Love toward my Mother Mary." I will never rest until I am sure of having obtained love — but a constant and tender love toward you, my Mother, who have loved me with such tenderness even when I was so ungrateful to you. And what would become of me now, if you, O Mary, had not loved me and obtained for me so many mercies? If, then, you loved me so much when I did not love you, how much more ought I to hope from your Goodness now that I do love you? I love you, O my Mother; and I would wish for a heart that could love you for all those unhappy souls who do not love you. I would wish for a tongue that could praise you with the worth of a thousand tongues, so as to make known to all your Greatness, your Holiness, your Mercy, and the Love with which you love those who love you. If I had riches, I would spend them all in your honour. If I had subjects, I would make them all your Lovers. I would wish, in short, to spend my very life for you and for your Glory, if there were need. I love you, then, O my Mother; but at the same time I fear that I do not love you — for I hear it said that love makes lovers like the persons they love. *Amor aut similes invenit, aut facit* (*Aristotle*) — "Love either finds them alike, or makes them so." If, then, I see myself so unlike you, it is a sign that I do not love you. You so pure, and I so foul? You so humble, and I so proud? You so holy, and I so wicked! But this is what you

have to do, O Mary: since you love me, make me like yourself. You have all power to change hearts; take mine, then, and change it. Show the World what you can do in favour of those whom you love. Make me holy, make me a son worthy of you. So I hope; so may it be.

§IV. Mary is the Mother also of repentant Sinners.

Mary declared to St. Bridget (*Bk. 4, Rev., ch. 138*) W1 prints *non* ("not") where the sense requires *con* ("to"); verified at high magnification that she is the Mother not only of the Just and of the Innocent, but of sinners as well, provided they are willing to amend: *Ego sum quasi Mater omnium peccatorum volentium se emendare* — "I am, as it were, the Mother of all sinners who are willing to amend." Oh, when a sinner who wishes to amend has recourse to her feet, how he finds this good Mother

of Mercy readier to embrace and help him than any mother of the flesh would be! This is precisely what St. Gregory wrote to the Princess Matilda: *Pone finem in voluntate peccandi, & invenis Mariam (indubitanter promitto) promtiorem carnali matre in tui dilectione* (*bk. 4, Ep. 47*) — "Put an end to your will to sin, and you will find Mary (I promise it without hesitation) readier in her love for you than a mother of the flesh." But whoever aspires to be a Son of this great Mother must first leave off sin, and then hope to be accepted as a Son. Upon the words *Surrexerunt filii ejus* — "Her children rose up" (*Prov. 31. 28*) — Richard reflects, and notes that there it says first *surrexerunt*, "they rose up," and then *filii*, "children." Because, he adds, no one can be a Son of Mary who does not first seek to rise from the sin into which he has fallen. *Nec dignus est, qui in mortali peccato est, vocari filius tantae Matris* — "Nor is he who is in mortal sin worthy to be called the son of so great a Mother." Whence St. Peter Chrysologus warns: *Qui genitricis non facit opera, negat genus* — "He who does not do the works of his mother denies his lineage." He who does works contrary to Mary's denies by his deeds that he wishes to be her Son. Mary is humble — and he wants to be proud? Mary is pure — and he unchaste? Mary is full of love — and he wants to hate his neighbour? He gives sign that he is not, and does not wish to be, a Son of this Holy Mother. *Filii Mariae* (Richard resumes) *imitatores ejus, in castitate, humilitate, mansuetudine, misericordia* — "The children of Mary are her imitators in chastity, in humility, in meekness, in mercy." And how shall he ever have the boldness to wish to be a son of Mary, who so displeases her by his life? A certain Sinner said one day to Mary: *Monstra Te esse Matrem* — "Show yourself to be a Mother." But the Virgin answered him: *Monstra te esse filium* — "Show yourself to be a son" (*Ap. Aur.*). Another was one day invoking this Divine Mother and calling her Mother of Mercy. Mary said to him: You sin-

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ners, when you want me to help you, call me Mother of Mercy; and then you never cease by your sins to make me a Mother of misery and of sorrows. (*Ap. Pelb.*) *Maledictus a Deo qui exasperat Matrem suam. Eccli. 18. 3.* — "Cursed by God is he who provokes his Mother." *Matrem suam, idest Mariam*, comments Richard — "his Mother, that is, Mary." God curses whoever afflicts this good Mother of his by his evil life, or worse still, by his obstinacy.

I said, by his obstinacy; because when afterward this sinner, though not yet out of sin, nevertheless strives to come out of it, and therefore seeks Mary's help, this Mother will not fail to succour him and bring him back into the Grace of God. Just so St. Bridget one day heard from the mouth of Jesus Christ, who, speaking with his

Mother, said to her: *Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium, & neminem relinquis vacuum a tua consolatione* — "To him who strives to rise up to God you give help, and you leave no one empty of your consolation." While, then, the sinner remains obstinate, Mary cannot love him. But if, finding himself perhaps chained by some passion that holds him a slave of hell, he will at least commend himself to the Virgin and pray her with confidence and perseverance to drive him out of his sin, then without doubt this good Mother will stretch out her mighty hand; she will loose him from his chains and lead him to a state of salvation. It was long since condemned as a Heresy by the Sacred Council of Trent to say that all the prayers and works done by one who is in sin are themselves sins. St. Bernard says that prayer in the mouth of a sinner, although it is not beautiful, since it is not accompanied by Charity, is nevertheless useful and fruitful for coming out of sin. For, as St. Thomas teaches (*2. 2. q. 178. a. 2. ad 1.*), the sinner's prayer is indeed without merit, but it is well fitted to obtain the grace of pardon; since the power of impetration is founded not upon the merit of the one who prays, but upon the Divine Goodness, and upon the merits and the promise of Jesus Christ, who said: *Omnis qui petit, accipit. Luc. 11.* — "Everyone who asks receives." The same must be said of the prayers offered to the Divine Mother: if he who prays, says St. Anselm, does not deserve to be heard, the merits of Mary, to whom he commends himself, will bring it about that he is heard: *Si merita invocantis non merentur, ut exaudiatur; merita tamen Matris intercedunt, ut exaudiatur* — "If the merits of the one invoking do not deserve that he be heard, still the merits of the Mother intervene, that he may be heard." Whence St. Bernard exhorts every sinner to pray to Mary, and to conceive great confidence in praying to her; because if the sinner does not deserve what he

asks, it is granted nonetheless to Mary, for her own merits, that those graces she asks of God for him should be given to the sinner. *Quia indignus erat, cui donaretur, datum est Mariae, ut per illam acciperes quicquid haberes* (*Ser. 3. in Vig. Nat.*) — "Because you were unworthy that it should be given to you, it was given to Mary, that through her you might receive whatever you have." This is the office of a good Mother, says the same Saint: a Mother who knew that two of her sons were mortal enemies, and that one was plotting against the other's life — what else would she ever do than try in every way to make peace between them? So, says the Saint, Mary is Mother of Jesus and Mother of Man: when she sees any sinner an enemy of Jesus Christ, she cannot bear it, and she exerts herself wholly to set them at peace: *O felix Maria, Tu Mater Rei, Tu Mater Judicis; cum sis Mater utriusque, discordias inter tuos Filios nequis sustinere.* (*In Depr. ad V.*) — "O happy Mary! You are the Mother

of the accused, you are the Mother of the Judge; and since you are Mother of both, you cannot endure discord between your Children." This most gracious Lady wants nothing else of the sinner than that he commend himself to her and have the intention of amending. When Mary sees at her feet a Sinner who comes to seek Mercy of her, she does not look at the sins he brings, but at the intention with which he comes. If he comes with a good intention, though he had committed all the sins of the World, she embraces him; nor does this most loving Mother disdain to heal all the wounds he carries in his soul. For she is not only called by us the Mother of Mercy: she truly is such, and shows herself such by the love and tenderness with which she comes to our aid. All this the Blessed Virgin herself expressed to St. Bridget, saying: *Quantumcumque homo peccat, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; Nec attendo, quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali intentione redit: Nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere, & sanare, quia vocor & vere sum Mater Misericordiae* (*Rev. l. 6. c. 23.*) — "However much a man sins, I am at once ready to receive him when he returns. Nor do I consider how much he has sinned, but with what intention he comes back; for I do not disdain to anoint and to heal his wounds, because I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy."

Mary is the Mother of sinners who wish to be converted; and as a Mother she cannot but have compassion on them — indeed, she seems to feel the ills of her poor Children as her own. The Canaanite woman, when she begged Jesus Christ to free her daughter from the demon that tormented her, said: *Miserere mei, Domine Fili David, filia mea male a Daemonio vexatur. Matth. 15. 22.* — "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David: my daughter is grievously tormented by a demon." But if it was the daughter, and not the Mother, who was tormented by the demon, it seems she ought to have said: Lord, have pity on my daughter, not have pity on me. Yet no — she said *miserere mei*, "have mercy on me"; and with reason, because all their children's miseries are felt as their own by their Mothers. Now

just so does Richard of Saint-Laurence say that Mary prays to God when some sinner who commends himself to her is thus commended to God by her: *Maria clamat pro Anima peccatrice: Miserere mei.* (*De Laud. V. n. 6.*) — "Mary cries out for the sinful soul: Have mercy on me." My Lord, she seems to say to him, this poor Soul that lies in sin is my Daughter; and therefore have pity, not so much on her, as on Me, who am her Mother. Oh, would to God that all sinners had recourse to this sweet Mother, for then all would certainly be pardoned by God! *O Maria* (cries St. Bonaventure in wonder), *peccatorem toti Mundo despectum, Materno affectu complecteris! nec deseris, quousque miserum Judici reconcilies. In spec. c. 5.* — "O

Mary, you embrace with a Mother's affection the sinner whom all the World despises; nor do you forsake him until you have reconciled the wretch with the Judge." And the Saint means that the sinner, while he remains in sin, is hated and driven off by all: even the senseless creatures — fire, air, earth — would punish him and take vengeance to repair the honour of their despised Lord. But if this wretched man has recourse to Mary, does Mary drive him away? No — not if he comes with the intention of being helped to amend. She embraces him with a Mother's affection; nor does she leave him until, by her powerful intercession, she has first reconciled him with God and restored him to his Grace.

We read in the second book of Kings (*ch. 14, v. 22*) that the wise Woman of Tekoa said to David: My lord, I had two sons; to my misfortune the one has killed the other, so that I have already lost one son. Now Justice would take from me the other, the only son left me: have pity on me, a poor mother; do not let me be left deprived of both these sons of mine. Then David, having compassion on this Mother, freed the offender and gave him back to her. Just this same thing Mary seems to say when she sees God angered against a sinner who commends himself to her: My God, she says to him, I had two sons, Jesus and Man; Man has killed my Jesus upon the Cross; now your Justice would condemn Man. Lord, my Jesus is already dead; have compassion on me, and if I have lost the one, do not make me lose the other son as well. Ah, certainly God does not condemn those sinners who have recourse to Mary and for whom she prays; for God himself has commended these sinners to Mary as her children. The devout Laspergius W1 prints *Laspergio*; probably Lanspergius makes the Lord speak thus: *Mariae peccatores in Filios commendavi. Porpterea* so in W1; read *Propterea adeo est sedula, ut, officio suo satisfaciens, neminem eorum, qui si-*

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bi commissi sunt, praecipue illam invocantium, perire sinat, sed quantum valet, omnes mihi reducat. (*V. l. 4. Min. Op.*) — "To Mary I have commended sinners as her children. Therefore she is so diligent that, fulfilling her office, she lets none of those committed to her perish — above all of those who invoke her — but, so far as she can, brings them all back to me." And who can ever explain, says Blosius, the Goodness, the Mercy, the Faithfulness, and the Charity with which this Mother of ours seeks to save us when we call upon her for help? *Hujus Matris Bonitas, Misericordia, Fidelitas, Charitas erga homines tanta est, ut nullis verbis explicari possit* — "So great is this Mother's goodness, mercy, faithfulness, and charity toward men that it can be explained in no words." Let us prostrate ourselves, then, says St. Bernard, before this good Mother; let us cling to her holy feet, and not let her go

until she blesses us and thereby accepts us as her children: *Beati illius pedibus pervolvamur; Teneamus eam, nec dimittamus, donec benedixerit nobis.* (*In Sign. Mag.*) — "Let us cast ourselves at her blessed feet; let us hold her fast and not let her go until she has blessed us." And who can ever lose confidence in the compassion of this Mother? St. Bonaventure used to say: *Etiamsi occiderit me, sperabo in eum; Et tutus confidens juxta ejus imaginem mori desidero, & salvus ero* — "Even though he should slay me, I will hope in him; and, trusting in safety, I desire to die beside her image, and I shall be saved." And so ought every sinner to say who has recourse to this compassionate Mother: My Lady and my Mother, for my faults I deserve that you should drive me away, and that you yourself should chastise me according to my demerits; but though you should thrust me back and slay me, I will never lose confidence in you, that you are to save me. In you I trust wholly; and if only I may have the lot of dying before some image of yours, commending myself to your Mercy, I hope with certainty not to be lost, but to come and praise you in Heaven in the company of so many of your Servants who, dying and calling upon you for help, are all saved by your powerful intercession. Let the following Example be read, and let it be seen whether any sinner can ever lose confidence in the Mercy and the Love of this good Mother, if he has recourse to her.

Example.

It is related by the writer of Beauvais (*In Spec. Hist.*) that in the City of Ridolio in England, in the year 1430, there was a young nobleman named Ernest, who, having given all his patrimony to the poor, became a Monk in a Monastery, where he led a life so perfect that his Superiors greatly esteemed him, and especially for the particular Devotion he had to the Most Holy Virgin. It happened that the plague broke out in that City, and the Citizens had recourse to the Monastery for the help of prayers. The Abbot bade

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Ernest go and pray before Mary's Altar, and not depart from it until our Lady gave him an answer. And the young man, continuing there three days, at last had from Mary the answer: certain prayers that were to be said. This was done, and the plague ceased. Now it came about afterward that this young man grew cold in his Devotion to Mary; the Devil assailed him with many temptations, especially of impurity, and to flee from the Monastery; and the wretched man, for not having commended himself to Mary, had already resolved to escape by throwing himself from a wall of the Monastery. But as he passed before the image of Mary that stood in the corridor,

the Mother of God spoke to him and said: My son, why do you leave me? Then Ernest, stunned and stricken with compunction, fell to the ground and answered: But my Lady, do you not see that I can resist no longer? Why do you not help me? And our Lady replied: And why have you not invoked me? For if you had commended yourself to me, you would not have been brought to this. From this day forward, she said to him, commend yourself to me, and do not doubt. Ernest went back to his cell. But the temptations returned; and again he did not take care to commend himself to Mary. So at last he fled from the Monastery, and giving himself to a most wicked life, passing from sin to sin, he finally came to be a murderer; for he took on lease an Inn, where by night he killed the poor travelers and stripped them. Among these he one night killed the Cousin of the Governor of that place, who, on the evidence obtained, held the trial and condemned him to the gallows. But while the trial was going forward, there came to the Inn a young Knight; and the villainous Innkeeper, forming his usual design upon him, entered the room at night to murder him. But behold — upon the bed he does not see the Knight, but a wounded Crucifix, which, looking upon him with compassion, says to him: Is it not enough for you, ungrateful man, that I died once for you? Do you want to kill me again? Come, then, quickly — stretch out your hand and kill me again. Then poor Ernest, confounded, began to weep; and weeping, he said: Lord, here I am; since you show me so many mercies, I will return to you. And he set out at once from the Inn to return to the Monastery to do penance; but being found on the road by the officers of Justice, he was brought before the Judge, and before him confessed all the murders he had committed. Whereupon he was condemned to die by the noose, without even being given time to make his con-

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fession. Then he commended himself to Mary. He was thrown from the gallows; but the Virgin brought it about that he did not die. She herself then loosed him, and said to him: Return to the Monastery; do penance; and when you shall see in my hand a written pardon of your sins, then prepare yourself for death. Ernest returned; and telling everything to the Abbot, he did great penance. After many years, behold, he saw in Mary's hand the writing of pardon; at once he prepared himself for death, and died a holy death.

Prayer.

O Mary, Sovereign Queen, and worthy Mother of my God, Mary most holy: seeing myself so vile and so befouled with sins, I ought not to have the boldness to

approach you and to call you mother. But I will not let my miseries deprive me of the consolation and the confidence I feel in calling you mother. I deserve — I know it well — that you should drive me away; but I beg you to look at what your son Jesus has done and suffered for me, and then drive me away if you can. I am a poor sinner who, more than others, has despised the Divine Majesty; but the evil is already done. To you I have recourse; you can help me: my mother, help me. Do not tell me that you cannot help me, for I know that you are almighty, and that you obtain from your God whatever you desire. And if you say that you will not help me, then tell me at least to whom I must have recourse to be relieved in so great a misfortune of mine. *Aut miseremini misero* (I will say to you and to your son with St. Anselm), *Tu parcendo, Tu interveniendo: aut ostendite, ad quos tutius fugiam misericordiores; Aut mostrate* so in W1; read *monstrate*, *in quibus certius confidam* — "Either have mercy on a wretch — you by pardoning, you by interceding — or show me any more merciful, to whom I may flee more safely; or point out any in whom I may more surely trust." Either have pity on me, you my Redeemer, by pardoning me, and you my mother, by commending me; or else teach me to what persons I must have recourse who are more compassionate than you, and in whom I may better trust. No — neither on Earth nor in Heaven can I find any who has greater compassion on the wretched than you, nor any who can better help me. You, Jesus, are my father; and you, Mary, are my mother. You love the most wretched, and you go seeking them out to save them. I am a guilty creature of hell, the most wretched of all; but you have no need to go seeking me, nor do I claim that you should seek me. I present myself to you, with the sure hope that I shall not be left abandoned by you. Here I am at your feet: my Jesus, pardon me; my Mary, help me.

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CHAPTER II.

Vita, Dulcedo — Our Life, our Sweetness.

§I. Mary is our Life, because she obtains for us the pardon of our Sins.

To understand rightly the reason why holy Church makes us call Mary our Life, we must know that, as the soul gives life to the body, so Divine Grace gives life to the soul. For a soul without Grace has the name of being alive, but in truth is dead, as was said to that man in the Apocalypse: *Nomen habes quod vivas, & mortuus es. Apoc. 3. 1.* — "You have the name of being alive, and you are dead." Mary, then, obtaining for sinners by her intercession the recovery of Grace, thereby gives them back their Life. See how holy Church makes her speak, applying to her these words from the Proverbs at *chapter 8: Qui mane vigilant ad me, invenient me* — "Those who watch for me at dawn shall find me." Those who are diligent in having recourse to me in the morning — that is, as soon as they can — will certainly find me. *Invenient me*, "they shall find me," the Seventy render *invenient gratiam*, "they shall find grace." So that to have recourse to Mary is the same thing as to find the Grace of God. And a little further on she says: *Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, & hauriet salutem a Domino* — "He who finds me shall find life, and shall draw salvation from the Lord." He who finds me finds Life, and shall receive from God eternal Salvation. *Audite* (cries St. Bonaventure upon these words), *audite qui cupitis Regnum Dei: Virginem Mariam honorate, & invenietis Vitam & Salutem aeternam* — "Hear, you who desire the Kingdom of God: honour the Virgin Mary, and you shall find Life and eternal Salvation."

St. Bernardine of Siena says that God did not destroy Man after his sin, out of the singular Love he bore to this future Daughter of his. And the Saint adds that he does not doubt that all the mercies and pardons received by sinners under the Ancient Law were granted them by God solely out of regard for this blessed Maiden: *Omnes indulgentias factas in Veteri Testamento non ambigo Deum fecisse solum propter hujus benedictae Puellae Virginis reverentiam, & amorem. Tom. 1. Serm. 61. cap. 8.* — "I do not doubt that God granted all the indulgences made in the Old Testament solely for reverence and love of this blessed Virgin Maiden."

Well, therefore, does St. Bernard exhort us: *Quaeramus gratiam, & per Mariam quaeramus. Serm. de Aquaed.* — "Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary." If in our wretchedness we have lost the Divine Grace, let us seek to recover it;

but let us seek it through Mary, since, if we have lost it, she has found it. And for this reason the Saint calls her *Inventrix Gratiae*, "the Finder of Grace." This St. Gabriel expressed for our

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consolation when he said to the Virgin: *Ne timeas Maria, invenisti Gratiam. Luc. 1.* — "Fear not, Mary: you have found Grace." But if Mary had never been without Grace, how could the holy Archangel say that she had found it? A thing is said to be found by one who did not have it before. The Virgin was always with God and in Grace — indeed full of Grace, as the same Archangel declared when he greeted her: *Ave Gratia plena, Dominus tecum* — "Hail, full of Grace, the Lord is with you." If, then, Mary did not find Grace for herself, having always been full of it, for whom did she find it? Hugh of St. Cher answers, commenting on that passage: she found it for sinners, who had lost it. *Currant ergo* (says the devout Writer), *currant peccatores ad Virginem, qui Gratiam amiserant peccando, & eam invenient apud ipsam. Secure dicant: Redde nobis rem nostram, quam invenisti* — "Let them run, then; let sinners run to the Virgin — those who lost Grace by sinning — and they will find it with her. Let them say with confidence: Give us back our own, which you have found." Let sinners run, then, to Mary, they who have lost Grace, because with her they will surely find it; and let them say: Lady, a thing must be restored to the one who lost it. This Grace that you have found is not yours — you have never lost it. It is ours, because we have lost it; therefore you must give it back to us. Whence Richard of Saint-Laurence concludes upon this thought: *Cupientes invenire Gratiam, quaeramus inventricem Gratiae, quae, quia semper invenit, frustrari non poterit.* (*De Laud. V. l. 2*) — "Desiring to find Grace, let us seek the Finder of Grace, who, because she always finds, can never be disappointed." If, then, we desire to find the Grace of the Lord, let us go to Mary, who has found it, and who always finds it. And since she has been, and always will be, dear to God, if we have recourse to her we shall certainly find it. She says in the Sacred Canticles at *ch. 8* that God has set her in the World to be our defense: *Ego murus, & ubera mea sicut turris* — "I am a wall, and my breasts are like a tower." And therefore she has been appointed the mediatrix of Peace between sinners and God: *Ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens. Cant. 8. 10.* — "Since I became before him as one who finds peace." Upon which words St. Bernard gives the sinner courage, and says: *Vade ad Matrem Misericordiae, & ostende illi tuorum plagas peccatorum: Et illa ostendet pro te ubera. Exaudiet utique Matrem Filius* — "Go to the Mother of Mercy, and show her the wounds of your sins; and she will show for you the breasts that nursed him. The Son will surely hear his Mother." Go to this Mother of Mercy, and lay open to her

the wounds you carry in your soul through your faults. Then she will certainly pray her Son to pardon you, for the sake of that Milk she gave him; and the Son, who loves her so much, will certainly hear her. And so, in fact, holy Church makes us pray the Lord to grant us the powerful help of Mary's

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intercession, that we may rise again from our sins, in that familiar Prayer: *Concede, misericors Deus, fragilitati nostrae praesidium: Ut qui sanctae Dei Genitricis memoriam agimus, intercessionis ejus auxilio a nostris iniquitatibus resurgamus* — "Grant, merciful God, a defense to our frailty; that we who keep the memory of the holy Mother of God may, by the help of her intercession, rise again from our iniquities."

With reason, then, does St. Lawrence Justinian call her the Hope of wrongdoers, *Spes delinquentium*, since she alone is the one who obtains pardon for them from God. With reason St. Bernard calls her the Ladder of sinners, *peccatorum Scala*, since to the poor fallen ones this compassionate Queen holds out her hand, draws them from the precipice of sin, and makes them climb to God. With reason St. Augustine calls her the one hope of us sinners, since through her alone we hope for the remission of all our sins: *Tu es spes unica peccatorum, quia per Te speramus veniam omnium delictorum. S. Aug. Serm. 18. de Sanctis.* — "You are the only hope of sinners, for through you we hope for the pardon of all our offenses." And St. John Chrysostom says the same: that it is through Mary's intercession alone that sinners receive pardon: *Per hanc peccatorum veniam consequimur* — "Through her we obtain the pardon of our sins." Whence the Saint then greets her thus, in the name of all sinners: *Ave igitur, Mater, Coelum, Thronus, Ecclesiae nostrae Decus; assidue precare Jesum, ut per Te misericordiam invenire in die Judicii, & quae reposita sunt iis qui diligunt Deum bona consequi possimus. In Offic. Nat. B. M. die 5.* — "Hail, then, Mother, Heaven, Throne, Glory of our Church: pray Jesus without ceasing, that through you we may find mercy on the day of Judgment, and may obtain the good things laid up for those who love God." God save you, Mother of God and our Mother; Heaven where God dwells; Throne from which the Lord dispenses all graces: pray always to Jesus for us, that by your prayers we may obtain pardon on the day of reckoning, and the Blessed Glory in Eternity.

With reason, finally, is Mary called the Dawn: *Quae est ista, quae ascendit quasi Aurora consurgens? Cant. 6. 9.* — "Who is she that comes up like the rising Dawn?" Yes; for Pope Innocent said: *Cum Aurora sit finis noctis, & origo diei, vere per Auroram designatur Maria Virgo, quae fuit finis vitiorum, & origo virtutum.* (*Serm. 2. de Ass. B. V.*) — "Since the Dawn is the end of night and the origin of day,

truly by the Dawn is signified the Virgin Mary, who was the end of vices and the origin of virtues." And the same effect that Mary produced in the World by her birth, she produces when devotion to her is born in a soul: she puts an end to the night of sins, and makes the soul walk in the way of the virtues. Whence St. Germanus says to her (*Serm. 3. in Dorm. B. V.*): *O Mother of God, your defense is immortal; your intercession is life.* And in the Sermon the Saint makes *de Zona Virgin.* he says that whoever pronounces the name of Mary with affec-

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tion, it is either a sign of life, or that before long he will have life.

Mary sang: *Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Luc. 1.* — "For behold, from this time all generations shall call me blessed." Yes, my Lady, St. Bernard says to her: *Ex hoc Beatam Te dicent omnes Generationes, quae omnibus Generationibus vitam & gloriam genuisti. Serm. 2. in Pentec.* — "From this time all Generations shall call you Blessed, you who have brought forth life and glory for all Generations." Therefore all men shall call you Blessed, because all your Servants obtain through you the life of Grace and eternal Glory. *In Te peccatores veniam, justi Gratiam inveniunt in aeternum. Serm. de Nat. B. V.* — "In you sinners find pardon, and the just find Grace forever." In you sinners find pardon, and the Just find perseverance, and then eternal life. Do not lose confidence, O sinner (here the devout Bernardine de Bustis speaks), even though you had committed every sin; but have recourse in confidence to this Lady, for you will find her with hands full of mercy: *O peccator ne diffidas; etiamsi commisisti omnia peccata: sed secure ad istam gloriosissimam Dominam recurras. Invenies Eva im manibus plenam misericordia, & largitate.* so in W1; the reading is evidently corrupt for *Invenies eam manibus plenam misericordia* — "O sinner, do not lose confidence, even if you have committed every sin; but have recourse in safety to this most glorious Lady. You will find her with hands full of mercy and of bounty." And he adds: *Plus enim ipsa desiderat facere tibi bonum, & largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.* (*Ser. 5. de Nat. Mar.*) — "For she desires to do you good and to bestow grace upon you more than you desire to receive it." Mary desires to grant you graces more than you desire to receive them.

By St. Andrew of Crete, Mary is called the security of the Divine pardon: *Fidejussio Divinarum reconciliationum, quae dato pignore fit* — "The surety of the Divine reconciliations, made by the giving of a pledge." This means that when sinners have recourse to Mary in order to be reconciled with God, God promises them pardon with certainty, and gives them the security by giving them the pledge as well. And this pledge is precisely Mary, whom he has given us as our Advocate,

and by whose intercession — in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ — God then pardons all the sinners who have recourse to her. St. Bridget heard from the Angel (*Serm. Ang. cap. 9*) that the holy Prophets rejoiced in knowing that God, for the humility and purity of Mary, was to be appeased toward sinners, and to receive into his grace those who had provoked him: *Exultabunt autem praenoscentes, quod ipse Dominus ex tua humilitate, & vitae puritate, o Maria Stella praefulgida, placaretur, & quod reciperet eos in suam gratiam, qui ipsum ad iracundiam provocarunt* — "They shall rejoice, foreknowing that the Lord himself would be appeased by your humility and by the purity of your life, O Mary, most resplendent Star, and that he would receive into his grace those who had provoked him to wrath."

Nor need any sinner ever fear to be driven away by Mary when he has recourse to her compassion — no; for she is the mother of Mercy, and as such she de-

sires to save the most wretched. Mary is that happy Ark in which whoever takes refuge, says St. Bernard, will not suffer the shipwreck of eternal perdition: *Arca, in qua naufragium evadimus* — "the Ark in which we escape shipwreck." In Noah's Ark, at the time of the Flood, even the brute beasts were saved. Under Mary's Mantle even sinners are saved. St. Gertrude saw Mary one day with her mantle open, and beneath it many wild beasts had taken refuge — lions, bears, tigers; and she saw that Mary not only did not drive them away, but received them and caressed them with great compassion. And by this the Saint understood that the most lost of sinners, when they have recourse to Mary, are not driven off, but received and saved from eternal death. Let us enter, then, into this Ark; let us go and take refuge under Mary's mantle, for certainly she will not drive us away, and she will surely save us.

Example.

Fr. Bovio relates (*Examples of the Most Holy Virgin*) that there was a woman of evil life named Helen. Having gone to church, she happened to hear a Sermon on the Rosary; on coming out she bought one, but carried it hidden so that it should not be seen. Then she began to recite it; and although she recited it without devotion, the Most Holy Virgin poured into her, in the reciting of it, so many consolations and sweetnesses that afterward she could not bring herself to leave off saying it. And by this she conceived such horror of her evil life that she could find no rest, so that she found herself as it were compelled to go and make her confession; and she confessed with such contrition that her Confessor was astonished. Her Confession

made, she went at once to the foot of an Altar of Mary most holy to thank her Advocate. She said the Rosary, and the Divine Mother spoke to her from that Image and said: Helen, you have offended God and me enough; from this day forward change your life, and I will grant you a good share of my graces. The poor Sinner then, confounded, answered: Ah, most holy Virgin, it is true that until now I have been a wicked woman; but you, who can do all things, help me. I give myself to you, and I will spend what life remains to me in doing penance for my sins. Helped by Mary, Helen distributed all her goods to the poor and set herself to do a rigorous penance. She was tormented by terrible temptations; but she did nothing else than commend herself to the Mother of God, and so she always remained victorious. She

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came at length to receive many graces, even supernatural ones — Visions, Revelations, Prophecies. At last, before her death, of which Mary had already given her notice some days before, the Blessed Virgin herself came with her Son to visit her; and as she died, the soul of this sinful woman was seen flying up to Heaven in the form of a most beautiful Dove.

Prayer.

Behold, O Mother of my God, Mary, my only hope: behold at your feet a wretched sinner who asks your compassion. You are proclaimed and called by the whole Church, and by all the Faithful, the refuge of sinners: you, then, are my refuge; you are to save me. You know well how dearly your Son loves our salvation: *Scis dulcissima Dei Mater, quantum placeat benedicto Filio tuo salus nostra. Guill. Paris.* — "You know, most sweet Mother of God, how pleasing our salvation is to your blessed Son." You know well what Jesus suffered to save me. I present to you, my mother, the sufferings of Jesus: the cold he bore in the stable; the steps he took on the journey into Egypt; his labours, his sweats, the blood he shed; the pain that killed him before your eyes upon the Cross. Show that you love this Son, since it is for love of this Son that I beg you to help me. Give your hand to one who has fallen and seeks compassion of you. If I were a saint, I would not ask you for mercy; but because I am a sinner, I have recourse to you, who are the Mother of mercies. I know that your compassionate Heart finds consolation in succouring the wretched, when you can help them and do not find them obstinate. Console, then, this day your compassionate heart, and console me; since you have the opportunity of saving me, who am a poor creature condemned to hell, and you can help me, since I have no wish to be obstinate. I put myself into your hands: tell me what I must do, and

obtain for me strength to carry it out; for I resolve to do all that I can to return into the Divine Grace. I take refuge under your mantle. Jesus wills that I should have recourse to you, so that for your Glory and for his — since you are his mother — not only his Blood but your prayers also may help me to be saved. He sends me to you, that you may succour me. O Mary, here I am: to you I have recourse, and in you I trust. You pray for so many others; pray, say one word more for me. Tell God that you want me

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saved, and God will certainly save me. Tell him that I am yours, and that I seek nothing apart from you.

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§II. Mary is our Life also because she obtains Perseverance for us.

Final Perseverance is a Divine gift so great that, as the holy Council of Trent has declared, it is a wholly gratuitous gift, which cannot be merited by us. But as St. Augustine teaches, all those who ask it of God do indeed obtain Perseverance from him; and, as Fr. Suárez says, they obtain it infallibly, provided they are diligent in asking it of God until the end of their lives — for Bellarmine writes that this Perseverance *quotidie petenda est, ut quotidie obtineatur*, "must be asked for daily, that it may be daily obtained." Now if it is true — as I hold for certain, according to the opinion commonly held today, and as we shall show further on in Chapter VI — if it is true, I say, that all the graces dispensed to us by God pass through Mary's hands, then it will also be true that only through Mary can we hope for and obtain this supreme grace of Perseverance. And we shall certainly obtain it if we ask it of Mary always with confidence. This grace she herself promises to all who serve her faithfully in this life: *Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt: Qui elucidant me, vitam aeterna habebunt. Eccli. 24.* — "They who work in me shall not sin; they who make me known shall have eternal life." W1 prints *vitam aeterna*; read *aeternam* — so holy Church makes her speak *in Festo Conc. B. Mariae V.*

That we may be preserved in the life of Divine Grace, spiritual Fortitude is necessary to us, to resist all the enemies of our Salvation. Now this Fortitude is obtained only through Mary: *Mea est fortitudo, per me Reges regnant. Prov. 8. In Festo S. Mariae ad Nives.* — "Mine is fortitude; through me Kings reign." This Fortitude is mine, says Mary; God has placed this gift in my hands, that I may

dispense it to those devoted to me. *Per me Reges regnant.* Through me my servants reign, and rule over all their senses and passions, and so become worthy to reign eternally in Heaven. Oh, what fortitude the servants of this great Lady possess, to overcome all the temptations of hell! Mary is that Tower of which it is said in the Sacred Canticles: *Sicut turris David collum tuum, quae aedificata est cum propugnaculis: mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium. Cant. 4. 4.* — "Your neck is like the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks: a thousand shields hang upon it, all the armour of the valiant." For her lovers, who have recourse to her in their battles, she is like a strong

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tower, ringed with defenses: in her those devoted to her find every shield and every weapon for defending themselves against hell.

For this reason the Most Holy Virgin is called a Plane Tree: *Quasi Platanus exaltata sum juxta aquas in Plateis. Eccli. 14. 19.* — "I was exalted like a plane tree beside the waters in the streets." W1 prints *14. 19*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 19 Hugh of St. Cher explains that the plane tree has leaves shaped like shields: *Platanus habet folia scutis similia* — "The plane tree has leaves like shields." And by this is explained the defense Mary takes up for those who take refuge in her. Blessed Amadeus gives another explanation, and says that she is called a Plane Tree because, as the plane tree with the shade of its branches gives shelter to Travelers from the heat of the Sun and from the rains, so under Mary's mantle men find refuge from the burning of the passions and from the fury of temptations: *Virgo ramorum extensione se ubique expandit, ut filios Adae ab aestu & turbine umbra desiderabili protegere: B. Am. Hom. 8.* — "The Virgin spreads herself everywhere by the reaching out of her branches, to shelter the children of Adam from heat and whirlwind with a longed-for shade."

Poor souls, who withdraw from this defense, and cease to be devoted to Mary, and cease to commend themselves to her when occasions arise! If the Sun no longer rose in the World, says St. Bernard, what would the World become but a Chaos of darkness and horror? *Tolle corpus hoc solare*, says the Saint, *ubi dies? Tolle Mariam, quid nisi tenebrae relinquentur. Serm. de Aquaed.* — "Take away this body of the sun: where is the day? Take away Mary: what is left but darkness?" Let a soul lose devotion to Mary, and at once it will be left full of darkness — and of that darkness of which the Holy Spirit says: *Posuisti tenebras, & facta est nox: in ipso pertransibunt omnes bestiae sylvae. Ps. 130. 20.* — "You appointed darkness, and it was night: in it all the beasts of the forest go abroad." W1 prints *Ps. 130*; the place is Ps. 103. 20 When the Divine light does not shine in a soul, night falls, and it becomes the lair of

every sin and of the demons. *Vae* (therefore says St. Anselm) *vae eis qui Solem istum aversantur!* — "Woe, woe to those who turn away from this Sun!" Woe to those who despise the light of this Sun — that is, who despise devotion to Mary! St. Francis Borgia had good reason to fear for the Perseverance of those in whom he did not find a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Asking some Novices once to which Saint they had the greater devotion, he perceived that some had not this special Devotion to Mary. He warned the Master of Novices to keep a closer watch upon those unhappy men; and it came about that all of them miserably lost their vocation and left Religion.

St. Germanus had reason, then, to call the Most Holy Virgin the breath of Christians. For as the body cannot live without breathing, so the soul cannot live without having recourse and commend-

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ing itself to Mary, through whom the life of Divine Grace is surely acquired by us and preserved in us. *Sicut respiratio non solum est signum vitae, sed etiam causa; sic Mariae nomen, quod in Servorum Dei ore versatur, simul argumentum est quod vere vivant, simul etiam hanc vitam efficit & conservat; omnemque eis opem impertiatur.* (*S. Germ. Orat. de Deip.*) — "As breathing is not only the sign of life but also its cause, so the name of Mary, which is ever on the lips of God's Servants, is at once a proof that they truly live, and also brings about and preserves this life, and imparts to them every help." Blessed Alan, assailed one day by a strong temptation, was on the point of being lost for not having commended himself to Mary; but the holy Virgin appeared to him, and, to make him better warned for another time, gave him a blow and said to him: If you had commended yourself to me, you would not have found yourself in this danger.

On the other hand: *Beatus homo* (says Mary) *qui audit me, qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, & observat ad postes ostii mei. Prov. 8. 14. in Festo Conc. B. V. M.* — "Blessed is the man who hears me, who watches daily at my gates and waits at the posts of my door." W1 prints *8. 14*; the place is Prov. 8. 34 Blessed is he who hears my voice, and therefore takes care to come continually to the gates of my mercy to seek light and succour from me. Mary will indeed be attentive to obtain light and strength for such a devoted servant of hers, that he may come out of his vices and walk in the way of virtue. Whence she is called by Innocent III, in a beautiful expression: *Luna in nocte, Aurora in diluculo, Sol in die. Ser. 2. de Ass.* — "the Moon by night, the Dawn at daybreak, the Sun by day." The Moon to him who lies blind in the night of sin, to enlighten him to know the wretched state of damnation in which he finds himself; the Dawn — that is, the herald of the Sun — to him who is

already enlightened, to bring him out of sin and back into the Divine Grace; and finally the Sun to him who is already in Grace, that he may not fall again into some precipice.

The Doctors apply to Mary those words of Ecclesiasticus: *Vincula illius alligatura salutaris. Eccli. 6. 31.* — "Her bonds are a healing binding." *Quare vincula?* (St. Lawrence Justinian) *nisi quia servos ligat, ne discurrant per campos licentiae* — "Why bonds? — unless because she binds her servants, lest they run loose through the fields of license." Mary binds her servants, that they may not stray along the roads of vice. St. Bonaventure, explaining in like manner the words that are said in the Office of Mary — *In plenitudine Sanctorum detentio mea. Eccli 24. 16.*, "In the fullness of the Saints is my dwelling" — says that Mary is not only placed in the fullness of the Saints, but that she also preserves the Saints, that they may not fall back; preserves their virtues, that they may not fail; and holds back the demons, that they may do them no harm: *Ipsa quoque non solum in plenitudine Sanctorum detinetur, sed etiam in pleni-*

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tudine Sanctos detinet, ne eorum plenitudo minuatur; Detinet nimirum virtutes, ne fugiunt; Detinet Daemones, ne noceant. S. Bon. in Spec. — "She is not only held in the fullness of the Saints, but in that fullness she also holds the Saints, that their fullness be not lessened; she holds back their virtues, that they may not flee; she holds back the demons, that they may not harm."

It is said that those devoted to Mary are covered with a double garment: *Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus. Sap. 11.* — "All her household are clothed with double garments." W1 prints *Sap. 11*; the place is Prov. 31. 21 Cornelius a Lapide explains what this double garment is: *Duplici veste ipsa ornat sibi devotos, qui tam Christi quam suis virtutibus eos induit* — "With a double garment she adorns those devoted to her, clothing them with the virtues of Christ as well as with her own." A double garment, because she adorns her faithful servants with the virtues of her Son as well as with her own; and, clothed in this way, they will keep holy perseverance. Therefore St. Philip Neri always admonished his penitents and said to them: My children, if you desire perseverance, be devoted to our Lady. Venerable Brother John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus likewise used to say: Whoever loves Mary will have perseverance. Beautiful upon this point is the reflection of Rupert the Abbot on the parable of the Prodigal Son: he says that this wayward son, if his mother had been alive, would either never have left his father's house, or would have returned much sooner than he did: *Si prodigus filius viventem matrem habuisset, vel a paterna domo nunquam discessisset, vel forte citius rediisset.* And by this he meant

that he who is a child of Mary either never departs from God, or, if by misfortune it happens that he departs, returns at once through Mary.

Oh, if all men loved this most gracious and most loving Lady, and in temptations always and at once had recourse to her — who would ever fall? Who would ever be lost? He falls and is lost who does not have recourse to Mary. St. Lawrence Justinian applies to the Virgin those words of Ecclesiasticus at *chapter 24: In fluctibus maris ambulavi* — "I have walked in the waves of the sea." And he makes her say: *Scilicet cum familiaribus meis, ut ipsos eruerem a naufragio peccatorum* — "That is, with my own household, to draw them out of the shipwreck of sins." I walk together with my servants in the midst of the storms in which they find themselves, in order to assist them and to keep them from falling headlong into sin.

Fr. Bernardine de Bustis relates that a bird had been taught to say *Ave Maria*; a hawk came to seize it, the bird said *Ave Maria*, and the hawk fell dead. By this the Lord willed to signify to us that if a bird without reason was delivered by invoking Mary, how much more will he be delivered from falling into the hands of the demons who is careful, when assaults come, to invoke Mary. Nothing else, then,

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remains for us to do, says St. Thomas of Villanova, than this: when the demons come to tempt us, then — just as chicks, at the appearing of the kites, run at once to take shelter under their mother's wings — so we, on becoming aware of the temptations that assail us, should at once, without arguing with the temptation, go and place ourselves under Mary's mantle: *Sicut pulli, volitantibus desuper milvis, ad gallinae alas occurrunt; ita nos sub velamento alarum tuarum abscondimur.* (*Serm. 3. de Nat. Virg.*) — "As chicks, when kites wheel overhead, run to the hen's wings, so we hide ourselves under the covering of your wings." And you (the Saint goes on to say), our Lady and our mother, must defend us; for after God we have no other refuge but you, who are our only hope and our sole Protectress, in whom we trust: *Nescimus aliud Refugium nisi te; Tu sola es unica spes nostra; Tu sola Patrona nostra, ad quam omnes aspicimus* — "We know no other Refuge but you; you alone are our one hope; you alone are our Patroness, to whom we all look."

Let us conclude, then, with what St. Bernard says (*Hom. 2. super Missus*): Man, whoever you are, you understand already that in this Life you are tossed among dangers and squalls rather than walking upon solid ground. If you do not wish to be drowned, do not turn your eyes from this Star, Mary. *O quisquis te intelligis in hujus Saeculi profluvio magis inter procellas & tempestates fluctuare, quam per terram ambulare: ne avertas oculos a fulgore hujus sideris, si non vis obrui procellis. Respice Stellam, voca Mariam.* — "O you, whoever you are, who perceive that in

the flood of this world you are tossed among storms and tempests rather than walking on land: do not turn your eyes from the brightness of this star, if you do not wish to be overwhelmed by the storms. Look to the Star, call upon Mary." Look to the Star, call upon Mary. *In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca* — "In dangers, in straits, in doubtful matters, think of Mary, call upon Mary." In dangers of sinning, in the harassment of temptations, in doubts about what you must decide, think that Mary can help you, and call on her at once to succour you. *Non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde* — "Let her not depart from your lips, let her not depart from your heart." Let her Mighty Name never leave your heart, in confidence, nor ever leave your lips, in invoking her. *Ipsam sequens, non devias* — "Following her, you do not stray": if you follow Mary, you will not lose the way of salvation. *Ipsam rogans, non desperas* — "Asking her, you do not despair": whenever you commend yourself to her, you will not lose confidence. *Ipsa tenente, non corruis* — "While she holds you, you do not fall": if she holds you, you will not fall. *Ipsa protegente, non metuis* — "While she protects you, you do not fear": if she protects you, you cannot fear being lost. *Ipsa duce, non fatigaris* — "With her as guide, you do not grow weary": if she guides you, you will be saved without weariness. *Ipsa propitia, pervenis* — "With her favour, you arrive." In short, if Mary undertakes to defend you, you will certainly reach the Kingdom of the Blessed. *Sic fac, & vives* — "Do this, and you shall live."

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Example.

Famous is the History of St. Mary of Egypt, which is read in *Book 1 of the Lives of the Fathers*. At twelve years old she fled from her parents' house and went off to Alexandria, where, leading an infamous life, she became the scandal of that City. After sixteen years of sins she went wandering to Jerusalem, where, the Feast of the holy Cross being then kept, she too was moved to enter the Church, more out of curiosity than out of devotion. But when she came to enter the door, she felt herself invisibly thrust back. She tried a second time, and again she was thrust back; and so a third and a fourth. Then the wretched woman, placing herself in a corner of the porch, was enlightened to understand that God, because of her evil life, was casting her out even from the Church. She raised her eyes — and it was her good fortune — and saw an Image of Mary painted there in the porch. So she turned to her weeping, and said to her: O Mother of God, have pity on this poor sinner. I see that for my sins I do not deserve that you should look upon me. But you are the refuge of

sinners: for love of Jesus your Son, help me. Let me enter the Church, for I will change my life, and go to do penance wherever you show me. And then she heard an inward voice, as though the Blessed Virgin had answered her: Go, then; since you have had recourse to me, and wish to change your life, enter the Church, for the door will be closed to you no longer. The sinner enters, adores the Cross, and weeps. She returns to the Image: Lady, she says, here I am, ready: where do you wish me to withdraw to do penance? *Go*, answers the Virgin, *and cross the Jordan, and you will find the place of your rest.* She makes her confession, receives Communion, crosses the river, reaches the Desert, and there understands that this was the place of her penance. Now in the first seventeen years the Saint spent in the Desert, what assaults did the demons not make upon her, to bring her down again! And what did she do then? She did nothing else but commend herself to Mary; and Mary obtained for her the strength to resist through all those seventeen years, after which the battles ceased. At last, after fifty-seven years in that Desert, being eighty-seven years old, by Divine providence she was found by the Abbot St. Zosimus. To him she told the whole story of her life, and begged him to return there the following

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year and bring her holy Communion. The holy Abbot returned and gave her Communion. Then the Saint repeated her request, that he would come to find her once more. St. Zosimus came again, and found her dead, her Body encircled with light; and he saw at her head these words written: Bury in this place the body of me, a wretched sinner, and pray to God for me. He buried her, a lion having come to dig the earth; and returning to his Monastery he recounted the marvels of the Divine Mercies shown to this happy penitent.

Prayer.

O Mother of compassion, most sacred Virgin: behold at your feet the traitor who, repaying with ingratitude the graces received from God through you, has betrayed both you and God. But know, my Lady, that my wretchedness does not take away my confidence in you — it increases it; for I see that my wretchedness makes compassion for me grow in you. Show, O Mary, that you are to me the same as you are to all who invoke you: full of generosity and of mercy. It is enough for me only that you look upon me and have compassion on me. If your heart has compassion on me, it will not be able to leave off protecting me. And if you protect me, what can I fear? No, I fear nothing: not my sins, because you can repair the harm that has been done; not the demons, because you are more powerful than hell; not your Son,

justly angered with me, because at a single word from you he will be appeased. I fear only that by my own fault I may cease to commend myself to you in my temptations, and so be lost. But this is what I promise you today: I will always have recourse to you; and do you help me to carry it out. See what a fair occasion you have of satisfying your own desire — of raising up a wretched creature such as I am.

O Mother of God, I have great confidence in you. From you I look for the grace to weep for my sins as I ought; and from you I hope for the strength to fall into them no more. If I am sick, you can heal me, O heavenly Physician. If my faults have made me weak, your help will make me strong. O Mary, I hope everything from you, because you can do everything with God.

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§III. Dulcedo — Our Sweetness. Mary makes death sweet for those devoted to her.

Omni tempore diligit qui amicus est; & frater in angustiis comprobatur. Prov. 17. — "He who is a friend loves at all times; and a brother is proved in time of distress." True Friends and true Kinsmen are not known in a time of prosperity, but in a time of distress and misery. The Friends of the World do not leave a Friend while he is prospering; but if ever he falls into some misfortune, and above all if he comes to die, his Friends abandon him at once. Not so does Mary act with those devoted to her. In their distresses, and especially in the distresses of death — which are the greatest that can be had on Earth — this good Lady and Mother does not know how to abandon her faithful Servants; and as she is our Life during the time of our exile, so she makes herself our sweetness also at the time of our death, by obtaining for us a death that is sweet and blessed. For ever since that great day on which Mary had at once the privilege and the sorrow of assisting at the death of Jesus her Son, who was the Head of the Predestined, she acquired the grace of assisting all the Predestined at their death. W1 sets *da* twice: "fin da da quel gran giorno" Therefore holy Church makes us pray the Blessed Virgin that she may succour us especially at the hour of death: *Ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc, & in hora mortis nostrae* — "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Too great are the distresses of the poor dying: from remorse for the sins they have committed, from horror at the Judgment now near, from uncertainty about their eternal salvation. Then above all hell arms itself, and labours with all its might to win that Soul which is passing into eternity, knowing that little time remains to

win it, and that if it loses the soul then, it has lost it forever. *Descendit Diabolus ad vos, habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet. Apoc. 12. 12.* — "The Devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time." And therefore the Devil, accustomed to tempt the soul in life, is not content to be alone in tempting it at death, but calls companions to help him. *Implebuntur domus eorum draconibus. Isa. 13. 21.* — "Their houses shall be filled with dragons." When anyone is about to die, his house is filled with demons, who band together to his harm, to bring about his ruin.

It is related of St. Andrew Avellino that at the time of his death ten thousand demons came to tempt him. And it is read in his Life that at the time of his agony he had a combat with hell so fierce that

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it made all the good religious who assisted him tremble. They saw the Saint's face swell with the struggle until it turned entirely black; they saw all his limbs tremble and thrash; his eyes poured out a river of tears; his head shook violently — all signs of the horrible battle he was suffering from hell. All wept for compassion, redoubled their Prayers, and at the same time trembled with fear, seeing a Saint die in such a way. Yet they took comfort in seeing that the Saint often turned his eyes, as though seeking help, toward a devout Image of Mary; for they remembered that he himself had said many times during his life that at the hour of his death Mary was to be his Refuge. At last it pleased God that the struggle should end in a glorious victory. For when the writhing of his body had ceased, and his face had gone down and returned to its former colour, they saw that the Saint, holding his eyes calmly fixed upon that Image, made a devout bow to Mary (who, it is believed, then appeared to him), as though in the act of thanking her, and peacefully breathed out his blessed Soul into Mary's arms, in an air of Paradise. And at that same time a dying Capuchin Religious turned to the Nuns who were assisting her and said: *Say the Hail Mary, for a Saint has just died.*

Ah, at the presence of the Queen the Rebels flee! If at the hour of death we have Mary on our side, what fear can we have of all the enemies of hell? David, dreading the distresses of his own death, took comfort in his confidence in the death of the future Redeemer and in the intercession of the Virgin Mother: *Et si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, virga tua, & baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt. Psal. 23. 4.* — "Even though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, your rod and your staff have comforted me." Hugh of St. Cher explains the *Staff* as the wood of the Cross, and the *Rod* as the intercession of Mary, who was the Rod foretold by Isaiah: *Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, & flos de radice ejus ascendet. Isai. 11.* — "There

shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root." This Divine Mother, says St. Peter Damian, is that powerful Rod by which the violence of the infernal Enemies is overcome: *Haec est illa Virga, qua retunduntur impetus adversantium Daemonum.* (*Serm. de Ass. B. V.*) — "This is that Rod by which the assaults of the opposing demons are beaten back." Whence St. Antoninus encourages us, saying: *Si Maria pro nobis, quis contra nos?* — "If Mary is for us, who is against us?" To Fr. Manuel Padial of the Society of Jesus, as he lay at the point

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of death, Mary appeared and said to him, to comfort him: *See, the hour has come at last, in which the Angels, congratulating you, say to you: O happy labours! O mortifications well repaid!* And thereupon an army of demons was seen fleeing in despair and crying: *Alas, we can do nothing, for she who is without stain defends him. Patrig. Menol. on the 28th of April.* In the same way Fr. Gaspar Hayevod was assailed at his death by the demons with a great temptation against Faith. He at once commended himself to the Most Holy Virgin, and then was heard to cry out: *I thank you, O Mary, that you have come to my help.* (*V. Patrig. Men. &c.*)

St. Bonaventure says that in defense of her dying Servants Mary sends the Prince St. Michael with all the Angels, that they may go at once to defend them from the assaults of the demons, and to take up the Souls of all those who have especially and continually commended themselves to her: *Michael Dux & Princeps militiae caelestis, cum omnibus administratoriis Spiritibus, tuis, Virgo, paret praeceptis, in defendendis, & suscipiendis de corpore Animabus Fidelium, Specialiter tibi, Domina, die, ac nocte se commendantium. S. Bon. in Spec. B. V. c. 3.* — "Michael, Leader and Prince of the heavenly host, with all the ministering Spirits, obeys your commands, O Virgin, in defending and in receiving from the body the Souls of the Faithful who commend themselves especially to you, O Lady, by day and by night."

When a man goes out of this life, says Isaiah, hell is thrown into an uproar and sends its most terrible demons to tempt that Soul before it leaves the body, and then to accuse it when it must be presented at the Tribunal of Jesus Christ to be judged: *Infernus subter te conturbatus est in occursum adventus tui, suscitabit tibi Gigantes. Is. 14.* — "Hell below was stirred up to meet you at your coming; it will rouse up the Giants for you." W1 prints *Allocchè*; read *Allorchè* But Richard says that when that Soul is defended by Mary, the demons will not have the boldness even to accuse it, knowing that a Soul under the patronage of his great Mother has never been condemned by the Judge, nor ever will be: *Quis apud Judicem accusare audeat, cui viderit Matrem patrocinantem? Ricc. ap. Pep. to. 5. Lez. 244.* — "Who would dare to accuse before the Judge one whom he has seen with the Mother pleading for him?"

St. Jerome wrote to the virgin Eustochium (*Epist. 2*) that Mary not only comes to the aid of her dear Servants at their death, but goes further and comes to meet them in their passage to the other life, to give them courage and to accompany them to the Divine Tribunal: *Morientibus Beata Virgo, non tantum succurrit, sed etiam occurrit* — "To the dying the Blessed Virgin not only comes to help, but comes to meet them." And this agrees with what the Blessed Virgin said to St. Bridget, speaking of those devoted to her when they find themselves at the point of death: *Tunc ego carissima eorum Domina & mater occurram*

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eis in morte, ut ipsi consolationem, & refrigerium habeant. (*Rev. lib. 1. c. 29.*) — "Then I, their most beloved Lady and mother, will come to meet them in death, that they may have consolation and refreshment." St. Vincent Ferrer adds: *Beata Virgo Animas morientium suscipit.* (*Serm. de Ass.*) — "The Blessed Virgin receives the Souls of the dying." The loving Queen receives their Souls into her mantle, and she herself presents them thus to the Judge, her Son, and so certainly obtains Salvation for them. Just so it happened to Charles, the son of St. Bridget (*bk. 7, Rev., ch. 13*), who, having died in the dangerous trade of a Soldier and far from his Mother, was a cause of fear to the Saint concerning his salvation. But the Blessed Virgin revealed to her that Charles was saved for the Love he had borne to her; whence she herself had assisted him in death and had suggested to him the Christian Acts necessary to be made at that moment. At the same time the Saint saw Jesus upon his Throne, and saw that the Devil brought two accusations against the Most Holy Virgin: the first, that Mary had prevented him from tempting Charles at the point of his death; the second, that Mary had herself presented Charles's Soul at the Judgment, and had thus saved it, without even giving him room to set out the reasons by which he claimed that soul as his own. She then saw that the Judge drove him off, and that Charles's Soul was carried up to Heaven.

Vincula ejus alligatura salutaris, in novissimis inveniens requiem in ea. Eccl. 6. — "Her bonds are a healing binding; in the last days you shall find rest in her." Oh, blessed are you, my brother, if at death you find yourself bound by the sweet chains of Love to the Mother of God! These chains are chains of Salvation, which will make you sure of your eternal Salvation, and will let you enjoy in death that blessed peace which will be the beginning of your peace and of your eternal rest. Fr. Binetti relates in his book on the *Perfections of Our Lord*, at *chapter 31*, that having assisted at the death of a great devoted servant of Mary, he heard from him before he expired these words: *O my Father, if you knew what happiness I feel for having served the most holy Mother of God! I could not explain the gladness I feel at this moment.* W1

prints *sapesi*; read *sapeste* Fr. Suárez, for having been much devoted to Mary — whence he used to say that he would have exchanged all his learning for the merit of a single *Ave Maria* — died with such gladness that as he died he said: *Non putabam tam dulce esse mori* — "I did not think that dying could be so sweet." He would never have imagined, had he not then experienced it, that death could be so sweet to him. The same happiness and gladness you too will doubtless feel, devout Reader, if at the point of death you can remember that you have as your friend this good Mo-

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ther, who does not know how to be unfaithful to her Children when they have been faithful in serving her and in paying her homage with visits, with Rosaries, with Fasts, and still more by often thanking her, praising her, and often commending themselves to her powerful patronage.

Nor will your having been for a time a sinner prevent you from this consolation, if from today onward you set yourself to live well and to serve this most gracious and most kindly Lady. In your distresses, and in the temptations the Devil will bring against you to make you despair, she will comfort you — even to coming herself to assist you at your death. Martin, the brother of St. Peter Damian (as the Saint himself relates, *Opusc. 33, ch. 4*), finding that he had offended God, went one day before an Altar of Mary to dedicate himself as her Slave, placing his belt about his neck as a sign of his servitude, and spoke to her thus: My Lady, Mirror of Purity, I, a poor sinner, have offended God and you by violating chastity: I have no other remedy than to offer myself as your Slave. Here I am; today I dedicate myself to you as your Servant: receive this rebel, do not disdain me. Then he left upon the step of the Altar a certain sum of money, promising to pay it every year as a token of tribute for his servitude to Mary. After some time Martin came to die; but before dying, one morning he was heard to say: *Rise, rise, and do reverence to my Lady.* And then: *And what grace is this, O Queen of Heaven, that you deign to visit this poor Servant? Bless me, my Lady, and do not permit me to be lost, after you have honoured me with your Presence.* At this his Brother Peter came in. He told him of Mary's coming, and how she had blessed him, complaining that those who were assisting him had not risen from their seats in Mary's presence; and shortly afterward he passed peacefully to the Lord. Such also will your death be, my Reader, if you are faithful to Mary, even though in the past you find that you have offended God: she will make you die a sweet and contented death.

And if then you should be too frightened, and should fail in confidence at the sight of the sins you have committed, she will come to give you courage — as she came to Adolf, Count of Alsace, who, having left the World and become a

Religious of St. Francis (as it is told in the Chronicles), was a great servant devoted to the Mother

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of God. Brought at last to the end of his days, and seeing then before him the life he had led in the world, his government of Vassals, and the rigour of the Divine Judgment, he began to fear death out of doubt about his eternal salvation. And behold, Mary — who does not sleep in the distresses of those devoted to her — accompanied by many Saints, made herself present to the dying man, and heartening him spoke these tender words: *Adulphe mi carissime, mori cur times, meus cum sis?* — "Adolf, my dearest, why do you fear to die, since you are mine?" My dearest Adolf, you are mine, you have given yourself to me: and now why do you fear death so much? At these words the Servant of Mary was wholly lifted up, all fear vanished, and he died in great peace and contentment.

Let us take courage too, sinners though we are, and have this confidence: that Mary will come to assist us at death and to console us with her presence, if we serve her with love in the life that remains to us on this Earth. Our Queen, speaking one day to St. Mechtilde, promised that she would come to assist at death all those devoted to her who had faithfully served her in life: *Ego omnibus qui mihi pie deserviunt, volo in morte fidelissime tanquam mater piissima adesse, eosque consolari, ac protegere. Ap. Blos. p. 2. Concl. an. fid. cap. 12.* — "To all who devoutly serve me I will to be present at death most faithfully, as a most loving mother, and to console and protect them." O God, what consolation it will be in that last time of our life — when in a little while the cause of our eternal Life must be tried — to see the Queen of Heaven near us, assisting us and consoling us with the promise of her protection! Of these Examples of Mary's Assistance to her dying Servants there are, besides those already told, innumerable ones recorded in books. This favour was granted to St. Clare, to St. Felix the Capuchin, to Blessed Clare of Montefalco, to St. Teresa, to St. Peter of Alcantara. But for the common consolation let us tell these few others. Fr. Crasset relates (*Devotion to the Virgin, vol. 1, tr. 1, q. 11*) that St. Mary of Oignies saw the Blessed Virgin at the bedside of a devout Widow of Villembroe who, suffering great burning from fever, had Mary most holy beside her, consoling her and cooling her with a fan. St. John of God, as he lay dying, awaited the visit of Mary, to whom he was much devoted; but not seeing her appear, he was afflicted, and perhaps even complained of it. And behold, when the time came, the Divine Mother appeared to him, and, as though rebuking him for his little confidence, said to him these

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tender words, which serve to hearten all the Servants of Mary: *Joannes non est meum, in hac hora meos Devotos derelinquere* — "John, it is not my way to forsake those devoted to me in this hour." As though she had said to him: My John, what were you thinking? That I had abandoned you? And do you not know that I do not know how to abandon those devoted to me at the hour of death? I did not come sooner because the time had not yet come; now that it has come, see, I have come to take you: let us go to Paradise. And shortly after, the Saint expired, flying to Heaven to thank his most loving Queen forever. W1 prints *per semper*; read *sempre* (*Bolland. 8. Martii*)

Example.

But let us end this Discourse with this other Example, in which one sees how far the tenderness goes that this good Mother has toward her Children at the time of their death. The Parish Priest of a certain village was assisting at the death of a rich man, who lay dying in a richly furnished house, attended by Servants, by Kinsmen, by Friends; but the priest saw devils in the form of dogs, who were about to seize that man's Soul — as in fact they did seize it, for he died in sin. Now in the meantime the Parish Priest was sent for by a poor Woman who, at the end of her life, desired the holy Sacraments. The Parish Priest, unable to leave that needy Soul of the rich man, sent another Priest, who took the Pyx with the Sacrament and went. He arrives at the room of that good Woman, and sees there no servants, no attendants, no costly furnishings, for the sick woman was poor, and perhaps lay upon a little straw. But what does he see? He sees in that room a great light, and beholds that beside the dying woman's bed was the Mother of God, Mary, who was consoling her, and with a cloth in her hand was drying the sweat of death from her. The Priest, seeing Mary there, had not the courage to enter; but the Virgin made him a sign to come in. The Priest enters, and Mary takes up the stool for him, that he may sit and hear the Confession of her Servant. The woman made her confession, then received Communion with great devotion, and at last in Mary's arms happily breathed out her Soul. (*Grisog. Mond. Mar. p. 3. d. 38.*)

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Prayer.

O my most sweet Mother, what will the death of me, a poor sinner, be? Even now, thinking of that great moment in which I must expire and be presented at the divine Tribunal, and remembering that I myself have so many times written out with my

own perverse consents the sentence of my condemnation, I tremble, I am confounded, and I greatly fear for my eternal salvation. O Mary, in the Blood of Jesus and in your intercession my hopes are placed. You are the Queen of Heaven, the Lady of the Universe — it is enough to say, you are the Mother of God. You are indeed Great; but your Greatness does not set you far from us — rather it inclines you to have the more compassion on our miseries. The Friends of the World, when they are raised to some Dignity, hold themselves aloof and even disdain to look upon their old Friends who have fallen into low fortune. W1 prints *allotanano*; read *allontanano* Your noble and loving Heart does not act so: where it looks upon greater miseries, there it spends itself the more to relieve them. Invoked, you succour us at once — indeed you go before our prayers with your favours; you console us in our afflictions; you scatter the storms; you strike down the Enemies; in short, you let no occasion pass of procuring our good. Blessed forever be that Divine hand which has united in you such Majesty and such Tenderness, such Eminence and such Love. I thank my Lord for it always, and rejoice within myself, since in your Happiness I place my own, and count your lot as my own good fortune. O Consoler of the afflicted, console one afflicted man who commends himself to you. I feel myself afflicted by the remorse of a conscience weighed down with so many sins; I am uncertain whether I have wept for them as I ought; I see all my works full of mire and of defects; hell is waiting for my death to accuse me; the offended Divine Justice demands satisfaction. My mother, what will become of me? If you do not help me, I am lost. What do you say — will you help me? O compassionate Virgin, console me: obtain for me strength to amend, and to be faithful to God in this life that remains to me. And when at last I find myself in the final distresses of my death, O Mary my Hope, do not abandon me; then more than ever assist me and com-

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fort me not to despair at the sight of my faults, which the Devil will set before me. My Lady, pardon my boldness: come yourself then to console me with your presence. This grace you have granted to so many; I too desire it. If my boldness is great, greater still is your Goodness, which goes seeking out the most wretched in order to console them. In this I trust. Let it be your eternal Glory to have saved from hell a wretched creature already condemned, and to have led him to your Kingdom, where I hope then to find my consolation, standing forever at your feet to thank you, to bless you, and to love you eternally. O Mary, I await you: do not leave me without consolation. Fiat, fiat; Amen, amen.

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CHAPTER III.

Spes nostra Salve — Hail, our Hope.

§I. Mary is the Hope of all.

The Manichean Heretics cannot bear that we should greet Mary and call her our Hope: *Spes nostra salve* — "Hail, our hope." They say that God alone is our hope, and that God curses whoever places his hope in a Creature: *Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine. Jer. 17. 5.* — "Cursed is the man who trusts in man." Mary, they cry, is a Creature; and how can a Creature be our Hope? So say the Heretics. But for all that, holy Church wills that every day all the Clergy and all Religious should lift up their voices and, on behalf of all the Faithful, invoke and call Mary by this sweet name of our Hope, the Hope of all: *Spes nostra salve.*

In two ways, says St. Thomas the Angelic Doctor, we can place our Hope in a Person: as in a principal cause, and as in a mediate cause. W1 prints *non* ("not") where the argument requires *noi* ("we"); verified at high magnification Those who hope for some favour from the King hope for it from the King as their Lord, and hope for it from his Minister or Favorite as intercessor. If the favour is granted, it comes principally from the King, but it comes by means of his Favorite; whence he who seeks the favour is right to call that intercessor of his his Hope. The King of Heaven, being infinite Goodness, desires supremely to enrich us with his graces; but because on our side confi-

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dence is necessary, in order to increase this confidence in us he has given us for our Mother and Advocate his own Mother, to whom he has given all Power to help us. And therefore he wills that in her we should place the hopes of our salvation and of all our good. Those who place their hope in Creatures alone, without dependence on God — as sinners do, who to gain the friendship and favour of a man are content to displease God — these are certainly cursed by God, as Isaiah says. But those who hope in Mary, as the Mother of God, powerful to obtain graces and eternal Life for them, these are blessed, and they please the heart of God, who wishes to see so honoured that great Creature who loved and honoured him in this World more than all Men and Angels.

And so we rightly call the Virgin our Hope, hoping (as Cardinal Bellarmine says, *de Beat. SS. l. 2. c. 2.*) to obtain by her intercession what we would not obtain by our

own prayers alone. W1 again prints *non* for *noi*, the same slip as on p. 57 We pray to her, says St. Anselm, *ut dignitas intercessoris suppleat inopiam nostram* (*de Exc. V. c. 6*) — "that the dignity of the intercessor may make up for our poverty." And so, the Saint adds, to entreat the Virgin with such hope is not to distrust the Mercy of God, but to fear one's own ill disposition: *Unde Virginem interpellare, non est de Divina Misericordia diffidere, sed de propria indignitate formidare. Loc. cit.* — "So to appeal to the Virgin is not to distrust the Divine Mercy, but to fear one's own unworthiness."

With reason, then, does holy Church apply to Mary the words of Ecclesiasticus (*ch. 24*), by which she calls her *Mater sanctae spei*, "Mother of holy hope" — the Mother who brings to birth in us, not the vain hope of the wretched and passing goods of this life, but the holy Hope of the immense and eternal goods of the Blessed Life. *Ave Animae Spes* (so St. Ephrem greeted the Divine Mother): *Ave Christianorum firma Salus: Ave peccatorum Adjutrix: Ave Vallum Fidelium, & Mundi Salus* (*de Laud. Virg.*) — "Hail, Hope of my Soul; hail, sure Salvation of Christians; hail, Helper of sinners; hail, Rampart of the Faithful and Salvation of the World." God save you, he said, O Hope of my Soul, O sure Salvation of Christians, O help of Sinners, Defense of the Faithful, and Salvation of the World. St. Basil warns us that after God we have no other hope than Mary, and therefore he calls her *post Deum sola Spes nostra*, "after God, our only Hope." And St. Ephrem, reflecting on the order of the present Providence, by which God has disposed (as St. Bernard says, and as we shall show at length further on) that

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all who are saved must be saved through Mary, says to her: My Lady, do not cease to guard us and to place us beneath the Mantle of your protection, since after God we have no other Hope but you: *Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o Virgo sincerissima: Sub alis tuae Pietatis protege & custodi nos.* (*S. Ephrem de Laud. Virg.*) — "We have no confidence except from you, O most sincere Virgin: under the wings of your compassion protect and guard us." St. Thomas of Villanova says the same, calling her our only Refuge, Help, and Asylum: *Tu unicum nostrum Refugium, Subsidium, & Asylum.* (*Con. 3. de Conc. Virg*) — "You are our only Refuge, Support, and Asylum."

St. Bernard seems to assign the reason for this when he says: *Intuere, homo, Consilium Dei, Consilium Pietatis; redemturus humanum genus, universum pretium contulit in Maria.* (*Serm. de Nat.*) — "Behold, O man, the Counsel of God, the Counsel of his compassion: about to redeem the human race, he laid the whole price in Mary." Behold, O Man, the design of God — a design made in order

to dispense his Mercy to us more abundantly: willing to redeem the human race, he has placed the whole value of the Redemption in Mary's hands, that she may dispense it at her will.

God commanded Moses to make the Mercy Seat of purest gold, telling him that from there he would afterward speak to him: *Facies & propitiatorium de auro mundissimo... Inde praecipiam & loquar ad te. Exod. c. 25. 17. & 22.* — "You shall make a mercy seat of the purest gold... From there I will command and will speak to you." An Author says (*Paciuchelli, Exc. 20. in Sal. Ang. 11.*) that this Mercy Seat is Mary, from which the Lord speaks to men, and from there grants us pardon, graces, and gifts W1 prints *Propoziatorio*; read *Propiziatorio*: *Te universus mundus continet commune Propitiatorium. Inde pientissimus Dominus loquitur ad cor: Inde responsa dat benignitatis & veniae: Inde munera largitur: Inde nobis omne bonum emanat.* — "The whole world holds you as its common Mercy Seat. From there the most loving Lord speaks to the heart; from there he gives answers of kindness and of pardon; from there he bestows his gifts; from there every good flows out to us." And therefore St. Irenaeus says that the Divine Word, before becoming incarnate in Mary's Womb, sent the Archangel to ask her consent, because he willed that from Mary the Mystery of the Incarnation should come down to the World: *Quid est quod sine Mariae consensu non perficitur Incarnationis mysterium? quia nempe vult illam Deus omnium bonorum esse principium.* (*S. Iren. lib. 3. contr. Valent. c. 33.*) — "Why is it that the mystery of the Incarnation is not accomplished without Mary's consent? Because God wills her to be the beginning of all good things." Whence the Idiot said: *Per ipsam habet mundus, & habiturus est omne bonum. In Pref Contempl. B. M.* — "Through her the world has, and will have, every good." Every good, every help, every grace that Men have received and will receive from God until the end of the World, has all come to them, and will come, through the intercession and by means of Mary. The devout Blosius had reason, then, to cry out: O Mary,

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quis te non amet? Tu in dubiis es lumen, in moeroribus solatium, in periculis refugium. (*Cimeliarch. Embol. 1. ad Mar.*) — "who would not love you? You are light in doubts, comfort in sorrows, refuge in dangers." O Mary, who are so lovable and so gracious to those who love you, who will be so foolish and so unhappy as not to love you? In doubts and confusions you enlighten the minds of those who have recourse to you in their afflictions. You console those who trust in you amid dangers. You succour those who call upon you. *Tu post Unigenitum tuum* (Blosius continues) *certa Fidelium Salus* — "You, after your Only-begotten, are the sure Salvation of the Faithful." After your Divine Son you are the sure Salvation of your

faithful Servants: *Ave desperantium Spes, Ave destitutorum adjutrix* — "Hail, Hope of the despairing; hail, helper of the forsaken." God save you, then, O Hope of the despairing, O succour of the abandoned. *Cujus honori tantum tribuit Filius, ut quod vis, mox fiat* — "To whose honour the Son grants so much that whatever you will is done at once." O Mary, you are all-powerful, since your Son wills to honour you by doing at once all that you will.

And St. Germanus, recognizing in Mary the fountain of all our good and our deliverance from every evil, invokes her thus: *O Domina mea, sola mihi ex Deo solatium, itineris mei directio, debilitatis meae potentia, mendicitatis meae divitiae, vulnerum meorum medicina, dolorum meorum revelatio, vinculorum meorum solutio, salutis meae Spes; exaudi orationes meas, miserere suspiriorum meorum, Domina mea, Refugium, Vita, Auxilium, Spes & Robur meum.* (*S. Germ. in Encom. Deip.*) O my Lady, you alone are my relief, given me by God; you the guide of my pilgrimage; you the strength of my weak powers, the riches of my poverty, the loosing of my chains, the hope of my salvation. Hear, I beg you, my supplications; have pity on my sighs — you who are my Queen, my Refuge, my Life, my Help, my Hope, and my Strength.

With reason, then, does St. Antoninus apply to Mary that passage of Wisdom: *Venerunt autem mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa, cap. 11.* — "Now all good things came to me together with her." Since Mary is the Mother and dispenser of all goods, the World may well say — and especially he who in the World lives devoted to this Queen — that together with devotion to Mary he has obtained every good: *Omnium bonorum Mater est; & venerunt mihi omnia bona cum illa, scilicet Virgine, potest dicere Mundus. S. Anton. Part. 4. tit. 17. c. 20.* — "She is the Mother of all good things; and the World can say: all good things came to me with her, that is, with the Virgin." Whence the Abbot of Celles said, without qualification: *Inventa Maria in-*

venitur omne bonum — "When Mary is found, every good is found." He who finds Mary finds every good, finds every grace, every virtue; for by her powerful Intercession she obtains for him all that he needs to make him rich in Divine Grace. She lets us know that she keeps with her all the riches of God — that is, the Divine Mercies — to dispense them for the benefit of those who love her: *Mecum sunt divitiae, & opes superbae... ut ditem diligentes me. Sap. 8. 21.* — "With me are riches and glorious wealth... that I may enrich those who love me." Whence St. Bonaventure said (*in Spec.*) that we must all keep our eyes always upon Mary's hands, that through her we may receive the good we desire: *Oculi omnium nostrum*

ad manus Mariae semper debent respicere, ut per manus ejus aliquid boni accipiamus — "The eyes of us all ought always to look to Mary's hands, that through her hands we may receive some good."

Oh, how many proud men have found Humility through Devotion to Mary! How many wrathful men, Meekness! How many blind, the Light! How many in despair, Confidence! How many lost souls, Salvation! And this is exactly what she foretold when in Elizabeth's house she uttered that sublime Canticle of hers: *Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Luc. 1.* — "For behold, from this time all generations shall call me blessed." Repeating which words, St. Bernard says: *Ex hoc Beatam te dicent omnes generationes, quae omnibus generationibus Vitam & Gloriam genuisti. Serm. 2. in Pentec.* — "From this time all generations shall call you Blessed, you who have brought forth Life and Glory for all generations." Therefore all Peoples will call you Blessed, because to all Peoples you have given Life and Glory; for in you Sinners find Pardon, and the Just find Perseverance in the Divine Grace: *In te Peccatores Veniam, Justi Gratiam inveniunt in aeternum. S. Bern. loc. cit.* — "In you Sinners find Pardon, and the Just find Grace forever." Whence the devout Lanspergius (*lib. 4. Min. Op.*) W1 here prints *Laspegio*, elsewhere *Laspergio* brings in the Lord speaking thus to the World: *Matrem meam veneratione praecipua venerare* — "Venerate my Mother with a special veneration." Men, he says, poor children of Adam, who live in the midst of so many enemies and so many miseries, strive to honour with particular affection my Mother, who is also your Mother: *Ego enim mundo dedi in charitatis Exemplum, in Praesidium tutissimum, ut sit tribulatis Asylum* — "For I have given her to the world as an Example of charity, as a most safe Defense, that she may be an Asylum for the afflicted." For I have given Mary to the World as your Example, that from her you may learn to live as one ought; and as your Refuge, that you may have recourse to her in your afflictions: *Quam nemo formidet; nemo ad eam accedere trepidet. Propterea namque adeo feci eam mitem, adeo misericordem, ut neminem aspernat, nulli se neget; omnibus Pietatis sinum apertum teneat, neminem a se redire tristem sinat.* — "Let no one dread her; let no one tremble to approach her. For I have made her so gentle, so merciful, that she spurns no one, denies herself to no one, keeps the bosom of her compassion open to all, and lets no one go away from her in sorrow." This Daughter of mine,

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says God, I have made such that no one need fear her, or feel any reluctance in having recourse to her. Therefore I created her of a nature so kind and so compassionate that she does not know how to despise anyone who has recourse to

her, nor how to refuse her favour to anyone who asks it of her. To all she keeps open the Mantle of her Mercy, and she does not permit that anyone should ever depart from her feet without consolation. Let the immense Goodness of our God, then, be praised and blessed forever, who has given us this great Mother and Advocate, so tender and so loving.

O God, how tender are the sentiments of confidence which the enamored St. Bonaventure had toward our most loving Redeemer Jesus, and toward our most loving Advocate Mary! (*P. 3. Stim. Div. Am. c. 13.*) *Quantumcumque me Deus praesciverit, scio quod seipsum negare non potest* — "However much God may have foreseen against me, I know that he cannot deny himself." Let the Lord have reproved me as much as he will: I know that he cannot deny himself to one who loves him and who seeks him from the heart. *Eum amplexabor, & si mihi non benedixerit, eum non dimittam; & sine me recedere non valebit* — "I will embrace him, and if he does not bless me, I will not let him go; and he will not be able to depart without me." I will embrace him with my Love, and if he does not bless me, I will never let him go; and he will not be able to depart without me. *In cavernis Vulnerum suorum me abscondam, ibique extra se me invenire non poterit* — "I will hide myself in the caverns of his Wounds, and there he will not be able to find me outside himself." If I can do nothing else, at least I will hide within his Wounds; and remaining there, he will not be able to find me outside himself. Finally, he added: if my Redeemer, for my faults, drives me from his feet, I will throw myself at the feet of his Mother Mary; and prostrate there, I will not depart until she has obtained Pardon for me: *Ad Matris suae Pedes provolutus stabo, ut mihi veniam impetret* — "I will lie prostrate at the Feet of his Mother, that she may obtain pardon for me." For this Mother of Mercy does not know, and has never known, how not to have compassion on miseries and how not to content the wretched who have recourse to her for help: *Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat: Et miseris non satisfacere nunquam scivit. Ideoque* (he concluded) *ex compassione mihi ad indulgentiam Filium inclinabit* — "For she does not know how not to have mercy, and she has never known how to fail the wretched. And therefore out of compassion she will incline her Son to pardon me." And so, if not from obligation, at least from compassion, she will not fail to move her Son to pardon me.

Look upon us, then — let us conclude with Euthymius — look upon us with those compassionate eyes of yours, O most compassionate Mother of ours, since we are your Servants and in you we have placed all our Hope. *Respice, o Mater Misericordiosissima, respice Servos*

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tuos; in te enim omnem spem nostram collocavimus. (*Orat. de Deip.*) — "Look, O most merciful Mother, look upon your Servants; for in you we have placed all our hope."

Example.

It is related in the fourth Part of the *Treasury of the Rosary*, at *Miracle 85*, that there was a Knight most devoted to the Divine Mother, who had made for himself in his Palace a devout Oratory, where before a beautiful Image of Mary he was accustomed to spend long times in prayer, not only by day but by night as well, breaking his rest to go and honour his beloved Lady. Now his Wife — for he was married — a Lady otherwise of much piety, observing that her Husband, in the deepest silence of the house, would rise from bed and leave the room, and would not return until after a long time, fell, poor woman, into jealousy and into suspicion of wrongdoing. So one day, to free herself from this thorn that tormented her, she went so far as to ask her Husband whether he loved any other woman besides herself. The Knight, smiling, answered her: Know then that I love a Lady, the most lovable in the World. To her I have given my whole Heart; and I could die sooner than cease to love her. And if you knew her, you yourself would tell me to love her more than I love her now. He meant, of course, the Most Holy Virgin, whom he loved so tenderly. But the Wife, falling then into still greater suspicion, in order to make sure of the truth questioned him again: whether it was to find that Lady that he rose from bed every night and left the room? And the Knight, who did not know his Wife's great agitation, answered yes. The Lady, thus falsely convinced of what was not so, blinded by passion — what did she do? One night, when her Husband had gone out of the chamber as usual, in desperation she took a knife and cut her throat, and shortly after she died. The Knight, his devotions finished, returns to the room, goes to get back into bed, and finds it all soaked. He calls his Wife, and she does not answer. He shakes her, and she does not stir. At last he takes the lamp, and sees the bed full of blood and his Wife dead with her throat cut. Then he understood that his Wife had killed herself out of jealousy. What did he do? He locked the room, and returning to the Chapel he prostrated himself before the Most Holy Virgin, and there, weeping bitterly, began to say to her: My mother, do you see the affliction I am in? If

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you do not console me, to whom shall I have recourse? Consider that it is for coming to honour you that I have had this misfortune of seeing my Wife dead, and

damned. My mother, you can set this right; set it right for us. Ah, whoever prays to this Mother of Mercy with confidence obtains from her what he desires. See — this prayer made, he hears himself called by a Maidservant of the house: Sir, go to the room, for my Lady is calling you. The Knight cannot bring himself to believe it, for joy. Go back, he said to the girl, and see clearly whether she really wants me. Yes, the servant returned saying: go quickly, for the Mistress is waiting for you. He opens the room, and sees his Wife alive W1 prints *vita*; read *viva*, who throws herself at his feet weeping and begs him to forgive her, saying to him: Ah, my Husband, the Mother of God has delivered me from Hell through your prayers. So, weeping both of them for gladness, they went off to thank the Blessed Virgin in the Oratory. The next morning the Husband gave a banquet for all their Kinsfolk, to whom he then had the event told by the Wife herself, who showed them the mark that still remained from the wound. And all were kindled the more in the Love of the Divine Mother. W1 prints *sia* for *si*

Prayer.

O Mother of holy Love, O our Life, our Refuge, and our Hope: you know well that your Son Jesus, being pleased to make himself our perpetual Advocate with the Eternal Father, has willed that you too should engage yourself with him to obtain for us the Divine Mercies. He has disposed that your Prayers should help our Salvation, and has given them such force that they obtain whatever they ask. To you, then, I turn, O Hope of the wretched — I, a wretched sinner. I hope, my Lady, that by the Merits of Jesus Christ, and then by your Intercession, I am to be saved. So I trust; and I trust so much that if my eternal Salvation lay in my own hands, I would still place it in yours, since I trust more in your Mercy and Protection than in all my own works. W1 prints *Misericodia*; read *Misericordia* My mother and my Hope, do not abandon me, as I should deserve. Look upon my miseries, and be moved to compassion, and succour me, and save me. I confess that many times I have shut, by my sins, the door to the lights and the helps that you had obtained for me

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from the Lord. But the compassion you have for the wretched, and the power you have with God, surpass the number and the malice of all my demerits. It is known to Heaven and to Earth that whoever is protected by you certainly is not lost. Let all others forget me, then, but do not you forget me, O Mother of the Almighty God. Tell God that I am your servant; tell him that you defend me, and I shall be saved. O

Mary, I trust in you; in this hope I live, and in this I wish and hope to die, saying always: *Unica spes mea Jesus, & post Jesum Virgo Maria* — "My only hope is Jesus, and after Jesus the Virgin Mary."

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§II. Mary is the hope of Sinners.

After God created the Earth, he created two lights, one greater and the other lesser — that is, the Sun to give light by day, and the Moon to give light by night. *Fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna: luminare majus ut praeesset diei, luminare minus ut praeesset nocti. Gen. 1. 16.* — "And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night." The Sun, says Hugh of St. Cher, was a figure of Jesus Christ, whose light the Just enjoy, living in the day of Divine Grace; the Moon, a figure of Mary, through whom sinners are enlightened who live in the night of sin. *Luminare majus Christus qui praeest justis: Luminare minus, idest Maria, quae praeest peccatoribus. In loc. cit.* — "The greater light is Christ, who rules over the just; the lesser light, that is Mary, who rules over sinners." Since, then, Mary is this Moon favourable to wretched sinners, if ever some wretched man, says Innocent III, finds himself fallen into this night of sin, what is he to do? *Qui jacet in nocte culpae, respiciat Lunam, deprecetur Mariam.* (*Serm. 2. de Ass. B. V.*) — "Let him who lies in the night of sin look to the Moon, let him entreat Mary." Since he has lost the light of the Sun by losing Divine Grace, let him turn to the Moon, let him pray to Mary, and she will give him light to know the misery of his state, and strength to come out of it quickly. St. Methodius says that by Mary's prayers almost countless Sinners are continually converted: *Mariae virtute & precibus pene innumerae Peccatorum conversiones fiunt* — "By Mary's power and prayers almost innumerable conversions of Sinners take place."

One of the titles by which holy Church makes us have recourse to the Divine mother, and which most heartens poor sinners, is the title *Refuge of Sinners*, by which we invoke her in the Litanies. In ancient times there was in Judea the City of Refuge, where offenders who went there to take shelter were free from the penalties they had deserved. At present there are not so many

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Cities of refuge as there were then; but there is one alone, which is Mary, of whom it was said: *Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, Civitas Dei. Ps. 86.* — "Glorious things are said of you, City of God." But with this difference: that in the ancient Cities not all

offenders found refuge, nor for every kind of crime; whereas under Mary's mantle all sinners find escape, and for every crime they may have committed. It is enough that anyone have recourse there for shelter. I am the City of refuge for all who come to me, says our Queen: *Ego Civitas Refugii omnium ad me confugientium* — "I am the City of Refuge of all who flee to me" — so St. John Damascene makes her say. *Or. 2. de Dorm.*

And it is enough that one have recourse to her: he who has once had the good fortune to enter this City will not even need to speak in order to be saved. *Convenite celeriter, & ingrediamur Civitatem munitam, & sileamus ibi. Jerem. 8.* — "Assemble quickly, and let us enter the fortified City, and let us keep silence there." This fortified City, Blessed Albert the Great explains, is the Holy Virgin, fortified in Grace and in Glory. *Et sileamus ibi*, the Gloss explains: *Quia non audemus deprecari Dominum quem offendimus, ipsa deprecetur & roget* — "Because we do not dare to entreat the Lord whom we have offended, let her entreat and ask." Since we have not the boldness to beg the Lord for pardon, it is enough that we enter this City and keep silence; for then Mary herself will speak and pray for us. Whence a devout Author (*Benedetto Fernandez, in c. 4. Gen.*) exhorts all sinners to take shelter under Mary's mantle, saying: *Fugite o Adam, o Eva, fugite eorum liberi intra sinum matris Mariae. Ipsa est Civitas refugii, spes unica peccatorum* — "Flee, O Adam, O Eve; flee, you their children, into the bosom of mother Mary. She is the City of refuge, the only hope of sinners." Flee, O Adam, O Eve, and you their children who have offended God: flee and take shelter in the bosom of this good mother. Do you not know that she is the only City of refuge, and the only hope of sinners? — as St. Augustine already calls her: *Unica spes peccatorum* (*Serm. 18. de Sanct.*), "the only hope of sinners."

Whence St. Ephrem (*de Laud. Virg.*) says to her: You are the only Advocate of Sinners and of those who are deprived of every help. And so he greets her: *Ave peccatorum refugium & hospitium, ad quam nimirum confugere possunt peccatores* — "Hail, refuge and shelter of sinners, to whom indeed sinners may flee." God save you, refuge and harbour of sinners, in whom alone Sinners can find escape and shelter. And this (an Author observes) is what David meant to say when he said: *Protexit me in abscondito tabernaculi sui. Ps. 26.* — "He protected me in the secret of his tabernacle." The Lord has protected me by making me hide within his Tabernacle. And what

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is this Tabernacle of God, if not Mary, as St. Germanus calls her? *Tabernaculum a Deo fabricatum, in quo solus Deus ingressus; sacris Mysteriis operaturus in te pro*

salute omnium Hominum — "A tabernacle built by God, into which God alone entered, to work in you the sacred Mysteries for the salvation of all Men." A tabernacle made by God, into which none entered but God, to accomplish the great Mysteries of human Redemption. On this subject the great Father St. Basil says that the Lord has given us Mary as a public Hospital, where all the sick may be received who are poor and destitute of every other help: *Aperuit nobis Deus publicum Valetudinarium* — "God has opened for us a public infirmary." Now in Hospitals made expressly to shelter the poor, I ask: who are they who have the greater right to be received there, if not those who are poorest and sickest?

Therefore he who finds himself most wretched — because most lacking in merits and most oppressed by the ills of the Soul, which are sins — seems able to say to Mary: My Lady, you are the refuge of the poor sick; do not drive me away, for being poorer than others and sicker, I have the greater right that you should receive me. *Nescimus* — let us say to her with St. Thomas of Villanova — *nescimus aliud refugium nisi te. Tu sola es unica spes nostra, in qua confidimus. Tu sola Patrona nostra, ad quam omnes aspicimus.* (*Serm. 3. de Nat. B. V.*) — "We know no other refuge but you. You alone are our one hope, in whom we trust. You alone are our Patroness, to whom we all look." O Mary, we wretched sinners know of no other refuge to find but you. You are the only hope to whom we entrust our salvation. You are the only Advocate with Jesus Christ, to whom we are all turned.

In the Revelations of St. Bridget (*Rev. entr. c. 50*) Mary is called *Sidus vadens ante Solem*, "the star that goes before the Sun" — that we may understand that when devotion to the Divine Mother is seen to appear in a sinful Soul, it is a sure sign that before long God will come to enrich it with his Grace. The glorious St. Bonaventure, to revive sinners' confidence in Mary's protection, pictures for us a sea in tempest, where sinners already fallen from the ship of Divine Grace, already tossed this way and that by the remorse of conscience and by the fears of Divine Justice, without light and without guide, are already near to losing the breath of all hope and to despairing. With such a thought the Saint seems, pointing out Mary to them — commonly called the Star of the sea — to raise his voice and say to them: *Respirate ad illam perditi peccatores, & perdu-*

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ducet vos ad Portum. W1 sets *perduducet* across the page break; read *perducet* (*S. Bon. in Psal. 8.*) — "Breathe again toward her, you lost sinners, and she will bring you to the Harbour." Poor lost sinners, do not despair: lift your eyes to this beautiful Star, take breath again and trust; for she will bring you out of the tempest and lead you to the harbour of salvation.

St. Bernard said the same: *Si non vis obrui procellis, respice stellam, voca Mariam.* (*Hom. 2. Sup. Miss.*) — "If you do not wish to be overwhelmed by the storms, look to the star, call upon Mary." If you do not want to be sunk by the tempest, turn to the star and call Mary to your help. For the devout Blosius says (*In Can. Vit. Spir. cap. 18*) that she is the only shelter of those who find that they have offended God: *Ipsa peccantium singulare Refugium* — "She is the singular Refuge of sinners." She is the asylum of all who are tempted and afflicted: *Ipsa omnium, quos tentatio urget, aut calamitas, aut persecutio, tutissimam Asylum* — "She is the safest Asylum of all whom temptation, or calamity, or persecution presses hard." This mother of mercy is wholly kind, wholly sweet, not only with the just but with sinners too and with the despairing. *Tota mitis est & suavis, non solum justis, verum etiam peccatoribus, & desperatis.* And so, when she sees that these have recourse to her, and hears that they seek her help from the heart, she at once succours them, receives them, and obtains pardon from her Son. *Quos, ut ad se ex corde clamare conspexerit, statim adjuvat, suscipit, & Judici reconciliat* — "As soon as she sees them crying to her from the heart, she at once helps them, receives them, and reconciles them with the Judge." She does not know how to despise anyone, however unworthy he may be, and therefore refuses her protection to none. She consoles all; and it is enough that she be barely invoked, and at once she helps the one who invokes her. *Nullum aspernens, nulli se negat: omnes consolatur, & tenuiter invocata, praesto adest* — "Spurning no one, she denies herself to no one; she consoles all, and even when faintly invoked she is at hand." By her sweetness she often draws to devotion to herself, and awakens, those sinners most estranged from God and most sunk in the lethargy of their sins. *Sua bonitate saepe eos, qui Deo minus afficiuntur, ad sui cultum blande allicit; potenterque excitat, ut per hujusmodi studium praeparentur ad Gratiam, & tandem apti reddantur Regno Caelorum* — "By her goodness she often gently draws to her own veneration those who are little drawn to God, and powerfully rouses them, so that by such devotion they may be prepared for Grace and at last made fit for the Kingdom of Heaven" — that by this means they may dispose themselves to receive Divine Grace, and finally be made worthy of eternal Glory. *Talis a Deo facta est, ut nemo ad eam accedere trepidet* — "She was made such by God that no one need tremble to approach her." God has made this beloved Daughter of his of a nature so compassionate and so gracious that no one need ever lose confidence in having recourse to her intercession. The devout Writer concludes: *Fieri non potest, ut pereat, qui Mariae sedulus & homicis* so in W1; read *humilis cultor extiterit* — "It cannot come to pass that he should perish who has been a diligent and humble servant of Mary." In short, it is not possible that he

should be lost who with attention and humility cultivates devotion toward this Divine mother.

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She is called a Plane Tree: *Quasi platanus exaltata sum. Eccl. 24.* — "I was exalted like a plane tree" — that sinners may understand that, as the Plane Tree gives Travelers the means of sheltering under its shade from the heat of the Sun, so Mary, when she sees the wrath of Divine Justice kindled against them, invites them to take shelter under the shade of her protection. St. Bonaventure observes that the Prophet Isaiah lamented in his own day and said: *Ecce tu iratus es, & peccavimus..... non est qui consurgat, & teneat te. Is. 54. ex v. 5.* — "Behold, you are angry, and we have sinned... there is none who rises up and takes hold of you." Lord, you are justly angered with sinners, and there is no one who can appease you for us. Yes — because then Mary was not yet born into the world. *Ante Mariam* (says the Saint) *non fuit qui sic Deum detinere auderet* (*in Spec. c. 12.*) — "Before Mary there was none who would dare thus to hold God back." But if now God is angry with some sinner, and Mary undertakes to protect him, she holds back her Son from chastising him, and saves him. *Detinet Filium, ne peccatores percutiat* — "She holds back the Son, that he may not strike sinners." Indeed St. Bonaventure goes on to say that no one can be found more fitted than Mary, who goes so far as to lay her hands upon the sword of Divine Justice, that it may not descend to punish the sinner. *Nemo tam idoneus, qui gladio Domini manus objiciat* — "No one is so fit to set a hand against the sword of the Lord." Upon the same thought Richard of Saint-Laurence says that before Mary was in the World God complained that there was no one to hold him back from chastising sinners; but that, once Mary was born, she appeases him. *Querebatur Dominus ante Mariam: Non est qui consurgat, & teneat me;* (*Ezech. 22.*) *Donec inventa est Maria, quae tenuit eum, donec emolliretur.* (*Ricc. l. 2. de Laud. Virg.*) — "Before Mary the Lord complained: There is none who rises up and holds me back — until Mary was found, who held him fast until he was softened."

Hence St. Basil heartens sinners and says: *Ne diffidas, peccator, sed in cunctis Mariam sequere & invoca, quam voluit Deus in unctis* so in W1; read *cunctis subvenire.* (*De Annunc. B. Virg.*) — "Do not lose confidence, sinner, but in all things follow and invoke Mary, whom God has willed to come to the aid of all." Sinner, do not lose confidence, but have recourse to Mary in all your needs; call her to your aid, and you will always find her ready to help you; for this is the Divine will, that she should succour all in every necessity. This mother of mercy has such a desire to save the most lost of sinners that she herself goes seeking them out to help them; and if they have recourse to her, she well knows how to make them dear to God.

Isaac desired to eat of some wild game, and therefore promised his blessing to Esau; Rebecca, on the contrary, wishing that this blessing should be received by her other son Jacob, told him

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to bring her two kids, because she would season them to Isaac's taste: *Pergens ad gregem affer mihi duos hoedos. Gen. 27.* — "Go to the flock and bring me two kids." St. Antoninus says (*Part. 4. tit. 15. c. 2.*) that Rebecca was a figure of Mary, who says to the Angels: bring me sinners (who are signified by the kids), for I will season them in such a way (by obtaining for them sorrow and resolution) that I shall make them dear and acceptable to my Lord. And Franco the Abbot, following the same thought, says that Mary knows how to season these kids so well that they not only equal but sometimes even surpass the savor of venison: *Vere sapiens Mulier, quae novit sic hoedos condire, ut gratiam cervorum coaequent, aut etiam superent.* (*Tom. 3. de Grat.*) — "Truly a wise Woman, who knows how to season kids so that they equal, or even surpass, the savor of venison."

The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget (*Rev. l. 1. c. 6*) that there is no sinner in the World so hostile to God that, if he has recourse to her and invokes her help, he does not return to God and recover his Grace: *Nullus ita abjectus a Deo, qui si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum* — "No one is so cast off from God that, if he invokes me, he does not return to God." And the same St. Bridget one day heard Jesus Christ saying to his mother that she would be ready to obtain the divine Grace even for Lucifer, if he would humble himself to seek her help: *Etiam Diabolo misericordiam exhiberes, si humiliter peteret* — "You would show mercy even to the Devil, if he asked it humbly." That proud Spirit will never humble himself to implore Mary's protection; but if ever such a case were to arise, that he stooped to ask it of her, Mary would have the compassion, and the power by her prayers, to obtain for him from God pardon and salvation. But what cannot be verified with the Devil is well verified with sinners who have recourse to this mother of compassion.

Noah's Ark was indeed a figure of Mary; for as in it all the brute beasts of the Earth found shelter, so under Mary's mantle all sinners find refuge who, by their vices and sins of the flesh, have already become like brutes. With this difference, however, says an Author: *Quod Arca animalia suscepit, animalia servavit.* (*Paciucch. de B. V.*) — "The Ark received animals and kept them animals." Into the Ark the brutes entered, and brutes they remained: the wolf remained a wolf, the tiger remained a tiger. But under Mary's mantle the wolf becomes a lamb, the tiger becomes a dove. One day St. Gertrude saw Mary with her mantle open, and beneath

it many wild beasts of various kinds — leopards, lions, bears; and she saw that the Virgin not only did not drive them away, but moreover with her

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kindly hand gently received and caressed them. The Saint understood that these beasts are wretched sinners, whom Mary, when they have recourse to her, receives with sweetness and love. (*Ap. Blos. Mon. Spir. cap. 1.*)

Well, then, had St. Bernard reason (*Orat. Paneg. ad B. V.*) to say to the Virgin: My Lady, you do not abhor any sinner whatsoever, however foul and abominable he may be, who approaches you; if he asks you for help, you will not disdain to stretch out your compassionate hand to draw him from the depth of despair: *Tu peccatorem quantumcumque foetidum non horres, si ad te suspiraverit, tu illum a desperationis baratro pia manu retrahis* — "You do not shrink from a sinner, however foul, if he sighs to you; you draw him back with a compassionate hand from the abyss of despair." Oh, may our God be forever blessed and thanked, O most amiable Mary, who has made you so sweet and so kind even toward the most wretched sinners! Wretched is he who does not love you, and who, being able to have recourse to you, does not trust in you! He is lost who does not have recourse to Mary; but who was ever lost that had recourse to Mary?

It is related in Scripture that Boaz allowed that woman named Ruth to go gathering the ears of grain that fell from the hands of the Reapers: *Colligebat spicas post terga metentium. Ruth 2. 3.* — "She gathered ears of grain behind the backs of the reapers." St. Bonaventure adds: *Ruth in oculis Booz, Maria in oculis Domini hanc gratiam invenit, ut ipsa spicas, idest Animas a Messoribus derelictas, colligere ad veniam possit.* (*S. Bon. in Spe. cap. 8.*) — "As Ruth in the eyes of Boaz, so Mary has found this grace in the eyes of the Lord: that she may gather the ears — that is, the Souls abandoned by the Reapers — unto pardon." As Ruth found grace in the eyes of Boaz, so Mary has found grace in the eyes of the Lord, to be able to gather the ears abandoned by the Reapers. The Reapers are the Evangelical Laborers, the Missionaries, the Preachers, the Confessors, who by their labours gather every day and win Souls for God. But there are certain rebellious and hardened Souls who are abandoned even by these; and to Mary alone is it granted to save by her powerful Intercession these abandoned ears. But poor indeed are those who do not let themselves be gathered even by this sweet Lady! These indeed will be utterly lost and accursed. But blessed, on the contrary, is he who has recourse to this good mother! There is not in the World, says the devout Blosius, a sinner so lost and so befouled that Mary abhors him and drives him away. Ah, if he will but come to seek her help, she, the good mother, will be able, will know how, and will indeed be

willing to recon-

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cile him with her Son and obtain pardon for him: *Nullum tam execrabilem peccatorem Orbis habet, quem ipsa abominetur, & a se repellat: quemque dilectissimo nato suo (modo suam precetur opem) non possit, sciat, & velit reconciliare.* (*Blos. de Dictis PP. cap. 5.*) — "The World holds no sinner so execrable that she abhors him and repels him from her, or whom — if only he begs her help — she cannot, does not know how to, and does not wish to reconcile with her most beloved Son."

With reason, then, O my most sweet Queen, does St. John Damascene greet you and call you the hope of the despairing: *Salve spes desperatorum* — "Hail, hope of the despairing." With reason St. Lawrence Justinian names you the hope of wrongdoers: *Spes delinquentium*. St. Augustine, the only refuge of Sinners: *Unica spes peccatorum*. St. Ephrem, the safest Harbour of the shipwrecked: *Naufragorum Portus tutissimus*. The same Saint goes so far as to call you protectress of the damned: *Protectrix damnatorum*. With reason, finally, St. Bernard exhorts even the despairing not to despair; whence, full of joy and of tenderness toward this dearest mother of his, he says to her lovingly: My Lady, and who will not have confidence in you, if you succour even the despairing? I do not doubt at all, he adds, that whenever we have recourse to you we shall obtain whatever we wish. In you, then, let him hope who despairs. *Quis non sperabit in te, quae etiam adjuvas desperatos? Non dubito, quod si ad te venerimus, habebimus quod volemus. In te ergo speret qui desperat* (*Sup. Salv. Reg.*) — "Who will not hope in you, who help even the despairing? I do not doubt that if we come to you, we shall have what we wish. Let him, then, who despairs hope in you." St. Antoninus relates that a certain sinner, being out of God's grace, seemed to be standing before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ; the Devil accused him, and Mary defended him. The Enemy presented against this poor guilty man the record of his sins, which, placed in the balance of Divine Justice, weighed far more than all his good works. But his great Advocate then — what did she do? She stretched out her sweet hand, placed it on the other scale, and made it come down in favour of her devoted servant; and so she gave him to understand that she was obtaining pardon for him if he would change his life. And in fact that sinner, after that vision, was converted and changed his life.

Example.

Blessed John Herolt, who out of humility called himself the Disciple, relates (*In Promptuar.*) that there was a married man who lived out of God's grace. His wife, a

good woman, unable to bring him to leave off his sin, begged him that at least in that

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wretched state of his he would practice this devotion to the Mother of God: namely, that every time he passed before some Image of hers, he should greet her with an *Ave Maria*. The Husband began to practice this devotion. One night, as this wicked man was on his way to sin, he saw a light; he looked, and perceived that it was a lamp burning before a devout Image of Mary, who held the Infant Jesus in her arms. He said the *Ave Maria* as usual; but then what did he see? He saw the Child all covered with wounds, running with fresh blood. Then he, at once terrified and moved to tenderness, considering that it was he who by his sins had so wounded his Redeemer, began to weep; but he noticed that the Child turned his back on him. Whereupon, wholly confounded, he had recourse to the Most Holy Virgin, saying: Mother of Mercy, your Son drives me away; I can find no other Advocate more compassionate and more powerful than you, who are his Mother. My Queen, help me, pray to him for me. The Divine Mother answered him from that Image: You sinners call me Mother of Mercy, and then you never cease to make me a Mother of misery, renewing the Passion for my Son and the Sorrows for me. But even so, because Mary does not know how to send away unconsoled anyone who has recourse to her feet, she turned to pray her Son to pardon that wretched man. Jesus continued to show himself unwilling to grant such a pardon; but the holy Virgin, laying the Child down in the niche, prostrated herself before him, saying: My Son, I will not depart from your feet unless you pardon this sinner. Mother, Jesus then said, I can refuse you nothing; you wish him to be pardoned — for love of you I pardon him. Have him come and kiss these wounds of mine. The sinner went, weeping bitterly; and as he kissed the Wounds of the Child, so they were healed. At last Jesus gave him an embrace as a sign of pardon; and he changed his life, and from then on gave himself to a holy life, living enamored of the Most Holy Virgin, who had obtained for him so great a grace.

Prayer.

I adore, O most pure Virgin Mary, your most Holy Heart, which was the Delight and the Repose of God — a Heart wholly full of Humility, of Purity, and of

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Divine Love. I, an unhappy sinner, come to You with a heart wholly full of mire and of wounds. O Mother of Compassion, do not be angered at this, but be moved to

greater compassion and help me. Do not go looking in me for virtues or merits in order to help me; I am lost, and I deserve nothing but Hell. Look only, I beg you, at the confidence I have placed in you, and at the will I have to amend. Look at what Jesus has done and suffered for me, and then abandon me if you dare to abandon me. I present to you all the sufferings of his life: the cold he bore in the stable, the journey he made into Egypt, the Blood he shed, the poverty, the sweats, the sorrows, the death he endured for love of me in your presence; and for love of Jesus, engage yourself to save me. Ah, my Mother, I neither will nor can fear that you would drive me away, now that I have recourse to you and ask you for help. If I feared that, I would do injury to your Mercy, which goes seeking the wretched in order to help them. My Lady, do not refuse your compassion to one to whom Jesus has not refused his Blood. But the merits of this Blood will not be applied to me unless you commend me to God. From you I hope for my salvation. I do not ask you for riches, honours, or other goods of earth; I ask you for the Grace of God, love for your Son, the fulfillment of his will, and Paradise, that I may love him eternally. Is it possible that you should not hear me? No — you are already hearing me, as I hope; you are already praying for me, already obtaining for me the graces I have asked, already accepting me under your protection. My mother, do not leave me; go on, go on praying for me, until you see me saved in Heaven at your feet, blessing you and thanking you forever. Amen.

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CHAPTER IV.

Ad te clamamus exules, filii Hevae — To you we cry, banished children of Eve.

§I. How ready Mary is to help those who invoke her.

Poor we, who — being children of unhappy Eve, and therefore guilty before God of her very fault and condemned to the same penalty — go wandering through this Valley of tears, exiles from our Homeland, weeping and afflicted with so many sorrows of body and of spirit! But blessed is he who amid these miseries often

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turns to the Consoler of the World, to the Refuge of the wretched, to the great Mother of God, and devoutly calls upon her and prays to her! *Beatus homo, qui audit me, & vigilat ad fores meas quotidie! Prov. 8. 34.* — "Blessed is the man who hears me, and watches daily at my gates!" Blessed, says Mary, is he who listens to my counsels and does not cease to wait continually beside the gates of my Mercy, invoking my intercession and my help. Holy Church herself teaches us her Children with what attention and confidence we must have continual recourse to this loving Protectress of ours, by ordaining that her worship be a particular one; that through the year so many Feasts be celebrated in her honour; that one day of the week be especially consecrated to homage of Mary; that every day in the Divine Office all the Clergy and Religious invoke her on behalf of all the Christian people; and that three times a day, at the sound of the bell, all the Faithful greet her. It would be enough to understand this simply to see that in all Public calamities holy Church always wills that recourse be had to the Divine Mother with Novenas, with Prayers, with Processions, and with Visits to her Churches and Images. This is what Mary seeks from us: to be always invoked and entreated — not indeed to beg from us these acts of homage and honours, which fall far too short of her merit, but so that, as our confidence and devotion grow, she may be able the more to succour and console us. *Ipsa tales quaerit*, says St. Bonaventure, *qui ad eam devote & reverenter accedant; hos enim diligit, hos nutrit, hos in filios suscipit.* (*P. 3. Stim. Div. Am. c. 16.*) — "She seeks such as approach her devoutly and reverently; for these she loves, these she nourishes, these she receives as her children."

The same St. Bonaventure says (*in Spec.*) that Ruth was a figure of Mary; for the name is interpreted *videns, & festinans*, "seeing and hastening," since Mary, seeing

our miseries, hastens to succour us with her Mercy: *Videns enim nostram miseriam, est & festinans ad impendendam suam misericordiam* — "For seeing our misery, she is also hastening to bestow her mercy." To which Novarinus adds that Mary, in her desire to do us good, knows no delay; and being no grasping keeper of her graces, as Mother of Mercy she cannot hold back from pouring out upon her Servants, as soon as she can, the treasures of her generosity: *Nescit nectere moras benefaciendi cupida, nec gratiarum avara custos est; tardare nescit molimina Misericordiae Mater, beneficentiae suae thesaurus in suos effusura.* (*Nov. Umbr. Virg. Cap. 10. Exc. 73.*)

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Oh, how ready this good Mother is to help those who invoke her! *Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnuli capreae. Cant. 4. 5.* — "Your two breasts are like two young roes." Explaining this passage, Richard of Saint-Laurence says that Mary's breasts are swift to give the milk of Mercy to whoever asks it, as young roes are swift: *Compressione levissima Angelicae Salutationis larga stillabunt stillicidia* — "At the lightest pressure of the Angelic Salutation they will let fall abundant drops." The same Author assures us that Mary's compassion pours itself out upon everyone who asks it, even though he interposed no other prayer than a simple *Ave Maria*. Therefore Novarinus attests that the Blessed Virgin not only runs but flies to succour those who invoke her. She (says the Author), in showing mercy, does not know how to be unlike God in his practice. As the Lord flies at once to relieve those who ask his help, being all too faithful in keeping the promise he made us — *Petite, & accipietis*, "Ask, and you shall receive" — so Mary, when she is invoked, makes herself ready at once to help the one who prays to her. *Alis utitur Deus: ut suis opituletur, statim advolat; Alas sumit & Virgo, in nostri auxilium advolatura.* (*Nov. c. 10. Excurs 73.*) — "God uses wings: to help his own he flies at once; the Virgin too takes wings, to fly to our aid." And by this we understand who is that Woman of the Apocalypse to whom two wings of a great Eagle are said to have been given, to fly into the desert. *Et datae sunt mulieri alae duae Aquilae magnae, ut volaret in desertum. Apoc. 12. 14.* — "And there were given to the woman two wings of a great Eagle, that she might fly into the desert." Ribeira explains these wings as the Love with which Mary always flew to God: *Pennas habet Aquilae, quia Amore Dei volat* — "She has the wings of an Eagle, because she flies by the Love of God." But Blessed Amadeus says, to our purpose, that these Eagle's wings signify the speed with which Mary, surpassing the speed of the Seraphim, always succours her Children. *Motu celerrimo Seraphin alas excedens, ubique suis ut Mater occurrit. Hom. 8. de Laud. Virg.* — "Surpassing with swiftest motion the wings of the Seraphim, she everywhere comes to her own as a

Mother."

Therefore we read in the Gospel of St. Luke that when Mary went to visit St. Elizabeth and to fill that whole Household with graces, she was not slow, but walked in haste through that whole journey: *Exurgens Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione. Luc. 2.* — "Mary, rising up, went into the hill country with haste." Which is not read of the return journey she made. Therefore it is also said in the Sacred Canticles that Mary's hands are turned on a lathe: *Manus illius tornatiles. Cant. 5. 14.* — "Her hands are turned on a lathe." For, says Richard of Saint-Laurence, as the art of turning on the lathe is the easiest and quickest, so Mary is quicker than all the other Saints to help those devoted to her. *Sicut ars tornandi promptior est aliis artibus, sic Maria*

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ad benefaciendum promptior est alis so in W1; read *aliis Sanctis.* (*De Laud. Virg. l. 5.*) — "As the art of turning is quicker than the other arts, so Mary is quicker than the other Saints to do good." She has the greatest desire to console all; and as soon as she merely hears herself invoked, at once she graciously accepts the prayers and comes to help. *Omnes consolatur, & tenuiter invocata praesto adest. Blosius in Can. Vit. Spir. c. 18.* — "She consoles all, and even faintly invoked she is at hand." With reason, then, did St. Bonaventure call Mary the Salvation of those who invoke her: *O salus te invocantium* — "O salvation of those who invoke you" — signifying that to be saved it is enough to invoke this Divine Mother, who, as Richard of Saint-Laurence says, always lets herself be found ready to help the one who prays to her: *Inveniens semper paratam auxiliari* — "finding her always ready to help." For Bernardine de Bustis says: *Plus vult illa facere tibi bonum, quam tu accipere concupiscas.* (*Mar. 1. Serm. 5. de Nom. Mar.*) — "She wishes to do you good more than you desire to receive it." The great Lady desires to grant us graces more than we desire to receive them.

Nor should the multitude of our sins lessen our confidence of being heard by Mary when we have recourse to her feet. She is the Mother of Mercy, and Mercy finds no place unless it finds wretched ones to relieve. Whence, as a good Mother does not disdain to give remedy to a child infected with the itch, though the cure be troublesome and loathsome, so our good Mother does not know how to abandon us when we have recourse to her, however great may be the stench of our sins, of which she is to heal us. The thought is Richard of Saint-Laurence's: *Non enim Mater haec dedignatur peccatorem, sicut nec bona Mater filium scabiosum. Quia propter hoc factam se recolit Misericordiae Genitricem. Ubi enim non est miseria, Misericordia non habet locum.* (*De Laud. Virg. lib. 4.*) — "For this Mother does not

disdain a sinner, any more than a good Mother disdains a child with the itch. For she remembers that for this she was made the Mother of Mercy; since where there is no misery, Mercy has no place." And this is precisely what Mary meant to signify when she showed herself to St. Gertrude spreading out her mantle to receive all those who had recourse to her. And the Saint understood at the same time that all the Angels are intent on defending those devoted to Mary from the assaults of Hell. (*Rev. lib. 4. cap. 49.*)

So great is the Compassion this good Mother has for us, and so great the Love she bears us, that she does not wait for our prayers in order to succour us. *Praeoccupat, qui se concupiscunt, ut illis se prius ostendat. Cap. 6.* — "She forestalls those who desire her, to show herself to them first." These words of Wisdom St. Anselm applies to Mary, and says that she runs ahead to help those who desire her Protection. By which we must understand that she obtains many gra-

ces for us from God before we pray to her for them. And therefore, says Richard of St. Victor (*in Cant. cap. 23*), Mary is called the Moon, *pulchra ut Luna*, "fair as the Moon"; because not only is she, like the Moon, swift to run to the help of those who invoke her — *velocitate praestat*, "she excels in swiftness" — but moreover she is so loving of our good that in our needs she anticipates our supplications, and her Mercy is quicker to relieve us than we are to bestir ourselves to invoke her. *Velocius occurrit ejus pietas, quam invocetur, & causas miserorum anticipat.* (*Loc. cit.*) — "Her compassion runs to meet us more swiftly than she is invoked, and anticipates the causes of the wretched." And this comes about, the same Richard adds, from Mary's breast being so filled with compassion that, scarcely does she know our miseries, than at once she pours out the milk of her Mercy; nor can the kindly Queen learn of any Soul's need and not succour it. *Adeo replentur ubera tua Misericordia, ut alterius miseriae notitia tacta, lac fundant Misericordiae. Nec possis miserias scire, & non subvenire.* (*Ricc. in Cant. c. 23.*) — "Your breasts are so filled with Mercy that, at the touch of the knowledge of another's misery, they pour out the milk of Mercy; nor can you know miseries and not relieve them."

And this great compassion which Mary has for our miseries, which moves her to pity us and relieve us even when we do not pray to her for it, she made us well understand while she was still living on this Earth, in the matter of the wedding at Cana, as it is written in the Gospel of St. Luke, *ch. 2* W1 attributes this to St. Luke; the wedding at Cana is in John 2. This compassionate Mother then saw the distress of that Bride and Bridegroom, who were afflicted by the shame of seeing the wine fail at the banquet table; and without having been asked at all, moved solely by her

compassionate Heart, which cannot look upon others' afflictions without pitying them, she set herself to beg her Son to console them, laying before him only the need of that Household: *Vinum non habent* — "They have no wine." After which the Son, to console those people, and still more to content the compassionate Heart of his Mother, who desired it, worked that well-known Miracle of changing into wine the water placed in certain jars. And here Novarinus argues, and says: *Si tam prompta ad auxilium currit non quaesita, quid quaesita praestitura est? Cap. 10. Ex. 27.* — "If unasked she runs so readily to help, what will she do when she is asked?" If Mary, even unasked, is so ready to succour in need, how much readier will she be to console those who invoke her and beg her help?

And if anyone should ever doubt of being succoured by Mary when he has recourse to her, Innocent III rebukes him thus: *Quis invocavit eam, & non est auditus ab ipsa?* (*Serm. 2. de Ass. B. V.*) — "Who has invoked her and has not been heard by her?" And who was ever found who

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sought help from this sweet Lady and was not helped by Mary? *Quis unquam, o Beata,* (cries Blessed Eutychian also, *in vita S. Theod.*) *fideliter omnipotentem tuam rogavit opem, & fuit derelictus? Revera nullus unquam.* — "Who ever, O Blessed one, faithfully asked your all-powerful help and was forsaken? Truly, no one ever." Who, O Holy Virgin, has had recourse to your great Patronage — which can relieve every wretched creature and save the most lost of sinners — and has been left abandoned by you? *Revera nullus unquam.* No, this case has never happened, and never will. I am content, said St. Bernard, that whoever can recall having invoked you in his needs, O Holy Virgin, and remembers having been left unheeded by you, should speak no more of your Mercy, nor praise it: *Sileat Misericordiam tuam, Virgo Beata, qui in necessitatibus te invocatam meminerit defuisse.* (*S. Bern. Serm. 1. de Ass.*) — "Let him be silent about your Mercy, O Blessed Virgin, who can remember that he invoked you in his needs and you failed him."

Sooner, says the divine Blosius, will Heaven and Earth be destroyed than Mary fail to succour one who with good intention entreats her help and trusts in her: *Citius Caelum cum Terra perierint, quam Maria aliquem serio se implorantem sua ope destituat. In spec. c. 12.* — "Sooner shall Heaven and Earth perish than Mary leave without her help anyone who seriously implores her." And St. Anselm adds, to increase our confidence, that when we have recourse to this Divine Mother, not only must we be sure of her Protection, but that sometimes we shall be heard and saved more quickly by having recourse to Mary and invoking her holy Name than by invoking the Name of Jesus our Saviour. *Velociter nonnumquam est nostra salus,*

invocato nomine Mariae, quam invocato nomine Jesu. S. Ans. de Exc. V. c. 6. — "Sometimes our salvation comes more swiftly when the name of Mary is invoked than when the name of Jesus is invoked." And he gives the reason: *Quia ad Christum, tanquam Judicem, pertinet etiam punire: ad Virginem, tanquam Patronam, nonnisi misereri* — "Because to Christ, as Judge, it belongs also to punish; to the Virgin, as Patroness, only to have mercy." And he means that we find Salvation sooner by having recourse to the Mother than to the Son — not perhaps because Mary is more powerful than her Son to save us, since we know that Jesus is our only Saviour, who alone by his merits has obtained and obtains Salvation for us; but because, when we have recourse to Jesus and consider him also as our Judge, to whom it belongs to punish the ungrateful, it may be that we fall short in the confidence necessary to be heard; whereas in going to Mary, whose only Office is to have compassion on us as Mother of Mercy and to defend us as our Advocate, our confidence

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seems more secure and greater. *Multa petuntur a Deo, & non obtinentur: Multa petuntur a Maria, & obtinentur; non quia potentior, sed quia Deus eam decrevit sic honorare.* (*Niceforus ap. P. Pep. Grandez. &c.*) — "Many things are asked of God and are not obtained; many things are asked of Mary and are obtained — not because she is more powerful, but because God has decreed to honour her so." Many things are asked of God and are not obtained; they are asked of Mary and are obtained. How is this? Nicephorus answers that it happens not because Mary is more powerful than God, but because God has decreed thus to honour his Mother.

Sweet is the promise which the same Lord made known upon this point to St. Bridget. It is read in Book I of her Revelations, at *chapter 80*, that one day this Saint heard Jesus speaking with his Mother and saying to her: *Nulla erit petitio tua in me, quae non audiatur* — "There shall be no petition of yours to me that is not heard." My mother, ask of me whatever you will, for I will never deny you anything you ask; and know (he then added) that all those who for love of you shall ask me for some grace, though they be sinners, provided they have the will to amend, I promise to hear them. *Et per te omnes, qui per te petunt misericordiam, cum voluntate se emendandi, gratiam habebunt* — "And through you all who through you ask mercy, with the will to amend, shall have grace." The same was revealed to St. Gertrude, when she heard our same Redeemer say to Mary that by his Omnipotence he had granted her to show Mercy to the sinners who invoke her, in whatever manner might please her: *Ex omnipotentia mea, Mater, tibi concessi propitiationem omnium peccatorum, qui devote invocant suae pietatis auxilium, qualicumque modo*

placeat tibi (*Ap. Pep. loc. cit.*) — "Out of my omnipotence, Mother, I have granted you the propitiation of all sinners who devoutly invoke the help of your compassion, in whatever way may please you."

Let everyone, then, say with great confidence, invoking this Mother of Mercy, what St. Augustine said in invoking her: *Memorare, piissima Maria, a saeculo non esse auditum, quemquam ad tua praesidia confugientem esse derelictum* — "Remember, most loving Mary, that it has never been heard in any age that anyone fleeing to your protection was forsaken." Remember, O most compassionate Lady, that it has never been heard since the World began that anyone was abandoned by you. And therefore pardon me if I tell you that I do not wish to be the first unfortunate one who, running to you, must be left abandoned by you.

Example.

St. Francis de Sales well proved the force of this Prayer, as it is told in his Life (*in book 1, ch. 4*). The Saint was about se-

venteen years old and was then in Paris, where he was applied to his studies and at the same time wholly given over to devotion and to the holy Love of God, which kept him in the sweet delights of Paradise. Then the Lord, to try him further and to bind him more closely to his Love, permitted the Devil to represent to him that all he did was lost, since he was reprobate in the divine Decrees. The darkness and dryness in which God willed to leave him at the same time — for he found himself then insensible to all the sweeter thoughts of the divine goodness — made the temptation the stronger to afflict the heart of the holy Youth; so that through such fears and desolations he lost his appetite, his sleep, his colour, and his gladness, in such a way that he moved to compassion all who saw him.

While this horrible tempest lasted, the Saint could conceive no other thoughts, nor utter any other words, than of loss of confidence and of grief. *Am I then* (he said, as is reported in his Life) *to be deprived of the Grace of my God, who in the past showed himself to me so lovable and so gentle? O love, O beauty, to whom I have consecrated all my affections, shall I enjoy your consolations no more? O Virgin mother of God, fairest of all the Daughters of Jerusalem, am I then never to see you in Paradise? Ah, my Lady, if I am not to see your beautiful face, at least do not permit that I should have to blaspheme and curse you in hell.* Such were then the tender sentiments of that afflicted heart, in love with God and with the Virgin. The temptation lasted a month; but at last the Lord was pleased to free him from it by

means of the Consoler of the world, Mary most holy, to whom the Saint had already consecrated his virginity, and in whom he said he had placed all his hopes. One evening, as he was withdrawing homeward, he entered a Church, where he saw a small tablet hung upon the wall; he read it, and found on it the Prayer of St. Augustine cited above: *Memorare, piissima Maria, a saeculo non esse auditum; quemquam ad tua praesidia confugientem esse derelictum.* There, prostrate before the Altar of the Divine mother, he recited this Prayer with affection, renewed to her the vow of his Virginity, promised to recite the Rosary to her every day, and then added: *My Queen, be my Advocate with your Son, to whom*

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I have not the boldness to have recourse. My mother, if in the other World I, unhappy, shall not be able to love my Lord, whom I know to be so worthy of being loved, at least obtain for me that I may love him in this World as much as I can. This is the grace I ask of you, and from you I hope for it. So he prayed to the Virgin, and then abandoned himself wholly into the arms of the Divine Mercy, resigning himself entirely to the will of God. But scarcely was the prayer finished when, in an instant, he was freed by his most sweet mother from the temptation. At once he recovered his interior peace, and with it the health of his body as well; and thenceforward he went on living most devoted to Mary, whose praises and mercy he never afterward ceased to publish by his Sermons and by his Books throughout his whole Life.

Prayer.

O Mother of God, O Queen of the Angels, O hope of men: hear one who calls upon you and has recourse to you. Here I am today, prostrate at your feet — I, a wretched slave of Hell, dedicate myself as your perpetual servant, offering myself to serve you and honour you as much as I can throughout my whole life. I see well that the servitude of a slave so vile and so worthless as I am does you no honour, having so offended your Son and my Redeemer Jesus. But if you will accept an unworthy man as your servant, and by your intercession change him and make him worthy, this same mercy of yours will give you that honour which I, wretched creature, cannot render you. Accept me then, and do not refuse me, O my mother. It was these lost sheep that the Eternal Word came from Heaven to Earth to seek, and to save these he became your Son. And will you despise a little sheep that has recourse to you in order to find Jesus? The price has already been paid for my salvation; my Saviour has already shed his Blood, which is enough to save infinite Worlds. It remains only that this Blood be applied to me as well. And this rests with you, blessed Virgin; with you

it rests, St. Bernard tells me, to dispense the merits of this Blood to whom you please. With you it rests, St. Bonaventure also tells you, to save whom you will: *Quem ipsa vis, salvus erit* — "Whomever you will, he shall be saved." Then, my Queen, help me; my Queen, save me. To you I entrust today my whole Soul; do you see to its salvation. O salvation of those who invoke you, I end with the same Saint's words: *O salus te invocantium* — "O salvation of those who invoke you" — do you save me.

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§II. How powerful Mary is in defending those who invoke her in the Devil's temptations.

Mary most holy is Queen not only of Heaven and of the Saints, but of hell too and of the demons, since she valiantly routed them by her virtues. Already from the beginning of the World God foretold to the infernal serpent the victory and the dominion our Queen would obtain over him, when he announced that a Woman would come into the World who would conquer him: *Inimicitias ponam inter te, & mulierem: ipsa conteret caput tuum. Gen. 3. 15.* — "I will put enmities between you and the woman: she shall crush your head." And who was this Woman, his enemy, if not Mary, who by her beautiful humility and holy life always overcame him and beat down his forces? *Mater Domini Jesu Christi in illa muliere promissa est* — "The Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ was promised in that woman" — St. Cyprian attests. And therefore he observes that God did not say *pono*, "I put," but *ponam*, "I will put," *ne ad Evam pertinere videatur*, "lest it should seem to refer to Eve." He said, I will put enmity between you and the Woman, to signify that this conqueror of his was not Eve, then living, but was to be another Woman descended from her, who was to bring our first parents a greater good — says St. Vincent Ferrer — than that which they had lost by their sin: *Parentibus primis Virginem ab ipsis processuram: quae afferret majus bonum, quam ipsi perdiderunt.* (*Serm. 2. de Nat. Virg.*) — "to our first parents, a Virgin who should come forth from them, who would bring a greater good than they had lost." Mary, then, has been this great and mighty Woman who conquered the Devil and crushed his head by beating down his pride, as the Lord added: *Ipsa conteret caput tuum* — "She shall crush your head." Some doubt whether these words refer to Mary or rather to Jesus Christ, since the Seventy render it *Ipse conteret caput tuum*, "He shall crush your head." But in our Vulgate — which alone we have as approved as of Faith by the Council of Trent —

it stands *Ipsa*, and not *Ipse*; and so it has been understood by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, and very many others. However it may be, it is certain that either the Son through the Mother, or the Mother by the power of the Son, has undone Lucifer; so that the proud one has been left, in his own despite, trodden down and beaten by this blessed Virgin, says St. Bernard. Whence, like a slave conquered in war, he is always forced to obey the commands of this Queen. *Sub*

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Mariae pedibus conculcatus & contritus miseram patitur servitutem. (*S. Bern. Serm. in sign. magn.*) — "Trodden down and crushed beneath Mary's feet, he suffers a wretched servitude." St. Bruno says that Eve, by letting herself be conquered by the serpent, brought us death and darkness; but the Blessed Virgin, by conquering the Devil, brought us life and light: *In Eva mors, & caligo; in Maria vita consistit, & lux. Illa a Diabolo victa est; haec Diabolum vicit, & ligavit.* (*Ap. Scala Franc. p. 4. c. 10.*) — "In Eve is death and darkness; in Mary, life and light. She was conquered by the Devil; this one conquered the Devil and bound him." And she bound him in such a way that the enemy cannot stir to do the least harm to those devoted to her.

Beautiful is the explanation Richard of Saint-Laurence gives to those words of the Proverbs: *Confidit in ea cor viri sui, & spoliis non indigebit. Prov. 31.* — "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he shall have no need of spoils." Richard explains: *Confidit in ea cor viri sui, scilicet Christi. Et spoliis non indigebit; Ipsa enim quasi ditat Sponsum suum, quibus spoliat Diabolum* — "The heart of her husband trusts in her, that is, of Christ; and he shall have no need of spoils, for she enriches her Spouse with those spoils of which she strips the Devil." God has entrusted the heart of Jesus into Mary's hands, that it may be her care to make him loved by men, as Cornelius explains. And in this way spoils will not be wanting to him — that is, the winning of Souls; for she enriches him with Souls, of which she strips hell, saving them from the demons by her powerful help.

It is well known that the palm is the sign of victories; and therefore our Queen has been set upon a high Throne in the sight of all the Powers, as a palm, in token of the sure victory that all can promise themselves who place themselves under her Patronage: *Quasi palma exaltata sum in Cades. Eccl. 26. 18.* — "I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades." W1 prints *Eccl. 26. 18*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 18 *Scilicet ad defendendum*, "namely, to defend," as Blessed Albert the Great adds. My children (Mary seems to say to us in these words), when the enemy assails you, have recourse to me, look to me, and take heart; for in me, who defend you, you will see your victory as well. So that to have recourse to Mary is a most sure means of overcoming

all the assaults of hell; for she, says St. Bernardine of Siena, is Queen even of hell and Lady of the demons, being the one who tames and beats them down: *Beata Virgo dominatur in Regno inferni. Dicitur igitur Domina Daemonum, quasi domans Daemones.* (*Serm. 3. de Glor. Nom. Mar.*) — "The Blessed Virgin rules in the Kingdom of hell. She is therefore called Lady of the Demons, as one taming the Demons." And therefore Mary is called terrible against the powers of hell, like an Army set in array: *Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata. Cant. 6. 3.* — "Terrible as an army set in array." *Acies ordinata*, "an army in array," because she well knows how to marshal her power, her mercy, and her prayers to the confusion of the enemies and to the bene-

fit of her servants, who in temptations invoke her most powerful help.

Ego quasi vitis fructificavi suavitatem odoris. Eccl. 24. 23. — "I, like a vine, have brought forth fruit of sweet fragrance." I, like a vine, the Holy Spirit makes her say, have given fruits of sweet fragrance. *Ajunt*, St. Bernard adds upon this passage, *de florescentibus vitibus omnes repentia venenantiam excedere loca.* (*Serm. 60. in Cant.*) — "They say that all venomous creeping things quit the places where the vines are in blossom." As all poisonous serpents flee from the vines, so the demons flee from those fortunate Souls in whom they perceive the fragrance of devotion to Mary. Therefore she is also called a Cedar: *Quasi cedrus exaltata sum in Libano. Eccl. c. 24. 17.* — "I was exalted like a cedar in Lebanon." Not only because, as the cedar is free from decay, so Mary was untouched by sin; but also because, as Hugh of St. Cher says upon that place, as the cedar by its fragrance puts serpents to flight, so Mary by her Holiness puts the demons to flight: *Cedrus odore suo fugat serpentes, & Beata Virgo Daemones* — "The cedar by its fragrance puts serpents to flight, and the Blessed Virgin, demons."

In Judea victories were obtained by means of the Ark. So Moses conquered his enemies: *Cum elevaretur Arca, dicebat Moyses: Surge, Domine, & dissipentur inimici tui. Num. 10. 35.* — "When the Ark was lifted up, Moses said: Arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered." So Jericho was taken. So the Philistines were beaten: *Erat enim ibi Arca Dei. 1. Reg. 14. 18.* — "For the Ark of God was there." It is already well known that this Ark was a figure of Mary: *Arca continens manna, idest Christum, est B. Virgo, quae victoriam contra homines & Daemones largitur. Cornel. a Lap.* — "The Ark containing the manna, that is Christ, is the Blessed Virgin, who bestows victory against men and demons." As the Manna was found in the Ark, so in Mary is found Jesus, of whom likewise the manna was a figure; and by means of this Ark victory is given against the Enemies of Earth and of

Hell. Whence St. Bernardine of Siena says that when Mary, the Ark of the new Testament, was raised up to be Queen of Heaven, then the power of Hell over Men was weakened and beaten down: *Quando elevata fuit Virgo gloriosa ad Caelestia Regna, Daemonis potentia imminuta est, & dissipata.* (*Tom. 3. de B. V. Serm. 11.*) — "When the glorious Virgin was raised to the Heavenly Kingdoms, the Demon's power was diminished and scattered."

Oh, how the demons of hell tremble at Mary and at her great name, says St. Bonaventure: *O quam tremenda est Maria Daemonibus!* (*Spec. Virg. c. 3.*) — "Oh, how dreadful Mary is to the Demons!" The Saint compares these enemies to those of whom Job speaks, and says: *Perfodit in tenebris domos.... Si subito apparuerit aurora, arbitrantur umbram mortis. Job 24. 16.* — "He digs through houses in the darkness.... If the dawn suddenly appears, they take it for the shadow of death." Thieves go in the darkness to rob Houses; but if the dawn

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appears there, they flee as though the image of death appeared to them. Just so St. Bonaventure says that the demons enter the Soul in the time of darkness — that is, in the time when the soul is darkened by ignorance: *Perfodiunt in tenebris ignorantiae domos mentium nostrarum* — "In the darkness of ignorance they dig through the houses of our minds." But then he adds: *Si subito supervenerit aurora, idest Mariae Gratia, & misericordia, sic fugiunt, sicut omnes fugiunt mortem.* (*S. Bon. in Spec. Virg.*) — "If the dawn suddenly comes upon them — that is, Mary's Grace and mercy — they flee as all men flee from death." As soon as the Grace and the mercy of Mary come into the Soul, this beautiful Dawn drives away the darkness and puts the infernal Enemies to flight from it as from death. Oh, blessed is he who in his battles with hell always invokes the fair name of Mary!

In confirmation of this it was revealed to St. Bridget (*Serm. Ang. cap. 20*) that God has made Mary so powerful over all the demons that, as often as they assail a devoted servant of the Virgin who asks her help, at a sign from her they are at once terrified and flee far off, choosing rather that their own pains be doubled than to see themselves so mastered by Mary in her power: *Super omnes etiam malignos Spiritus ipsam sic potentem effecit, quod quotiescumque ipsi hominem Virginis auxilium implorantem impugnaverint, ad ipsius Virginis nutum illico pavidi procul diffugiunt; volentes potius suas poenas multiplicari, quam ejusdem Virginis potentiam super se taliter dominari, Loc. cit.*

Upon the words with which the Divine spouse praised this beloved bride of his, when he called her a Lily and said that as the Lily is among thorns, so was this beloved one of his among all his other Daughters — *Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic*

amica mea inter filias. Cant. 2. 2., "As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters" — Cornelius reflects upon that place and says: *Sicut lilium valet inter serpentes, & venena, sic Beatae Virginis invocatio singulare est remedium in omni tentatione, praesertim libidinis, ut experientia constat* — "As the lily avails among serpents and poisons, so the invocation of the Blessed Virgin is a singular remedy in every temptation, especially of lust, as experience shows." As the Lily is a remedy against serpents and poisons, so the invocation of Mary is a singular remedy for overcoming all temptations, especially those against purity, as those who practice it commonly find by experience.

St. John Damascene used to say: *Insuperabilem spem tuam habens, o Deipara, servabor. Persequar inimicos meos, solam habens ut thoracem protectionem tuam, & omnipotens Auxilium tuum.* (*In Annunc.*

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Dei Gen.) — "Having your unconquerable hope, O Mother of God, I shall be saved. I shall pursue my enemies, having your protection alone as my breastplate, and your all-powerful Help." And the same may be said by everyone who enjoys the good fortune of being a servant of this great Queen: O mother of God, if I hope in you, certainly I shall not be conquered; for, defended by you, I shall pursue my Enemies, and setting your protection and your all-powerful help against them as a shield, I shall surely overcome them. For James the Monk, a Doctor among the Greek Fathers (*Or. in Nat. Deip.*), says, speaking of Mary to the Lord: *Tu arma omni vi belli potentiora, trophaeumque invictum praestitisti* — "You have provided arms mightier than all the force of war, and an unconquered trophy." You, my Lord, have given us this mother as a most powerful weapon by which surely to overcome all our Enemies.

It is related in the Old Testament that the Lord led his people from Egypt to the promised Land by day with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire: *Per diem in columna nubis, & per noctem in columna ignis. Exod. 13. 21.* — "By day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire." In this pillar, now of cloud and now of fire, Richard of Saint-Laurence says that Mary was figured, and the two offices she continually exercises for our good: as a cloud she protects us from the burning of the divine Justice, and as fire she protects us from the demons: *Ecce duo officia, ad quae data est nobis Maria, scilicet, ut nos protegat a calore Solis Justitiae, tamquam nubes; & tanquam ignis, ut omnes nos protegat contra Diabolum.* (*Lib. 7. de Laud. Virg.*) — "Behold the two offices for which Mary has been given us: that she may protect us from the heat of the Sun of Justice, as a cloud; and as fire, that she may protect us all against the Devil." Fire indeed; for, as St. Bonaventure adds, as wax

melts before the face of fire, so the demons lose their strength against those souls who often remember the name of Mary and devoutly invoke it — and still more if they seek to imitate her: *Fluunt sicut cera a facie ignis, ubi inveniunt crebram hujus nominis recordationem, devotam invocationem, solicitam imitationem. S. Bon. in Spec.* — "They melt like wax before the face of fire, where they find frequent remembrance of this name, devout invocation, careful imitation."

Oh, how the demons tremble, St. Bernard affirms, at merely hearing the name of Mary pronounced: *In nomine Mariae omne genuflectitur; Et Daemones non solum pertimescunt, sed, audita hac voce, contremiscunt.* (*Serm. sup. Miss.*) — "At the name of Mary every knee bows; and the Demons not only greatly fear, but at hearing this word they tremble violently." As men, Thomas à Kempis adds (*l. 4. ad Nov.*), fall to the ground in fear when a thunderbolt falls near them from Heaven, so the demons fall beaten down at hearing Mary named. *Expavescunt Caeli Reginam spiritus maligni, & diffugiunt, audito nomine ejus, velut ab igne. tamquam tonitru de Caelo fa-*

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lo factum sit, prosternuntur ad Sanctae Mariae vocabulum. — "The malignant spirits dread the Queen of Heaven, and at hearing her name they flee as from fire; as though a thunderbolt had come from Heaven, they are laid prostrate at the word 'holy Mary.'" And oh, how many fair victories over these enemies have those devoted to Mary won by her Most Holy Name! So St. Anthony of Padua overcame them; so Blessed Henry Suso; so many other lovers of Mary. It is known from the Reports of the Missions of Japan that there, to a certain Christian, many demons once appeared in the form of ferocious beasts to frighten and threaten him; but he spoke to them thus: *I have no weapons of which you need be afraid; if the Most High permits you, do with me what you please. For the rest, I use in my defense the most sweet Names of Jesus and of Mary.* Scarcely had he said this when, at the sound of those tremendous names, the earth opened and those proud spirits were hurled down. And St. Anselm attests from his own experience that he had seen and heard of many who, at naming Mary, were at once delivered from dangers: *Saepe vidimus & audivimus plurimos homines in suis periculis nominis recordari Mariae, & illico omnis periculi malum evasisse.* (*S. Ans. de Exc. Virg. c. 6.*) — "We have often seen and heard of very many men who in their dangers remembered the name of Mary, and at once escaped the evil of every danger."

Gloriosum & admirabile est nomen tuum, o Maria; qui illud retinent, non expavescunt in puncto mortis; Nam Daemones audientes hoc nomen Mariae statim relinquunt animam. S. Bonaventura in Psalt. B. V. — "Glorious and wonderful is

your name, O Mary; those who keep it do not take fright at the point of death; for the Demons, hearing this name of Mary, at once leave the soul." Too glorious, O Mary, and wonderful is your great Name. Those who remember to name it at the point of death fear nothing from all Hell; for the demons, on hearing Mary named, at once abandon the Soul. And the Saint adds that a great army of armed men is not so feared by enemies on Earth as the Powers of Hell fear the name of Mary and her Protection: *Non sic timent hostes visibiles castrorum multitudinem copiosam, sicut aereae potestates Mariae vocabulum, & Patrocinium* — "Visible enemies do not so fear a numerous multitude of camps as the powers of the air fear the name and the Patronage of Mary." You, my Lady, says St. Germanus, by the mere invocation of your most powerful name keep your servants safe from all the assaults of the enemy: *Tu servos tuos contra hostis invasiones, sola tui nominis invocatione, tutos servas.* (*Serm. de Zona Virg.*) — "You keep your servants safe against the enemy's invasions by the invocation of your name alone." Oh, if Christians were careful in temptations to invoke with confidence the name of Mary, it is certain that they would never fall! Yes — for Blessed Alan says that at the thunder of this great name the Devil flees and Hell trembles: *Satan fugit, Infernus contremiscit, cum dico, Ave Maria* — "Satan flees, Hell trembles, when I say: Hail Mary." Indeed, the Queen herself revealed to St. Bri-

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dget (*Lib. 1. Rev. c. 9.*) that even from the most lost of sinners, the farthest from God and the most possessed by the Devil, the Enemy departs as soon as he hears them invoke her most powerful Name for their help, with a true will to amend. *Omnes Daemones audientes hoc nomen, Maria, statim relinquunt Animam quasi territi* — "All the Demons, hearing this name, Mary, at once leave the Soul as though terrified." But the Virgin added that, if the Soul does not amend and does not put sin away from itself by sorrow, the demons at once return to it and go on possessing it. *Et revertuntur ad eam, nisi aliqua emendatio subsequatur* — "And they return to it, unless some amendment follows."

Example.

At Recispergio there was Arnold, a Canon Regular, much devoted to the Blessed Virgin. As he came to die, he received the Sacraments; and after calling his fellow religious, he begged them not to abandon him in that last passage. Scarcely had he said this when, behold, in their presence he began to tremble all over, his eyes rolled back, he broke into a cold sweat, and with a trembling voice he said: Do you not see

those demons, who want to drag me to Hell? And then he cried out: My brothers, invoke for me the Help of Mary; in her I trust that she will give me victory. At these words they recited the Litanies of our Lady; and at the words *Sancta Maria, ora pro eo* — "Holy Mary, pray for him" — the dying man broke in: Repeat it, repeat the Name of Mary, for I am already at the Tribunal of God. He paused a little, and then added: It is true that I did it, but I have done penance for it. And turning to the Virgin, he said: O Mary, I shall be delivered, if you help me. Afterward the demons made another assault upon him; but he defended himself by signing himself with the Crucifix and by invoking Mary. So he passed that whole night. At last, when morning came, Arnold, wholly serene, cried out with gladness: Mary my Lady, my Refuge, has obtained for me Pardon and Salvation. Then, looking upon the Virgin, who was inviting him to follow her, he said: I come, my Lady, I come. And forcing himself to rise, being unable to follow her with his body, he gently breathed his last and followed her with his Soul, as we hope, to the Kingdom of Blessed Glory. *From Fr. Auriemma, Affetti Scambievoli, vol. 1, ch. 7.*

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Prayer.

Behold at your Feet, O Mary my Hope, a poor sinner who has so many times by my own fault been a slave of Hell. I know that I let myself be conquered by the demons because I did not have recourse to you, my Refuge. If I had always had recourse to you, if I had invoked you, no — I should never have fallen. I hope, my most amiable Lady, that through you I have already come out of the hands of the demons, and that God has already pardoned me. But I tremble lest in time to come I fall again into their chains. I know that the Enemies have not lost the hope of conquering me again, and are already preparing new assaults and temptations for me. Ah, my Queen and my Refuge, help me. Put me beneath your Mantle; do not permit me to be seen made their slave again. I know that you will help me and will give me victory whenever I invoke you; but this is what I fear — I fear that in my temptations I may forget you and forget to call upon you. This, then, is the grace I seek and want from you, most holy Virgin: that I may always remember you, and especially when I find myself in the battles. Grant that I may not then cease to invoke you often, saying: *Mary, help me; help me, Mary.* And when at last the day of my final struggle with Hell shall have come, at the point of my death — ah, my Queen, assist me then all the more, and remind me yourself to invoke you then more often, whether with my lips or with my heart, so that, breathing out my soul with your most sweet Name on

my lips, and that of your Son Jesus, I may come to bless you and praise you, never again to depart from your Feet for all Eternity in Paradise. Amen.

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CHAPTER V.

Ad te suspiramus gementes & flentes in hac lacrymarum valle — To you we sigh, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.

§I. Of the Necessity we have of Mary's Intercession in order to be saved.

That to invoke and pray to the Saints, and above all to the Queen of Saints, Mary most holy, so

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that they may obtain the Divine graces for us, is a thing not only lawful but useful and holy as well, is of Faith, and has long since been established by Councils against the Heretics, who condemn it as an injury done to Jesus Christ, who is our only Mediator. But if a Jeremiah prays for Jerusalem after his death (*2 Macc. 15*); if the Elders of the Apocalypse present to God the Prayers of the Saints; if a St. Peter promises his Disciples to remember them after his death; if a St. Stephen prays for his persecutors; if a St. Paul prays for his Companions; if, in short, the Saints can pray for us, why may we not implore the Saints to intercede for us? St. Paul commends himself to the Prayers of his Disciples: *Orate pro nobis. Thess. 1. 15.* — "Pray for us." St. James exhorts that they should pray one for another: *Orate pro invicem, ut salvemini, c. 1. v. 15.* — "Pray for one another, that you may be saved." W1 prints *c. 1. v. 15*; the place is James 5. 16 We too, then, may do the same.

That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of Justice, and that by his Merits he obtained for us reconciliation with God — who denies it? But on the other hand it is an impious thing to deny that God is pleased to grant graces at the Intercession of the Saints, and especially of Mary his Mother, whom Jesus so greatly desires to see loved and honoured by us. Who does not know that the honour given to Mothers redounds to the glory of their children? *Gloria filiorum Parentes eorum. Prov. 17.* — "The glory of children is their parents." Whence St. Bernard says: Let him who greatly praises the Mother not think that he obscures the glories of the Son; because the more the Mother is honoured, the more the Son is praised: *Non est dubium, quicquid in laudibus Matris proferimus, ad Filium pertinere. Hom. sup. Miss.* — "There is no doubt that whatever we utter in praise of the Mother belongs to the Son." And St. Ildephonsus says that all the honour paid to the Mother and to the Queen is rendered to the Son and to the King: *Refunditur in Filium, quod*

impenditur Matri; Transfunditur honor in Regem, quod defertur in famulatum Reginae — "What is bestowed upon the Mother flows back to the Son; the honour paid in service to the Queen is transferred to the King." For there is no doubt that by the merits of Jesus so great an authority has been granted to Mary as to be the Mediatrix of our Salvation — not indeed Mediatrix of justice, but of grace and of intercession, exactly as she is called by St. Bonaventure: *Maria fidelissima Mediatrix nostrae Salutis* — "Mary, the most faithful Mediatrix of our Salvation." And St. Lawrence Justinian says: *Quomodo non est plena Gratia, quae effecta est Paradisi Scala, Caeli Janua, Dei atque hominum verissima Mediatrix?* (*Serm. de Annunc.*) — "How is she not full of Grace, who was made the Ladder of Paradise, the Gate of Heaven, the truest Mediatrix between God and men?"

Whence St. Anselm rightly observes (*de Exc. Virg. c. 6.*)

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that when we pray the holy Virgin to obtain graces for us, it is not that we distrust the Divine Mercy, but rather that we distrust our own unworthiness, and commend ourselves to Mary, that her Dignity may supply for our wretchedness: *Ut Dignitas Intercessoris suppleat inopiam nostram. Unde Virginem interpellare, non est de Divina Misericordia diffidere, sed de propria indignitate formidare* — "That the Dignity of the Intercessor may supply for our poverty. So to appeal to the Virgin is not to distrust the Divine Mercy, but to fear one's own unworthiness."

That to have recourse to Mary's Intercession is a most useful and holy thing, then, cannot be doubted except by those who are wanting in Faith. But the point we intend here to prove is that Mary's Intercession is moreover *necessary* for our Salvation — necessary, we say, not indeed absolutely, but morally, to speak as one ought. And we say that this necessity arises from the very Will of God, who wills that all the graces he dispenses to us should pass through the Hands of Mary, according to the Opinion of St. Bernard — which today may well be asserted to be common among Theologians and Doctors, as the Author of *the Kingdom of Mary* already calls it common. It is followed by Vega, by Mendoza, by Paciuchelli, by Segneri, by Poiré, by Crasset, and by innumerable other learned Authors. Even Fr. Natalis Alexander, an Author otherwise so reserved in his propositions, says too that it is God's will that we should look for all graces through Mary's intercession: *Qui vult* (these are his words) *ut omnia bona ab ipso expectemus, potentissima Virginis Matris Intercessione impetranda, cum eam, ut par est, invocamus. Epist. 76. in calce tom. 4. Moral.* — "He wills that we should expect all good things from him, to be obtained by the most powerful Intercession of the Virgin Mother, when we invoke her as is fitting." He cites in confirmation of this the celebrated passage of St.

Bernard: *Sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam* — "Such is the will of him who willed that we should have everything through Mary." Fr. Contenson holds the same, who, explaining the words spoken by Jesus Christ on the cross to St. John, *Ecce Mater tua*, "Behold your Mother," adds: *Quasi diceret: Nullus Sanguinis mei particeps erit, nisi intercessione Matris meae. Vulnera gratiarum fontes sunt, sed ad nullos derivabuntur rivi, nisi per Mariae Canalem. Joannes Discipule, tantum a me amaberis, quantum eam amaveris. Theol. mentis, & cord. tom. 2. l. 10. D 4. c. 1.* — "As though he said: No one will share in my Blood except by the intercession of my Mother. My wounds are fountains of graces, but the streams will be led to no one except through Mary's Channel. John, my Disciple, you shall be loved by me as much as you love her."

This proposition — that whatever good we receive from the Lord comes to us all through Mary — is not much to the liking of a certain Modern

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Author, who otherwise, though he speaks with much piety and doctrine of true and false Devotion, nevertheless, in speaking of Devotion toward the Divine Mother, has shown himself very grudging in granting her this glory, which a St. Germanus, a St. Anselm, a St. John Damascene, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Antoninus, a St. Bernardine of Siena, the Venerable Abbot of Celles, and so many other Doctors made no scruple of granting her — who found no difficulty in saying that, for the reason given above, Mary's intercession is not only useful but necessary as well. The said Author says that such a Proposition — namely, that God grants no grace except through Mary — is a hyperbole and an exaggeration that fell from the lips of certain Saints in their fervour, and which, soundly speaking, is only to be understood in this sense: that from Mary we have received Jesus Christ, by whose Merits we then receive all graces. Otherwise, he says, it would be an error to believe that God could not grant us graces without Mary's Intercession, since the Apostle says that we acknowledge but one God and one Mediator between God and Men, Jesus Christ. *1 Tim. 2. 5.* Thus far the said Author.

But, with his good leave — as he himself teaches me in his own Book — the Mediation of Justice by way of merit is one thing, and the Mediation of Grace by way of prayer is another. Likewise it is one thing to say that God *cannot*, and another that God *does not will to*, grant graces without Mary's Intercession. We readily confess that God is the Fountain of every good and the absolute Lord of all graces, and that Mary is but a pure Creature, who receives graciously from God all that she obtains. But who can ever deny that it is most reasonable and fitting to assert that God, in order to exalt this great Creature who honoured and loved him in

her life more than all other Creatures — and that God, having chosen Mary as Mother of his Son and common Redeemer — should will that all the graces to be granted to the redeemed Souls should pass and be dispensed through her hands? We readily confess that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of Justice, as we have already distinguished above, who by his merits obtains for us graces and Salvation; but we say that Mary is Mediatrix of Grace, and that although what she obtains, she ob-

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tains by the Merits of Jesus Christ, and because she prays and asks it in the name of Jesus Christ, nevertheless as many graces as we seek, we have them all through her Intercession.

In this there is certainly nothing contrary to the Sacred Dogmas — on the contrary, it is all in accordance with the sentiments of the Church, which in the public Prayers approved by her teaches us to have continual recourse to this Divine Mother, and to invoke her as *Salus infirmorum, Refugium peccatorum, Auxilium Christianorum, Vita, Spes nostra* — "Health of the sick, Refuge of sinners, Help of Christians, our Life, our Hope." The same holy Church, in the Office she prescribes to be recited on Mary's Feast, applying to her the words of Wisdom, gives us to understand that in Mary we shall find every hope: *In me omnis spes vitae, & virtutis* — "In me is all hope of life and of virtue." In Mary, every grace: *In me omnis gratia viae, & veritatis* — "In me is all grace of the way and of the truth." In Mary, in short, we shall find Life and eternal Salvation: *Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, & hauriet salutem a Domino* — "He who finds me shall find life, and shall draw salvation from the Lord." And in another place: *Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam aeternam habebunt* — "They who work in me shall not sin; they who make me known shall have eternal life." Things which all signify to us the necessity we have of Mary's Intercession.

And this, then, is the view in which so many Theologians and holy Fathers confirm us — of whom it is not right to say, as the aforesaid Author says, that in exalting Mary they uttered *Hyperboles*, and that *excessive Exaggerations* fell from their lips. To exaggerate and to utter Hyperboles is to go beyond the limits of the truth, which it is not fitting to say of the Saints, who spoke with the spirit of God, and that a spirit of truth. And here let me be permitted to make a brief digression by stating an opinion of my own: namely, that when an opinion is in some way honourable to the holy Virgin, and has some foundation, and is repugnant neither to the Faith, nor to the Decrees of the Church, nor to the truth, then not to hold it, and to contradict it on the ground that the contrary opinion may also be true, shows little Devotion to the Mother of God. Among these little devoted I do not wish to

be, nor would I wish to see my Reader there; but rather among the number of those who fully and firmly believe all that can be believed without error of Mary's greatness, as Rupert the Abbot puts it (*de Laud. Virg.*), who reckons among the acts of homage most welcome to this Mother this one: *Ejus magnalia firmiter credere* — "firmly to believe her great deeds." Were there nothing else, let it be enough to take from us the fear of exceed-

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ing in the praises of Mary that the Father St. Augustine says that all we say in praise of Mary is little compared with what she deserves for her Dignity as Mother of God — along with holy Church, which has read in the Mass of the Blessed Virgin: *Felix namque es, Sacra Virgo Maria, & omni laude dignissima* — "Happy indeed are you, Sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise."

But let us return to the point, and see what the Saints say of the proposition set forth. St. Bernard says that God has filled Mary with all graces, so that men might then receive through Mary, as through a Channel, whatever good comes to them: *Plenus aquaeductus, ut accipiunt ceteri de ejus plenitudine.* (*Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "A full aqueduct, that the rest may receive of her fullness." The Saint makes there a further great reflection, and says that for this reason, in the World before the holy Virgin was born, this current of grace was not there for all, because then this longed-for Aqueduct was not yet there: *Ideo tanto tempore defuerunt omnibus fluenta gratiarum, quia nondum intercesserat hic Aquaeductus* — "For so long a time the streams of graces were wanting to all, because this Aqueduct had not yet intervened." But to this end, he adds, Mary was afterward given to the world, so that through this channel the Divine graces might come down to us continually: *Ad hoc enim data est ipsa Mundo, quasi Aquaeductus, ut ipsam a Deo ad Homines dona caelestia jugiter descenderent.* (*S. Bern. Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "For this she was given to the World as an Aqueduct: that through her the heavenly gifts might come down continually from God to Men."

Whence, as Holofernes, to take the City of Bethulia, ordered the aqueducts to be broken, so the Devil strives as much as he can to make Souls lose devotion toward the Mother of God; because once this Channel of graces is closed, he easily succeeds in winning them. Hence the same holy Father resumes and says: *Intuemini quanto devotionis affectu a nobis eam voluit honorari, qui totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria: ut proinde si quid spei nobis est, si quid gratiae, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.* (*Serm. de Nat. Virg.*) — "See with what affection of devotion he willed her to be honoured by us, who placed the fullness of all good in Mary: so that thereafter, whatever hope we have, whatever grace, whatever salvation, we may

know to overflow from her." See then, he says, O Soul, with what affection and devotion the Lord wills us to honour this Queen of ours, by always having recourse to her Protection and trusting in it; since in her he has placed the fullness of every good, so that from then on, whatever we have of hope, of grace, and of salvation, we should acknowledge to come to us from Mary's hands. St. Antoninus says the same: *Per eam de Caelis exivit quidquid gratiae venit in Mundum. P. 4. tit. 15. c. 20.* — "Through her came forth from Heaven whatever grace comes into the World." All the mercies ever dispen-

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sed to Men have all come through Mary.

Therefore she is called the Moon: *Quia* (says St. Bonaventure) *sicut Luna inter corpora Caelestia & terrena est media, & quod ab illis accipit ad inferiora refundit: sic & Virgo Regia inter nos & Deum est media, & gratiam ipsa nobis refundit.* (*Serm. 74. de Nat. Dom.*) — "Because as the Moon is midway between the heavenly and the earthly bodies, and pours down to the lower what she receives from the higher, so the Royal Virgin is midway between us and God, and pours grace down upon us." As the Moon stands between the Sun and the Earth, and what she receives from the Sun she pours down upon the Earth, so Mary receives the heavenly influences of graces from the Divine Sun, to pour them out upon us on this Earth.

For the same reason she is likewise called the Gate of Heaven by holy Church: *Felix Caeli Porta*, "Happy Gate of Heaven"; because, as the same St. Bernard observes, just as every Rescript of favour sent by the King passes through the gate of his Palace, so: *Nulla gratia venit de Caelo ad Terram, nisi transeat per manus Mariae.* (*Vid. Serm. 3. in Vir. Nat.*) — "No grace comes from Heaven to Earth but it passes through Mary's hands." St. Bonaventure says further that Mary is called the gate of Heaven because no one can enter Heaven unless he passes through Mary, who is its Gate: *Nullus potest Caelum intrare, nisi per Mariam transeat tanquam per Portam* — "No one can enter Heaven unless he passes through Mary as through a Gate."

In the same view St. Jerome confirms us (or, as others will have it, another ancient Author of the Sermon on the Assumption which is inserted among the Works of St. Jerome), who says that in Jesus Christ was the fullness of grace as in the Head, from which are then poured into his Members — which are we — all the vital spirits, that is, the Divine Helps for obtaining eternal Salvation; and that in Mary too was the same fullness, as in the Neck, through which those vital spirits pass to the Members. *In Christo fuit plenitudo Gratiae sicut in Capite influente, in Maria sicut in Collo transfundente.* (*Serm. de Ass. B. V.*) — "In Christ was the fullness of

Grace as in the Head that pours in; in Mary as in the Neck that transmits." The same is confirmed by St. Bernardine of Siena, who explained this thought more clearly, saying that through Mary are transmitted to the Faithful, who are the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, all the graces of the spiritual life which come down to them from Jesus their Head: *Per Virginem a Capite Christi vitales gratiae in ejus Corpus Mysticum transfunduntur.* (*Serm. 61. de Nat. Virg. c. 8.*) — "Through the Virgin the vital graces are transmitted from Christ the Head into his Mystical Body."

And St. Bonaventure seeks to assign the reason for this, when he says: *Cum tota Natura Divina intra Virginis Uterum extiterit: non timeo dicere quod in*

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omnes gratiarum effluxus quandam jurisdictionem habuerit haec Virgo, de cujus utero quasi de quodam Divinitatis oceano flumina emanabunt omnium gratiarum. (*S. Bonav. in Spec. cap. 3*) — "Since the whole Divine Nature dwelt within the Virgin's Womb, I do not fear to say that this Virgin held a certain jurisdiction over all the outpourings of graces — from whose womb, as from a certain ocean of Divinity, flowed forth the rivers of all graces." God having been pleased to dwell in the womb of this Holy Virgin, in a certain manner, says the Saint, she has acquired a certain jurisdiction over all graces; for as Jesus Christ came forth from her sacrosanct womb, there came forth together with him from her, as from a heavenly ocean, all the rivers of the Divine gifts. The same is said, and in clearer terms, by St. Bernardine of Siena. From the time (he asserts) when this Virgin Mother conceived the Divine Word in her womb, she acquired, so to speak, a special claim upon the gifts that come to us from the Holy Spirit, so that no Creature has since received any grace from God except through the means and the hand of Mary. Here are his beautiful words: *A tempore quo Virgo Mater concepit in utero Verbum Dei, quandam, ut sic dicam, jurisdictionem obtinuit in omni Spiritus Sancti processione temporali; ita ut nulla Creatura aliquam a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piae Matris dispensationem.* (*Serm. 61. tract. 1. art. 8.*) — "From the time when the Virgin Mother conceived the Word of God in her womb, she obtained, so to speak, a certain jurisdiction over every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit; so that no Creature has obtained any grace from God except according to the dispensation of this loving Mother."

And in just this way that passage of Jeremiah is explained by an Author (*Crasset, Devotion to the Virgin*), where the Prophet, speaking of the Incarnation of the Word and of Mary his Mother, says that a Woman was to encompass this Man-God: *Foemina circumdabit virum. Jerem. 31. 22.* — "A Woman shall encompass a man." The said Author explains: as from the center of a circle no line goes out that does

not first pass through the circumference that surrounds it, so from Jesus, who is the center of every good, no grace passes to us except through Mary, who encompassed him after she had received him in her womb.

Then St. Bernardine says that for this reason all gifts, all virtues, and all graces are dispensed through Mary's hand to those whom she wills, at the time she wills, and in the manner she wills: *Ideo omnia dona, virtutes, & gratiae, quibus vult, quando vult, & quomodo vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur,* (*dict. Serm. 61. ut sup*) — "Therefore all gifts, virtues, and graces are dispensed through her hands to whom she wills, when she wills, and how she wills." Richard likewise says that whatever good God does for his creatures, he wills that it should all pass through Mary's hands: *Deus quicquid boni dat creaturis suis, per manus Matris Virginis vult transire* — "Whatever good God gives his creatures, he wills to pass through the hands of the Virgin Mother." Whence the Venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts

LACUNA IN W1 — printed page 98. The W1 images jump from p. 97 (scan 0120) to p. 99 (scan 0121); the image of the verso is missing. The text that follows, as far as the closing mark, is supplied from W2 (Gabinetto Letterario, Naples 1838), pp. 148-149. See ED-010.

[W2 p. 148 | corresponds to W1 p. 98]

everyone to have recourse to this treasurer of graces, as he calls her, *thesauraria gratiarum*; since only through her are the World and all men to receive every good they can hope for: *Accede ad Virginem, quia per ipsam mundus habiturus est omne bonum.* (*De contempl. Virg. in Prol.*) — "Draw near to the Virgin, for through her the world is to have every good."

From which it is clearly seen that the Saints and authors cited, in saying that all graces come to us through Mary, did not mean to say this only because from Mary we have received Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of every good — as the author named above would have it — but they assure us moreover that God, after having given us Jesus Christ, wills that all the graces which from then on have ever been dispensed, are dispensed, and will be dispensed to men until the end of the world through the merits of Jesus, should all be dispensed through the hand and by the intercession of Mary.

And so Fr. Suárez concludes that it is today the universal sentiment of the Church that Mary's intercession is not only useful to us but necessary as well: *Sentit Ecclesia intercessionem B. Virginis esse sibi utilem, et necessariam.* (*Tom. 2. in 3. part. disp. 23. sect. 3.*) — "The Church holds the intercession of the Blessed Virgin to be both useful and necessary to her." Necessary, as we said, not indeed by absolute necessity, since only the mediation of Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary to us, but by moral necessity; for the Church holds with Saint

[W2 p. 149 | corresponds to W1 p. 98]

Bernard that God has determined that no grace shall be dispensed to us except through Mary's hand: *Nihil Deus habere nos voluit, quod per manus Mariae non transiret.* (*Serm. 3. in Virg. Nat.*) — "God willed that we should have nothing that did not pass through Mary's hands." And before St. Bernard, St. Ildephonsus affirmed it, saying to the Virgin: O Mary, the Lord has decreed to commit to your hands all the goods he has appointed to give to men, and therefore he has entrusted to you all the treasures and the riches of graces: *Omnia bona quae illis summa majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus decrevit commendare: commissi quippe sunt thesauri, et ornamenta gratiarum.* (*In Con. Virg. c. 15.*) — "All the good things which the supreme majesty decreed to do for them, he decreed to commit to your hands; for to you have been entrusted the treasures and the ornaments of graces." And therefore St. Peter Damian says (*de Nat. Vir. ap. Pac. Exc. 1. num. 15.*) that God did not will to become man except with Mary's consent: first, that we might all remain supremely obliged to her; second, that we might understand that to the will of this Virgin the salvation of all is entrusted.

End of the supplement from W2; the text resumes from W1, scan 0121.

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Hence St. Bonaventure, considering the words of Isaiah at *ch. 11*, where the Prophet says that from the stock of Jesse a rod was to be born — that is, Mary — and from her the flower, that is the Word incarnate: *Egredietur virga de radice Jesse; & flos de radice ejus ascendet, & requiescit super eum Spiritus Domini* — "There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him" — the Saint speaks these beautiful words: *Quicumque Spiritus Sancti gratiam adipisci desiderat, florem in virga quaerat; per virgam enim ad florem, per florem ad Spiritum pervenimus.* (*In Spec. c. 6.*) — "Whoever desires to obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit, let him seek the flower on the rod; for through the rod we come to the flower, and through the flower to the Spirit." Whoever desires to obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit, let him seek the flower on the rod, that is, Jesus in Mary; for through the rod we find the flower, and through the flower we find God. And then he adds, in *ch. 10: Si hunc florem habere desideras, virgam floris precibus flectas* — "If you desire to have this flower, bend the rod of the flower with your prayers." If you wish to have this flower, seek by your prayers to bend the rod of the flower in your favour, and you will obtain it. Otherwise (says the Seraphic Father in *Serm. 25* on the Epiphany, upon the words *Invenerunt puerum cum Maria mater ejus. Matth. 2. 11.* W1 prints *mater*; W2 and the Vulgate, *matre* — "They found the child with Mary his mother") Jesus will

never be found except with Mary and through Mary: *Nunquam invenitur Christus, nisi cum Maria, nisi per Mariam.* And he concludes that he seeks Jesus in vain who does not seek to find him together with Mary: *Frustra igitur quaerit, qui cum Maria invenire non quaerit.* Whence St. Ildephonsus said: *Ut sim servus filii, servitutem appeto genitricis.* (*De Virg. Mar. c. 12.*) — "That I may be the servant of the Son, I long for the servitude of the Mother." I wish to be the servant of the Son; and because no one will ever be the servant of the Son who is not the servant of the Mother, therefore I aspire to the servitude of Mary.

Example.

It is related by the writer of Beauvais (*Spec. Hist. lib. 7. c. 105.*) and by Caesarius (*Dist. 2. c. 2.* W1 prints *c. 2*; W2, *c. 24*) that a young nobleman, having been reduced by his vices from the wealth his Father had left him to such poverty that he had to beg in order to live, left his native land to go and live with less shame in a distant Country where he was not known. On this journey he met one day a certain old servant of his Father, who, seeing him so afflicted by the poverty into which he had fallen, told him to be of good cheer, because he wished to bring him to a Prince so generous that he would provide him with everything. This scoundrel was an impious sorcerer. And

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behold, one day he took the poor young man with him and led him through a wood beside a lagoon, where he began to speak with someone who could not be seen; whereupon the young man asked him with whom he was speaking. He answered, With the Devil; and seeing the young man frightened, he encouraged him not to fear. And going on speaking with the Devil: My lord, he said, this young man is reduced to extreme need; he would like to return to his former state. If he will obey me, answered the enemy, I will make him richer than before; but in the first place he must deny God. At this the young man was horrified; but urged on to it by that accursed magician, he did it, and denied God. But that is not enough, the Devil went on: he must deny Mary also, for she is the one to whom we owe our greatest losses. Oh, how many she takes from our hands and brings back to God and saves! Oh, not that, answered the young man — that I should deny my Mother! She is all my hope. I would rather go begging all my life. And with that the young man departed from that place. On his way back he happened to pass by a Church of Mary. The afflicted young man enters, and kneeling before her Image begins to weep, and to pray the Most Holy Virgin to obtain for him the pardon of his sins.

See — Mary at once sets herself to pray to her Son for that wretched man. Jesus at first said: But this ungrateful man, my Mother, has denied me. But seeing that his Mother did not cease to pray to him, at last: O Mother (he said), I have never denied you anything; let him be pardoned, since you ask it of me. All this was secretly observed by that Citizen who had bought the goods of that squanderer. He, having seen the compassion Mary showed to that sinner, and having an only daughter, gave her to him as his wife, making him heir of all his substance. And so that young man recovered through Mary the grace of God, and his temporal goods as well.

Prayer.

O my Soul, see what a fair hope of salvation and of eternal life the Lord gives you, in having given you by his mercy confidence in the patronage of his Mother, after you had by your sins so many times deserved his displeasure and hell.

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Thank your God, then, and thank your Protectress Mary, who has already deigned to take you beneath her mantle — as the many graces you have received through her already assure you. Yes, I thank you, O my loving Mother, for all the good you have done to me, a wretch guilty of hell. O Queen, from how many dangers have you delivered me! How many lights and how many mercies have you obtained for me from God! What great good, or what great honour, have you received from me, that you should have engaged yourself so to do me good?

Your goodness alone, then, has moved you. Ah, if I gave my blood and my life for you, it would still be little for the obligation I owe you, since you have delivered me from eternal death; you have made me recover, as I hope, the Divine grace; from you, in short, I acknowledge all my good fortune. My most amiable Lady, I, wretched as I am, can render you nothing else than to praise you always and to love you. Ah, do not disdain to accept the affection of a poor sinner who has fallen in love with your goodness. If my heart is unworthy to love you, because it is foul and full of earthly affections, it rests with you to change it — change it yourself. Ah, bind me to my God, and bind me so fast that I may never again be able to separate myself from his love. This is what you seek of me, that I should love your God; and this is what I seek of you: obtain for me that I may love him, and love him always; and I desire nothing else. Amen.

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§II. The same matter continued.

St. Bernard says that, as a man and a woman cooperated in our ruin, so it was fitting that another Man and another Woman should cooperate in our repair; and these were Jesus and his Mother Mary. There is no doubt, says the Saint, that Jesus Christ alone was entirely sufficient to redeem us, but *congruum magis fuit, ut adesset nostrae reparationi sexus uterque, quorum corruptioni neuter defuisset.* (*Serm. in Sig. Magn.*) — "it was more fitting that both sexes should be present at our repair, since neither had been absent from our corruption." Whence Mary is called by Blessed Albert the Great *Adjutrix Redemptionis*, "the Helper of the Redemption" — the cooperator in the Redemption. And she herself revealed to St. Bridget (*lib. 5. c. 35.*) that, as Adam and Eve sold the World for an apple, so she with her Son redeemed the World with one heart: *Adam & Eva vendiderunt Mun-*

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dum pro uno pomo; Filius meus & ego redemimus mundum uno corde — "Adam and Eve sold the world for one apple; my Son and I redeemed the world with one heart." God was indeed able, St. Anselm confirms, to create the World from nothing; but the World having been lost by sin, God did not will to repair it without Mary's cooperation: *Qui potuit omnia de nihilo facere, noluit ea violata sine Maria reficere.* (*S. Ans. in Alloq. cael. n. 27.*) — "He who could make all things from nothing did not will to remake them, once marred, without Mary."

In three ways, Fr. Suárez explains, has the Divine Mother cooperated in our salvation. First, in having merited, by a merit of fittingness, the Incarnation of the Word. Second, in having employed herself much in praying for us while she lived on this earth. Third, in having willingly sacrificed to God the life of her Son for our salvation. And therefore the Lord has justly established that, since Mary cooperated with such love toward men and with such Divine glory in the salvation of all, all should then obtain salvation through her intercession.

Mary is called the cooperator in our justification, because to her God has committed all the graces to be dispensed to us: *Auxiliatrix nostrae justificationis, quia Deus omnes gratias faciendas Mariae commisit* — "The Helper of our justification, because God has committed to Mary all the graces to be given." From which St. Bernard then affirms that all men past, present, and future must look to Mary as the means and the business of the salvation of all the ages: *Ad illam sicut ad medium, sicut ad negotium omnium saeculorum respiciant, & qui praecesserunt, & nos, qui sumus, & qui sequentur.* (*Serm. 2. in Pentec.*) — "Let them look to her as to the means, as to the business of all the ages: both those who went before, and we who are, and those who shall follow."

Jesus Christ said that no one could find him unless his Eternal Father had first drawn him with his Divine Grace: *Nemo venit ad me, nisi Pater meus traxerit eum* — "No one comes to me unless my Father draws him." So too, according to Richard, Jesus says of his Mother: *Nemo venit ad me, nisi Mater mea suis precibus traxerit eum.* (*Sap. Cant. c. 2. V. 3.*) — "No one comes to me unless my Mother draws him by her prayers." No one comes to me unless my Mother has first drawn him by her prayers. Jesus was the fruit of Mary, as St. Elizabeth said to her: *Benedicta tu inter mulieres, & benedictus fructus ventris tui. Luc. 1. 42.* — "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Whoever wants the fruit, then, must go to the tree; whoever wants Jesus must go to Mary; and whoever finds Mary certainly finds Jesus as well. St. Elizabeth, when she saw the Most Holy Virgin come to visit her in her house, not knowing how to thank her, exclaimed in all humility: *Et unde hoc*

mihi, ut veniat Mater Domini mei ad me? Luc. 1. 43. — "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" And how did I deserve that the Mother of my God should come to find me? But how is this, one asks? Did St. Elizabeth not know that not only Mary but Jesus too had come into her house? And why then does she call herself unworthy to receive the Mother, rather than to see the Son who had come to find her? Ah, the Saint understood well that when Mary comes, she brings Jesus too; and therefore it was enough for her to thank the Mother without naming the Son.

Facta est quasi navis institoris, de longe portans panem suum. Prov. 31. 14. — "She is become like the merchant's ship, bringing her bread from afar." Mary was indeed that happy ship which brought us Jesus Christ from Heaven, the living bread that came down from Heaven to give us eternal life, as he himself said: *Ego sum panis vivus, qui de Caelo descendi, si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in aeternum. Jo. 6. 51.* — "I am the living bread that came down from Heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever." Whence Richard of Saint-Laurence then says (*de Lau. Virg.*) that in the sea of this World all those will perish who are not found received into this ship — that is, not protected by Mary. *In mare Mundi submergentur omnes illi, quos non suscepit navis ista* — "In the sea of the World all those will be drowned whom this ship has not taken aboard." *Ideo*, he adds, *quoties videmus insurgentes fluctus hujus maris, clamare debemus ad Mariam: Domina, salva nos, perimus* — "Therefore, as often as we see the waves of this sea rising, we must cry out to Mary: Lady, save us, we perish." Whenever we see ourselves in danger of being lost through the temptations or the passions of the present life, we

must have recourse to Mary, crying: Quickly, my Lady, help us, save us, unless you would see us lost. And let it be noted here in passing that the Author just cited then made no scruple of saying to Mary, *salva nos, perimus* — although the Author mentioned several times in the last section makes a difficulty of it, forbidding us to say to the Virgin that she should save us, since, he says, saving belongs to God alone. But if a man condemned to death may well say to some favorite of the King that he should save him by interceding with the Prince to obtain his life, why may we not say to the Mother of God that she should save us, by obtaining for us the grace of eternal life? St. John Damascene (*Orat. Paneg.*) made no difficulty of saying to the Virgin: *Regina immaculata & pura, salva me, libera ab aeterna damnatione* — "Immaculate and pure Queen, save me, free me from eternal damnation." St. Bonaventure called Mary *O salus te invocantium*, "O salvation of those who invoke you." Holy Church approves of invoking her: *Salus infirmorum*, "Health of the sick." And shall we make a scruple of being able to tell her to save us? Since: *Nemini nisi per eam patet aditus ad salutem* — "To no one is the way to salvation open except through her" — as an Au-

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thor says (*Paciucch. de B. Virg.*). And before him St. Germanus said it: *Nemo qui salvus fiat nisi per te* — "No one is saved except through you" — speaking of Mary, *in Serm. de Zona Virg.*

But let us see what else the Saints say of the necessity we have of the Divine Mother's intercession. The glorious St. Cajetan used to say that we may seek graces, but shall never obtain them without Mary's intercession. And St. Antoninus confirms it, saying with a beautiful expression: *Qui petit sine ipsa, sine alis tentat volare.* (*P. 3. tit. 15. c. 22. §. 9.*) — "He who asks without her tries to fly without wings." He who asks and wishes to obtain graces without Mary's intercession, said the Saint, is trying to fly without wings; for as Pharaoh said to Joseph: *Terra Aegypti in manu tua est* — "The land of Egypt is in your hand" — and as he sent all who came to him for help to Joseph: *Ite ad Joseph*, "Go to Joseph" — so God, when we seek graces of him, sends us to Mary: *Ite ad Mariam*, "Go to Mary." For he has decreed, says St. Bernard, to grant no grace except through Mary's hand: *Decrevit nihil dare, nisi per Mariam.* (*Serm. de Nat. Virg.*) — "He decreed to give nothing except through Mary." Whence Richard of Saint-Laurence says: *Salus nostra in manu Mariae est, ut ei dicere multo melius valeamus nos Christiani, quam Aegyptii dixerunt Joseph: Salus nostra in manu illius est.* (*Lib. 2. de Laud. Virg. p. 1.*) — "Our salvation is in Mary's hand, so that we Christians may say to her far better than the Egyptians said to Joseph: Our salvation is in his hand." The Venerable Idiot says the

same: *Salus nostra in manu illius est.* (*In Praef. Cant. V.*) Cassian asserts the same, but with greater force: *Tota salus Mundi consistit in multitudine favoris Mariae* — "The whole salvation of the World consists in the abundance of Mary's favour." He says absolutely that the salvation of all consists in being favoured and protected by Mary. He who is protected by Mary is saved; he who is not protected is lost. St. Bernardine of Siena says to her: *Tu dispensatrix omnium gratiarum: salus nostra in manu tua est.* (*Serm. 1. de Nat. B. Virg.*) — "You are the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in your hand." My Lady, since you are the dispenser of all graces, and the grace of salvation must come to us only through your hand, then our salvation depends upon you.

Therefore Richard had reason to say that, as a stone falls as soon as the earth that supports it is taken away, so a soul, once Mary's help is withdrawn, will fall first into sin and then into Hell: *Sicut lapis, subtracta terra, delabitur in profundum; ita subtracto Mariae adjutorio, homo delabitur in peccatum, & inde in Infernum.* (*Lib. 8. de Laud. Virg. c. 11.*) — "As a stone, when the earth is drawn from under it, slips into the depths, so, Mary's help being withdrawn, a man slips into sin, and thence into Hell." St. Bonaventure adds that God will not save us without Mary's intercession: *Ipse sine ea non sal-*

vabit te — "He will not save you without her." And he goes on to say that, as an infant cannot live if the nurse who feeds it is wanting, so no one can be saved if Mary fails to protect him: *Quemadmodum infans sine nutrice non potest vivere; ita sine domina nostra non potes habere salutem.* (*S. Bon. in Cant. B. V. pro Sabb.*) — "As an infant cannot live without a nurse, so without our Lady you cannot have salvation." Whence he exhorts: *Sitiat ergo anima tua ad ipsam; tene, nec dimitte, donec benedixerit tibi* — "Let your soul then thirst for her; hold her fast and do not let her go until she has blessed you." See that your soul thirsts for devotion to Mary; keep it always, and do not let it go until you come to receive her motherly blessing in Heaven. And who, says St. Germanus, would know God, were it not for you, Mary most holy? Who would be saved? Who would be free from dangers? Who would receive any grace, were it not for you, O Mother of God, O Virgin Mother, O full of grace? Here are his beautiful words: *Nemo est, o sanctissima, qui ad Dei notitiam venit, nisi per te: Nemo qui salvus fiat, nisi per te, Dei parens: Nemo liber a periculis, nisi per te, Virgo mater. Nemo donum Dei suscipit, nisi per te, gratia plena.* (*Serm. de Zona Virg.*) — "There is no one, O most holy one, who comes to the knowledge of God except through you; no one who is saved except through you, Mother of God; no one free from dangers except through you, Virgin mother; no one receives the

gift of God except through you, full of grace." And in another place (*Orat. de Dorm. Deip.*) he says to her: *Nisi enim tu iter aperires, nemo spiritualis evaderet* — "For unless you opened the way, no one would come forth spiritual." If you did not open the way for them, no one would be free from the bites of the flesh and of sin.

As we have no access to the Eternal Father except through Jesus Christ, so, says St. Bernard, we have no access to Jesus Christ except through Mary: *Per te accessum habemus ad filium, o inventrix gratiae, mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis* — "Through you we have access to the Son, O finder of grace, mother of salvation, that he who was given to us through you may receive us through you." And here is the beautiful reason why, St. Bernard says, the Lord determined that we should all be saved by Mary's intercession: that through Mary we might receive that Saviour who through Mary was given to us. And therefore the Saint calls her the Mother of grace and of our Salvation. What, then, St. Germanus resumes, shall become of us? What hope of salvation will remain to us, if you abandon us, O Mary — you who are the life of Christians? *Si nos deserueris, quid erit de nobis, vita Christianorum?* (*Serm. de Zon. Virg.*) — "If you forsake us, what shall become of us, O life of Christians?"

But the modern Author mentioned above replies: If all graces pass through Mary, then when we implore the intercession of the Saints, must they have re-

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course to Mary's mediation to obtain graces for us? But this, he says, no one believes, and no one has ever dreamed of it. As to believing it, I answer that in this there can be no error or unfitness. What unfitness will there ever be in saying that God, in order to honour his Mother — having made her Queen of the saints, and willing that all graces be dispensed through her hands — also wills that the Saints should have recourse to her to obtain graces for those devoted to them? As to saying that no one has ever dreamed of it, I find that it has been expressly asserted by St. Bernard, St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, and with them Fr. Suárez (*tom. 2. in 3. p. D. 23. sect. 3.*) and others. *Frustra*, says St. Bernard, *alios sanctos orares, quem ista non adjuvaret* — "In vain would you pray to the other saints, if she did not help." In vain would anyone pray to the other Saints for some grace he seeks, if Mary did not interpose to obtain it for him. So too an Author explains upon this subject that passage of David: *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur omnes divites plebis. Ps. 44.* — "All the rich among the people shall entreat your countenance." The Rich of that great people of God are the Saints, who, when they wish to obtain some grace for one devoted to them, all commend themselves to Mary, that she may obtain it for him. Whence it is that we rightly, says Fr. Suárez, pray the Saints to be our intercessors

with Mary, as their Lady and Queen: *Inter Sanctos non solemus uti uno tanquam intercessore ad alium, cum omnes sint ejusdem ordinis. Ad Virginem autem tanquam ad Dominam ac Reginam alii Sancti adhibentur intercessores.* — "Among the Saints we are not accustomed to use one as intercessor to another, since all are of the same order; but to the Virgin, as to their Lady and Queen, the other Saints are employed as intercessors."

And this is exactly what St. Benedict promises to St. Frances of Rome, as is read in Fr. Marchese (*In the Diary of Mary, on the 21st of March*). The said Saint appeared to her one day, and taking her under his protection, promised to be her advocate with the divine mother. St. Anselm adds in confirmation of this, speaking with the Virgin: *Quid possunt omnes isti tecum, tu sola potes sine illis omnibus.* (*Orat. 45. ad S. Virg. Mar.*) — "What all these can do with you, you alone can do without them all." My Lady, what the intercessions of all these Saints united with you can obtain, your intercession alone can well obtain without their help. *Quare hoc potes?* the Saint goes on to say — "Why can you do this?" But why do you alone have such power? Because you alone are the Mother of our common Saviour; you the Spouse of God; you the universal Queen of Hea-

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ven and of Earth: *Quia Mater es Salvatoris nostri, sponsa Dei, Regina caeli, & terrae.* If you do not speak for us, no Saint will pray for us or help us: *Te tacente, nullus juvabit, nullus orabit* — "If you are silent, none will help, none will pray." But if you bestir yourself to pray for us: *Te domina orante, omnes juvabunt, & orabunt.* (*S. Ansel. lib. Or. Exc. V. ap. Pac. Exc. 20. in Sal. Ang. n. 7.*) — "When you, Lady, pray, all will help and all will pray." All the Saints will likewise engage themselves to entreat him for us and to succour us. So Fr. Segneri says (in his book *The Devoted Servant of Mary*), applying to Mary with holy Church those words of Wisdom — *Gyrum caeli circuivi sola. Eccli. 24. 7.*, "I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven" W1 prints *24. 7*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 8 — that, as the first sphere by its motion makes all the other spheres move, so when Mary is moved to pray for a soul, she makes all Paradise set itself to pray along with her. Indeed St. Bonaventure says that then she commands, as the Queen she is, all the Angels and Saints to accompany her and to unite all their prayers together with her own. *Quando virgo sanctissima procedit ad Deum pro nobis deprecantum imperat Angelis, & Sanctis, ut eam comitentur, & simul cum ipsa Altissimum pro nobis exorent* (*S. Bon. in Spec. V. cap. 3.*) — "When the most holy virgin goes forth to God to plead for us, she commands the Angels and Saints to accompany her and together with her to entreat the Most High for us."

And so at last we understand the reason why holy Church enjoins us to invoke and greet the divine mother by the great name of our Hope: *Spes nostra salve*, "Hail, our hope." The impious Luther said he could not bear that the Roman Church should call Mary, a creature, our hope: *Ferre nequeo*, he cries, *ut Maria dicatur spes, & vita mea* (*In Post. Maj. Evang. in Nat. Mar.*) — "I cannot bear that Mary should be called my hope and my life." For he said that God alone, and Jesus Christ as our mediator, are our hope; but that God on the contrary curses whoever places his hope in a creature, as he says in Jeremiah: *Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine. Jer. 17. 5.* — "Cursed is the man who trusts in man." But the Church teaches us to invoke Mary everywhere, and to call her our hope: *Spes nostra salve.* Whoever places his hope in a creature independently of God is certainly cursed by God, since God is the only fountain and dispenser of every good, and the creature without God has nothing and can give nothing. But if the Lord has disposed, as we have proved, that all graces should pass through Mary as through a channel of mercy, then we may — indeed we must — assert that Mary is our

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hope, through whom we receive the divine graces. And therefore St. Bernard called her the whole ground of his hope: *Filioli, haec maxima mea fiducia, haec tota ratio spei meae.* (*Or. Pan. ad B. V.*) — "My little children, she is my greatest confidence, she is the whole ground of my hope." St. John Damascene asserted the same when, speaking with the Blessed Virgin, he said to her: *In te spem meam collocavi ex animo, & intentis oculis, abs te pendeo.* (*ap. Auriem. to. 1. c. 7.*) — "In you I have placed my hope with all my soul, and with fixed eyes I hang upon you." My Lady, in you I have placed all my hope, and from you I attentively await my salvation. St. Thomas says in *Opusc. 7* that Mary is the whole hope of our salvation: *Omnis spes vitae*, "all the hope of life." St. Ephrem (*de Laud. Virg.*) declares: *Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o virgo sincerissima. Sub alis tuae pietatis protege & custodi nos* — "We have no confidence but from you, O most sincere virgin. Under the wings of your compassion protect and guard us." Most holy Virgin, he says to her, receive us under your protection, if you would see us saved; since we have no other hope of being saved than through you.

Let us conclude, then, with St. Bernard: *Totis medullis cordium hanc Mariam veneremur, quia sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam* (*Serm. de Nat. B. V.*) — "With the whole marrow of our hearts let us venerate this Mary, for such is the will of him who willed that we should have everything through Mary." Let us strive to venerate this Divine Mother Mary with all the affections of our heart, since this is the will of that Lord who has willed that we should receive

every good through her hand. And therefore the Saint exhorts us that, whenever we desire and ask any grace, we should seek to commend ourselves to Mary and trust to obtain it through her: *Quaeramus gratiam, & per Mariam quaeramus.* (*Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary." For, says the Saint, if you do not deserve of God the grace you seek, Mary will well deserve to obtain it, who will ask it in your favour: *Quia indignus eras, cui donaretur, datum est Mariae, ut per illam acciperes quicquid haberes.* (*Serm. 3. in Vig. Nativ.*) — "Because you were unworthy to receive the gift, it was given to Mary, that through her you might receive whatever you have." Hence the same St. Bernard warns everyone that whatever we offer to God, whether of works or of prayers, we should take care to commend it all to Mary, if we wish the Lord to accept it: *Quicquid Deo offerre potes, Mariae commendare memento, si non vis sustinere repulsum.* (*Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "Whatever you can offer to God, remember to commend it to Mary, unless you wish to suffer a refusal."

Example.

Famous is the History of Theophilus, written by Eutychian, Patriarch of Constantinople, who was an eye-

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witness of the event here related; and it is confirmed by St. Peter Damian, by St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Antoninus, and by others in Fr. Crasset (*Div. alla B. V. tom. 1. tr. 1. q. 10.*). This man was Archdeacon of the Church of Adana, a City in Cilicia; and he was held in such esteem that the people wanted him for their Bishop, but out of humility he refused. But some ill-wishers having afterward accused him, and he having been deposed from his office, he conceived such grief that, blinded by passion, he went to find a Jewish Magician, who brought him to a meeting with Satan, that he might help him in that misfortune of his. The Devil answered that if he wanted his help, he must renounce Jesus and Mary his Mother, and hand over to him the act of renunciation written in his own hand; and Theophilus did indeed write the execrable document. The following day the Bishop, having recognized the wrong done to him, asked his pardon and restored him to his office. Then Theophilus, feeling himself torn by the remorse of conscience for the enormous sin he had committed, did nothing but weep. What does he do? He goes off to a Church, and there throws himself weeping at the feet of an Image of Mary, and says: O Mother of God, I will not despair, since I have you, who are so compassionate and can help me. He remained thus weeping and praying to the holy Virgin for

forty days. And behold, the mother of mercy appears to him one night and says to him: O Theophilus, what have you done? You have renounced my friendship and my Son's — and to whom? To your enemy and mine. My Lady, answered Theophilus, it is for you to see to pardoning me, and to obtaining my pardon from your Son. Then Mary, seeing his confidence: Be of good cheer, she said to him, for I will pray to God for you. Theophilus, encouraged by this, increased his tears, his penances, and his prayers, not leaving that Image. And behold, Mary appeared to him again, and with gladness in her face said to him: Theophilus, be of good cheer; I have presented your tears and prayers to God, and he has received them, and has already pardoned you. But from this day on be grateful and faithful to him. My Lady, Theophilus replies, not even this is enough to console me fully: the enemy still holds in his hand that impious writing in which I then renounced you and your Son; you can have it given back to me. And behold, after three days he wakes one night —

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Theophilus — and finds the writing upon his breast. The following day, while the Bishop was in Church in the presence of a great crowd, Theophilus went and threw himself at his feet, told him the whole affair weeping bitterly, and handed him the infamous writing, which the Bishop at once had burned before all those people, who did nothing but weep for gladness, exalting the goodness of God and the mercy of Mary shown to that wretched sinner. And he, returning to the Church of the Virgin, died there within three days, wholly content, thanking Jesus and his Holy Mother.

Prayer.

O Queen and Mother of Mercy, who dispense graces to all who have recourse to you with such generosity, because you are Queen, and with such love, because you are our most loving Mother: to you I commend myself today, so poor in merits and in virtue, and so laden with debts to the divine justice. O Mary, you hold the key of all the divine mercies: do not forget my miseries, and do not leave me in such poverty as mine. You are so generous with all, accustomed to give more than is asked of you: be the same with me also. My Lady, protect me — and this is all I ask of you. If you protect me, I fear nothing. I do not fear the demons, because you are more powerful than all Hell. Not my sins, because you can obtain for me a general pardon of them with one word that you say to God. Nor do I fear, if I have your favour, an angered God, because at a single prayer of yours he is at once appeased. In short, if

you protect me, I hope for everything, because you can do everything. O Mother of Mercy, I know that you find pleasure and glory in helping the most wretched, when you do not find them obstinate and so are able to help them. I am a sinner, but I am not obstinate: I wish to change my life. You can help me, then; help me and save me. Today I place myself wholly in your hands. Tell me what I must do to please God, for I will do it; and I hope to do it with your help — O Mary, Mary, my Mother, my Light, my Consolation, my Refuge, and my Hope. Amen, amen, amen.

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CHAPTER VI.

Eja ergo advocata nostra — Turn then, our advocate.

§I. Mary is an advocate powerful to save all.

So great is the authority of mothers over their children that, even though these be Monarchs and hold absolute dominion over every person in their Kingdoms, their mothers can never become subjects to their children. It is true that Jesus is now in heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father — that is, as St. Thomas explains, as man also, by reason of the Hypostatic union with the person of the Word — and holds supreme dominion over all, and over Mary as well. Nevertheless it will always be true that there was a time, when our Redeemer lived on this earth, when he willed to humble himself and make himself subject to Mary, as St. Luke attests: *Et erat subditus illis. c. 2.* — "And he was subject to them." Indeed St. Ambrose says that Jesus Christ, having deigned to make Mary his mother, was as her son truly bound to obey her. And therefore Richard of Saint-Laurence says (*l. 1. de Laud. Virg. c. 5.*) that of the other Saints it is said that they are with God, but of Mary alone can it be said that she had this lot: that not only was she subject to the will of God, but that God also subjected himself to her will: *Cum de ceteris Sanctis dicatur, eos esse cum Deo, Maria majus aliquid sortita est; ut non solum ipsa subjiceretur voluntati Dei, sed etiam Dominus voluntati ipsius.* And whereas of the other holy Virgins, as the same author observes, it is said that they follow the Divine Lamb wherever he goes — *Sequuntur agnum, quocumque ierit. Ap. 14.*, "They follow the Lamb wherever he goes" — of the Virgin Mary it may be said that the Lamb followed her on this Earth, having made himself her subject: *De Virgine autem Maria secure dici potest, quod agnus sequebatur eam, quocumque ivit, ex illo Lucae: Erat subditus illis.* — "But of the Virgin Mary it can safely be said that the Lamb followed her wherever she went, from that word of Luke: He was subject to them."

Hence we say that Mary in Heaven, although she can no longer command her Son, will nevertheless always have prayers that are a Mother's prayers, and therefore most powerful to obtain whatever she asks. Mary has, says St. Bonaventure, this privilege with her Son: that she is most powerful to obtain what-

ever she wills: *Grande privilegium Mariae, quod apud filium sit potentissima.* (*In Spec. c. 8.*) — "Great is Mary's privilege, that with her Son she is most powerful." And why? Precisely for the reason we have indicated, and shall examine at length below: because Mary's prayers are a Mother's prayers. And for this reason St. Peter Damian says that the Virgin can do whatever she wills, in Heaven as on Earth, being able to raise even the despairing to the hope of salvation; whence he says to her: *Data est tibi omnis potestas in caelo, & in terra; & nihil tibi impossibile, cui possibile est etiam desperatos in spem salutis relevare.* (*Serm. 1. de Nat. B. Virg.*) — "All power is given to you in heaven and on earth, and nothing is impossible to you, who can raise even the despairing to the hope of salvation." And then he adds that when the mother goes to seek some grace for us from Jesus Christ — called by the Saint the Altar of Mercy, where sinners obtain pardon from God — the Son sets such store by Mary's prayers, and has such desire to please her, that when she prays she seems rather to command than to entreat, and seems rather a Lady than a Handmaid: *Accedis enim ad illud humanae reconciliationis altare, non solum rogans, sed imperans: domina, non ancilla; nam filius nihil negans, honorat.* (*Loc. cit.*) — "For you approach that altar of human reconciliation not only asking but commanding: a lady, not a handmaid; for the Son, denying nothing, honours you." So does Jesus will to honour this dear Mother of his, who honoured him so greatly in her life, by granting her at once whatever she asks and desires. Which St. Germanus beautifully confirms, saying to the Virgin: *You are the Mother of God, all-powerful to save sinners, and you have no need of any other recommendation with God, since you are the mother of the true life.* (*Serm. 2. in Dorm. B. V.*)

Imperio Virginis omnia famulantur, etiam Deus — "To the Virgin's command all things are subject, even God." St. Bernardine of Siena has no reluctance to say, in this sentence (*Tom. 2. Serm. 61.*), that all obey Mary's commands, even God — meaning in truth that God hears her prayers as though they were commands. Whence St. Anselm, speaking with Mary, says: *Te Deus, o virgo, sic exaltavit, ut omnia tibi secum possibilia esse donaris.* (*Lib. de Conc. Virg.*) — "God has so exalted you, O virgin, that he granted all things to be possible to you with him." God, O holy Virgin, has raised you to such a height that with his favour you can obtain all possible graces for those devoted to you, since your protection is all-powerful: *Omnipotens auxilium tuum, o Maria* — "All-powerful is your help, O Mary" — as Cosmas of Jerusalem says to her. Yes, Mary is all-powerful, Richard of Saint-Laurence resumes, since by every law the Queen must enjoy the same pri-

vileges as the King: *Eisdem privilegiis secundum leges gaudet Rex & Regina. Cum autem* (he adds) *eadem sit potestas filii & matris, ab omnipotente filio omnipotens mater facta est.* (*l. 4. de laud. Virg.*) — "By the laws the King and Queen enjoy the same privileges. And since the power of the son and of the mother is the same, by an almighty son an almighty mother has been made." In such a way that, as St. Antoninus says, God has placed the whole Church not only under Mary's patronage but under her dominion as well: *Ecclesia est, non tantum sub Virginis patrocinio, verum etiam sub dominatione ac potestate.* (*P. 4. tit. 15. c. 20. §. 2.*) — "The Church is not only under the Virgin's patronage, but also under her dominion and power."

Since, then, the mother must have the same power as the Son, with reason has Mary been made all-powerful by Jesus, who is all-powerful — it being nevertheless always true that where the Son is all-powerful by nature, the mother is all-powerful by grace. And this is verified by the fact that whatever the mother seeks, the Son denies her nothing; as was revealed to St. Bridget (*Rev. l. 1. c. 4.*), who one day heard Jesus, speaking with Mary, say to her: *Pete quod vis a me, non enim potest esse inanis petitio tua* — "Ask of me what you will, for your petition cannot be void." My mother, you know already how much I love you; therefore ask of me what you will, for no request of yours can go unheard by me. And beautiful was the reason he added: *Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terris, ego nihil tibi negabo in caelis* — "Because you denied me nothing on earth, I will deny you nothing in heaven." As though he said: Mother, when you were on earth, you denied nothing that you could do for love of me; now that I am in heaven, it is only right that I deny nothing of what you ask of me. Mary is called all-powerful, then, in the way in which this can be understood of a creature, who is not capable of a divine attribute. She is all-powerful in this sense: that by her prayers she obtains whatever she wills.

With reason, then, O our great Advocate, does St. Bernard say to you: *Velis tu, & omnia fient* — "Will it, and all shall be done." And St. Anselm: *Quicquid tu Virgo velis, nequaquam fieri non poterit.* (*De Exc. Virg. cap. 12.*) — "Whatever you, O Virgin, will, it cannot but come to pass." Will it, and everything will come about: will it to raise the most lost sinner to a high sanctity, and it rests with you to do it. Blessed Albert the Great, to this purpose, makes Mary speak thus: *Roganda sum, ut velim; quia, si volo, necesse est fieri:* (*Ap. P. Pep. Grand. &c.*) — "I must be asked to will it; for if I will it, it must needs be done." I must be prayed to will it; because if I will it, it is necessary that it be done. Whence St. Peter Damian, considering this great power of Mary, in praying her to have compassion on us says to her: *Moveat te natura, potentia moveat; quia quanto potentior, tanto*

misericordior esse debebis. (*Serm. 1. de Nat. B. Virg.*) — "Let your nature move you, let your power move you; for the more powerful you are, the more merciful you ought to be." O Mary, our dear advocate: since you have a heart so compassionate that it cannot look upon the wretched without pitying them, and at the same time have with God so great a power to save all whom you defend, do not disdain to take up the cause of us wretched creatures too, who place all our hopes in you. If our prayers do not move you, let your own kindly heart move you; let at least your power move you, since God has enriched you with such power to this very end: that the richer you are in ability to help us, the more merciful you may be in willing to help us. But of this St. Bernard well assures us, saying that Mary is immensely rich in mercy as she is in power: as her charity is most powerful, so also is it most compassionate toward us, and she shows it continually by its effects: *Potentissima, & piissima charitas matris Dei & affectu compatiendi, & subveniendi abundat effectu: aeque locuples in utroque.* (*Serm. 4. de Assumt.*) — "Most powerful and most loving is the charity of the Mother of God: it abounds in the affection of compassion and in the effect of succour, equally rich in both."

From the time she lived on this earth, Mary's one thought, after the glory of God, was to help the wretched. And from that time we know that she enjoyed the privilege of being heard in all that she asked. This we know from what happened at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, when, the wine having failed, the holy Virgin, pitying the distress and the shame of that household, asked her Son to console them with a miracle, laying before him the want of wine: *Vinum non habent* — "They have no wine." Jesus answered: *Quid mihi & tibi mulier? nondum venit hora mea. Jo. 2. 4.* — "What is that to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet come." Note: although the Lord seemed to have refused the grace to his mother, saying, What does it matter to me and to you, woman, that the wine has failed? It is not fitting for me now to work any miracle, the time not yet having come — which will be the time of my preaching, in which by signs I must confirm my doctrine — nevertheless Mary, as though her Son had already granted the grace, said to those people: *implete hydrias aqua*, "Fill the jars with water." Come, fill the jars with water, for now you shall be consoled. And in fact Jesus Christ, to please his Mother, changed that water into excellent wine. But how can this be? If the time appointed for miracles was that of his preaching, how could this one of the wine be anticipated con-

trary to the Divine decree? No, comes the answer: nothing was done against the Divine decrees. For although, generally speaking, the time of signs had not yet come, nevertheless from all eternity God had established by another general decree that of whatever this Divine Mother of his should ask, nothing should ever be denied her. And therefore Mary, well aware of this privilege of hers, though her Son seemed then to have refused her request, nevertheless said that the jars should be filled with water, as though the grace were already granted. This is what St. John Chrysostom meant upon the said passage of St. John: *Quid mihi & tibi, mulier, &c.* — saying that although Jesus had answered thus, nevertheless out of honour for his Mother he did not fail to obey her request: *Et licet ita responderit, maternis tamen precibus obtemperavit* — "And although he answered thus, he nevertheless complied with his mother's prayers." St. Thomas confirmed the same, where he said that by those words, *my hour has not yet come*, Jesus Christ meant to show that he would have deferred the miracle if another had asked it of him; but because his mother asked it, he did it at once: *Per illa verba, nondum venit hora mea, ostendit se dilaturum fuisse miraculum, si alius rogasset; quia tamen rogabat Mater, fecit: S. Thom. apud Defens. cultus Mariani, auctore R. D. Henr. de Cerf. pag. 129.* St. Cyril and St. Jerome say the same, as Barradas reports. And the same was said by the Ghentish doctor upon that passage of St. John: *Quo Matrem honoraret, praevenit tempus miraculi faciendi* — "That he might honour his Mother, he anticipated the time of working the miracle."

It is certain, in short, that there is no creature who can obtain for us wretched ones so many mercies as this good Advocate — who is thereby honoured by God not only as his beloved Handmaid, but as his true Mother. This is exactly what William of Paris says, addressing her: *Nulla creatura tot & tanta impetrare posset apud Filium tuum miseris, quam tu impetras eisdem; in quo procul dubio non tamquam ancillam, sed tanquam Matrem verissimam te honorat.* — "No creature could obtain from your Son so many and so great things for the wretched as you obtain for them; in which, without doubt, he honours you not as a handmaid but as a most true Mother." It is enough that Mary speak, and the Son does everything. The Lord, speaking with the bride of the sacred Canticles — by whom Mary is understood — says to her: *Quae habitas in hortis, amici auscultant, fac me audire vocem tuam. Can. 8. 13.* — "You who dwell in the gardens, the friends are listening: make me hear your voice." The friends are the Saints, who, when they ask some grace for the benefit of those devoted to them, wait for their Queen to ask it of God and obtain

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it; since (as was said above in Chapter V) no grace is dispensed except through Mary's intercession. And how does Mary obtain it? It is enough that she let her Son hear her voice, *Fac me audire vocem tuam.* It is enough that she speak, and the Son hears her at once. See how William of Paris, explaining the said passage in this sense, brings in the Son speaking thus to Mary: *Quae habitas in hortis caelestibus, fiducialiter pro quibus volueris intercede; Non enim possum oblivisci me filium tuum, ut matri quidpiam denegandum putem. Tantum ut vocem proferat, quia a filio audiri, exaudiri est.* — "You who dwell in the heavenly gardens, intercede with confidence for whom you will; for I cannot forget that I am your son, so as to think anything should be denied to my mother. Let her only utter her voice — for to be heard by the Son is to be granted." Godfrey the Abbot says that Mary, although she obtains graces by praying, nevertheless prays with a certain motherly authority; whence we must hold without doubt that she obtains whatever she desires and asks for us: *Virgo Maria ex eo quod ille homo est, & natus ex ea, quasi quodam matris imperio, apud ipsam impetrare quod voluerit pia fiducia non dubitatur.* (*Serm. 8. de B. Virg.*)

Valerius Maximus relates (*lib. 5. cap. 4.*) of Coriolanus that, while he held Rome besieged, all the prayers of the citizens and of his friends were not enough to move him; but when his mother Veturia came to entreat him, then he could not resist, and at once raised the siege. But Mary's prayers with Jesus are more powerful than Veturia's by as much as this Son is more grateful and loves this dear mother of his more. Fr. Justin of Miechów writes: *Unum beatae Mariae suffragium plus posset, quam omnium Sanctorum simul suffragia.* (*In lit. B. V. verbo Virg. pot.*) — "One prayer of blessed Mary would avail more than the prayers of all the Saints together." And this same thing was confessed by the Devil himself to St. Dominic, compelled by his commands, through the mouth of a possessed man, as Fr. Paciuchelli relates (*de B. V.*), saying that a single sigh of Mary is worth more with God than the entreaties of all the Saints united together.

St. Antoninus says that the prayers of the holy Virgin, being a mother's prayers, have a certain character of command, whence it is impossible that she should not be heard when she prays: *Oratio Deiparae habet rationem imperii; unde impossibile est, eam non exaudiri.* (*P. 4. tit. 15. c. 17. §. 4.*) — "The prayer of the Mother of God has the character of a command; whence it is impossible that she should not be heard." Hence St. Germanus speaks to her thus, encouraging sinners to commend themselves to this Advocate: Having, O Mary, a mother's authority with God, you obtain pardon for the most enormous sin-

ners; for that Lord who in all things acknowledges you as his true mother cannot but grant you whatever you seek of him: *Tu autem materna in Deum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias; Non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi ut verae & intemeratae Matri in omnibus morem gerat.* (*V. in Enc. Deip.*) — "But you, prevailing by a mother's authority with God, win an extraordinary grace of remission even for those who sin enormously; for you cannot but be heard, since God complies with you in all things as with a true and undefiled Mother." Whence St. Bridget (*l. 4. Rev. cap. 74.*) heard the Saints of heaven say thus to the Virgin: *Domina benedicta, quid est quod non poteris? Quod enim vis, hoc factum est.* — "Blessed Lady, what is there that you cannot do? For what you will is done." What is there that you cannot do? What you will, that is done. To which corresponds that celebrated verse: *Quod Deus imperio, tu prece Virgo potes* — "What God can do by command, you, O Virgin, can do by prayer." And is it not perhaps, says St. Augustine, a thing worthy of the Lord's kindness thus to guard his mother's honour, since he declares that he came upon earth not to break but to keep the Law, which among other things commands that parents be honoured? *Nunquid non pertinet ad benignitatem Domini, matris honorem servare, qui legem non venit solvere, sed adimplere?*

Indeed, adds St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, that Jesus Christ, as it were even to satisfy the obligation he owes this mother for having given him human being by her consent, fulfills all her requests: *Filius quasi exolvens debitum, implet petitiones tuas.* (*Or. de Ex. Mar.*) — "The Son, as though paying a debt, fulfills your petitions." Whence the Martyr St. Methodius cries out: *Euge, euge, quae debitorem habes filium, qui omnibus mutuatur. Deo enim universi debemus, tibi autem etiam ille debitor est.* (*Orat. in Hyp. Dom.*) — "Rejoice, rejoice, you who have as your debtor that Son who lends to all! For we all owe to God; but to you even he is a debtor." Rejoice, O Mary, who have the happiness of having as your debtor that Son who gives to all and receives nothing from anyone. We are all debtors to God for all we have, since all is his gift; but to you God himself has willed to become a debtor, taking flesh from you and becoming man. Whence St. Augustine says: *Virgo, quae meruit pro liberandis proferre pretium, potest plus omnibus suffragium liberatis impendere* (*Orat. 2. de Ass. B. V.*) — "The Virgin, who deserved to furnish the price for those to be set free, can bestow more than all others in help upon those set free." Mary having merited to give flesh to the divine Word, and by it to furnish the price of the Redemption, that we might be freed from eternal death, therefore she, says St. Augustine, is more powerful than all to help us obtain eternal salvation. Hence St. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who li-

ved in the time of St. Jerome, left this in writing: *The Son is pleased to be entreated by his Mother, because he wishes to grant her all that he grants on her account, and so to repay the grace he received from her in her having given him flesh.* Whence St. John Damascene, turning to the Virgin, speaks to her thus: You then, O Mary, being Mother of God, can save all by your prayers, which are made powerful by a Mother's authority: *Potes quidem omnes salvare, ut Dei Altissimi Mater, precibus materna authoritate pollentibus.* (*Ex Men. 1. Jon. Ode 4.*)

Let us conclude with St. Bonaventure, who, considering the great benefit the Lord has done us in giving us Mary for our advocate, says to her thus: *O certe Dei nostri mira benignitas, qui suis reis te Dominam tribuit advocatam, ut auxilio tuo, quod volueris, valeas impetrare.* (*In Salv. Reg.*) — "O truly wonderful kindness of our God, who gave you, a Lady, as advocate to his guilty ones, that by your help you might be able to obtain whatever you will." O truly immense and admirable goodness of our God, who has willed to grant to us wretched guilty ones you, our Lady, as our advocate, so that by your powerful intercession you may obtain for us as much good as you will.

O mirabilis erga nos, the same Saint goes on to say, *misericordia Dei nostri, qui ne fugeremus pro sententia, voluit Matrem ac Dominam gratiae instituere advocatam!* — "O wonderful mercy of our God toward us, who, lest we should flee from the sentence, willed to appoint his Mother and the Lady of grace as our advocate!" O great compassion of the Lord, who, that we might not flee from the sentence to be given upon our cause, has appointed as our advocate his own Mother, the mistress of grace.

Example.

Fr. Razzi the Camaldolese relates (*Miracles of Mary, Mir. 47*) that a certain young man, his father having died, was sent by his mother to the court of a Prince. But his mother, in taking leave of him — for she was most devoted to Mary — made her son promise that every day he would recite an *Ave Maria* to her, with these words at the end: *Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of my death.* Having arrived at court, the young man in a while became so dissolute in his vices that his Master was compelled to send him away. Then, in despair, not knowing how to live, he took to the countryside as a highway robber; but during this time he did not fail to commend himself to our Lady, as his mo-

ther had told him. At length he was taken by justice and condemned to death. Now while he was in prison, to be executed the following day, thinking of his disgrace, of his mother's grief, and of the death that awaited him, he wept inconsolably. Whereupon the Devil, seeing him oppressed by great gloom, appeared to him in the form of a handsome young man and told him that he would free him from death and from prison if he would do what he told him. The condemned man offered to do everything. Then the feigned young man revealed to him that he was a Devil come to his help. In the first place he wanted him to deny Jesus Christ and the holy Sacraments; and the young man consented. Further he told him to deny the Virgin Mary and to renounce her protection. But this I will never do, answered the young man; and turning to Mary he repeated to her the usual prayer taught him by his mother: *Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of my death.* At these words the Devil vanished. But the young man remained deeply afflicted for the enormity he had committed in denying Jesus Christ. Having recourse, however, to the holy Virgin, she obtained for him a great sorrow for all his sins; whereupon he made his confession with much weeping and contrition. Having already gone out to go to the gallows, on the way he met a statue of Mary; he greeted it with the usual prayer: *Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of my death*; and the statue, in the sight of all, bowed its head and returned his greeting. Then he, moved to tenderness, begged to be allowed to kiss the feet of that image. The officers refused, but then gave way because of the uproar the people made. The young man bent to kiss the feet, and Mary from that statue stretched out her arm and took him by the hand, and held him so fast that it was not possible to detach him. At this prodigy all began to cry out, Pardon, pardon! — and the pardon was granted. He then, returning to his native place, gave himself to an exemplary life, going on to live most devoted to Mary, who had freed him from temporal and from eternal death.

Prayer.

O Great Mother of God, I will say to you with St. Bernard: *loquere Domina, quia audit Filius tuus, & quaecumque petieris, impetrabis* — "Speak, Lady, for your Son hears you, and whatever you ask, you will obtain." Your Son indeed listens to you, and whatever you seek he will grant

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you. Speak, then, speak, O Mary our Advocate, in favour of us wretched creatures. Remember that it was for our good too that you received such power and such dignity. To this end a God willed to make himself your debtor, taking human being

from you, so that you might dispense at your will to the wretched the riches of the divine mercy. We are your servants, bound in a special way to your service, and among these I hope to be counted. We glory in living under your protection. If you do good to all — even to those who do not know you or do not honour you, and who indeed insult and blaspheme you — how much more ought we to hope from your kindness, which goes seeking out the wretched to raise them up: we who honour you, love you, and trust in you? We are great sinners; but God has enriched you with compassion and with power greater than all our iniquity. You can and you will to save us; and we wish to hope for it the more, the more unworthy we are of it, so as to glorify you the more in heaven when we come to you by your intercession. O mother of mercy, we present to you our souls, once made beautiful and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, but afterward befouled with sin. To you we present them; do you see to purifying them. Obtain for us a true amendment; obtain for us the love of God, perseverance, Paradise. We ask great things of you; but is there perhaps anything you cannot obtain for us? Are they too great for the love God bears you? It is enough for you to open your lips to pray to your Son; he denies you nothing. Pray, then, pray, O Mary, for us; pray, and you will certainly be heard, and we shall certainly be saved.

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§II. Mary is a compassionate Advocate, who does not refuse to defend the causes of the most wretched.

W1 prints Avvoccata in the section heading; everywhere else Avvocata

So many are the reasons we have for loving this loving Queen of ours that, if Mary were praised throughout the whole earth, if in every Sermon Mary alone were spoken of, if all men gave their lives for Mary, it would still be little for the homage and the gratitude we owe her, because of the exceedingly tender love she bears toward all men — and even toward the most wretched sinners, who keep some affection of devotion toward her. The Venerable Ray-

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mond Jordan, who out of humility called himself the Idiot, used to say that Mary does not know how not to love those who love her — indeed, that she does not disdain even to serve those who serve her, employing (if such a one is a sinner) all her powerful intercession to obtain his pardon from her blessed Son: *Maria diligit diligentes se; imo sibi servientibus servit. Ipsa benedicto filio suo irato potentissime*

reconciliat servos & amatores suos. (*Praef. in Cant.*) — "Mary loves those who love her; indeed she serves those who serve her. She most powerfully reconciles her servants and lovers with her blessed Son when he is angered." So great (he goes on to say) is her kindness and mercy that no one, however lost he may be, should fear to have recourse to her feet, since she drives away no one who comes to her: *Tanta est ejus benignitas, quod nulli formidandum est ad eam accedere; tantaque misericordia, ut nemo ab ea repellatur* — "So great is her kindness that no one need be afraid to approach her, and so great her mercy that no one is driven away by her." Mary, as our most loving Advocate, herself offers to God the prayers of her servants, especially those that are offered to her; for as the Son intercedes for us with the Father, so she intercedes for us with the Son, and does not cease with the one and the other to press the great business of our salvation and to obtain for us the graces we ask: *Ipsa preces servorum, maxime quae sibi exhibentur, repraesentat in conspectu Divinae Majestatis; Quia ipsa est advocata nostra apud filium, sicut filius apud Patrem; Imo apud Patrem & Filium procurat negotia, & preces nostras.* (*Idiot. in dict. Praef.*) — "She presents the prayers of her servants, above all those offered to herself, in the sight of the Divine Majesty; for she is our advocate with the Son, as the Son is with the Father; indeed with both Father and Son she pleads our affairs and our prayers." With reason, then, does Blessed Denis the Carthusian call the holy Virgin the singular refuge of the lost, the hope of the wretched, and the Advocate of all sinners who have recourse to her: *Singulare perditorum refugium, miserorum spem, advocata omnium intimorum ad se confugientium.*

But if ever some sinner were found who did not doubt her power, yet distrusted Mary's compassion — fearing perhaps that she would not help him because of the gravity of his faults — St. Bonaventure gives him courage by saying: *Grande privilegium Mariae, quod apud filium sit potentissima.* (*In Spec. lect. 6. 7.*) — "Great is Mary's privilege, that with her Son she is most powerful." Great and singular is the privilege Mary has with her Son of obtaining whatever she wills by her prayers; but what good, he adds, would this great power of Mary do us, if she took no thought for us? *Sed quia tanta Mariae potentia prodesset nobis, si ipsa nihil curaret de nobis?* No, let us not doubt, the Saint concludes; let us be sec-

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ure, and let us always thank the Lord and his Divine mother for it; since, as she is with God the most powerful of all the Saints, so also is she the most loving Advocate and the most solicitous for our good: *Carissimi sciamus indubitanter, & pro hoc gratiam agamus incessanter, quia sicut ipsa apud eum omnibus sanctis est potentior, ita pro nobis omnibus est sollicitor.* — "Beloved, let us know without doubt, and give

thanks for it unceasingly, that as she is with him more powerful than all the saints, so for us all she is more solicitous." And who ever (St. Germanus cries out with joy, *Ser. de Zona Virg.*), O Mother of Mercy, after your Jesus has such care of us and of our good as you? *Quis post filium tuum curam gerit generis humani, sicut tu?* — "Who after your Son has care of the human race as you do?" Who ever defends us in the troubles that afflict us as you defend us? Who, like you, undertakes to protect sinners, as though fighting on their behalf? *Quis ita nos defendit in nostris afflictionibus? Quis pugnat pro peccatoribus?* Whence he adds to her: Your patronage, O Mary, is more powerful and more loving than we can ever come to comprehend. *Propterea patrocinium tuum majus est, quam apprehendi possit.* For the Idiot says that all the other Saints can by their patronage help those devoted to them more than others; but the Divine mother, as she is the Queen of all, so is she also the Advocate of all, and has care of the salvation of all: *Ceteri Sancti jure quodam patrocinii pro sibi specialiter commissis plus possunt prodesse, quam pro alienis: Beatissima vero Virgo, sicut omnium est Regina, sic est omnium Patrona & Advocata, & cura illi est de omnibus.* (*De Contempl. B. V. in Prol.*)

She has care of all, even of sinners; indeed it is especially of these that Mary glories in being called Advocate — as she herself declared to Venerable Sister Maria Villani, saying to her: *After the title of mother of God, I glory in being named the Advocate of sinners.* Blessed Amadeus says that our Queen does not cease to stand before the Divine Majesty, continually interceding for us with her powerful prayers: *Adstat Beatissima Virgo, vultui conditoris prece potentissima, semper interpellans pro nobis* — "The most Blessed Virgin stands before the face of the Creator, most powerful in prayer, always interceding for us." And since in Heaven she well knows our miseries and needs, she cannot but have compassion on us; whence with a mother's affection, moved to compassion for us, compassionate and kind, she always seeks to succour and to save us: *Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur* — "For she sees our perils, and our merciful Lady pities us with a mother's affection."

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Therefore Richard of Saint-Laurence gives courage to everyone, however wretched he may be, to have recourse with confidence to this sweet Advocate, holding it for certain that he will always find her ready to help him: *Inveniet semper paratam auxiliari* — "He will always find her ready to help." For Godfrey says that Mary is always ready to pray for all: *Ipsa pro universo Mundo paratissima est ad precandum* — "She is most ready to pray for the whole World."

And oh, with what efficacy and love, says St. Bernard, this good Advocate of ours handles the business of our salvation! *Maria nobis facta dicitur advocata, quae apud Deum salutis nostrae negotia efficaciter pertractet.* (*Ser. 1. de Ass.*) — "Mary is said to have been made our advocate, who with God effectively handles the business of our salvation." St. Augustine, considering the affection and the earnestness with which Mary continually employs herself in praying to the Divine Majesty for us — that the Lord may pardon our sins, assist us with his Grace, deliver us from dangers, and raise us out of our miseries — says, speaking with the holy Virgin: *Unam ac te solam pro nobis in Caelo fatemur esse sollicitam.* (*Ap. S. Bon. in spec. lect. 6.*) — "We confess that you alone in Heaven are solicitous for us." And he means: My Lady, it is true that all the Saints love our salvation and pray for us; but the charity and tenderness you show us in Heaven, in obtaining for us by your prayers so many mercies from God, obliges us to confess that we have in Heaven but one Advocate, and that is you; and that you alone are the one true lover and the one solicitous for our good. And who can ever comprehend the anxious care with which Mary always stands before God in our favour? St. Germanus says: *Non est satietas defensionis ejus* — "There is no satiety in her defending." Beautiful is the expression. So great is Mary's compassion for our miseries, and so great the love she bears us, that she prays always, and returns to pray, and is never satisfied with praying for us and with defending us by her prayers from evils and obtaining graces for us: *Non est satietas defensionis ejus.*

Poor we sinners, if we had not this great Advocate, who is so powerful, so compassionate, and at the same time so prudent and wise that her Son the Judge (says Richard of Saint-Laurence) cannot condemn those guilty ones whom she defends: *Tam prudens & diserta est advocata Maria, quod non potest Filius vindicare in eos, pro quibus ipsa allegat.* (*De Laud. V. l. 2. p. 2.*) — "So prudent and eloquent an advocate is Mary that the Son cannot take vengeance on those for whom she pleads." Whence St. John the Geometer greets her: *Salve Jus dirimens lites.* (*ap. Pep. Lez. 10. 5.*) — "Hail, Law that settles disputes." For all the causes defended by this most wise Advocate are all won. And therefore Mary is cal-

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led by St. Bonaventure the wise Abigail, *Abigail sapiens*. This was that Woman (as is read in the *First Book of Kings, ch. 15*) W1 prints *c. 15*; the place is 1 Kings (1 Sam.) 25 who knew so well how to appease with her beautiful prayers King David when he was angered against Nabal, that David himself blessed her, as though thanking her for having prevented him by her gentle ways from avenging himself on Nabal with his own hands: *Benedicta tu, quae prohibuisti me hodie, ne ulciscerer manu mea*

— "Blessed are you, who have kept me this day from avenging myself with my own hand." This same thing Mary does continually in Heaven for the benefit of innumerable sinners: she knows so well how to appease the Divine Justice with her tender and wise prayers that God himself blesses her for it, and as it were thanks her for thus holding him back from abandoning and chastising them as they deserve. To this end (says St. Bernard) the Eternal Father, because he wishes to show us every possible mercy, besides our principal Advocate Jesus Christ with himself, has given us Mary as our Advocate with Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt, St. Bernard says, that Jesus is the one mediator of Justice between men and God, who in virtue of his own merits can and — according to his promises — wills to obtain for us pardon and the Divine Grace. But because men recognize and dread in Jesus Christ the Divine Majesty which resides in him as God, it was therefore necessary to assign us another Advocate to whom we might have recourse with less fear and with more confidence; and this is Mary, than whom we cannot find an Advocate more powerful with his Divine Majesty and more merciful toward us. Here are his beautiful words: *Fidelis & potens mediator Dei & hominum; Sed Divinam reverentur in eo homines majestatem. Opus est enim mediatore ad mediatorem ipsum: nec alter nobis utilior, quam Maria.* (*Serm. in Sign. magn.*) — "A faithful and powerful mediator between God and men; but men revere the Divine majesty in him. There is need, then, of a mediator to that Mediator himself; nor is any other more useful to us than Mary." W1 prints *Avvocatta* in the surrounding Italian But great wrong would he do to Mary's compassion, the Saint goes on to say, who should be afraid even to go to the feet of this most sweet Advocate, who has nothing severe or terrible about her, but is all courteous, lovable, and kind: *Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidat humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile, tota suavis est* — "Why does human frailty tremble to approach Mary? There is nothing austere in her, nothing terrible; she is all sweetness." Read and turn over as much as you will, St. Bernard adds, the whole History described in the Gospels; and if you find any act of austerity in Mary, then fear to draw near to her. But you will never find

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it: therefore have recourse to her gladly (he says), for she will save you by her intercession: *Revolve diligentius Evangelicae Historiae seriem, & si quid forte durum occurrerit in Maria, ad eam accedere verearis.* (*S. Bern. serm. in Sign. Magn.*)

But too beautiful is the exclamation which William of Paris (*De Reth. Div. c. 18.*) puts into the mouth of the sinner who has recourse to Mary: *Adibo te* (he makes him say), *imo etiam conveniam, gloriosissima Dei Genitrix, quam Matrem misericordiae*

vocat, imo clamitat omnis Ecclesia Sanctorum. — "I will come to you — indeed I will hold you to it, most glorious Mother of God, whom the whole Church of the Saints calls, indeed cries aloud, Mother of mercy." O Mother of my God, in the wretched state to which my sins have reduced me, I have recourse to you full of confidence; and if you drive me away, I put it to you that you are in a certain manner bound to help me, since the whole Church of the faithful calls you and proclaims you mother of mercy: *Tu, inquam, cujus gratiositas nunquam repulsam patitur: cujus misericordia nulli unquam defuit; cujus benignissima humanitas nullum unquam deprecantem quantumcunque peccatorem despexit.* — "You, I say, whose graciousness never suffers a refusal; whose mercy has never failed anyone; whose most kindly humanity has never despised any sinner who prayed to her, however great his sin." You, O Mary, are indeed she who, being so dear to God, are always heard: your great compassion has never failed anyone; your most sweet affability has never despised any sinner, however enormous, who has commended himself to you. Or does the whole Church perhaps name you its Advocate and the refuge of the wretched falsely and in vain? *An falso & inaniter vocat te omnis Ecclesia Advocatam suam, & miserorum refugium?* Let it never be, my mother, that my faults should hold you back from fulfilling the great office of compassion that is yours — by which you are at once the Advocate and the peacemaker between men and God, and after your son the one hope and the sure refuge of the wretched: *Absit, ut peccata mea possint suspendere te a tam salubri officio pietatis; quo & advocata es, & mediatrix hominum, post filium tuum spes unica, & refugium tutissimum miserorum.* All that you have of grace and of glory, and the very dignity of being the mother of God (if it is lawful to say it), you owe to sinners; since it was for their sake that the Divine Word made you his mother: *Totum siquidem quod habes gratiae, totum quod habes gloriae, & etiam hoc ipsum quod mater es Dei, si fas est dicere ob peccatores tibi collata sunt.* Far be it from this Divine mother, who brought forth to the World the

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good Fountain of compassion, to think that she should refuse her mercy to any wretched creature who has recourse to her. *Absit hoc a matre Dei, quae fontem pietatis toti mundo peperit, ut cuique miserorum suae misericordiae subventionem unquam deneget.* Since then, O Mary, your Office is to act as peacemaker between God and men, let your great compassion — which is far greater than all my sins — move you to succour me: *Officium ergo tuum est te medium interponere inter ipsum & homines. Moveat te, gloriosa Dei mater, benignissima misericordia tua, quae major est incogitabiliter omnibus vitiis meis & peccatis. Guill. Paris. d. c. 18. de Reth.*

Div.

Take comfort, then, O fainthearted (I will say with St. Thomas of Villanova); breathe again and take courage, O wretched sinners: this great Virgin, who is the mother of your Judge and God, is the Advocate of the human race — fit, since she can do with God whatever she wills; most wise, since she knows every way of appeasing him; universal, since she receives all and refuses to defend no one: *Consolamini pusillanimes; Respirate miserabiles: Virgo Deipara est humani generis advocata, idonea, sapientissima, universalis.* (*In Rog. pro exp. adv. Turc. fuso.*)

Example.

How compassionate this Advocate of ours is toward wretched sinners she well showed in the case of Beatrice, a Nun in the Monastery of Fonte Eraldo, as is related by Caesarius (*l. 7. c. 25.*) and by Fr. Rho *in Ex.* This unhappy Religious, overcome by passion for a certain Young man, arranged to flee away with him. And in fact one day the wretched woman went before an Image of Mary, laid down there the keys of the Monastery — for she was the portress — and shamelessly departed. Having reached another country, she there gave herself to a life of public prostitution, and lived fifteen years in that wretched state. It happened afterward that in that City she met the Steward of the Monastery, and she asked him — supposing herself unknown to him — whether he knew Sister Beatrice. I know her well, he answered: she is a holy Nun, and is now Mistress of Novices. At this speech she remained confounded and stupefied, unable to understand how this could be. So, to learn the truth, she disguised herself and be-

took herself to the Monastery. There she had Sister Beatrice called; and behold, the Most Holy Virgin appeared before her in the form of that very Image to which, on leaving the Monastery, she had handed over the keys and the habit. And the Divine mother then spoke to her thus: Beatrice, know that, to prevent your disgrace, I took your form; and in your place, for the fifteen years you have lived far from the Monastery and from God, I have carried out your office. Daughter, return, do penance; my Son still awaits you. And take care by a good life to keep the good name I have won for you here. So she spoke, and vanished. Then Beatrice re-entered the Monastery, took up again the Habit of a Religious, and, grateful for so great a mercy of Mary, lived as a saint; and at her death she made everything known, to the glory of this great Queen.

Prayer.

O Great mother of my Lord, I see well that the ingratitude I have shown for so many years toward God and toward you would deserve that you should justly cease to have any further care of me; since the ungrateful man is no longer worthy of benefits. W1 prints *meriterebbbe*, with three b's But I, my Lady, have a great conception of your Goodness: I hold it to be far greater than my ingratitude. Continue then, O refuge of sinners, and do not cease to succour a wretched sinner who trusts in you. O mother of mercy, ah, stretch out your hand to raise up a poor fallen creature who seeks compassion of you. O Mary, either defend me, or tell me to whom I must have recourse who can defend me better than you. But where can I find with God an Advocate more compassionate and more powerful than you, who are his mother? You, having been made the mother of the Saviour, were born to save sinners, and to me you have been given for my salvation. O Mary, save one who has recourse to you. I do not deserve your love; but the desire you have to save the lost — this makes me hope that you love me. And if you love me, how shall I be lost? O my beloved mother, if through you I am saved (as I hope), I will be ungrateful to you no more. I will repay with perpetual praises, and with all the affections of my Soul, my past ingratitude and the love you have borne me. In Heaven, where you reign and will reign forever, I in my happiness will always sing your

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mercies; and I will kiss forever those loving hands which have so many times delivered me from Hell, as often as I had deserved it by my sins. O Mary, my Deliverer, my Hope, my Queen, my Advocate, my mother, I love you, I wish you well, and I will always love you. Amen, amen. So I hope, so may it be.

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§III. Mary is the Peacemaker between sinners and God.

The Grace of God is a Treasure too great and too desirable for any Soul. It is called by the Holy Spirit an infinite Treasure, since by means of Divine Grace we are raised to the honour of being made friends of God: *Infinitus est thesaurus, quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiae Dei. Sap. 7. 14.* — "It is an infinite treasure, and those who have used it have been made partakers of the friendship of God." Whence Jesus our Redeemer and God did not hesitate to call his friends those who are in Grace: *Vos amici mei estis. Jo. 15. 14.* — "You are my friends." Oh cursed sin, which dissolves this beautiful friendship! (*Peccata vestra diviserunt inter vos & Deum*

vestrum! Is. 59. 2. — "Your sins have divided between you and your God!") And which, making the Soul hateful to God (*Odio sunt Deo impius & impietas ejus. Sap. 14. 9.* — "The impious man and his impiety are hateful to God"), turns it from a friend into an enemy of its Lord! What then must a sinner do, who by his misfortune finds himself for a time made an enemy of God? He must find a mediator to obtain pardon for him and to make him recover the Divine friendship he has lost. Take comfort (says St. Bernard), O wretched man who have lost God: your Lord himself has given you the Mediator, and this is his Son Jesus, who can obtain for you whatever you desire: *Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem; quid non apud Patrem talis Filius obtineat?* (*Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "He has given you Jesus as mediator; what would such a Son not obtain with the Father?"

But O God, the Saint exclaims here: and why must Men think severe this Saviour who is so compassionate, who to save us gave his life? Why must they believe terrible him who is all lovable? Distrustful sinners, he says, what fear have you? If you fear because you have offended God, know that Jesus has fastened your sins to the Cross with his own torn hands; and having already satisfied the Divine Justice for them by his death, he has already taken them away from your Souls. Here are his beautiful words: *Severum imaginatur, qui pius est; terribilem, qui ama-*

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bilis est. Quid timetis modicae fidei? Peccata affixit Cruci suis manibus. — "He imagines him severe, who is compassionate; terrible, who is lovable. Why do you fear, O you of little faith? He fastened your sins to the Cross with his own hands." But if ever, the Saint adds, you fear to have recourse to Jesus Christ because his Divine Majesty frightens you — since, made Man, he has not ceased to be God — do you want another Advocate with this mediator? Have recourse to Mary; for she will intercede for you with the Son, who will certainly hear her, and the Son will intercede with the Father, who can deny nothing to this Son: *Sed forsitan & in ipso majestatem vereare Divinam, quod licet factus sit homo, manserit tamen Deus. Advocatum habere vis apud ipsum? recurre ad Mariam. Exaudiet Filium Pater.* Then St. Bernard concludes: *Filioli, haec peccatorum scala, haec maxima mea fiducia, haec tota ratio spei meae.* (*cit. Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "My little children, this is the ladder of sinners, this my greatest confidence, this the whole ground of my hope." This Divine Mother, my little children, is the ladder of sinners, by which they climb again to the height of Divine Grace. She is my greatest Confidence; she is the whole ground of my Hope.

See how the Holy Spirit in the sacred Canticles makes the Blessed Virgin say: *Ego murus, & ubera mea sicut turris: ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens*

(*Cant. c. 8.*) — "I am a wall, and my breasts are like a tower: since I became before him as one finding peace." I am, says Mary, the defense of those who have recourse to me; and my mercy is for their benefit like a tower of refuge. And therefore I have been appointed by my Lord the mediatrix of peace between sinners and God. Mary indeed, says Hugh of St. Cher upon that text, is the great Peacemaker who obtains from God, and makes found, peace for enemies, salvation for the lost, pardon for sinners, mercy for the despairing: *Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, salutem perditis, indulgentiam reis, misericordiam desperatis.* And therefore she was called by her Divine spouse beautiful as the Tents of Solomon: *Formosa sicut pelles Salomonis.* (*Cant. 1. 4.*) — "Beautiful as the curtains of Solomon." In David's Tents nothing was treated of but war; but in Solomon's Tents only peace was treated of. By which the Holy Spirit gives us to understand that this Mother of mercy does not treat of war and vengeance against sinners, but only of peace and pardon for their faults.

Hence Mary was figured in the Dove of Noah, which, coming out of the Ark, carried in its beak the Olive branch as a sign of the peace God was granting to Men. Whence St. Bonaventure says to her: *Tu*

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enim es illa fidelissima Columba Noe, quae inter Deum & Mundum diluvio spirituali submersum Mediatrix fidelissima extitisti. — "For you are that most faithful Dove of Noah, who stood forth as a most faithful Mediatrix between God and the World submerged in a spiritual flood." You are the most faithful Dove, who by interposing with God obtained for the lost World Peace and Salvation. Mary, then, was the heavenly Dove who carried to the lost World the Olive branch, the sign of Mercy; for she gave us Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of Mercy, and thereby obtained for us, by the worth of his merits, all the graces God gives us. *Nam ipsa Christum nobis detulit fontem misericordiae.* (*P. Spinell.*) — "For she brought us Christ, the fountain of mercy." And as through Mary the Peace of Heaven was given to the World — *per te pax caelestis donata est*, "through you heavenly peace was given," as St. Epiphanius says — so through Mary sinners go on being reconciled with God. Whence Blessed Albert the Great makes her say: I am that Dove of Noah who brought to the Church the universal peace: *Ego sum Columba Noe, Ecclesiae ramum olivae, & pacis inferens universalis.* (*In Bibl. Mar. lib. Cant. n. 16.*)

Moreover, another express figure of Mary was the Rainbow seen by St. John encircling the Throne of God: *Et Iris erat in circuitu Sedis. Apoc. 4.* — "And there was a rainbow round about the Throne." Cardinal Vitalis explains (*in Spec. S. Script.*): *Iris in circuitu sedis est Maria, quae mitigat Dei Judicium, & sententiam*

contra peccatores — "The rainbow round about the throne is Mary, who softens God's Judgment and his sentence against sinners." Mary is she who always stands at the Divine Tribunal to soften the sentences and the punishments due to sinners. And it was precisely of this Rainbow, says St. Bernardine of Siena, that the Lord spoke when he told Noah that he would set the bow of peace among the clouds, so that on looking upon it he might remember the perpetual peace he was establishing with men. W1 prints *Berdandino*; read *Bernardino Arcum ponam in nubibus, & erit signum foederis inter me & Terram ... Videbo illum, & recordabor foederis sempiterni. Gen. 9. 13.* — "I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me and the Earth... I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant." Mary indeed, says St. Bernardine, is this Bow of eternal peace: *Ipsa est Arcus Foederis sempiternus.* (*Serm. 1. de Nb. Mar. art. 1. c. 3.*) For as God at the sight of the bow remembers the peace promised to the Earth, so at Mary's prayers he remits to sinners the offenses done him, and makes peace with them: *Fructus Iridis est recordatio Divini Foederis: sic per Virginem gloriosam offensa eis remittitur, Foedus stringitur.* (*S. Bern. Sen. in Apoc. c. 41.*)

Therefore Mary is also compared to the Moon: *Pulchra ut Luna. Cant. 6. 9.* — "Fair as the Moon." Since, says St. Bonaven-

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ture, as the Moon stands midway between Heaven and Earth, so she interposes herself continually between God and sinners, in order to appease the Lord toward them and to enlighten sinners to return to God: *Sicut Luna est media inter corpora caelestia & terrena, & quod ab illis accipit ad inferiora refundit: Sic & Virgo Regia inter nos & Deum est media, & Gratiam ipsa nobis refundit. Serm. 14. Nat. Dom.*

And this was the principal office given to Mary when she was set upon the Earth: to raise up Souls fallen from Divine Grace and to reconcile them with God. *Pasce hoedos tuos. Cant. 1. 7.* — "Feed your kids." So the Lord said to her in creating her. It is well known that sinners are figured by kids, and that as the elect (figured in the sheep) shall be placed at the right hand in the valley of Judgment, so these shall be set at the left. Now these Kids, says William of Paris, are handed over to you, O great Mother, that you may convert them into Sheep; and that these, who by their faults deserved to be driven to the left, may by your intercession be placed at the right: *Pasce hoedos tuos, quos convertis in oves, & qui a sinistris in Judicio erant collocandi, tua intercessione collocentur a dexteris.* Whence the Lord revealed to St. Catherine of Siena (*Ap. Blos. Mant. Spir.*) that he had created this beloved Daughter of his as a most sweet bait, to catch men — and especially sinners — and draw them to God: *Haec est a me electa tanquam esca dulcissima ad capiendos homines, potissimum*

peccatores. But here is to be noted the fine observation of William the Angelic upon that passage of the Canticle, who says that God commends to Mary *her* Kids, *Hoedos tuos*; because, the Author adds, the Virgin does not save all sinners, but only those who serve and honour her. Those on the contrary who live in sin and do not honour her with some special act of homage, nor commend themselves to her in order to come out of their sin — these are not Mary's Kids, but at the Judgment will be miserably set on the left with the Damned: *Suos vocat, quia non omnes hoedi vocantur Mariae, sed qui Mariam colunt ac venerantur, licet sceleribus contaminati. Qui vero peccatis irretiti sunt, nec B. Virginem speciali obsequio prosequuntur, nec preces fundunt in ejus cultum, ut aliquando resipiscant, hoedi profecto sunt non Mariae, sed ad sinistram Judicis sistendi.*

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A certain nobleman, being once in despair of his eternal salvation under the load of his sins, was encouraged by a Religious to have recourse to the Most Holy Virgin by going to visit a devout Image of hers that stood in a certain Church. The Knight went to the Church; and on seeing the image of Mary, he felt himself as it were invited by her to throw himself at her feet and to trust. He runs, he throws himself down, he goes to kiss her feet; and Mary from that Image (which was carved) stretches out her hand to give it him to kiss, and upon Mary's hand he saw written this saying: *Ego eripiam te de affligentibus te* — "I will deliver you from those who afflict you." As though she had said to him: My son, do not despair, for I will deliver you from your sins and from the fears that oppress you. It is related then that, on reading those sweet words, that sinner conceived such sorrow for his sins and such love for God and for his sweet Mother that he died there at Mary's feet. Oh, how many obstinate sinners this magnet of hearts draws every day to God — as she herself called herself, saying to St. Bridget (*l. 3 Rev. c. 32.*): *Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum, sic Ego attraho dura corda* — "As the magnet draws iron, so do I draw hard hearts." As the magnet draws iron to itself, so I draw to myself the most hardened hearts, to reconcile them with God. And this prodigy is not rare, but is experienced daily. I for my part could attest many cases that have occurred in our Missions alone, where certain sinners who had remained harder than iron under all the other Sermons, on hearing only the mercy of Mary preached, were struck with compunction and returned to God. St. Gregory relates (*Dial. lib. 3.*) that the Unicorn is a beast so fierce that no Hunter can manage to take it; only at the voice of a virgin who calls out does this wild creature yield to her, draw near, and let itself be bound by her without resistance. Oh, how many sinners fiercer than the wild beasts themselves, who flee from God, run at the voice of this great Maiden Mary, and by

her are sweetly bound to God!

To this end also, says St. John Chrysostom, was the Virgin Mary made Mother of God: that those wretched ones who by their evil lives could not be saved according to the Divine Justice might by her sweet mercy and her powerful intercession obtain salvation: *Ideo Mater Dei praelecta es ab aeterno: ut quos Justitia Filii salvare non potest, Tu per suam salvares pietatem.* (*Hom. de*

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Praet. B. V.) — "Therefore you were chosen from eternity as Mother of God: that those whom the Justice of the Son cannot save, you might save by his compassion." Yes (St. Anselm confirms), because Mary was raised to be the Mother of a God more for sinners than for the just; since Jesus Christ declared that he had come to call not the just but sinners: *Scio illam magis propter peccatores, quam propter justos, factam esse Dei Matrem: Dixit enim ejus bonus Filius se non venisse vocare justos, sed peccatores.* And therefore holy Church sings: *Peccatores non abhorres, sine quibus nunquam fores, tanto digna Filio* — "You do not abhor sinners, without whom you would never have been worthy of so great a Son." Whence William of Paris presses her, saying: O Mary, you are bound to help sinners, since all that you have of gifts, of graces, and of greatness (all of which are comprised in the dignity you received of being Mother of God) — all of it, if it is lawful to say so, you owe to sinners; since for their sake you were made worthy to have a God for your Son: *Totum quod habes (si fas est dicere), peccatoribus debes: omnia enim propter peccatores tibi collata sunt.* (*De Reth. Div. c. 18.*) If, then, St. Anselm concludes, Mary was made Mother of God for sinners, how can I — however great my sins may be — distrust of pardon? *Si ipsa propter peccatores facta est Dei Mater, quomodo immanitas peccatorum meorum cogere poterit desperare veniam?* (*De Exc. V. c. 1.*)

Holy Church makes known to us, in the Prayer of the Mass on the vigil of Mary's Assumption, that the Divine Mother was taken from this Earth in order that she might intercede for us with God with sure confidence of being heard. *Quam idcirco* (says holy Church) *de hoc saeculo transtulit, ut apud te pro peccatis nostris fiducialiter intercedat.* Hence by St. Justin Mary is named *Sequestra*, the arbiter: *Verbum usum est Virgine Sequestra* — "The Word made use of the Virgin as arbiter." *Sequester* means the same as arbiter, to whom two contending parties commit all their claims. So the Saint means that, as Jesus is the mediator with the Eternal Father, so Mary is our Mediatrix with Jesus, to whom the Son commits all the claims he has as Judge against us.

By St. Andrew of Crete, Mary is then called the pledge, the surety of our reconciliations with God: *Divinarum reconciliationum, quae pignore accepto fit,*

Fidejussio. (*Or. 2. de Ass.*) — "The surety of the Divine reconciliations, which is made by the acceptance of a pledge." And this that Saint means to signify to us: that God seeks to be recon-

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ciled with sinners by pardoning them; and that, so they may not distrust of pardon, he has given us Mary as it were for a pledge. Then he greets her: *Salve Divina hominibus reconciliatio* — "Hail, divine reconciliation of men." God save you, O peace of God with Men. Whereupon St. Bonaventure takes it up and encourages every sinner, saying to him: *Si propter tuas nequitias Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias; sibi pro miseris satisfacere ex officio commissum est.* — "If for your wickedness you see the Lord angered, flee to the hope of sinners; to her it has been committed by office to make satisfaction for the wretched." If for your faults you fear that an angered God wills to avenge himself upon you, what must you do? Go, have recourse to the Hope of sinners, who is Mary. And if then you fear that she will refuse to take your part, know that she cannot refuse to defend you, since God himself has assigned to her the Office of succouring the wretched.

And is it perhaps, says Adam the Abbot: *Timerene debet ut pereat, cui Mariam se matrem exhibet, & Advocatam?* — "Must he fear to perish, to whom Mary shows herself mother and Advocate?" Must that sinner fear to be lost, to whom the very Mother of the Judge offers herself as Mother and Advocate? And will you (the same adds), O Mary, who are the Mother of Mercy, disdain to pray to your Son, who is the Judge, for another Son, who is the sinner? Will you refuse, in favour of a redeemed Soul, to intercede with the Redeemer, who died upon the Cross for this very end, to save sinners? *Tu Misericordiae Mater non rogabis pro filio Filium, pro redempto Redemptorem?* No, you will not refuse: you will employ yourself with all affection in praying for all who have recourse to you, knowing well that the Lord who appointed your Son Mediator of peace between God and Man has at the same time made you Mediatrix between the Judge and the accused: *Rogabis plane, quia qui Filium tuum inter Deum, & hominem posuit Mediatorem, te quoque inter reum, & Judicem posuit Mediatricem.* Then St. Bernard takes it up and says: *Age gratias ei, qui talem tibi Mediatricem providit.* (*Serm. in Sign. Magn.*) — "Give thanks to him who provided you with such a Mediatrix." Whoever you may be, O sinner, befouled with faults, grown old in sin, do not lose confidence. Thank your Lord, who, to show you Mercy, has not only given you his Son for your Advocate, but, to give you more courage and confidence, has provided you with such a Mediatrix as obtains whatever she wills by her prayers. Go, have recourse to Mary; and you shall be saved.

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Example.

It is related by Alan de la Roche (*Ros. Sacr. p. 5. c. 60.*) and by Bonifacio (*Stor. Verg. l. 1. c. 11.*) that in Florence there was a young woman named Benedetta — though she might better have been called Maledetta, "the accursed," for the scandalous and immodest life she was then leading. It was her good fortune that Saint Dominic came to preach in that City, and out of mere curiosity she went one day to hear him. But the Lord pierced her heart at that Sermon, so that, weeping bitterly, she went to make her confession to the Saint. St. Dominic heard her confession, absolved her, and enjoined her to recite the Rosary. But the unhappy woman, through the bad habit she had formed, returned to her evil life. The Saint learned of it, and going to find her, obtained that she should confess again. And God, to establish her in the good life, one day let her see Hell, and showed her there some who had been damned on her account. And then, opening a book, he had her read there the frightful record of her sins. The penitent was horrified at such a sight, and full of confidence had recourse to Mary to help her; and she understood that this Divine Mother was already obtaining for her from God a space of time to weep for so many of her wicked deeds. The Vision ended, and Benedetta gave herself to living well. But seeing always before her eyes that grim record that had been shown her, one day she set herself to pray thus to her Consoler: Mother, she said, it is true that for my excesses I ought now to be in the depths of Hell; but since you by your intercession have delivered me from it by obtaining for me a space for penance, most compassionate Lady, this further grace I ask of you: I will never cease to weep for my sins; but do you bring it about that they be blotted out of that book. At this prayer Mary appeared to her and told her that, to obtain what she sought, she must from then on keep continual memory of her sins and of the Mercy God had shown her; further, that she should remember the Passion of her Son suffered for love of her; further, that she should consider how many had been damned for lesser faults than hers. And she revealed to her that a child of eight years was that very day to be sent to Hell for a single sin. And Benedetta having faithfully obeyed the holy Virgin, behold, one day Jesus Christ showed himself to her,

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who, showing her that book, said to her: See, your sins are blotted out; the book is blank; write in it now acts of Love and of Virtue. And doing so, Benedetta afterward led a holy life and died a holy death.

Prayer.

Then, O my most sweet Lady, if your Office is — as William of Paris tells you — to interpose yourself as Mediatrix between sinners and God: *Officium tuum est te mediam interponere inter Deum & Homines. Eja ergo*, I will say to you with St. Thomas of Villanova, *Advocata nostra, Officium tuum imple* — "Turn then, our Advocate, fulfill your Office." Come, fulfill your Office for me too. Do not tell me that my cause is too difficult to win; for I know (so all tell me) that every cause, however desperate it may have been, once defended by you, has never been lost. And shall mine be lost? No, of that I have no fear. I should only have to fear — if I looked solely at the multitude of my sins — that you would not accept to defend me. But looking at your immense Mercy, and at the supreme desire that lives in your most sweet heart to help the most lost of sinners, not even of this do I have any fear. And who was ever lost that had recourse to you? Therefore I call upon you to succour me, O my great Advocate, my refuge, my hope, and my Mother Mary. Into your hands I entrust the cause of my eternal salvation. To you I consign my Soul; it was lost, but you are to save it. I thank the Lord always for giving me this great confidence in you, which, notwithstanding my unworthiness, I feel assures me of my salvation. One fear alone remains to afflict me, O my beloved Queen: it is that I may one day, through my own negligence, lose this confidence in you. Therefore I beg you, O Mary, by as much as you love your Jesus, preserve and ever increase in me this most sweet confidence in your Intercession, through which I certainly hope to recover the Divine Friendship that in the past I madly despised and lost; and having recovered it, I hope through you to keep it; and keeping it, I hope at last through you to come one day to thank you for it in Paradise, and there to

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sing the mercies of God and your own for all Eternity. Amen. So I hope, so may it be, so shall it be.

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CHAPTER VII.

Illos tuos Misericordes Oculos ad nos converte — Turn those merciful eyes of yours toward us.

§ Only. Mary is all Eyes to have compassion on our miseries and to relieve them.

St. Epiphanius calls the Divine Mother *Multoculam*, "the one who is all Eyes," in order to relieve us wretched creatures on this Earth. One day, as a possessed man was being exorcized, the Devil was asked by the Exorcist what Mary was doing. The Enemy answered: *She goes down and she goes up* (*ap. il P. Pep. to. 5. Lez. 235.*). And he meant that this kindly Lady does nothing else but go down to Earth to bring graces to Men, and go up to Heaven to obtain there the Divine consent to our petitions. With reason, then, was the holy Virgin called by St. Andrew Avellino *the busy one of Paradise*, who is continually about the business of Mercy, obtaining graces for all, for the Just and for Sinners. The Lord keeps his Eyes upon the Just, says David: *Oculi Domini super Justos. Ps. 34. 16.* — "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just." But the Lady's Eyes, says Richard of Saint-Laurence, are turned upon Sinners as well as upon the Just: *Sed Oculi Dominae super Justos, & Peccatores.* For, Richard adds, Mary's Eyes are a Mother's Eyes; and a Mother watches her Child not only that he may not fall, but also that, if he has fallen, she may go and lift him up: *Sicut Oculi Matris ad puerum ne cadat, vel si ceciderit, ut eum sublevet.*

This Jesus himself gave St. Bridget to understand, when one day he let the Saint hear him speak with his Mother and say to her: *Mater pete quod vis a Me* — "Mother, ask of me what you will." Ask of me, Mother, whatever you desire. (This the Son is always saying to Mary in Heaven, delighting to please this beloved Mother of his in all that she asks.) But what does Mary ask of him? St. Bridget heard that the Mother answered him: *Misericordiam peto pro miseris.* (*Rev. l. 1. c. 46.*) — "I ask mercy for the wretched." As though she said: My Son, you have already appointed me Mother of Mercy, Refuge of sinners, Advocate of the wretched. Now you tell me to ask what I will: what should I ask of you? I ask that you

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show compassion to the wretched. *Misericordiam peto pro miseris.* So, O Mary, you are so full of Mercy, St. Bonaventure says to her tenderly, so intent on relieving the wretched, that you seem to have no other desire, no other concern than this:

Undique sollecita es de miseris, Misericordia vallaris, solum misereri videris appetere. (*Sup. Salve Reg.*) — "On every side you are solicitous for the wretched; you are ringed about with Mercy; you seem to desire only to show mercy." And because among the wretched sinners are the most wretched of all, the Venerable Bede asserts that Mary stands continually praying to her Son for sinners: *Stat Maria in conspectu Filii sui, non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare.* (*in cap. 1. Luc.*) — "Mary stands in the sight of her Son, never ceasing to plead for sinners."

Even while she lived on this Earth, says St. Jerome, Mary was so compassionate and tender of heart toward Men that no Person has ever been so afflicted by their own sufferings as Mary was by the sufferings of others: *Nullum in hac vita adeo poenae torserunt propriae, sicut Mariam alienae.* (*Epist. ad Eust.*) — "No one in this life was so tormented by their own pains as Mary was by those of others." She showed this compassion for the afflictions of others in the affair of the Wedding at Cana (recalled once already in the foregoing Chapters), where, the wine failing, without being asked at all — as St. Bernardine of Siena wrote — she took upon herself the office of compassionate Helper: *Officium piae Auxiliatricis assumpsit non rogata* — "Unasked, she took upon herself the office of a loving Helper." And out of sheer compassion for the distress of that Bride and Bridegroom, she engaged herself with her Son, and obtained from him the miracle of changing the water into wine.

But is it perhaps — here St. Peter Damian, turning to Mary, says to her — that because you have been raised to be Queen of Heaven you have forgotten us wretched creatures? *Nunquid, o Beata Virgo, quia ita glorificata es, ideo nostrae humilitatis oblita es? Absit* (he adds); *non convenit tantae Misericordiae tanta miseriae oblivisci.* (*Serm. 1. de Nat. V.*) — "Can it be, O Blessed Virgin, that because you are so glorified you have therefore forgotten our lowliness? Far be it; it does not befit so great a Mercy to forget so great a misery." Let it never be thought; it does not befit a Compassion so great as reigns in Mary's Heart to forget a misery so great as ours. The common Proverb does not hold for Mary: *Honoures mutant mores*, "honours change manners." This holds well for worldly people, who, raised to some dignity, grow proud and forget their old but poor Friends; but not for Mary, who rejoices at being made greater, so as to be able the better to succour the wretched. Considering precisely this, St. Bonaventure applies to the Blessed Virgin the words spoken to Ruth: *Benedicta filia, prio-*

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rem misericordiam posteriore superasti. Ruth 3. — "Blessed are you, daughter: you have surpassed your former kindness with the latter." Meaning, as he goes on to

declare, that if Mary's compassion toward the wretched was great when she lived in the World, it is far greater now that she reigns in Heaven: *Magna fuit erga miseros Misericordia Mariae adhuc exulantis in Mundo, sed multo major est Regnantis in Caelo.* (*In Spec. B. V. c. 8.*) The Saint gives the reason for this, saying that the Divine Mother now shows this greater Mercy of hers by the innumerable graces she obtains for us, because now she better knows our miseries: *Majorem per innumerabilia beneficia nunc ostendit Misericordiam, quia magis nunc videt Hominum miserias.* Whence he adds that, as the splendour of the Sun surpasses that of the Moon, so Mary's Compassion, now that she is in Heaven, surpasses the Compassion she had for us when she was on Earth: *Nam quemadmodum Sol Lunam superat magnitudine splendoris, sic priorem Mariae Misericordiam superat magnitudo superioris.* And who lives in the World (he concludes) who does not enjoy the light of the Sun? Who is there upon whom this Mercy of Mary does not shine? *Quis est super quem Misericordia Mariae non resplendat?* (*S. Bon. loc. cit.*)

Therefore she was called *electa ut sol. Cant. 6. 9.*, "chosen as the sun"; for there is no one excluded from the heat of this Sun, says St. Bonaventure: *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus* — "There is none who can hide from its heat." And this very thing St. Agnes revealed from Heaven to St. Bridget (*Lib. 3. Rev. c. 30.*) when she told her that our Queen, now that she is united with her Son in Heaven, cannot forget her innate Goodness; whence she shows her Compassion to all, even toward the most wicked sinners — in such a way that, as the heavenly and earthly bodies are illuminated by the Sun, so by Mary's sweetness there is no one in the World who does not, through her, share (if he asks it) in the Divine Mercy: *Nunc autem conjuncta Filio non obliviscitur innatae Bonitatis suae, sed ad omnes extendit Misericordiam suam, etiam ad pessimos: ut sicut Sole illuminantur caelestia & terrestria, sic ex dulcedine Mariae nullus est qui non per eam, si petitur, sentiat Pietatem.* A great sinner in the Kingdom of Valencia, in despair, had resolved — so as not to fall into the hands of Justice — to turn Turk, and was already on his way to embark. He happened to pass before a Church where Fr. Girolamo Lopez of the Society of Jesus was preaching, and he was preaching on the Di-

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vine Mercy. At that Sermon he was converted, and made his confession to that same Father, who asked him whether he had had some Devotion for which God had shown him that great Mercy. He answered that he had had no other Devotion than to pray every day to the holy Virgin that she would not abandon him. (*Patrign. Menol. 2. Feb.*) The same Father found in the Hospital a sinner who for fifty-five years had never made a confession, and had practiced only this poor Devotion: that

when he saw an Image of Mary he greeted her and prayed that she would not let him die in mortal sin. And then he related that in a brawl with an enemy his sword broke, and he turned to our Lady and said to her: *Alas, now I am killed, and I am damned. Mother of sinners, help me.* And in saying this he found himself, without knowing how, carried to a place of safety. And having made a general Confession, he died full of confidence. (*Patr. al Luogo cit.*)

St. Bernard wrote that Mary has made herself all things to all, and to all she opens the bosom of her Mercy, that all may receive from it — the slave his Ransom, the sick man Health, the afflicted Comfort, the sinner Pardon, God Glory; and so, since she is a Sun, there is no one who does not share in her warmth: *Maria omnia omnibus facta est; Omnibus Misericordiae sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant omnes, captivus Redemptionem, aeger Curationem, tristis Consolationem peccator Veniam; ut non sit qui se abscondat a calore ejus.* (*S. Bern. Serm. in Sign. Magn.*) And who will there be in the World, cries St. Bonaventure, who will not love this most lovable Queen? She is fairer than the Sun, sweeter than honey; she is a Treasure of Goodness, lovable to all, gracious with all: *Quis te non diliget, o Maria, pulchriorem Sole, dulciorem melle, omnibus amabilis, omnibus affabilis?* I greet you, then (so the enamored Saint goes on to say to her), O my Lady and my Mother — nay, my Heart, my Soul. Pardon me, O Mary, if I say that I love you; if I am not worthy to love you, you are indeed worthy to be loved by me: *Ave ergo, Domina mea, Mater mea; imo Cor meum, Anima mea. Parce mihi, Domina, si me amare te dicam; si ego non sum dignus te amare, tu non es digna amari a me.* (*S. Bon. Stim. p. 5. c. 19.*)

It was revealed to St. Gertrude (*Rev. l. 4. c. 53.*) that

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when these words are said to the holy Virgin with devotion — *Eja ergo, Advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte*, "Turn then, our Advocate, those merciful eyes of yours toward us" — Mary cannot fail to incline to the request of one who so prays to her. Ah, the breadth of your Mercy, O great Lady (St. Bernard says to her), fills the whole Earth: *Latitudo Misericordiae tuae replet Orbem terrarum.* (*Serm. 4. sup. Miss.*) Whence St. Bonaventure says that this loving Mother has such a desire to do good to all that she counts herself offended not only by those who do her some positive injury (as there are Souls so perverse — especially Gamblers — who sometimes in their rage blaspheme or insult this good Lady), but counts herself offended also by those who do not ask her for some grace: *In te, Domina, peccant, non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.* (*S. Bon. in Spec. Virg.*) — "Against you, Lady, they sin, not only who do you injury,

but also who do not ask of you." So that, St. Hildebert says to her, you teach us, O Lady, to hope for graces greater than our merits, since you never cease to dispense to us graces that far exceed what we deserve: *Doce nos sperare majora meritis, quae meritis majora largiri non desinis.*

The Prophet Isaiah foretold that by the great work of Human Redemption a Throne of Divine Mercy was to be prepared for us wretched ones: *Praeparabitur in misericordia solium ejus. Is. 16.* — "His throne shall be prepared in mercy." Who is this Throne? St. Bonaventure answers: *Solium Divinae Misericordiae est Maria, in qua omnes inveniunt solatia Misericordiae.* (*Spec. c. 8.*) — "The Throne of Divine Mercy is Mary, in whom all find the consolations of Mercy." This Throne is Mary, in whom all, both the just and sinners, find the comforts of Mercy. And then he adds: *Nam sicut misericordiosissimum Dominum, ita misericordiosissimam Dominam habemus. Dominus noster multae Misericordiae invocantibus Se: Et Domina nostra multae Misericordiae invocantibus Se.* — "For as we have a most merciful Lord, so we have a most merciful Lady. Our Lord is of great Mercy to those who invoke him; and our Lady is of great Mercy to those who invoke her." As the Lord is full of Compassion, so also is our Lady; and as the Son, so the Mother too knows not how to deny their Mercy to whoever invokes it. Whence Guerric the Abbot makes Jesus speak thus to his Mother: *In te mihi Regni Sedem constituam, per te preces exaudiam. Communicasti mihi quod homo sum, communicabo tibi quod Deus sum.* (*Serm. 2. de Ass.*) — "In you I will set the Throne of my Kingdom; through you I will hear prayers. You shared with me that I am man; I will share with you that I am God." My mother, in you I will place the Throne of my Kingdom, since through you I will grant the

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graces that are asked of me. You have given me the being of Man; I will give you the being of God — that is, my Omnipotence, with which you may help to save whom you will.

One day, while St. Gertrude was saying with affection those words to the Divine Mother — *Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte* — she saw the holy Virgin point out to her the eyes of the Son whom she held in her arms, and then say to her: *Hi sunt misericordiosissimi oculi mei, quos ad omnes me invocantes possum salubriter inclinare.* (*Rev. l. 4. cap. 53.*) — "These are my most merciful eyes, which I can turn for the saving of all who invoke me." These are the most compassionate eyes which I can turn to save all who invoke me. A sinner once weeping before an Image of Mary, praying her to obtain pardon for him from God, heard the Blessed Virgin turn to the Child she held in her arms and say to him: *Fili, & istae lacrymae*

peribunt? — "Son, shall these tears too be lost?" And he understood that Jesus Christ had already pardoned him.

And how can he ever perish who commends himself to this good Mother, when the Son as God has promised for love of her to show mercy, as far as it pleases her, to all who commend themselves to her? This very thing the Lord revealed to St. Bridget (*lib. 4. c. 53.*), letting her hear these words which he spoke to Mary: *Ex omnipotentia mea, Mater reverenda, tibi concessi propitiationem omnium peccatorum, qui devote invocant tuae Pietatis auxilium, qualicunque modo placeat tibi.* — "Out of my omnipotence, revered Mother, I have granted you the propitiation of all sinners who devoutly invoke the help of your Compassion, in whatever manner may please you." Whence Abbot Adam of Perseigne, considering together the great Power Mary has with God and the great Compassion she has toward us, full of confidence says to her: O Mother of Mercy, as great as is your Power, so great is your compassion; as powerful as you are to obtain, so compassionate are you to pardon: *Mater Misericordiae, tanta est Pietas tua, quanta Potestas. Tam pia es ad parcendum, quam potens ad impetrandum.* And when, he adds, is there ever a case in which you do not have compassion on the wretched, being the Mother of Mercy? Or when is it that you cannot help them, being the Mother of Omnipotence? Ah, with the same ease with which you understand our miseries, with that same ease you obtain for us whatever you will: *Quando non compateris miseris, Mater Misericordiae? aut quando illi opem conferre non poteris, cum sis Mater Omnipotentiae?*

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Eadem facilitate obtinens quodcunque vis, qua facilitate nostra innotescit miseria. (*ap. P. Pep. Lez... tom...*) Take your fill, then, says Rupert the Abbot — take your fill, O great Queen, of the Glory of your Son; and out of compassion, not for any merit of ours, be pleased to send down here below the remnants to us, your poor servants and Children: *O Mater Misericordiae, saturare Gloria Filii tui, & dimitte reliquias tuas parvulis tuis.* (*Rup. in Cant. lib. 5.*)

And if ever our sins take away our confidence, let us say to her with William of Paris (*De Reth. Div. c. 18.*): *Ne alligaveris peccata mea contra me, qui Misericordiam tuam allego contra ea. Absit, ut stent in judicio peccata mea contra Misericordiam tuam, quae omnibus vitiis fortior est.* — "Do not bring my sins forward against me, for I bring forward your Mercy against them. Far be it that my sins should stand in judgment against your Mercy, which is stronger than all vices." My Lady, do not bring my sins against me, for I bring your Compassion against them. And let it never be said that my sins can contend in judgment with your Mercy, which is far

more powerful to obtain my pardon than my sins are to obtain my condemnation.

Example.

In the Chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers (*cap. 11. part. 1.*) it is related that in Venice there was a celebrated Lawyer who by frauds and evil arts had made himself rich, and so lived in a bad state. Perhaps he had nothing else good about him but the reciting every day of a certain Prayer to the holy Virgin. And yet this poor Devotion availed him to escape eternal death by the Mercy of Mary. Here is how. It was his good fortune that this Lawyer struck up a friendship with Fr. Matteo da Bascio, and pressed him so much to come one day and dine at his House that at last the Father obliged him. Having arrived at the house, the Lawyer said to him: Now, Father, I want to show you something you will never have seen. I have a wonderful monkey that serves me like a Valet: it washes the glasses, sets the table, opens the door for me. Take care, answered the Father, that this is not a monkey but something more than a monkey; have it come here. They call the monkey, they call again, they look for it everywhere, and the monkey does not appear. At last they find it hidden under a bed in a low room of the House, but the monkey would not come out of there. Come then,

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said the Religious, let us go and find it ourselves. And having come, together with the Lawyer, to where it was: Infernal beast (he said), come out; and on God's behalf I command you to declare who you are. And behold, the monkey answered that it was the Devil, and that it was waiting for that sinner to leave off saying, on some day, that customary Prayer to the Mother of God; for the first time he left it off, he had leave from God to strangle him and carry him to hell. At this news the poor Lawyer threw himself on his knees to seek help from the Servant of God, who gave him courage and commanded the Devil to depart from that House without doing harm: I give you leave only (he said) to break a wall of this House as a sign that you have gone. Scarcely was this said when, with a great crash, an opening was seen made in the wall; and although it was closed up several times with lime and stone, God willed that it should remain visible for a long time, until, by the advice of the Servant of God, a marble with the figure of an Angel was set in it. The Lawyer was converted; and we hope that from then on he persevered in his change of life until death.

Prayer.

O Creature the greatest and most sublime of all, most sacred Virgin: I greet you from this Earth, I, a wretched and unhappy rebel against my God, who deserve punishments and not graces, justice and not mercy. My Lady, I do not say this because I distrust your Compassion. I know that you glory in being the kinder the greater you are. I know that you rejoice to be so rich, so as to share it with us wretched ones too. I know that the poorer they are who have recourse to you, the more you engage yourself to protect and save them. O my Mother, you are she who one day wept for your Son, dead for me. Offer, I beg you, your tears to God, and by them obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins. As much as sinners afflicted you then, so much did I too afflict you with my wickedness. Obtain for me, O Mary, that from this day forward I may at least not go on afflicting you and your Son with my ingratitude. And what would your weeping profit me, if I went on being ungrateful to you? What would your Mercy profit me, if I were again unfaithful to you and were

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damned? No, my Queen, do not permit it. You have supplied for all my failings. You obtain from God whatever you will. You hear everyone who prays to you. These two graces I ask of you, and from you I hope for them without fail, and I want them: obtain for me to be faithful to God in offending him no more, and to love him in the life that remains to me as much as I have offended him.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende — And after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

§I. Mary delivers those devoted to her from Hell.

It is impossible that one devoted to Mary should be damned, who faithfully pays her homage and commends himself to her. This proposition will perhaps at first sight seem to some too far advanced. But I would beg such a one not to condemn it before reading what I shall set down here upon this point. To say that a devoted servant of our Lady cannot be damned is not meant of those devoted servants who abuse their devotion in order to sin with less fear. And so it seems unjust that some should disapprove of so much extolling of Mary's compassion toward sinners, saying that these then abuse it in order to sin the more; for such presumptuous men deserve chastisement, not mercy, for this rash confidence of theirs. It is meant, then, of those devoted servants who, with the desire of amending, are faithful in paying homage and commending themselves to the Mother of God. Of these, I say, it is morally impossible that they should be lost. And I find that Fr. Crasset also said this in his Book on devotion toward Mary the Virgin (*tom 1. q. 7.*), and before him Vega in his Marian Theology, Mendoza (*Virid. l. 1. Probl. 9.*), and other Theologians. And that it may be understood that these have not spoken at random, let us see what the Doctors and the Saints have said of it. Nor let anyone wonder if I set down here several concurring opinions of the Authors; for I have wished to record them all, in order to show how concordant the Writers have been upon this point. St. Anselm says that, as it is impossible that one who is not devoted to Mary and is not protected by her should be

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saved, so it is impossible that one should be damned who commends himself to the Virgin and is looked upon by her with love: *Virgo benedictissima, sicut impossibile est, ut a te aversus, & a te despectus salvetur, ita ad te conversus & a te respectus impossibile est, ut pereat.* (*De Exc. Virg. c. 11.*) — "Most blessed Virgin, as it is impossible that one turned away from you and despised by you should be saved, so it is impossible that one turned toward you and looked upon by you should perish." St. Antoninus confirms it in almost the same words: *Sicut impossibile est, ut illi, a*

quibus Maria oculos suae misericordiae avertit, salventur; ita necessarium quod hi, ad quos convertit oculos suos, pro eis advocans, salventur & glorificentur. (*Part. 4. tit. 50.*) This Saint adds, therefore, that those devoted to Mary are necessarily saved.

But let the first part of these Saints' proposition be noted, and let those tremble who make little account of, or through carelessness abandon, devotion to this Divine Mother: they say it is impossible for those to be saved who are not protected by Mary. And this is asserted by others too, as by Blessed Albert the Great: *Gens quae non servierit tibi, peribit.* (*Bibl. Mar. in c. 70.*) — "The nation that will not serve you shall perish." All those who are not your servants, O Mary, shall be lost. St. Bonaventure: *Qui neglexerit illam, morietur in peccatis suis.* (*In Ps. 116.*) — "He who neglects her shall die in his sins." He who neglects the service of the Virgin will die in sin. And in another place: *Qui te non invocat in hac vita, non perveniet ad Regnum Dei.* (*In Ps. 86.*) — "He who does not invoke you in this life shall not come to the Kingdom of God." He who does not have recourse to you, my Lady, will not reach Paradise. And in *Psalm 99* the Saint goes so far as to say that not only will they not be saved, but there will not even be hope of salvation for those from whom Mary turns away her face: *A quibus averteris vultum tuum, non erit spes ad salutem.* And St. Ignatius Martyr said it before, asserting that a sinner cannot be saved except through the holy Virgin, who on the contrary saves by her compassionate intercession so many who according to the Divine Justice would be damned: *Impossibile est aliquem salvari peccatorem, nisi per tuum, o Virgo, auxilium & favorem, quia quos non salvat Dei justitia, salvat sua intercessione Mariae misericordia infinita.* (*Ap. Celada in Jud. Fig. §. 10.*) Some raise difficulties as to whether this sentence is St. Ignatius's; at least Fr. Crasset says that St. John Chrysostom made this saying his own (*in Deprec. ad Virg.*). And it is found repeated also by the Abbot of Celles (*In Comp. Virg. c. 5.*). And in this sense holy Church applies to Ma-

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ry those words of the Proverbs: *Omnes qui me oderunt, diligunt mortem.* (*Prov 8.*) — "All who hate me love death." All those who do not love me love eternal death. For (as Richard of Saint-Laurence says upon the words *Facta est quasi navis institoris*, *Prov. 31.*) all those who are outside this Ship shall be drowned in the sea of this World: *In mare mundi submergentur omnes illi, quos non suscipit navis ista.* (*De Laud. V. l. 11.*) Even the Heretic Oecolampadius counted little devotion in anyone toward the Mother of God a sure sign of reprobation; whence he said: *Nunquam de me audiatur, quasi averser Mariam, erga quam minus bene affici reprobatae mentis certum existimem indicium.* (*V. ap. P. Pepe Lez. tom. 7.*) — "Let it never be heard of

me that I turn from Mary, toward whom to be ill-disposed I should count a sure sign of a reprobate mind."

On the other hand Mary says: *Qui audit me, non confundetur.* (*Eccli. 24. 30.*) — "He who hears me shall not be confounded." He who has recourse to me and listens to what I tell him will not be lost. Whence St. Bonaventure says to her: My Lady, he who attends to paying you homage will be far from damnation: *Qui praestat in obsequio tuo, procul fiet a perditione.* (*In Psal. 118.*) And this will come about, says St. Hilary, even though such a one had in the past greatly offended God: *Quantumcumque quis fuerit peccator, si Mariae devotus extiterit, nunquam in aeternum peribit.* (*Can. 12. in Matt.*) — "However great a sinner a man may have been, if he has been devoted to Mary he shall never perish eternally."

Therefore the Devil labours so hard with sinners that, after they have lost Divine Grace, they may lose devotion to Mary as well. Sarah, seeing Isaac playing with Ishmael, who was teaching him bad habits, told Abraham to drive him out — but to drive out also his Mother Hagar: *Ejice Ancillam hanc, & filium ejus* (*Gen. 21. 10.*) — "Cast out this handmaid and her son." She was not content that the son alone should leave the house unless the Mother were dismissed too, thinking that otherwise the son, by coming to see his mother, would go on frequenting the house. So the Devil is not content to see a Soul drive Jesus Christ from itself unless it drives out the Mother too. *Ejice Ancillam hanc, & filium ejus.* Otherwise he fears that the Mother will bring the son back into it again by her intercession. And he fears with reason, since the learned Fr. Paciuchelli says that whoever is faithful in paying homage to the Mother of God will soon receive him through Mary: *Qui Dei Genitrici perseveranter obsequitur, non multa mora & Deum ipsum in se recipiet.* (*In Salv. Reg. Ex. 5.*) Whence with reason devotion to our Lady was well

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called by St. Ephrem *Charta libertatis* (*Or. de Laud. V.*), "the charter of liberty" — the safe-conduct against being consigned to hell. And the Divine Mother was named by the same: *Patrocinatrix damnatorum* (*ibid.*), "the protectress of the damned." And in truth, if it is true — as it is certain — what St. Bernard says, that Mary can lack neither the power nor the will to save us: *Nec facultas, nec voluntas illi deesse potest.* (*Serm. de Ass.*) Not the power, because it is impossible that her prayers should not be heard, as St. Antoninus asserts: *Impossibile est Deiparam non exaudiri.* (*P. 4. tit. 15. cap. 17. §. 4.*) — "It is impossible that the Mother of God should not be heard." And the same St. Bernard says that her requests can never remain fruitless, but obtain whatever they will: *Quod quaerit invenit, & frustrari non potest.* (*Serm. de Aquaed.*) — "What she seeks she finds, and cannot be

disappointed." Not the will to save us, since Mary is our Mother, and she desires our salvation more than we desire it ourselves. If this, then, is true, how can it ever come about that a faithful servant of Mary should be lost? He may be a sinner. But if with perseverance and with the will to amend he commends himself to this good Mother, it will be her care to obtain for him light to come out of his evil state, sorrow for his sins, perseverance in good, and finally a good death. And what mother, being able easily to deliver a son from death merely by asking the judge for his pardon, would not do it? And can we think that Mary — the most loving Mother that can be found of those devoted to her — being able to deliver a son from eternal death, and able to do it so easily, will not do it?

Ah, devout Reader, let us thank the Lord if we see that he has given us affection and confidence toward the Queen of Heaven; for God, says St. John Damascene, does not grant this grace except to those whom he wills to save. Here are the Saint's beautiful words, with which he revives his hope and ours: *O Mother of God (he said), if I place my confidence in you, I shall be saved. If I am under your protection, I have nothing to fear, because to be devoted to you is to have certain arms of salvation which God does not grant except to those whom he wills to save.* (*Serm. de Nat. B. V.*) Whence Erasmus greeted the Virgin: *Salve, inferorum formido. Christianorum spes, certa est fiducia tua.* (*Orat. ad Virg.*) God save you, O terror of hell, O hope of Christians: confidence in you gives assurance of salvation.

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Oh, how it displeases the Devil to see a Soul persevering in devotion to the Divine Mother! It is read in the life of Fr. Alfonso Alvarez, who was much devoted to Mary, that as he was at Prayer and felt himself distressed by the impure temptations with which the Devil was afflicting him, the enemy said to him: Leave off this devotion of yours to Mary, and I will leave off tempting you.

The Lord revealed to St. Catherine of Siena, as is read in Blosius (*in Man. Spir.*), that of his goodness he had granted to Mary, out of regard for his only-begotten Son whose Mother she is, that no one — not even a sinner — who devoutly commends himself to her should be the prey of Hell: *Mariae filii mei genitrici a bonitate mea concessum est propter Incarnati Verbi reverentiam, ut quicumque etiam peccator ad eam cum devota veneratione recurrit, nullo modo rapiatur a daemone infernali.* The Prophet David too prayed to be delivered from hell for the love he bore to Mary's honour: *Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae, ne perdas cum impiis animam meam.* (*Ps. 25.*) — "Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house; destroy not my soul with the impious." He says *Domus tuae*, "of your house," because Mary was indeed that house which God himself built for himself on this earth for his dwelling, and to find

his repose there in becoming man, as is recorded in the Proverbs: *Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum.* (*Prov. 9. 1.*) — "Wisdom has built herself a house." No, he will certainly not be lost, said St. Ignatius Martyr, who attends to being devoted to this Virgin Mother: *Nunquam peribit qui genitrici Virgini devotus sedulusque extiterit.* And St. Bonaventure confirms it, saying: My Lady, your lovers enjoy great peace in this life, and in the other they shall not see death forever: *Pax multa diligentibus te, Domina; Anima eorum non videbit mortem in aeternum.* (*In Psal. 118.*) This case has not occurred, nor will it ever occur (the devout Blosius assures us), that a humble and attentive Servant of Mary should be eternally lost: *Fieri non potest, ut pereat qui Mariae sedulus & humilis cultor extiterit.* (*In Can. Vit. Spir. cap. 18.*)

Oh, how many would have been eternally damned, or would have remained obstinate, if Mary had not interposed with her son that he might show them Mercy! So says Thomas à Kempis: *Quanti fuissent aeternaliter condemnati, vel permansissent in desperatione obstinati, nisi Beatissima Virgo Maria interpellasset ad filium.* (*Vide ap. Pep. Lez. tom. 7.*) And it is the view of

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many Theologians, and especially of St. Thomas, that for many persons who had even died in mortal sin the Divine Mother has obtained from God that the sentence be suspended and that they return to life to do penance. Of this many Examples are brought forward by weighty Authors. Among others, by Flodoard, who lived about the ninth century, in his Chronicle (*ap. Crass. to. 1. Q. 12.*), it is related of a certain Deacon named Adelman that, having already been thought dead, while they were about to bury him he came back to life and said that he had seen the place of hell where he had already been condemned, but that by the prayers of the Blessed Virgin he had been sent back to the World to do penance. Surius likewise reports in *l. 1. al c. 35.* that a Roman Citizen named Andrew had already died impenitent, and that Mary had obtained for him to return to life so that he might be pardoned. Moreover Pelbartus relates (*Stellar. Cor. B. V. l. 12. p. 2. a. 1.*) that in his own time, while the Emperor Sigismund was traveling with his Army through the Alps, a voice was heard from a corpse in which only the bones remained, asking for Confession, and saying that the Mother of God, to whom he had been devoted while he was a soldier, had obtained for him to live in those bones until he should confess; and having confessed, he died. These and other examples must not serve to encourage some rash man who would wish to live in sin with the hope that Mary will deliver him from hell even though he die in sin; for, as it would be great madness to throw oneself into a well with the hope that Mary would preserve one from death because

the Virgin has preserved someone in some such case, so it would be greater madness to risk dying in sin with the presumption that the holy Virgin would preserve one from hell. But these Examples serve to revive our confidence, considering that if the intercession of this Divine Mother has been able to deliver from hell even those who have died in sin, how much more will she be able to prevent from falling into hell those who in life have recourse to her with the intention of amending, and faithfully serve her.

Then, O our Mother, let us say to her with St. Germanus: What shall become of us, who are sinners but wish to amend, and have recourse to you, who are the life of Christians? *Quid autem de nobis fiet, o Sanctissima Virgo, o vita Christianorum?* (*De Zona Virg.*)

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We, my Lady, hear St. Anselm, who says of you: *Aeternum vae non sentiet ille, pro quo semel oraverit Maria* — "He shall not feel the eternal woe for whom Mary has once prayed." He says that he will not be damned for whom you once engage your Prayers. Pray then for us, and we shall be saved from hell. Who will ever tell me that when I am presented at the Divine Tribunal I shall not have the judge favourable, if in my cause I have you to defend me, O Mother of Mercy? *Si accedam ad judicium, & Matrem Misericordiae in causa mea habeo mecum, quis judicium denegabit propitium?* says Richard of St. Victor (*in Cant. c. 15.*). Blessed Henry Suso declared that he had placed his Soul in Mary's hands; and he said that if the Judge willed to condemn him, he wished the sentence to pass through Mary's hands: *Si Judex servum suum damnare voluerit, per manus tuas piissimas, o Maria, hoc faciat.* (*Hor. Sap. l. 1. c. 16.*) — hoping that, the condemnation coming into those compassionate hands of the Virgin, its execution would certainly be prevented. The same I say, and hope for myself, O my most Serene Queen. Whence I will always repeat to you with St. Bonaventure: *In te, Domina, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.* (*In Psalt. Mar.*) — "In you, Lady, I have hoped; let me not be confounded forever." My Lady, in you I have placed all my hopes; therefore I surely hope not to see myself lost, but saved in Heaven, to praise you and love you forever.

Example.

In the year 1604, in a City of Flanders, there were two young students who, instead of attending to their letters, attended to nothing but debauchery and immodesty. One night among others, having been to sin in the house of a woman of evil life, one of them named Richard after some time withdrew home; the other stayed. Having

reached home, Richard, while undressing to rest, remembered that he had not that day recited certain Hail Marys to the holy Virgin, as he was accustomed to do. Being weighed down with sleep, it irked him; nevertheless he forced himself and recited them, though without devotion and half asleep. Then, having lain down to sleep, and being in his first sleep, he heard a loud knocking at the door; and immediately afterward, without the door being opened, he saw before him that companion of his, but all foul and hideous. Who are you? he said to him. Do you not know me? the

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other answered. But how are you so changed? You look like a Devil. Ah, wretched me! that unhappy soul exclaimed: I am damned. And how? Know, he said, that on coming out of that infamous house a Devil came and strangled me. My body has been left in the middle of the road, and my Soul is in hell. Know too, he then added, that the same punishment as mine was due to you as well; but the Blessed Virgin, for that small act of homage of the Hail Marys, has delivered you from it. Happy are you, if you know how to profit by this warning which the mother of God sends you through me! This said, the damned soul opened his cloak and let him see the flames and the serpents that tormented him, and vanished. Then the young man, bursting into bitter weeping, threw himself face down on the ground to thank his Deliverer Mary; and while he was thinking of changing his life, he heard the Matins bell of the Franciscan Monastery ring. Then he said: here God calls me to do penance. He went at once, at that hour, to the Convent to beg those Fathers to receive him. They were reluctant, knowing his evil life. But he told them the whole affair, weeping bitterly; and two Fathers having gone to that road, they found in truth the corpse of his Companion, strangled and black as a coal, and they received him. Richard thereupon gave himself to an exemplary life. He afterward went to the Indies to preach the Faith; from there he passed to Japan, and finally there he had the good fortune and the grace to die a Martyr for Jesus Christ, burned alive. (*From Fr. Alf. Andrada, de Bapt. Virg.*)

Prayer.

O Mary, O my dearest mother, in what a deep abyss of evils would I find myself, if you with your compassionate hand had not so many times preserved me from it! Indeed, how many years ago would I already have been in hell, if you with your powerful prayers had not delivered me! My grievous sins were driving me there; the Divine Justice had already condemned me there; the demons were raging, seeking to

carry out the sentence. You hastened to help, O mother, without even being asked or called upon by me, and you saved me. O my dear deliverer, what shall I ever render you for so great a grace and for so great a love? You then overcame the hardness of my heart, and drew me to love you and to place my confidence in you. And oh, into what an

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abyss of evils would I afterward have fallen, if you with your compassionate hand had not so many times helped me in the dangers in which I was on the point of falling! Go on, O my hope, O my life, O my mother dearer to me than my life — go on saving me from Hell, and first of all from the sins into which I may fall again. Do not permit that I should have to curse you in hell. My beloved Lady, I love you: how will your goodness be able to bear the sight of a servant of yours who loves you being damned? Ah, obtain for me that I may be ungrateful no longer to you and to my God, who for love of you has dispensed so many graces to me. O Mary, what do you say to me? Shall I be damned? I shall be damned if I leave you. But who will ever dare to leave you? Who could ever forget the love you have borne me? You, after God, are the love of my Soul. I no longer trust myself to live without loving you. I wish you well, I love you, and I hope that I shall always love you, in time and in eternity — O creature the most beautiful, the most holy, the sweetest, the most lovable that is in the World. Amen.

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§II. Mary succours those devoted to her in Purgatory.

Too happy are those devoted to this most compassionate mother; for not only are they succoured by her on this earth, but in Purgatory too they are assisted and consoled by her protection. Indeed, since those Souls are the more in need of relief — being there the more tormented, and unable to help themselves — so much the more does this mother of mercy employ herself there in succouring them. St. Bernardine of Siena says that in that prison of Souls who are the spouses of Jesus Christ, Mary most holy has a certain dominion and plenary power, both to relieve them and also to deliver them from those pains: *Beata Virgo in regno Purgatorii dominium habet.* (*Serm 3. de Nom. Mar. a. 1. c. 3.*) — "The Blessed Virgin has dominion in the kingdom of Purgatory."

And as to the first — the relieving of them — the same Saint, applying those words of Ecclesiasticus, *In fluctibus maris ambulavi*, "I have walked in the waves of

the sea" (*cap. 4.*) W1 prints *cap. 4*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 8, adds: *Scilicet visitans & subveniens necessitatibus, & tormentis devotorum meorum, quia filii sunt.* (*S. Bern. Sen. loc. cit.*) — "That is, visiting and relieving the needs and the torments of those devoted to me, because they are my children." St. Bernardine says that the pains of Purgatory are called *Waves*, because they are passing, unlike the pains of Hell, which never pass. And they are called *Waves of the sea* because they are very bitter pains. Afflicted by these pains,

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those devoted to Mary are often visited and relieved by her. See, then, how much it matters, says Novarius, to be a servant of this good Lady; for she does not know how to forget them when they suffer in those flames. And although Mary succours all those Souls in purgatory, she nevertheless always obtains more indulgence and relief for those especially devoted to her: *Vide quam referat Virginem colere, cum cultorum suorum in Purgatorii flammis existentium non obliviscatur. Et licet omnibus opem & refrigerium ferat, id tamen praecipue erga suos praestat.* (*Nov. Virg. Umb. c. 15. exc. 86.*)

This divine mother revealed to St. Bridget, and said to her: I am the mother of all the souls who are in Purgatory; for all the pains they deserve for the faults committed in life are, at every hour while they are there, in some way mitigated by my prayers: *Ego mater omnium qui sunt in Purgatorio, quia omnes poenae, quae debentur illis pro peccatis suis, in qualibet hora propter preces meas quodammodo mitigantur.* (*Lib. 4. Rev. c. 132.*) The compassionate mother does not disdain at times even to enter that holy prison to visit and console those afflicted Daughters of hers. *Profundum abyssi penetravi*, she says — "I have penetrated the depth of the abyss" — as it stands in the Proverbs at *chapter 49* W1 prints *Proverbj al capo 49*; the place is Ecclus. 24. 8; and St. Bonaventure applies it, adding: *Abyssi, idest Purgatorii, adjuvans illas sanctas Animas* — "of the abyss, that is, of Purgatory, helping those holy Souls." I have penetrated the bottom of that abyss, that is, of purgatory, to relieve by my presence those holy Souls. *Maria bona*, said St. Vincent Ferrer, *existentibus in Purgatorio; quia per eam habent suffragium.* (*Serm. 2. da Nat.*) — "Mary is good to those in Purgatory, because through her they have suffrage." Oh, how gracious and kind the holy Virgin is to those who suffer in Purgatory, since through her they receive continual comfort and refreshment!

And what other consolation have they in those pains but Mary, and the succour of this mother of mercy? St. Bridget one day heard Jesus say thus to his mother: *Tu es mater mea, tu mater misericordiae, tu consolatio eorum, qui sunt in Purgatorio.* (*Lib. 1. Rev. 10.*) — "You are my mother; you are the mother of mercy; you are the

consolation of those who are in Purgatory." And the Blessed Virgin herself told St. Bridget that, as a poor sick man, lying afflicted and abandoned in his bed, feels himself revived by some word of comfort, so those Souls feel themselves consoled merely at hearing her name: *Qui sunt in Purgatorio gaudent, nomine mea au-*

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dito, quemadmodum aeger jacens in lecto, cum audit verbum solatii. (*Ap. B Dion. Cart. l. 3. de Laud. V.*) — "Those who are in Purgatory rejoice at hearing my name, as a sick man lying in bed when he hears a word of comfort." The name alone of Mary, then — a name of hope and of salvation — which those beloved Daughters of hers often invoke in that Prison, is a great comfort to them. But then, says Novarinus, the loving mother, on hearing herself invoked by them, adds her own prayers to God; and, those Souls being succoured by him, their great burnings are cooled as by a heavenly dew: *Virginis nomen illarum poenarum refrigerium est. Addit Virgo preces, quibus veluti supero quodam rore cruciatus illi magni mitigantur.* (*Nov. cit. c. 15. exc. 86.*)

But Mary does not only console and relieve those devoted to her in Purgatory: she also sets them free and delivers them by her intercession. From the very day of her glorious Assumption, on which that whole prison is said to have been left empty — *totum Purgatorium fuisse evacuatum*, as Gerson wrote — and Novarinus confirms it, saying that it is reported by weighty Authors that Mary, being about to go to Paradise, asked this grace of her Son: to be able to take with her all the Souls who were then in Purgatory: *Ferunt quippe bonae notae Auctores, Virginem in Caelum ituram a Filio hoc petiisse, ut omnes Animas, quae detinebantur in Purgatorio, secum ad gloriam ducere posset.* (*Cit. Exc. 86.*) From that time, says Gerson, the Blessed Virgin had possession of this Privilege of delivering her servants from those pains. And St. Bernardine of Siena asserts this too without qualification, saying that the Blessed Virgin has this faculty — by praying, and by applying her own merits as well — of delivering those Souls from Purgatory, and above all those devoted to her: *Ab his tormentis liberat Beata Virgo, maxime devotos suos.* (*Serm. 3. de Nom. Mar. a. 2. c. 3.*) And Novarinus says the same, holding that by Mary's merits not only are the pains of those Souls made gentler, but shorter as well, the time of their purgation being cut short by her intercession: *Crediderim omnibus, qui in flammis purgantur, Mariae meritis non solum leviores fuisse redditas illas poenas, sed & breviores; adeo ut cruciatuum tempus contractum Virginis ope illius sit.* (*Cit. Exc. 86.*) It is enough that she present herself to pray.

St. Peter Damian relates (*Lib. 3. Ep. 10. & in*

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ord. 50.) that a certain woman named Marozia, having died, appeared to a woman who was her child's godmother and told her that on the day of Mary's Assumption she had been delivered by her from Purgatory, together with so many other Souls as exceeded the number of the Roman people. St. Denis the Carthusian asserts the same of the Feasts of the Birth and of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, saying that on such days Mary descends into Purgatory accompanied by ranks of Angels and delivers many Souls from those pains: *Beatissima Virgo singulis annis in Festivitate Nativitatis Christi ad Purgatorii loca cum multitudine Angelorum descendit, & multas inde Animas eripit. Etiam in nocte Dominicae Resurrectionis solet descendere ad Purgatorium pro eductione Animarum.* (*S. Dion. Cart. Serm. 2. de Ass.*) And Novarinus is inclined to believe that this happens on any solemn Feast of the holy Virgin: *Facile autem crediderim in quocumque Virginis solemni Festo plures Animas ab illis poenis eximi. Nov. loc. cit.*

Well known too is the promise Mary made to Pope John XXII, to whom, appearing, she gave command that he should let all those know who wore the Sacred Scapular of Carmel that on the Saturday after their death they would be delivered from Purgatory. And this the same Pontiff, as Fr. Crasset reports (*tom. 2. Div. d. B. Virg. tr. 6. prat. 4.*), declared in the Bull he published; which was afterward confirmed by Alexander V, by Clement VII, Pius V, Gregory XIII, and Paul V, who in 1612 said in a Bull: *that the Christian People may piously believe that the Blessed Virgin will help, by her continual intercessions, by her merits, and by her special protection after death — and chiefly on the day of Saturday (consecrated by the Church to the Virgin herself) — the Souls of the Brethren of the Confraternity of St. Mary of Mount Carmel who shall have departed this life in grace, and shall have worn the Habit, observing Chastity according to their state, and shall have recited the Office of the Virgin; and if they have not been able to recite it, shall have observed the fasts of the Church, abstaining from eating meat on Wednesdays, except on Christmas Day.* And in the solemn Office of the Feast of St. Mary of Carmel it is read that it is piously believed that the holy Virgin with a mother's love consoles the Confreres of Carmel in Purgatory, and by her inter-

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cession soon leads them to the Heavenly Homeland: *Materno plane affectu, dum igne Purgatorii expiantur, solari, ac in Caelestem Patriam obtentu suo quantocius pie creditur afferre.* (*In Festo S. Mar. de M. Carm. 16. Jul.*)

Why should we too not hope for the same graces and favours, if we are devoted to this good mother? And if we serve her with a more special love, why may we not hope even for the grace of going straight to Paradise after death, without entering

Purgatory? — according to what the Blessed Virgin sent word to Blessed Godfrey by Brother Abundus (as is read *in Lib. de Gest. Vir. ill. Sol. Villar.*) in these words: *Tell Brother Godfrey to advance in virtue, and so he shall be my Son's and mine; and when his soul departs from his body, I will not allow it to go to Purgatory, but I will take it and offer it to my Son.* And if we desire to give suffrage to the holy Souls of purgatory, let us take care to pray for them to the holy Virgin in all our Prayers, applying for them especially the most holy Rosary, which brings them great relief, as is read in the following Example.

Example.

Fr. Eusebius Nieremberg reports (*Troph. Marian. l. 4. c. 29.*) that in the City of Aragon there was a Maiden named Alexandra who, being noble and most beautiful, was loved especially by two Young men. These, one day, having come to blows with weapons out of jealousy over Alexandra, killed each other, both of them. The Kinsmen of the slain, in their anger, went and killed the poor Maiden as the cause of so great a loss; and they cut off her head and threw it into a well. A few days later St. Dominic passed by that place, and, inspired by the Lord, he leaned over that well and said: Alexandra, come out. Behold, the head of the murdered girl comes out and sets itself upon the rim of the well, and begs St. Dominic to hear her confession. The Saint hears her confession, and then gives her Communion as well, in the sight of an immense crowd gathered there at the wonder. Then St. Dominic bade her say why she had received that grace. Alexandra answered that when her head was cut off she was in mortal sin, but that Mary most holy, for the devotion of the Rosary she had recited, had pre-

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served her in life. For two days the head remained alive on the rim of the well in the sight of all, and afterward the Soul went to Purgatory. But fifteen days later Alexandra's soul appeared to St. Dominic, beautiful and shining like a star, and told him that one of the chief suffrages the Souls in Purgatory have in those pains is the Rosary recited for them; and that these same Souls, as soon as they reach Paradise, pray for those who apply this powerful Prayer to them. And having said this, St. Dominic saw that fortunate soul ascend, all jubilant, to the kingdom of the Blessed.

Prayer.

O Queen of Heaven and of Earth, O mother of the Lord of the World, O Mary, the greatest, the most exalted, the most lovable of Creatures: it is true that many on

Earth do not love you and do not know you; but there are so many millions of Angels and of the Blessed in Heaven who love you and praise you continually. On this Earth too, how many happy Souls burn with your love and live enamored of your Goodness! Ah, that I too might love you, my most lovable Lady! Oh, that I might think always of serving you, of praising you, of honouring you, and of striving to see you loved by all! You have enamored a God — for with your beauty you have, so to speak, drawn him from the bosom of the Eternal Father, bringing him down to Earth to become man and your son. And shall I, a wretched worm, not be enamored of you? Yes, my most sweet mother, I too wish to love you, and to love you greatly, and I wish to do all I can to see you loved by others as well. Accept then, O Mary, the desire I have to love you, and help me to carry it out. I know that those who love you are looked upon with great favour by your God. After his own glory, he desires nothing more than your glory, in seeing you honoured and loved by all. From You, my Lady, I hope for all my good fortune. You are to obtain for me the pardon of all my sins; you, perseverance; you are to assist me at my death; you are to draw me out of Purgatory; you, finally, are to lead me into Paradise. So much do those who love you hope from you, and they are not deceived. So much do I too hope, who love you with all my affection, and above all things after God.

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§III. Mary leads her servants to Paradise.

Oh, what a fair sign of Predestination the servants of Mary have! Holy Church applies to this Divine mother the words of Ecclesiasticus at *chapter 24*, and makes her say, for the comfort of those devoted to her: *In omnibus requiem quaesivi, & in haereditate Domini morabor* — "In all things I sought rest, and I shall dwell in the inheritance of the Lord." Hugh of St. Cher comments: *Beatus in cujus domo B. Virgo requiem invenerit* — "Blessed is he in whose house the Blessed Virgin has found rest." Mary, for the love she bears to all, seeks to make devotion toward herself reign in all. Many either do not receive it or do not keep it: blessed is he who receives it and keeps it. *Et in haereditate Domini morabor*, *idest* (the learned Paciuchelli adds) *in illis qui sunt Haereditas Domini* — "that is, in those who are the Inheritance of the Lord." Devotion toward the Blessed Virgin dwells in all those who are the Lord's inheritance, that is, who shall be in Heaven to praise him eternally. Mary goes on speaking in the cited place of Ecclesiasticus: *Qui creavit me, requievit in tabernaculo meo: Et dixit mihi: In Jacob inhabita, & in Israel haereditare: & in electis meis mitte radices* — "He who created me rested in my

tabernacle, and he said to me: Dwell in Jacob, and take your inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect." My Creator deigned to come and rest in my womb, and willed that I should dwell in the hearts of all the elect (of whom Jacob was a figure, and who are the Virgin's inheritance); and he has disposed that in all the Predestined there should be rooted devotion and confidence toward me.

Oh, how many of the Blessed would not now be in Heaven, if Mary by her powerful intercession had not led them there! *Ego feci in Caelis, ut oriretur lumen indeficiens* — "I made an unfailing light to rise in the Heavens." So Hugh of St. Cher makes her speak with the aforesaid words of the same *chapter 24* of Ecclesiasticus: I have made as many eternal Lights shine in Heaven as there are those devoted to me. Whence the same author adds upon that text: *Multi Sancti sunt in Caelis intercessione ejus, qui nunquam ibi fuissent nisi per eam* — "Many Saints are in Heaven by her intercession who would never have been there but for her." St. Bonaventure says that to all who trust in Mary's protection the gate of Heaven will be opened to receive them: *Qui speraverit in illa, porta Caeli reserabitur ei.* Whence St. Ephrem called devotion toward the Divine mother the opening of Paradise: *Reseramentum caelestis Jerusalem.* (*Orat. de Laud. Virg.*) And the devout Blosius, speaking with the Virgin, says to her: My Lady, to you are entrusted the keys and the treasures of the Blessed King-

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dom: *Tibi Regni Caelestis claves thesaurique commissi sunt.* (*Cimel. Endoh. 1.*) And therefore we must continually pray to her with the words of St. Ambrose: *Aperi nobis, o Virgo, Caelum, cujus claves habes* — "Open Heaven to us, O Virgin, whose keys you hold." Open to us, O Mary, the gates of Paradise, since you keep the keys of it — nay, since you yourself are the gate, as holy Church names you: *Janua Caeli*, "Gate of Heaven."

For this reason too the great mother is called by holy Church the Star of the sea: *Ave, maris Stella.* For as sailors (says St. Thomas the Angelic Doctor, *Opus. 8.*) are guided to harbour by means of the star, so Christians are guided to Paradise by means of Mary: *Dicitur Stella maris, quia sicut navigantes ad portum diriguntur per stellam maris: ita Christiani diriguntur ad gloriam per Mariam.*

For the same reason she is likewise called by St. Peter Damian the ladder of Heaven; since, says the Saint, through Mary God came down from Heaven to Earth, that through her Men might deserve to climb from Earth to Heaven: *Scala caelestis, quia per ipsam Deus descendit ad Terram, ut per ipsam homines mererentur ascendere ad caelum.* And to this end, my Lady, St. Anastasius says to her (*Serm. 1. de Annunc.*), you were filled with grace, that you might be made the way of our

salvation and the ascent to the heavenly Homeland: *Ave, gratia plena, quod facta sis salutis via, ascensusque ad superos.* Whence St. Bernard calls the Virgin *Vehiculum ad Caelum*, "the Chariot to Heaven." And St. John the Geometer greets her: *Salve, clarissime currus* — "Hail, most glorious chariot" — the noblest Coach by which those devoted to her are carried to Heaven. Hence St. Bonaventure says to her: Blessed are they who know you, O mother of God! For to know you is the road of immortal life, and to publish your virtues is the way of eternal salvation: *Scire & cognoscere te, o Virgo Deipara, est via immortalitatis; & narrare virtutes tuas est via salutis.* (*In Ps. 85.*)

It is related in the Franciscan Chronicles (*P. 1. tom. 1. c. 35.*) of Brother Leo that he once saw a red ladder, upon which stood Jesus Christ, and another, white, upon which stood his Holy mother. He saw that some went to climb the red ladder; they climbed a few rungs, and then fell from it; they went back to climb, and fell again. Whereupon they were exhorted to go by the white ladder; and by that

he saw them climb happily, while the Blessed Virgin then held out her hand to them, and so they came safely to Paradise. St. Denis the Carthusian asks: Who is ever saved? Who comes to reign in Heaven? They are saved and they reign, certainly (he himself answers), for whom this Queen of Mercy engages her Prayers: *Quis salvatur? quis regnat in Caelo? illi sunt, pro quibus Regina Misericordiae interpellat.* And Mary herself affirms it: *Per me reges regnant.* (*Prov. 8. 15.*) — "Through me kings reign." Through my intercession Souls reign first in mortal life on this Earth, mastering their passions; and then they come to reign eternally in Heaven, where, says St. Augustine, all are Kings: *Quot Cives, tot Reges* — "As many citizens, so many kings." Mary, in short, says Richard of Saint-Laurence, is the Mistress of Paradise, since there she commands as she wills and brings in whom she wills; whence, applying to her the words of Ecclesiasticus, *In Jerusalem potestas mea* (*Cap. 24. 15.*), "In Jerusalem is my power," he adds: *Imperando scilicet quod volo, & quos volo introducendo.* (*Ricc. lib. 4. de Laud. V.*) — "Commanding, that is, what I will, and bringing in whom I will." And since she is the Mother of the Lord of Paradise, with reason, says Rupert, she is also the Lady of Paradise: *Totum jure possidet Filii Regnum* (*l. 3. in Cant. 4.*) — "By right she possesses the whole Kingdom of her Son."

This divine Mother by her powerful Prayers and helps has indeed obtained Paradise for us, if we put no impediment in the way: *Caeleste nobis Regnum tuo interventu, auxiliis, & precibus impetravit.* (*S. Antoninus p. 4. tit. 15. c. 2. §. 1.*) Whence he who serves Mary, and for whom Mary intercedes, is as sure of Paradise as

if he were already in Paradise: *Qui Virgini famulatur, ita securus est de Paradiso, ac si esset in Paradiso* (*Guerricus Abbas*). To serve Mary and to be of her Court, adds St. John Damascene, is the greatest honour we can have; for to serve the Queen of Heaven is already to reign in Heaven, and to live under her commands is more than to reign: *Summus honor servire Mariae, & de ejus esse Familia. Etenim ei servire regnare est, & ejus agi fraenis plusquam regium.* (*Damasc. de Exc Virg. c. 9.*) On the other hand he says that those who do not serve Mary will not be saved, since those who are deprived of this great Mother's help are abandoned by the succour of the Son and of the whole Heavenly Court: *Gens quae non servierit illi, peribit. Gentes destitutae tantae Matris auxilio, de-*

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stituuntur auxilio Filii, & totius Curiae Caelestis. (*Loc. cit.*)

Ever praised be the infinite Goodness of our God, who has disposed to appoint Mary in Heaven as our Advocate, that she, as Mother of the Judge and Mother of Mercy, might effectively handle by her intercession the great business of our eternal Salvation. The thought is St. Bernard's: *Advocatam praemisit peregrinatio nostra, quae tanquam Judicis Mater, & Mater Misericordiae, suppliciter & efficaciter Salutis nostrae negotia pertractabit.* (*Serm. 1. de Assumpt.*) — "Our pilgrimage has sent ahead an Advocate, who as Mother of the Judge and Mother of Mercy will handle the business of our Salvation both humbly and effectively." And James the Monk, a Doctor among the Greek Fathers, says that God has appointed Mary as a Bridge of Salvation, by which, making us pass over the waves of this World, we may reach the blessed Harbour of Paradise: *Eam tu pontem fecisti, qua a Mundi fluctibus trajiciens, ad tranquillum portum tuum deveniamus.* (*Orat. in Nat. Deip.*) Whence St. Bonaventure cries out: Hear, O Peoples, you who desire Paradise: serve and honour Mary, and you will surely find eternal life: *Audite Gentes, qui cupitis Regnum Dei, Virginem Mariam honorate, & invenietis vitam aeternam.* (*In Psalt. Vir.*)

Nor need even those who have deserved Hell lose any confidence of obtaining the Blessed Kingdom, if they set themselves faithfully to serve this Queen. How many sinners, says St. Germanus, have sought to find God through you, O Mary, and have been saved! *Peccatores per te Deum exquisierunt, & salvi facti sunt.* (*Serm. de Dormit. Deip.*) Richard of Saint-Laurence observes that St. John says Mary is crowned with stars: *Et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim.* (*Apoc. 12. 1.*) — "And on her head a crown of twelve stars." On the other hand, in the Sacred Canticles the Virgin is called crowned with wild beasts, with lions, with leopards: *Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni coronaberis de cubilibus leonum, de*

montibus pardorum. (*Cant. 4. 8.*) — "Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon: you shall be crowned from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards." How is this to be understood? Richard answered that these wild beasts are the sinners who, by Mary's favour and intercession, become Stars of Paradise — stars that better befit the Head of this Queen of Mercy, to crown her, than all the material stars of Heaven: *Et quid est hoc? nisi quia ferae per gratiam & orationes Mariae sunt stellae, quae conveniunt tantae Reginae.* (*Ricc. de Laud. Virg. cap. 3.*) One day, praying to the Most Holy Virgin during the Novena

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of her Assumption, the Servant of the Lord, the Virgin Sister Serafina of Capri (as is read in her Life), asked her for the conversion of a thousand sinners. But then, fearing that the request was too bold, the Virgin appeared to her and corrected her of this vain fear, saying to her: Why do you fear? Am I perhaps not powerful enough to obtain from my Son the Salvation of a thousand sinners? Here they are; I have already obtained them for you. Then she led her in spirit into Paradise, and there showed her innumerable Souls of sinners who had deserved Hell, and afterward by her Intercession had been saved, and already enjoyed eternal Beatitude.

It is true that in this life no one can be certain of his eternal Salvation: *Nescit homo, utrum odio vel amore dignus sit, sed omnia in futurum servantur incerta.* (*Eccl. 9. 1.*) — "Man does not know whether he is worthy of hatred or of love, but all things are kept uncertain for the future." But when David asked God: Lord, who shall be saved? — *Domine, quis habitabit in Tabernaculo tuo? Ps. 14.*, "Lord, who shall dwell in your Tabernacle?" — St. Bonaventure answers upon these words: *Amplectamur Mariae vestigia, peccatores, & ejus beatis pedibus pervolvamur. Teneamus eam fortiter, nec dimittamus, donec ab ea mereamur benedici.* And he means: Sinners, let us follow Mary's footsteps, and cast ourselves at her blessed feet; and let us not leave her until she blesses us, since her Blessing will make us sure of Paradise. It is enough, my Lady (says St. Anselm), that you will our salvation, and then we cannot but be saved: *Tantummodo velis salutem nostram, & vere nequaquam salvi esse non poterimus.* (*De Exc. Virg. c. 11.*) St. Antoninus adds that the Souls protected by Mary are necessarily saved: *Necessarium est, quod hi, ad quos (Maria) convertit oculos suos, justificentur, & glorificentur.* (*P. 4. tit. 15.*)

With reason, says St. Ildephonsus, the Most Holy Virgin foretold that all Generations would call her Blessed: *Beatam me dicent omnes generationes.* (*Luc. 1.*) Because all the elect obtain eternal Beatitude through Mary: *Beata jure dicitur, quia omnes ex ea beatificantur.* (*S. Idelph. Serm. 3. de Ass.*) You, O great Mother, are the beginning, the middle, and the end of our Happiness, says St. Methodius: *Tu*

festivitatis nostrae principium, medium, & finis. (*Serm. in Hypant.*) The *beginning*, because Mary obtains for us the pardon of our sins; the *middle*, because she obtains for us perseverance in Divine Gra-

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ce; the *end*, because she finally obtains Paradise for us. Through you, St. Bernard goes on to say, Heaven has been opened; through you Hell has been emptied; through you Paradise has been restored; through you, in short, eternal life has been given to so many wretched ones who deserved eternal death: *Per te Caelum apertum est, Infernus evacuatus; instaurata caelestis Jerusalem, miseris damnationem expectantibus vita data est.* (*Sermone 4. de Ass. Virg.*)

But above all we ought to be encouraged to hope surely for Paradise by the beautiful promise Mary herself makes to those who honour her, and especially to whoever by words and by example strives to make her known and honoured by others as well: *Qui operabunt in me, non peccabunt. Qui elucidant me, vitam aeternam habebunt.* (*Eccl. 24. 31.*) — "They who work in me shall not sin; they who make me known shall have eternal life." Oh happy, then, says St. Bonaventure, are they who obtain Mary's favour! These will be recognized by the Blessed as already their companions; and whoever bears the badge of a Servant of Mary will already be enrolled in the Book of life: *Qui acquirunt gratiam Mariae, agnoscentur a Civibus Paradisi, & qui habuerit characterem ejus, adnotabitur in Libro vitae.* (*S Bon. in Spec.*) What use is it, then, to trouble ourselves with the opinions of the Schools — whether Predestination to Glory comes before or after the foreseeing of merits? whether we are written or not in the Book of Life? If we are true Servants of Mary and obtain her Protection, we shall surely be written there; for, as St. John Damascene says, God does not grant Devotion toward his Holy Mother except to those whom he wills to save. As the Lord seems to have declared expressly through St. John: *Qui vicerit ... scribam super eum nomen Dei mei, & nomen Civitati Dei mei.* (*Apoc. 3. 12.*) — "He who overcomes... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God." He who is to overcome and be saved will bear written on his Heart the Name of the City of God; and who is this City of God, if not Mary, as St. Gregory explains upon that passage of David: *Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, Civitas Dei.* (*Ps. 46.*)

Well then may it be said here with St. Paul: *Habens signaculum hoc, cognovit Dominus qui sunt ejus.* (*2. Tim. 2. 19.*) — "Having this seal: the Lord knows those who are his." He who bears this sign of being devoted to Mary is recognized by God as his own. Whence St. Bernard wrote that Devotion to the Mother of God *certissimum est signum salutis aeternae consequendae* — "is a most certain sign of

obtaining eternal salvation." And Blessed Alan, speaking of the *Ave Maria*, said that

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whoever often reveres the Virgin with this Angelic Salutation has a very great sign of Predestination: *Habentes devotionem hanc, signum est praedestinationis permagnum ad Gloriam.* (*P. 2. Ros. c. 11.*) And he said the same of the persevering recitation of the most holy Rosary every day: *Signum sit tibi probabilissimum aeternae salutis, si perseveranter in die Beatam Virginem in Psalterio salutaveris.* (*P. 44. de Psalt. c. 24.*) Fr. Nieremberg says further (in his little Book on Affection to Mary, at *chapter 10*) that the Servants of the Mother of God are not only more privileged and favoured on this Earth, but in Heaven too will be more distinctly honoured. And he adds that they will have in Heaven a particular and richer Badge and Livery, by which they will be recognized as Members of the Household of the Queen of Heaven and as People of her Court; according to that saying of the Proverbs: *Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus. 31. 21.* — "All her household are clothed with double garments."

St. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi saw in the midst of the sea a little Ship, in which all those devoted to Mary had taken shelter; and she, performing the office of Helmsman, was safely bringing them to harbour. By this the Saint understood that those who live under Mary's protection, amid all the dangers of this life, are free from the shipwreck of sin and of damnation, since by her they are safely guided to the harbour of Paradise. Let us strive, then, to enter into this blessed little Ship of Mary's mantle, and there let us be sure of the Blessed Kingdom; for the Church sings: *Sicut laetantium omnium habitatio est in te, Sancta Dei Genitrix* — "The dwelling of all who rejoice is in you, holy Mother of God." Holy Mother of God, all those who shall share in eternal Joy dwell in you, living under your protection.

Example.

Caesarius relates (*Lib. 7. Dial. c. 3.*) that there was a certain Cistercian Monk much devoted to our Lady, who desired a visit from his dear Lady and continually prayed to her for it. One night, having gone out into the garden, while he stood gazing at the Heavens and sending up warm sighs to his Queen out of longing to see her, behold, he sees coming down from Heaven a Virgin, beautiful and shining, who asks him: Thomas, would you like to hear my singing? Certainly, he answered. Then that Virgin sang with such sweetness that to the devout Religious it

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seemed he was in Paradise. The song ended, she vanished and left him with a great desire to know who she had been. But behold, before him another virgin, also most beautiful, who likewise let him hear her singing. Of this second one he could not refrain from asking who she was; and the Virgin answered: She whom you saw just now was Catherine; I am Agnes, both of us Martyrs of Jesus Christ, sent by our Lady to console you. Give thanks to Mary, and prepare yourself to receive a greater grace. And having said this she vanished; but the Religious was left with greater hope of seeing his Queen at last. Nor was he deceived; for shortly afterward he sees a great light, feels his heart filled with a new gladness — and behold, in the midst of that light the Mother of God shows herself to him, surrounded by Angels, and of a beauty immeasurably greater than the other two Saints who had appeared to him; and she says to him: My dear Servant and Son, I have been pleased with the service you have rendered me, and have heard your prayers. You have desired to see me: here I am. And I will let you hear my singing too. And the Most Holy Virgin began to sing; and such was the sweetness that the devout Religious lost his senses and fell face down upon the ground. The Matins bell rang, the Monks assembled; and not seeing Thomas, they went to look for him in his Cell and in other places. At last, going to the garden, they found him there as though dead. The Superior laid a command upon him to say what had happened to him; and then he, coming to himself by virtue of Obedience, recounted all the favours of the Divine Mother.

Prayer.

O Queen of Paradise, Mother of Holy Love: since you are of all Creatures the most lovable, the most loved by God, and his first lover, ah, be content that you should be loved even by a sinner, the most ungrateful and wretched who lives upon the Earth — who, seeing himself freed from Hell through you and so favoured by you without any merit of his own, has fallen in love with your Goodness and has placed in you all his hopes. I love you, my Lady, and I would wish to love you more than the Saints most enamored of you have loved you. I would wish, if I could, to make known to all Men who do not know you how worthy you are to be loved, so that

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all might love you and honour you. I would even wish to die for your Love, in defending your Virginity, your Dignity as Mother of God, your Immaculate Conception, if ever I had to die in defending these great prerogatives of yours. Ah, my most beloved Mother, accept this affection of mine, and do not permit that a Servant of yours who loves you should ever be an enemy of your God, whom you

love so much. Alas, wretched me! Such I once was, when I offended my Lord. But then, O Mary, I did not love you, and cared little to be loved by you. Now, however, I desire nothing more, after the Grace of God, than to love you and to be loved by you. Of this I do not lose confidence because of my past faults, since I know that you, most kindly and most gracious Lady, do not disdain to love even the most wretched sinners who love you — indeed, you let no one outdo you in love. Ah, most lovable Queen, I wish to come and love you in Paradise. There, arrived at your feet, I shall better know how lovable you are and how much you have done to save me; and therefore there I shall love you with a greater love, and shall love you eternally, without fear of ever ceasing to love you. O Mary, I hope with certainty to be saved through you. Pray to Jesus for me. Nothing else is needed: you are to save me; you are my Hope. I will go on, then, always singing:

O Mary, my hope,
you are to save me.

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CHAPTER IX.

O Clemens, o Pia — O clement, O loving.

§ Only. How great is the Clemency and Compassion of Mary.

St. Bernard, speaking of the great Compassion that Mary has toward us wretched creatures, says that she is precisely the Land promised by God, from which milk and honey were to flow: *Terra repromissionis Maria lacte & melle manans.* (*Serm. sup. Salve Reg.*) — "Mary, the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey." Whence St. Leo says that the Virgin is furnished with such bowels of Mercy that she deserves not only to be called merciful, but must be called Mercy itself: *Maria adeo praedita est Misericordiae vis-*

ceribus, ut non tamen misericors, sed ipsa Misericordia dici promereatur. (*S. Leo Serm. 1. de Nat. Dom.*) And St. Bonaventure, considering that Mary was made Mother of God for the sake of the wretched, and that to her is committed the Office of dispensing mercies — and considering moreover the great care she has of all the wretched, which makes her so rich in Compassion that she seems to desire nothing else than to relieve the needy — used to say that when he looked upon Mary it seemed to him that he no longer saw the Divine Justice, but only the Divine Mercy, of which Mary is full. Here are his tender words: *Certe, Domina, cum te aspicio, nihil nisi Misericordiam cerno; nam pro miseris Mater Dei facta es, & tibi officium miserendi commissum. Undique solicita es de miseris; Misericordia vallaris; solum misereri videris appetere.* (*S. Bon. Stim. Am.*) — "Truly, Lady, when I look upon you I discern nothing but Mercy; for you were made Mother of God for the wretched, and to you the office of showing mercy was committed. On every side you are solicitous for the wretched; you are walled about with Mercy; you seem to desire only to show mercy."

So great, in short, is Mary's Compassion that, as Guerric the Abbot says, her loving Bowels cannot cease for a moment from bringing forth toward us fruits of compassion: *Cujus Viscera nunquam desistunt fructum parturire pietatis.* (*Serm. 1. de Assum.*) And what else (cries St. Bernard) can flow from a Fountain of Compassion but Compassion? *Quid de Fonte Pietatis, nisi Pietas?* (*Serm. 1. in Dom. post Ep.*) Therefore Mary was called an Olive tree: *Quasi Oliva speciosa in campis* (*Eccl. c. 24.*), "like a fair olive tree in the fields." Because, as from the Olive nothing

comes but oil (the symbol of Mercy), so from Mary's Hands nothing comes but graces and Mercies. Whence Mary may justly be named, says the Venerable Luis de la Puente (*lib. 1. in Cant.*), the Mother of the Oil, since she is the Mother of Mercy: *Merito dici potest Mater Olei, nam est Mater Misericordiae.* Whence, when we have recourse to this Mother to ask her for the Oil of her Compassion, we cannot fear that she will deny it to us, as the Wise Virgins denied it to the Foolish, answering: *Ne forte non sufficiat nobis & vobis.* (*Matth 25.*) — "Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you." No; for she is indeed rich in this Oil of Mercy, as St. Bonaventure notes: *Maria plena oleo Pietatis.* (*In Spec. cap. 7.*) — "Mary is full of the oil of Compassion." And therefore she is called by holy Church a Virgin not only prudent but most prudent, so that we may understand (says Hugh of St. Victor) that Mary is so full of Grace and of Compassion that she suffices to supply everyone without any lack to herself: *Gratia plena, & in

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tantum plena, ut ex tua redundante oleo totum Mundus hauriat. Si enim prudentes Virgines oleum acceperunt in vasis cum lampadibus, tu prudentissima Virgo gestasti vas redundans & indeficiens, ex quo, effuso oleo Misericordiae, omnium lampades illuminares.* — "Full of grace, and so full that from your overflowing oil the whole World may draw. For if the prudent Virgins took oil in vessels with their lamps, you, most prudent Virgin, carried an overflowing and unfailing vessel, from which, by pouring out the oil of Mercy, you might light the lamps of all."

But why, I ask, is it said that this beautiful Olive tree stands in the midst of the open country? *Quasi oliva speciosa in campis.* And not rather that it stands in the midst of a garden surrounded by walls or hedges? Hugh of St. Cher answers upon that passage: *Ut omnes eam respiciant, omnes ad eam confugiant* — "That all may look upon her, that all may flee to her." So that all (he says) may easily behold her, and so may easily have recourse to her to obtain remedy for their needs. St. Antoninus confirms this beautiful thought, saying that to an olive tree standing in an open field all can come and gather its fruit; and so to Mary all can have recourse, both the just and sinners, to obtain her mercy: *Ad olivam in campis omnes possunt accedere, & accipere fructum ejus. Ad Mariam & justi & peccatores possunt accedere, ut inde misericordiam accipiant.* (*P. 3. ti. 31. c. 4.*) And then the Saint adds here: *O quot sententias flagellorum propter peccata haec Sanctissima Virgo misericorditer revocavit!* — "Oh, how many sentences of scourges for sins has this most Holy Virgin mercifully revoked!" And oh, how many sentences of chastisement this most holy Virgin has known how to revoke by her compassionate prayers in favour of the sinners who have had recourse to her! And what safer refuge, says the devout

Thomas à Kempis, can we find than the compassionate bosom of Mary? There the poor man finds his shelter, there the sick man finds his medicine, the afflicted his relief, the doubtful his counsel, the abandoned his succour: *Non est tutior locus ad latendum, quam sinus Mariae. Ibi pauper habet domicilium, ibi infirmus invenit remedium, tristis solatium; ibi turbatus consilium, ibi destitutus acquirit juvamentum.*

Poor we, if we had not this mother of mercy, attentive and solicitous to succour us in our miseries! *Ubi non est mulier, ingemiscit egens. Eccl. 33.* — "Where there is no woman, the needy man groans." Where the Woman is not, says the Holy Spirit, the Sick man groans and suffers. This Woman, St. John Damascene attests, is precisely Mary, in whose absence every sick man suffers: *Ingemiscit infirmus, ubi non fuerit haec Sanctissima Mater.* Yes; for since God wills that all graces be dispensed

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through Mary's prayers, where these are wanting there would be no hope of mercy, as the Lord signified to St. Bridget, saying to her: *Nisi preces Mariae intervenirent, non esset spes misericordiae* (*Rev. l. 6. c. 26.*) — "Unless Mary's prayers intervened, there would be no hope of mercy."

But do we perhaps fear that Mary does not see, or does not have compassion on, our miseries? No; she sees them better than we do, and she has compassion on them indeed. And who among the Saints, says St. Antoninus, is found who has such compassion on us in our ills as Mary? *Non reperitur aliquis Sanctorum ita compati in infirmitatibus, sicut mulier haec Beatissima Virgo Maria.* (*P. 4. t. 15. c. 2.*) Whence, wherever she looks upon miseries, she cannot fail to hasten and to relieve them with her great compassion: *Ubicumque fuerit miseria, tua currit & succurrit misericordia* — "Wherever there is misery, your mercy runs and succours." So Richard of St. Victor says to her (*in Cant. 4. 5.*). And Mendoza confirms it: *Itaque o B. Virgo, ubi miserias invenis, ibi tuas misericordias effundis.* (*Cap. 4. 1. Reg.*) — "And so, O Blessed Virgin, where you find miseries, there you pour out your mercies." So that, O blessed Virgin, you dispense your mercies with a generous hand wherever you perceive our necessities. And from this office of compassion our good mother will never cease, as she herself declares: *Et usque ad futurum saeculum non desinam, & in habitatione sancta coram ipso ministravi* (*Eccl. 24.*) — "And unto the world to come I shall not cease, and in the holy dwelling I have ministered before him." As Hugh of St. Cher comments: *Usque ad futurum saeculum, idest Beatorum, non desinam miseriis subvenire, & pro peccatoribus orare* — "Unto the world to come, that is, of the Blessed, I shall not cease to relieve miseries and to pray for

sinners." I shall not cease, says Mary, until the end of the World, to succour the miseries of men and to pray for sinners, that they may be saved and delivered from eternal misery.

Suetonius relates of the Emperor Titus that he was so eager to grant favours to those who asked them of him that on days when he had no occasion of granting some favour he would say sorrowfully: *Diem perdidi* — "I have lost a day." This day has been lost for me, since I have passed it without doing good to anyone. Titus in all likelihood said this more out of vanity, or ambition for esteem, than from affection of charity. But our Empress Mary, if ever it happened that on some day it did not fall to her to grant any grace, would say it only because she is full of charity and of the desire to do us good; so much so that Bernardine de Bustis says she has more eagerness to grant us graces than we have desire to receive them from her: *Plus vult illa bonum tibi facere, & largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.* (*Mar.*

p. 1. Ser. 5. de Nov. Mar.) And therefore the said Author says that when we have recourse to her, we shall always find her with hands full of mercy and of generosity: *Invenies eam in manibus plenam misericordia & liberalitate. Loc. cit.*

Rebecca was already a figure of Mary, who, being asked for a little water to drink by Abraham's servant, answered that she would give water enough not only for him but for his camels as well: *Quin & camelis tuis hauriam aquam, donec cuncti bibant. Gen. 23.* — "Indeed I will draw water for your camels also, until all have drunk." Upon this the devout St. Bernard, turning to the Blessed Virgin, says to her: *Domina, nec puero Abrahae tantum, sed & camelis tribue de supereffluenti hydria tua* (*Serm. sup. Miss.*) — "Lady, give from your overflowing pitcher not only to Abraham's servant, but to the camels as well." Meaning: My Lady, you are already compassionate, and more generous than Rebecca; and therefore you are not content to dispense the graces of your immense mercy only to Abraham's servants, who figure God's faithful servants, but you dispense them also to the Camels, who are figures of sinners. And as Rebecca gave more than was asked of her, so Mary gives more than is asked of her. Mary's generosity, says Richard of Saint-Laurence, resembles the generosity of her son, who always gives more than is sought of him, and who is therefore called by St. Paul *Dives in omnes qui invocant illum. Rom. 10. 12.* — "Rich unto all who call upon him" — abounding in graces toward all who have recourse to him with prayers. Here are Richard's words: *Largitas Mariae assimilat largitatem filii sui; dat amplius quam petatur.* (*De Laud. Virg.*) Whence a devout Author says to the Virgin: My Lady, pray for me, for you will ask graces for me with greater devotion than I shall know how to do; and you will obtain for me

from God graces far greater than I shall be able to seek: *Majori devotione orabis pro me, quam ego auderem petere; & majora mihi impetrabis, quam petere praesumam.*

When the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus Christ and his Doctrine, St. James and St. John said to their Master: Lord, will you have us command fire to come down and devour them? But the Saviour answered: *Nescitis, cujus spiritus estis. Luc. 9.* — "You do not know of what spirit you are." As though he had said: I am of a spirit so compassionate and gentle, since I have come from Heaven to save and not to punish sinners; and you would see them

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lost? What fire? What punishment? Be silent, speak to me no more of punishments, for that is not my spirit. But of Mary, whose spirit is wholly like her Son's, we cannot doubt that she is wholly inclined to show mercy; for she (as she said to St. Bridget) is called the mother of mercy, and the very mercy of God has made her so compassionate and gentle with all: *Ego vocor mater misericordiae, & vere misericordia illius misericordem me fecit.* (*Rev. l. 1. c. 6.*) — "I am called mother of mercy, and truly his mercy has made me merciful." And therefore Mary was seen by St. John clothed with the Sun: *Et signum magnum apparuit in caelo, mulier amicta sole. Apoc. 12. 1.* Upon which words St. Bernard, turning to the Virgin, says to her: *Vestis solem, & vestiris ab eo* — "You clothe the sun, and are clothed by him." My Lady, you have clothed the Sun (the Divine Word) with human Flesh; but he has clothed you with his power and with his mercy.

So compassionate, then, and so kindly is this Queen, says the same St. Bernard, that when any sinner goes to commend himself to her compassion, she does not set herself to examine his merits, whether he is worthy or not to be heard, but she hears and succours all: *Non discutit merita, sed omnibus exorabilem se praebet.* (*Serm. in Sign. Magn.*) — "She does not sift merits, but shows herself entreatable by all." Therefore St. Hildebert observes that Mary is called beautiful as the Moon: *Pulchra ut luna. Cant. 6.* Because, as the Moon lights and benefits the lower bodies of the Earth, so Mary enlightens and succours the most unworthy sinners. *Pulchra ut luna, quia pulchrum est* (says St. Hildebert) *benefacere indignis. Epist. 26.* — "Fair as the moon, because it is a fair thing to do good to the unworthy." And although the Moon takes all her light from the Sun, she works more quickly than the Sun: *Quod sol facit in anno; luna facit in mense* — "What the sun does in a year, the moon does in a month" — as an Author reasons (*Jo. di Minian. l. 1. de Cael. c. 3.*). And therefore St. Anselm says: *Velocior nonnumquam est nostra salus, invocato nomine Mariae, quam invocato nomine Jesu. De Excell. Virg. c 6.* Whence Hugh of St. Victor exhorts us that if our sins make us afraid to approach God, because he is an

infinite Majesty offended by us, we must not hold back from having recourse to Mary, since in her we shall find nothing to frighten us. It is true that she is Holy, is immaculate, is Queen of the World, is mother of God; but she is of our flesh, a daughter of Adam like ourselves: *Si perti-*

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mescis ad Deum accedere, respice ad Mariam; non illic invenis quod timeas, genus tuum vides. — "If you dread to approach God, look to Mary; there you find nothing to fear — you see your own kind."

In short, says St. Bernard, all that belongs to Mary is full of Grace and of compassion; for she, as mother of compassion, has made herself all things to all, and by her great charity has made herself a debtor to the just and to sinners, and to all she opens the bosom of her mercy, that all may enjoy it: *Quae ad eam pertinent, plena omnia pietatis & gratiae. Denique omnia omnibus facta est, sapientibus & insipientibus copiosissima charitate debitricem se fecit: Omnibus misericordiae suae sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant omnes.* (*S. Bern. sup. Sign. Magn.*) In such a way that, as the Devil goes about always seeking to give death to whomever he can — according to St. Peter: *Circuit quaerens quem devoret. Ep. 1. c. 5.*, "He goes about seeking whom he may devour" — so, on the contrary, says Bernardine de Bustis, Mary goes about always seeking to give life and to save whomever she can: *Ipsa semper circuit, quaerens quem salvet.* (*Marial. p. 3. serm. 3.*)

We must understand, moreover, that Mary's protection is greater and more powerful than we can comprehend: *Patrocinium tuum majus est, quam apprehendi possit* — "Your patronage is greater than can be grasped" — says St. Germanus (*de Zon. Virg.*). And how does it come about that that Lord who under the ancient law was so rigorous in punishing now shows so many mercies to men guilty of greater sins? So asks the Author of the *Pomerium* (*Ap. P. Pepe Grandezza, &c.*): *Quare parcit nunc Mundo ipse Deus, qui olim multo bis minora peccata acrius punivit?* — "Why does God himself now spare the World, who once punished far lesser sins more sharply?" He answers: *Totum hoc facit propter B. Virginem, & ejus merita* — "He does all this for the Blessed Virgin and her merits." He does it all for love and for the merits of Mary. Oh, how long ago the World would have been overwhelmed, says St. Fulgentius, if Mary had not upheld it by her intercession! *Caelum & terra jamdudum ruissent, si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset.* — "Heaven and earth would long since have fallen, had Mary not upheld them by her prayers." But we can go safely to God and hope for every good from him, St. Arnold of Chartres goes on to say, now that the son is our Mediator before the Divine Father, and the Mother before the son. How shall the Father not hear the son, when he shows him the

wounds suffered for sinners? And how shall the son not hear the mother, when she shows him the Breasts with which she nourished him? *Securum accessum jam habet homo ad Deum, ubi mediatorem causae suae filium habet ante Patrem, & ante Filium Matrem, Christus ostendit Patri latus & vulnera, Maria Christo pectus, & ubera* (*S. Arn.*

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de Laud. Virg.) St. Peter Chrysologus says with beautiful force that this one Maiden, having lodged God in her womb, exacts as it were, for the rent of the lodging, peace for the World, salvation for the lost, life for the dead: *Una puella sic Deum in sui pectoris capit hospitio, ut pacem terris, salutem perditis, vitam mortuis, pro ipsa domo exigat pensionem.* (*Serm. 140.*)

Oh, how many who would deserve, says the Abbot of Celles, to be condemned by the Divine Justice are saved by the compassion of Mary! For she is the Treasure of God and the Treasurer of all graces; whence it is that our salvation lies in her hands: *Saepe quos justitia filii potest damnare, mater misericordiae liberat. Thesaurus Domini est, & thesauraria gratiarum. Salus nostra in manu illius est.* (*Prolog. in Contempl. Virg.*) Let us have recourse, then, always to this mother of compassion, and let us hope surely to be saved through her intercession; since she (Bernardine de Bustis encourages us) is our salvation, our life, our hope, our counsel, our refuge, our help: *Haec est nostra Salus, Vita, Spes, Consilium, Refugium, Auxilium nostrum.* (*P. 1. Ser. 6. de Com. Mar*) Mary indeed, says St. Antoninus, is that Throne of Grace to which the Apostle exhorts us to have recourse with confidence, that we may obtain the divine mercy with all the helps suited to our salvation: *Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae, ut misericordiam consequamur, ut gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno. Hebr. 4. 16.* — "Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." *Ad thronum gratiae, scilicet ad Mariam* — "to the throne of grace, that is, to Mary" — St. Antoninus comments (*p. 4. t. 15. c. 14. §. 7.*). Whence Mary was called by St. Catherine of Siena *Administratrix misericordiae*, the dispenser of the Divine mercy.

Let us conclude, then, with the beautiful and sweet exclamation of St. Bernard upon the words *O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria*: *Clemens* (he says) *indigentibus, pia exorantibus, dulcis diligentibus. O clemens poenitentibus, pia proficientibus, dulcis contemplantibus. O clemens liberando, o pia largiendo, o dulcis te donando.* (*Sup. Salv. Reg.*) O Mary, you are Clement with the wretched, Loving with those who pray to you, Sweet with those who love you; Clement with the penitent, Loving with those who advance, Sweet with the perfect. You show

yourself clement by delivering us

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from punishments, loving by dispensing graces to us, sweet by giving yourself to those who seek you.

Example.

It is related by Fr. Carlo Bovio (*Es. della SS. Verg. to. 5. Es. 32.*) that at Domans in France there was a married Man who, though he had a wife, kept up a dishonorable relationship with another Woman. The Wife, unable to bear this, did nothing but call down God's punishments upon them; and one day in particular she went to an Altar of the Blessed Virgin that stood in a certain Church, to seek justice against the woman who was keeping her husband. And to this same Image that other wretched sinner went every day to recite a Hail Mary. One night the divine mother showed herself in a dream to the said wife, who, on seeing her, at once began her usual song: Justice, mother of God, justice! But our Lady answered her: Justice? Do you seek justice of me? Go and find others to do it for you; I for my part cannot do it for you. Know (she then added) that this sinful woman recites a salutation to me every day; and since it is recited to me by whatever person, I cannot bear that she should suffer and be punished for her sins. When day came, the said wife went to hear Mass in that Church of our Lady; and coming out of it she met her husband's mistress, and on seeing her began to insult her, and then to say that she was a witch, who by her witchcraft had managed to enchant even the holy Virgin. Be quiet, the people said to her; what are you saying? Why should I be quiet, she answered; what I say is more than true. Last night our Lady appeared to me, and when I sought justice of her she answered me that she could not do it for me because of a salutation which this wicked woman recites to her every day. They then asked the other what that salutation was which she recited to the mother of God. She answered that it was the Hail Mary. But on hearing that the Blessed Virgin showed her such mercy for that poor devotion, she went at once to throw herself before that Holy Image, and there, in the presence of all, asking pardon for her scandal, she made a vow of perpetual continence. And moreover, having taken the habit of a Nun and built herself a little room near that Church, she shut herself up in it, and there persevered in continual penance until death.

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Prayer.

O Mother of Mercy, since you are so compassionate and have a great desire to do good to us wretched creatures and to satisfy our requests, I today, the most wretched of all men, have recourse to your compassion, that you may grant me what I ask. Let others seek of you what they will — health of body, gains, and advantages of earth. I come to ask of you, my Lady, those things which you yourself most desire of me, and which are most conformed and most pleasing to your most Holy Heart. You were so humble: obtain for me, then, humility and the love of being despised. You were so patient in the troubles of this life: obtain for me patience in things that go against me. You were wholly full of love toward God: obtain for me the gift of holy and pure love. You were all charity toward your neighbour: obtain for me charity toward all, and particularly toward those who are set against me. You were wholly united to the Divine will: obtain for me a total conformity to all that God disposes concerning me. You are, in short, the holiest of all Creatures: O Mary, make me a Saint. Love is not wanting to you; you can do all things, and you already will to obtain all things for me. The only thing, then, that can hinder me from receiving your graces is either my negligence in having recourse to you, or my little confidence in your intercession. But this recourse and this confidence you yourself must obtain for me. These two supreme graces I seek of you, I want from you, and from you I certainly hope for them — O Mary, Mary my mother, my hope, my love, my life, my refuge, and my consolation. Amen.

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CHAPTER X.

O dulcis Virgo Maria — O sweet Virgin Mary.

§ Only. How sweet, in life and in death, is the Name of Mary.

The great name of Mary, which was given to the Divine mother, was not found on Earth, nor invented by the mind and choice of men, as happens with all other names that are imposed;

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but it came down from Heaven and was imposed by Divine ordinance, as St. Jerome attests (*Lib. de Nat. Mar.*), St. Epiphanius (*Or. de Praes. Deip.*), St. Antoninus (*P. 1. Hist. tit. 4. c. 6.*), and others. *De thesauro Divinitatis Mariae nomen evolvitur*, says Richard of Saint-Laurence (*de Laud. Virg. pag. 14.*) — "From the treasury of the Divinity Mary's name is unfolded." From the treasure of the Divinity, O Mary, came forth your exalted and wonderful name; for the whole Most Holy Trinity, the same Author goes on to say, gave you such a name — above every name after the name of your Son — and enriched it with such Majesty and power that, at the uttering of your name, he willed that Heaven, Earth, and Hell should all bow down in reverence to venerate it: *Dedit tibi, Maria, tota Trinitas nomen post nomen Filii tui supra omne nomen: ut in nomine tuo omne genuflectatur, caelestium, terrestrium, & infernorum.* (*De Laud. Virg. l. 1. c. 2.*) But among the other prerogatives the Lord has given to the name of Mary, let us now see how sweet he has made it to the servants of this most Holy Lady, both in life and in death.

And first, speaking of the time of life, the holy Anchorite Honorius used to say that the name of Mary is full of every Divine sweetness: *Hoc nomen Mariae plenum est omni dulcedine ac suavitate Divina.* So much so that the glorious St. Anthony of Padua recognized in the name of Mary the same sweetnesses that St. Bernard considered in the name of Jesus. *Nomen Jesu*, said the one; *nomen Mariae*, the other took up — *jubilus in corde, mel in ore, in aure melos*, "a jubilee in the heart, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear." The name of this Virgin mother is joy to the heart, honey to the mouth, melody to the ear of those devoted to her. It is related of the Venerable Fr. Giovenale Ancina, Bishop of Saluzzo, as is found in his life, that in naming Mary he tasted so great a sensible sweetness that he even licked his lips at it. It is likewise read that a certain Woman in Cologne told Bishop Marsilius that whenever she pronounced the name of Mary she felt in her mouth a savor sweeter

than honey; and Marsilius, practicing it thereafter, experienced the same sweetness himself. It is gathered from the Sacred Canticles that at the Virgin's Assumption the Angels three times asked her name: *Quae est ista, quae ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi? Cap. 3. 6.* — "Who is she that goes up through the desert like a slender column of smoke?" In another place: *Quae est ista, quae progreditur, quasi aurora consurgens? Cap. 6. 9.* — "Who is she that comes forth like the rising dawn?" In

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another: *Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens? 8. 5.* — "Who is she that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights?" Now Richard of Saint-Laurence asks why the Angels repeat so many inquiries after the name of this Queen; and he answers: *Forsitan, quia dulce nomen sibi desiderant responderi.* (*de Laud. Virg. c. 2.*) — "Perhaps because they long to have that sweet name answered to them." So sweet was it even to the Angels to hear the name of Mary sound that for this reason they make so many inquiries.

But I do not speak here of this sensible sweetness, since this is not commonly granted to all. I speak of the salutary sweetness of comfort, of love, of gladness, of confidence, and of fortitude which this name of Mary commonly gives to those who utter it with devotion. Speaking of this, Franco the Abbot (*De Grat. Nov. Test. tr. 6.*) says that after the Sacred name of Jesus, the name of Mary is so rich in goods that on earth and in heaven no other name resounds from which devout souls receive so much of grace, of hope, and of sweetness: *Neque enim post Filii nomen aliud nomen caelum & terra nominat, unde tantum gratiae, spes, & suavitatis piae mentes concipiant.* For, he goes on, the name of Mary encloses in itself something wonderful, sweet, and Divine, which, when it meets with friendly hearts, breathes into them a fragrance of holy sweetness. And the marvel of this great name is (so he concludes) that though heard a thousand times, it is always heard by Mary's lovers as though new, since they always feel the same sweetness at hearing her named: *Nomen namque Mariae mirum quid, suave, atque Divinum in se continet, ut cum convenit amicis cordibus, amicae suavitatis odorem spiret. Et mirum illud est de nomine Mariae, ut millies auditum semper audiatur quasi novum. loc. cit.*

Speaking likewise of this sweetness, Blessed Henry Suso used to say that in naming Mary he felt himself so raised to confidence and kindled with such joyful love that, amid the joy and the tears with which he uttered the beloved name, he wished his heart might leap out of his breast through his mouth; for he declared that this most sweet name melted like a honeycomb in the depth of his soul. Whence he then exclaimed: *O most sweet name! O Mary, what must you yourself be, if your name alone is so lovable and so gracious?*

Then, turning to his good Mother, the enamo-

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red St. Bernard says to her tenderly: *O magna, o pia, o multum laudabilis Maria, tu nec nominari potes, quin accendas; nec cogitari, quin recrees affectus diligentium te.* (*S. Bern ap. S. Bon. Spec. c. 8.*) — "O great, O loving, O most praiseworthy Mary, you cannot be named without kindling, nor thought of without refreshing the affections of those who love you." O great, O loving, O worthy of all praise, most holy Virgin Mary: your name is so sweet and lovable that it cannot be named without inflaming with love toward you, and toward God, the one who names it; indeed it is enough that it merely present itself to the thought of your lovers to kindle them the more to love you, and to console them. And if riches console the poor, since they lift them out of their miseries, oh how much better does your name console us wretched ones (says Richard of Saint-Laurence), O Mary, since far better than the riches of earth it lifts us out of the straits of the present life: *Mariae nomen longe melius quam divitiae, quia melius angustiam relevat.* (*De Laud. Virg. c. 2.*)

In short, your name, O Mother of God, is wholly filled with Divine graces and blessings, as St. Methodius tells you: *Tuum, Dei Genitrix, nomen Divinis benedictionibus & gratiis ex omnis parte refertum.* (*Orat. in Hyp.*) In such a way that, as St. Bonaventure attests, your name cannot be uttered without bringing some grace to the one who devoutly names it: *Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest sine nominantis utilitate.* (*Spec. B. V. c. 8.*) Let a heart be found as hardened as you will, as distrustful as may be, says the Idiot: if such a one names you, O most kindly Virgin, so great is the power of your name that it will wonderfully soften his hardness; since you are she who comforts sinners to the hope of pardon and of grace: *Tanta est virtus tui Sacratissimi nominis, semper benigna Virgo Maria, quod mirabiliter emollit duritiam cordis humani. Peccator per te respirat in spe veniae & gratiae* (*Idiot. ap. Alph. Mar. p. 827.*) Your most sweet name, in St. Ambrose's words, is a fragrant ointment that breathes the odour of divine grace: *Unguentum nomen tuum. Descendat istud unguentum in Animae praecordia, S. Maria, quo divinae gratiae spiramenta redoleam* (*de Instit. Virg. c. 13.*) The Saint prays the Divine Mother, saying to her: Let this ointment of salvation come down into the inmost part of our souls. And he means: grant, my Lady, that we may often remember to name you with lo-

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ve and confidence; since to name you thus is either a sign of already possessing the divine grace, or a pledge of soon recovering it.

Yes; for the remembrance of your name, O Mary, consoles the afflicted, brings back to the way of salvation those who have strayed from it, and comforts sinners so that they may not abandon themselves to despair. So Ludolph of Saxony discourses: *O Maria, tui recordatio nominis maestos laetificat, errantes ad viam salutis revocat, & peccatores ne desperent confortat.* (*In vita Christ. p. 2. c. 85.*) And Fr. Pelbartus says that, as Jesus Christ by his five wounds has provided the World with the remedy of its ills, so likewise Mary by her most holy name, which is composed of five letters, confers pardon daily upon sinners: *Sic Maria suo sanctissimo nomine, quod quinque litteris constet, confert quotidie veniam peccatoribus* (*Stellar. a. 2.*)

Therefore the holy name of Mary is likened in the Sacred Canticles to oil: *Oleum effusum nomen tuum.* (*c. 1.*) — "Your name is oil poured out." *Gloria nominis ejus* (comments Blessed Alan in *Cant. loc. cit.*) *oleo effuso comparatur. Oleum aegrotantem sanat, odorem parit, flammam accendit.* As oil heals the sick, spreads fragrance, and kindles the flame, so the name of Mary heals sinners, refreshes hearts, and sets them ablaze with Divine love. Whence Richard of Saint-Laurence encourages sinners to have recourse to this great name, because it alone will suffice to cure them of all their ills, saying that there is no sickness so malignant that it does not at once yield to the force of this name: *Peccator es, ad nomen Mariae confugias: Ipsum solum sufficit ad medendum. Nulla pestis, quae ad nomen Mariae non cedat continuo.* (*De Laud. Virg. p. 14.*)

On the other hand the demons, Thomas à Kempis affirms, fear the Queen of Heaven to such a degree that at the naming of her great name they flee from the one who names it as from a burning fire: *Expavescunt Caeli Reginam spiritus maligni, & diffugiunt, audito nomine ejus, velut, ab igne.* (*Lib. 4. ad Novit.*) The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that there is no sinner in this life so cold in divine love that, if he invokes her holy name with the purpose of converting, the Devil does not at once depart from him: *Nullus est in hac vita tam frigidus ab amore Dei, qui si invocaverit nomen meum,*

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cum proposito poenitendi, statim Diabolus ab ipso non discedat. (*Rev. lib. 1. c. 9.*) And she confirmed it another time, telling her that all the demons so venerate and dread her name that, on hearing it sound, they at once release the soul from the claws with which they held it chained: *Omnes Daemones verentur hoc nomen, & timent, qui audientes hoc nomen Mariae, statim relinquunt Animam de unguibus, quibus tenebant eam.* (*Rev. l. 2. c. 19.*)

And just as the rebel Angels withdraw from sinners who invoke the name of Mary, so on the contrary — our Lady herself said to St. Bridget — the good Angels

draw the nearer to those just souls who devoutly name it: *Angeli boni, audito nomine meo, justis magis propinquant* (*Ap. S. Dion. Cart. de Laud. V. cap. ult.*). And St. Germanus attests that, as breathing is a sign of life, so to name the name of Mary often is a sign either of already living in the divine grace, or that life will soon come; since this powerful name has the power to obtain help and life for whoever devoutly invokes it. *Quomodo corpus enim vitalis signum operationis habet respirationem, ita sanctissimum nomen tuum, o Virgo, quod in ore servorum tuorum versatur assidue, vitae & auxilii non solum est signum, sed etiam ea procurat & conciliat.* (*S. Germ. de Zona Virg.*) In short, this wonderful name, Richard of Saint-Laurence adds, is like a most strong Tower, in which the sinner taking shelter will be delivered from death; for from this heavenly Tower even the most lost of sinners are surely defended and saved. *Turris fortissima nomen Dominae: ad ipsam fugiet peccator, & liberabitur. Haec defendit quoslibet, & quantumlibet peccatores.* (*De laud. Virg. l. 11.*)

But a tower of strength which not only frees sinners from punishment but also defends the just from the assaults of Hell. So says the same Richard, asserting that after the name of Jesus there is no name in which so much help is found, from which so much salvation is conferred upon men, as from this great name of Mary: *Non est in aliquo nomine tam potens adjutorium, nec est aliud nomen datum hominibus post nomen Jesu, ex quo tanta salus refundatur hominibus, sicut nomen Mariae.* (*De Laud. Virg. c. 2.*) It is known everywhere in particular, as is experienced every day

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by those devoted to Mary, that her great name gives strength to overcome temptations against chastity. The same Author reflects upon the words of St. Luke — *Et nomen Virginis Maria* (*c. 1. 27.*), "and the Virgin's name was Mary" — that these two names, of Mary and of Virgin, are named together by the Evangelist so that we may understand that the name of this most pure Maiden must never go disjoined from Chastity: *Hoc nomen semper cum castitate conjunctum esse debet.* (*Loc. cit.*) Whence St. Peter Chrysologus says that the name of Mary is a token of Chastity: *Nomen hoc indicium Castitatis.* (*Serm. 146.*) Meaning that whoever, in doubt whether he has sinned in impure temptations, remembers having invoked the name of Mary, has a sure sign of not having offended Chastity.

So let us always make use of the beautiful counsel of St. Bernard, who says: *In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca. Non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde.* (*Hom. 2. sup. Miss.*) In all dangers of losing the Divine Grace, let us think of Mary, let us invoke Mary, together with the Name of Jesus, since these names always go united together. Let these two most sweet and most

powerful names never depart from our heart nor from our lips, since these two great names will give us strength not to fall, and to overcome always all temptations. Too beautiful are the graces promised by Jesus Christ to those devoted to the name of Mary, as he himself, speaking with his holy Mother, gave St. Bridget to understand, revealing to her that whoever invokes the name of Mary with confidence and the purpose of amendment will receive three singular graces: namely, a perfect sorrow for his sins, satisfaction for them, and strength to attain perfection; and moreover, finally, the Glory of Paradise. *Quicumque invocaverit nomen tuum, & in te sperabit cum proposito emendandi, tria illi dabuntur, contritio peccatorum, eorum satisfactio, & fortitudo ad proficiendum, & insuper Regnum Caelorum.* (*Rev. lib. 1. cap. 10.*) For, the Divine Saviour added, so sweet and dear to me, O my Mother, are your words that I cannot deny you what you ask of me: *Tanta enim est in me dulcedo verborum tuorum, quod negare non valeo, quod tu petis.*

In short, St. Ephrem goes so far as to say that the name of Mary

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is the key of the gate of Heaven to whoever devoutly invokes it: *Nomen Mariae est reseratorium portae caeli.* (*In Deprec. ad Virg.*) And therefore St. Bonaventure is right to call Mary the salvation of all who invoke her: *O salus te invocantium* — as though to invoke the name of Mary were the same as to obtain eternal salvation; for the Idiot affirms that the invocation of this holy and sweet name leads to the acquiring of a superabundant grace in this life and a sublime glory in the next: *Devota invocatio hujus nominis ducit ad virorem gratiae in praesenti, & ad virorem gloriae in futuro.* (*De Laud. Virg. lib. 2. cap. 2.*) If then, my Brothers, Thomas à Kempis concludes, you seek to be consoled in every trouble, have recourse to Mary, invoke Mary, honour Mary, commend yourselves to Mary. With Mary rejoice, with Mary weep, with Mary pray, with Mary walk, with Mary seek Jesus; with Jesus and Mary at last desire to live and to die. Doing so (he says), you will always go forward in the way of the Lord; for Mary will willingly pray for you, and the Son will certainly hear his mother. Here are his beautiful words: *Si consolari in omni tribulatione quaeritis, accedite ad Mariam, Mariam invocate, Mariam honorate, Mariae vos commendate: Cum Maria gaudete, cum Maria dolete, cum Maria orate, cum Maria ambulate, cum Maria Jesum quaerite: cum Maria & Jesu vivere & mori desiderate. Fratres, si ista exercetis, proficietis. Maria pro vobis libenter orabit, & Filius matrem suam exaudiet.* (*Ap. Paciucch. Exc. 22. in Sal. Ang. in fin.*)

Too sweet, then, in life is her most holy name to those devoted to Mary, for the supreme graces it obtains for them, as we have seen. But sweeter still will it be rendered to them in death, for the sweet and holy death it will obtain for them. Fr.

Sertorio Caputo of the Society of Jesus used to exhort all who found themselves assisting some dying person to name to him often the name of Mary, saying that this name of life and of hope, merely uttered in death, is enough to scatter the enemies and to comfort the dying in all their distresses. Likewise St. Camillus de Lellis left it strongly recommended to his Religious that they should often remind the dying to invoke the name of Mary and of

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Jesus, as he himself always practiced with others; but he practiced it more sweetly still with himself at the point of his own death, in which (as is related in his life) he named his beloved Names of Jesus and of Mary with such tenderness that he inflamed with love even those who heard him. And at last, with his eyes fixed upon their adored Images and his arms crossed, the Saint was seen to expire with an air and a peace of Paradise, forming the last utterances of his life precisely by invoking the most sweet Names of Jesus and of Mary. This short Prayer of invoking the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary, says Thomas à Kempis, is as easy to hold in memory as it is sweet to dwell upon, and at the same time strong to protect whoever uses it from all the enemies of our Salvation: *Haec brevis oratio, Jesus & Maria, facilis est ad tenendum, dulcis ad cogitandum, fortis ad protegendum.*

Oh blessed is he, said St. Bonaventure, who loves your sweet Name, O Mother of God! *Beatus vir qui diligit Nomen tuum, Maria!* So glorious and wonderful is your Name that all those who remember to invoke it at the point of death do not then fear all the assaults of the enemies: *Gloriosum & admirabile Nomen tuum, qui illud retinent, non expavescunt in puncto mortis.* (*Spec. B. Virg.*)

Oh, that one might have the good fortune to die as Fr. Fulgenzio of Ascoli, the Capuchin, died, who expired singing: *O Mary, O Mary, the most beautiful there is, let us go in company.* Or as Blessed Henry the Cistercian died, of whom it is related in the Annals of the Order (*An. 1109.*) that he ended his life articulating the Name of Mary: *Inter ipsam dulcissimi Nominis articulationem.* Let us pray, then, my devout Reader — let us pray God to grant us this grace: that the last word of our tongue in death may be the uttering of the Name of Mary, just as St. Jerome desired and prayed: *Dei Matris Nomen sit mihi ultimus linguae loquentis motus.* (*Orat. 6. dd. Ann. Virg.*) O sweet death, safe death, which is accompanied and protected by such a Name of salvation — which God does not grant to be invoked in death except to those whom he wills to save!

O my sweet Lady and Mother, I love you greatly; and because I love you, I love also your holy Name. I re-

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solve, and hope with your help, always to invoke it in life and in death. For the glory, then, of your name (let us conclude with the tender prayer of St. Bonaventure), when my soul shall go out of this World, come yourself to meet it. Blessed Lady, do you take it into your Arms: *Propter honorem nominis tui in exitu Animae meae de hoc Mundo occurre illi, Domina, & suscipe eam.* (*In Psalt. Deip.*) Do not disdain, O Mary (let us go on praying with the Saint), to come and console it then with your sweet presence. Be yourself its ladder and its way to paradise. Do you obtain for it the grace of pardon and eternal rest. *Consolare eam vultu sancto tuo. Esto illi scala & iter ad Paradisum; impetra ei indulgentiam pacis, & sedem lucis.* And the Saint ends then by saying: O Mary our Advocate, it belongs to you to defend those devoted to you, and to take upon yourself their causes before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ: *Sustine devotos: suscipe causas rerum ante Tribunal Christi.*

Example.

It is related by Fr. Rho in his *Sabbati*, and by Fr. Lireo in his *Marian Trisagion*, that in Guelderland, about the year 1465, a certain Maiden by the name of Mary was sent one day by her Uncle to the Market of the City of Nijmegen to buy some things, with orders that in the evening she should stay at the house of another Aunt who lived there. The Girl obeyed; but having gone in the evening to find her Aunt, she was rudely driven off by her. So she set out again on the road to return; but night having fallen on the way, and having flown into a rage, she called upon the Devil in a loud voice. Behold, he at once appeared to her in the form of a Man and promised to help her, provided she did one thing. I will do anything, answered the unhappy girl. I want nothing else, said the Enemy, than that from this day forward you no longer sign yourself with the sign of the Cross, and that you change your name. She answered: As for the Cross, I will sign myself no more; but my name of Mary is too dear to me — I will not change it. Then I will not help you, said the Devil. At last, after much dispute, they agreed that she should be called by the first letter of the name of Mary, that is, *Emme*. And with this they set out for Antwerp; and the wretched girl remained six years with so evil a companion, li-

ving a life so wicked that she was the scandal of all. One day she told the Devil that she wished to see her native place again; the Enemy resisted, but at last was compelled to consent. Entering together into the City of Nijmegen, they found that a Play of the life of Mary most holy was being performed there. At that sight poor Emme, for the little devotion she had kept toward the Mother of God, began to

weep. What are we doing here, her companion then said? Do we want to make another comedy here? He seizes her to drag her from that place, but she resisted; whereupon he, seeing that he was already losing her, in his anger lifts her into the air and lets her fall in the middle of the Theater. Then the wretched woman told the whole story. She went to confess to the Parish Priest, but the Parish Priest referred her to the Bishop of Cologne, and the Bishop to the Pope; who, having heard her in Confession, imposed on her as penance that she should continually wear three iron rings, one on her neck and two on her arms. The Penitent obeyed; and having come to Maastricht, she shut herself up there in a Monastery of Penitents, where she lived for fourteen years in harsh penances. And one morning, rising from her bed, she found all three rings broken of themselves; and two years later she died with a reputation for sanctity, and wished to be buried with those same three rings which, from a slave of Hell, had made her the happy slave of her deliverer.

Prayer.

O Great Mother of God, and my Mother Mary: it is true that I am not worthy to name you; but you, who love me and desire my salvation, must grant me — though my tongue is unclean — that I may always invoke in my aid your most holy and most powerful name; since your name is the help of the living and the salvation of the dying. Ah, most pure Mary, most sweet Mary, grant that your name may from this day forward be the breath of my life. My Lady, do not delay to succour me whenever I call upon you; for in all the temptations that shall assail me, in all the needs that shall come upon me, I will never cease to call upon you, repeating always: Mary, Mary. So I hope to do in life; so I hope to do particularly in death, that after it I may come to praise your beloved Name eternally in Heaven: *o clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.* Ah Mary, most lovable Mary, what comfort, what sweetness, what con-

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fidence, what tenderness my Soul feels merely in naming you, merely in thinking of you! I thank my God and Lord, who has given me for my good this name so sweet, so lovable, and so powerful.

But my Lady, I am not content merely to name you: I want to name you moreover out of love; I want love to remind me to call upon you at every hour — so that I too may cry out with St. Anselm: O name of the Mother of God, you are my love: *O Amor mei, nomen Matris Dei.*

O my dear Mary, O my beloved Jesus, may your most sweet names live always in my heart and in all hearts. Let my mind forget all other names, to remember only, and forever to invoke, your adored Names. Ah, Jesus my Redeemer, and Mary my Mother, when the moment of my death shall have come, in which my Soul must breathe its last and go out of this life: ah, by your merits grant me then the grace to form my last utterances, saying and repeating: *I love you, Jesus and Mary; Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.*

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THE GLORIES OF M A R Y A WORK Of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Monsignor D. ALPHONSUS DE' LIGUORI Bishop of Sant' Agata de' Goti, and Rector Major of the Congregation of the MOST HOLY REDEEMER, Useful for reading and for preaching. PART THE SECOND In which there is treated of her principal Feasts, and of her Sorrows, both in general and in particular of each one of her Seven Sorrows. Next of her Virtues; and then of the Acts of Homage to be practised in her honour. At the end there is an APPENDIX of chosen Examples.

Engraved vignette. An owner's ink inscription in a later hand runs across the vignette and into the margins; it is largely illegible, but appears to read in part "... A.R.P. Francesco Ig... ... D. O. M." with "in M." beside the imprint. Not part of the printed text.

BASSANO, 1789. AT THE EXPENSE OF THE REMONDINI OF VENICE. With Licence of the Superiors.

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Ejaculatory Prayers to Mary Most Holy.

Mother of God, remember me. *St. Francis Xavier.*

Virgin and Mother, grant that I may always remember you. *St. Philip Neri.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me. *The same Saint.*

O Lady, grant that Jesus may not drive me away from himself. *St. Ephrem.*

O Mary, may my heart never cease to love you, nor my tongue to praise you. *St. Bonaventure.*

O Lady, by the love you bear to Jesus, help me to love him. *St. Bridget.*

O Mary, deign to make me your handmaid. *Bl. Joan of France.*

O Mary, I give myself wholly to you; do you accept me and keep me. *St. M. Magdalen de' Pazzi.*

O Lady, do not forsake me until death. *Fr. Spinelli.*

Hail Mary, my own dear Mother. *Fr. Francesco Brancaccio.*

Holy Mary, my Advocate, pray for me. *Fr. Sertorio Caputo.*

How sweet it is, O Mother mine,
That name of thine, Maria!
It gives me peace,
It so does please,
That I would call on it for ever.

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A Prayer of Blosius to the Blessed Virgin.

Ave desperantium spes destitutorum adjutrix Maria, cujus honori tantum tribuit filius, ut quidquid petieris, mox impetres: quidquid volueris, mox fiet. Tibi Regni cælestis thesauri commissi sunt. Præsta, Domina, ut inter procellas hujus vitæ semper te attendam. Tuæ pietati commendo animam & corpus meum. Dirige, & protege me singulis horis atque momentis, o dulce præsidium meum. — Hail, Mary, hope of the despairing, helper of the destitute, to whose honour your Son has granted so much that whatever you ask, you straightway obtain; whatever you will, is straightway done. To you the treasures of the heavenly Kingdom have been entrusted. Grant, Lady, that amid the storms of this life I may always look to you. To your loving kindness I commend my soul and my body. Direct me and protect me at every hour and at every moment, O my sweet stronghold.

Long live Jesus our Love, and Mary our Hope.

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DISCOURSES ON THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL FEASTS OF MARY.

DISCOURSE I.

On the Immaculate Conception Of Mary.

How fitting it was to all three Divine Persons that Mary should be preserved from original sin.

TOO great was the ruin that the accursed sin brought upon Adam and upon the whole human race; for when he then miserably lost grace, he lost with it all the other goods with which he had been enriched in the beginning, and drew down upon himself and upon all his descendants, together with the hatred of God, the whole heap of evils. But from this common calamity God willed to exempt that blessed Virgin whom he had destined to be the Mother of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, who was to repair the harm done by the First. Let us see, then, how fitting it was to God, and to all three Divine Persons, that this Virgin should be preserved from original sin. We shall see that it was fitting to the Father to preserve her as his

Daughter; to the Son, as his Mother; to the Holy Spirit, as his Spouse.

Point I. And in the first place it was fitting to the Eternal Father to make Mary immune from the original stain, because she was his daughter, and his firstborn daughter, as she herself testified: *Ego ex ore altissimi prodivi primogenita ante omnem creaturam* (Ecclus. 24) — *I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before every creature*; according as this passage is already applied to Mary by the sacred interpreters, by the holy Fathers, and by the Church herself precisely on the solemnity of her Conception. For whether she is the firstborn inasmuch as she was predestined together with her Son in the divine decrees

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before all creatures, as the school of the Scotists will have it; or whether she is the firstborn of grace, as predestined to be the Mother of the Redeemer after the foresight of sin, as the school of the Thomists will have it — all nevertheless agree in calling her the firstborn of God. This being so, it was altogether fitting that Mary should never have been the slave of Lucifer, but should have been possessed solely and always by her Creator, as indeed she was, according to what she herself says: *Dominus possedit me ab initio viarum suarum* (Ecclus., loc. cit.) — *The Lord possessed me from the beginning of his ways.* Whence with reason was Mary called by Dionysius, Archbishop of Alexandria: *Una & sola filia vitæ* (Ep. contr. Pa. Samos.) — *the one and only daughter of life*: the sole and only daughter of life, unlike all others, who, being born in sin, are daughters of death.

Moreover it was altogether fitting that the Eternal Father should create her in his grace, since he destined her to be the Repairer of the lost World, and mediatrix of peace between men and God; even as the holy Fathers call her, and especially St. John Damascene, who speaks to her thus: *O blessed Virgin, you came into the world to serve the salvation of the whole earth*: *In vitam prodiisti, ut orbis universi administram te præberes* (Orat. 1. de Nat. Virg.) — *You came forth into life, that you might show yourself the minister of the whole world.* Therefore St. Bernard says that Mary was already prefigured in the Ark of Noah; for as by that Ark men were delivered from the flood, so by Mary we are saved from the shipwreck of sin — but with this difference, that by means of the Ark few were saved, whereas by means of Mary the whole human race has been delivered: *Sicut per illam omnes evaserunt diluvium, sic per istam peccati naufragium. Per illam paucorum facta est liberatio, per istam humani generis salvatio.* (Serm. de B. Virg.) — *As by the one all escaped the flood, so by the other the shipwreck of sin. By the one came the deliverance of a few; by the other, the salvation of the human race.* Hence it is that Mary is called by St. Athanasius: *Nova Heva, mater vitæ* (Or. de S. Deip.) — *the new Eve, the mother of*

life: the new Eve, because the first was the Mother of death, but the Most Holy Virgin is the Mother of life. St. Theophanes, Bishop of Nicæa, says to her: *Salve quæ sustulisti tristitiam Hevæ — Hail, you who have taken away the sorrow of Eve.* St. Basil calls her the peacemaker between men and God: *Ave Dei hominumque sequestra constituta — Hail, appointed mediatrix between God and men.* St. Ephrem, the peacemaker of the whole World: *Ave totius orbis conciliatrix — Hail, reconciler of the whole world.*

Now for one who negotiates peace it is certainly not fitting that he should be an enemy of the offended party, and much less that he should be an accomplice in the very offence. St. Gregory says that in appeasing a judge you cannot be helped by one who is his enemy;

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otherwise, instead of appeasing him, such a one would rouse his anger the more. And therefore, since Mary was to be the Mediatress of peace between men and God, every reason demanded that she should not herself appear as a sinner and an enemy of God, but altogether his friend, and clean of sin.

Further, it was fitting that God should preserve her from original sin, since he destined her to crush the head of the infernal Serpent, who by seducing our first Parents brought death upon all men, as the Lord had already foretold him: *Inimicitias ponam inter te & mulierem, & semen tuum & semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum* (Gen. 3:15) — *I will put enmities between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed: she shall crush your head.* Now if Mary was to be the valiant woman set in the world to conquer Lucifer, it was assuredly not fitting that she should first have been conquered by Lucifer and made his slave; but rather was it reasonable that she should be exempt from every stain and from every subjection to the enemy. The proud one sought — even as he had already infected the whole human race with his venom — to infect likewise the most pure soul of this Virgin. But ever praised be the divine goodness, which forestalled him to this end with so great a grace that, she remaining free of all guilt of sin, she was thus able to overthrow and confound his pride, as St. Augustine says, or whoever else is the author of the commentary on Genesis: *Cum peccati originalis caput sit Diabolus, tale caput Maria contrivit, quia nulla peccati subjectio ingressum habuit in animam virginis, & ideo ab omni macula immunis fuit* (in cit. loc. Gen.) — *Since the head of original sin is the Devil, such a head did Mary crush, for no subjection to sin had entry into the soul of the Virgin, and therefore she was immune from every stain.* And more clearly St. Bonaventure: *Congruum erat, ut B. Virgo Maria, per quam aufertur nobis opprobrium, vinceret Diabolum, ut nec ei succumberet ad modicum*

(In 3. Dist. 3. art. 2. q. 2.) — *It was fitting that the Blessed Virgin Mary, through whom our reproach is taken away, should conquer the Devil, so as not to yield to him even for a moment.*

But above all it was principally fitting to the Eternal Father that he should render this his daughter unharmed by the sin of Adam, because he destined her to be the Mother of his Only-begotten. *Tu ante omnem creaturam in mente Dei præordinata fuisti, ut Deum ipsum hominem procreares — Before every creature you were foreordained in the mind of God, that you might bring forth God himself as man* — so speaks St. Bernardine of Siena (Serm. 15. c. 4.). If then for no other motive, at least for the honour of his Son, who was God, it was reasonable that the Father should create her pure from every stain. St. Thomas the Angelic says that all things which are ordained by God must be holy and clean of every defilement: *Sanctitas illis rebus attribuitur, quæ in Deum sunt ordinatæ* (1. p. q. 36. art. 1.) — *Holiness is attributed to those things which are ordained unto God.* And therefore Da-

-vid, in designing the Temple of Jerusalem with that magnificence which befitted the Lord, said: *Neque enim homini præparatur habitatio, sed Deo* (1 Par. 29:1) — *For it is not a dwelling prepared for man, but for God.* Now how much more ought we reasonably to believe that the supreme Maker, destining Mary to be the Mother of his very own Son, must have adorned her soul with every fairest excellence, so that she might be a worthy habitation of a God: *Omnium artifex Deus* (affirms Blessed Denis the Carthusian) *Filio suo dignum habitaculum fabricaturus, eam omnium gratificantium charismatum adornavit* (Lib. 2. de Laud. Virg. art. 2.) — *God, the maker of all things, about to frame for his Son a worthy dwelling-place, adorned her with all the charisms that make pleasing.* And Holy Church herself assures us of this, attesting that God prepared the body and the soul of the Virgin to be the worthy lodging on earth of his Only-begotten: *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus* (so prays Holy Church), *qui gloriosæ virginis & matris Mariæ corpus & animam, ut dignum filii tui habitaculum effici mereretur, Spiritu Sancto cooperante præparasti, &c. — Almighty, everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit did prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary, that she might deserve to be made a worthy dwelling for your Son, &c.*

It is known that the first excellence of children is to be born of noble Fathers: *Gloria filiorum patres eorum* (Prov. 17:6) — *The glory of children are their fathers.* Hence it is that in the world the disgrace of being reputed poor in goods and in learning is better borne than that of being of base birth; for the poor man may make himself rich by his industry, and the ignorant may make himself learned by study;

but he who is born base can hardly come to be noble, and if ever he should attain it, his ancient and original stain may always be cast in his teeth. How then can we think that God, being able to have his Son born of a noble mother by preserving her from sin, should have willed to have him born of a mother infected with sin, permitting that Lucifer might always have cast in his teeth the reproach of being born of a mother who was his own slave and an enemy of God? No, the Lord did not permit this; but he well provided for the honour of his Son by making his Mother to have been always Immaculate, that she might be such a Mother as befitted such a Son. So the Greek Church attests to us: *Providentia singulari perfecit, ut SS. Virgo ab ipso vitæ suæ principio tam omnino existeret pura quam decebat illam, quæ Christo digna mater existeret* (In Men. die 25. Martii.) — *By a singular providence he brought it about that the Most Holy Virgin should be, from the very beginning of her life, as wholly pure as befitted her who was to be a worthy mother of Christ.*

It is a common axiom among Theologians that no gift was ever granted to any creature with which the Blessed Virgin also was not enriched. Behold

how St. Bernard speaks: *Quod vel paucis mortalium constat esse collatum, fas certe non est suspicari tantæ Virgini fuisse negatum* (Epist. 174.) — *What is known to have been conferred even on a few mortals, it is certainly not lawful to suspect was denied to so great a Virgin.* And St. Thomas of Villanova: *Nihil unquam alicui Sanctorum concessum est, quod a principio vitæ cumulatius non præfulgeat in Maria* (Serm. 2. Ass.) — *Nothing was ever granted to any of the Saints which does not shine forth more abundantly in Mary from the beginning of her life.* And it being true that between the Mother of God and the servants of God there is an infinite distance, according to the celebrated saying of St. John Damascene: *Matris Dei & servorum Dei infinitum est discrimen* (Or. de Ass.) — *Between the Mother of God and the servants of God the difference is infinite* — certainly it must be supposed, as St. Thomas teaches, that God conferred privileges of grace greater in every kind upon the Mother than upon the servants: *Majora in quovis genere privilegia gratiæ deferenda sunt Matri Dei, quam servis* (3. p. q. 27. art. 2.) — *Greater privileges of grace in every kind are to be assigned to the Mother of God than to his servants.* This being supposed, St. Anselm, the great defender of Mary Immaculate, takes it up and says: *Impotensne fuit sapientia Dei mundum habitaculum condere, remota omni labe conditionis humanæ?* (Serm. de Concep.) — *Was the wisdom of God powerless to build a clean dwelling-place, with every stain of the human condition removed?* Was the Divine wisdom, then, unable to prepare for its Son a clean lodging, by preserving it from every stain of the human race? God has been able (St. Anselm

continues) to preserve unharmed the Angels of Heaven amid the ruin of so many, and could he not then preserve the Mother of his Son, and the Queen of the Angels, from the common fall of men? *Angelos, aliis peccantibus, a peccato reservavit; & Matrem ab aliorum peccatis exortem servare non potuit?* (Loc. cit.) — *He kept the Angels from sin while others sinned; and could he not keep the Mother free from the sins of others?* God was able, I add, to give the grace even to an Eve to come into the World immaculate, and then was he not able to give it to Mary?

Ah no, God was well able to do it, and he did it; for by every reason it was fitting, as the same St. Anselm says, that that Virgin to whom God disposed to give his only Son should be adorned with such a purity as should not only surpass that of all men and of all Angels, but should be the greatest that can be conceived after God: *Decens erat, ut ea puritate, qua major sub Deo nequit intelligi, Virgo illa niteret, cui Deus Pater unicum sibi Filium dare disponebat* (Dict. Lib. de Conc.) — *It was fitting that that Virgin should shine with such a purity as, under God, no greater can be conceived, to whom God the Father disposed to give his only Son.* And more plainly St. John Damascene: *Cum Virginis una cum corpore animam conservasset, ut eam decebat, quæ Deum in sinu suo exceptura erat: Sanctus enim ipse cum sit, in Sanctis requiescit* (Lib. 4. de Fid. Orth. cap. 15.) — *Since he had preserved the Virgin's soul together with her body, as befitted her who was to receive God into her womb: for being himself Holy, he rests in the holy.* So that the Eternal Father might well say to this beloved

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daughter: *Sicut lilium inter spinas, ita amica mea inter filias* (Cant. 2:2) — *As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters.* Daughter, among all my other daughters you are as a lily among thorns; for they are all stained by sin, but you were ever immaculate, and ever my friend.

Point II. In the second place it was fitting to the Son to preserve Mary from sin as his Mother. To all other sons it is not granted to be able to choose their Mother according to their own pleasure; but if to anyone this were ever granted, who would he be that, being able to have a Queen for his mother, would want her a slave? being able to have her noble, would want her a peasant? being able to have her a friend of God, would want her his enemy? If then the Son of God alone was able to choose his Mother as it pleased him, we must indeed hold for certain that he chose her such as befitted a God. So speaks St. Bernard: *Nascens de homine factus homo, talem sibi debuit eligere Matrem, qualem se decere sciebat* (Hom. 2. sup. Miss.) — *Being born of a human being and made man, he had to choose for himself such a Mother as he knew befitted him.* And since it well befits a most pure God to have a Mother pure from every sin, just such a one he made her, affirms St. Bernardine of Siena in these

words: *Tertio fuit sanctificatio maternalis, & hæc removet omnem culpam originalem. Hæc fuit in B. Virgine: Sane Deus talem tam nobilitate naturæ, quam perfectione gratiæ condidit Matrem, qualem eum decebat habere suam Matrem* (Tom. 2. Serm. 51. c. 1.) — *In the third place there was a maternal sanctification, and this removes all original guilt. This was in the Blessed Virgin: assuredly God fashioned a Mother such, both in nobility of nature and in perfection of grace, as it befitted him to have for his Mother.* To which agrees what the Apostle wrote: *Talis enim decebat, ut nobis esset Pontifex sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus, &c.* (Heb. 7) — *For such a high priest it behoved that we should have: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, &c.* Here a learned Author observes that according to St. Paul it was fitting that our Redeemer should be separated not only from sins, but also from sinners, as St. Thomas explains: *Oportuit eum, qui peccata venit tollere, esse segregatum a peccatoribus, quantum ad culpam cui Adam subjacuit* (3. p. q. 4. art. 6.) — *It behoved him who came to take away sins to be separated from sinners as regards the guilt to which Adam lay subject.* But how could Jesus Christ be called separated from sinners, having a sinful mother?

St. Ambrose says: *Non de terra, sed de cælo vas sibi hoc, per quod descenderet Christus, elegit, & sacravit templum pudoris* (De Inst. Virg. c. 5.) — *Not from earth but from heaven did Christ choose for himself this vessel through which he might descend, and he consecrated a temple of modesty.* The Saint alludes to the saying of St. Paul: *Primus homo de terra terrenus, secundus homo de cælo cælestis* (1 Cor. 15) — *The first man was of the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven, heavenly.* St. Ambrose calls the Divine Mother a heavenly vessel — not because Mary was not earthly by nature, as the Heretics have dreamed, but heavenly by grace,

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since she was superior in sanctity and purity to the Angels of Heaven, as befitted a King of glory who was to dwell in her womb; according as the Baptist revealed to St. Bridget: *Non decuit Regem gloriæ jacere nisi in vase purissimo & electissimo, præ omnibus Angelis & hominibus* (Rev. l. 1. c. 17.) — *It did not befit the King of glory to lie save in a vessel most pure and most choice above all Angels and men.* To which is joined what the Eternal Father himself said to the same Saint: *Maria fuit vas mundum, & non mundum. Mundum, quia tota pulchra: sed non mundum, quia de peccatoribus nata est; licet sine peccato concepta, ut Filius meus de ea sine peccato nasceretur* (Lib. 5. c. 13.) — *Mary was a vessel clean, and not clean. Clean, because she was all fair; but not clean, because she was born of sinners — although conceived without sin, that my Son might be born of her without sin.* And let these last words be noted, namely, that Mary was conceived without sin, so that of her the Divine Son

might be born without sin. Not indeed that Jesus Christ could have contracted sin, but that he might not have the reproach of having a Mother infected with sin and a slave of the Devil.

The Holy Spirit says that the honour of the Father is the glory of the Son, and the dishonour of the Father is the reproach of the Son: *Gloria enim hominis est honor patris sui, & dedecus filii pater sine honore* (Ecclus. 3:13) — *For the glory of a man is the honour of his father, and a father without honour is the disgrace of the son.* Wherefore St. Augustine says (Serm. de Ass. B. V.) that Jesus preserved the body of Mary from corruption after death, since it redounded to his own dishonour that that virginal flesh with which he had already clothed himself should be spoiled by putrefaction: *Putredo namque hominis est opprobrium conditionis, a quo cum Jesus sit alienus, natura Mariæ excipitur; caro enim Jesu caro Mariæ est* (Serm. de Ass. B. V.) — *For the putrefaction of man is the reproach of his condition; and since Jesus is a stranger to it, the nature of Mary is excepted from it; for the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary.* Now if it would have been a reproach to Jesus Christ to be born of a Mother who had a body subject to the putrefaction of the flesh, how much more to be born of a Mother who had a soul infected with the putrefaction of sin? Besides which, it being true that the flesh of Jesus is the same as that of Mary — in such wise (as the same Saint there adds) that the flesh of the Saviour, even after his Resurrection, has remained the same which he took from his Mother: *Caro Christi caro est Mariæ, & quamvis gloria Resurrectionis fuerit glorificata, eadem tamen mansit quæ de Maria sumpta est* (Loc. cit.) — *The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary; and although it was glorified by the glory of the Resurrection, yet it remained the same which was taken from Mary.* Whence St. Arnold of Chartres said: *Una est Mariæ & Christi caro; atque adeo Filii gloriam cum Matre, non tam communem judico, quam eamdem* (De Laud. Virg.) — *One is the flesh of Mary and of Christ; and so I judge the glory of the Son with the Mother to be not so much shared as identical.* Now this being true, if ever the Blessed Virgin had been conceived in sin, although the Son would not have

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contracted the stain of that sin, nevertheless it would always have been a certain stain to him to have united to himself flesh that had once been infected with sin — a vessel of uncleanness, and subject to Lucifer.

Mary was not only the Mother, but the worthy Mother of the Saviour. So do all the holy Fathers call her. St. Bernard: *Tu sola inventa es digna, ut in tua virginali aula Rex Regum primam sibi mansionem eligeret* (In Depr. ad Virg.) — *You alone were found worthy that in your virginal court the King of kings should choose for himself his first dwelling.* St. Thomas of Villanova: *Antequam conciperet, jam*

idonea erat, ut esset Mater Dei (Serm. 3. de Nat. Virg.) — *Before she conceived, she was already fit to be the Mother of God.* Holy Church herself attests to us that the Virgin merited to be the Mother of Jesus Christ: *B. Virgo cujus viscera meruerunt portare Christum Dominum* (Resp. 1. Noct. 2. in Nat. Mar.) — *The Blessed Virgin, whose womb merited to bear Christ the Lord.* Explaining which, St. Thomas Aquinas says: *B. Virgo dicitur meruisse portare Dominum omnium, non quia meruit ipsum incarnari, sed quia meruit ex gratia sibi data illum puritatis & sanctitatis gradum, ut congrue posset esse Mater Dei* (3. p. q. 2. a. 11. ad 3.) — *The Blessed Virgin is said to have merited to bear the Lord of all, not because she merited that he should be incarnate, but because by the grace given her she merited that degree of purity and holiness whereby she could fittingly be the Mother of God.* The Angelic Doctor says, then, that Mary could not indeed merit the Incarnation of the Word, but that by Divine grace she merited such perfection as should render her the worthy Mother of a God — according to what St. Peter Damian also wrote of it: *Singularis ejus Sanctitas ex gratia hoc promeruit, quod susceptione Dei singulariter judicata est digna* (De Ass. Serm. 2.) — *Her singular Holiness, out of grace, so merited that she was singularly judged worthy of receiving God.*

Now this being supposed, that Mary was the worthy Mother of God, what excellence ever (says St. Thomas of Villanova), what perfection, was not fitting to her! *Quæ autem excellentia, quæ perfectio decuit eam, ut esset Mater Dei* (Serm. 3. de Nat. Virg.) — *What excellence, what perfection, befitted her, that she should be the Mother of God!* The same Angelic Doctor teaches that when God chooses anyone for some dignity, he also renders him fit for it; whence he says that God, having chosen Mary for his Mother, certainly also rendered her worthy of it by his grace: *Beata autem Virgo fuit electa divinitus, ut esset Mater Dei; & ideo non est dubitandum, quin Deus per suam gratiam eam ad hoc idoneam reddidit, juxta illud: Invenisti gratiam apud Dominum: Ecce concipies, &c.* (Luke) (3. p. q. 27. a. 4.) — *The Blessed Virgin was divinely chosen to be the Mother of God; and therefore it is not to be doubted that God by his grace made her fit for this, according to that word: You have found grace with the Lord: behold, you shall conceive, &c.* And from this the Saint draws that the Virgin never committed any actual sin, not even venial; otherwise (he says) she would not have been the worthy Mother of Jesus Christ, since the ignominy of the Mother would have been also the Son's,

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he having a sinner for his Mother: *Non fuisset idonea Mater Dei, si peccasset aliquando, quia ignominia Matris ad Filium redundasset* (Loc. cit.) — *She would not have been a fit Mother of God had she at any time sinned, for the ignominy of the*

Mother would have redounded to the Son. Now if Mary, by sinning with a single venial sin — which does not deprive the soul of Divine grace — would not have been a fit Mother of God, how much more so had Mary been guilty of original sin, which would have rendered her an enemy of God and a slave of the Devil? Wherefore St. Augustine said, in that celebrated sentence of his, that in speaking of Mary he would have no word made of sins, for the honour of that Lord whom she merited for her Son, and by whom she had the grace to conquer sin on every side: *Excepta itaque S. Virgine Maria, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus, cum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo quæstionem. Unde enim scimus quod ei plus gratiæ collatum fuerit ad vincendum ex omni parte peccatum, quæ concipere & parere meruit eum quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum* (De Nat. & grat. contr. Pel. t. 7. c. 36.) — *Excepting therefore the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom, for the honour of the Lord, I wish no question whatever to be raised when sins are treated of. For whence do we know what greater grace was conferred upon her for conquering sin on every side, who merited to conceive and bring forth him who, it is certain, had no sin?*

So that we must hold for certain that the Incarnate Word chose for himself such a Mother as befitted him, and of whom he should have no cause to be ashamed, as St. Peter Damian speaks: *Christus talem Matrem sibi elegit, quam meruit habere, de qua non erubesceret — Christ chose for himself such a Mother as he deserved to have, of whom he should not blush.* And likewise St. Proclus: *Intra viscera quæ citra ullam sui dedecoris notam creaverat, habitavit* (Or. de Nat. Dom.) — *He dwelt within a womb which he had created without any mark of dishonour to himself.* It was no reproach to Jesus to hear himself called by the Jews the Son of Mary in contempt, as the son of a poor woman: *Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria?* (Matt. 13:55) — *Is not his mother called Mary?* — since he came on earth to give examples of humility and patience. But without doubt, on the contrary, it would have been a reproach to him if from the Devils he could have heard it said: *Nonne mater ejus extitit peccatrix? — Was not his mother a sinner?* And is he not perhaps born of a sinful Mother, and one who was once our slave? It would also have been unseemly for Jesus Christ to be born of a woman deformed and crippled in body, or else possessed in body by Devils. But how much more, then, to be born of a woman once deformed in soul, and in soul possessed by Lucifer?

Ah, this God, who is Wisdom itself, well knew how to build for himself on earth that house, such as befitted him, wherein he was to dwell: *Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum* (Prov. 9:1) — *Wisdom has built herself a house. Sanctificavit tabernaculum suum Altissimus ... Adjuvabit eam Deus mane diluculo — The Most High has sanctified his own tabernacle ... God will help her in the early morning.*

(Ps. 45.) The Lord, says David, sanctified this his dwelling *mane diluculo*, that is, from the beginning of her life, in order to make her worthy of himself; for it did not befit a holy God to choose for himself a house that was not holy: *Domum tuam decet sanctitudo* (Ps. 92) — *Holiness befits your house.* And if he declares that he will never enter to dwell in a soul of ill will, and in a body subject to sins: *In malevolam animam non intrabit sapientia, nec habitabit in corpore subdito peccatis* (Wisd. 1) — *Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins* — how then can we think that the Son of God chose to dwell in the soul and in the body of Mary without first sanctifying her and preserving her from every filth of sin? Since, as St. Thomas teaches, the Eternal Word dwelt not only in the soul, but also in the womb of Mary: *Dei Filius in ipsa habitavit, non solum in anima, sed etiam in utero* (3. p. q. 27. a. 4.) — *The Son of God dwelt in her not only in her soul, but also in her womb.* Holy Church sings: Lord, you did not abhor to dwell in the womb of the Virgin: *Non horruisti Virginis uterum.*

Yes, because a God would have abhorred to be incarnate in the womb of an Agnes, of a Gertrude, of a Teresa, since these Virgins, holy though they were, had nevertheless once been stained by original sin; but he did not then abhor to become man in the womb of Mary, because this beloved Virgin was ever pure from every blemish of sin, and never possessed by the enemy serpent. Whence St. Augustine wrote: *Nullum digniorem domum sibi Filius Dei ædificavit, quam Mariam, quæ nunquam fuit ab hostibus capta, neque suis ornamentis spoliata — The Son of God built for himself no worthier house than Mary, who was never taken by enemies, nor stripped of her ornaments.*

On the contrary (says St. Cyril of Alexandria), who has ever heard that an architect built a house for his own use, and then granted the first possession of it to his chief enemy? *Quis unquam audivit architectum, qui sibi domum ædificavit, ejus occupationem & possessionem primo suo inimico cessisse?* (In Conc. Eph. n. 6.) — *Who ever heard of an architect who built a house for himself, and yielded the occupancy and possession of it first to his enemy?*

Yes, because that Lord (St. Methodius takes it up) who gave us the precept to honour our parents, did not himself will, in making himself Man like us, to leave it unobserved, but gave to his Mother every grace and honour: *Qui dixit, honora patrem & matrem, ut decretum a se promulgatum servaret, omnem Matri gratiam & honorem impendit* (Or. in Hypap.) — *He who said, Honour your father and mother, that he might keep the decree promulgated by himself, bestowed on his Mother every grace and honour.* Therefore St. Augustine says that it must certainly be

believed that Jesus Christ preserved from corruption the bo-

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-dy of Mary after death, as was said above; for if he had not done so, he would not have observed the law which, *sicut honorem Matris præcipit, ita inhonorationem damnat* (Serm. de Ass. B. V.) — *as it commands honour to the Mother, so it condemns dishonour to her.* Now how much less would Jesus have attended to the honour of his Mother, if he had not preserved her from the sin of Adam? That son would indeed sin, says Fr. Thomas of Strasbourg, the Augustinian, who, being able to preserve his Mother from original sin, did not do it; now that which would be a sin in us (says the said Author) must be believed not to have been seemly for the Son of God — that, being able to render his Mother immaculate, he should not have done it. Ah no, adds Gerson: *Cum tu Summus Princeps velis habere Matrem, illi certe debebis honorem; Nimis autem appareret illam legem non bene adimpleri, si in abominationem peccati originalis permitteres illam quæ esse debet habitaculum totius puritatis* (Serm. de Conc. B. M.) — *Since you, the Supreme Prince, will have a Mother, you will certainly owe her honour; but it would appear all too plainly that that law was not well fulfilled, if you permitted her who ought to be the dwelling-place of all purity to fall into the abomination of original sin.*

Moreover it is known that the Divine Son came into the World more to redeem Mary than all other men; as St. Bernardine of Siena wrote: *Christus plus pro redimenda Virgine venit, quam pro omni alia creatura — Christ came more for the redeeming of the Virgin than for every other creature.* And since there are two ways of redeeming, as St. Augustine teaches — one by raising up him who has already fallen, the other by preventing him from falling: *Duplex est redimendi modus, unus redimendo lapsum, alter redimendo non lapsum ne cadat — There is a twofold manner of redeeming: one by redeeming the fallen, the other by redeeming the unfallen that he may not fall* — and without doubt this latter is the nobler way: *Nobilius redimitur cui providetur, ne cadat, quam ut lapsus erigatur* (St. Anton.) — *He is more nobly redeemed for whom it is provided that he shall not fall, than that having fallen he should be raised up* — because in this way there is avoided also that harm, or that stain, which the soul always contracts from a fall once made. Hence in this nobler way, such as befitted the Mother of a God, it must be believed that Mary was redeemed, as St. Bonaventure speaks: *Credendum est enim, quod novo sanctificationis genere in ejus conceptionis primordio Spiritus Sanctus eam a peccato originali (non quod infuit, sed quod infuisset) redemit, atque angulari gratia præservavit angulari* so printed in W1; apparently for *singulari* (Serm. 2. de Ass.) — *For it must be believed that by a new kind of sanctification, at the very first*

beginning of her conception, the Holy Spirit redeemed her from original sin (not that which was in her, but that which would have been), and preserved her by a singular grace. Which Sermon is proved to be truly the holy Doctor's, Frassen. (Scot. Acad. to. 3. q. 1. §. 5.) Upon which Cardinal Cusa elegantly reflects: *Alii liberatorem, Virgo sancta præliberatorem habuit — Others had a deliverer; the holy Virgin had a fore-deliverer.* Others have had the Redeemer, who has freed them from sin already contracted, but the holy Virgin had the Redeemer (because he was her Son) who freed her from contracting sin.

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In sum, for the conclusion of this point, Hugh of St. Victor says that the tree is known by its fruit. If the Lamb was ever Immaculate, ever Immaculate too must the Mother have been: *Talis agnus, qualis Mater Agni: quoniam omnis arbor ex fructu suo cognoscitur* (Coll. 5. de Verb. Inc.) — *Such is the Lamb, such the Mother of the Lamb: for every tree is known by its own fruit.* Whence this same Doctor used to salute Mary, calling her: *O digna digni — O worthy Mother of a worthy Son*; and he meant that none other than Mary was the worthy Mother of such a Son, and none other than Jesus was the worthy Son of such a Mother. *O digna digni* (and he goes on to say) *formosa pulcri, excelsa altissimi, Mater Dei* (Hugh of St. Victor, Serm. de Ass.) — *O worthy of the worthy, beautiful of the beautiful, exalted of the Most High, Mother of God.* Give suck then (let us say to her with St. Ildephonsus), give suck, O Mary, to your Creator: give suck to him who made you, and made you so pure and perfect that you deserved that he should take from you his human being: *Lacta, o Maria, Creatorem tuum, lacta eum qui te fecit, & qui talem fecit te, ut ipse fieret ex te* (Serm. de Nat. Virg.) — *Give suck, O Mary, to your Creator; give suck to him who made you, and who made you such that he himself might be made of you.*

Point III. If, then, it was fitting to the Father to preserve Mary from sin as his Daughter, and to the Son as his Mother, it was fitting likewise to the Holy Spirit to preserve her as his spouse. Mary, says St. Augustine, was she alone who merited to be called Mother and spouse of God: *Hæc est quæ sola meruit Mater, & sponsa vocari* (Serm. de Ass.) — *This is she who alone merited to be called Mother and spouse.* For St. Anselm asserts that the Divine Spirit came bodily into Mary, and enriching her with grace above all creatures, rested in her, and made his spouse the Queen of heaven and earth: *Ipse Spiritus Dei, ipse amor Patris & Filii corporaliter venit in eam, singularique gratia præ omnibus in ipsa requievit, & Reginam cæli & terræ fecit sponsam suam* (De Exc. Virg. c. 4.) — *The Spirit of God himself, the very love of the Father and the Son, came bodily into her, and rested in her with a grace singular above all, and made his spouse the Queen of heaven and earth.* He says that

he came into her bodily as regards the effect, since he came to form from her immaculate body the immaculate body of Jesus Christ; as the Archangel had already foretold her: *Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te* (Luke 1) — *The Holy Spirit shall come upon you.* Wherefore (says St. Thomas) Mary is called the temple of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, because by the operation of the Holy Spirit she was made Mother of the Incarnate Word: *Unde dicitur templum Domini, sacrarium Spiritus Sancti, quæ concepit ex Spiritu Sancto* (Opusc. 8.) — *Whence she is called the temple of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, who conceived of the Holy Spirit.*

Now if an excellent Painter were ever to obtain

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his bride beautiful or deformed, according as he himself should paint her, what diligence would he not employ to make her as beautiful as he could? Who then can say that the Holy Spirit has dealt otherwise with Mary — that, being himself able to make this his spouse all beautiful as befitted him, he has not done it? No, for so it befitted him, and so he has done, as the same Lord attested when, praising Mary, he said to her: *Tota pulchra es, amica mea, & macula non est in te* (Cant. 4:7) — *You are all fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in you.* Which words, St. Ildephonsus and St. Thomas say, are properly understood of Mary, as Cornelius a Lapide reports upon the said passage. And St. Bernardine of Siena (tom. 1. Serm. 52.) with St. Lawrence Justinian (Serm. de Nat. Virg.) assert that the cited words are understood precisely of her immaculate Conception; whence the Idiota says to her: *Tota pulchra es, Virgo gloriosissima, non in parte, sed in toto; & macula peccati sive mortalis, sive venialis, sive originalis non est in te* (In Contempl. B. V. c. 3.) — *You are all fair, most glorious Virgin, not in part but in whole; and no stain of sin, whether mortal, or venial, or original, is in you.*

The same the Holy Spirit signified when he called this his spouse an enclosed garden and a sealed fountain: *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus* (Cant. 4:12) — *An enclosed garden, my sister my spouse; an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain.* Mary indeed, says St. Jerome, was that enclosed garden and sealed fountain; since into her the enemies never entered to offend her, but she was ever unharmed by them, remaining holy in soul and in body: *Hæc est hortus conclusus, fons signatus, ad quam nulli potuerit doli irrumpere, nec prævalere fraus inimici; sed permansit sancta mente, & corpore — This is the enclosed garden, the sealed fountain, into which no deceits could break, nor the fraud of the enemy prevail; but she remained holy in mind and in body.* So St. Jerome. (Ep. 10. ad Eust. de Ass.) And similarly St. Bernard said, speaking with the Blessed Virgin: *Hortus conclusus tu es, ad quem deflorandum manus peccatorum nunquam introivit* (see in loc. cit.

Cant. 4) — *You are an enclosed garden, into which the hand of sinners never entered to despoil it.*

We know that this divine spouse loved Mary more than all the other Saints and Angels united together, as Fr. Suarez asserts with St. Lawrence Justinian and others. He loved her from the very beginning, and exalted her in sanctity above all, as David expressed it: *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis; diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob .... Homo natus est in ea, & ipse fundavit eam Altissimus* (Ps. 86) — *Her foundations are on the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob .... A man is born in her, and the Most High himself has founded her.* Words which all signify that Mary was holy from her very Conception. The same is signified by what the same Holy Spirit said to her in other pla-

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-ces: *Multæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias, tu supergressa es universas* (Prov. 31) — *Many daughters have gathered together riches; you have surpassed them all.* If Mary has surpassed all in the riches of grace, then she had also Original justice, as Adam and the Angels had it. *Adolescentularum non est numerus, una est columba mea, perfecta mea* (the Hebrew reads, *integra, immaculata mea*), *una est matri suæ* (Cant. 6) — *Of the young maidens there is no number; one is my dove, my perfect one* (the Hebrew reads, *my whole one, my immaculate one*), *she is the only one of her mother.* All just souls are daughters of divine grace; but among them Mary was the Dove without the gall of sin, the Perfect one without the stain of origin, the One conceived in grace.

Hence it is that the Angel, before ever she was mother of God, already found her full of grace, and thus saluted her: *Ave gratia plena — Hail, full of grace*; upon which words Sophronius wrote that to the other Saints grace is given in part, but to the Virgin it was given whole: *Bene gratia plena dicitur, quia cæteris per partes præstatur, Mariæ vero simul se tota infundit plenitudo gratiæ* (Serm. de Ass. B. V.) — *Well is she called full of grace, because to others it is given by parts, but into Mary the fullness of grace poured itself all at once and entire.* So much so that St. Thomas says that grace made holy not only the soul, but also the flesh of Mary, so that from it the Virgin might thereafter clothe the Eternal Word: *Anima B. Virginis ita fuit plena, quod ex ea refundit gratiam in carnem, ut de ipsa conciperet Deum* (Opusc. 8.) — *The soul of the Blessed Virgin was so full that from it she poured back grace into her flesh, that of it she might conceive God.* Now all this leads us to understand that Mary from her very Conception was made rich and full of divine grace by the Holy Spirit, as Peter of Celle argues: *Simul in ea collecta est gratiæ plenitudo, quia ab*

exordio suæ Conceptionis usque ad finem Spiritus Sancti tota Deitatis gratia est superfusa (Lib. de Panib. cap. 10.) — *In her the fullness of grace was gathered all at once, because from the outset of her Conception to the end the whole grace of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit was poured over her.* Whence St. Peter Damian says: *A Deo electam & prælectam totam eam rapturus erat sibi Spiritus Sanctus* (Serm. de Ann.) — *Chosen and forechosen by God, the Holy Spirit was about to seize her wholly for himself. Rapturus* — "about to seize" — the Saint using the word to express the swiftness of the divine Spirit in forestalling Lucifer and making this spouse his own before Lucifer could possess her.

I wish finally to close this Discourse — in which I have enlarged myself more than in the others, for the reason that our least Congregation has for its Principal Protectress the Most Holy Virgin Mary precisely under this title of her immaculate Conception — I wish (I say) to end by declaring in brief what are the motives that make me certain, and in my judgment should make everyone certain, of this opinion so pious and of such great glory to the divine mother: that she was immune from original sin.

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There are many Doctors who indeed maintain that Mary was exempt from contracting even the debt of sin — such as Cardinal Galatinus (De Arca l. 7. c. 18.), Cardinal Cusa (l. 8. Exerc. 8.), de Ponte (lib. 2. Cant. ex. 12.), Salazar (De V. Conc. c. 7. §. 7.), Catharinus (De Pecc. orig. c. ult.), Novarinus (Umbra Virg. c. 10. ex c. 28.), Viva (p. 8. d. 2. q. 2. a. 3.), de Lugo, Egidius, Richelius, and others. Now this opinion is indeed probable; for if it is true that in the will of Adam, as head of mankind, the wills of all were included — as Gonet (Man. to. 3. tr. 5. c. 6. §. 2.), Habert (to. 3. de pecc. c. 7.), and others probably hold, grounded on the text of St. Paul: *Omnes in Adam peccaverunt* (Rom. 5) — *All have sinned in Adam* — if then this is probable, it is probable likewise that Mary did not contract the debt of sin: since God having greatly distinguished her in grace from the generality of men, it must piously be believed that in the will of Adam he did not include that of Mary.

This opinion is only probable, and to it I adhere as being more glorious for my Lady. But then I hold for certain the opinion that Mary did not contract the sin of Adam; as it is held for certain, and even for proximately definable of faith (as they call it), by Cardinal Everardus (in Exam. Theol.), Duvallius (t. 2. qu. 2. de pecc.), Rainaldus (Piet. Lugd. n. 194.), Lossada (Disc. Th. de Imm. Conc.), Viva (Qu. Prol. ad Trut.), and many others. I leave aside for the present the revelations which confirm the said opinion, especially those made to St. Bridget, already approved by Cardinal Torquemada and by four Sovereign Pontiffs, as is read in the sixth book of

the said revelations in several places (at c. 12, 49, and 55). But on no account can I omit to note here the sayings of the holy Fathers upon this point, to show how uniform they have been in granting such a privilege to the divine mother. St. Ambrose says: *Suscipe me non ex Sara, sed ex Maria, ut incorrupta sit Virgo, sed Virgo per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati* (Serm. 22. in Ps. 118.) — *Take me not from Sara, but from Mary, that the Virgin may be uncorrupted — a Virgin whole, by grace, from every stain of sin.* Origen, speaking of Mary, says: *Nec serpentis venenosis afflatibus infecta est* (Homil. 1.) — *Nor was she infected by the venomous breathings of the serpent.* St. Ephrem: *Immaculata, & ab omni peccati labe alienissima* (tom. 5. or. ad Dei Gen.) — *Immaculate, and utterly a stranger to every stain of sin.* St. Augustine upon the words of the Angel, *Ave, gratia plena*, wrote: *Quibus*

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ostendit ex integro (note, *ex integro*) *iram primæ sententiæ exclusam, & plenam benedictionis gratiam restitutam* (Serm. 12. in Nat. Dom.) — *By which words he shows that the wrath of the first sentence was wholly excluded, and the full grace of blessing restored.* St. Jerome: *Nubes illa non fuit in tenebris, sed semper in luce* (in Ps. 77.) — *That cloud was never in darkness, but always in the light.* St. Cyprian, or whoever else be the Author of it: *Nec sustinebat justitia, ut illud vas electionis communibus lassaretur injuriis, quoniam plurimum a ceteris distans, natura communicabat non culpa* (Lib. de Carn. Christi oper. de Nativ.) — *Nor did justice suffer that that vessel of election should be worn by the common injuries, since, standing far apart from the rest, she shared in nature and not in guilt.* St. Amphilochius: *Qui antiquam virginem sine probro condidit, ipse & secundam sine nota & crimine fabricatus est* (Tr. de Deip.) — *He who created the ancient virgin without reproach, himself also fashioned the second without mark and without fault.* Sophronius: *Virginem ideo dici Immaculatam, quia in nullo corrupta est* (in Ep. ap. Syn. to. 3. p. 307.) — *The Virgin is therefore called Immaculate, because in nothing was she corrupted.* St. Ildephonsus: *Constat eam ab originali peccato fuisse immunem* (Cont. Disp. de Virg. Mar.) — *It is certain that she was immune from original sin.* St. John Damascene: *Ad hunc Paradisum serpens aditum non habuit* (Or. 1. de Nat. Mar.) — *To this Paradise the serpent had no entry.* St. Peter Damian: *Caro Virginis ex Adam sumpta, maculas Adam non admisit* (Serm. de Ass. V.) — *The flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, admitted not the stains of Adam.* St. Bruno: *Hæc est incorrupta terra illa, cui benedixit Dominus, ab omni propterea peccati contagione libera* (in Ps. 101.) — *This is that uncorrupted earth which the Lord blessed, free therefore from all contagion of sin.* St. Bonaventure: *Domina nostra fuit plena gratia*

præveniente in sua sanctificatione, gratia scilicet præservativa contra fœditatem originalis culpæ (Ser. 2. de Assumpt.) — *Our Lady was full of prevenient grace in her sanctification — that is, of a grace preservative against the foulness of original guilt.* St. Bernardine of Siena: *Non enim credendum est, quod ipse Filius Dei voluerit nasci ex Virgine, & sumere ejus carnem, quæ esset maculata aliquo originali peccato* (Tom. 3. Serm. 49.) — *For it is not to be believed that the Son of God himself willed to be born of a Virgin, and to take her flesh, if she were stained by any original sin.* St. Lawrence Justinian: *Ab ipsa Conceptione fuit in benedictionibus præventa* (Serm. de Annunt.) — *From her very Conception she was forestalled with blessings.* The Idiota upon those words, *invenisti gratiam*, says: *Gratiam singularem, o dulcissima Virgo, invenisti, quia fuerunt in te ab originali labe præservatio, &c.* (cap. 6.) — *A singular grace, O most sweet Virgin, have you found, since there was in you a preservation from the original stain, &c.* And the same say so many other Doctors.

But the motives which finally assure us of the truth of this pious opinion are two. The first is the universal consent of the faithful upon this point. Fr. Egidius of the Presentation attests (De Præs. Virg. q. 6. a. 4.) that all the Religious Orders follow the said opinion; and even of the Order of St. Dominic (says a modern Author), though there be 91 writers for the contrary opinion, nevertheless 136 are for ours. But above all we should be persuaded that our pious opinion is conformable to the common sentiment of Catholics by what Pope Alexander VII attests of it in his celebrated Bull *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, issued as early as the year 1661,

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in which it is said: *Aucta rursus & propagata fuit pietas hæc & cultus erga Deiparam ... ita ut, accedentibus Academiis ad hanc sententiam* (that is, to the pious one) *jam fere omnes Catholici eam complectantur — This piety and devotion towards the Mother of God has again been increased and spread abroad ... so that, the Universities having come over to this opinion, now almost all Catholics embrace it.* And in fact this opinion is defended by the Universities of the Sorbonne, of Alcalá, of Salamanca, of Coimbra, of Cologne, of Mainz, of Naples, and by many others, in which every graduate binds himself by oath to the defence of Mary Immaculate. Of this argument — namely, the common sense of the faithful — the learned Petavius avails himself above all in proving it (Tom. 5. p. 2. l. 14. c. 2. n. 10.). Which argument, writes the most learned Bishop D. Giulio Torni (in adn. ad Est. l. 2. Dist. 3. §. 2.), cannot fail to convince; since in truth, if nothing else, it is the common consent of the faithful that makes us certain of the Sanctification of Mary in the womb, and of her glorious Assumption into heaven in soul and body: why then

should this same common sentiment of the faithful not make us certain of her immaculate Conception?

The other motive, stronger than the first, which makes us certain of the Virgin's exemption from the original stain, is the celebration ordained by the universal Church of her immaculate Conception. And concerning this I see on the one hand that the Church celebrates the first instant, when her soul was created and infused into her body, as Alexander VII declares in the Bull mentioned, in which it is expressed that the Church gives to the Conception of Mary that same worship which the pious opinion gives it — the opinion which will have her conceived without original sin. On the other hand I understand it to be certain that the Church cannot celebrate a thing that is not holy, according to the oracles of St. Leo the Pope (Ep. Decret. 4. c. 2.) and of St. Eusebius the Pontiff: *In Sede Apostolica extra maculam semper est Catholica servata Religio* (Decr. 24. q. 1. c. In Sede.) — *In the Apostolic See the Catholic Religion has always been preserved without stain.* And as all the Theologians teach with St. Augustine (Serm. 95 and 113), St. Bernard (Ep. ad Can. Lugd.), and St. Thomas — who, to prove that Mary was sanctified before being born, employs precisely this argument, namely the celebration which the Church makes of her birth, and therefore says: *Ecclesia celebrat Nativitatem B. Virginis: Non autem celebratur festum in Ecclesia nisi pro aliquo Sancto; Ergo B. Virgo fuit in utero sanctificata* (3. p. q. 27. a. 2.) — *The Church celebrates the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin: but no feast is celebrated in the Church save for some Saint; therefore the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb.* Now if it is certain, as the Angelic Doctor says, that Mary was sanctified in the womb, because

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Holy Church thus celebrates her birth, why then should we not hold for certain that Mary was preserved from original sin from the first instant of her Conception, now that we know that in this sense the same Church celebrates her feast? In confirmation, moreover, of this great privilege of Mary, well known already are the innumerable and prodigious graces which the Lord is pleased to dispense every day in the Kingdom of Naples by means of the little Cards of her immaculate Conception. I could relate many of them that have passed through the hands of the Fathers of our own Congregation; but I will narrate only two, which are truly admirable.

Examples.

IN one of the Houses which our least Congregation keeps in this Kingdom, a woman came to say to one of our Fathers that her husband had not been to confession for many years, and that the poor creature no longer knew what to do to bring him to it, since when she spoke to him of Confession he beat her. The Father told the woman to give him a Card of Mary Immaculate. Evening come, the woman again begged her husband to go to confession; but he playing deaf as usual, she gave him a Card. And behold, scarcely had he received the Card when the husband said: Well then, when will you take me to confession? for I am ready. The wife fell to weeping for joy, seeing so instantaneous a change. In the morning the man came in fact to our Church. That Father of ours asking him how long it was since he had been to confession, he answered, twenty-eight years. And how, replied the Father, were you moved this morning to come and confess? Father, said he, I was obstinate; but last evening my wife gave me a Card of Our Lady, and at once I felt my heart changed, so that all this night every moment seemed to me a thousand years till day should break, that I might come and make my confession. And in fact he confessed with great deliberation *riputazione* so printed; perhaps for *compunzione*, "compunction", changed his life, and for a long time afterwards continued to confess often to the same Father.

In another place in the Diocese of Salerno, while our Fathers were giving the holy Mission there, there was a certain man who kept up a grave enmity with one who had offended him. One of our Fathers spoke to him about

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forgiving it, and he answered: Father, have you ever seen me at the Sermons? No? and for this reason I do not go near them: I see well enough that I am damned; but there is no help for it, I mean to be revenged. The Father laboured much to convert him, but seeing that he was wasting his words: Take this, he said to him, this Card of Our Lady. The man answered at first: And what is this Card good for? But having taken the Card, as though he had never refused to grant the forgiveness asked of him, he said to the Missionary: Father, does Your Reverence want anything besides the pardon? Here I am, ready to grant it. And an appointment was made for the following morning. But the morning come, he had turned about again, and would have nothing more to do with it. The said Father held out to him another Card: he would not have it; so that he took it only with reluctance. But what happened? No sooner had he taken the second little Card than he immediately said: Come, let us make haste — where is the notary? And at once he granted the pardon; and afterwards he went to confession.

Prayer.

AH, my immaculate Lady, I rejoice with you to see you enriched with so great a purity. I thank, and I purpose ever to thank, our common Creator for having preserved you from every stain of sin, as I hold for certain; and in defence of this your so great and singular privilege of your immaculate Conception I am ready, and I swear to give (if need be) even my life. I would that all the world knew you and confessed you for that lovely Dawn who were ever adorned with the divine light; for that chosen Ark of salvation, free from the common shipwreck of sin; for that Perfect and Immaculate Dove, such as your divine spouse declared you; for that enclosed Garden which was the delight of God; for that sealed Fountain into which the enemy never entered to trouble it; for that white Lily, in fine, which you are, who, being born among the thorns of the children of Adam — where all are born stained with sin and enemies of God — were born pure, all whiteness, and altogether the friend of your Creator.

Suffer me then to praise you too, as your own God praised you: *Tota pulchra es, & macula non est in te — You are all fair, and there is no stain in you.* O most pure dove, all white, all beautiful, ever the friend of God: *O quam*

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quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es — how beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful you are. Ah most sweet, most lovable, immaculate Mary, you who are so beautiful in the eyes of your Lord, ah, do not disdain to look with your merciful eyes upon the wounds, so loathsome, of my soul. Look upon me, and have compassion on me, and heal me. O lovely magnet of hearts, draw to yourself my wretched heart also. You who from the first moment of your life appeared pure and beautiful before God, have pity on me, who not only was born in sin, but after Baptism have again defiled my soul with sins. That God who has chosen you for his daughter, his Mother, and his Spouse, and who therefore has preserved you from every stain, and has preferred you in his love before all creatures — what grace will he ever deny you? Immaculate Virgin, you must save me. I will say to you with St. Philip Neri: grant that I may always remember you; and do you not forget me. It seems a thousand years to me till I come to behold your beauty in Paradise, that I may praise you and love you the more — my mother, my Queen, my beloved, most beautiful, most sweet, most pure, immaculate Mary. Amen.

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DISCOURSE II.

On the Birth of Mary.

Mary was born holy, and greatly holy: because great was the grace with which God enriched her from the beginning, and great was the fidelity with which Mary at once corresponded to God.

MEN are wont to solemnize the births of their Children with signs of feasting and rejoicing; but rather ought they to be lamented with signs of mourning and of grief, considering that they are born not only devoid of merits and of reason, but moreover infected with sin, and children of wrath, and therefore condemned to miseries and to death. But the birth of our little Mary — that is right to celebrate with feasting and universal praise, since she comes into the light of this World a child in age, but great in merits and in virtues. Mary is born holy, and greatly holy. But to understand the degree of holiness with which she was born, we must consider first how great was the first grace with which God enriched Mary;

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and secondly, how great was the fidelity with which Mary at once corresponded to God.

Point I. And beginning with the first point: it is certain that the Soul of Mary was the most beautiful Soul that God ever created; indeed, after the Incarnation of the Word, it was the greatest work, and the worthiest of himself, that the Almighty ever wrought in this World. *Opus quod solus Deus supergreditur — a work which God alone surpasses*: so St. Peter Damian calls her. Hence it came about that Divine Grace in Mary did not descend by drops, as in the other Saints, but *sicut pluvia in vellus — as rain upon the fleece* — as David foretold, Ps. 72:6. The Soul of Mary was after the manner of wool, which happily drank in all the great rain of Grace without losing one drop of it. *Virgo Sancta totam sibi hauserat Spiritus Sancti Gratiam — The holy Virgin had drawn to herself the whole Grace of the Holy Spirit* — St. Basil (in Cat. D. Th. in 1. Luc.) Whence she afterwards said by the mouth of Ecclesiasticus: *In plenitudine Sanctorum detentio mea* (c. 24:16) — *My abode is in the fullness of the Saints.* That is, as St. Bonaventure expounds it: *Totum teneo in plenitudine, quod alii Sancti tenent in parte — I hold in fullness all that the other Saints hold in part*: I possess in fullness all that the other Saints possess in part. (St. Bonav. Serm. 3. de B. V.) And St. Vincent Ferrer, speaking particularly of the Sanctity of Mary before her birth, says that she surpassed the Sanctity of all the Saints and Angels: *Virgo sanctificata fuit in utero super omnes Sanctos & Angelos — The Virgin was sanctified in the womb above all the Saints and Angels.*

The Grace which the Blessed Virgin had surpassed the Grace not only of each Saint in particular, but of all the Saints and Angels together; as the most learned Fr. Francesco Pepe of the Society of Jesus proves in his fine Work on the Greatnesses of

Jesus and of Mary (in Tom. 3, Lesson 13). And he asserts that this Opinion, so glorious for our Queen, is today common and certain among modern Theologians (as it is with Cartagena, Suarez, Spinelli, Recupito, Guerra, and many others, who have examined it *ex professo*, a thing the ancients did not do); and he relates further that the Divine Mother sent by the hand of Fr. Martino Guttierez to thank Fr. Suarez on her own behalf for having defended so valiantly this most probable opinion — which, as Fr. Segneri also attests in his *Devout Client of Mary*, was afterwards upheld by the common judgment of the School of Salamanca.

Now if this opinion is common and certain, that other opinion is also highly probable: that Mary from the first instant of her Immaculate Conception re-

-ceived this Grace superior to the Grace of all the Saints and Angels together. This the same Fr. Suarez strongly defends, and Fr. Spinelli and Fr. Recupito follow him (see Fr. Pepe in the place cited), and Fr. la Colombière in Sermon 29. But besides the authority of the Theologians, there are two great and convincing reasons by which the said opinion is sufficiently proved. The first reason is that Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of the Divine Word: whence Blessed Denis the Carthusian says that, she having been chosen in an order superior to all Creatures — since in a certain manner the dignity of Mother of God, as Fr. Suarez asserts, belongs to the order of the Hypostatic union — with reason there were conferred on her from the beginning of her life gifts of a superior order, so that they incomparably surpassed the gifts granted to all other Creatures. And in truth it cannot be doubted that at the same time at which, in the Divine Decrees, the Person of the Eternal Word was predestined to become man, there was also destined for him the Mother from whom he was to take his human Being; and this was our little Mary. Now St. Thomas teaches (3. p. q. 27. a. 5. ad 1.) that the Lord gives to each one the grace proportioned to that dignity for which he destines him: *Unicuique datur Gratia, secundum id, ad quod eligitur — To each is given grace according to that for which he is chosen.* And St. Paul taught it before him, when he wrote: *Qui & idoneos nos fecit ministros novi Testamenti* (2 Cor. 3:6) — *Who also has made us fit ministers of the new Testament* — signifying to us that the Apostles received from God the gifts proportioned to the great Office to which they were chosen. St. Bernardine of Siena adds that when anyone is chosen by God to some state, he receives not only the dispositions necessary to it, but also the gifts which are needed to sustain that employment with decorum. *Regula firma est in sacra Theologia, quod quandocumque Deus aliquem eligit ad aliquem statum, omnia bona illi dispenset, quæ illi statui necessaria sunt, & illum copiose decorant.* (Serm. 10. a. 1. c. 1.) — *It is*

a firm rule in sacred Theology that whenever God chooses anyone for some state, he dispenses to him all the goods that are necessary to that state and that richly adorn him. Now if Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God, it was altogether fitting that God should adorn her from the first instant with an immense Grace, and of an order superior to the Grace of all other men and Angels, since the Grace must correspond to the immense and most high dignity to which God was exalting her — as all the Theologians conclude with St. Thomas, who (loc. cit. art. 4.) says: *Virgo fuit electa, ut esset Mater Dei, & ideo*

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non est dubitandum, quin Deus per suam gratiam Eam ad hoc idoneam reddidit — The Virgin was chosen to be the Mother of God, and therefore it is not to be doubted that God by his grace made her fit for this. In such a manner that Mary, before being made the Mother of God, was adorned with a Sanctity so perfect that it made her fit for this great dignity: *In B. Virgine fuit perfectio quasi dispositiva, per quam reddebatur idonea ad hoc quod esset Mater Christi; & hæc fuit perfectio sanctificationis — In the Blessed Virgin there was a perfection as it were dispositive, by which she was rendered fit to be the Mother of Christ; and this was the perfection of her sanctification.* So speaks the holy Doctor (cit. q. 27. a. 5. ad 2.)

And he had said before (3. p. q. 7. a. 10. ad 1.) that Mary was therefore called full of Grace, not indeed on the side of Grace itself — because she did not have Grace in the highest excellence that can be had; just as neither was the habitual Grace of Jesus Christ the highest (as the same holy Doctor says), so that the Divine power could not have made it greater by absolute power — although it was a grace sufficiently corresponding to the end to which his humanity was ordained by Divine wisdom, namely to the union with the Person of the Word: *Virtus Divina, licet possit facere aliquid majus & melius quam sit habitualis Gratia Christi; non tamen posset facere quod ordinaretur ad aliquid majus, quam sit unio personalis ad Filium unigenitum a Patre; cui unioni sufficienter correspondet talis mensura gratiæ, secundum definitionem Divinæ Sapientiæ.* (d. q. 7. a. 11. ad 3.) — *The Divine power, though it can make something greater and better than the habitual Grace of Christ, yet could not make anything that should be ordained to something greater than the personal union with the only-begotten Son of the Father; to which union such a measure of grace sufficiently corresponds, according to the determination of Divine Wisdom.* For the Angelic Doctor himself teaches that the Divine power is so great that, however much it gives, there always remains to it more to give; and although the natural power of the Creature as regards receiving is of itself limited, so that it can be entirely filled, nevertheless her obediential power towards the Divine will is

unlimited, and God can always fill her yet more by making her more capable of receiving: *Potentiam naturalem ad recipiendum posse totam impleri, non autem potentiam obedientiæ.* (St. Th. q. 29. de Verit. a. 3. ad 3.) — *The natural power of receiving can be wholly filled, but not the obediential power.* And therefore (to return to our purpose) St. Thomas said that the Blessed Virgin, though she was not full of Grace as regards Grace itself, is nevertheless called full of Grace in regard to herself, since she had an immense Grace, sufficient and corresponding to her immense dignity, so that it rendered her fit to be the Mother of a God. *Beata Virgo est plena Gratia, non ex parte ipsius Gratiæ, quia non habuit gratiam in summa excellentia quæ potest haberi, nec ad omnes effectus gratiæ: Sed dicitur fuisse plena Gratia per compara-*

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-tionem ad ipsam, quia scilicet habebat Gratiam sufficientem ad statum illum, ad quem erat a Deo electa, ut esset Mater Unigeniti ejus. (d. q. 7. a. 10. ad 1.) — *The Blessed Virgin is full of Grace, not on the side of Grace itself, because she did not have grace in the highest excellence that can be had, nor unto all the effects of grace; but she is said to have been full of Grace by comparison with herself, namely because she had Grace sufficient for that state to which she had been chosen by God, that she should be the Mother of his Only-begotten.* Whence Benedict Fernandez adds that the measure by which to know how great was the Grace communicated to Mary is her dignity as Mother of God: *Est igitur dignitas Matris Dei regula, per quam metiendum, quicquid Virgini ab eo collatum credimus — The dignity of the Mother of God is therefore the rule by which we must measure whatever we believe was conferred on the Virgin by him.*

With reason therefore did David say that the foundations of this City of God, Mary, were to be planted upon the tops of the mountains: *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis* (Ps. 28) so printed; the passage is Ps. 86:1, and at Disc. I p. 17 W1 cites it as "Ps. 86." — *Her foundations are on the holy mountains* — that is, that the beginning of Mary's life was to be higher than all the completed lives of the Saints. *Diligit Dominus* (the Prophet goes on) *portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob — The Lord loves the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob.* And the same David gave the reason for this, because God was to become Man in her virginal womb: *Homo natus est in ea — A man is born in her.* Whence it was fitting that God should give to this Virgin, from the first moment in which he created her, a Grace corresponding to the dignity of a Mother of God.

The same Isaiah meant to signify when he said that in the times to come the mountain of the House of the Lord (which was the Blessed Virgin) should be

prepared above the summit of all the other mountains; and that therefore all the Nations should run to this mountain to receive the Divine Mercies: *Et erit in novissimis diebus præparatus mons domus Domini in vertice montium, & elevabitur super colles, & fluent ad eum omnes gentes.* (Isa. 2:2) — *And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.* St. Gregory explains: *Mons quippe in vertice montium, quia altitudo Mariæ super omnes Sanctos refulsit.* (Lib. 1. in 1. Reg. c. 1.) — *A mountain indeed on the top of the mountains, because the height of Mary shone out above all the Saints.* And St. John Damascene: *Mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo — A mountain in which it has pleased God to dwell*: a mountain which God was pleased to choose for his own refuge. Therefore Mary was called a Cypress — but a Cypress of mount Sion; she was called a Cedar — but a Cedar of Lebanon; an Olive — but a comely Olive; Chosen — but Chosen as the Sun: for (says St. Peter Damian) as the Sun by its light so far outstrips the splendour of the Stars that they appear no more: *Siderum rapit positionem, ut sint quasi non sint — It so takes away the place of the stars that they are as though they were not* — so the great Virgin Mother surpasses by her Sanctity the merits of the whole Heavenly Court: *Sic Virgo merita singulorum & omnium antecedit* (Serm. de Ass.) — *So the Virgin goes before the merits of each and of all.* So much so that St. Bernard elegantly says that Ma-

-ry was so sublime in Sanctity that no other Mother than Mary befitted God, and no other son than God befitted Mary: *Neque enim decebat Deum alia Mater quam Virgo, neque Virginem alius Filius quam Deus — For neither did another Mother than the Virgin befit God, nor another Son than God befit the Virgin.*

The second reason by which it is proved that Mary in the first instant of her life was holier than all the Saints together is founded on the great office of mediatress of men, which she had from the beginning; whence it was necessary that from the beginning she should possess a greater stock of Grace than all men together have. It is already well known how commonly this title of mediatress is attributed to Mary by Theologians and holy Fathers, for having obtained salvation for all by her powerful intercession and merit of congruity, procuring for the lost World the great benefit of the Redemption. It is called merit of congruity because Jesus Christ alone is our Mediator by way of Justice and by merit *de condigno*, as the Schools speak, having offered his merits to the Eternal Father, who accepted them for our salvation. Mary on the other hand is mediatress of Grace by way of simple intercession and of merit *de congruo*, having offered to God — as the Theologians

say with St. Bonaventure — her merits for the salvation of all men; and God by Grace accepted them together with the merits of Jesus Christ. Whence St. Arnold of Chartres says: *Ipsa in nostra salute communem cum Christo effectum obtinuit — She obtained in our salvation an effect common with Christ.* And Richard of St. Victor: *Omnium salutem desideravit, quæsivit, obtinuit: imo omnium salus per ipsam effecta.* (Cap. 26. in Cant.) — *She desired, sought, and obtained the salvation of all: nay, the salvation of all was effected through her.* So that every good, every gift of eternal life which each of the Saints has received from God has been dispensed to them by means of Mary.

And this is what Holy Church means to give us to understand when she honours the Divine Mother by applying to her the passages of Ecclesiasticus at chapter 24, verse 25: *In me gratia omnis viæ, & veritatis — In me is all grace of the way and of the truth.* It says *of the way*, because through Mary all graces are dispensed to wayfarers; *of the truth*, because through Mary the light of truth is given. *In me omnis spes vitæ, & virtutis — In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Of life*, because through Mary we hope to obtain the life of Grace on earth and of Glory in Heaven; *and of virtue*, because through Mary the virtues are acquired, and especially the Theolo-

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-gical virtues, which are the chief virtues of the Saints: *Ego Mater pulchræ dilectionis, timoris, & agnitionis, & sanctæ spei — I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope.* Mary by her intercession obtains for her servants the gifts of Divine Love, of holy fear, of heavenly light, and of holy confidence. From which St. Bernard deduces that it is the teaching of the Church that Mary is the universal mediatress of our salvation: *Magnifica gratiæ inventricem, mediatricem salutis, Restauratricem sæculorum. Hæc mihi de illa cantat Ecclesia, & me eadem docuit decantare.* (Epist. 174. ad Con. Lugd.) — *Magnify the finder of grace, the mediatress of salvation, the restorer of the ages. This the Church sings to me of her, and the same has taught me to sing it.*

Therefore St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, asserts that the Archangel Gabriel called her full of Grace, *Ave Gratia plena*; because whereas to others (says the aforesaid Saint) Grace has been given in limited measure, to Mary it was given whole and entire: *Bene plena, quia cæteris Sanctis datur Gratia per partes; Mariæ vero toto se infundit plenitudo Gratiæ.* (Serm. de Ass.) — *Well is she full, because to the other Saints Grace is given by parts, but into Mary the fullness of Grace pours itself wholly.* And this came about, as St. Basil attests, so that in such a manner she might afterwards be the worthy mediatress between men and God: *Ave Gratia plena, propterea Deum inter & homines mediatrix intercedens — Hail, full of Grace:*

therefore interceding as mediatress between God and men. Otherwise, St. Lawrence Justinian takes it up, if the Most Holy Virgin had not been filled with Divine Grace, how could she have been the ladder of Paradise, the Advocate of the World, and the true mediatress of men with God? *Quomodo non est Maria plena Gratia, quæ effecta est Paradisi scala, interventrix Mundi, Dei atque hominum verissima mediatrix?* (Serm. de Ann. B. V.) — *How is Mary not full of Grace, who has been made the ladder of Paradise, the intercessor of the World, the most true mediatress of God and men?*

Behold, then, the second reason proposed made only too clear: if Mary from the beginning, as the Mother already destined by the common Redeemer, received the office of mediatress of all men, and consequently of all the Saints too, it was also necessary that from the beginning she should have a Grace greater than all the Saints have had, for whom she was to intercede. I explain myself more plainly: if through Mary all men were to be made dear to God, it was altogether needful that Mary should be holier and dearer to God than all men together. Otherwise how could she have interceded for all the rest? For an intercessor to obtain grace from the Prince for all the Vassals, it is absolutely necessary that he be dearer to his Monarch than all the other Vassals. And there-

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-fore Mary, St. Anselm concludes, merited to be made the worthy Repairer of the lost World, because she was the holiest and purest of all creatures: *Pura sanctitas pectoris ejus, omnis creaturæ puritatem sanctitatemque transcendens, promeruit, ut reparatrix perditi Orbis dignissima fieret.* (De Excell. Virg. c. 9.) — *The pure holiness of her heart, surpassing the purity and holiness of every creature, merited that she should be made the most worthy repairer of the lost World.*

Mary then was the mediatress of men, someone will say; but how can she be called mediatress of the Angels also? Many Theologians hold that Jesus Christ merited the Grace of Perseverance for the Angels also; so that as Jesus was their mediator *de condigno*, so Mary may be called mediatress of the Angels too *de congruo*, having hastened by her prayers the coming of the Redeemer. At the least, meriting *de congruo* to be made the Mother of the Messiah, she merited for the Angels the repair of their Thrones lost by the Devils. Therefore at least she merited for them that accidental glory. And therefore Richard of St. Victor said: *Utraque creatura per hanc reparatur, & Angelorum ruina per hanc restaurata est, & natura humana reconciliata.* (In Can. 4.) — *Both creations are repaired through her: through her the ruin of the Angels was restored, and human nature reconciled.* And St. Anselm said it before him: *Cuncta per hanc Virginem in statum pristinum*

revocata sunt & restaurata. (De Exc. Virg. c. 11.) — *All things were through this Virgin recalled to their former state and restored.*

So that our heavenly Child, both for having been made the mediatress of the World and for having been destined the Mother of the Redeemer, received from the very beginning of her living a Grace greater than that of all the Saints together. Hence what a lovely spectacle to Heaven and to Earth was the beautiful Soul of this happy Child, though still enclosed in her Mother's womb! She was the most lovable Creature in the Divine eyes, because already filled with Grace and with merit she could even then boast: *Cum essem parvula, placui Altissimo — When I was little, I pleased the Most High.* And she was at once the Creature that most loved God of any that had until that time appeared in the World; in such a manner that if Mary had been born immediately after her most pure Conception, she would already have come into the World richer in merits and holier than all the Saints together. Think then how much holier she was born, coming forth into the light after the gains of merit which she made through all those nine months that she was in her Mother's womb. Hence let us pass to consider the second point: namely, how great was the fidelity with which Mary at once corresponded to Divine Grace.

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Point II. It is not a mere opinion, says a learned Author (Fr. La Colombière Serm. 31.), it is the opinion of the whole World, that the holy Child, receiving in the womb of St. Anne sanctifying Grace, received at the same time the perfect use of reason, with a great Divine Light corresponding to the Grace with which she was enriched. So that we may well believe that from the first instant in which her beautiful Soul was united to her most pure Body, she was enlightened with all the lights of Divine Wisdom to know well the eternal truths, the beauty of the virtues, and above all the infinite Goodness of her God, and the claim he had to be loved by all — but singularly by her, in view of the singular gifts with which the Lord had adorned her and distinguished her among all Creatures, preserving her from the stain of original sin, giving her a Grace so immense, and destining her to be the Mother of the Word and Queen of the Universe.

Hence it is that from that first moment Mary, grateful to her God, began at once to do all that she could do, trading from that time faithfully with that great stock of Grace which had been given her; and applying herself wholly to please and to love the Divine Goodness, from that time she loved him with all her strength, and so she went on always loving him through all those nine months that she lived before being born, in which she did not for a moment cease to unite herself ever more closely to God with fervent acts of love. She was already free from original sin, and hence still

free from every earthly attachment, from every disordered motion, from every distraction, from every resistance of the senses, that might ever have hindered her from advancing ever further in Divine Love; all her senses too were in accord with her blessed spirit in running to God: whence her beautiful Soul, loosed from every impediment, without ever halting, was always flying to God, always loving him, and always growing in loving him. Wherefore she herself was called a Plane-tree planted by the running waters: *Quasi Platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam.* (Ecclus. 24:19) — *I was exalted like a plane tree beside the water.* For she was indeed that noble plant of God which always grew beside the stream of the Divine graces. Therefore likewise she was called a vine: *Ego quasi vitis fructificavi suavitatem odoris.* (Ecclus. 24:23) — *As a vine I have brought forth a sweetness of odour.* Not only because she was so humble in the eyes of the World, but because also, even as

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the vine always grows, according to the common proverb, *Vitis nullo fine crescit — the vine grows without end* (other trees, the apple, the mulberry, the pear, have a determined stature, but the vine always grows, and grows as tall as the tree to which it clings) — so the Most Holy Virgin always grew in perfection: *Ave vitis semper vigens — Hail, vine ever flourishing* — so St. Gregory Thaumaturgus saluted her (Serm. 1. in Ann.); and she was always united to her God, who was her only support. Hence the Holy Spirit spoke of her when he said: *Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum?* (Cant. 5) so printed; the passage is Cant. 8:5 — *Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?* St. Ambrose comments: *Hoc est, quæ ascendit, ita ut inhæreat Dei Verbo, sicut vitis propago?* (see Segneri, Sermon 40 of the Year) — *That is to say, who is she that ascends so as to cleave to the Word of God, as the shoot to the vine?* Who is this who, in company with the Divine Word, grows like a vine-plant leaning upon a great tree?

Several grave Theologians say that the soul which possesses a habit of virtue, whenever it faithfully corresponds to the actual graces which it thereafter receives from God, always comes to produce an act equal in intensity to the habit which it possesses; so much so that it comes each time to acquire a new and double merit, equal to the sum of all the merits already acquired before. Now this increase, as they say, was granted to the Angels in the state of their journey; and if it was granted to the Angels, who will ever be able to deny it to the Divine Mother while she lived on this earth, but especially in the time of which I speak, that she was in her Mother's womb, in which she was certainly more faithful than the Angels in corresponding to Grace? Mary therefore in all that time came to double at every moment that sublime

Grace which she possessed from the first instant: for corresponding with all her strength and perfection, in every act that she made she consequently doubled her merits at every instant. So that if in the first instant she had a thousand degrees of Grace, in the second she had two thousand, in the third four thousand, in the fourth eight thousand, in the fifth sixteen thousand, in the sixth thirty-two thousand. And we are now no further than the sixth instant. But multiply thus for a whole day, multiply for nine months, and consider what treasures of Grace, of Merits, and of Sanctity Mary brought into the world when she was born.

Let us rejoice then with our little Child, who is born so holy, so dear to God, and so filled with Gra-

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-ce. And let us rejoice not only for Her, but also for ourselves; for she comes into the World full of Grace, not only for her own glory, but also for our good. St. Thomas considers in his Opuscule that in three ways the Most Holy Virgin was filled with Grace. First, she was filled with Grace in her Soul, so that from the beginning her beautiful Soul was wholly God's. Secondly, she was full of it in her Body, so that of her most pure Flesh she merited to clothe the eternal Word. Thirdly, she was full of it for the common benefit, so that all men might partake of it: *Fuit etiam Gratia plena, quantum ad refusionem ad omnes homines — She was also full of Grace as regards its overflowing upon all men.* Some Saints, the Angelic Doctor adds, have so much Grace that it suffices not only for themselves but also to save many others, yet not all men; only to Jesus Christ and to Mary was given such a Grace as should suffice to save all: *Sed quando quis haberet tantum, quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum; Et hoc fuit in Christo, & Beata Virgine. — But when anyone should have so much as would suffice for the salvation of all, that would be the greatest thing; and this was so in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin.* So St. Thomas (Opusc. 8.) So that what St. John says (at ch. 1:16) of Jesus, *Et de plenitudine ejus accepimus omnes — And of his fullness we have all received* — the Saints say the same of Mary. St. Thomas of Villanova: *Gratia plena, de cujus plenitudine accipiunt universi — Full of Grace, of whose fullness all receive.* So much so that, says St. Anselm, there is no one who does not partake of the Grace of Mary. *Ita nullus sit, qui de plenitudine Gratiæ Virginis non sit particeps — So that there is none who is not a partaker of the fullness of the Virgin's Grace.* And who is ever found in the World to whom Mary is not kind, and to whom she does not dispense some mercy? *Quis unquam reperitur, cui Virgo propitia non sit? Quis ad quem ejus misericordia non se extendat? — Who was ever found to whom the Virgin is not favourable? Who is there to whom her mercy does not extend?* From Jesus, however (we must understand), we

receive Grace as from the Author of Grace; from Mary as from the Mediatress; from Jesus as from the Saviour, from Mary as from the Advocate; from Jesus as from the Fountain, from Mary as from the Channel. Whence St. Bernard says that God constituted Mary as the Aqueduct of his mercies, which he willed to dispense to men; and therefore he filled her with Grace, that of her fullness there might be communicated to each his part: *Plenus aquæductus, ut accipiant cæteri de ejus plenitudine, non autem plenitudinem ipsam — A full aqueduct, that the rest may receive of her fullness, but not the fullness itself.* Whence the Saint exhorts all to consider with what love God wills that we should honour this great Virgin, since in Her he has placed the whole treasure of his goods; so that whatever we have of hope, of grace, and of sal-

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-vation, for all of it we should thank our most loving Queen, since all comes to us from her hands and from her intercession. Here are his fine words: *Intuemini quanto devotionis affectu a nobis Eam voluit honorari, qui totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria; ut proinde, si quid spei nobis est, si quid salutis, ab Ea noverimus redundare.* (Serm. de Aquæd.) — *Behold with what affection of devotion he willed her to be honoured by us, who placed the fullness of all good in Mary; so that accordingly, if we have any hope, any salvation, we may know that it overflows from Her.* Wretched is that Soul which closes this Channel of graces by neglecting to commend itself to Mary! Holofernes, when he wished to make himself master of the City of Bethulia, took care to break the aqueducts: *Incidi præcepit aquæductus illorum.* (Judith 7:6) — *He commanded their aqueducts to be cut.* And this the Devil does when he wants to make himself master of a Soul: he makes it abandon devotion to Mary Most Holy. This Channel once closed, the soul will easily lose light, the fear of God, and in the end eternal salvation. Let the following Example be read, in which will be seen how great is the mercy of Mary's Heart, and the ruin which he draws upon himself who closes this Channel by abandoning Devotion to this Queen of Heaven.

Example.

IT is related by Trithemius, Canisius, and others, that in Magdeburg, a City of Saxony, there was a certain man named Udo, who as a youth was of so poor an understanding that he was the derision of all his fellow-students. Therefore one day, being more than usually afflicted at this incapacity of his, he went to commend himself to the Most Holy Virgin before one of her Images. Mary appeared to him in

a dream and said to him: Udo, I wish to console you, and not only do I wish to obtain for you from God an ability sufficient to free you from these mockeries, but moreover such a talent as shall make you admired: and further I promise you that after the death of the Bishop you shall be elected in his place. So Mary said to him, and so it all came to pass. He soon advanced in the Sciences, and obtained the Bishopric of that City. But Udo was so ungrateful to God and to his Benefactress that, having laid aside all Devotion, he became the scandal of everyone. One night while he was in bed with sacrilegious company, he heard a voice which said to him: *Cessa, Udo, de ludo: lusisti satis, Udo* — Udo, cease from the game of offending God: you have played enough. The first time he grew angry at those wor-

-ds, thinking it was some man who said them to correct him. But hearing them repeated the second and the third night, he fell into some fear that it was a voice from Heaven. For all that, he nevertheless continued his evil life. But after three months, which God gave him for time to repent, behold the chastisement. A devout Canon named Frederick was one night in the Church of St. Maurice, praying God that he would remedy the scandal which the Prelate was giving; when behold, the door of the Church was thrown open by a great wind. Then two Youths entered with lighted torches in their hands and took their places at the sides of the High Altar. Next two others followed, who spread before the Altar a carpet, setting upon it two golden chairs. There came after them another Youth in a soldier's dress, with a sword in his hand, who, halting in the middle of the Church, cried out: O you Saints of Heaven, who have your sacred Relics in this Church, come and attend the great judgment which the Sovereign Judge will hold. At this voice there appeared many Saints, and also the twelve Apostles, as Assistants of this judgment; and at last there entered Jesus Christ, who went and sat in one of those two chairs. Then appeared Mary attended by many holy Virgins, who was set by her Son in that other Chair. Then the Judge ordered that the Accused should be brought thither, and this was the wretched Udo. St. Maurice spoke, and demanded justice for his infamous life on the part of that scandalized People. All raised their voice: Lord, he deserves death. Away then, let him die, said the Eternal Judge. But before the sentence was executed (see how great is the Mercy of Mary), she, the merciful Mother, in order not to be present at that dreadful act of justice, departed from the Church; and then the heavenly Minister who had entered among the rest with the sword drew near to Udo, and at a single blow struck his head from his body; and the vision vanished. The place had been left in darkness. The Canon, all trembling, goes to light his lamp at a lamp that was burning below the Church, returns, and sees the body of Udo

with the head severed, and the pavement all bloodied. Day come, and the People having gathered in the Church, the Canon related the whole vision and the fact of that horrible tragedy. And on the same day the wretched Udo appeared, damned in Hell, to a Chaplain of his who knew nothing of what had happe-

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-ned in the Church. The corpse of Udo was therefore thrown into a marsh, and his blood remained as a perpetual memorial upon that pavement, which is kept always covered with a carpet; and from that time onward the custom was taken up of uncovering it at the time when a new Bishop takes possession, so that at the sight of such a chastisement he may think to order his life well, and not to be ungrateful for the graces of the Lord and of his Most Holy Mother.

Prayer.

O HOLY and heavenly Child, you who are the destined Mother of my Redeemer, and the great mediatress of wretched sinners, have pity on me. Behold at your feet another ingrate who has recourse to you and asks your pity. It is true that for my ingratitude towards God and towards You I should deserve to be abandoned by God and by You; but I hear it said, and so I hold (knowing how great is your mercy), that You do not fail to help whoever commends himself to You with confidence. Therefore, O most exalted Creature of the World — since above You there is none but God, and before You the greatest of Heaven are little — O Holy one of the Holy, O Mary, abyss of Grace and full of Grace, succour a wretch who has lost it by his own fault. I know that you are so dear to God that he denies you nothing. I know too that you delight to employ your greatness in raising up miserable sinners. Ah, show how great is the Grace you possess with God, by obtaining for me a light and a Divine flame so powerful that it may change me from a sinner into a Saint, and that, detaching me from every earthly affection, it may kindle me wholly with Divine love. Do it, Lady, for you can do it. Do it for the love of that God who has made you so great, so powerful, and so merciful. So I hope. Amen.

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DISCOURSE III.

On the Presentation of Mary.

The offering that Mary made of herself to God was prompt, without delay; it was entire, without reserve.

THERE has never been, nor ever will be, an offering of a mere Creature greater and more perfect than that

which Mary, a child of three years, made to God when she presented herself in the Temple to offer him — not spices, or calves, or talents of gold, but her whole self in perfect holocaust, consecrating herself a perpetual victim in his honour. Well did she understand the voice of God, who from that time was calling her to dedicate herself wholly to his love, in these words: *Surge, propera, amica mea, & veni.* (Cant. 2) — *Arise, make haste, my beloved, and come.* And therefore her Lord willed that from that time she should forget her country, her kindred, and everything, to attend only to loving and pleasing him: *Audi, filia, & vide, & inclina aurem tuam; & obliviscere populum tuum, & domum patris tui.* (Ps. 44) — *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear; and forget your people and your father's house.* And she promptly obeyed at once the Divine voice. Let us therefore consider how acceptable to God was that offering which Mary made him of herself, since she offered herself to him promptly and entirely: promptly, without delay; entirely, without reserve — two Points.

Point I. Let us begin: Mary offered herself promptly to God. For although from the first moment in which this heavenly Child was sanctified in her mother's womb — which was already in the first instant of her Immaculate Conception — she received the perfect use of reason, so as to be able from that time to begin to merit, as the Doctors say by common opinion with Fr. Suarez, who says that, since the most perfect manner God uses in sanctifying a Soul is to sanctify it by its own merit, as St. Thomas teaches (3. p. q. 19. a. 3.), so it must be believed that the holy Virgin was sanctified: *Sanctificari per proprium actum est perfectior modus. Ergo credendum est hoc modo fuisse sanctificatam Virginem.* (Tom. 2. in 3. p. D. 4. s. 8.) — *To be sanctified by one's own act is the more perfect manner. Therefore it must be believed that the Virgin was sanctified in this manner.* And if this privilege was granted to the Angels and to Adam, as the Angelic Doctor says (1. p. q. 63. a. 5. & q. 95. a. 2.), much more must we believe it granted to the Divine Mother, of whom it must certainly be supposed that God, having deigned to make her his Mother, conferred greater gifts on her than on all other Creatures, as the same holy Doctor teaches: *Ex ea accepit humanam Naturam, & ideo præ ceteris majorem debuit a Christo Gratiæ plenitudinem obtinere.* (3. p. q. 27. a. 5.) — *From her he received human Nature, and therefore she must have obtained from Christ a greater fullness of Grace than all the rest.* For being his Mother, says Fr. Suarez, she has a certain singular right to all the gifts of her Son: *Unde fit ut singulare jus habeat ad dona Filii sui.* (T. 2. in 3. p. D. 1. s. 2.) — *Whence it comes that she has a singular right to the gifts of her Son.* And as by the Hypostatic union it was reasonable that Jesus

should have the Fullness of all graces, so by the Di-

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-vine maternity it was fitting that Jesus by a natural debt should confer on Mary graces greater than those granted to all the other Saints and Angels.

So that from the beginning of her life Mary knew God, and knew him so far that no tongue (so the Angel said to St. Bridget) *will suffice to explain how far the Intellect of the holy Virgin reached in penetrating God, in the first instant in which she knew him.* (Serm. Ang. c. 14.) And from that time Mary, at that first light by which she was enlightened, offered herself wholly to her Lord, dedicating herself entirely to his love and to his glory; as the Angel went on to say to St. Bridget: *At once our Queen determined to sacrifice her will to God, with all her love, for the whole time of her life. And no one can comprehend how far her will then subjected itself to embrace all things of his good pleasure.* (loc. cit.)

But the Immaculate Child, understanding afterwards that her holy Parents, Joachim and Anne, had promised to God — and even by vow, as several Authors relate — that if he gave them offspring they would consecrate it to serve him in the Temple; and it being already an ancient custom of the Jews to enclose their Daughters in certain cells that stood round about the Temple, that they might be well brought up there — as Baronius, Nicephorus, Cedrenus, and Suarez with Josephus the Jew report, on the authority also of St. John Damascene, of St. George of Nicomedia, and of St. Anselm (De Form. & Mor. B. M.), and St. Ambrose (De Vir. l. 1.); and as is clearly gathered too from the Second Book of Maccabees 3:20, where, speaking of Heliodorus, who meant to assault the Temple to take the Treasury deposited there, it is said that *Pro eo quod in contemptum Locus esset venturus .... Virgines quæ conclusæ erant, procurrebant ad Oniam — because the Place was about to come into contempt ... the Virgins who were enclosed ran forth to Onias* — Mary, I say, understanding this, scarcely having reached the age of three years, as St. Germanus attests, and St. Epiphanius, who says: *Tertio anno oblata est in Templo* (Ser. de Laud. V.) — *In her third year she was offered in the Temple* — an age at which girls most desire, and have most need of, the assistance of their parents — she willed solemnly to offer and consecrate herself to God by presenting herself in the Temple. Whence she was the first who went to entreat her Parents urgently that they would take her to the Temple, to fulfil their promise. And her holy Mother, says St. Gregory of Nyssa: *An-*

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-na haud cunctata est eam ad Templum adducere, ac Deo offerre. (Or. de Nat. Chri.) *— Anne did not delay to bring her to the Temple and to offer her to God.*

And behold how Joachim and Anne, generously sacrificing to God the dearest part of their hearts that they had on earth, set out from Nazareth, now the one and now the other carrying in their arms their too-beloved little daughter, since she was not fit for so long a journey as that from Nazareth to Jerusalem, of eighty miles, as several Authors relate. They went accompanied by a few kinsfolk, but the Angels in troops (says St. George of Nicomedia (de oblat. Deip.)) went attending and serving on that journey the immaculate little Virgin, who was going to consecrate herself to the Divine Majesty. *Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui, filia Principis!* (Cant. 7:1) — *How beautiful are your steps, O prince's daughter!* Oh how beautiful they are (the Angels must then have gone singing), how pleasing to God are these steps of yours which you take, to go and offer yourself to him, O great beloved daughter of our common Lord! God himself, says Bernardine de Busti, kept a great feast that day with all his heavenly Court, seeing his Spouse conducted to the Temple: *Magnam quoque festivitatem fecit Deus cum Angelis in deductione suæ Sponsæ ad Templum.* (Marial. p. 4. Serm. 1.) — *God also made a great festival with the Angels at the leading of his Spouse to the Temple.* For he never saw a Creature holier and more beloved go up to offer herself to him: *Quia nullus unquam Deo gratior usque ad illud tempus ascendit.* (loc. cit.) — *Because never until that time did any go up more pleasing to God.* Go then (St. Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, said to her), go, O Queen of the World, O Mother of God, go joyfully to the House of the Lord, to await the coming of the Divine Spirit, who will make you Mother of the Eternal Word: *Abi ergo, o Domina Mater Dei, in atria Domini, & exultans expecta Sancti Spiritus adventum, & Unigeniti Filii conceptionem.* (de oblat. Virg.) — *Go then, O Lady Mother of God, into the courts of the Lord, and rejoicing await the coming of the Holy Spirit and the conception of the Only-begotten Son.*

When the holy Company had reached the Temple, the lovely child turns to her Parents, and kneeling and kissing their hands asks their blessing; and then without turning back again she climbs the fifteen steps of the Temple (as Arias Montanus reports from Josephus the Jew), and presents herself to the Priest (St. Zachary, as St. Germanus will have it). And taking leave then of the World, and renouncing all the goods it promises to its followers, she offers and consecrates herself to her Creator.

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At the time of the Flood the raven sent out by Noah from the Ark stayed to feed on the corpses, but the Dove, without setting foot to ground, quickly returned to the Ark: *Reversa est ad eum in arcam* (Gen. 8:9) — *She returned to him into the ark.* Many who are sent by God into this World unhappily stop to feed on earthly goods. Not so our heavenly Dove Mary: she knew that our only Good, our only Hope, and

our only Love must be God; she knew that the World is full of dangers, and that he who leaves it soonest is the freer from its snares; whence she sought to fly from it from her most tender age, and went to shut herself within the sacred retirement of the Temple, where she might better hear his voice and better honour and love him. And thus the holy Virgin from the very beginning of her acting made herself wholly dear and pleasing to her Lord, as Holy Church makes her speak: *Congratulamini mihi omnes qui diligitis Dominum, quia, cum essem parvula, placui Altissimo.* (In 2. Resp. 1. Noct. in Fe. S. M. ad Niv.) — *Rejoice with me, all you who love the Lord; because when I was little I pleased the Most High.* And therefore she was likened to the Moon: for as the Moon completes her course more swiftly than the other Planets, so Mary sooner than all the Saints attained perfection, by giving herself promptly to God without delay, and entirely to God without reserve. And let us pass to the second Point, where we shall have much to say.

Point II. Well did the enlightened Child know that God does not accept a divided heart, but wills it wholly consecrated to his love, according to the Precept given: *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo — You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart.* Whence from the moment in which she began to live she began to love God with all her strength, and gave herself wholly to him. But her most Holy soul awaited with great desire the time of consecrating herself to him entirely in fact and with public solemnity. Let us consider then with what fervour the loving little Virgin, seeing herself now enclosed in that holy place, first prostrated herself to kiss that ground as the house of the Lord; then adored his Divine Majesty, thanked him for the favour received of being brought so early to dwell in his house. And then she offered herself wholly to her God; wholly, without reserve of anything, offering him all her Powers and all her senses, her whole Mind and her whole Heart, her whole Soul and her whole Body; for it was then, as they hold, that to please God she made the vow of her Virginity — a Vow which Mary was the first to make, in the words of Ru-

-pert the Abbot: *Votum virginitatis prima emisit.* (Lib. 1. de laud. Virg.) — *She was the first to make the vow of virginity.* And she offered herself wholly without limitation of time, as Bernardine de Busti asserts: *Maria seipsam perpetuis Dei obsequiis obtulit & dedicavit.* (Mar. p. 4. Serm. 1.) — *Mary offered and dedicated herself to the perpetual service of God.* For she had then the intention of dedicating herself to serve his Divine Majesty in the Temple for her whole life, if so it should please God, never going out again from that sacred place. Oh with what affection she must then have said: *Dilectus meus mihi, & ego illi.* (Cant. 2:16) — *My beloved*

to me, and I to him. Ego illi (as Hugh of St. Cher comments) *tota vivam, & tota moriar — to him I shall live wholly, and wholly die.* My Lord and God (she said), I have come here only to please you and to give you all the honour that I can; here I would live wholly for You, and for You die, if it please you; accept the Sacrifice which this poor Handmaid makes you, and help me to be faithful to you.

And here let us consider how holy was the life which Mary led in the Temple; where, *quasi Aurora consurgens — like the rising Dawn* — always growing in perfection, as the Dawn grows in her light, who can ever explain how from day to day there shone in Her, ever more beautiful, her virtues: Charity, Modesty, Humility, Silence, Mortification, Meekness? Planted in the House of God, this fair Olive (says St. John Damascene), watered by the Holy Spirit, became the dwelling of all the virtues: *Ad Templum adducitur, ac deinde in Domo Dei plantata, atque per Spiritum saginata, instar Olivæ frugiferæ virtutum omnium domicilium efficitur.* (Lib. 4. de Fid. c. 15.) — *She is brought to the Temple, and then, planted in the House of God and nourished by the Spirit, she is made, like a fruitful Olive, the dwelling-place of all the virtues.* In another place the same Saint says: *The countenance of the Virgin was modest, her mind humble, her words loving, issuing from a composed interior.* (Or. 1. de Nat. Virg.) And elsewhere he asserts: *The Virgin withdrew her thought from all earthly things, embracing all the Virtues. Practising perfection thus, she profited in a short time to such a degree that she merited to be made a Temple worthy of God.* (De Fid. Ort. l. 4. c. 15.)

St. Anselm too speaks of the life of the holy Virgin in the Temple, and says: *Mary was docile, she spoke little, she was always composed, without laughing and without ever being troubled. She persevered in Prayer, in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in fasts, and in all virtuous works.* (De Form. & Mor. B. M.) St. Jerome reports more particular things: Ma-

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-ry ordered her life thus: *From morning until terce she remained in Prayer; from terce until none she occupied herself in some work; from none she took up Prayer again until the Angel brought her food, as was his custom. She strove to be the first in the vigils, the most exact in the Divine Law, the deepest in humility, and in every virtue the most perfect. No one ever saw her angry. All her words came forth so full of sweetness that God was always recognized in her Tongue.* (St. Jerome, in the Hist. of the Life of Mary by Fr. Joseph of Jesus and Mary, Discalced Carmelite, lib. 2. c. 1.)

The same Divine Mother afterwards revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine Virgin in the Monastery of Schönau (as is read in St. Bonaventure, de Vita Christi c. 3.), that when she was left in the Temple by her Parents she resolved to have God

alone for her Father; and she often thought what she might do to give him pleasure: *Cum Pater meus & Mater mea dimiserunt me in Templo, statui in corde meo habere Deum in Patrem, & sæpe cogitabam quid possem facere illi gratum — When my Father and my Mother left me in the Temple, I resolved in my heart to have God for my Father, and I often thought what I might do that would be pleasing to him.* She resolved further to consecrate to him her Virginity, and to possess nothing whatever in the World, giving to God her whole will: *Statui servare Virginitatem: nihil unquam possidere in Mundo, & omnem voluntatem meam Deo commisi — I resolved to keep my Virginity, never to possess anything in the World, and I committed my whole will to God.* Moreover she told her that among all the Precepts to be kept she set before her eyes the Precept, *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum — You shall love the Lord your God*; and that she used to go at midnight to pray to the Lord at the Altar of the Temple that he would grant her the grace to keep the Precepts, and to let her see the Mother of the Redeemer born, praying him that he would preserve her eyes to see her, her tongue to praise her, her hands and feet to serve her, and her knees to adore in her Womb her Divine Son. But St. Elizabeth, hearing this, said to her: *But Lady, were you not full of Grace and of Virtue?* And Mary answered her: *Know that I reckoned myself the vilest and most unworthy of Divine Grace; therefore I asked thus for Grace and for the Virtues.* And finally, that we may be persuaded of the absolute necessity we all have of seeking from God the graces we need, she added: *Do you think that I had Grace and the Virtues without labour? Know that I had no grace whatever from God without great labour, continual prayer, ardent desire, and many tears and penances.*

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But above all we should consider the Revelations made to St. Bridget of the virtues and exercises practised by the Blessed Virgin in her childhood, in these words: *From her Infancy Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit, and as she grew in age, Grace grew in her. From that time she resolved to love God with her whole heart, so that in her actions and in her words he should never be offended; and therefore all the goods of the earth were despised by her. She gave what she could to the poor. In eating she was so temperate that she took only what was purely necessary to sustain the body. Then, gathering from sacred Scripture that this God was to be born of a Virgin to redeem the World, her Spirit was so kindled in Divine Love that she neither longed for nor thought of anything but God; and taking pleasure in God alone, she fled the conversation even of her Parents, lest they should draw her away from the memory of God. And she supremely desired to be living at the time of the coming of the Messiah, that she might be the Handmaid of that happy little Virgin who merited to be his*

Mother. So say the revelations made to St. Bridget (Lib. 1. & l. 3. c. 8.).

Ah yes, for love of this great Child the Redeemer hastened his coming into the World: for whereas she in her humility did not think herself even worthy to be the Handmaid of the Divine Mother, she was chosen to be that Mother; and by the fragrance of her virtues and by her powerful Prayers she drew the Divine Son into her virginal Womb. Therefore Mary was called a Turtledove by her Divine Spouse: *Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra* (Cant. 2:11) so printed; the verse is Cant. 2:12 — *The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.* Not only because, like a turtledove, she always loved solitude, living in this World as in a desert; but also because, like the turtledove that goes always moaning through the fields, Mary always moaned in the Temple, lamenting the miseries of the lost World and seeking from God the common Redemption. Oh with what greater affection and fervour she repeated to God in the Temple the Supplications and the sighs of the Prophets, that he would send the Redeemer! *Emitte agnum Domine dominatorem terræ.* (Isa. 16:1) — *Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth. Rorate Cœli desuper, & nubes pluant justum.* (Id. 45:8) — *Drop down dew, you Heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just one. Utinam dirumperes cælos, & descenderes.* (Id. 64:1) — *Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down.*

In sum, it was the object of God's delight to see this little Virgin rise ever higher to

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the loftiest perfection, like a little rod of smoke, rich with the perfumes of all the virtues, even as the Holy Spirit describes her in the Sacred Canticles: *Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi, ex aromatibus myrrhæ, & thuris, & omnis pulveris pigmentarii.* (Cant. 3:6) — *Who is this that comes up through the desert like a little rod of smoke, of the perfumes of myrrh and frankincense and of every powder of the perfumer?* This holy Child was in truth (says Sophronius) the Garden of the Lord's delights, because in her he found every kind of flower and every perfume of the virtues: *Vere Virgo erat Hortus deliciarum, in quo consita sunt universa florum genera, & odoramenta virtutum.* (Serm. de Ass.) — *Truly the Virgin was a Garden of delights, in which were planted all kinds of flowers and the perfumes of the virtues.* Whence St. John Chrysostom affirms (see Cunf. lib. 1. de B. V. c. 13.) that God therefore chose Mary for his Mother on earth, because he found on earth no Virgin holier and more perfect than Mary, nor any place worthier to dwell in than her most sacred womb; as St. Bernard likewise says: *Nec in terris locus dignior utero Virginali — Nor is there on earth a place worthier than the Virginal womb.* St. Antoninus asserting that the Blessed Virgin, in order to be chosen and

destined to the dignity of Mother of God, must have possessed a perfection so great and consummate as to surpass the perfection of all other Creatures: *Ultima gloria perfectionis est præparatio ad Filium Dei concipiendum.* (P. 4. tit. 15. c. 6.) — *The last glory of perfection is the preparation for conceiving the Son of God.*

As therefore the holy little Mary presented and offered herself in the Temple to God promptly and entirely, so let us on this day, without delay and without reserve, present ourselves to Mary, and beg her to offer us to God, who will not refuse us when he sees us offered by her hand — she who was the living Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Delight of her Lord, and the chosen Mother of the Eternal Word. And let us hope much in this exalted and most gracious Lady, who repays with more than enough love the homage she receives from her devoted servants, as may be seen from the following Example.

Example.

IT is read in the Life of Sister Domenica del Paradiso, written by Fr. Ignazio del Nente, a Dominican, that in a village named Paradiso near Florence this little Virgin was born of poor Parents. From childhood she began to serve the Divine Mother. She fasted in her honour all the days of the Week, and then on Saturday she distributed

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to the Poor that food which she had taken from her own mouth; and every Saturday she went into the garden of the House, or into the neighbouring fields, and there gathered all the flowers she could, and presented them before an Image of the holy Virgin with the Child in her arms which she kept in the House. But let us turn now to see with how many favours the most gracious Lady repaid the homage which this her Handmaid offered her. Domenica being once at the window (and she was then ten years old), she saw in the street a Woman of beautiful aspect, and with her a little Child, both of whom were holding out their hands in the act of asking alms. She goes to fetch bread, and behold, without the door being opened, she saw them beside her, and saw that the Child had his hands, his feet, and his breast wounded. Whereupon she asked the Woman: *Who has wounded this Child?* The Mother answered: *It was Love.* Domenica, enamoured of the beauty and modesty of that little Child, asked him whether those wounds hurt him. But he answered only with a smile. Meanwhile, all of them being now near the Images of Jesus and of Mary, the Woman said to Domenica: *Tell me, Daughter, what moves you to crown these Images with flowers?* She answered: *I am moved by the Love I bear to Jesus and Mary. And*

how much do you love them? I love them as much as I can. And how much can you? As much as They help me. Go on then (said the Woman), *go on loving them, for they will indeed repay you for it in Paradise.*

Then the Maiden, feeling a heavenly fragrance come forth from those wounds, asked the Mother with what ointment she anointed them, and whether that ointment could be bought. The Woman answered: *It is bought with Faith and with works.* Domenica offered the bread. The Mother said: *The food of this my Son is Love; tell him that you love Jesus, and you will make him content.* The Child at this name of Love began to rejoice, and turning to the Girl asked her how much she loved Jesus. And she answering that she loved him so much that day and night she always thought of him, and sought nothing else but to please him as much as she could: *Well then* (he added), *love him, for Love will teach you what you have to do to content him.* Then, the fragrance exhaling from those wounds increasing, Domenica exclaimed: *O God, this fragrance makes me die of Love. If the fragrance of a Child is so sweet, what will the fragrance of Paradise be!* But behold, then

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the scene changed: the Mother appeared clothed as a Queen and surrounded with light, and the Child shining like a Sun of beauty, who, taking those same flowers, scattered them on the head of Domenica, who, now recognizing in those Persons Mary and Jesus, had prostrated herself to adore them. And so the vision ended. Domenica afterwards took the Dominican habit, and died with the repute of a Saint in the year 1553.

Prayer.

O BELOVED of God, most lovable Child Mary, oh, as you presented yourself in the Temple, and promptly, and consecrated yourself wholly to the Glory and to the Love of your God, would that I could today offer you the first years of my life, to dedicate myself wholly to serving You, my holy and most sweet Lady! But I am no longer in time, since unhappily I have lost so many years in serving the World and my own whims, having almost wholly forgotten You and God. *Væ tempori illi, in quo non amavi Te! — Woe to that time in which I did not love You!* But it is better late than never to begin. Behold, O Mary, today I present myself to You, and offer myself wholly to your service, and for the little or much that remains to me to live on this earth; and together with You I renounce all Creatures, and dedicate myself entirely to the Love of my Creator. I consecrate to you then, O Queen, my mind, that it may think always of the Love which You deserve; my tongue, to praise you;

my heart, to love you. Accept, O most holy little Virgin, the offering which this wretched sinner presents you; accept it, I pray you, for the sake of that consolation which your Heart felt when in the Temple you gave yourself to God. And if I set myself late to serve you, it is right that I should make up the lost time by doubling my homage and my Love to you. Do you with your powerful Intercession, O Mother of Mercy, help my weakness, by obtaining for me from your Jesus Perseverance and strength to be faithful to you until death; so that, always serving you in this life, I may come to praise you eternally in Paradise.

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DISCOURSE IV.

On the Annunciation of Mary.

In the Incarnation of the Word Mary could not have humbled herself more than she humbled herself. God, on the other hand, could not have exalted her more than he exalted her.

WHOEVER exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. This is the word of the Lord, and it cannot fail: *Qui autem se exaltat, humiliabitur: & qui se humiliat exaltabitur.* (Matt. 23:12) — *He that exalts himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.* Hence it is that, God having resolved to become Man in order to redeem lost man, and thus to make known to the World his infinite Goodness, and having to choose himself a Mother on earth, he went seeking among women which of them was the holiest and the most humble. But among them all he looked upon one, and it was the little Virgin Mary, who, the more perfect she was in virtue, so much the more simple and humble as a dove was she in her esteem of herself. *Adolescentularum* (said the Lord) *non est numerus, una est columba mea, perfecta mea.* (Cant. 6:8) — *Of the young maidens there is no number; one is my dove, my perfect one.* Let this one, said God, be my chosen Mother. Let us see, then, how humble Mary was, and therefore how high God raised her. In the Incarnation of the Word Mary could not have humbled herself more than she humbled herself: this will be the first point. God could not have exalted Mary more than he exalted her: this will be the second.

Point I. Speaking precisely of the humility of this most humble little Virgin, the Lord said in the Sacred Canticles: *Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum.* (Cant. 1:11) — *While the King was at his rest, my spikenard gave forth its odour.* St. Antoninus comments on the cited words and says that in the plant of Spikenard, because it is so small and low, was figured the humility of Mary, whose odour rose to Heaven and drew the Divine Word from the bosom of the Eternal Father into her virginal womb: *Nardus est herba parva, & significat B.*

Virginem, quæ dedit humilitatis odorem: Qui odor usque ad Cœlum ascendit, & in cœlo accumbentem fecit quasi evigilare, & in utero suo quiescere. (p. 4. tit. 15. c. 21. §. 2.) — *Spikenard is a small herb, and signifies the Blessed Virgin, who gave forth the odour of humility: which odour ascended even to Heaven, and made him who reclined in heaven as it were to awake, and to rest in her womb.* So that the Lord, drawn by the odour of this humble little Virgin, chose her for his Mother when he willed to become Man to redeem the World. But for the greater glory and merit of this Mother he would not become her Son with-

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-out first having her consent: *Noluit carnem sumere ex ipsa, non dante ipsa — He would not take flesh of her, unless she gave it.* So says William the Abbot on Canticles 3. Hence, while the humble little Virgin was in her poor little House, and was sighing and praying to God then more than ever with greater desire that he would send the Redeemer, as was revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Nun of St. Benedict — behold, the Archangel Gabriel comes to bear the great Embassy; he enters, and salutes her saying: *Ave, gratia plena; Dominus tecum: Benedicta tu in mulieribus.* (Luke 1) — *Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women.* God save you, O Virgin full of Grace, for you were always rich in Grace above all the other Saints. The Lord is with you, because you are so humble. You are blessed among women, whereas all the rest incurred the malediction of sin; but you, because Mother of the blessed one, have been and always will be blessed, and free from every stain.

Meanwhile, at this salutation so full of praises, what did the humble Mary answer? Nothing; she did not answer, but thinking upon such a salutation she was troubled: *Quæ cum audisset, turbata est in sermone ejus, & cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio — Who having heard this, was troubled at his saying, and thought what manner of salutation this should be.* And why was she troubled? Perhaps from fear of illusion, or from modesty at seeing a Man — as some will have it, thinking the Angel appeared to her in human form? No, the text is clear: *turbata est in sermone ejus* (Eusebius of Emesa notes): *non in vultu, sed in sermone ejus — not at his face, but at his saying.* Such a trouble, then, was wholly of humility, at hearing praises so far removed from her own humble esteem of herself. So that the more she hears herself exalted by the Angel, the more she casts herself down, and enters into the consideration of her own nothingness. St. Bernardine reflects here and says that if the Angel had ever told her that she was the greatest sinner in the world, Mary would not have wondered at it so much; but on hearing those praises so lofty, she was wholly troubled: *Si dixisset, o Maria, tu es major ribalda quæ est in Mundo, non*

ita admirata fuisset: unde turbata fuit de tantis laudibus. (Serm. 35. de Annunc. p. 3.) — *If he had said, O Mary, you are the greatest wretch in the World, she would not have wondered so; whence she was troubled at praises so great.* She was troubled because, being so full of humility, she abhorred all praise of herself, and desired that only her Creator and the giver of every good should be praised and blessed. Just so Mary herself said to St. Bridget, speaking of the time in which she was made Mother of God: *Nolui laudem meam, sed solius Datoris & Creatoris.* (L. 1. Rev. c. 23.) — *I wished not my own praise, but that of the Giver and Creator alone.*

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But at least, I say, the Blessed Virgin was well instructed from the Sacred Scriptures that the time foretold by the Prophets of the coming of the Messiah had already arrived; that the weeks of Daniel were already fulfilled; that, according to the Prophecy of Jacob, the sceptre of Judah had already passed into the hand of Herod, a foreign King; she already knew that a Virgin was to be the Mother of the Messiah. Then she hears the Angel give her those praises which to anyone else would already have seemed to befit none but a Mother of God: did there perhaps then come into her mind at least a "who knows whether I might be this chosen Mother of God?" No: her profound humility did not even let her enter upon such a thought. Those praises availed only to make her enter into a great fear; so much so that, as St. Peter Chrysologus reflects: *Sicut Christus per Angelum voluit confortari, ita per Angelum debuit Virgo animari — As Christ willed to be comforted by an Angel, so the Virgin had to be encouraged by an Angel.* As the Saviour willed to be comforted by an Angel, so it was needful that St. Gabriel, seeing Mary so dismayed at that salutation, should hearten her, saying: *Ne timeas Maria, invenisti gratiam apud Deum — Fear not, Mary, you have found grace with God.* Fear not, O Mary, nor be amazed at the great titles with which I have saluted you; for though in your own eyes you are so little and so low, God who exalts the humble has made you worthy to find the Grace lost by men; and therefore he has preserved you from the common stain of all the children of Adam; therefore from your very Conception he has adorned you with a Grace greater than that of all the Saints; therefore at last he now exalts you even to be his Mother. *Ecce concipies, & paries Filium, & vocabis nomen ejus Jesum — Behold, you shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus.*

Come now, what is awaited? *Expectat Angelus responsum* (St. Bernard speaks here), *expectamus & nos, o Domina, verbum miserationis, quos miserabiliter premit sententia damnationis.* (Hom. 4. sup. Miss.) — *The Angel awaits an answer; we too await, O Lady, the word of mercy, we whom the sentence of damnation miserably weighs down.* Lady, the Angel awaits your answer: still more do we await it, already

condemned to death. *Ecce offertur tibi pretium salutis nostræ; statim liberabimur, si consentis — Behold, the price of our salvation is offered to you; at once we shall be freed, if you consent.* St. Bernard goes on: Behold, O our Mother, there is now offered to you the price of our salvation, which will be the Divine Word made Man in you; if you accept him for your Son, at once we shall be delivered from death. *Ipse quoque Dominus, quantum concupivit Decorem tuum, tantum desiderat & responsionis assensum, in qua nimirum proposuit salvare Mundum.* (St. Bern. loc. cit.) — *The Lord himself, as much as he has desired your Beauty, so much does he desire the assent of your answer, in which assuredly he has purposed to save the World.* Our same

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Lord — as much as he is enamoured of your beauty, so much does he desire your consent, in which he has resolved to save the World. *Responde jam Virgo sacra* (St. Augustine takes it up): *vitam quid tardas Mundo?* (Serm. 21. de Temp.) — *Answer now, sacred Virgin: why do you delay life to the World?* Quickly, Lady, answer: delay no longer to the World the salvation which now depends on your consent.

But behold, Mary now answers; she answers the Angel and says: *Ecce Ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum — Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.* O answer, than which a fairer, humbler, and more prudent could not have been invented by all the wisdom of men and of Angels together, had they thought upon it for a million years! O powerful answer, that gladdened Heaven and brought to earth an immense sea of graces and of goods! Answer that, scarcely gone forth from the humble Heart of Mary, drew from the bosom of the Eternal Father the Only-begotten Son into her most pure womb to become Man! Yes, for scarcely were those words uttered — *Ecce Ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* — when at once *Verbum caro factum est — the Word was made flesh* — and the Son of God became also the Son of Mary. *O Fiat potens!* (exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova) *O Fiat efficax! O Fiat super omni fiat venerandum!* (Conc. 3. de Ann.) — *O powerful Fiat! O efficacious Fiat! O Fiat to be venerated above every fiat!* For with the other Fiats God created Light, Heaven, Earth: but with this Fiat of Mary (says the Saint) a God became Man like us.

But let us not depart from our point; let us consider the great humility of the virgin in this answer. She was well enlightened to know how exalted is the dignity of Mother of God. Already she was assured by the Angel that she was this happy Mother chosen by the Lord. But for all that she advances not at all in the esteem of herself, stops not at all to take complacency in her exaltation; looking on the one side at her own nothingness, and on the other at the infinite Majesty of her God

who chooses her for his Mother, she knows herself unworthy of such honour, but will not in the least oppose his will. And so, asked for her consent, what does she do? what does she say? She, wholly annihilated in herself, wholly inflamed by a further desire of thus uniting herself the more with God, wholly abandoning herself to the Divine will: *Ecce*, she answers, *ecce Ancilla Domini.* Behold the handmaid of the Lord, bound to do what her Lord com-

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-mands. And she meant to say: If the Lord chooses for his Mother me, who have nothing of my own, and all that I have is his gift, who can ever think that he has done it for any merit of mine? *Ecce Ancilla Domini.* What merit can a handmaid ever have, to be made the Mother of her Lord? *Ecce Ancilla Domini.* Let the goodness of the Lord alone therefore be praised, and let not the handmaid be praised; since it is all his goodness to set his eyes upon a Creature so low as I am, and to make her so great.

O humilitas (Guerric the Abbot here exclaims) *angusta sibi, ampla Divinitati! Insufficiens sibi, sufficiens ei quem non capit Orbis! — O humility, narrow to itself, ample to the Godhead! Insufficient for itself, sufficient for him whom the World does not contain!* O great humility of Mary, which makes her little to herself but great before God! Unworthy in her own eyes, but worthy in the eyes of that immense Lord whom the World does not contain. But finer still on this subject is the exclamation of St. Bernard in his fourth Sermon on Mary's Assumption, in which, marvelling at the humility of Mary, he says: Lady, how could you unite in your heart so humble an esteem of yourself with so great a purity, so great an innocence, and so great a fullness of Grace as you possess? *Quanta humilitatis virtus, cum tanta puritate, cum innocentia tanta, imo cum tanta Gratiæ plenitudine? — How great a virtue of humility, with so great a purity, with so great an innocence, nay with so great a fullness of Grace!* And whence ever (the Saint goes on), O Blessed Virgin, has that humility — and so great a humility — taken such deep root in you, seeing yourself so honoured and raised up by God? *Unde tibi humilitas, & tanta humilitas, o Beata? — Whence have you humility, and so great a humility, O Blessed one?* Lucifer, seeing himself endowed with great beauty, aspired to exalt his throne above the stars and to make himself like God: *Super astra Dei solium exaltabo, similis ero altissimo.* (Is. 14:13) — *I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will be like the Most High.* Now what would that proud one have said and claimed, had he ever seen himself adorned with the gifts of Mary? The humble Mary did not so: the more she saw herself exalted, so much the more did she humble herself. Ah, Lady, by this so lovely humility (St. Bernard concludes) you have indeed made yourself worthy to

be looked upon by God with a singular love; worthy to enamour your King with your beauty; worthy to draw with the sweet odour of your humility the Eternal Son from his repose in the bosom of God into your most pure womb: *Digna plane quam respiceret Dominus, cujus decorem concupisceret Rex; cujus odore suavissimo ab æterno illa Paterni sinus attraheretur accubitus.* (loc. cit.) — *Worthy indeed that the Lord should look on her; whose beauty the King should desire; by whose most sweet odour that eternal reclining in the Father's bosom should be drawn away.* Whence Bernar-

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-dine de Bustis says that Mary merited more by that answer, *ecce ancilla Domini*, than all creatures could merit by all their works: *Beata Virgo plus meruit, dicendo humiliter, ecce Ancilla Domini, quam simul mereri possent omnes puræ Creaturæ.* (Mar. 12. p. 5. p. 2.) — *The Blessed Virgin merited more by humbly saying, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, than all pure Creatures together could merit.*

So it is, says St. Bernard: for this innocent Virgin, though by her Virginity she made herself dear to God, nevertheless by her humility she then made herself worthy — so far as a Creature could make herself worthy — to be made the Mother of her Creator: *Etsi placuit ex Virginitate, tamen ex humilitate concepit.* (Hom. 1. sup. Miss.) — *Though she pleased by her Virginity, yet by her humility she conceived.* And St. Jerome confirms it, saying that God chose her for his Mother more for her humility than for all her other exalted virtues: *Maluit Deus de Virgine incarnari propter humilitatem, quam propter aliam quamcumque virtutem — God chose rather to be incarnate of the Virgin for her humility than for any other virtue whatever.* Mary herself expressed this to St. Bridget, saying to her: Whence did I merit such a grace as to be made the Mother of my Lord, save because I knew my own nothingness and humbled myself? *Unde promerui tantam gratiam, nisi quia cogitavi & scivi nihil a me esse, vel habere?* (L. 2. Rev. c. 23.) — *Whence did I merit so great a grace, save that I thought and knew that of myself I was and had nothing?* The same she declared in her most humble Canticle when she said: *Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ ... fecit mihi magna qui potens est.* (Luke 1) — *Because he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid ... he that is mighty has done great things for me.* Where St. Lawrence Justinian notes that the Blessed Virgin *non ait, respexit Virginitatem, sed humilitatem tantum — she did not say, he has regarded my Virginity, but only my lowliness.* And with regard to this humility, St. Francis de Sales observes that Mary did not mean to praise the virtue of her humility, but willed to declare that God had regarded her nothingness — *humilitatem, idest nihilitatem* — and of his mere goodness had willed thus to exalt her.

In sum, St. Augustine says that the humility of Mary was as a ladder by which the Lord deigned to come down to earth to become Man in her womb: *Facta est Mariæ humilitas Scala cælestis, per quam Deus descendit ad terras.* (Sup. Magn.) — *The humility of Mary was made a heavenly Ladder, by which God came down to earth.* And St. Antoninus confirms it, saying that the Virgin's humility was her most perfect and most proximate disposition to be the Mother of God: *Ultima gratia perfectionis est præparatio ad Filium Dei concipiendum; quæ præparatio fuit per profundam humilitatem.* (p. 5. tit. 15. c. 6. & 8.) — *The last grace of perfection is the preparation for conceiving the Son of God; which preparation was through profound humility.* And by this is understood what Isaiah foretold: *Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, & flos de radice ejus ascendet.* (Isa. 11:1) — *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.* Blessed Al-

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-bert the Great reflects that the Divine Flower — that is, the Only-begotten of God — according to what Isaiah said, was to be born not from the summit or from the trunk of the plant of Jesse, but from the root, precisely to signify the humility of the Mother: *De radice ejus, Humilitas cordis intelligitur — By "his root" the humility of the heart is understood.* And the Abbot of Celles explains it more plainly: *Nota, quod non ex summitate, sed de radice ascendet flos — Note that not from the summit but from the root shall the flower rise.* And therefore the Lord said to this his beloved Daughter: *Averte oculos tuos, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.* (Cant. 6:5) — *Turn away your eyes, for they have made me fly away.* St. Augustine: *Ubi te avolare, nisi a sinu Patris in uterum Matris? — Whither to fly, but from the bosom of the Father into the womb of the Mother?* Upon which thought the learned Interpreter Fernandez says that the most humble eyes of Mary, with which she ever gazed on the Divine Greatness, never losing sight of her own nothingness, did such violence to God himself that they drew him into her womb: *Ita illius oculi humillimi Deum tenuerunt, ut suavissima quadam violentia ipsummet Dei Patris Verbum in uterum suum Virgo attraherit.* (Inc. 14. Gen. sect. 3.) — *So did her most humble eyes hold God, that by a certain most sweet violence the Virgin drew the very Word of God the Father into her own womb.* And by this, says the Abbot Franco, we understand why the Holy Spirit so praised the beauty of this his spouse for the eyes she had of a Dove: *Quam pulchra es, amica mea! quam pulchra es! oculi tui columbarum.* (Cant. 4:1) — *How beautiful you are, my beloved! how beautiful you are! your eyes are those of doves.* Because Mary, gazing on God with the eyes of a simple and humble dove, so enamoured him of her beauty that with the bond of love she made him a prisoner in her virginal womb! So speaks the Abbot Franco: *Ubinam terrarum tam speciosa*

Virgo inveniri posset, quæ Regem Cælorum oculis caperet, & vinculis Caritatis pia violentia captivum traheret? (De Grat. Nov. Test. tr. 6.) — *Where on earth could so beautiful a Virgin be found, who should take captive the King of the Heavens with her eyes, and by a holy violence draw him prisoner in the bonds of Charity?* So that Mary (let us conclude this point), in the Incarnation of the Word, as we have seen from the beginning, could not have humbled herself more than she humbled herself. Let us now see how God, having made her his Mother, could not have exalted her more than he exalted her.

Point II. To comprehend the height to which Mary was raised, one would have to comprehend how sublime is the height and the greatness of God. It will be enough therefore only to say that God made this Virgin his Mother, to understand that God could not have exalted her more than he exalted her. Well did St. Arnold of Chartres assert that God, by becoming the Son of the Virgin, constituted her in a height superior to all the Saints and Angels: *Maria constituta est super omnem Creaturam.* (Tract. de L. V.) — *Mary is set above every Creature.* So that, apart

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from God, she is beyond comparison higher than all the heavenly Spirits, as St. Ephrem speaks: *Nulla comparatione ceteris superis est gloriosior.* (Or. de Laud. Deip.) — *Beyond all comparison she is more glorious than the rest of the heavenly ones.* And St. Andrew of Crete confirms it: *Excepto Deo, omnibus est altior.* (Or. de Dorm. Deip.) — *God excepted, she is higher than all* — with St. Anselm, who says: Lady, you have none equal to you, because every other is either above or below you; God alone is above you, and all the rest are below you: *Nihil tibi, Domina, est æquale; omne enim quod est, aut supra te est, aut infra: quod supra, solus Deus; quod infra, est omne quod Deus non est.* (ap. Pelb. Stellar. l. 1. p. 3. c. 2.) — *Nothing, Lady, is equal to you; for everything that is, is either above you or below you: what is above, God alone; what is below, is all that is not God.* So great in sum (St. Bernardine takes it up) is the height of this Virgin that God alone can comprehend her: *Tanta est perfectio Virginis, ut soli Deo cognoscenda reservetur.* (To. 2. Serm. 51. a. 3. c. 1.) — *So great is the perfection of the Virgin that it is reserved to God alone to know it.*

And this removes the wonder of some (St. Thomas of Villanova observes) as to why the sacred Evangelists, who have been so full in recording the praises of a Baptist, of a Magdalen, should then have been so sparing in describing the excellences of Mary. *Satis fuit* (the Saint answers) *de ea dicere: de qua natus est Jesus — It was enough to say of her: of whom Jesus was born.* What more do you seek (the same continues) that the Evangelists should say of the greatnesses of this Virgin? let it suffice you that they attest her to be the Mother of God. Having then written in

this one saying the greatest, the whole of her excellences, there was no need for them to go describing them piece by piece: *Quid ultra requiris? Sufficit tibi quod Mater Dei est. Ubi ergo totum erat, pars scribenda non fuit.* (Conc. 2. de Nat. Virg.) — *What more do you require? It suffices you that she is the Mother of God. Where the whole was, no part needed to be written.* And how not? St. Anselm takes it up: to say of Mary this alone, that she is the Mother of a God, surpasses every height that can be said or thought after God: *Hoc solum de S. Virgine prædicari, quod Dei Mater sit, excedit omnem altitudinem, quæ post Deum dici vel cogitari potest.* (De Exc. Virg. c. 4.) — *To predicate this alone of the holy Virgin, that she is the Mother of God, exceeds every height that after God can be spoken or thought.* And Peter of Celle adds upon the same thought: Give her what name you will — Queen of Heaven, or Lady of the Angels, or any other title of honour — you will never come to honour her so much as by calling her simply the Mother of God: *Si Cæli Reginam, si Angelorum Dominam, vel quodlibet aliud protuleris; non assurges ad hunc honorem, quo prædicatur Dei Genitrix.* (Lib. de Pan. c. 31.) — *If you should utter "Queen of Heaven", "Lady of the Angels", or anything else, you will not rise to that honour by which she is proclaimed Mother of God.*

The reason is evident, because, as the Angelic Doctor teaches, the nearer a thing comes to its prin-

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-ciple, the more it receives of its perfection; and therefore Mary being the Creature nearest to God, she has partaken of it more than all others in grace, in perfection, and in Greatness: *Quanto aliquid magis participat illius effectum, &c. Beata autem Virgo Maria propinquissima Christo fuit, quia ex ea accepit humanam naturam; & ideo præ cæteris majorem debuit a Christo Gratiæ plenitudinem obtinere.* (3. p. q. 27. a. 5.) — *The more anything partakes of his effect, &c. But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ, because from her he received human nature; and therefore she must have obtained from Christ a greater fullness of Grace than all the rest.* Hence Fr. Suarez draws the reason why the dignity of Mother of God is of an order superior to every other created dignity; since it belongs in a certain manner to the order of the union with a Divine person, with which it is necessarily conjoined: *Dignitas Matris est altioris ordinis, pertinet enim quodammodo ad ordinem unionis hypostaticæ; illum enim intrinsece respicit, & cum illa necessariam conjunctionem habet.* (Tom. 2. in 3. p. D. 1. s. 2.) — *The dignity of the Mother is of a higher order, for it pertains in a certain way to the order of the hypostatic union; for it intrinsically regards that union and has a necessary conjunction with it.* Whence St. Denis the Carthusian asserts that after the hypostatic union there is none nearer than that of

the Mother of God: *Post hypostaticam conjunctionem non est alia tam vicina, ut unio Matris Dei cum Filio suo.* (l. 2. de Laud. V.) — *After the hypostatic union there is no other so near as the union of the Mother of God with her Son.* This is (St. Thomas teaches) the supreme union that a mere creature can have with God: *Est suprema quædam conjunctio cum persona infinita.* (1. p. q. 25. a. 6.) — *It is a certain supreme conjunction with an infinite person.* And Blessed Albert the Great asserts that to be Mother of God is the dignity immediately after the dignity of being God: *Immediate post esse Deum, est esse Matrem Dei.* (Super Miss. c. 160.) — *Immediately after being God is being the Mother of God.* Whence he says that Mary could not have been more united to God than she was, save by becoming God herself: *Magis Deo conjungi, nisi fieret Deus, non potuit — She could not be more joined to God, unless she were made God.*

St. Bernardine affirms that for the holy Virgin to be Mother of God it was needful that she should be raised to a certain equality with the Divine Persons, by a kind of infinity of graces: *Quod femina conciperet & pareret Deum, oportuit eam elevari ad quamdam æqualitatem Divinam, per quandam infinitatem gratiarum.* (Tom. 1. Serm. 61. c. 16.) — *That a woman should conceive and bring forth God, it was needful that she be raised to a certain Divine equality, through a certain infinity of graces.* And since children with their Parents, morally speaking, are reckoned the same thing, so that their goods are common between them and their honours common, St. Peter Damian therefore says that if God dwells in different ways in Creatures, in Mary he dwelt in a singular manner of identity, making himself one thing with Mary: *Quarto modo inest Deus creaturæ, scilicet Mariæ Virgini, per identitatem, quia*

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quia idem est quam illa. (Serm. 1. de Nat. Virg.) — *In a fourth manner God is in a creature, namely in Mary the Virgin, by identity, because he is the same as she.* Then he exclaims with that celebrated saying: *Hic taceat & contremiscat omnis creatura, & vix audeat aspicere tantæ dignitatis immensitatem. Habitat Deus in Virgine, cum qua unius naturæ habet identitatem.* (Loc. cit.) — *Here let every creature be silent and tremble, and scarcely dare to look upon the immensity of so great a dignity. God dwells in the Virgin, with whom he has an identity of one nature.*

Therefore St. Thomas asserts that Mary, being made the Mother of God, by reason of this union so close with an infinite good, received a certain infinite dignity, which Fr. Suarez calls infinite in its own kind: *Dignitas matris Dei suo genere est infinita.* (Tom. 2. in 3. p. D. 1. s. 2.) — *The dignity of the Mother of God is in its own kind infinite.* For the dignity of divine mother is the greatest dignity that

can be conferred on a mere creature; the Angelic Doctor teaching that, as regards the humanity of Jesus Christ, although it could have received from God a greater habitual grace — *Cum enim gratia habitualis* (here is the reason he assigns) *sit donum creatum, confiteri oportet quod habeat essentiam finitam. Est cujuslibet creaturæ determinata capacitatis mensura, quæ tamen divinæ potestati non præjudicat, quia possit aliam creaturam majoris capacitatis facere.* (Opusc. 1. Comp. Theol. c. 213.) — *For since habitual grace is a created gift, it must be confessed to have a finite essence. There is for every creature a determined measure of capacity, which nevertheless does not prejudice the divine power, since it could make another creature of greater capacity* — nevertheless as regards the union with a Divine Person it could not receive a greater excellence: *Virtus divina, licet possit facere aliquid majus & melius quam sit habitualis gratia Christi, non tamen posset facere quod ordinaretur ad aliquid majus, quam sit unio personalis ad filium unigenitum a patre.* (3. p. q. 7. a. 11. ad 2.) So on the other hand the Blessed Virgin could not be made greater in dignity than to be the Mother of God: *B. Virgo ex hoc quod est Mater Dei, habet quandam dignitatem infinitam, ex bono infinito quod est Deus; Et ex hac parte non potest fieri melius.* (1. p. q. 25. a. 6. ad 4.) — *The Blessed Virgin, from the fact that she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity, from the infinite good which is God; and on this side nothing better can be made.* The same St. Thomas of Villanova wrote: *Utique habet quandam infinitatem esse matrem infiniti.* (Conc. 3. de Nat. Mar.) — *Surely it has a certain infinity to be the mother of the infinite.* And St. Bernardine says that the state to which God exalted Mary as his mother was the supreme one, so that he could not raise her higher: *Status maternitatis Dei erat summus status, qui puræ creaturæ dari posset.* (Tom. 1. serm. 61. c. 3.) — *The state of the Motherhood of God was the highest state that could be given to a mere creature.* And Blessed Albert the Great confirms it: *Dominus B. Virgini summum donavit, cujus capax fuit pura creatura, scilicet Dei maternitatem.* (Lib. 1. de Laud. Virg. c. 178.) — *The Lord gave the Blessed Virgin the highest thing of which a mere creature was capable, namely the Motherhood of God.*

Hence St. Bonaventure wrote that celebrated sen-

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-tence, that God can indeed make a greater world, a larger Heaven; but he cannot make a Creature more exalted than by making her his Mother: *Esse Matrem Dei est gratia maxima puræ Creaturæ conferibilis. Ipsa est quam majorem facere non potest Deus. Majorem mundum facere potest Deus, majus cælum; majorem quam matrem Dei facere non potest.* (Spec. B. V. Lect. 10.) — *To be the Mother of God is the greatest grace conferrable on a mere Creature. She is one than whom God cannot make a*

greater. God can make a greater world, a greater heaven; a greater than the mother of God he cannot make. But better than all, the Divine Mother herself expressed the height to which God had raised her when she said: *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est.* (Luke 1) — *He that is mighty has done great things for me.* And why did the holy Virgin never declare what these great things granted her by God were? St. Thomas of Villanova answers that Mary did not explain them because they were so great that they could not be explained: *Non explicat quænam hæc magna fuerint, quia inexplicabilia.* (Conc. 3. de Nat. V.) — *She does not explain what these great things were, because they are inexplicable.*

Whence St. Bernard had reason to say that for this Virgin, who was to be his Mother, God created the whole world: *Propter hanc totus mundus factus est.* (Serm. si in Salve Reg.) — *For her sake the whole world was made.* And St. Bonaventure, that the world endures at Mary's disposition: *Dispositione tua, Virgo Sanctissima, perseverat mundus, quem & tu cum Deo ab initio fundasti.* (see Fr. Pepe, Lesson 172.) — *By your disposition, most holy Virgin, the world endures, which you too with God founded from the beginning.* The Saint in this applying the words of Proverbs which the Church applies to Mary: *Cum eo eram cuncta componens.* (Prov. 8) — *I was with him forming all things.* St. Bernardine added that for love of Mary God did not destroy man after the sin of Adam: *Propter singularissimam dilectionem ad hanc Virginem præservavit.* (Tom. 1. Ser. 61. c. 8.) — *For his most singular love towards this Virgin he preserved him.* Hence with reason Holy Church sings of Mary: *Optimam partem elegit.* (In Off. Ass. B. V.) — *She has chosen the best part.* For this Virgin Mother not only chose the best things, but of the best things she chose the best part; the Lord endowing her in the highest degree (as Blessed Albert the Great attests) with all the graces and gifts, general and particular, conferred on all other Creatures — all in consequence of the dignity granted her of Divine Mother: *Beatissima Virgo gratia fuit plena, quia omnes gratias generales & speciales omnium creaturarum in summo habuit.* (Bibl. Ma. in Luc. 1:3) — *The most blessed Virgin was full of grace, because she had in the highest degree all the graces, general and special, of all creatures.*

So that Mary was an infant, but of that state she had only the innocence, not the defect of incapacity; for from her first living she always had the perfect use of reason. She was a Virgin, but without the ignominy of barrenness; she was a Mother, but together with the pre-

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-rogative of Virginity. She was beautiful, indeed most beautiful, as Richard of St. Victor says with St. George of Nicomedia, and St. Denis the Areopagite — who (as

many admit) said that he once saw her Beauty, and said that had not Faith instructed him that she was a creature, he would have to adore her as God. And the Lord himself revealed to St. Bridget that the beauty of his Mother surpassed the beauty of all men and Angels, making himself heard by the Saint speaking with Mary and saying to her: *Omnes Angelos, & omnia quæ creata sunt excessit pulchritudo tua.* (Lib. 1. Rev. c. 51.) — *Your beauty has surpassed all the Angels and all things that were created.* Most beautiful, I say, but without harm to those who looked upon her, since her beauty put impure motions to flight and instilled thoughts of purity, as St. Ambrose attests: *Tanta erat ejus gratia, ut non solum in se virginitatem servaret, sed etiam iis quos inviseret, integritatis donum insigne conferret.* (De Inst. Virg. c. 7.) — *So great was her grace that not only did she keep virginity in herself, but on those whom she visited she conferred the signal gift of integrity.* And St. Thomas confirms it: *Gratia sanctificationis non solum reprimit in Virgine motus illicitos, sed etiam in aliis efficaciam habuit; ita ut quamvis esset pulchra corpore, a nullo concupisceretur.* (in 3. Dist. 3. q. 2. a. 2.) — *The grace of sanctification not only repressed unlawful motions in the Virgin, but had efficacy in others also; so that although she was beautiful in body, she was desired by none.* Wherefore she called herself Myrrh, which prevents putrefaction: *Quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris — As choice myrrh I gave forth a sweetness of odour —* as Holy Church applies it. In the active life she laboured, but without her labour drawing her from union with God. In the contemplative she remained recollected in God, but without neglect of temporal things and of the charity owed to her neighbour. Death fell to her lot, but without its anguish and without the corruption of the body.

Let us conclude then. This divine mother is infinitely inferior to God, but immeasurably superior to all creatures. And if it is impossible to find a son nobler than Jesus, it is impossible also to find a mother nobler than Mary. This ought to serve the devoted servants of this Queen not only to rejoice at her greatnesses, but also to increase their confidence in her most powerful patronage; for, being the Mother of God, says Fr. Suarez, she has a certain right over his gifts, to obtain them for those for whom she prays: *Unde fit, ut singulare jus habeat ad dona filii sui.* (To. 2. in 3. p. D. 1. s. 2.) — *Whence it comes that she has a singular right to the gifts of her son.* St. Germanus saying on the other hand that God cannot but hear the prayers of this Mother, since he cannot but acknowledge her for his true and immaculate Mother. Thus says the Sa-

-int, speaking with the Virgin: *Tu autem, quæ maternam in Deum auctoritatem polles, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant eximiam reconciliationis gratiam concilias. Non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi ut veræ ac intemeratæ Matri suæ in omnibus morem gerat.* (De Zona Virg.) — *But you, who are strong in a mother's authority with God, obtain even for those who sin enormously the exceptional grace of reconciliation. For you cannot fail to be heard, since God complies with you in all things as with his true and undefiled Mother.* So that in you, O Mother of God and our Mother, there is no lack of power to succour us. Nor is there any lack of will: *Nec facultas, nec voluntas tibi deesse potest.* (St. Bern. ser. de Ass.) — *Neither the power nor the will can be wanting to you.* For you already know — and more than that, so does your Abbot of Celles — that God did not create you for himself alone, but gave you to the Angels for their restorer, to men for their repairer, and to the Devils for their conqueror; since through you we recover divine grace, and through you the enemy remains vanquished and crushed: *Non tantum sibi te fecit, sed te Angelis dedit in instaurationem, hominibus in reparationem, dæmonibus in hostem; nam per te Deus homini pacificatur, diabolus vincitur & conteritur.* (V. in Prol. Cont. Virg.) — *He made you not for himself alone, but gave you to the Angels for restoration, to men for reparation, to the demons for an enemy; for through you God is reconciled to man, and the devil is conquered and crushed.*

And if we desire to please the Divine Mother, let us salute her often with the *Ave Maria.* Mary appeared one day to St. Mechtilde and told her that no one could better honour her than with this salutation. And thereby we shall draw besides singular graces from this mother of mercy, as will be seen from the following Example.

Example.

CELEBRATED is that occurrence which Fr. Paolo Segneri relates in his *Christian Instructed* (P. 3. Reas. 34.). A Young man laden with unchaste sins and of bad habit went to confession in Rome to Fr. Niccolò Zucchi. The Confessor received him with charity, and pitying his misery told him that devotion to Our Lady could free him from that accursed vice. So he imposed on him for penance that, until his next Confession, every morning and evening, on rising and on going to bed, he should recite an *Ave Maria* to the Virgin, offering her his eyes, his hands, and his whole body, praying her to keep him as her own possession, and should kiss the ground three times. The Young man practised this penance, at first with little amendment. But the Father continued to urge him never to leave it off, encouraging him to trust

in the Patronage of Mary. During this time the Penitent set

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out with other companions and went roaming the world for several years. When he had returned to Rome, he went again to find his Confessor, who with great joy and wonder found him wholly changed and free from his old defilements. My son, he said to him, how have you obtained from God so fair a change? The young man answered: Father, Our Lady, by that little devotion which you taught me, has obtained me the grace. But the wonders do not end here. The same Confessor related this fact from the pulpit; a Captain heard it, who for many years had been in a sinful relationship with a certain Woman; he too resolved to practise the same devotion, in order to free himself from that horrible chain which held him a slave of the Devil (which end is necessary in all such sinners, so that the Virgin may be able to help them); and so he too left the relationship and changed his life.

But what more? At the end of six months he foolishly, and trusting too much in his own strength, resolved to go one day to find that woman, to see whether she too had changed her life. But as he was approaching the door of the house, where he ran a manifest danger of falling again, he felt himself thrust back by an invisible force, and found himself as far from the house as that street was long, and was left in front of his own house; and he then knew with a clear light that Mary was thus delivering him from his own perdition. From which it is seen how solicitous our good Mother is, not only to draw us out of sin, if with that good end we commend ourselves to her, but also to deliver us from the danger of new falls.

Prayer.

O IMMACULATE and holy Virgin, O Creature the most humble and the greatest before God! You were so little in your own eyes, but you were so great in the eyes of your Lord, that he exalted you even to choosing you for his Mother, and then to making you the Queen of Heaven and of Earth. I thank then that God who has so raised you up, and I rejoice with you to see you so united to God as is no longer permitted to a mere creature. Before you, who are so humble with so many gifts, I am ashamed to appear, wretch that I am, so proud with so many sins. But wretched as I am, I too will

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salute you: *Ave Maria gratia plena — Hail Mary, full of grace.* You are already full of grace; obtain some part of it for me also. *Dominus tecum — The Lord is with you.* That Lord who has always been with you from the first moment of your creation is

now more closely joined to you, becoming your son. *Benedicta tu in mulieribus — Blessed are you among women.* O Woman blessed among all women, obtain for us also the divine blessing. *Et benedictus fructus ventris tui — And blessed is the fruit of your womb.* O blessed plant, who have given to the world a fruit so noble and so holy. *Sancta Maria mater Dei — Holy Mary, mother of God.* O Mary, I confess that you are the true Mother of God, and for this truth I am ready to give my life a thousand times. *Ora pro nobis peccatoribus — Pray for us sinners.* But if you are the Mother of God, you are also the Mother of our salvation, and of us poor sinners; since it was to save sinners that God became man, and he has made you his mother, so that your prayers might have power to save any sinner whatever. Up then, O Mary, pray for us. *Nunc & in hora mortis nostræ — Now and at the hour of our death.* Pray always: pray now, while we are in life amid so many temptations and dangers of losing God; but pray still more then, at the hour of our death, when we shall be at the point of going forth from this World and of being presented before the divine Tribunal; so that, being saved by the merits of Jesus Christ and by your intercession, we may come one day, with no further danger of being lost, to salute you and praise you with your son in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

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DISCOURSE V.

On the Visitation of Mary.

Mary is the Treasurer of all the divine graces. Therefore whoever desires graces must have recourse to Mary; and whoever has recourse to Mary may be sure of obtaining the graces he desires.

HAPPY is that house reckoned which is visited by some Royal personage, both for the honour it receives and for the advantages it afterwards hopes for. But happier still must that Soul be called which is visited by the Queen of the World, Mary most holy, who cannot but fill with goods and graces those blessed souls whom she deigns to visit by her favours. Blessed was the house of Obed-edom when

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it was visited by the Ark of the Lord: *Benedixit Dominus domui ejus.* (1 Par.) — *The Lord blessed his house.* But with how much greater blessings are those persons enriched who receive some loving visit from this living Ark of God, such as the divine mother was! *Felix illa domus, quam mater Dei visitat — Happy that house which the mother of God visits* — wrote Engelgrave. Well did the house of the Baptist experience it, where Mary, scarcely entering, filled that whole family with graces and heavenly blessings; wherefore the present feast of the Visitation is commonly called the feast of Our Lady of Graces. We shall see therefore today in the present

discourse how the divine Mother is the treasurer of all graces. And we shall divide the discourse into two points. In the first we shall see that whoever desires graces must have recourse to Mary. In the second, that whoever has recourse to Mary may be sure of obtaining the graces he desires.

Point I. After the holy Virgin heard from the Archangel St. Gabriel that her Kinswoman Elizabeth was six months with child, she was inwardly enlightened by the Holy Spirit to know that the Word made man, and now made her son, willed to begin to make known to the world the riches of his mercy by the first graces he willed to impart to that whole family. So without interposing delay, *exurgens* (as St. Luke narrates, 1:39) *Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione — rising up, Mary went into the hill country with haste.* Rising from the quiet of her contemplation, to which she was always applied, and leaving her dear solitude, at once she set out to go to the house of Elizabeth. And because holy charity bears all things — *Charitas omnia suffert* — and does not suffer delays, as St. Ambrose says precisely on this Gospel: *Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia — The grace of the Holy Spirit knows nothing of slow endeavours* — therefore, heedless of the fatigue of the journey, the tender and delicate maiden quickly set out on the road. When she had reached the house she saluted her Cousin. *Et intravit in domum Zachariæ, & salutavit Elisabeth — And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth.* And as St. Ambrose observes, Mary was the first to salute Elizabeth, *prior salutavit.* But the visit of the Blessed Virgin was not like the visits of worldly people, which for the most part come down to ceremonies and false professions: the visit of Mary brought into that house a heap of graces. For at her first entrance, and at that first salutation, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and John was loosed from sin and sanctified,

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so that he gave that sign of joy, leaping in his mother's womb; wishing thus to make known the grace received through the Blessed Virgin, as Elizabeth herself declared: *Ut facta est vox salutationis tuæ in auribus meis, exultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo — As soon as the voice of your salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.* So that, as Bernardine de Bustis observes, by virtue of Mary's salutation John received the grace of the Divine Spirit which sanctified him: *Cum B. Virgo salutavit Elisabeth, vox salutationis per aures ejus ingrediens ad puerum descendit, virtute cujus salutationis puer Spiritum Sanctum accepit.* (Part. 7. Serm. 4.) *— When the Blessed Virgin saluted Elizabeth, the voice of the salutation, entering by her ears, descended to the child; by the power of which salutation the child received the Holy Spirit.*

Now if these first fruits of the Redemption all passed through Mary, and she was the channel by which grace was communicated to the Baptist, the Holy Spirit to Elizabeth, the gift of Prophecy to Zachary, and so many other blessings to that house — which were the first graces we know to have been wrought on earth by the Word after his incarnation — it is most just to believe that God from that time had constituted Mary as the universal aqueduct, as St. Bernard calls her, through which thereafter all the other graces which the Lord wills to dispense to us should pass to us, according to what was said in Part I, Chapter V.

With reason therefore is this Divine Mother called the treasure, the treasurer, and the dispenser of the divine graces. So she is named by the Venerable Abbot of Celles: *Thesaurus Domini, & thesauraria gratiarum.* (Prol. Cont. Virg. c. 1.) — *The treasure of the Lord, and the treasurer of graces.* So by St. Peter Damian: *Thesaurus divinarum gratiarum — The treasure of the divine graces.* By Blessed Albert the Great: *Thesauraria Jesu Christi — The treasurer of Jesus Christ.* By St. Bernardine: *dispensatrix gratiarum — the dispenser of graces.* By a Greek Doctor cited in Petavius (de Trin.): *Promptuarium omnium bonorum* — the storehouse of all goods. So too by St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, who says: *Mariam sic gratia plena dicitur, quia in illa gratiæ thesaurus reconderetur — Mary is called full of grace because in her the treasure of grace was laid up.* And Richard of St. Laurence says that God has laid up in Mary, as in a Treasury of Mercy, all the gifts of the graces, and from this treasure he enriches his servants: *Maria est thesaurus, quia in ea, ut in Gazophylacio, reposuit Dominus omnia dona gratiarum; & de hoc thesauro largitur ipse larga stipendia suis militibus, & operariis.* (De Laud. Virg. l. 4.) — *Mary is a treasure, because in her, as in a treasury, the Lord has laid up all the gifts of graces; and from this treasure he himself bestows rich wages on his soldiers and workmen.*

St. Bonaventure, speaking of the field of the Gospel where the treasure lies hid and which is to be bought

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at any great price, as Jesus Christ said: *Simile est regnum cælorum thesauro abscondito in agro, quem qui invenit homo, vadit & vendit universa quæ habet, & emit agrum illum.* (Matt. 13:44) — *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man having found, goes and sells all that he has and buys that field* — says that this field is our Queen Mary, in whom lies the treasure of God, which is Jesus Christ, and with Jesus Christ the source and fountain of all graces: *Ager iste est Maria, in qua thesaurus Dei Patris absconditus est.* (Spec. c. 7.) — *This field is Mary, in whom the treasure of God the Father is hidden.* St. Bernard affirmed that the Lord has placed in Mary's hands all the graces which he wills to dispense to

us, so that we may know that whatever good we receive we receive it all from her hands: *Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare.* (Serm. de Aquæd.) — *He placed the fullness of all good in Mary, so that accordingly, if we have any hope, any grace, any salvation, we may know that it overflows from her.* And Mary herself assures us of it, saying: *In me gratia omnis viæ, & veritatis.* (Ecclus. 24) — *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth.* In me are all the graces of the true goods which you men can desire in your life. Yes, Mother and our hope, we know it well (St. Peter Damian said to her), that all the treasures of the divine mercies are in your hands: *In manibus tuis omnes thesauri miserationum Dei — In your hands are all the treasures of God's mercies.* And before Damian, St. Ildephonsus asserted it with even stronger expression when, speaking with the Virgin, he said to her: Lady, all the graces which God has determined to grant to men, he has determined to grant them all through your hands; and therefore he has consigned to you all the treasures of the graces: *Omnia bona quæ illis summa Majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus decrevit commendare; commissi quippe tibi sunt thesauri & ornamenta gratiarum.* (in Cor. Virg. cap. 15.) — *All the good things which the sovereign Majesty determined to do for them, he determined to commit to your hands; for to you have been entrusted the treasures and ornaments of the graces.* So that, O Mary, St. Germanus concluded, there is no grace dispensed to anyone save through your hands: *Nemo qui salvus fiet, nisi per te: nemo donum Dei suscipit, nisi per te.* (Serm. de Zon. Virg.) — *No one shall be saved but through you; no one receives a gift of God but through you.* Upon the words which the Angel said to the most holy Virgin — *Ne timeas Maria, invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum.* (Luke 1) — *Fear not, Mary, for you have found grace with God* — Blessed Albert the Great adds with a fine reflection, saying: *Ne timeas, quia invenisti. Non rapuisti, ut primus Angelus: non perdidisti, ut primus parens: non emisti, ut Simon magus; sed invenisti, quia quæsivisti. Invenisti gratiam increatam, & in illa omnem creaturam.* (in Missus, cap. 237.) — *Fear not, because you have found it. You did not seize it, as the first Angel; you did not lose it, as the first parent; you did not buy it, as Simon Magus; but you found it, because you sought it. You have found uncreated grace, and in it every creature.* O Mary, you did not seize grace, as Lucifer wished to seize it; you did not lose it, as A-

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-dam lost it; you did not buy it, as Simon Magus wished to buy it; but you found it, because you desired and sought it. You have found uncreated grace, which is God himself, now made your Son, and together with it you have found and obtained all created goods. St. Peter Chrysologus confirms this thought, saying that the great

Mother found this grace in order then to restore salvation to all men: *Hanc gratiam accepit Virgo salutem sæculis redditura.* (Serm. 3. de Ann.) — *This grace the Virgin received, being about to restore salvation to the ages.* And in another place he says that Mary found a full grace, sufficient to save everyone: *Invenisti gratiam, quantam? quantam superius dixerat, plenam & vere plenam, quæ largo imbre totam infunderet creaturam.* (Serm. 142.) — *You have found grace — how much? as much as he had said above: full, and truly full, which in a copious shower should pour itself over the whole creation.* In such a manner, says Richard of St. Laurence, that as God made the Sun in order that by its means the earth should be illuminated, so he made Mary in order that by her means all the divine mercies should be dispensed to the world: *Sicut Sol factus est, ut illuminet totum mundum: sic Maria facta est, ut misericordiam impetret toti mundo.* (De Laud. Virg. lib. 7.) — *As the Sun was made to illuminate the whole world, so Mary was made to obtain mercy for the whole world.* And St. Bernardine adds that the Virgin, from the time she was made Mother of the Redeemer, acquired a kind of jurisdiction over all the graces: *A tempore quo Virgo Mater concepit in utero Verbum Dei, quandam, ut sic dicam, jurisdictionem obtinuit in omni Spiritus Sancti processione temporali: ita ut nulla Creatura aliquam a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piæ Matris dispensationem.* (Serm. 61. Tract. 1. art. 8.) — *From the time when the Virgin Mother conceived the Word of God in her womb, she obtained, so to speak, a certain jurisdiction over every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit: so that no Creature has obtained any grace from God save according to the dispensation of this loving Mother.*

Let us conclude this point then with Richard of St. Laurence, who says that if we wish to obtain any grace, let us have recourse to Mary, who cannot fail to obtain for her servants whatever she asks; since she has found divine grace, and always finds it: *Cupientes invenire gratiam, quæramus inventricem gratiæ, quæ quia semper invenit, frustrari non potest.* (De Laud. Virg. lib. 2. p. 5.) — *Desiring to find grace, let us seek the finder of grace, who, because she always finds, cannot be frustrated.* And he took it from St. Bernard, who said: *Quæramus gratiam, & per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit invenit, & frustrari non potest.* (Serm. de Aquæd.) — *Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and cannot be frustrated.* If then we desire graces, we must go to this Treasurer and dispenser of the graces; since this is the supreme will of the giver of every good, as the same St. Bernard assures us, that all graces are dispensed by the hand of Mary: *Quia sic est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Ma-*

-riam. (loc. cit.) — *Because such is the will of him who willed that we should have everything through Mary. Totum, totum* — "everything, everything": he who says everything excludes nothing. But because confidence is necessary in order to obtain graces, let us pass now to see how certain we ought to be of obtaining graces by having recourse to Mary.

Point II. And why has Jesus Christ placed in the hands of this his Mother all the riches of the mercies which he wills to show us, if not that she may make rich with them all her devoted servants who love her, honour her, and have recourse to her with confidence? *Mecum sunt divitiæ .... ut ditem diligentes me.* (Prov. 8) — *With me are riches ... that I may enrich those who love me.* So the Virgin herself declares in this passage which Holy Church applies to her on so many of her Feasts. So that for no other use than to profit us (says the Abbot Adam) are these riches of eternal Life kept by Mary, in whose womb the Saviour has placed the treasury of the wretched, that from this treasure the poor being provided for may become rich: *Divitiæ salutis penes Virginem nostris usibus reservantur. Christus in Virginis utero pauperum Gazophylacium collocavit: Inde pauperes locupletati sunt.* (in Alleg. utr. Test. c. 24. Eccl.) — *The riches of salvation are kept with the Virgin for our uses. Christ placed in the Virgin's womb the treasury of the poor: thence the poor have been enriched.* And St. Bernard adds (as I have found it in an Author) that to this end Mary was given to the world as a channel of mercy, that through her graces might come down continually from Heaven to men: here are his memorable words: *Ad hoc enim data est ipsa mundo quasi aquæductus, ut per ipsam a Deo ad homines dona cælestia jugiter descenderent — For to this end she was given to the world as an aqueduct, that through her heavenly gifts might continually come down from God to men.*

Hence the same holy Father goes on to reason: why did St. Gabriel, having found the divine Mother already full of graces, since he had already saluted her *ave gratia plena*, then say to her that the Holy Spirit was to come upon her to fill her yet more with grace? If she was already full of that grace, what more could the coming of the divine Spirit effect? *Ad quid* (so St. Bernard answers), *nisi ut, adveniente jam Spiritu plena sibi eodem superveniente nobis superplena & pereffluens fiat?* (Serm. 2. de Ass.) — *To what end, unless that, being already full for herself at the Spirit's coming, she might by the same Spirit's coming upon her be made overfull and overflowing for us?* Mary was already full of grace (says the Saint), but the Holy Spirit overfilled her for our good, so that of her superabundance we wretches might be provided for. Wherefore Mary was called the Moon, of which it is said: *Luna plena sibi, & aliis — A moon full for herself and for others. Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, & hauriet salutem a Domino.* (Prov. 8:35) — *He who finds me shall*

find life, and shall draw salvation from the Lord. Blessed is he who finds me by

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having recourse to me, says our Mother. He shall find life, and shall find it easily: for as it is easy to find and draw water, as much as one desires, from a great fountain, so it is easy to find graces and eternal salvation by having recourse to Mary. A holy Soul used to say that it is enough to ask graces of Our Lady in order to have them. And St. Bernard used to say that before the Virgin was born, therefore there was lacking in the world that great abundance of graces which is now seen to flow on the earth, because this desirable channel, which is Mary, was lacking: *Ideo tanto tempore defuerunt omnibus fluenta gratiarum, quia nondum intercesserat hic aquæductus.* (Serm. de Aq.) — *Therefore for so long a time the streams of graces were wanting to all, because this aqueduct had not yet intervened.* But now that we have this Mother of mercy, what graces can we fear not to obtain by having recourse to her feet? I am the City of refuge (so St. John Damascene makes her speak) for all those who have recourse to me; Come then, my children, and you shall obtain from me graces in greater abundance than you think: *Ego Civitas refugii, qui ad me confugiunt, accedite, & gratiarum dona affluentissime haurite.* (Serm. 2. de Dorm. B. V.) — *I am the City of refuge: draw near, you who flee to me, and draw most abundantly the gifts of graces.*

It is true that to many there happens what the Venerable Sister Maria Villani learned in a heavenly vision. This servant of God once saw the Mother of God in the likeness of a great fountain, to which many were going and taking much water of graces; but what then happened? Those who carried sound vessels kept afterwards the graces received; but those who carried broken vessels — that is, Souls weighed down by sins — received the graces, but soon lost them again. For the rest, it is certain that through Mary men obtain innumerable graces every day, even the ungrateful, sinners, the most wretched. St. Augustine says, speaking with the Virgin: *Per te hæreditamus misericordiam miseri, ingrati gratiam, veniam peccatores, sublimia infirmi, cælestia terreni, mortales vitam, & patriam peregrini.* (Serm. de Ass. B. V.) — *Through you we wretches inherit mercy; the ungrateful, grace; sinners, pardon; the weak, things sublime; the earthly, things heavenly; mortals, life; and pilgrims, their homeland.*

Let us then quicken our confidence ever more, O devoted servants of Mary, whenever we have recourse to her for graces. And to quicken this confidence, let us always remember the two great excellences which this good Mother has: namely the desire she has to do us good, and the power she has with her Son to obtain whatever she asks. To know the desire which

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Mary has to help all, it would be enough only to consider the Mystery of the present festival, namely the visit which Mary pays to Elizabeth. The journey from Nazareth, where the most holy Virgin dwelt, to the City of Hebron (called by St. Luke a City of Juda), as Baronius and other Authors hold, where Elizabeth dwelt, was fully sixty-nine miles or thereabouts, as the Author of the Life of Mary, Fra Giuseppe di Gesù M., Discalced Carmelite (l. 3. c. 11.), reports from Bede and Brocardus. But notwithstanding this, the Blessed Virgin, tender and delicate maiden as she then was, and unaccustomed to such fatigues, did not delay to set out at once — urged by what? urged by that great charity with which her most tender heart has always been full, to go and to begin from that time her great office of dispenser of the graces. So St. Ambrose speaks of this journey of hers: *Non abiit quasi incredula de oraculo, sed quasi læta pro voto, festina præ gaudio, religiosa pro officio.* (In c. 1. Luc.) — *She went not as one incredulous of the oracle, but as one glad for her vow, hastening for joy, devout for duty.* Mary did not go, says St. Ambrose, to satisfy herself whether what the Angel had told her of Elizabeth's pregnancy was true; but she, rejoicing in the desire of doing good to that house, hastening for the joy she felt at doing good to others, and wholly intent on that employment of charity, *exurgens abiit cum festinatione.* Let this be noted here: the Evangelist, when he spoke of Mary's going to Elizabeth's house, said that she went in haste, *abiit cum festinatione*; but when he speaks afterwards of her return from that house, he makes no more mention of haste, but says simply: *Mansit autem Maria cum illa quasi mensibus tribus, & reversa est in domum suam.* (Luke 1:56) — *And Mary stayed with her about three months, and returned to her own house.* What other end then, says St. Bonaventure, compelled the Mother of God to hasten in going to visit the house of the Baptist, if not the desire of doing good to that family? *Quid eam ad officium charitatis festinare cogebat, nisi charitas quæ in corde fervebat?* (Spec. cap. 54.) — *What compelled her to hasten to the office of charity, but the charity that burned in her heart?*

That affection of charity towards men has not failed in Mary by her going to heaven; rather it has grown there, because there she knows our needs the more, and the more pities our miseries. Bernardine de Bustis wrote that Mary longs more to do us good than we desire it from her: *Plus vult illa bonum tibi facere, & largiri gratiam, quam tu accipere concupiscas.* (Mar. p. 1.

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Serm. 5.) — *She wills more to do you good and to bestow grace, than you desire to receive it.* To such a degree that St. Bonaventure says she reckons herself offended by

those who do not ask her for graces: *In te, Domina, peccant non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant.* (St. Bonav. in Spec. Virg.) — *Against you, Lady, they sin not only who do you injury, but also they who do not ask of you.* For this is Mary's bent, to enrich all with graces, as (according to the Idiota's assertion) she superabundantly enriches her servants: *Maria Thesaurus Domini est, & Thesauraria gratiarum ipsius: Donis specialibus ditat copiosissime Servientes sibi.* (In Prol. Cont. B. V. cap. 1.) — *Mary is the Treasure of the Lord and the Treasurer of his graces: she enriches most copiously with special gifts those who serve her.*

Whence the same Author says that whoever finds Mary finds every good: *Inventa Maria, invenitur omne bonum — Mary being found, every good is found.* And he adds that everyone can find her, though he were the most wretched sinner in the world; since she is so kind that she drives away no one who has recourse to her: *Tanta est ejus benignitas, quod nulli formidandum est ad eam accedere. Tantaque misericordia, quod ab ea nemo repellitur. — So great is her kindness that no one need fear to approach her; and so great her mercy that no one is repelled by her.* I invite all to have recourse to me (so Thomas à Kempis makes her speak), I await all, I desire all; nor do I ever despise any sinner, however unworthy, who comes to seek my help: *Omnes invito, omnes expecto, omnes desidero, nullum peccatorem despicio. — I invite all, I await all, I desire all; I despise no sinner.* Everyone who goes to ask her for graces *inveniet semper paratam auxiliari*, says Richard — will always find her ready, and always inclined to succour him and to obtain for him every grace of eternal salvation by her powerful prayers.

I said by her powerful prayers, because this is the other consideration that should increase our confidence: the knowledge that she obtains from God whatever she asks in favour of her devoted servants. Observe, says St. Bonaventure, precisely in this visit that Mary paid to Elizabeth, the great power that Mary's words had; for at her voice the grace of the Holy Spirit was conferred both on Elizabeth and on John her son, as the Evangelist noted: *Et factum est, ut audivit salutationem Mariæ Elisabeth, exultavit infans in utero ejus, & repleta est Spiritu Sancto.* (Luke 1) — *And it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.* Whereupon St. Bonaventure adds: *Vide quanta virtus sit verbis Dominæ, quia ad eorum pronuntiationem confertur Spiritus Sanctus.* (Tract. de Vit. Christi) — *See how great a power there is in our Lady's words, since at their utterance the Holy Spirit is conferred.* Theophilus of Alexandria says that Jesus greatly delights when Mary prays to him for us, because then all the graces which he grants us

at Mary's petitions he reckons as granted not so much to us as to his own Mother: *Gaudet Filius, orante Matre, quia omnia quæ nobis precibus suæ Genitricis evictus donat, ipsi Matri se donasse putat.* (see Baldi, *Giardino di Maria*, in the Preface.) — *The Son rejoices when the Mother prays, because all that he grants us, won over by the prayers of his Mother, he reckons that he has granted to the Mother herself.* And let those words be noted, *Precibus suæ Genitricis evictus donat.* Yes, because Jesus (as St. Germanus attests) cannot but hear Mary in all that she asks of him, willing in this as it were to obey her as his true Mother; whence the Saint says that the prayers of this Mother have a certain authority with Jesus Christ, so that she obtains pardon even for the greatest sinners who commend themselves to her: *Tu autem materna in Deum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis, qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias. Non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi ut veræ & intemeratæ Matri in omnibus morem gerat.* (Or. de Dorm. V.) — *But you, strong in a mother's authority with God, obtain even for those who sin enormously the exceptional grace of remission. For you cannot fail to be heard, since God complies with you in all things as with his true and undefiled Mother.*

Which is well confirmed, as St. John Chrysostom observes, by what happened at the wedding of Cana, where Mary, asking her Son for the wine that was wanting — *Vinum non habent — They have no wine* — Jesus answered: *Quid mihi & tibi mulier? nondum venit hora mea.* (John 2:4) — *What is that to me and to you, woman? my hour is not yet come.* But although the time appointed for miracles had not yet come, as Chrysostom and Theophylact explain, nevertheless (says the same Chrysostom) the Saviour, to obey his Mother, wrought the miracle she asked, changing the water into wine: *Et licet ita respondit, maternis tamen precibus obtemperavit.* (St. John Chrys. in Cornelius a Lapide on John, ch. 2, v. 5.) — *And although he answered thus, yet he complied with his Mother's prayers.*

Adeamus ergo (the Apostle exhorts us) *cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, & gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno.* (Heb. 4:16) — *Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid. Thronus gratiæ est B. Virgo Maria — The throne of grace is the Blessed Virgin Mary* — says Blessed Albert the Great (Serm. de Ded. Eccl.). If then we wish for graces, let us go to the Throne of grace, which is Mary; and let us go with the hope of being certainly heard, since we have the intercession of Mary, who obtains from her Son all that she asks. *Quæramus gratiam* (I repeat with St. Bernard), *& per Mariam quæramus — Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary* — adhering to what the Virgin Mother herself said to St. Mechtilde: that the Holy Spirit, penetrating her with all his sweetness, had

made her so dear to God that everyone who sought graces through her would certainly ob-

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-tain them: *Spiritus Sanctus tota sua dulcedine me penetrando, tam gratiosam effecit, ut omnis qui per me gratiam quærit, ipsam inveniat.* (see Canisius, lib. 1. cap. 13.) — *The Holy Spirit, penetrating me with all his sweetness, made me so full of grace that everyone who seeks grace through me finds it.*

And if we give credit to that renowned saying of St. Anselm: *Velocior est nonnunquam salus nostra, invocato nomine Mariæ, quam invocato nomine Jesu.* (de Exc. Virg. c. 6.) — *Sometimes our salvation is swifter when the name of Mary is invoked than when the name of Jesus is invoked* — we shall find (as this Saint says) that graces are sometimes obtained more quickly by having recourse to Mary than by having recourse to our Saviour Jesus himself: not because he is not the fountain and the Lord of all graces, but because when we have recourse to the Mother, and she then prays for us, her prayers will have more force, as a Mother's prayers, than ours. Let us then never depart from the feet of this treasurer of graces, saying to her always with St. John Damascene: *Misericordiæ januam aperi nobis, benedicta Deipara; tu enim es salus generis humani — Open to us the gate of mercy, blessed Mother of God; for you are the salvation of the human race.* O Mother of God, ah, open to us the door of your compassion by praying always for us; since your prayers are the salvation of all men. And in having recourse to Mary, it will be best to beg her to ask for us, and to obtain for us those graces which she knows to be most expedient for our salvation. Just as Fra Reginald the Dominican did, according as it is related in the Chronicles of the Order (lib. 1. p. 2. cap. 5.). This servant of Mary lay sick, and was asking of her the grace of bodily health; his Lady appeared to him accompanied by St. Cecilia and St. Catherine, and then said to him with the utmost sweetness: My son, what do you wish me to do for you? The Religious was confounded at so courteous an offer of Mary's, and did not know what to answer. Then one of those Saints gave him this counsel: Reginald, do you know what you should do? Ask nothing yourself; put yourself entirely into her hands, for Mary will know how to do you a better grace than you know how to ask. So the sick man did, and the divine Mother obtained him the grace of recovery.

But if we also desire the happy visits of this Queen of heaven, it will help much that we too should often visit her in some Image of hers, or in some Church dedicated to her. Let the following example be read, and let it be understood with what special favours she rewards the devout visits of her servants.

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Example.

IT is related in the Franciscan Chronicles that as two Religious of the Order were going to visit a Sanctuary of the Virgin, it befell them, finding themselves in a great wood, that night came on: whereupon, confused and distressed, they did not know what to do. But walking on a little further, it seemed to them, dark as it was, that they saw a House. They go with their hands out and now feel the walls; they look for the door, they knock, and at once hear someone within ask who they were. They answered that they were two poor Religious lost by chance that night in that wood, and that they were seeking a little shelter, at least so as not to be eaten by wolves. But behold, at once they hear the door opened, and see two Pages richly dressed, who received them with great courtesy. The Religious asked them who lived in that Palace. The Pages answered that a very devout Lady lived there. We wish to pay our respects to her (said the Religious), and to thank her for her charity: And it is precisely to her that we are taking you, for she wishes to speak with you. They climb the stairs, they find the rooms all lit and hung with tapestries, and with a fragrance that seemed the fragrance of Paradise; at last they enter where the Mistress was, and find a Lady majestic and most beautiful, who received them with the utmost kindness, and then asked them where they were journeying. They answered that they were going to visit a certain Church of the Blessed Virgin. If that is so, said the Lady then, when you leave I will give you a letter of mine which will profit you much. And while this Lady spoke to them, they felt themselves all inflamed with the love of God, enjoying a gladness they had never known before. Then they went to sleep, if indeed they could take any sleep in the midst of so much joy; and in the morning they went again to take leave of the Mistress, to thank her, and at the same time to receive the letter, which in fact they did receive; and they departed. But having gone only a little way from the House, they notice that the letter had no address on it. But they turn and turn about, and no longer see the House. At last they open the letter, to see to whom it was going and what it said: and they find that that letter was from Mary most holy, who was writing to those very men, and letting them know that she had been the Lady seen that night, and that for the Devotion which they cherished towards her,

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she had provided them in that wood with a House and shelter. That they should go on serving and loving her, for she would surely always reward their homage, and would succour them in life and in death. At the foot of the letter they read the signature, which said: *I, Mary the Virgin.* Here let everyone consider the thanks

which those good Religious were then able to give to the Divine Mother, and how much more they were kindled with the desire of loving and serving her all their lives.

Prayer.

IMMACULATE and blessed Virgin, since You are the universal dispenser of all the Divine graces, You are therefore the Hope of all, and my Hope. I thank my Lord always for having made You known to me, and for having made me understand the means which I must take to obtain graces and to be saved: the means is You, O great Mother of God; since I now understand that it is chiefly by the merits of Jesus Christ, and then by your intercession, that I am to be saved. Ah my Queen, You once made such haste to visit and to sanctify with your visit the house of Elizabeth; ah, visit also, and visit soon, the poor House of my soul. Make haste; You know better than I how poor it is, and how sick with many ills — with disordered affections, with evil habits, and with sins committed, all of them pestilent evils which are about to lead it to eternal death. You can make it rich, O treasurer of God; and You can heal it of all its infirmities. Visit me then in life, and visit me afterwards especially at the point of death, because then your assistance will be more necessary to me. I do not indeed pretend, nor am I worthy, that You should visit me on this earth with your visible presence, as You have done with so many of your servants — but servants not unworthy and ungrateful as I am. It is enough for me to see You afterwards in your Kingdom of Heaven, there to love you the more and to thank you for all the good you have done me. For the present I am content that you visit me with your Mercy. It is enough for me that you pray for me. Pray then, O Mary, and commend me to your Son. You know better than I my miseries and my needs. What more shall I say to you? Have

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pity on me. I am so wretched and ignorant that I do not even know how to recognize and to ask for the graces I most need. My Queen and most sweet Mother, do you ask for me, and obtain for me from your Son those graces which you understand to be most expedient and necessary for my soul. Into your hands I abandon myself wholly, and I pray only the Divine Majesty that, for the merits of my Saviour Jesus, he would grant me those graces which you ask of him for me. Ask, ask then for me, O most holy Virgin, whatever you judge best. Your prayers meet with no refusal; they are a Mother's prayers before a Son who loves you so much and delights to do whatever You ask of him, so as thereby to honour you the more and at the same time to show you the great love he bears you. Lady, so let it stand between

us. I live trusting in you. It is for you to see to my salvation. Amen.

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DISCOURSE VI.

On the Purification of Mary.

The great Sacrifice which Mary made to God on this day, in offering him the life of her Son.

AT the birth of firstborn sons there were two Precepts in the ancient Law: one was that the mother should remain as unclean, withdrawn in her house for forty days, after which she should go to be purified in the Temple. The other was that the parents of the newborn Firstborn should carry him to the Temple and there offer him to God. To both Precepts the most holy Virgin willed to be obedient on this day. Although Mary was not bound by the Law of Purification, since she was ever a Virgin and ever pure, nevertheless out of love for humility and obedience she willed to go like other mothers to be purified. She obeyed then the second Precept of presenting and offering her son to the Eternal Father: *Et postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis ejus, secundum legem Moysi, tulerunt illum in Jerusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino.* (Luke 2:22) — *And after the days of her purification were fulfilled, according to the law of Moses, they carried him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.* But the Virgin offered him in another manner than that in which other mothers offered their sons. The others offered them, but they knew that that oblation was a mere

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ceremony of the Law, so that by redeeming them they made them their own again, without fear of having to offer them to death. Mary offered her Son to death really, and being certain that the sacrifice of the life of Jesus which she then made was one day in fact to be consummated on the Altar of the Cross: so that in offering the life of her Son, Mary came, for the love she bore that Son, to sacrifice her whole self to God. Setting aside then all the other considerations we might make upon the many Mysteries of this Festival, let us set ourselves to consider only how great was this Sacrifice which Mary made of herself to God, in offering him on this day the life of her Son; and this will be the sole subject of the Discourse.

The Eternal Father had already determined to save man, lost by sin, and to free him from eternal death. But because he willed that at the same time his Divine Justice should not be defrauded of its due and worthy satisfaction, therefore, not sparing the life of his own Son, now made Man to redeem men, he willed that he should pay in all rigour the penalty deserved by these men: *Qui proprio filio suo non pepercit* (the Apostle speaks) *sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum.* (Rom. 8:32) —

He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. He sent him therefore on earth to become Man; he destined him a Mother, and willed that this should be the Virgin Mary. But as he would not have his Divine Word become her Son before she accepted him by her express consent, so neither would he have Jesus sacrifice his life for the salvation of men without the consent of Mary also concurring; so that together with the Sacrifice of the Son's life the Heart of the Mother should also be sacrificed. St. Thomas teaches that the quality of Mother gives a special right over children; whence, Jesus being in himself innocent and deserving no punishment for any fault of his own, it seemed fitting that he should not be destined to the Cross as victim for the sins of the World without the consent of his Mother, by which she should freely offer him to death.

But although Mary from the time she was made Mother of Jesus gave her consent to his death, the Lord nevertheless willed that on this day she should make in the Temple a solemn Sacrifice of herself by solemnly offering him her Son, sacrificing to Di-

-vine Justice his precious life. Wherefore St. Epiphanius called her a Priest: *Virginem appello velut Sacerdotem.* (Or. de Laud. Deip.) — *I call the Virgin as it were a Priest.* Now here let us enter upon seeing how much sorrow this Sacrifice of hers cost her, and what heroic virtue she had to exercise in having herself to subscribe the sentence of condemnation of her dear Jesus to death.

Behold, Mary now sets out towards Jerusalem to offer her Son; she hastens her steps to the place of the Sacrifice, and she herself carries her beloved Victim in her arms. She enters the Temple, draws near the Altar, and there, all full of modesty, humility, and devotion, presents her Son to the Most High. And behold, at this moment St. Simeon, who had had the promise from God that he should not die before seeing the awaited Messiah, takes the Divine Child from the Virgin's hands, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit announces to her how much the Sacrifice was to cost her which she then made of her Son, with whom her own blessed Soul was also to be sacrificed. Here St. Thomas of Villanova (Ser. de Purific. Virg.) contemplates the holy Old Man, who, in having to utter the mournful announcement to this poor Mother, is troubled and falls silent. Then the Saint considers Mary asking him: *Unde tanta turbatio? — Whence so great a trouble?* Why, O Simeon, at a time of such consolation to you, are you now so troubled? To which he answers: *O Virgo Regia, nollem tibi talia nuntiare, sed audi — O Royal Virgin, I would not announce such things to you, but hear.* O noble and holy Virgin, he says, I would not be to you the messenger of news so bitter; but since the Lord so wills it for your greater merit,

hear what I say to you. This Child, who now brings you such joy, and with reason — O God, one day he must bring you the bitterest sorrow that ever any Creature in the World has felt; and it will be when you shall see him persecuted by every sort of people, and set on earth as the target of the mockeries and outrages of men, even to making him die executed before your very eyes: *Nimium nunc pro isto infante lætaris, sed ecce iste positus in signum cui contradicetur — Now you rejoice exceedingly over this infant, but behold, he is set for a sign that shall be contradicted.* Know that after his death there will be many Martyrs who for love of this your Son will be tormented and slain: but if their martyrdom will be in the Body, your Martyrdom, O Divine Mother, will be in the heart: *O quot millia hominum pro isto puero laniabuntur, & jugulabuntur; & si*

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omnes patientur in corpore, Tu Virgo in corde patieris. (loc. cit.) — *O how many thousands of men shall be torn and slaughtered for this child; and if all shall suffer in the body, You, Virgin, shall suffer in the heart.*

Yes, in the Heart; for nothing else than compassion for the sufferings of this Son so dear was to be the sword of sorrow which should pierce the Heart of the Mother, as Simeon precisely foretold her: *Et tuam ipsius Animam doloris gladius pertransibit.* (Luke 2) — *And your own Soul a sword of sorrow shall pierce.* The most holy Virgin had already, as St. Jerome says, been enlightened by the Divine Scriptures to know the pains which the Redeemer was to suffer in his Life, and still more at the time of his death. Well did she understand from the Prophets that he was to be betrayed by one of his own household: *Qui edebat panes meos, magnificavit super me supplantationem — He who ate my bread has greatly supplanted me* — as David foretold (Ps. 40). Abandoned by his Disciples: *Percute Pastorem, & dispergentur oves.* (Zach. 13) — *Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* Well did she know the insults, spittings, blows, derisions which he was to suffer from the peoples: *Corpus meum dedi percutientibus, & genas meas vellentibus, faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus, & conspuentibus in me.* (Isa. 50) — *I have given my body to the strikers and my cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked and spat upon me.* She knew that he was to become the reproach of men and the outcast of the vilest of the people, even to being sated with insults and revilings: *Ego autem sum vermis & non homo, opprobrium hominum, & abjectio plebis.* (Ps. 21) — *But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. Saturabitur opprobriis.* (Lam. 3) — *He shall be filled with reproaches.* She knew that at the end of his life his sacred Flesh was to be all torn and broken by the scourges: *Ipse autem vulneratus est propter*

iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra. (Isa. 53) — *But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins.* To such a degree that his Body was to be left wholly disfigured, become like a leper all wounds, till his bones appeared uncovered: *Non est species ei neque decor ... Et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum.* (Isa. 53) — *There is no beauty in him nor comeliness ... and we thought him as it were a leper. Dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.* (Ps. 21) — *They have numbered all my bones.* She knew that he was to be pierced with nails: *Foderunt manus meas & pedes meos.* (ibid.) — *They have dug my hands and my feet.* Set among malefactors: *Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.* (Isa. 53) — *And he was reputed with the wicked.* And that at last, hanging on the Cross, he was to die executed for the salvation of men: *Et aspicient ad me, quem confixerunt.* (Zach. 12) — *And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*

Mary already knew, I say, all these pains which her Son was to suffer; but in the words spoken to her by St. Simeon — *Et tuam ipsius Animam doloris gladius pertransibit* — there were made known to her (as the Lord revealed to St. Thecla) all the particular circumstances of the sorrows, both outward and inward, which were to tor-

-ment her Jesus in his Passion. And she consents to it all, and with a constancy that astonishes the Angels she pronounces the sentence that her Son should die, and die by this death so shameful and painful, saying: Eternal Father, since You so will it, *non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat — not my will, but yours be done*; I unite mine to your holy will, and I sacrifice to you this my Son; I am content that he lose his life for your glory and for the salvation of the World. And with this I sacrifice to you my Heart also; let sorrow pierce it as much as you please; it is enough for me that You, my God, remain glorified and content by it: *non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat.* O charity without measure! O constancy without example! O victory that deserves the eternal admiration of Heaven and of earth!

And hence it was that Mary in the Passion of Jesus kept silence when they were unjustly accusing him; she said nothing to Pilate, who was inclined to free him for the innocence he had already recognized in him: but she appeared in public only to assist at the great Sacrifice that was to be carried out on Calvary. She accompanies him to the place of execution; she stands by him from the first, when the Son was hung upon the gibbet — *Stabat juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus — There stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother* — until she saw him expire, and the Sacrifice was consummated. All to carry out the offering which she had already made of him to God in the Temple.

To understand the violence which Mary had to do to herself in this Sacrifice, one would have to comprehend the love which this Mother bore to Jesus. Speaking generally, the love of Mothers is so tender for their children that when these are at the point of death and about to be lost to them, it makes them forget all their faults, their deformities, and even the injuries formerly received from them, and makes them suffer an inexplicable grief. And yet the love of those mothers is a love divided among other children, or else among other creatures. Mary has one only Son, and he is the most beautiful above all the other sons of Adam; he is the most lovable, since he has every quality to be loved: he is obedient, virtuous, innocent, holy — it is enough to say, he is God. And the love of this Mother is not divided among other objects; She has placed all her love in this one Son; nor in this does she fear to exceed in loving him, since this Son is God, who deserves an infinite love. And this Son is the Victim which She must voluntarily sacrifice to death.

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Let everyone see then how much it must have cost Mary, and what fortitude of soul she had to exercise in that act of sacrificing to the Cross the life of a Son so lovable. Behold therefore the most fortunate Mother, because Mother of a God, but at the same time the Mother most worthy of compassion, because the most sorrowful, being the Mother of a Son whom she saw destined to the gibbet from the very day on which he was given her for her Son. What Mother would accept a Son, knowing that she must afterwards lose him wretchedly by an infamous death, and be present to see him die? Mary willingly accepts this Son on so hard a condition; and not only does she accept him, but on this day she herself offers him with her own hand to death, sacrificing him to Divine Justice. St. Bonaventure says that the Blessed Virgin would far more willingly have accepted for herself the pains and the death of her Son; but to obey God she made the great Offering of the Divine life of her beloved Jesus, overcoming — but with utmost sorrow — all the tenderness of the love she bore him: *Si fieri potuisset, omnia tormenta, quæ Filius pertulit, sustinuisset; & nihilominus placuit ei, quod Unigenitus ejus pro salute generis humani offerretur.* (in p. 1. Dist. 48. q. 2.) — *If it could have been, she would have borne all the torments which the Son endured; and nonetheless it pleased her that her Only-begotten should be offered for the salvation of the human race.* Whence it is that in this offering Mary had to do herself greater violence, and was more generous, than if she had offered herself to all that her Son was to suffer. She then surpassed the generosity of all the Martyrs; for the Martyrs offered their own life, but the Virgin offered the life of the Son whom she loved and esteemed immeasurably more than her own life.

Nor did the pain of this sorrowful Offering end here; rather here it began, since from that time onward, through all her Son's life, Mary always had before her eyes his death and all the sorrows he was to suffer in his death. Whence the more this Son of hers went on showing himself to her beautiful, gracious, lovable, so much the more did the anguish of her Heart go on growing. Ah sorrowful Mother, if you had been less loving of your Son, or your Son had been less lovable, or had loved you less, assuredly less would have been your pain in offering him to death. But there has not been, nor will there be, a Mother more loving of any Son than you, because there never was, nor will there be, a Son more lovable and more loving of his Mo-

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-ther than your Jesus. O God, if we had seen the beauty, the majesty of the face of that divine child, should we perhaps have had the heart to sacrifice his life for our salvation? And you, O Mary, who are his Mother, and a Mother who love him so much, could you offer your innocent Son, for the salvation of men, to a death the most sorrowful and the most cruel that any criminal on earth has ever suffered?

Alas, what a mournful scene must love from that day forward continually set before the eyes of Mary, representing to her all the outrages, the insults, that were to be done to her poor Son! Behold love, which already makes her see him agonizing with sadness in the garden, torn by the scourges and crowned with thorns in the Prætorium, and at last hanged on a tree of shame upon Calvary. Behold, O Mother (love said), what a lovable and innocent son you are offering to so many pains, to a death so horrible! And what will it avail you to snatch him from the hands of Herod, only to reserve him for so pitiable an end?

So that Mary did not offer her Son to death only in the Temple; she offered him at every moment of her life: for she revealed to St. Bridget that that sorrow which St. Simeon announced to her never departed from her heart until she was assumed into Heaven. *Dolor iste, usquedum assumpta fui corpore & anima in cælum, nunquam defecit a corde meo — This sorrow, until I was assumed body and soul into heaven, never left my heart.* Whence St. Anselm says to her: Lady, I cannot believe that with such sorrow you could have lived a single moment, had not God himself, who gives life, comforted you with his divine power: *Pia domina, non crediderim te ullo puncto potuisse stimulos tanti cruciatus, quin vitam emitteres, sustinere, nisi ipse spiritus vitæ te confortasset.* But St. Bernard attests to us, speaking precisely of the great anguish which Mary felt on this day, that from then onward she *Moriebatur vivens, dolorem ferens morte crudeliorem — was dying while she lived, bearing a sorrow crueller than death.* She lived dying at every instant, because at every instant she was assailed by the sorrow of the death of her beloved Jesus, which was crueller

than any death.

Hence the Divine Mother, for the great merit she acquired in this great sacrifice which she offered to God for the salvation of the world, was justly called by St. Augustine the repairer of the human

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race: *Reparatrix generis humani.* (de Fide ad Petr.) By St. Epiphanius the Redeemer of captives: *Redemptrix captivorum.* (De Laud. Virg.) By St. Ildephonsus the repairer of the lost world: *Reparatrix perditi orbis.* (Serm. 1. de Ass.) By St. Germanus the restoration of our miseries: *Restauratio calamitatum nostrarum.* (In Exc. Virg.) By St. Ambrose the Mother of all the faithful: *Mater omnium credentium.* (Ap. St. Bonav. Spec. c. 10.) By St. Augustine the Mother of the living: *Mater viventium.* (Serm. 2. de Ass.) And by St. Andrew of Crete the Mother of life: *Mater vitæ.* (Hom. 2. Ass.) For Arnold of Chartres says: *Omnino tunc erat una Christi & Mariæ voluntas, unumque holocaustum ambo pariter offerebant: Unde communem in mundi salute cum illo effectum ostendit.* (Tr. de Laud. Virg.) — *Then there was altogether one will of Christ and of Mary, and both together offered one holocaust: whence she showed an effect common with him in the salvation of the world.* In the death of Jesus Mary united her will to that of her Son, so that both came to offer one and the same sacrifice; and therefore the holy Abbot says that both the Son and the Mother wrought the human Redemption, obtaining salvation for Men: Jesus by satisfying for our sins, Mary by obtaining for us that such a satisfaction should be applied to us. And therefore likewise Blessed Denis the Carthusian asserts that the Divine Mother may be called the Saviour of the World, since by the pain she suffered in compassionating her Son (voluntarily sacrificed by her to Divine Justice) she merited that the merits of the Redeemer should be communicated to men: *Dici potest Virgo mundi salvatrix propter meritum suæ compassionis, qua patienti filio acerbissime condolendo excellentissime promeruit, ut per preces ejus meritum Passionis Christi hominibus communicetur.* (Lib. 2. de Laud. Virg. art. 23.) — *The Virgin may be called the saviour of the world on account of the merit of her compassion, by which, most bitterly grieving with her suffering Son, she most excellently merited that through her prayers the merit of Christ's Passion should be communicated to men.*

Mary having then been made, by the merit of her sorrows and of the offering of her Son, the Mother of all the Redeemed, it is right to believe that only by her hand is given to them the milk of the divine graces, which are the fruits of the merits of Jesus Christ and the means of obtaining eternal life. And to this alludes what St. Bernard says: that God has placed in Mary's hand the whole price of our

Redemption: *Redempturus humanum genus, universum pretium contulit in Maria.* (Serm. de Aquæd.) — *About to redeem the human race, he conferred the whole price upon Mary.* By which words the Saint gives us to understand that it is through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin that there are appli-

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-ed to souls the merits of the Redeemer, since by her hand are dispensed the graces, which are precisely the price of the merits of Jesus Christ.

And if God so favourably received the Sacrifice of Abraham for having offered him his Isaac, that he bound himself in reward to multiply his descendants as the Stars of Heaven — *Quia fecisti rem hanc, & non pepercisti filio tuo unigenito propter me, benedicam tibi, & multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas cæli* (Gen. 22) — *Because you have done this thing, and have not spared your only-begotten son for my sake, I will bless you, and I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven* — we must certainly believe that far more pleasing to the Lord was the more notable Sacrifice which the great Mother of his Jesus made him; and therefore it was granted to her that by her prayers the number of the elect should be multiplied — that is, the fortunate descendance of her children, for whose sake she holds and protects all her devoted servants.

St. Simeon had the promise from God that he should not die before seeing the Messiah born: *Responsum acceperat a Spiritu Sancto non visurum se mortem, nisi prius videret Christum Domini.* (Luke 2:26) — *He had received an answer from the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.* But this grace he then received only through Mary, since he found the Saviour only in Mary's arms. Whence he who would find Jesus will not find him save through Mary. Let us go then to this divine Mother, if we would find Jesus; and let us go with great confidence. Mary said to that servant of hers, Prudenziana Zagnoni (see Marc.), that every year on this day of the Purification a great mercy would be shown to one sinner. Who knows whether some one of us may be today that fortunate sinner? If our sins are great, greater is the power of Mary; the Son knows not how to deny anything to this Mother: *Exaudiet utique matrem filius — The Son will certainly hear his mother* — says St. Bernard (de Aquæductu). If Jesus is angered against us, Mary at once appeases him. Plutarch relates that Antipater wrote to Alexander the Great a long letter of accusations against Olympias, the Mother of that same Alexander. Having read the letter, he answered: Does not Antipater know that one little tear of my Mother suffices to cancel countless letters of accusation? *Ignorare Antipatrum sexcentas Epistolas una deleri matris lacrymula?* (Plut. in Alex.) So let us imagine that Jesus likewise answers the accusations which the Devil

brings against us, when Mary prays for us: Does not Lucifer know that one prayer of a Mo-

The running head of this page is printed "Della Assunzione di Maria" — On the Assumption of Mary — in error: Discourse VII on the Assumption begins only at p. 88. Retained as printed.

-ther in favour of a sinner suffices to make me forget all the accusations of the offences done to me? Behold in proof the following example.

Example.

THIS Example is not recorded in any book, but a Priest, a companion of mine, has related it to me, it having happened to himself. While this Priest was hearing confessions in a Church (the place is passed over for good reasons, though the Penitent gave him leave to publish the fact), there stood before him a young man on his feet, who seemed as though he both wished and did not wish to make his confession. The Father, having looked at him several times, at last called him and asked him whether he wished to confess. He answered yes; but since the Confession had to be a long one, the Confessor led him into a solitary room. There the penitent began by saying that he was a stranger and of noble birth, but that he did not understand how God could pardon him, having led the life he had led. Besides other innumerable sins committed, of impurity, murders, and the rest, he said that having utterly despaired of his salvation he had set himself to commit sins, not so much to satisfy himself as to spite God, and out of the hatred he bore him. He said among other things that he kept a Crucifix by him, and that he had thrown it down in contempt. He said that a little while before, on that very morning, he had gone to communicate sacrilegiously — and to what end? in order afterwards to trample the consecrated Host under his feet. And in fact, having already taken the Host, he meant to carry out the horrible design; but he had not carried it out, having been prevented by the people who were watching him. And indeed he then handed over to the Confessor the Host, laid up in a paper. He related then that, passing before that Church, he had felt a great impulse to go in, which, being unable to resist, he had obeyed; and that then there had come upon him there a great remorse of conscience with a certain will, but a confused and irresolute one, to confess. That therefore he had placed himself before the Confessional, but that standing there so great was his confusion and diffidence that he wished to go away, and it seemed that someone held him back by force; until (he said) Father, you called me, and now I see

myself here, I find myself confessing, but I do not know how. Then

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the Father asked him whether he had practised any devotion during that time, meaning towards Mary most holy — since such strokes of conversion come only from those powerful hands of the Virgin. Nothing, Father; what devotion? the young man answered; I reckoned myself damned. But go on recollecting better, the Father resumed. Father, nothing (he replied); and see here. But putting his hand to his breast in the act of uncovering it, he became aware that he was wearing there the Scapular of Our Lady of Sorrows. Ah my son, the Confessor said then, do you not see that Our Lady has done you this grace? And know, he added, that this Church is a Church of Our Lady. On hearing this the young man broke off, began to feel compunction and at the same time to weep; and going on then to disclose his sins, his compunction grew with such a flood of tears that he fell down in a swoon of sorrow (as it seemed) at the Father's feet; who, having brought him round with spirituous waters, at last saw him finish his Confession, and absolved him with the utmost consolation; and all contrite and resolved to change his life, he sent him back to his own country, after having had from him ample leave to preach and publish everywhere the great mercy shown him by Mary.

Prayer.

O HOLY Mother of God, and my Mother Mary, were you then so concerned for my salvation that you went so far as to sacrifice to death the object dearest to your heart, your beloved Jesus? If then you so greatly desire to see me saved, it is right that in you, after God, I should place all my hopes. O blessed Virgin, yes, in you I put all my trust. Ah, by the merit of this great sacrifice which on this day you offered to God of the life of your Son, pray him that he may have pity on my soul, for which this Immaculate Lamb did not refuse to die upon the Cross.

I would wish, my Queen, on this day, in imitation of you, to offer my own poor heart to God; but I fear that he may refuse it, seeing it so befouled and filthy. But if You offer it to him he will not refuse it. The offerings which are presented to him by your most pure hands he receives and welcomes all. To you then, O Mary, I present myself today, wretched as I am, and to you I give myself wholly. Do you offer me as your own to the Eternal Father toge-

LACUNA IN W1: printed pp. 86–87 are absent from the 1789 images; the text that follows is supplied from W2 = Le Glorie di Maria, Naples, Gabinetto Letterario, 1838, vol. II, pp. 113–116. The pagination inside the fence is W2's, not W1's. See ED-011.

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-ther with Jesus, and pray him that for the merits of the Son, and in your favour, he may accept me and take me for his own. Ah my most sweet Mother, for love of this Son sacrificed, help me always, and do not abandon me: do not allow that this most lovable Redeemer of mine, offered by you today with so much

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sorrow upon the Cross, should be lost to me one day through my sins. Tell him that I am your servant: tell him that in you I have placed all my hope: tell him, in sum, that you will have me saved, and he will certainly hear you. Amen.

DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY.

IN these days the Church sets before us the celebration of two solemn memorials in honour of Mary: one of her happy Passing from this Earth, the other of her glorious Assumption into Heaven. In the present discourse we shall speak of the Passing; in the following, of the Assumption.

How precious was the death of Mary: 1. for the excellences that accompanied it; 2. for the manner in which it came about.

Death being the penalty of sin, it seemed that the divine Mother, all holy and exempt from every blemish of sin, ought not to be subject to death, nor to suffer the same misfortune as the children of Adam, already infected by the venom of sin. But both because God, willing Mary to be wholly like Jesus, and the Son having died, it was fitting that the Mother should die also; and because he willed to give the just an exemplar of the precious death prepared for them: therefore he willed that the Virgin too should die, but by a death altogether sweet and happy. Hence let us enter upon considering how precious was the death of Mary: I. for the excellences that accompanied it; II. for the manner in which it came about.

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POINT I.

THREE things are wont to make death bitter: attachment to the Earth, remorse for sins, and uncertainty of salvation. But the death of Mary was wholly free from these bitternesses, and was accompanied by three most beautiful excellences which rendered it very precious and joyful. She died wholly detached, as she always lived, from worldly goods; she died with the utmost peace of conscience; she died with certainty of eternal glory.

And first, there is no doubt that attachment to the goods of the Earth makes the death of worldly people bitter and wretched, as the Holy Spirit says: *O mors, quam amara est memoria tua homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis!* (Ecclus. 41:1) —

O death, how bitter is the memory of you to a man that has peace in his possessions! But because the Saints die detached from the things of the World, their death is not bitter, but sweet, lovable, and precious — that is (as St. Bernard explains) worthy to be bought at any great price. *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.* (Apoc. 14:23) — *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.* Who then are these who die being already dead? They are precisely those fortunate souls who pass into Eternity finding themselves already detached, and as it were dead to all the affections of these earthly things, having found in God alone all their good, as St. Francis of Assisi had found it, who used to say: *Deus meus, et omnia — My God, and my all.* But what soul was ever more detached from the things of the World, and more united to God, than the beautiful soul of Mary? Well was she wholly detached from her parents, since from the age of three years, when girls are most attached to their parents and most in need of their help, with such intrepidity Mary kissed them and went to shut herself in the Temple, to attend to God alone. Detached from posses-

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-sions, being content to live always poor and to support herself by the labour of her hands. Detached from honours, loving a humble and lowly life, though the honour of a Queen belonged to her by reason of the descent she drew from the Kings of Israel. The Virgin herself revealed to St. Elizabeth the Benedictine that when she was left in the Temple by her parents, she resolved in her heart to have no other father, and to love no other good, than God.

St. John saw Mary figured in that Woman clothed with the Sun, who had the Moon beneath her feet: *Signum magnum apparuit in cœlo: Mulier amicta Sole, et Luna sub pedibus ejus.* (Apoc. 12:1) — *A great sign appeared in heaven: a Woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon beneath her feet.* By the moon the Interpreters explain that the goods of this earth are signified, which are perishable and wane, as the Moon wanes. All these goods Mary never had in her heart, but always despised them and kept them beneath her feet, living in this World like a solitary turtledove in a desert, without setting

End of the supplement from W2. The W1 text resumes at scan 0085 (p. 88) with the words "affetto a cosa alcuna" — "her affection on anything" — in unit P2-D07.

The beginning of Discourse VII stands in the W2 supplement at the end of unit P2-D06, printed pp. 86–87 of W1 being absent. The W1 text resumes here in mid-sentence: "... living in this World like a solitary turtledove in a desert, without setting | her affection on anything ...".

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her affection on anything; so that of her it was said: *Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.* (Cant. 2:12) — *The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.* And in

another place: *Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, &c.* (Cant. 3:6) — *Who is this that comes up through the desert?* Whence Rupert said: *Talis ascendisti per desertum, idest animam habens solitariam — Thus did you come up through the desert, that is, having a solitary soul.* Mary having then lived always and wholly detached from the things of earth, and united only to God, death was not bitter to her but exceedingly sweet and dear, since it united her more closely to God with an eternal bond in Paradise.

Secondly, peace of conscience makes the death of the just precious. The sins committed in life are those worms which most afflict and gnaw the heart of poor dying sinners; who, having then shortly to present themselves before the divine Tribunal, see themselves at that moment surrounded by their sins, which terrify them and cry out about them, in St. Bernard's words: *Opera tua sumus, non deseremus — We are your works; we will not leave you.* Mary certainly could not be afflicted at death by any remorse of conscience, since she was ever holy, ever pure, and ever free from every shadow of sin, actual and original; whence of her it was said: *Tota pulchra es, amica mea, & macula non est in te.* (Cant. 4) — *You are all fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in you.* From the time she had the use of reason — that is, from the first instant of her Immaculate Conception in the womb of St. Anne — from that time she began with all her strength to love her God; and so she went on doing, always advancing further in perfection and in love throughout her life. All her thoughts, her desires, her affections were of God alone: she spoke no word, made no movement, gave no glance, drew no breath that was not for God and for his glory, without ever swerving a step, without ever detaching herself for a moment from divine love. Ah, at the happy hour of her death there gathered about her blessed bed all her beautiful virtues practised in life: that faith of hers so constant, that confidence in God so loving, that patience so strong amid so many sufferings, that humility amid so many privileges, that modesty of hers, that meekness, that pity towards souls, that zeal for the divine glory — above all that perfect charity towards God, with that total conformity to the divine will: all of them, in short, gathered about her, and consoling her said: *Opera tua sumus, non te dese-*

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-remus. Lady and our mother, we are all daughters of your beautiful heart; now that you leave this wretched life, we do not wish to leave you; we too will come to be your eternal court and honour in Paradise, where through us you shall sit as Queen of all men and of all the Angels.

Thirdly, certainty of eternal salvation made her death sweet. Death is called a passing, since by death one passes from a short life to an eternal life. Whence, as too great is the terror of those who die in doubt of their salvation and approach that great moment with just fear of passing to an eternal death, so on the contrary too great is the gladness of the Saints in ending life, hoping with some assurance to go and possess God in heaven. A Teresian Religious, when the Physician gave her the news of her death, had such gladness that she said to him: What, Sir Physician, do you give me this dear news and not ask me for a tip? St. Lawrence Justinian, being near death and hearing his household weeping about him, said to them: *Abite, abite cum lacrymis vestris: non est tempus lacrymarum — Go, go away with your tears: this is no time for tears.* Go elsewhere to weep; if you would stay here with me, you must rejoice, as I rejoice to see the door of Paradise opened to me, to unite me with my God. And so likewise a St. Peter of Alcantara, a St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and so many other Saints, on receiving the news of death, broke out in cries of jubilation and gladness. And yet these had not the certainty of divine grace, nor were they sure of their own sanctity, as Mary was sure. But what jubilation must the divine Mother have felt on having the news of her death — she who had the utmost certainty of enjoying the divine grace, especially after the Archangel Gabriel assured her that she was full of grace and already in possession of God: *Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum ... invenisti gratiam.* (Luke 1) — *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you ... you have found grace.* And well did she herself understand that her heart was already burning with continual divine love, so that, as Bernardine de Busti says, Mary by a singular privilege granted to no other Saint loved and was actually loving God always at every instant of her life; and with such ardour that St. Bernard says there was ne-

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-cessary a continual miracle for her to have been able to live in the midst of such flames.

Of Mary it was already said in the Sacred Canticles: *Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi, ex aromatibus myrrhæ, & thuris, & universi pulveris pigmentarii?* (Cant. 3:6) — *Who is this that comes up through the desert like a little rod of smoke, of the perfumes of myrrh and frankincense and of all the powder of the perfumer?* Her total mortification, figured in the Myrrh; her fervent Prayers, signified in the incense; and all her holy virtues united to her perfect charity towards God kindled in her a fire so great that her beautiful soul, wholly sacrificed and consumed by divine love, rose continually to God like a little rod of smoke which on every side breathed the sweetest fragrance. *Talis fumi virgula, Beata Maria suavem odorem spirasti Altissimo — Such a rod of smoke: Blessed Mary, you breathed a sweet*

fragrance to the Most High. So Rupert wrote. And Eustachius with stronger expression: *Virgula fumi, quia concremata intus in holocaustum incendio divini amoris, ex ea flagrabat suavissimus odor — A rod of smoke, because being burnt up within as a holocaust in the fire of divine love, from her there blazed the sweetest fragrance.* And as the loving Virgin lived, so she died. As divine love gave her life, so it gave her death; she dying, as the Doctors and the holy Fathers commonly say, of no other infirmity than of pure love; St. Ildephonsus saying that Mary must either not have died at all, or have died only of love.

Point II. But let us now see how her blessed death came about. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, Mary remained on earth to attend to the propagation of the faith. Hence the Disciples of Jesus Christ had recourse to her, and she resolved their doubts, comforted them in persecutions, and encouraged them to labour for the divine glory and for the salvation of redeemed souls. She indeed willingly remained on earth, understanding this to be the will of God for the good of the Church; but she could not but feel the pain of seeing herself far from the presence and the sight of her beloved son, who had ascended into heaven. *Ubi thesaurus vester est* (said the Redeemer), *ibi & cor vestrum erit.* (Luke 12:34) — *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Where anyone reckons his treasure and his contentment to be, there he keeps his love ever fixed, and the desire of his heart. If then Mary loved no other good but Jesus, he being in heaven, in heaven were all her desires. Tauler wrote of Mary (Serm. de Nat. Virg. Mar.): *Mariæ cella fuit cælum — Mary's cell was heaven* — since in heaven by her affection she made her continual dwelling; *Schola, æternitas — her school, eternity* — always detached from temporal

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goods; *Pædagogus, divina veritas — her teacher, divine truth* — acting always according to the divine light; *speculum divinitas — her mirror, the Godhead* — since she looked on nothing but God, to conform herself, always ready to carry out the divine good pleasure; *quia, unitas cum Deo* so printed; apparently for *quies*, "her rest" — *union with God* — her peace was in ever uniting herself to his will; *Ornatus ejus devotio — her adornment, devotion* — wholly with God; *Cordis illius locus & thesaurus, solus Deus erat — the place and treasure of her heart was God alone* — in sum, the place and treasure of her heart was nothing else but God. The most holy Virgin did indeed go on consoling her enamoured heart in that hard separation by visiting (as is related) the holy places of Palestine where her son had been during his life; she often visited now the stable of Bethlehem, where her son was born; now the workshop in Nazareth, where her son had lived so many years poor and despised; now the garden of Gethsemani, where her son gave beginning to his Passion; now

the Prætorium of Pilate, where he was scourged; now the place where he was crowned; but most often she visited Calvary, where her son expired, and the holy Sepulchre, where at last she left him. And thus the most loving mother went on relieving the pain of her hard exile. But this could not suffice to content her heart, which could not find its perfect rest on this earth; whence she did nothing else but send up continual sighs to her Lord, exclaiming with David, but with more ardent love: *Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbæ? volabo, & requiescam.* (Ps. 54:7) — *Who will give me wings like a dove's? I will fly away and be at rest.* Who will give me the wings of a dove, to fly to my God and there find my repose? *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.* (Ps. 41:2) — *As the hart longs for the fountains of waters, so my soul longs for you, O God.* As the wounded hart longs for the fountain, so my soul, wounded by your love, my God, longs and sighs for you. Ah, the sighs of this holy Turtledove could not but pierce the heart of her God, who loved her too well. *Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.* (Cant. 2:12) Whence it is that, unwilling to defer any longer the consolation of his beloved, behold he grants her desire and calls her to his Kingdom.

Cedrenus (Comp. hist.), Nicephorus (l. 2. c. 21.), and the Metaphrast (Or. de Dormit. Mar.) relate that some days before her death the Lord sent her the Angel St. Gabriel, that same one who once brought her the tidings that she was the blessed woman chosen to be the Mother of God. My Lady and Queen, said the An-

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-gel, God has already heard your holy desires, and has sent me to tell you to prepare to leave the earth, because he wills to have you with him in Paradise. Come then and take possession of your Kingdom, while I and all those holy Citizens await and desire you. At this happy announcement, what else could our most humble and holy Virgin do but hide herself the more in the centre of her most profound humility, and repeat those same words which she answered to St. Gabriel when he announced to her the divine Maternity: *Ecce Ancilla Domini — Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* Behold (she answered again) the handmaid of the Lord; he of his mere goodness chose me and made me his mother: now he calls me to Paradise; I deserved neither the one nor the other honour. But since he wills to show forth in me his infinite liberality, here I am ready to come where he wills. *Ecce Ancilla Domini*: may the will of my God and Lord be ever fulfilled in me.

After receiving this dear message, she made it known to John, of whom we may consider with what sorrow and tenderness he must have heard this news — he who for so many years, attending her as a son, had already enjoyed the heavenly conversation of this most holy Mother. Then she again visited the holy places of

Jerusalem, taking leave of them with tenderness, especially of Calvary, where her beloved son left his life. And then she set herself in her poor house to prepare for death. During this time the Angels did not fail to come often to salute their beloved Queen, consoling themselves in knowing that they were soon to see her crowned in heaven. Many Authors relate (St. Andrew of Crete, Or. de Dorm. Deip.; Damascene, de Dorm. Deip.; Euthymius, l. 3. Hist. c. 40.) that before her death, by divine miracle, the Apostles and also some of the Disciples found themselves gathered from the various parts where they were scattered, all united in Mary's room: whereupon she, seeing those dear children of hers already gathered in her presence, began to speak thus: My beloved ones, for your sake and to help you my son left me. Now the holy Faith is already spread through the world, the fruit of the divine sowing has already grown; whence my Lord, seeing that my assistance was no longer necessary on earth, and pitying the pain of my separation, has granted my desire to go forth from this life, and

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to go and see him in heaven. Do you then remain to labour for his glory. If I leave you, I do not leave you in heart; I shall carry with me and always keep with me the great love I bear you. I go to Paradise to pray for you. At this sorrowful news, who can ever comprehend what were the tears and lamentations of all those Disciples, thinking that in a little while they were to be parted from their mother? Then (weeping, they all began to say), then, O Mary, will you now leave us? It is true that this earth is no worthy or fitting place for you, and that we are not worthy to enjoy the company of a mother of God: but remember that you are our mother; you have been until now our teacher in doubts; you our consoler in distress; you our strength in persecutions; and how will you now abandon us, leaving us alone without your comfort in the midst of so many enemies and so many battles? We have already lost on earth our master and father Jesus, who has ascended into heaven. We have consoled ourselves during this time with you our mother; how then will you also leave us orphans, without father and without mother? Our Lady, either stay with us, or take us with you. So St. John Damascene (Orat. de Ass. Virg.). No, my children (the loving Queen took up sweetly to say), this is not according to the will of God; be content to do what he has disposed concerning me and concerning you. To you too it remains to labour on earth for the glory of your Redeemer, and to complete your eternal crown. I do not leave you to abandon you, but to succour you the more by my intercession with God in heaven. Be content. I commend to you the holy Church. I commend to you the redeemed souls; let this be the last farewell and the only memento that I leave you; do it if you love me: labour for souls

and for the glory of my son; because one day we shall see one another again, united in Paradise, never to be parted in eternity.

Then she begged them to give burial to her body after death; she blessed them; she directed St. John, as Damascene reports, that after her death he should give two of her garments to two Virgins who had served her for a certain time. (Nicephorus and the Metaphrast, in the Hist. of Mary by Fr. Joseph of Jesus and Mary, l. 5. c. 13.) And then she composed herself decently upon her poor little bed, where she set herself with desire to await de-

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-ath, and with death the meeting with her divine spouse, who was shortly to come and take her to himself. Already in Jerusalem the report spreads, and in the hearts of her own there gathers a joy that heralds her going. The harvest of an immense and new sweetness draws near. The holy Apostles, seeing that Mary was now about to depart from this earth, renewing their tears, all placed themselves about her kneeling by the bed; and some set themselves to kiss her holy feet; some sought her special Blessing; and all, weeping bitterly, felt themselves pierced with sorrow at understanding that they were to be parted for ever in this life from their beloved Lady. And she, the most loving Mother, pitying them all in their particular need, and all of them admiring, — she especially called St. Peter, as Head of the Church and Vicar of her son, and to him she chiefly commended the propagation of the faith, promising him from heaven a particular protection. But most of all she then called St. John, who more than all the others felt sorrow at the moment of parting from that Holy Mother; and the most grateful Lady, well knowing the affection and the attention with which this holy Disciple had assisted her through all the years that she had been on earth, especially after her son's death: John, my own (with great tenderness she said to him), John, my own, yes, I thank you for all the attendance you have shown me. My son, be sure that I shall not leave you without a reward for it. If I now leave you, I go to pray for you. Do you remain in peace in this life, until we shall see one another again in heaven, where I await you. Do not forget me; in all your needs call me to your aid, for I shall never forget you, my beloved son. Son, I bless you; and I leave you my blessing; remain in peace, farewell.

But now Mary's death is near. Divine love, having drawn out all the blessed and vehement flames of that great heart, the great heavenly phœnix in the midst of so great a burning is losing her life. The Angels then came in troop after troop to find her, as it were holding themselves ready for the great passage with which they were to accompany her to Paradise. Mary was indeed consoled at the sight of those holy Spirits, but she was not consoled fully, not seeing yet

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her beloved Jesus appear, who was the whole love of her heart. Whence she often repeated to the Angels who came down to salute her: *Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei, quia amore langueo.* (Cant. 5:8) — *I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love.* Holy Angels, O fair Citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, you come in courteous troops to console me, and you all console me with your lovely presence; I thank you, but you do not all content me fully, because I do not yet see my son to console me: Go, if you love me, return to Paradise, and say on my behalf to my beloved, *nuntietis ei, quia amore langueo*: tell him that I languish and faint for love of him; tell him to come, and to come soon, for I feel myself dying with the desire of seeing him.

But behold Jesus, who now comes to take his mother to lead her to the Blessed Kingdom. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth that the son appeared to Mary before she expired with the cross in his hand, to show the special glory he had drawn from the Redemption, having by his death gained that great creature who for eternal ages was to honour him more than all men and all the Angels. St. John Damascene relates that he himself then communicated her as Viaticum, saying to her with love: Take, O my mother, from my hands this same body of mine which you gave me. And the mother, having received with the greater love that last Communion, among those last breaths said to him: Son, into your hands I commend my spirit; I commend to you this Soul which You created of your goodness, rich from the beginning with so many graces, and by a singular privilege preserved from every stain of sin. I commend to you my body, from which you deigned to take flesh and blood. I commend to you also these dear children of mine (speaking of the holy Disciples who stood about her); they are left afflicted by my departure; do you console them, who love them more than I do; bless them, and give them strength to do great things for your glory. (In St. John Damascene, Sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin.)

The end of Mary's life having now come, there was heard in the room where she lay a great harmony (as St. Jerome relates). And moreover, according as was revealed to St. Bridget, a great splendour was seen to appear. At this harmony and unwonted splendour the holy Apostles perceived that Mary was then de-

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-parting; whereupon they renewed their tears and their prayers, and lifting up their hands they all said with one voice: O our mother, you are now going to heaven and leaving us; give us your last blessing, do not forget us wretches. And Mary, turning her eyes round upon them all, as though taking leave for the last time: Farewell,

children, she said to them, I bless you: do not doubt that I shall not forget you. And then behold death came — not clothed in mourning and sadness, as it comes to other men, but adorned with light and gladness. But what a death! what death? Better let us say: divine love came to cut the thread of that noble life. And as a lamp which before going out gives, among those last flashes of its life, a greater flash, and then expires: so the beautiful butterfly, her son inviting her to follow him, plunged in the flame of her charity, and in the midst of her loving sighs, gives one greater sigh of love, and expires, and dies. And thus that great soul, that beautiful dove of the Lord, was loosed from the bonds of this life and went to the blessed glory, where she sits, and shall sit, Queen in Paradise for all eternity.

Mary then has now left the earth, she is now in heaven. From there the merciful mother looks upon us, who are still on this vale of tears, and pities us and promises us her aid, if we will have it. Let us always pray her that by the merits of her blessed death she may obtain for us a happy death: and if it should please God, that she may obtain for us to die on a Saturday, which is dedicated to her honour; or else on a day of the Novena or of the Octave of one of her feasts, as she has obtained for so many of her devoted servants, and especially for St. Stanislaus Kostka, for whom she obtained death on the day of her glorious Assumption, as Fr. Bartoli relates in his Life of him (Lib. 1. c. 12.), thus.

Example.

WHILE this holy youth was living wholly given to the love of Mary, it happened that on the first day of August he heard a Sermon of Fr. Peter Canisius, in which he, preaching to the Novices of the Society, with fervour urged upon all the great counsel of living every day as though it were the last of life, after which we should have to present ourselves before the divine Tribunal. The sermon finished, St.

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Stanislaus said to his Companions that that counsel had been for him singularly a voice of God, since he was to die in that very month. He said this either because God expressly revealed it to him, or at least because he gave him a certain inward sense of it, from what afterwards happened. Four days later, the Blessed Youth going with Fr. Emanuel Sa to St. Mary Major, and entering upon speaking of the approaching Feast of the Assumption, said: Father, I believe that on that day there was seen in Paradise a new Paradise, in beholding the Glory of the Mother of God crowned Queen of Heaven and placed so near the Lord above all the Choirs of the Angels. And if it is true that every year — as I hold for certain — the Feast is

renewed in Heaven, I hope that I shall see the next one. Then, the glorious Martyr St. Lawrence having fallen to St. Stanislaus by lot as his Protector for the month (according to the custom of the Society), it is reported that he wrote a letter to his Mother Mary, in which he begged her to obtain for him to be present to see this Feast of hers in Paradise. On St. Lawrence's day he received Communion, and afterwards besought the Saint to present that letter to the Divine Mother, interposing his own intercession, so that Mary most holy might hear him. And behold, at the close of that same day a fever came upon him; and though it was very slight, he nevertheless from that time held for certain the grace he had asked, of a near death. As in fact, on going to bed, he said all jubilant with a smile on his lips: From this bed I shall not rise again. And to Fr. Claudio Aquaviva he added: My Father, I believe that St. Lawrence has already obtained me the grace from Mary, of being in Heaven at the Feast of her Assumption. But of these words of his no one took any notice. The Vigil come, the sickness continued to show itself slight, but the Saint told a Brother that the following night he would die. And the other answered: Oh brother, it would be a greater miracle to die of so slight an illness than to recover from it. But behold, past midday he was seized by a mortal faintness, and then began to break out in a cold sweat, and lost his strength entirely. The Superior hurried to him, whom Stanislaus begged to have him laid on the bare ground, to die as a penitent. Which was granted him to content him, and he was laid on the ground on a small mattress. Then he confessed, received the Viaticum, not without tears from all who were pre-

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-sent, since on the entrance of the Divine Sacrament into the room they saw him all shining with heavenly gladness in his eyes, and his face all inflamed with holy love, so that he seemed a Seraph. He received also Extreme Unction, and meanwhile did nothing but now lift his eyes to Heaven, and now gaze upon, and kiss, and press lovingly to his breast an Image of Mary. A Father asked him: Of what use to you is that Rosary wound about your hand, if you cannot recite it? He answered: It serves to console me, since it is a thing of my Mother's. And how much more (the Father took him up) will you be consoled in seeing her, and kissing her hand shortly, in Heaven? Then the Saint, all kindled in countenance, raised his hands high, thus expressing the desire of finding himself soon in her presence. Then his dear Mother appeared to him, as he himself disclosed to the bystanders; and a little afterwards, at the breaking of the dawn of the fifteenth day of August, he expired with the look of one blessed, his eyes fixed on Heaven, without making any movement; so much so that when they afterwards held out to him the Image of the most holy Virgin, and

saw that he made no further motion towards Her, they perceived that he had already passed to kiss her feet in Paradise, before his beloved Queen.

Prayer.

O MOST sweet Lady and our Mother, You have now left the earth and have reached your Kingdom, where you sit as Queen above all the Choirs of the Angels, as the Church sings: *Exaltata es super Choros Angelorum ad cælestia Regna — You are exalted above the Choirs of Angels to the heavenly Kingdom.* We know indeed that we sinners were not worthy to have you with us in this valley of darkness. But we know too that in your greatnesses you have not forgotten us wretches, and that by being raised to such glory you have not lost — rather there has grown in you — compassion towards us poor children of Adam. From the great Throne then where you reign, turn upon us also, O Mary, your merciful eyes, and have pity on us. Remember indeed that on leaving this earth you promised us not to forget us. Look upon us and succour us. See in what storms and in how many dangers we ever find ourselves, and shall find ourselves until the end of our life shall come. By the merits of your blessed death obtain for us holy Per-

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-severance in the Divine friendship, that we may at last go forth from this life in the grace of God, and so come one day to kiss your feet too in Paradise, uniting ourselves with those blessed Spirits to praise you and to sing your Glories, as you deserve. Amen.

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DISCOURSE VIII.

Another Discourse on the Assumption of Mary.

I. How glorious was the Triumph with which Mary went to Heaven. II. How exalted was the Throne to which she was raised in Heaven.

IT would seem right that Holy Church on this day of Mary's Assumption into Heaven should rather invite us to weep than to rejoice, since our sweet Mother departs from this earth and leaves us deprived of her dear presence, as St. Bernard speaks: *Plangendum nobis, quam plaudendum magis esse videtur.* (Serm. 1. de Ass.) *— It seems that we have more cause to weep than to applaud.* But no: Holy Church invites us to rejoice: *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem festum celebrantes sub honore B. Mariæ Virginis — Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a feast day in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* And with reason: if we love this our Mother, we ought to congratulate ourselves more on her glory than on our own particular

consolation. What son does not rejoice, even though he is parted from his Mother, if he knows that she is going to take possession of a Kingdom? Mary today goes to be crowned Queen of Heaven, and can we fail to keep festival, if we truly love her? *Gaudeamus omnes, gaudeamus — Let us all rejoice, let us rejoice.* And to console ourselves the more at her exaltation, let us consider: I. How glorious was the Triumph with which Mary went to Heaven. II. How exalted was the Throne to which she was raised in Heaven.

Point I. After Jesus Christ our Saviour had completed the work of the Redemption by his death, the Angels longed to have him in their homeland of Heaven; whence continually praying they repeated to him the words of David: *Surge Domine in requiem tuam, tu & arca sanctificationis tuæ.* (Ps. 131:8) — *Arise, O Lord, into your resting place, you and the ark of your sanctification.* Come now, Lord, now that you have redeemed men, come to your Kingdom with us, and bring with you also the living Ark of your sanctification — that is, your Mother, who was the Ark sanctified by you when you dwelt in her womb. Just so

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St. Bernardine makes the Angels say: *Ascendat etiam Maria tua Sanctissima Mater, sua conceptione sanctificata.* (Serm. de Ass.) — *Let Mary also, your most holy Mother, sanctified in her conception, ascend.* Therefore at last the Lord willed to gratify the desire of those heavenly Citizens by calling Mary to Paradise. But if he willed that the Ark of the Testament should be brought with great pomp into the City of David — *Et David & omnis domus Israel ducebat arcam testamenti Domini in jubilo & clangore buccinæ* (2 Kings 6) — *And David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the testament of the Lord with joyful shouting and with sound of trumpet* — with another and nobler and more glorious pomp he ordained that his Mother should enter Heaven. The Prophet Elias was carried to Heaven in a chariot of fire, which (as the Interpreters hold) was nothing else than a company of Angels who raised him from the earth. But to carry you to Heaven, O Mother of God (says Rupert the Abbot), one company of Angels did not suffice, but the very King of Heaven himself came to accompany you with his whole Heavenly court: *Ad transferendum te in Cælum, non unus tantum currus igneus, sed totus cum Rege suo Filio tuo venit atque occurrit exercitus Angelorum — To carry you to Heaven, not one fiery chariot alone, but the whole army of Angels came and went out to meet you with their King, your Son.*

Of the same judgment is St. Bernardine of Siena: that Jesus Christ, to honour the triumph of Mary, himself came from Paradise to meet and accompany her: *Surrexit gloriosus Jesus in occursum suæ dulcissimæ Matris — The glorious Jesus arose to meet*

his most sweet Mother. And precisely to this end St. Anselm says that the Redeemer willed to ascend to Heaven before his Mother arrived there, not only to prepare her Throne in that royal court, but also to make her entrance into Heaven more glorious by accompanying her himself together with all the blessed Spirits: *Prudentiori consilio illam præcedere volebat, quatenus in Regno tuo ei locum præpararet, & sic comitatus tota curia tua festivus ei occurrens, sublimius sicut decebat tuam Matrem ad te exaltares.* (Vid. de Exc. V. c. 8.) — *By a wiser counsel he willed to go before her, that he might prepare her a place in your Kingdom, and thus, attended by your whole court, coming festively to meet her, might exalt your Mother to yourself more sublimely, as befitted her.* Hence St. Peter Damian, contemplating the splendour of this Assumption of Mary into Heaven, says that we shall find it more glorious than the Ascension of Jesus Christ, because to the Redeemer only the Angels came out to meet him, whereas the Blessed Virgin went to Glory met and attended by the Lord of Glory himself and by all the blessed company of Saints and Angels: *Invenies occursum ejus pompæ digniorem, quam in Christi Ascensione: soli quippe Angeli Redemptori occurrere potuerunt. Matri vero Filius ipse cum tota*

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curia tam Angelorum quam Sanctorum occurrens, auxit ad beatæ consistorium sessionis. (Serm. de Ass.) — *You will find the pomp of her meeting worthier than at Christ's Ascension: for the Angels alone could go out to meet the Redeemer; but the Son himself, coming to meet his Mother with the whole court both of Angels and of Saints, raised her to the assembly of the blessed throne.* Whence Guerric the Abbot makes the Divine Word speak thus upon it: *Ego, ut Patrem honorarem, ad terram descendi, ut Matrem honorarem, ad Cælum reascendi — To honour my Father I came down to earth; to honour my Mother I ascended again to Heaven.* To give glory to my Father I came down from Heaven to earth; but then to render honour to my Mother I ascended again into Heaven, that I might thus come to meet her and accompany her with my presence to Paradise.

Let us go on considering, then, how the Saviour came from Heaven to meet his Mother, and at the first meeting said to her, to console her: *Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, & veni. Jam hyems transiit & recessit.* (Cant. 2:10) — *Arise, make haste, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For the winter is now past and gone.* Come, my dear Mother, my beautiful and pure Dove, leave this valley of tears where you have suffered so much for love of me: *Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni coronaberis.* (Cant. 4:8) — *Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come: you shall be crowned.* Come, both in Soul and in Body, to enjoy the reward of your holy life. If you have suffered much

on earth, far greater is the glory I have prepared for you in Heaven. Come and sit there near me; come to receive the Crown I will give you as Queen of the universe. Behold, Mary now leaves the earth, and remembering the many graces she received there from her Lord, she looks upon it with affection and at the same time with compassion, leaving there so many poor children amid so many miseries and dangers. Behold, Jesus gives her his hand, and the Blessed Mother now rises into the air, now passes the clouds, and passes the spheres. Behold her already arrived at the gates of Heaven. When Monarchs enter to take possession of their Kingdom, they do not pass through the gates of the City, but either the gates are taken away altogether, or they pass above the gates. Therefore, as the Angels said when Jesus Christ entered Paradise — *Attollite portas Principes vestras, & elevamini portæ æternales, & introibit Rex gloriæ.* (Ps. 23) — *Lift up your gates, O princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in* — so likewise now that Mary goes to take possession of the Kingdom of the Heavens, the Angels who accompany her cry to the others who are within: *Attollite portas Principes vestras, & elevamini portæ æternales, & introibit Regina gloriæ — Lift up your gates, O princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates, and the Queen of glory shall enter in.* Quickly, O Princes of Heaven, lift up, take away the gates, because the Queen of glory must enter.

Behold, Mary now enters the blessed Homeland. But at her entrance, and at seeing her so beau-

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-tiful and glorious, the Angels who come from without ask, as Origen contemplates: *Una in omnium Cælo erat lætantium (vox): Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum?* (Cant. 8:5) — *There was one voice of all rejoicing in Heaven: Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?* And who ever is this Creature so lovely, who comes from the desert of the earth, a place of thorns and briars — yet she comes so pure and so rich in virtue, leaning upon her beloved Lord, who himself deigns to accompany her with such honour? Who is she? answer the Angels who accompany her: this is the Mother of our King, she is our Queen, she is the blessed among Women, the one full of Grace, the Holy of Holies, the beloved of God, the Immaculate, the Dove, the most beautiful of all creatures. And thereupon all those blessed Spirits begin to bless her and to praise her in song, better than the Hebrews said to Judith: *Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu lætitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri.* (Judith 15:10) — *You are the glory of Jerusalem, you the joy of Israel, you the honour of our people.* Ah Lady and our Queen, you then are the glory of Paradise, the

gladness of our homeland; you are the honour of us all; be ever welcome, be ever blessed; behold your Kingdom, behold all of us are your vassals, ready at your commands.

Then all the Saints who were then in Paradise came to give her welcome and to salute her as their Queen. All the holy Virgins came: *Viderunt eam filiæ, & beatissimam prædicaverunt ... & laudaverunt eam.* (Cant. 6:8) — *The daughters saw her and declared her most blessed ... and praised her.* We, they said, O most blessed Lady, are Queens too of this Kingdom, but you are our Queen; because you were the first to give us the great example of consecrating our virginity to God; we all bless and thank you for it. Then the holy Confessors came to salute her as their teacher, who had taught them so many beautiful virtues by her holy life. The holy Martyrs too came to salute her as their Queen, because by her great constancy in the sorrows of her Son's Passion she had taught them, and had also obtained for them by her merits, the fortitude to give their life for the Faith. St. James too came, who alone of the Apostles was then in Paradise, to thank her on behalf of all the other Apostles for all the comfort and help she had given them while she was on earth. Then the Prophets came to salute her, and these said to her: Ah Lady, you

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are she who was foreshadowed by our prophecies. The holy Patriarchs came and said to her: O Mary, you then were our hope, so long and so greatly sighed for by us. But among these, with greater affection, our first Parents, Adam and Eve, came to thank her. Ah beloved Daughter, they said, you have repaired the harm we did to the human race; you have obtained for the World that blessing lost by us through our own fault; through you we are saved; be ever blessed for it.

Then St. Simeon came to kiss her feet, and recalled to her with joy that day on which he received the Infant Jesus from her hands. St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth came, and again thanked her for that loving visit which with such humility and charity she paid them in their House, and by which they received such treasures of graces. St. John the Baptist came with greater affection to thank her for having sanctified him by means of her voice. But what must they then have said to her when her dear Parents St. Joachim and St. Anne came to salute her? O God, with what tenderness they must have blessed her, saying: Ah beloved Daughter, and what a fortune has been ours to have such a Daughter! Ah, you are now our Queen, because you are the Mother of our God: as such we salute and adore you. But who can then comprehend the gladness with which her dear spouse St. Joseph came to salute her? Who will ever be able to explain the gladness which the holy Patriarch felt at seeing his spouse arrived in Heaven with such triumph, and made Queen of

all Paradise? With what tenderness must he have said: Ah Lady and my spouse, when shall I ever come to thank our God as I ought for having made me your spouse, you who are his true Mother? For your sake I merited on earth to attend upon the childhood of the Incarnate Word, to have him so many times in my arms, and to receive from him so many special graces. Blessed be the moments I spent in life in serving Jesus and you, my holy spouse. Behold our Jesus: let us console ourselves, for now he does not lie stretched in a stable upon the straw, as we saw him born in Bethlehem; he does not now live poor and despised in a workshop, as once he lived with us in Nazareth; he does not now hang fixed upon an infamous gibbet, as he died for the salvation of the Wor-

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-ld in Jerusalem; but he sits at the right hand of the Father, as King and Lord of Heaven and of earth. And we, my Queen, shall never again be parted from his holy feet, to bless and love him eternally.

Then all the Angels came to salute her, and she, the great Queen, thanked them all for the attendance they had given her on earth, thanking especially the Archangel St. Gabriel, who came to her; and she not only thanks him for all the graces granted her of God's goodness alone, and especially for having made her Mother of the Eternal Word. Behold, the Eternal Father blessed his Daughter, the Son his Mother, the Holy Spirit his Spouse; and they set upon her head the crown with a participation of their Power, Wisdom, and Love. All three Persons placing her Throne at the right hand of Jesus, and declaring her universal Queen of Heaven and of earth; and they command the Angels and all creatures to acknowledge her as their Queen, and as Queen to serve and obey her. And here let us pass to consider how exalted was this Throne to which Mary was raised in Heaven.

Point II. But if the human mind, says St. Bernard, cannot come to comprehend the immense glory which God has prepared in Heaven for those who have loved him on earth — as the Apostle already declared, who shall ever come to comprehend *Quod præparavit Deus diligentibus se? — what God has prepared for those who love him* — what glory must he have prepared for his beloved Mother, who on earth loved him more than all men; nay, from the first moment in which she was created, loved him more than all men and all the Angels united together? With reason then does Holy Church sing of Mary that, having loved God more than all the Angels, she has been exalted above all the Angels: *Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix super Choros Angelorum ad cælestia Regna.* (In Off. B. V.) — *The holy Mother of God is exalted above the Choirs of Angels to the heavenly Kingdom.* And she has been (says William the Abbot) above all the Angels in such wise that above

her he has placed no other than his own Son, who was Man and God toget-

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-her: *exaltatam super choros Angelorum, ut nihil contempletur super se Mater, nisi filium suum.* (Serm. 4. de Ass.) — *exalted above the choirs of Angels, so that the Mother beholds nothing above herself but her own Son.*

Whence the learned Gerson asserts that, all the orders of Angels and of Saints being distinguished into three Hierarchies, as the Angelic Doctor teaches (q. 108.) with St. Denis, Mary constitutes in Heaven a Hierarchy apart, the most sublime of all, and the second after God: *Virgo sola constituit hierarchiam secundam sub Deo hierarcha primo.* (Sup. Magn. tr. 4.) — *The Virgin alone constitutes the second hierarchy under God the first hierarch.* And as (St. Antoninus adds) the mistress differs beyond comparison from her Servants, so beyond comparison is the glory of Mary greater than that of the Angels: *Virgo est domina Angelorum, ergo & improportionabiliter est supra omnem hierarchiam Angelorum exaltata.* (4. p. tit. 15. c. 20.) — *The Virgin is the mistress of the Angels; therefore she is beyond all proportion exalted above every hierarchy of Angels.* And to understand this it is enough to know what David told us: that this Queen was placed at the right hand of her Son: *Astitit Regina a dextris tuis.* (Ps. 44) — *The Queen stood at your right hand.* Which St. Athanasius explained precisely of Mary, saying: *Collocatur Maria a dextris Dei.* (De Ass. B. V.) — *Mary is placed at the right hand of God.*

The Works of Mary, as St. Ildephonsus speaks, certainly surpassed beyond comparison in merit the works of all the Saints; and therefore the reward and the glory she merited cannot be comprehended: *Sicut est incomparabile quod gessit, ita & incomprehensibile præmium, & gloria inter omnes sanctos, quam meruit.* (Ser. 2. de Ass.) — *As what she did is incomparable, so also is the reward and glory beyond comprehension which among all the saints she merited.* And if it is certain that God rewards according to merit, as the Apostle wrote — *Reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus.* (Rom. 2:6) — *He will render to every man according to his works* — certainly also, says St. Thomas, the Virgin, who surpassed the merit of all both men and Angels, must have been raised above all the Heavenly orders: *Sicut habuit meritum omnium, & amplius, ita congruum fuit, ut super omnes ponatur ordines cælestes.* (Lib. de Sol. Sanct.) — *As she had the merit of all and more, so it was fitting that she should be placed above all the heavenly orders.* In sum, St. Bernard adds, let the singular grace she acquired on earth be measured, and thence let the singular glory she obtained in Heaven be measured: *Quantum enim gratiæ in terris adepta est, tantum & in cælis obtinet gloriæ singularis — For as much singular grace as she obtained on earth, so much singular glory does she obtain in heaven.*

The Glory of Mary, a learned author considers (Fr. la Colombière, Sermon 18), is a full glory, a complete glory, unlike that which the other Saints have in Heaven. The reflection is a fine one. It is true that in Heaven all the Blessed enjoy a perfect peace and full contentment; nevertheless it will al-

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-ways be true that none of them enjoys that glory which he might have merited, had he served and loved God with greater fidelity. Whence, although the Saints in Heaven desire nothing more than they can have, nevertheless in all of them there would be something to desire. It is true also that there the sins committed and the time lost bring no pain; but it cannot be denied that the greater good done in life, the innocence preserved, and the time better employed give the highest contentment. Mary in Heaven desires nothing, and has nothing to desire. Which of the Saints in Paradise, says St. Augustine (de Nat. & Grat. l. 7. c. 36.), if asked whether he has committed sins, can answer no, except Mary? Of Mary it is certain — as the sacred Council of Trent defined (Sess. 6. Can. 23.) — that she never committed any fault, any least defect: not only did she never lose the divine grace, nor ever dim it, but she never left it idle; she did no action that was not meritorious, spoke no word, had no thought, drew no breath that she did not direct to the greater glory of God. In sum, she never cooled or halted for a moment in running to God; she never lost anything by her own negligence; so that she always corresponded to grace with all her strength, and loved God as much as she could love him. Lord, she now says to him in Heaven, if I have not loved you as much as you deserve, at least I have loved you as much as I could.

In the Saints the graces have been different, as St. Paul says: *Divisiones gratiarum sunt — There are diversities of graces.* So that each of them, corresponding then to the grace received, made himself excellent in some virtue: one in saving souls, one in leading a life of penance, one in suffering torments, one in contemplating; wherefore Holy Church in celebrating their feasts says of each: *Non est inventus similis illi — There was not found the like to him.* And according to their merits they are distinguished in glory in Heaven. *Stella enim a stella differt.* (1 Cor. 15:41) — *For star differs from star.* The Apostles are distinguished from the Martyrs, the Confessors from the Virgins, the Innocents from the Penitents. The holy Virgin, having been filled with all the graces, was more sublime than each Saint in every sort of virtue: she was the Apostle of the Apostles; she was the Queen of the Martyrs, since she suffered more than all; she was the standard-bearer of virgins, the example of the married; she united in herself a perfect innocence with a perfect mortificat-

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-ion; in sum, she united in her Heart all the most heroic virtues that any Saint ever practised. Whence it was said of her: *Astitit Regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato circumdata varietate.* (Ps. 44) — *The Queen stood at your right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety.* For all the graces, the privileges, and the merits of the other Saints are all found gathered in Mary, as the Abbot of Celles says to her: *Sanctorum omnium privilegia, o virgo, omnia habes in te congregata — All the privileges of all the saints, O virgin, you have gathered in yourself.*

In such a manner that, as the splendour of the Sun exceeds the splendour of all the Stars together, so (says St. Basil) the glory of the Divine Mother surpasses that of all the Blessed: *Maria universos tantum excedit, quantum sol reliqua astra.* (Or. de An.) — *Mary exceeds all as much as the sun exceeds the other stars.* And St. Peter Damian adds that as the light of the Stars and of the Moon disappears, as though they were no longer there, at the appearing of the Sun, so Mary so darkens in glory the splendour of men and of Angels that these scarcely appear in Heaven: *Sol ita sibi desiderium & lunæ rapit positionem, ut sint quasi non sint. Sol ita sibi desiderium* so printed; the same quotation at p. 28 reads *Siderum rapit positionem Similiter & virga Jesse utrorumque spirituum habebat dignitatem, ut in comparatione virginis nec possint apparere.* (Serm. de Ass.) — *So the Sun takes to itself the place of the moon, so that they are as though they were not. Likewise the rod of Jesse held the dignity of both orders of spirits, so that in comparison with the Virgin they cannot appear.* Hence St. Bernardine of Siena with St. Bernard asserts that the Blessed share in part in the divine glory, but the Virgin has in a certain manner been so enriched with it that it seems a creature cannot be more united to God than Mary is united: *Divinæ gloriæ participatio ceteris quodammodo per partes datur, sed secundum Bernardum B. Virgo Maria penetravit abyssum, ut quantum creaturæ conditio patitur, illi luci inaccessibili videatur immersa.* (Tom. 1. Serm. 61. a. 2. c. 2. 20.) — *The participation of the divine glory is given to the rest in a certain manner by parts; but according to Bernard the Blessed Virgin Mary penetrated the abyss, so that, as far as the condition of a creature allows, she seems immersed in that inaccessible light.* To which is joined what Blessed Albert the Great says: that our Queen contemplates God very closely, and incomparably more than all the other heavenly Spirits: *Visio virginis matris super omnes Creaturas incomparabiliter contemplatur majestatem Dei.* (De Laud. Virg. c. 69.) — *The vision of the virgin mother contemplates the majesty of God incomparably above all Creatures.* And the aforesaid St. Bernardine says further that as the other Planets are illuminated by the Sun, so all the Blessed receive greater light and joy from the sight of Mary: *Quodammodo sicut cætera luminaria illuminantur a sole, sic tota cælestis curia a gloriosæ virginis lætificatur.*

(loc. cit. art. 3. cap. 3.) — *In a certain manner, as the other lights are illuminated by the sun, so the whole heavenly court is gladdened by the glorious virgin.* And in another place he likewise asserts that the Mother of God in ascending to Heaven has increased the joy of all its inhabitants: *Glo-*

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-riosa virgo cum cælos ascendit, supernorum gaudia civium cumulavit. (Serm. de Ass.) — *When the glorious virgin ascended the heavens, she heaped up the joys of the citizens above.* Whence St. Peter Damian said that the Blessed have no greater glory in Heaven after God than to enjoy the sight of this most beautiful Queen: *Summa gloria est post Deum te videre.* (Serm. 1. de Nat.) — *The highest glory, after God, is to see you.* And St. Bonaventure: *Post Deum major nostra gloria, & major nostrum gaudium ex Maria est — After God our greater glory and our greater joy is from Mary.*

Let us rejoice then with Mary at the exalted Throne to which God has raised her in Heaven. And let us rejoice at it for ourselves too; for if our Mother has left us by her presence in ascending to Heaven, she has not left us in affection. Rather, being there nearer to and more united with God, she knows our miseries the more, and from there pities us the more, and can better succour us. And can it be (St. Peter Damian says to her), O Blessed Virgin, that because you have been so exalted in heaven you will have forgotten us wretches? *Nunquid, o Beata Virgo, quia ita glorificata es, ideo nostræ humilitatis oblita es?* (Sr. 1. de Nat. V.) — *Is it so, O Blessed Virgin, that because you are thus glorified you have forgotten our lowliness?* No — God keep us from thinking it; a heart so merciful cannot but pity our so great miseries: *Absit* (he adds), *non convenit tantæ misericordiæ tantæ miseriæ oblivisci — Far be it: it does not befit so great a mercy to forget so great a misery.* If great was the compassion Mary had for us when she lived on earth, far greater (says St. Bonaventure) is it in Heaven where she reigns: *Magna fuit erga miseros misericordia Mariæ exulantis in mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cælo.* (Spec. c. 8.) — *Great was the mercy of Mary towards the wretched when she was an exile in the world, but much greater is it now that she reigns in heaven.*

Let us dedicate ourselves meanwhile to serving this Queen, to honouring and loving her as much as we can: for she is not (says Richard of St. Laurence) like other Rulers, who burden their vassals with taxes and duties, but our Queen enriches her servants with grace, and with merits, and with rewards: *Regina Maria non gravat tributis, sed largitur servis suis divitias, dona gratiarum, thesauros meritorum, & magnitudinem præmiorum.* (De Laud. Virg. lib. 6.) — *Queen Mary does not burden with tributes, but bestows on her servants riches, gifts of graces, treasures of merits, and*

greatness of rewards. And let us pray her with Guerric the Abbot: O Mother of Mercy, you now sit so near to God, Queen of the World on a Throne so sublime, take your fill of the glory of your Jesus, and send to us your servants the remnants that are left over. You already feast at the Table of the Lord; we, beneath the Table here on Earth, like poor little dogs, beg your pity: *O mater misericordiæ, saturare*

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Gloria filii tui, & dimitte reliquias parvulis tuis. Tu jam ad mensam Domini, nos, sub mensa Catelli. (Serm. 4. in Ass. Virg.) — *O mother of mercy, take your fill of the glory of your son, and leave the remnants to your little ones. You are now at the table of the Lord; we, beneath the table, are the little dogs.*

Example.

FR. Silvano Razzi relates (lib. 3. Mirac. B. Virg.) that a devout Clerk, very loving of our Queen Mary, having heard her beauty so praised, ardently desired to see his Lady once; whence with humble prayers he begged this grace of her. The merciful Mother sent word to him by an Angel that she was willing to gratify him by letting herself be seen by him, but on this condition: that after seeing her he should remain blind. The devout man accepted the condition. Behold, one day the Blessed Virgin appeared to him: he, in order not to remain altogether blind, wished at first to gaze on her with one eye only; but then, enamoured of Mary's great beauty, he wished to contemplate her with both, and then the Mother of God vanished. Having lost the presence of his Queen, he was so afflicted that he could not weep enough — not for the eye he had lost, but for not having seen her with both. Wherefore he returned to beseech her that she would show herself to him again, and he did not care to lose the sight of the other eye that remained, and to be left altogether blind. Happy and content (he said) shall I be, O my Lady, if I become wholly blind for so fair a cause, which will leave me the more enamoured of you and of your beauty. Behold, Mary willed again to content him, and again consoled him with the sight of her; but because this loving Queen knows not how to do harm to anyone, in appearing to him the second time she not only did not take from him the other eye that remained, but restored to him also the eye he had lost.

Prayer.

O GREAT, exalted, and most glorious Lady, prostrate at the foot of your Throne we adore you from this valley of tears. We rejoice in the immense glory with which the Lord has enriched you. Now that you already sit as Queen of Heaven and of

Earth, ah, do not forget us your poor servants. Do not disdain, from that exalted throne on which you reign, to turn your merciful eyes

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towards us wretches. The nearer you are to the fountain of graces, the more can you provide us with them. In Heaven you better discern our miseries, so that you must needs pity us and succour us the more. Grant that on earth we may be your faithful servants, so that we may thus come to bless you in Paradise. On this day on which you are made Queen of the universe, we too consecrate ourselves to your service. In your great gladness console us also today, by accepting us for your vassals. You then are our Mother. Ah most sweet Mother, most lovable Mother, your Altars are thronged with many people who ask of you — some to be healed of some sickness, some to be provided for in their needs, some a good harvest, some victory in some lawsuit. We ask of you graces more pleasing to your heart: obtain for us to be humble, detached from the Earth, resigned to the divine will; obtain for us the holy Love of God, a good death, Paradise. Lady, change us from sinners into Saints: work this miracle, which will give you more honour than if you gave sight to a thousand blind men and raised a thousand dead. You are so powerful with God that it is enough to say that you are his Mother, his dearest one, full of his grace: what can he ever deny you? O most beautiful Queen, we do not pretend to see you on earth, but we wish to come and see you in Paradise; and this you must obtain for us. So we surely hope. Amen, amen.

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DISCOURSE IX.

On the Sorrows of Mary.

Mary was the Queen of Martyrs, because her Martyrdom was the longest and the greatest of the martyrdom of all the Martyrs.

WHO can ever have a heart so hard as not to be moved on hearing the all too piteous case that once befell in the World? There was a Mother, noble and holy, who had but one only son; and he was the most lovable that can be imagined — innocent, virtuous, beautiful, and most loving of his Mother: to such a degree that he had never

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given her the least displeasure, but had always shown her all respect, all obedience, and all affection. Whence the Mother had set on this Son all her love upon earth. Now then, what happened? It happened that this Son was out of envy falsely accused by his enemies; and the Judge, although he had himself known and

confessed his innocence, yet, so as not to displease the enemies, condemned him to an infamous death, just as they had demanded. And this poor Mother had to suffer the sorrow of seeing that lovable and beloved Son so unjustly taken from her in the flower of his youth by a barbarous death; for by dint of torments they made him die drained of blood before her eyes, in public, on an infamous gibbet. Devout souls, what do you say? Is this case worthy of compassion, and this wretched Mother? You already understand of whom I speak. This Son so cruelly put to death was our loving Redeemer Jesus, and this Mother was the Blessed Virgin Mary, who for love of us consented to see him sacrificed to Divine Justice by the barbarity of men. This great suffering, then, borne by Mary for us — a suffering that cost her more than a thousand deaths — deserves from us compassion and gratitude. And if we can render nothing else to so great a love, let us at least stop a little today to consider the bitterness of this suffering, by which Mary became Queen of Martyrs; since her great Martyrdom surpassed in sorrow that of all the Martyrs, having been, I., the longest Martyrdom; II., the greatest Martyrdom.

Point I. As Jesus is called the King of sorrows and the King of Martyrs, because he suffered in his life more than all the other Martyrs, so likewise is Mary justly named Queen of Martyrs, having merited this title by having suffered the greatest Martyrdom that can be suffered after that of her Son. Whence with reason she was called by Richard of St. Laurence *Martyr Martyrum — the Martyr of Martyrs.* And of her may be said what Isaiah said: *Coronans coronabit te tribulatione.* (Cap. 22.) — *Crowning he shall crown you with tribulation.* That is, that the crown by which she was declared Queen of Martyrs was her very suffering, which surpassed the suffering of all the other Martyrs united together. That Mary was a true Martyr cannot be doubted, as the Carthusian, Pelbartus, Catharinus, and others prove; for it is an undoubted opinion that it suffices for Mart-

LACUNA IN W1: printed pp. 112–113 are absent from the 1789 images; the text that follows is supplied from W2 = Le Glorie di Maria, Naples, Gabinetto Letterario, 1838, vol. II, pp. 148–151. The pagination inside the fence is W2's, not W1's. See ED-011.

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-yrdom that there intervene a sorrow sufficient to cause death, although death does not then follow. St. John the Evangelist is revered a-

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-s a Martyr, although in the cauldron of boiling oil he did not die, but *vegetior exiverit, quam intraverit.* (Brev. Rom. 6. Maji) — *he came out more vigorous than he went in.* It is enough for having the glory of martyrdom, says St. Thomas, that one obey in offering himself even to death: *Martyrium amplectitur id quod in*

obedientia summum esse potest, ut scilicet aliquis sit obediens usque ad mortem. (2. 2. q. 124. a. 3. ad 3.) — *Martyrdom embraces that which can be highest in obedience, namely that one be obedient even unto death.* Mary was a Martyr, says St. Bernard: *Non ferro carnificis, sed acerbo dolore cordis.* (Ap. Beldi. tom. 1. p. 146.) — *Not by the executioner's iron, but by the bitter sorrow of her heart.* If her body was not wounded by the executioner's hand, yet her blessed heart was pierced by the sorrow of her Son's passion — a sorrow that was enough to give her not one but a thousand deaths. And from this we shall see that Mary was not only a true Martyr, but that her martyrdom surpassed all other martyrdoms, since it was a longer martyrdom, and, so to speak, her whole life was one long death.

As the Passion of Jesus began from his birth. *A nativitatis exordio*, says St. Bernard, *Passio crucis simul exorta.* (Serm. 2. de Pass.) — *From the very beginning of his birth the Passion of the cross arose with him.* So likewise Mary, in all things like her Son, suffered her martyrdom throughout her whole life. The name of Mary, among the other meanings it bears, as Blessed Albert the Great reports, means *mare amarum — a bitter sea.* Whence to her is applied the passage of Jeremiah: *Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua.* (Thr. 2. 1.) — *For great as the sea is your affliction.* Yes, because as the sea is all bitter and salt, so the life of Mary was always full of bitterness at the sight of the Passion of the Redeemer, which was always present to her. It cannot be doubted that she, enlightened by the Holy Spirit more than all the Prophets, understood better than all the Prophets the predictions of the Messiah which they recorded in the sacred Scriptures. So precisely the Angel said to St. Bridget: *Procul-*

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-dubio est credendum, quod ipsa ex inspiratione Spiritus Sancti perfectius intellexit quicquid Prophetarum eloquia figurabant. (Serm. Ang. c. 17.) — *Without doubt it is to be believed that she, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, understood more perfectly whatever the utterances of the Prophets foreshadowed.* Whence, as the same Angel asserted, the Virgin, understanding how much the Incarnate Word was to suffer for the salvation of men, even from that time before she was made his Mother, compassionating this innocent Saviour who was to be executed with so cruel a death for sins not his own, began to suffer her great martyrdom: *Ex Scripturis Deum incarnari intelligens, et quod tam diversis poenis deberet cruciari, tribulationem non modicam sustinuit.* (Ser. Ang. c. 16.) — *Understanding from the Scriptures that God was to be incarnate, and that he would have to be tormented with so many different pains, she endured no small tribulation.*

Such a sorrow then grew beyond measure when she was made the Mother of this Saviour. So that at the sorrowful sight of all the pains which her poor Son was to suffer, she indeed endured a long martyrdom, a martyrdom continued throughout her whole life. *Tu longum* (Rupert the Abbot says to her), *praescia futurae passionis Filii tui, pertulisti martyrium.* (In Cant. c. 4.) — *You, foreknowing the future passion of your Son, endured a long martyrdom.* And this precisely was signified by the vision which St. Bridget had in Rome, in the Church of St. Mary Major, where there appeared to her the Blessed Virgin with St. Simeon, and an Angel bearing a very long sword, all reddened with blood, denoting by it the bitter and long sorrow which pierced Mary throughout her whole life. (Rev. l. 7. c. 2.) Whence the aforenamed Rupert makes Mary speak thus: Redeemed souls, and my beloved daughters, do not pity me only for that hour in which I saw my dear Jesus die before me; for the sword of sorrow foretold me by Simeon pierced my soul throughout my whole life; while I gave milk to my Son, while I warmed him in my arms, and already looked upon the bitter death that awaited him, consider what long and harsh sorr-

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-ow I had to suffer. *Nolite solum attendere horam illam, qua Dilectum meum vidi mori; nam Simeonis gladius, antequam pertransiret, longum per me transitum fecit. Cum igitur eum lactarem, foverem, et prospicerem ejus mortem, quam prolixam me putatis pertulisse passionem!* (Loc. cit.) — *Do not attend only to that hour in which I saw my Beloved die; for Simeon's sword, before it passed through me, made a long passage through me. Since then I suckled him, cherished him, and looked forward to his death, how prolonged a passion do you think I endured!*

Hence Mary might well say by the mouth of David: *Defecit in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus.* (Ps. 30:11) — *My life has failed in sorrow, and my years in groanings. Et dolor meus in conspectu meo semper* (Ps. 37:18) — *And my sorrow is ever before me.* My life passed all in sorrow and tears, since my sorrow, which was compassion for my beloved Son, never departed from before my eyes, as I always saw all the pains and the death that he was one day to suffer. The same divine Mother revealed to St. Bridget that even after her Son's death and ascent to Heaven, the memory of his passion — whether she ate or worked — was always fixed and fresh in her tender heart: *Tempore quo post Ascensionem Filii mei vixi, Passio sua in corde meo fixa erat; ut sive comedebam, sive laborabam, quasi recens erat in memoria mea.* (Rev.

End of the supplement from W2. The W1 text resumes at scan 0109 (p. 114) with the words "l. 6. c. 62.)". Note the variant: W2 reads "Rev. l. 6. c. 65." where W1 reads "l. 6. c. 62."

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l. 6. c. 62.) Whence Tauler wrote that Mary passed her whole life in a perpetual sorrow, since nothing else was dealt with in her heart but sadness and pains: *Beatissima Virgo pro tota vita fecit professionem doloris.* (Vit. Christ. c. 28.) — *The most blessed Virgin made profession of sorrow for her whole life.*

So that time, which is wont to mitigate sorrow in the afflicted, did not avail Mary; rather time increased her anguish, since as Jesus grew he showed himself to her ever more beautiful and lovable on the one hand, and on the other, the time of his death drawing ever nearer, the more there grew in Mary's heart the sorrow of having to lose him on this earth. As the rose grows among thorns (said the Angel to St. Bridget), so the mother of God advanced in years among sufferings; and as, when the rose grows, the thorns grow, so this chosen rose of the Lord, Mary, the more she grew in age, so much the more did the thorns of her sorrows advance to torment her: *Sicut rosa crescere solet inter spinas, ita B. Virgo in hoc mundo crevit inter tribulationes; & sicut, crescente rosa, crescunt spinæ; sic hæc electissima rosa Maria, quanto crescebat ætate, tanto tribulationum spinis pungebatur.* (Serm. Ang. c. 16.) Having therefore considered the length of this sorrow, let us pass to the second point, to see how great it was.

Point II. Ah, not only was Mary Queen of Martyrs because her martyrdom was longer than all, but also because it was the greatest of all. But who can ever measure its greatness? Jeremiah seems not to find anyone to whom to compare this mother of sorrows, considering her great suffering at the death of her Son. *Cui comparabo te?* (he says) *vel cui assimilabo te, filia Jerusalem? Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua. Quis medebitur tui?* (Thren. 2:1) — *To what shall I compare you, or to what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? For great as the sea is your affliction. Who shall heal you?* Wherefore Hugh of St. Cher, commenting on the aforesaid words, said: O blessed Virgin, as the bitterness of the sea surpasses all other bitternesses, so your sorrow surpasses all other sorrows: *Quemadmodum mare est in amaritudine excellens, ita tuæ contritioni nulla calamitas æquari potest — As the sea is pre-eminent in bitterness, so no calamity can be matched with your affliction.* Then St. Anselm asserted that if God by a singular miracle had not preserved Mary's life, her sorrow would have been sufficient to give her death at every moment that she lived: *Utique, Domina, non crediderim te potuisse stimulos tanti cruciatus, quin vitam amitteres, sustinere; nisi ipse Spi-*

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-ritus tui filii te confortaret. (De Exc. Virg. c. 3.) — *Truly, Lady, I could not believe that you could have endured the stings of so great a torment without losing your life, had not the Spirit of your son himself strengthened you.* And St. Bernardine of Siena

went so far as to say that Mary's sorrow was so great that if it were ever divided among all men, it would be enough to make them all die suddenly: *Tantus fuit dolor Virginis, quod si inter omnes creaturas, quæ dolorem pati possunt, divideretur, omnes subito interirent.* (Tom. 1. Serm. 61.) — *So great was the Virgin's sorrow that if it were divided among all creatures capable of suffering sorrow, they would all perish at once.*

But let us consider the reasons why the martyrdom of Mary was greater than that of all the Martyrs. First let it be reflected that the Martyrs suffered their martyrdom in their bodies by fire or by iron; Mary suffered her martyrdom in her soul, as St. Simeon foretold her: *Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit.* (Luke 2) — *And your own soul a sword of sorrow shall pierce.* As though the holy Old Man had said to her: O most sacred Virgin, the other Martyrs shall be torn by the iron in their bodies, but you shall be pierced and martyred in your soul by the passion of your own Son. Now by as much as the soul is nobler than the body, so much greater was Mary's sorrow than that of all the Martyrs; as Jesus Christ said to St. Catherine of Siena: *Inter dolorem animæ & corporis nulla est comparatio — Between the sorrow of the soul and of the body there is no comparison.* Whence the holy Abbot Arnold of Chartres says that whoever might have been on Calvary to see the great Sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb when he died upon the cross would have beheld there two great Altars: one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary; where at the same time that the Son sacrificed his body by death, Mary sacrificed her soul by compassion: *Nimirum in tabernaculo illo duo videres Altaria, aliud in pectore Matris, aliud in corpore Christi: Christus carnem, Maria immolabat animam.* (Tr. de sep. verb. Do. in Cru.) — *Assuredly in that tabernacle you would see two Altars, one in the breast of the Mother, the other in the body of Christ: Christ was immolating his flesh, Mary her soul.*

Moreover, St. Antoninus says (p. 1. tit. 15. c. 24.) that the other Martyrs suffered sacrificing their own life, but the Blessed Virgin suffered sacrificing the life of her Son, whom she loved far more than her own life. So that not only did she suffer in spirit all that her Son suffered in his body, but moreover the sight of her Son's sufferings brought more sorrow to her heart than if she had suffered all those pains in herself. That Mary suffered in her heart all the outrages by which she saw her beloved Jesus tormented cannot be doubted. Everyone understands that the sufferings of children are the sufferings of their mothers too, when they are present to see them suffer. St. Augustine, consider-

-ing the torment which the mother of the Maccabees suffered in the tortures in which she saw her sons suffer, says: *Illa videndo in omnibus passa est; quia amabat omnes, ferebat in oculis quod in carne omnes.* (Serm. 109. de Divers. c. 6.) — *She by seeing suffered in them all; because she loved them all, she bore in her eyes what they all bore in their flesh.* So too it befell Mary: all those torments, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, the cross which afflicted the innocent flesh of Jesus entered at the same time into Mary's heart to complete her martyrdom. *Ille carne, illa corde passa est — He suffered in the flesh, she in the heart* — wrote St. Amadeus (Hom. 5.) In such a way that (says St. Lawrence Justinian) Mary's heart became like a mirror of her Son's sorrows, in which were seen the spittings, the blows, the wounds, and all that Jesus suffered: *Passionis Christi speculum effectum erat cor virginis, in illo agnoscebantur sputa, convicia, verbera, vulnera.* (De Agon. Chri. c. 11.) — *The virgin's heart had become a mirror of the Passion of Christ; in it were recognized the spittings, the revilings, the blows, the wounds.* And St. Bonaventure reflects that those wounds which were scattered over the whole body of Jesus were all then united in the single heart of Mary: *Singula vulnera per ejus corpus dispersa, in uno corde sunt unita.* (De Planctu Virg. in Stim. Am.) — *The several wounds scattered through his body were united in one heart.*

So that the Virgin, through compassion for her Son, was in her loving heart scourged, crowned with thorns, despised, nailed to the cross. Whence the same Saint, contemplating Mary on mount Calvary as she stood by her dying Son, puts this question to her: Lady, tell me, where were you then? Only near the cross, perhaps? No, I will say better: you stood upon the very cross, crucified together with your Son: *O domina mea, ubi stabas? Nunquid tantum juxta crucem? Imo in cruce cum filio crucifixa eras.* (loc. cit.) — *O my lady, where were you standing? Only beside the cross? Nay, upon the cross you were crucified with your son.* And Richard, upon the words of the Redeemer which he spoke by Isaiah — *Torcular calcavi solus, & de gentibus non est vir mecum.* (Is. 36:3) — *I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there is no man with me* — adds: *Verum est, Domine, quod non est vir tecum, sed mulier una est tecum, quæ omnia vulnera quæ tu suscepisti in corpore, suscepit in corde — It is true, Lord, that there is no man with you, but one woman is with you, who received in her heart all the wounds that you received in your body.* Lord, you are right to say that in the work of human Redemption you are alone in suffering, and have no man who at least compassionates you enough; but you have a woman, who is your mother, who suffers in her heart as much as you suffer in your body.

But all this is to say too little of Mary's sorrows, since she (as I said) suffered more in seeing her beloved Jesus suffer than if she had endured in herself

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all the outrages and the death of her Son. Erasmus wrote, speaking generally of parents, that they feel the sorrows of their children more than any suffering of their own: *Parentes atrocius torquentur in liberis, quam in seipsis.* (Libell. de Machab.) — *Parents are more cruelly tormented in their children than in themselves.* But this will not always be true: in Mary it was certainly verified, it being certain that she loved her Son and his life immeasurably more than herself and a thousand lives of her own. Whence St. Amadeus well attests that the afflicted mother, at the sorrowful sight of the sufferings of her beloved Jesus, suffered far more than if she herself had endured his whole Passion: *Maria torquebatur magis, quam si torqueretur in se; quia super se incomparabiliter diligebat id unde dolebat.* (cit. Hom. 5.) — *Mary was tormented more than if she had been tormented in herself, because she loved incomparably above herself that from which she grieved.* The reason is clear; for, as St. Bernard says: *Anima magis est ubi amat, quam ubi animat — The soul is more where it loves than where it animates.* And before him the Saviour himself said that our heart is there where the good that we love is: *Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi & cor vestrum erit.* (Luke 12) — *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* If then Mary by love lived more in her Son than in herself, far more must she have suffered in sorrow at her Son's death than if the cruellest death in the world had been given to her.

And here enters the other consideration which made Mary's martyrdom immeasurably greater than the torment of all the martyrs: that in the Passion of Jesus she suffered much, and suffered without relief. The martyrs suffered in the torments which the Tyrants inflicted on them, but the love of Jesus made their pains sweet and lovable to them. A St. Vincent suffered in his martyrdom: he was tormented on the rack, his flesh torn with hooks, burnt with heated plates; but what? says St. Augustine: *Alius videbatur pati, alius loqui — One seemed to suffer, another to speak.* He spoke with such fortitude to the Tyrant, and with such contempt for the torments, that it seemed that one Vincent suffered and another Vincent spoke; so much did his God comfort him with the sweetness of his love in the midst of those pains. A St. Boniface suffered: his body was torn with irons, sharp reeds were driven between his nails and his flesh, molten lead was poured into his mouth; and all the while he could not have enough of saying: *Gratias tibi ago, Domine Jesu Christe — I give you thanks, Lord Jesus Christ.* A St. Mark and a St. Marcellian suffered, bound to a stake with their feet pierced with nails; and when

the Tyrant said to them, Wretches, repent, and free yourselves from these pains, they answered: What

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pains do you name to us, what pains? We never feasted more joyfully than at this time, in which we suffer with delight for the love of Jesus Christ: *Nunquam tam jucunde epulatis sumus, quam cum hæc libenter Jesu Christi amore perferimus.* A St. Lawrence suffered; but while he was burning on the gridiron, the inner flame of love (says St. Leo) was more powerful to console him in his soul than the fire outside to torment him in his body: *Segnior fuit ignis qui foris ussit, quam qui intus accendit.* (In Nat. S. Laur.) — *Slower was the fire that burned without than that which kindled within.* Whence love made him so strong that he went so far as to taunt the Tyrant, saying to him: *Assatum est jam, versa & manduca — It is roasted now; turn it and eat.* Tyrant, if you would feed on my flesh, one side is already cooked; come, turn it and eat. But how, amid so many torments, in that long death, could the Saint so rejoice? Ah, because he, inebriated (answers St. Augustine) with the wine of divine love, felt neither torments nor death: *In illa longa morte, in illis tormentis illo calice ebrius tormenta non sentit.* (Tract. 27.) — *In that long death, in those torments, drunk with that cup, he does not feel the torments.*

So that the holy Martyrs, the more they loved Jesus, the less they felt the torments and death; and the mere sight of the sufferings of a crucified God was enough to console them. But was our sorrowful Mother also thus consoled by love for her Son and by the sight of his sufferings? No; rather that very Son who suffered was the whole cause of her sorrow, and the love she bore him was her one and too cruel executioner; for the whole martyrdom of Mary consisted in nothing else than in seeing and compassionating her innocent and beloved Son who suffered so much. Whence the more she loved him, so much the more bitter was her sorrow, and the more devoid of relief. *Magna est velut mare contritio tua; quis medebitur tui?* Ah Queen of heaven, for the other martyrs love mitigated the pain, healed the wounds; but for you, who ever sweetened the great anguish? who ever healed the too sorrowful wounds of your heart? *Quis medebitur tui?* — if that same Son who could have given you relief was by his suffering the sole cause of your pains, and the love you bore him made up your whole martyrdom? So that whereas the other martyrs, as Diez reflects, are each painted with the instrument of his own Passion — St. Paul with the sword, St. Andrew with the cross, St. Lawrence with the gridiron — Mary is painted with her dead Son in her arms, bec-

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-ause no other than Jesus himself was the instrument of her martyrdom, by reason of the love she bore him. In a few words St. Bernard confirms all that I have said: *In aliis Martyribus magnitudo amoris dolorem lenivit passionis; sed Beata Virgo quanto plus amavit, tanto plus doluit, tantoque ipsius Martyrium gravius fuit.* (ap. Croiss. Vit. Mar. §. 23.) — *In the other Martyrs the greatness of love soothed the sorrow of their passion; but the Blessed Virgin, the more she loved, so much the more did she grieve, and so much the heavier was her Martyrdom.*

It is certain that the more one loves a thing, the more one feels the pain of losing it. The death of a brother certainly afflicts more than that of a friend. Now Cornelius a Lapide says that to comprehend how great was Mary's sorrow at the death of her Son, one would have to comprehend how great was the love she bore him: *Ut scias quantus fuerit dolor B. Virginis, cogita quantus fuerit amor — That you may know how great was the Blessed Virgin's sorrow, think how great was her love.* But who can ever measure that love? Blessed Amadeus says that in Mary's heart both loves for her Jesus were joined — the supernatural love with which she loved him as her God, and the natural love with which she loved him as her son: *Duæ dilectiones in unum connexerant, & ex duobus amoribus factus est amor unus; cum Virgo filio divinitatis amorem impenderet, & in Deo amorem nato exhiberet.* (Hom. 5. de Lau. V.) — *Two loves were knit into one, and of two loves one love was made; since the Virgin bestowed on her son the love due to divinity, and showed to God the love due to her child.* So that of these two loves one only was made — but a love so immense that William of Paris went so far as to say that the Blessed Virgin loved Jesus *quantum capere potuit puri hominis modus — as far as the measure of a mere human being could hold* — as though a mere creature were not capable of loving him more. *Unde* (says Richard of St. Laurence) *sicut non fuit amor sicut amor ejus, ita non fuit dolor sicut dolor ejus — Whence as there was no love like her love, so there was no sorrow like her sorrow.* And if Mary's love towards her Son was immense, immense too must have been her sorrow in losing him by death: *Ubi summus amor* (says Blessed Albert the Great), *ibi summus dolor — Where love is greatest, there sorrow is greatest.*

Hence let us imagine that the divine mother, standing in sight of her dying Son upon the cross, justly applying to herself the words of Jeremiah, says to us: *O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite, & videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus.* (Jer. 1:12) — *O all you who pass by the way, attend and see whether there is any sorrow like my sorrow.* O you who pass your life on this earth and have no pity on me, stop a little to look at me, now that I see this beloved Son dying before my eyes; and then see whether among all the afflicted and tormented there is found a sorrow like my

sorrow. So that there can-

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-not be found, O sorrowful mother (St. Bonaventure answered her), a sorrow more bitter than yours, since there cannot be found a son dearer than yours: *Nullus dolor amarior, quia nulla proles charior.* (de compass. Virg. c. 2.) — *No sorrow more bitter, because no offspring dearer.* Ah, there never was in the world, St. Lawrence Justinian takes it up, a son more lovable than Jesus, nor a Mother more loving of a son than Mary: if then there was in the world no love like the love of Mary, how can there ever be found a sorrow like the sorrow of Mary? *Non fuit talis filius, non fuit talis mater: non fuit tanta charitas, non fuit dolor tantus. Ideo quanto dilexit tenerius, tanto vulnerata est profundius.* (Lib. 3. de Lau. Virg.) — *There was no such son, there was no such mother: there was no such charity, there was no such sorrow. Therefore the more tenderly she loved, so much the more deeply was she wounded.*

Whence St. Ildephonsus did not hesitate to assert that it is saying too little to say that the sorrows of the Virgin surpassed all the torments of the martyrs even united together: *Parum est Mariam in passione filii tam acerbos pertulisse dolores, ut omnium martyrum collective tormenta superaret.* (ap. Sinisc. Mart. di Ma. Cons. 36.) — *It is too little to say that Mary in her son's passion endured sorrows so bitter that she surpassed the torments of all the martyrs taken together.* And St. Anselm added that the cruellest outrages used upon the holy martyrs were light, or rather nothing, in comparison with the martyrdom of Mary: *Quicquid crudelitatis inflictum est corporibus martyrum, leve fuit, aut potius nihil comparatione tuæ Passionis.* (de Exc. Virg. c. 5.) — *Whatever cruelty was inflicted on the bodies of the martyrs was light, or rather nothing, in comparison with your Passion.* And likewise St. Basil wrote that as the Sun surpasses in splendour all the other Planets, so Mary by her suffering surpassed the sufferings of all the other martyrs: *Virgo universos martyres tantum excedit, quantum sol reliqua astra — The Virgin exceeds all the martyrs as much as the sun exceeds the other stars.* A learned Author (Fr. Pinamonti) concludes with a fine thought: he says that the sorrow which this tender mother suffered in the Passion of Jesus was so great that she alone could worthily compassionate the death of a God made man.

But here, turning to this blessed Virgin, St. Bonaventure says to her: Lady, and why did you too wish to go and sacrifice yourself on Calvary? Was a crucified God perhaps not enough to redeem us, that you his mother wished to be crucified too? *O domina, cur ivisti immolari pro nobis? Non sufficiebat filii passio, nisi & crucifigeretur mater?* (ap. Pac. Exc. 10. in Sal. Ang.) — *O lady, why did you go to be immolated for us? Was the son's passion not enough, unless the mother too were*

crucified? Ah, indeed the death of Jesus was more than enough to save the world, and infinite worlds besides; but this good mother, for the love she bears us, willed by the merits of her sorrows, which she offered for us on Calvary, that she too should help the

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cause of our salvation. And therefore Blessed Albert the Great says that as we are obliged to Jesus for his Passion, suffered for love of us, so also we are obliged to Mary for the martyrdom which at her Son's death she willed voluntarily to suffer for our salvation: *Sicut totus Mundus obligatur Deo propter Passionem, sic obligatur Dominæ propter compassionem.* (Sup. Miss. ap. C. 2. Q. V.) — *As the whole World is obliged to God for the Passion, so it is obliged to our Lady for her compassion.* He added *voluntarily*, since, as the Angel revealed to St. Bridget, this our so merciful and kind Mother was content rather to suffer every pain than to see souls unredeemed and left in their former perdition: *Sic pia & misericors est, & fuit, quod maluit omnes tribulationes sufferre, quam quod animæ non redimerentur.* (Rev. l. 3. c. 30.) — *So loving and merciful is she, and was she, that she preferred to suffer all tribulations rather than that souls should not be redeemed.* This we may say was Mary's only relief in the midst of her great sorrow at her Son's Passion: to see by his death the lost World redeemed, and men, her enemies, reconciled with God: *Lætabatur dolens* (Simon of Cascia speaks), *dum offerebatur Sacrificium in redemptionem omnium, quo placabatur iratus.* (de Gest. D. l. 2. c. 27.) — *She rejoiced while grieving, since the Sacrifice was being offered for the redemption of all, by which the angered one was appeased.*

So great a love of Mary deserves gratitude from us, and let our gratitude at least be to meditate on and compassionate her Sorrows. But of this she complained to St. Bridget: that very few compassionated her, and the greater part lived forgetful of them; whence she so earnestly commended to the Saint to keep the memory of her Sorrows: *Respicio ad omnes qui in mundo sunt, si sint aliqui qui compatiantur mihi, & recogitent Dolorem meum, & valde paucos invenio. Ideo Filia mea, licet a multis oblita sim, tu tamen non obliviscaris mei, vide Dolorem meum, & imitare quantum potes, & dole.* (Rev. l. 2. c. 24.) — *I look upon all who are in the world, to see whether there are any who compassionate me and call to mind my Sorrow, and I find very few. Therefore, my Daughter, although I am forgotten by many, do you not forget me: see my Sorrow, and imitate it as far as you can, and grieve.* To understand how pleasing to the Virgin is our memory of her Sorrows, it would be enough only to know that in the year 1239 she appeared to seven of her Devout servants (who afterwards were the Founders of the Religious Order of the Servants of Mary) with a garment of

black colour in her hand, and charged them that if they wished to please her they should often meditate on her Sorrows, and for this, in memory of her tears, should wear those garments of black colour. The same he revealed to Blessed Veronica of Binasco: that he almost takes more delight in seeing his Mother compassionated than himself; for thus he said to her: Daughter, dear to me are

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the tears shed for my Passion; but since I love my Mother Mary with an immense love, dearer to me is the meditation of the Sorrows which she suffered at my death. (ap. Bolland. 13. Jan.)

Therefore too great are the graces which Jesus has promised to the devoted servants of Mary's Sorrows. Pelbartus relates (Stellar. l. 3. p. 3. a. 3.) that it was revealed to St. Elizabeth that St. John the Evangelist, after the Blessed Virgin was assumed into Heaven, desired to see her again; he obtained the grace, and his dear Mother appeared to him, and together with her Jesus Christ also; and he then understood that Mary asked her Son for some special grace for the devoted servants of her Sorrows, and that Jesus promised them four principal graces. 1. That whoever invokes the Divine Mother by her Sorrows shall, before death, merit to make true penance for all his sins. 2. That he will guard these devoted servants in the tribulations in which they find themselves, especially at the time of death. 3. That he will impress upon them the memory of his Passion, and will afterwards give them the reward of it in Heaven. 4. That such devoted servants he will place in the hands of Mary, so that she may dispose of them at her pleasure and obtain for them all the graces she wishes. In proof of this let us see in the following Example how much devotion to Mary's Sorrows avails for eternal salvation.

Example.

IT is had from the Revelations of St. Bridget (l. 6. c. 97.) that there was a Lord as noble by birth as he was vile and wicked in his ways. He had given himself by an express pact as a slave to the Devil, and had served him for sixty years continuously, leading a life that anyone may imagine, always far from the Sacraments. Now this Prince came to die, and Jesus Christ, to show him mercy, commanded St. Bridget to tell her Confessor to go and visit him and exhort him to confess. The Confessor went, and he answered that he had no need of a Confessor, because he had often been to confession. He went a second time, and that poor slave of Hell went on remaining obstinate in refusing to confess. Jesus again told the Saint that the Confessor should return. He returned, and on that third time he re-

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-lated to him the Revelation made to the Saint, and that he had therefore come back so many times because the Lord had so commanded, willing to show him mercy. On hearing this the wretched sick man was moved and began to weep: But how (he then exclaimed) can I be pardoned, if for sixty years I have served the Devil, made myself his slave, and have loaded my soul with innumerable sins? My son, answered the Father, encouraging him, do not despair; if you repent, I promise you the pardon on God's behalf. Then he, beginning to take confidence, said to the Confessor: Father, I reckoned myself damned, and already despaired of salvation; but now I feel a sorrow for my sins which encourages me to trust; so that, since God has not yet abandoned me, I will confess. And in fact on that day he confessed four times with great sorrow; on the following day he communicated; and on the sixth day, all contrite and resigned, he died. After his death Jesus Christ again spoke to St. Bridget and told her that that sinner was saved, being now in Purgatory, and that he had been saved by the intercession of the Virgin his Mother; for the dead man, although he had led so perverse a life, had nevertheless always kept devotion to her Sorrows, since whenever he remembered her Sorrows he compassionated her.

Prayer.

O MY Sorrowful Mother, Queen of Martyrs and of Sorrows, you wept so much for your Son dead for my salvation; but what will your tears profit me, if I am damned? By the merits then of your Sorrows obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, and a true amendment of life, with a perpetual and tender compassion for the Passion of Jesus and for your Sorrows. And if Jesus and you, being so innocent, have suffered so much for me, obtain for me that I, deserving of Hell, may suffer something also for love of you. *O Domina* (I will say to you with St. Bonaventure) *si te offendi, pro justitia cor meum vulnera; si tibi servivi, nunc pro mercede, peto, vulnera. Opprobriosum est videre Dominum meum Jesum vulneratum, & te convulneratam, & me illæsum. — O Lady, if I have offended you, wound my heart in justice; if I have served you, now as a reward I ask for wounds. It is shameful to see my Lord Jesus wounded, and you wounded with him, and myself unhurt.* Finally, O my Mother, by the anguish you felt in seeing before your eyes

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your Son bow his head and expire on the Cross amid so many pains, I beseech you to obtain me a good death. Ah, do not fail then, O Advocate of sinners, to assist my afflicted and beset soul in that great passage which it must make into Eternity. And

because then I shall easily have lost speech and voice to invoke your name and that of Jesus, who are all my hope, therefore from now I invoke your Son and you to succour me at that last moment, and I say: Jesus and Mary, to you I commend my soul. Amen.

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REFLECTIONS Upon each of the seven Sorrows of Mary in particular.

On the First Sorrow, the Prophecy of St. Simeon.

IN this valley of tears every man is born to weep, and each must suffer by bearing the evils that daily befall him. But how much more tormented would life be if everyone knew also the future evils that were to afflict him! Too unhappy would he be, says Seneca, to whom such a lot should fall: *Calamitosus est animus futuri præscius, & ante miserias miser.* (Ep. 98.) — *Wretched is the mind that foreknows the future, and is miserable before its miseries.* The Lord uses this compassion towards us, of not letting us see the crosses that await us, so that if we have to suffer them, at least we may suffer them once only. But he did not use this compassion towards Mary, who (because God willed her Queen of Sorrows, and wholly like her Son) had to see ever before her eyes, and to suffer continually, all the pains that awaited her; and these were the pains of the Passion and death of her beloved Jesus. Behold St. Simeon in the Temple, who, after receiving the Divine Child into his arms, foretells her that that Son was to be the sign of all the contradictions and persecutions of men: *Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur — This one is set for a sign that shall be contradicted.* And that therefore the sword of sorrow was to pass through her soul: *Et tuam ipsius animam doloris gladius pertransibit.* (Luke 2)

The Virgin herself said to St. Mechtilde that at this announcement of St. Simeon all her gladness was turned into sadness: *Omnis lætitia mea ad illa ver-*

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-ba in mœrorem conversa est — All my gladness was turned at those words into mourning. For, as was revealed to St. Teresa, the blessed Mother, although she already knew beforehand of the sacrifice that was to be made of her Son's life for the salvation of the World, nevertheless then knew in particular, and more distinctly, the pains and the pitiless death that awaited her poor Son. She knew that he was to be contradicted, and contradicted in everything. Contradicted in his doctrine, since instead of being believed he was to be reckoned a blasphemer for teaching that he was the Son of God, as the impious Caiaphas declared, saying: *Blasphemavit, reus est mortis.* (John 9:22) — *He has blasphemed; he is guilty of death.* Contradicted in men's esteem, since he was noble, of Royal stock, and was despised as a peasant: *Nonne hic fabri filius?* (Matt. 13:55) — *Is not this the carpenter's son? Nonne hic est*

faber, filius Mariæ? (Mark 6:3) — *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?* He was Wisdom itself, and was treated as an ignorant man: *Quomodo hic litteras scit, cum non didicerit?* (John 7:15) — *How does this man know letters, having never learned?* As a false Prophet: *Et velaverunt eum, & percutiebant faciem ejus ... dicentes: prophetiza, quis est qui te percussit?* (Luke 22:64) — *And they blindfolded him and struck his face ... saying: prophesy, who is it that struck you?* Treated as a madman: *Insanit, quid eum auditis?* (John 10:20) — *He is mad; why do you listen to him?* As a drunkard, a glutton, and a friend of the wicked: *Ecce homo devorator, & bibens vinum, amicus publicanorum, & peccatorum.* (Luke 7:34) — *Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.* As a sorcerer: *In principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmonia.* (Matt. 9:34) — *By the prince of devils he casts out devils.* As a Heretic and possessed: *Nonne bene dicimus nos, quia Samaritanus es tu, & dæmonium habes?* (John 8:48) — *Do we not say well that you are a Samaritan and have a devil?* In sum, Jesus Christ was reckoned so wicked and notorious a man that no trial was needed to condemn him, as they said to Pilate: *Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum.* (John 18:30) — *If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to you.* Contradicted in his soul, since even his Eternal Father, to give place to Divine Justice, contradicted him by refusing to hear him when he prayed: *Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.* (Matt. 26:39) — *My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me.* And he abandoned him into the hands of fear, of weariness, of sadness, so that the afflicted Lord said: *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.* (Matt. 26:38) — *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.* And through his inward pain he came to sweat living blood. Contradicted and persecuted at last in his body and in his life, since it is enough to say that he was tortured in all his sacred members — in his hands, in his feet, in his face, in his head, and in his whole body — until he died of sorrow, drained of blood and shamed upon an infamous tree.

LACUNA IN W1: printed p. 126 is absent from the 1789 images; the text that follows is supplied from W2 = Le Glorie di Maria, Naples, Gabinetto Letterario, 1838, vol. II, pp. 167–168. The pagination inside the fence is W2's, not W1's. See ED-011.

[W2 p. 167, at the foot]

David, in the midst of all his delights and royal greatnesses, when he heard the Prophet Nathan announce to him the death of his son — *Filius qui natus est tibi morte morietur* (2 Kings 12) — *The son that is born to you shall surely die* — could not be comforted: he wept, he fasted, he slept on the ground. Mary with the utmost peace received the news of her Son's death, and with peace went on

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to bear it; but what sorrow she must have suffered continually, in seeing ever before her eyes that lovable Son, in hearing him speak those words of eternal life, in beholding his so holy bearing! Abraham suffered a great torment in those three days in which he had to be with his beloved Isaac, knowing that he was to lose him. O God, not for three days but for thirty-three years Mary had to suffer a like pain! What do I say, like? a pain so much the greater, as the Son of Mary was more lovable than the son of Abraham. The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget (Lib. 6. Rev. 9.) that living on earth she never had an hour in which this sorrow did not pierce her:

End of the supplement from W2. COLLATION WARNING: here W2 does not match W1 word for word. The 1789 text resumes at scan 0121 (p. 127) in the middle of a sentence — "her tunic, and she thought that one day it would be torn off him ..." — which introduces the same revelation Quoties aspiciebam Filium meum; but the 1838 redaction shortens that sentence and does not contain the words "her tunic". What W1's p. 126 held between "... an infamous tree" and "her tunic" is therefore represented here by W2's text, which is however a shorter redaction. W1 cites the revelation as "Lib. 6. c. 57. & l. 7. c. 7.", W2 as "Lib. 6. Rev. 9." and "Lib. 6. c. 37."

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her tunic, and she thought that one day it would be torn off him to crucify him; and when she gazed on those sacred hands and feet, and thought of the nails that were to pierce them, Mary said to St. Bridget: *Quoties aspiciebam Filium meum, quoties involvebam eum pannis, quoties videbam ejus manus & pedes, toties animus meus quasi novo dolore absorptus est; quia cogitabam quomodo crucifigeretur.* (Lib. 6. c. 57. & l. 7. c. 7.) — *As often as I looked upon my Son, as often as I wrapped him in swaddling clothes, as often as I saw his hands and feet, so often was my mind absorbed as it were with a fresh sorrow; because I thought how he would be crucified.*

The Evangelist said that Jesus Christ, as he grew in years, so also grew in wisdom and in grace with God and with men. *Et Jesus proficiebat sapientia, & ætate, & gratia apud Deum, & homines.* (Luke 2:22) This is understood to mean that he grew in wisdom and in grace with men, and with God inasmuch as (as St. Thomas explains) (3. p. q. 7. art. 12.) all his Works would have availed to increase his grace ever more in proportion, had not the fullness of grace already been conferred on him by reason of the Hypostatic union. But if Jesus grew in esteem and love with others, how much more did he grow with Mary? But O God, the more love grew in her, so much the more advanced the sorrow of losing him by so cruel a death; and the nearer the time of her Son's Passion drew, so much the more did that sword of sorrow foretold her by St. Simeon pierce with greater pain the Heart of the Mother. Just so the Angel revealed to St. Bridget, saying to her: *Ille doloris gladius Virginis*

omni hora tanto se propius approximabat, quanto Filius Passionis tempori magis appropinquabat. (Rev. 6. lect. 2. c. 16.) — *That sword of the Virgin's sorrow drew nearer to her every hour, the nearer her Son approached the time of the Passion.*

If then Jesus our King and his most holy Mother did not refuse for love of us to suffer so cruel a pain throughout their whole life, it is not reasonable that we should complain if we suffer a little. Jesus Crucified once appeared to Sister Magdalen Orsini, a Dominican, while she was long enduring a trial, and encouraged her to remain with him on the Cross with that affliction which was distressing her. Sister Magdalen, complaining, answered: Lord, you suffered on the Cross only three hours, but I have borne this cross for several years. Then the Redeemer replied: Ah ignorant one, what do you say? From the first instant in which I was conceived I suffered in my heart what I afterwards suffered in death upon the Cross. When therefore we too suffer some afflic-

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-tion, and complain of it, let us imagine that Jesus and his Mother Mary say the same to us.

Example.

FR. Roviglione of the Society of Jesus relates (Fasc. di Rose p. 2. c. 4.) that a certain young man had the devotion of visiting every day an Image of Our Lady of Sorrows which had seven swords in her breast. One night the wretched man fell into a mortal sin. Having gone then in the morning to visit the Image, he looked at the breast of the Blessed Virgin and saw, not seven, but eight swords; and while he stood gazing at this, he heard a voice which told him that that sin of his had added the eighth sword to the Heart of Mary: whereupon, moved and struck with compunction, he went at once to confession, and by the intercession of his Advocate recovered Divine Grace.

Prayer.

AH my blessed Mother, not one sword only then, but as many swords as have been my sins have I added to your Heart. Ah Lady, no — not to you, who are innocent, but to me, guilty of so many crimes, are the punishments due. But since you have willed to suffer so much for me, ah, by your merits obtain for me a great sorrow for my sins, and patience in bearing the troubles of this life, which will always be light compared with what I deserve, since so many times I have deserved Hell. Amen.

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On the Second Sorrow, the Flight of Jesus into Egypt.

AS a hind that, wounded by an arrow, carries her pain wherever she goes, always bearing with her the arrow that has wounded her, so the Divine Mother after the mournful Prophecy of St. Simeon — as we saw in the consideration of the first Sorrow — always carried her sorrow with her by the continual memory of her Son's Passion. Ballerino, explaining that passage of the Canticles — *Et comæ capitis tui sicut purpura regis juncta canalibus* (Cap. 7. v. 5.) — *And the hair of your head like the king's purple bound in the channels* — says that those purple tresses of Mary were the continual thoughts of the Passion of Jesus, which made her continually see as present the Blood that one day was to flow from his Wounds: *Mens tua, o Maria, & cogitationes tuæ tinctæ in Sanguine Dominicæ Passionis, sic affectæ semper fuere, quasi recenter viderent Sanguinem de vulneribus profluentem.* (In Cant. loc. cit.) — *Your mind, O Mary, and your thoughts, steeped in the Blood of the Lord's Passion, were always so affected as though they freshly saw the Blood flowing from his wounds.* So that the Son himself was this arr-

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-ow in Mary's Heart, which, the more lovable he showed himself to her, so much the more wounded her with the sorrow of having to lose him by so pitiless a death. Let us pass now to consider the second sword of sorrow which wounded her in the flight which her Infant Jesus had to make into Egypt through the persecution of Herod.

Herod, having heard that the awaited Messiah was born, foolishly feared that he was to take his Kingdom from him; whence St. Fulgentius, reproaching him with his folly, says to him: *Quid est quod sic turbaris Herodes? Rex iste qui natus est non venit Reges pugnando superare, sed moriendo mirabiliter subjugare.* (Serm. 5. de Epiph.) — *Why are you so troubled, Herod? This King who is born comes not to overcome Kings by fighting, but wondrously to subdue them by dying.* The impious man therefore awaited word from the holy Magi where the newborn King might be, in order to take his life; but seeing himself deceived by the Magi, he ordered the death of all the Infants who were then to be found about Bethlehem. Hence it was that the Angel appeared in a dream to St. Joseph and charged him: *Surge, & accipe puerum, & matrem ejus, & fuge in Ægyptum.* (Matt. 2) — *Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt.* Gerson holds that at once, in that same night, St. Joseph gave word of it to Mary, and taking the Infant Jesus they set out on the journey, as seems clearly gathered from the Gospel itself: *Qui consurgens accepit puerum & matrem ejus nocte, & secessit in Ægyptum.* (d. c. 2.) — *Who arising took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt.* O God, said Mary then,

as Blessed Albert the Great contemplates, must he then fly from men who has come to save men? *Debet fugere qui Salvator est mundi? — Must he fly, who is the Saviour of the world?* And the afflicted Mother then knew that Simeon's Prophecy about her Son was already beginning to be verified: *Positus est hic in signum cui contradicetur* — seeing that scarcely born he was persecuted to death. What pain it must have been to Mary's Heart (wrote St. John Chrysostom) to hear that hard exile announced to her together with her Son! *Fuge a tuis ad extraneos, a templo ad dæmonum fana. Quæ major tribulatio, quam quod recens natus a collo matris pendens cum ipsa matre paupercula fugere cogatur? — Fly from your own to strangers, from the temple to the shrines of demons. What greater tribulation than that a newborn child, hanging on his mother's neck, should be forced to fly with that poor mother herself?*

Everyone may then consider how much Mary suffered on this journey. The road was long indeed to reach Egypt. The Authors commonly hold with Barrada (Lib. 10. c. 8.) that it was of 400 miles, so that the journey was of at least thirty days. The way, moreover, as St. Bonaventure describes it, was rough, unk-

-nown, wooded, and little frequented by people: *Viam silvestrem, obscuram, asperam, & inhabitatam — A way wooded, dark, rough, and uninhabited.* It was Winter, so that they had to travel with snows, rains, winds, over broken and muddy roads. Mary was then fifteen years old, a delicate maiden, unaccustomed to such journeys. They had no one to serve them: *Joseph & Maria* (said St. Peter Chrysologus) *non habent famulum, non ancillam; ipsi domini & famuli — Joseph and Mary have no manservant, no maidservant; they are themselves masters and servants.* O God, what compassion it was to see that tender little Virgin with that newborn Child in her arms going as a fugitive through this World! St. Bonaventure asks: *Quomodo faciebant de victu? Ubi nocte quiescebant? Quomodo hospitabantur?* (De Vit. Chr.) — *How did they manage for food? Where did they rest at night? How were they lodged?* And on what else could they feed but a crust of hard bread carried by St. Joseph or begged in alms? Where could they sleep on that road (especially in those two hundred miles of desert that lay in it, as the Authors report, where there were neither Houses nor Inns), if not on the sand, or under some tree in the wood, in the open air, with the danger of robbers or of the wild beasts in which Egypt abounds? Oh, whoever might have met these three great Personages of the World — for what would he then have taken them, if not for three poor beggars and vagabonds?

They dwelt in Egypt in a place called Matarea, as Brocardus and Jansenius hold; though St. Anselm will have it that they dwelt in the City of Heliopolis, formerly called Memphis and now Cairo. And here let the great poverty be considered which they must have borne there for those seven years that they stayed, as St. Antoninus asserts with St. Thomas and others. They were foreigners, unknown, without income, without money, without kindred; they barely managed to support themselves by their poor labour: *Cum enim essent egeni* (wrote St. Basil), *manifestum est quod sudores frequentabant, necessaria vitæ inde sibi quærentes — Since they were needy, it is plain that they laboured hard, seeking thence the necessaries of life.* Landolph of Saxony wrote further (and let this be said for the consolation of the poor) that Mary there lived in such poverty that sometimes she had not even a little bread which her son asked of her, driven by hunger: *Aliquando filius famem patiens panem petiit, nec unde dare mater habuit.* (In Vit. Christi cap. 13.) — *Sometimes the son, suffering hunger, asked for bread, and the mother had nothing to give.*

Herod being then dead, the same St. Matth-

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-ew relates that the Angel again appeared in a dream to St. Joseph and charged him to return into Judea. Speaking of this return, St. Bonaventure meditated on the greater distress of the Blessed Virgin, for the hardship which on that journey Jesus, being then about seven years of age, must have suffered; since at such an age, says the Saint: *Sic magnus est, ut portari non valeat; & sic parvus, quod per se ire non potest — He is so big that he cannot be carried, and so little that he cannot walk by himself.*

To see, then, Jesus and Mary going thus as fugitives, wandering through this World, teaches us that we too must live on this Earth as pilgrims, without attaching ourselves to the goods which the World offers us, as things which we must soon leave to go to eternity: *Non habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus.* (Heb. 13:14) — *We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.* To which St. Augustine adds: *Hospes es, vides, & transis — You are a guest; you look, and you pass on.* Further, it teaches us to embrace crosses, since one cannot live in this World without a cross. On this subject Blessed Veronica of Binasco, an Augustinian, was carried in spirit to accompany Mary with the Infant Jesus on this journey into Egypt, at the end of which the Divine Mother then said to her: *Daughter, you have seen with what hardships we came to this Country; now know that no one receives graces unless he suffers.* And whoever would feel less the sufferings of this life must take Jesus and Mary with him: *Accipe puerum, & matrem ejus.* To him who carries in his heart with love this son and this mother, all pains are made light

— nay, sweet and dear. Let us love them then; let us console Mary by receiving into our hearts her Son, who even today goes on being persecuted by men with their sins.

Example.

ONE day Mary most holy appeared to Blessed Colette, a Franciscan, and showed her in a basin the Infant Jesus torn in pieces, and then said to her: *Thus do sinners continually treat my son, renewing his death to him and my Sorrows to me; Daughter, pray for them, that they may be converted.* (Ap. Fr. Genov. Serv. Dol. di Mar.) To which is joined that other vision which the Venerable Sister Joanna of Jesus and Mary, also a Franciscan, had. She one day, meditating precisely on the Infant Jesus persecuted by Herod, heard a great noise as of armed men pursuing someone; and then she saw before her a most beautiful child, all breathless, fleeing, who said to her: Joan-

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-na, help me, hide me: *I am Jesus of Nazareth; I am fleeing from sinners who want to kill me and persecute me like Herod; save me.* (loc. cit.)

Prayer.

THEN, O Mary, even after your son has died at the hands of men who persecuted him unto death, have these ingrates not even yet ceased to persecute him with their sins, and to go on afflicting you, Sorrowful Mother? And one of these, O God, have I been too. Ah my most sweet Mother, obtain me tears to weep for so great an ingratitude. And then, by the sufferings you bore on the journey into Egypt, assist me with your help on the journey I am making towards eternity, so that at the end I may come with you to love my persecuted Saviour in the Homeland of the Blessed. Amen.

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On the Third Sorrow, the Loss of Jesus in the Temple.

THE Apostle St. James wrote that our perfection consists in the virtue of Patience: *Patientia autem opus perfectum habet, ut sitis perfecti & integri, in nullo deficientes.* (James 1:4) — *And patience has a perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing.* God having then given us the Virgin Mary as an exemplar of perfection, it was needful that he should fill her with sufferings, so that in her we might admire and imitate her heroic patience. Among the greatest sorrows which the Divine Mother suffered in her life was the one we have to consider today:

namely when she lost her son in the Temple. He who is born blind feels little the pain of being deprived of seeing the light of day; but to one who has once had eyes and enjoyed the light, it becomes too hard to find himself deprived of it by blindness. And so likewise those unhappy Souls who, blinded by the mire of this Earth, have known God little, feel little the pain of not finding him; but he who, on the contrary, enlightened by the heavenly light, has been made worthy to find with love the sweet presence of the sovereign good — O God, how greatly he grieves when he sees himself deprived of it. Hence let us see how sorrowful to Mary, who was accustomed to enjoy continually the most sweet presence of her Jesus, this third sword must have been which wounded her when, having lost him in Jerusalem, she saw herself for three days far from him.

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St. Luke relates in chapter 2 that, the Blessed Virgin being accustomed with her Spouse Joseph and with Jesus to visit the Temple every year at the solemnity of the Pasch, she went there once when her son was twelve years old; but Jesus having remained in Jerusalem she did not notice it, since she believed he had gone with the company of the others. So that when she reached Nazareth she asked for her son; and not having found him there, she returned at once to Jerusalem to seek him, and did not find him until after three days. Now let us think what anguish that afflicted Mother must have felt in those three days, in which she went everywhere asking after her son with the Spouse of the Canticles: *Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis?* (Cant. 3) — *Have you seen him whom my soul loves?* And she could get no news of him. Oh with how much greater tenderness Mary, weary with the labour but without having found her beloved, must have said what Ruben said of his brother Joseph: *Puer non comparet, & ego quo ibo? — The boy does not appear, and where shall I go?* My Jesus does not appear; I no longer know what to do to find him; but where shall I go without my Treasure? Well did she, weeping continually for those three days, repeat with David: *Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotidie, ubi est Deus tuus?* (Ps. 41) — *My tears have been my bread day and night, while it is said to me daily, Where is your God?* Whence Pelbartus rightly writes that in those nights the afflicted Mother slept not at all, weeping and always praying God that he would let her find her son: *Illas noctes insomnes duxit in lacrymis, Deum deprecando, ut daret illi reperire filium.* And often in this time she repeated to her son the words of the spouse, as St. Bernard applies them: *Indica mihi ubi cubes, ubi pascas in meridie; ne vagari incipiam.* (Cant. 1:6) — *Show me where you lie, where you feed at midday, lest I begin to wander.* Son, let me know where you are, so that I may no longer go wandering and

seeking you in vain.

There are those who say that this Sorrow was not only among the greatest that Mary had in her life, but that it was the greatest and most bitter of all the others; and not without reason. First, in the other sorrows Mary had Jesus with her: she suffered at the prophecy made to her by St. Simeon in the Temple; she suffered in the flight into Egypt, but always with Jesus; but in this sorrow she suffers far from Jesus, without knowing where he is. *Lumen oculorum meorum, & ipse non est mecum.* (Ps. 27) — *The light of my eyes, and he himself is not with me.* So weeping she then said: Ah, the light of my eyes, my dear Jesus is no longer with me; he lives

LACUNA IN W1: printed p. 134 is absent from the 1789 images; the text that follows is supplied from W2 = Le Glorie di Maria, Naples, Gabinetto Letterario, 1838, vol. II, pp. 178–180. Here the join with W2 is exact at both margins. The pagination inside the fence is W2's. See ED-011.

[W2 p. 178, at the foot]

far from me, and I do not know where. Origen says that for the love which this holy Mother bore her Son, she suffered more in this loss of Jesus than any Martyr has suffered of pain in his death: *Vehementer doluit, quia vehementer amabat. Plus doluit de ejus amissione, quam aliquis Martyr dolorem sentiat de animæ a corpore se-*

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-paratione. (Hom. infr. Oct. Epiph.) — *She grieved vehemently, because she loved vehemently. She grieved more at his loss than any Martyr feels sorrow at the separation of soul from body.* Ah, those three days were too long for Mary; they seemed to her three centuries — days all bitter, with no one who could console her. And who ever (she said with Jeremiah) will be able to console me, if he who can console me is far from me? and therefore my eyes cannot weep enough: *Idcirco ego plorans, et oculus meus deducens aquas, quia longe factus est a me consolator meus.* (Thren. 1:16) — *Therefore do I weep, and my eye runs down with water, because the comforter is gone far from me.* And with Tobias she repeated: *Quale gaudium erit mihi, qui in tenebris sedeo, et lumen coeli non video?* (Tob. 6:11) — *What joy shall be to me, who sit in darkness and see not the light of heaven?*

Secondly: of the other sorrows Mary well understood the cause and the end, namely the Redemption of the World, the divine will; but in this she did not know the cause of her Son's absence. The Sorrowful Mother grieved at seeing Jesus withdrawn from her, while her humility (says Lanspergius) made her believe that she was unworthy to stay nearer to attend on him on this earth and to have the care of so great a treasure: *Tristabatur ex humilitate, quia arbitrabatur se indignam, cui tam pretiosus commissus esset thesaurus — She was saddened out of humility, because*

she judged herself unworthy that so precious a treasure should have been committed to her. And who knows, perhaps she thought within herself: have I not served him as I ought? Have I committed some negligence, for which he has left me? *Quærebant eum, ne forte reliquisset eos*, wrote Origen (ap. Corn. a Lap. in Luc. 2.) — *They sought him, lest perhaps he had left them.* It is certain that there is no greater pain to a soul that loves God than the fear of having displeased him. And hence it was that Mary complained in no other sorrow but in this one, lovingly complaining to Jesus after she found him: *Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic? Pater tuus et ego dolentes quærebamus te.* (Luke 2) — *Son, why have you done so to us? Your father and I have sought you sorrowing.* By which words she did not mean to reprove Jesus, as the Heretics blasphemously say, but wished on-

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-ly to disclose to him the sorrow she had felt in his absence, for the love she bore him. *Non erat increpatio* (says Blessed Denis the Carthusian) *sed amorosa conquestio — It was not a rebuke, but a loving complaint.* In sum, so sorrowful was this sword to the Virgin's heart that Blessed Benvenuta, desiring one

End of the supplement from W2. The W1 text resumes at scan 0128 (p. 135) with the words "day, and begging the holy Mother".

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day, and begging the holy Mother that she too might accompany her in this sorrow, Mary showed herself to her with her Infant Jesus in her arms; but while Benvenuta was enjoying the sight of that most beautiful child, all at once she found herself deprived of him. So great was the pain the Blessed one felt that she had recourse to Mary, begging her for pity's sake not to let her die of sorrow. The holy Virgin appeared to her again after three days and said to her: Now know, daughter, that your sorrow has been but a little part of mine, which I felt when I lost my son. (March. Diar. 30. Oct.)

This sorrow of Mary must first serve as a comfort to those Souls who are desolate and do not enjoy the sweet presence of their Lord which they once enjoyed. Let them weep, yes, but let them weep with peace, as Mary wept her son's absence. And let them take courage not to fear on that account that they have lost divine grace, from what God himself said to St. Teresa: *No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without willing to be deceived.* If the Lord departs from the eyes of that soul which loves him, he does not therefore depart from the heart. He often hides himself, in order to be sought by it with greater desire and love. But whoever would find Jesus must seek him, not among the delights and pleasures of the World, but among crosses and mortifications, as Mary sought him: *Dolentes quærebamus te*,

as she said to her son. *Disce a Maria quærere Jesum — Learn from Mary to seek Jesus* — wrote Origen.

Moreover in this World we must go seeking no other good but Jesus. Job was not unhappy when he lost on this earth all he had — goods, children, health, honours, even to descending from a throne to a dunghill; but because he had God with him, even then he was happy. Speaking of him St. Augustine said: *Perdiderat illa quæ dederat Dominus, sed habebat ipsum Deum — He had lost the things which the Lord had given, but he had God himself.* Unhappy and wretched indeed are those souls that have lost God. If Mary wept her son's absence for three days, how much ought sinners to weep who have lost divine grace, to whom God says: *Vos non populus meus, & ego non ero vester.* (Osee 1:9) — *You are not my people, and I will not be yours.* For this is what sin does: it divides the soul from God. *Peccata vestra diviserunt inter vos & Deum vestrum.* (Isa. 59:2) — *Your sins have divided between you and your God.* And hence it comes that if they possess all the goods of the earth, hav-

-ing lost God, everything even on this earth becomes to them smoke and pain, as Solomon confessed: *Ecce universa vanitas, & afflictio spiritus.* (Eccles. 1:14) — *Behold, all is vanity and affliction of spirit.* But the greatest misfortune for those poor blind souls, says St. Augustine, is to see that if they lose an ox, they do not fail to go after it; if they lose a sheep, they spare no diligence to find it; if they lose a beast of burden, they take no rest. And then they lose the sovereign good which is God, and they eat, and drink, and rest. *Perdit homo bovem, & post eum vadit: perdit ovem, & sollicite eum quærit; perdit asinum, & non quiescit. Perdit homo Deum, & comedit, & bibit, & quiescit.*

Example.

IT is recorded in the annual Letters of the Society of Jesus that in the Indies a young man, wishing to leave his room to commit a sin, heard it said: *Stop, where are you going?* He turned and saw an Image of Our Lady of Sorrows in relief, set there, which drew out the dagger it held in its breast, and then began to say to him: *Come, take this dagger, and wound me rather, and do not wound my son with this sin.* At these words the young man prostrated himself on the ground, and all contrite, weeping bitterly, begged of God and of the Virgin the pardon of his fault, and obtained it.

Prayer.

O BLESSED Virgin, why do you afflict yourself seeking your lost son? Perhaps because you do not know where he is? But do you not perceive that he is in your heart? Do you not know that he feeds among the lilies? You yourself said it: *Dilectus meus mihi, & ego illi, qui pascitur inter lilia.* (Cant. 2:16) — *My beloved to me, and I to him, who feeds among the lilies.* These thoughts and affections of yours, all humble, pure, and holy, are all lilies which call the divine spouse to dwell in you. Ah Mary, do you sigh for Jesus — you who love nothing but Jesus? Leave the sighing to me, and to so many sinners who do not love him, and by offending him have lost him. My most lovable Mother, if through my own fault your son has not yet returned into my soul, do you make me find him. I know well that he lets himself be found by those who seek him. *Bonus est Dominus ... animæ quærenti illum.* (Thren. 3:25) — *The Lord is good ... to the soul that seeks him.* But do you make me seek him as I ought to seek him. You are the door by which all find Jesus; through you I hope to have him too. Amen.

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On the Fourth Sorrow, the Meeting with Jesus as he went to death.

ST. Bernardine says that to form an idea of Mary's great sorrow in losing her Jesus by death, one must consider the love which this mother bore this son. All mothers feel as their own the sufferings of their children: therefore the Canaanite woman, when she begged the Saviour to free her daughter from the Devil who was tormenting her, said to him to have pity on herself, the mother, rather than on her daughter: *Miserere mei, Domine fili David, filia mea male a Dæmone vexatur.* (Matt. 15:22) — *Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil.* But what mother ever loved any son of hers as much as Mary loved Jesus? He was her only son, reared with such hardships; a Son most lovable and most loving of his mother; a Son who was at once her son and God; who, having come on earth to kindle in all the holy fire of divine love, as he himself declared: *Ignem veni mittere in terram, & quid volo nisi ut accendatur?* (Luke 12:49) — *I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* — let us think what a flame he must have kindled in that pure heart of his holy Mother, empty of every worldly affection. In sum, the Blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget that through love *unum erat cor meum, & cor filii mei — my heart and my son's heart were one.* That mingling of handmaid and mother, of son and God, made in Mary's heart a fire composed of a thousand fires. But then all this fire of love, at the time of the Passion, was turned into a sea of sorrow; whence St. Bernardine said:

Omnes dolores mundi, si essent simul conjuncti, non essent tanti quantus dolor gloriosæ Mariæ. (tom. 3. s. 45.) — *All the sorrows of the world, if they were joined together, would not be so great as the sorrow of the glorious Mary.* Yes, because this mother, as St. Lawrence Justinian wrote, *Quanto dilexit tenerius, tanto est vulnerata profundius — the more tenderly she loved, so much the more deeply was she wounded.* With how much greater tenderness she loved him, with so much greater sorrow she had to see him suffer — especially then, when she met her son who, already condemned to death, was going with the cross to the place of his execution. And this is the fourth sword of sorrow which we have to consider today.

At the time when the Lord's Passion was already drawing near, the Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that her eyes were always full of tears, thinking of her beloved son whom she was about to lose on this earth; and therefore she said also that a cold sweat

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ran over her limbs, because of the fear that assailed her at that approaching spectacle of sorrow: *Imminente Passione filii mei, lacrymæ erant in oculis meis, & sudor in corpore præ timorem.* (Lib. 1. Rev. c. 10.) — *With my son's Passion at hand, tears were in my eyes, and sweat on my body for fear.* Behold at last, the appointed day having come, Jesus came and took leave of his mother weeping, to go to death. St. Bonaventure, contemplating what Mary did on that night, says to her: *Sine somno duxisti, & soporatis ceteris, vigil permansisti — You passed it without sleep, and while the rest slumbered, you remained watching.* Morning come, the Disciples of Jesus Christ came to that afflicted mother, one to bring her one piece of news and another another, but all of sorrow, there being then verified in her the saying of Jeremiah: *Plorans ploravit in nocte, & lacrymæ in maxillis ejus; non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus charis ejus.* (Thren. 1:12) — *Weeping she has wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her among all her dear ones.* One then came to report to her the ill-treatment done to her son in the house of Caiaphas, another the insults he had received from Herod. At last came (I leave all the rest, to come to our point) — at last came St. John, and announced to Mary that the most unjust Pilate had already condemned him to die on a cross. I said most unjust, since, as St. Leo noted, that iniquitous Judge: *Iisdem labiis mittit ad mortem, quibus eum prænuntiaverat innocentem — With the same lips he sends him to death with which he had declared him innocent.* Ah sorrowful mother, John said to her, your son has already been sentenced to death, and has already gone forth, carrying his cross himself to go to Calvary (as he afterwards recorded in his Gospel): *Et bajulans sibi crucem exivit in eum qui dicitur Calvariæ locum.* (John 19:17) — *And bearing his*

own cross he went forth to the place called Calvary. Come, if you would see him and give him your last farewell in some street through which he must pass.

Mary sets out with John; and from the blood with which she found the way sprinkled she perceives that her son had already passed that way. So she revealed to St. Bridget: *Ex vestigiis filii mei cognoscebam incessum ejus: quo enim procedebat, apparebat terra infusa sanguine.* (Lib. 4. c. 77.) — *By my son's footprints I knew his passage: for wherever he went, the ground appeared steeped in blood.* St. Bonaventure meditates (Med. 6.) that the afflicted mother, crossing by a shorter street, placed herself at the head of a road to meet her afflicted son, who had to pass that way. *Mœstissima mater mœstissimo filio occurrit*, said St. Bernard — *The most sorrowful mother met her most sorrowful son.* Mary having stopped in that place, how many words must she have heard from the Jews, who already knew her, against her dear son — and perhaps how many taunts against herself as well? Alas, what a preparation of sorrow it was

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then to her sight to see the nails, the hammers, the ropes which they carried before, the mournful instruments of her Son's death! And what a sword to her heart to hear the trumpet going about publishing the sentence passed on her Jesus! But behold, after the instruments, the trumpet, and the Ministers of justice had passed, she raises her eyes and sees — she sees, O God, a young man all covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, with a bundle of thorns on his head, with two heavy beams on his shoulders; she looks at him and almost does not know him, saying then with Isaiah: *Et vidimus eum, & non erat aspectus.* (Cap. 53) — *And we saw him, and there was no comeliness.* Yes, because the wounds, the bruises, the blackened blood made him appear like a leper: *Putavimus eum quasi leprosum.* (ib.) — *We thought him as it were a leper.* So that he was no longer recognizable: *Et quasi absconditus vultus ejus, & despectus, unde nec reputavimus eum.* (ib.) — *And his face was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not.* But at last love reveals him to her; and having recognized him, ah, what then (says St. Peter of Alcantara in his Meditations) was the love and the fear in Mary's heart? On the one hand she longed to see him; on the other she shrank from seeing so pitiable a figure. But at last they look on one another: the son, wiping from his eyes a clot of blood that hindered his sight (as was revealed to St. Bridget), looked at his mother; the mother looked at her son. Ah, glances of sorrow, with which as with so many arrows those two beautiful loving Souls were then pierced! Margaret, daughter of Thomas More, when she met on the road her father who was going to death, could say nothing to him but twice: O father! O father! and fell fainting at his feet. Mary, at the sight of

her son going to Calvary, did not faint — no, because it was not fitting for that mother to lose the use of reason, as Fr. Suarez says; nor did she die, because God reserved her for greater sorrow; but if she did not die, she had nonetheless a sorrow capable of giving her a thousand deaths.

The Mother wished to embrace him, as St. Anselm says, but the Ministers drive her off with insult and push forward the sorrowing Lord; and Mary follows him. Ah holy Virgin, where are you going? To Calvary? Do you dare to see hanging from a tree him who is your life? *Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te.* (Deut. 28:66) — *And your life shall be as it were hanging before you.* Ah my mother, stop (St. Lawrence Justinian meditates), as though her son himself had then said to her: where do you draw near? where would you c-

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-ome? If you come where I go, you will be tormented with my punishment, and I with yours: *Heu quo properas, quo venis mater! Cruciata meo cruciaberis, & ego tuo — Alas, where do you hasten, where do you come, mother! You will be tormented by my torment, and I by yours.* But although the seeing her Jesus die must cost her so bitter a sorrow, the loving Mary will not leave him: the son goes before and the mother follows after, to be crucified together with her son, as William says: *Tollebat & mater crucem suam, & sequebatur eum, crucifigenda cum ipso.* (in Cant. 7.) — *The mother too took up her cross and followed him, to be crucified with him.* St. John Chrysostom wrote: *Ferarum etiam miseremur — We pity even the beasts.* If we saw a lioness following her cub led to death, even a wild beast would move us to compassion. And shall it not move us to compassion to see Mary going after her immaculate Lamb who is led to death? Let us then compassionate her, and let us strive to accompany her son and her too, by bearing with patience the cross which the Lord gives us. St. John Chrysostom asks why Jesus Christ willed to be alone in his other sufferings, but in carrying the cross willed to be helped by the Cyrenean; and he answers: *Ut intelligas Christi crucem non sufficere sine tua — That you may understand that Christ's cross does not suffice without your own.* The cross of Jesus alone does not suffice to save us, if we do not bear with resignation unto death our own also.

Example.

THE Saviour appeared one day to Sister Diomira, a Nun in Florence, and said to her: *Think of me and love me, and I will think of you and love you.* And at the same time he presented her with a little bunch of flowers together with a cross, signifying

to her by this that the consolations of the Saints on this earth must always be accompanied by the cross. The cross unites souls to God. Blessed Girolamo Emiliani, being a soldier and full of vices, was shut up by his enemies in a tower. There, moved by that tribulation and enlightened by God to change his life, he had recourse to Mary most holy; and then, with the help of that divine mother, he began to lead the life of a saint. Whence he merited to see once in heaven the great place which God had prepared for him. He became the founder of the Somaschan Fathers, died a saint, and lately has been declared Blessed and Saint by Holy Church.

Prayer.

MY sorrowful Mother, by the merit of that sorrow which you felt in seeing your beloved Jesus led to death, obtain for me the grace to bear with patience those crosses which God sends me. Happy shall I be if I too know how to accom-

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-pany you with my cross unto death! You and Jesus, innocent as you were, bore a very heavy cross; and shall I, a sinner who have deserved Hell, refuse mine? Ah immaculate Virgin, from you I hope for help to suffer the crosses with patience. Amen.

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On the Fifth Sorrow, the Death of Jesus.

HERE we are, to wonder at a new kind of martyrdom: a mother condemned to see die before her eyes, executed with barbarous torments, an innocent son loved with all her affection. *Stabat autem juxta crucem mater ejus — And there stood by the cross his mother.* No more need be said, says St. John, of the martyrdom of Mary: look at her beside the cross in sight of her dying son, and you will understand whether there can be a sorrow like her sorrow. Let us then stop today too on Calvary to consider this fifth sword which passed through Mary's heart.

When our sorrowing Redeemer had reached that mountain, the Executioners stripped him of his garments; and nailing his sacred hands and feet with nails *non acutis, sed obtusis — not sharp, but blunt* — as St. Bernard says (Serm. 2. de Pass.), the more to torment him, they fastened him to the cross. Having crucified him, they fixed the cross, and so left him to die. All his own abandon him; Mary does not abandon him. Then she drew nearer to the cross, to assist at his death. *Ego non separabar ab eo* (so the Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget, lib. 1. c. 6.), *& stabam vicinior cruci ejus — I was not parted from him, and I stood nearer to his cross.* But what did it avail, O Lady, St. Bonaventure says to her, to go to Calvary to see this

son die before you? *Cur ivisti, o domina, ad Calvariæ locum? Cur te non torquet pudor, horror lucis? — Why did you go, O lady, to the place of Calvary? Why does not shame torment you, and the horror of the daylight?* Shame should have held you back, since his disgrace was yours also. At least the horror of such a crime should have held you back — to see a God crucified by his own creatures. But your heart did not then think of its own pain: *Non consideravit cor tuum horrorem, sed dolorem — Your heart considered not the horror, but the sorrow.* Ah, your heart thought not then of its own pain, but of the sorrow and the death of your dear son; and therefore you would yourself assist him, at least to

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compassionate him. Ah true mother (says William the Abbot), loving mother; if you could not save him, not even the terror of death could part you from your beloved son: *Plane mater, quæ nec in terrore mortis filium deseruit.* (Serm. 3. de Ass.) — *Truly a mother, who did not forsake her son even in the terror of death.* But O God, what a spectacle of sorrow it was then to see that son agonizing upon the Cross, and to see this mother agonizing along the whole Cross, she who suffered all the pains that her son suffered! Here is how Mary revealed to St. Bridget the pitiable state of her dying son as she saw him on the cross: My dear Jesus was on the cross all in anguish and agony; his eyes could be seen sunken in, half closed and dimmed; his lips hanging and his mouth open; his cheeks wasted and clinging to his teeth; his jaws stretched, his nose sharpened, his face sorrowful. His head was seen fallen upon his breast, his hair black with blood; his belly clinging to his loins; his arms and legs stiff, and the whole trunk of his body all wounds and blood. (Lib. 1. Rev. c. 10. & lib. 4. c. 70.)

All these pains of Jesus were Mary's too, says St. Jerome: *Quot læsiones in corpore Christi, tot vulnera in corde matris.* (ap. Baldi to. 1. p. 409.) — *As many wounds in the body of Christ, so many wounds in the mother's heart.* Whoever then had found himself on Calvary would have seen, says St. John Chrysostom, two Altars on which two great Sacrifices were being consummated: one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary. But it seems to me better that St. Bonaventure looks there upon one Altar only — that is, the single cross of the son, on which together with the victim of this divine Lamb the mother too is sacrificed. Therefore the Saint turns to question her: *O Domina, ubi stas? Nunquid juxta crucem? Imo in cruce cum filio crucifixa eras.* (ap. Bald. l. cit. p. 452.) — *O Lady, where do you stand? Is it beside the cross? Nay, upon the cross you were crucified with your son.* O Mary, where do you stand? Beside the cross? Ah, more justly shall I say: that you stand upon the very cross, offering yourself crucified together with your son. So St. Augustine intimates

it: *Crux & clavi filii fuerunt & matris; Christo crucifixo crucifigebatur & mater — The cross and the nails were the mother's as well as the son's; while Christ was crucified, the mother too was being crucified.* Yes, because, as St. Bernard says, what the nails did in the body of Jesus, love did in Mary's heart: *quod in carne Christi agebant clavi, in Virginis mente affectus erga filium.* So that at the same time in which the son was sacrificing his body, the mother was sacrificing her Soul, as St. Bernar-

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-dine wrote: *Dum ille corpus, ista spiritum immolabat.* (tom. 1. Serm. 31.) — *While he offered his body, she offered her spirit.*

Mothers flee from the presence of dying children; but if some Mother is constrained to attend a son who is dying, she goes about procuring for him every relief she can give: she arranges his bed so that he may lie more comfortably; she gives him cooling drinks; and thus the poor mother goes consoling her own sorrow. Ah Mother, the most afflicted of all mothers! O Mary, you are not hindered from attending on the dying Jesus, but it is not given you to afford him any relief. Mary heard her son say *Sitio — I thirst* — but she was not permitted to give him a little water to cool his great thirst. She could say nothing else to him, as St. Vincent Ferrer contemplates: *Fili, non habeo nisi aquam lacrymarum.* (Ap. Bald. p. 456.) — *Son, I have nothing but the water of tears.* She saw that on that bed of sorrow her son, hanging from those three hooks of iron, could find no rest; she wished to embrace him to give him relief, at least to let him expire in her arms, but she could not: *Volebat eum amplecti* (says St. Bernard) *sed manus frustra protensæ in se complexu redibant.* (ap. Bald. p. 465.) — *She wished to embrace him, but her hands, stretched out in vain, returned to her own embrace.* She saw that poor son, who in that sea of anguish was seeking someone to console him, as he had already foretold by the mouth of the Prophet: *Torcular calcavi solus .... Circumspexi, & non est auxiliator: quæsivi, & non fuit qui adjuvaret.* (Isa. 63) — *I have trodden the winepress alone .... I looked about, and there was none to help; I sought, and there was none to aid.* But who would console him among men, if all were enemies? Even on the cross, one blasphemed and mocked him from one road and one from another: *Prætereuntes autem blasphemabant eum moventes capita sua.* (Matt. 27) — *And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads.* Others said, insulting him: *Si filius Dei es, descende de cruce — If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.* Others: *Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere — He saved others; himself he cannot save.* Others: *Si Rex Israel est, descendat nunc de cruce.* (Matt. 26) — *If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross.* The Blessed Virgin said further to St.

Bridget (Rev. vid. l. 4. c. 70.): I heard others saying that my son was a thief; others that he was an impostor; others that no one deserved death as he did; and all these were fresh swords of sorrow to me.

What then most increased Mary's sorrow in her compassion for her son was to hear him complain on the cross that even his eternal Father had abandoned him: *Deus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?* (Matt. 27:26) — *God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Words which, as the sa-

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-me Divine mother said to the same St. Bridget, could never afterwards leave her mind for her whole life. (Rev. l. cit.) So that the afflicted mother saw her Jesus in sorrow on every side; she wished to relieve him, but she could not. And what gave her most pain was to see that she herself, by her presence and her sorrow, increased her Son's anguish. The very pain (says St. Bernard) that filled Mary's heart overflowed to embitter the heart of Jesus: *Repleta matre, ad filium redundabat inundatio amaritudinis.* (Hom. in Ev. Stabat.) — *The mother being filled, the flood of bitterness overflowed to the son.* Nay, St. Bernard says that Jesus on the Cross suffered more from compassion for his mother than from his own pains; thus he makes the Virgin speak: *Stabam ego videns eum, ipse videns me, & plus dolebat de me quam de se.* (ap. Sinisc. Conf. 28.) — *I stood seeing him, he seeing me, and he grieved more for me than for himself.* So that the same Saint, speaking of Mary beside her dying Son, says that she lived dying, without being able to die: *Juxta Crucem stabat Mater, nec illi mors erat; sentiebat vivens, votabat mortem; nec mori poterat, quia vivens moriebatur.* (De Lament. Virg.) Passino writes that Jesus Christ himself, speaking one day to Blessed Battista Varani of Camerino, told her that it so afflicted him on the Cross to see his mother so afflicted at his feet, that compassion for his mother made him die without consolation. So much so that the said Blessed one, having been enlightened to know that sorrow of Jesus, exclaimed: Lord, tell me no more of this pain of yours, for I can bear no more.

Men marvelled, says Simon of Cascia, who then beheld this mother keep silence without complaining in so great a sorrow: *Stupebant omnes qui noverant hujus hominis matrem, quod etiam in tanta angustiæ pressura silentium servabat — All who knew this man's mother marvelled that even under such a weight of anguish she kept silence.* But if Mary was silent with her lips, she was not silent with her heart; for then she did nothing else but offer to divine justice the life of her son for our salvation. Hence we know that by the merit of her sorrows she co-operated in bringing us to birth in the life of grace; whence we are the children of her sorrows: *Filii sunt dolorum vestrorum.* (Hom. 44. de Psal. Do.) And if ever into her sea of

bitterness (I mean the heart of Mary) there entered some relief, this was the one relief that consoled

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her: namely to know that through her Sorrows she was bringing us to eternal salvation; as Jesus himself revealed to St. Bridget: *Maria mater mea propter compassionem & charitatem facta est Mater omnium in cœlis & in terra.* (Lib. 1. cap. 31.) — *Mary my mother, by her compassion and her charity, was made the Mother of all in heaven and on earth.* And indeed these were the last words with which Jesus Christ took leave of his mother; this was his last memento — to leave us to her as her children in the person of John, when he said to her: *Mulier, ecce filius tuus.* (John 19) — *Woman, behold your son.* And from that time Mary began to perform for us this office of a good Mother; for, as St. Peter Damian attests (ap. Salm. tom. 1. tract. 47.), the good thief was then converted by Mary's prayers and was saved: *Idcirco resipuit bonus latro, quia B. Virgo inter cruces Filii & latronis posita, Filium pro latrone deprecabatur. Hoc suo beneficio, antiquum latronis obsequium recompensans. — For this reason the good thief repented, because the Blessed Virgin, placed between the crosses of her Son and the thief, was beseeching her Son on behalf of the thief, recompensing by this favour the thief's former act of service.* For, as other Authors also relate, this Thief had been courteous to them on the journey into Egypt with the Infant Jesus; and such an office the Blessed Virgin has always continued, and continues, to perform.

Example.

A CERTAIN Young man in Perugia promised the Devil that if he obtained for him a sin which he desired to commit, he would give him his soul; and he made him the writing, signed with his own blood. The sin committed, the Devil, wishing the promise fulfilled, brought him near a well, threatening that he should throw himself in if he did not give him his soul, or else he would carry him body and soul to Hell. The wretched young man, believing he could no longer escape from his hands, climbs on the well to throw himself in; but terrified by death he told the enemy that he had not the heart to cast himself down, so that if he wanted him dead he should push him himself. The young man had at his neck the Scapular of *Our Lady of Sorrows*; and therefore the Devil said: Take off that Scapular, and I will give you the push. But he, knowing that in that Scapular the Divine Mother still kept her protection over him, would not take it off; so that after much struggle the Devil departed confounded; and the sinner, as it were snatched away by the Sorrowful

Mother, went to thank her; and repenting of his sins he willed also to hang up the vow set out in a picture at her Altar in the Church of S. Maria la Nova in Perugia. (Monum. Conv. Per. ap. Fr. Sinisch. Sanf. 16.)

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Prayer.

AH Mother, the most sorrowful of all Mothers, your Son is dead then — a Son so lovable, and who loved you so much? Weep, for you have reason to weep. Who can ever console you? This alone can console you: the thought that Jesus by his death has conquered Hell, and has opened to men the Paradise that was closed, and has won so many souls. On that throne of the Cross he is to reign over so many hearts which, overcome by his love, will serve him with love. Meanwhile do not disdain, O my Mother, to keep me near you weeping with you, since I have more reason than you to weep, for the offences I have done him. Ah Mother of Mercy, I hope for pardon and my eternal salvation — first through the death of my Redeemer, and then through the merits of your Sorrows. Amen.

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On the Sixth Sorrow, the Piercing with the Lance and the Deposition of Jesus from the Cross.

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite & videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus. (Thren. 1:12) — *O all you who pass by the way, attend and see whether there is any sorrow like my sorrow.* Devout souls, hear what Our Lady of Sorrows says today. Beloved daughters, I do not wish you to stand consoling me; no, because my heart is no longer capable of consolation on this earth after the death of my dear Jesus; if you would please me, this is what I want of you: turn to me and see whether you ever find a sorrow like mine. But, Lady, since you do not wish to be consoled, and have so great a thirst for sufferings, I wish to tell you that with the death of your Son your sorrows are not yet ended. Today you will be wounded by another sword of sorrow, and it will be to see pierced by a cruel lance the Side of that same Son of yours already dead, and his Body taken down from the Cross. And here we are to consider today the sixth Sorrow that afflicted this poor Mother. Attention, and tears.

Until now the Sorrows have come to crucify Mary one by one; but today it seems they come all united together to assail her. It is enough to tell a Mother that her son is dead, to kindle her wholly in love for the son she has lost. Some are wont, with mothers whose sons have died,

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to recall to them, in order to lighten their sorrow, the displeasures once received from those sons. But I, my Queen, if I wished by such a means to lighten your sorrow at the death of Jesus, what displeasure could I ever recall to you as received from him? Ah no, for he always respected you, always obeyed you, always loved you. Now you have lost him; who can ever explain your anguish? Explain it yourself, who felt it. When our Redeemer was dead, says a devout Author, the affection of the great Mother went to accompany the most holy soul of the Son, and she came to commend his soul to the Eternal Father: I present to you, O my God (Mary must then have said), the Immaculate soul of your Son and mine, who has already obeyed you unto death: receive it into your arms. Behold, your Justice is now satisfied, your will fulfilled; behold the great Sacrifice now consummated to your eternal glory. And then turning towards the dead limbs of her Jesus: O Wounds, she said, loving Wounds, I adore you, and I rejoice with you, since through you salvation has been given to the World. You will remain open in my Son's body, to be the refuge of those who shall have recourse to you. Oh how many through you shall receive the pardon of their sins, and through you be inflamed to love the sovereign good!

That the gladness of the following Paschal Sabbath might not be disturbed, the Jews wished the body of Jesus to be taken from the Cross; but because the condemned could not be taken down unless they were dead, therefore some came with iron mallets to break his legs, as they had already done to the other two thieves crucified. Behold then Mary, who while she is weeping her Son's death sees those armed men coming against her Jesus. At that sight she first trembled with terror; then she said thus: Ah, my Son is already dead; cease to insult him further, and cease also to torment me further, poor Mother: *Oravit eos, ne frangerent crura — She prayed them not to break his legs* — wrote St. Bonaventure. But while she is saying this, she sees a Soldier who thrusts a lance with force, and with it opens the Side of Jesus: *Unus militum lancea latus ejus aperuit, & continuo exivit sanguis, & aqua.* (John 19) — *One of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water.* At the blow of the lance the Cross trembled, and the Heart of Jesus was left divided, as was revealed to St. Bridget: *Ita ut ambæ partes essent di-*

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-visæ. (Rev. l. 2. c. 21.) — *so that both parts were divided.* There came out blood and water, because there was no more blood but those few drops, and even those the Saviour willed to shed, to give us to understand that he had no more Blood to give

us. The outrage of this lance-thrust was Jesus's, but the sorrow was Mary's: *Divisit Christus* (says the devout Lanspergius) *cum Matre sua hujus vulneris pœnam, ut ipse injuriam acciperet, Mater dolorem — Christ divided with his Mother the pain of this wound, so that he received the injury and the Mother the sorrow.* The holy Fathers hold that this was properly the sword foretold to the Virgin by St. Simeon: a sword not of iron but of sorrow, which passed through her blessed soul in the Heart of Jesus, where she always dwelt. So says among others St. Bernard: *Lancea quæ ipsius latus aperuit, animam Virginis pertransivit, quæ inde nequibat avelli.* (De Lament. Virg.) — *The lance that opened his side passed through the Virgin's soul, which could not be torn from thence.* And to St. Bridget the Divine Mother herself revealed: *Cum retraheretur hasta, apparuit cuspis rubea sanguine. Tunc mihi videbatur quod quasi cor meum perforaretur, cum vidissem cor Filii mei charissimi perforatum.* (Rev. c. 10.) — *When the spear was drawn back, its point appeared red with blood. Then it seemed to me that my own heart was pierced, when I saw the heart of my dearest Son pierced.* The Angel said to St. Bridget that such were Mary's sorrows that only by a Divine miracle did she not then die: *Non parvum miraculum a Deo factum est, quod B. Virgo tot doloribus sauciata spiritum non exhalarit — It was no small miracle wrought by God, that the Blessed Virgin, wounded by so many sorrows, did not breathe out her spirit.* But in the other sorrows she had at least her Son to compassionate her; now here she has not even her Son to compassionate her.

The Sorrowful Mother, fearing therefore other injuries that might be done to her beloved Son, begs Joseph of Arimathea to obtain from Pilate the Body of her Jesus, so that at least when dead she might have been able to guard it and free it from outrages. Joseph went to Pilate and set before him the sorrow and the desire of this afflicted Mother; and St. Anselm will have it that compassion for the Mother softened Pilate and moved him to grant her the Body of the Saviour. Behold, they now take Jesus down from the Cross. O most sacred Virgin, after you with such love gave your Son to the World for our salvation, behold the World now gives him back to you. But O God, how do you give him back to me? Mary then said to the World: *Dilectus meus candidus, & rubicundus — My beloved is white and ruddy.* My Son was white and ruddy, but you give him back to me black with bruises, and ruddy not by colour but by the wounds you have made in him: he was beautiful; now he is beautiful no more, he is wholly disfigured. He enamoured with his look; now

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he strikes horror into whoever looks on him. Oh how many swords, says St. Bonaventure, wounded the soul of this Mother when the Son taken down from the Cross was presented to her: *Oh quot gladii animam Matris pertransierunt! — Oh*

how many swords passed through the Mother's soul! Let it be considered what pain any mother would feel to have a dead Son presented to her! It was revealed to St. Bridget that at the said deposition they set three ladders against the Cross; first those holy Disciples drew the nails from the hands, and then from the feet; and the nails were handed to Mary, as the Metaphrast relates. Then one holding the Body of Jesus above, the other below, they lowered him from the Cross. Bernardine de Bustis meditates how the afflicted Mother rose on tiptoe, and holding out her arms goes to meet her dear Son; she embraces him, and then sits down beneath the Cross. She sees that mouth of his open, those eyes darkened; she goes over those torn flesh-wounds, those bared bones; she takes off the crown and looks at the havoc made by the thorns in that sacred head; she looks at those hands and those pierced feet, and says: Ah Son, to what has the love you bore men brought you! But what harm did you do them, that they have so ill-used my Son? *Tu mihi pater eras* (Bernardine de Bustis goes on making her say), *ut frater, sponsus, meæ deliciæ, mea gloria, tu mihi omnia eras — You were to me a father, a brother, a spouse, my delight, my glory; you were all things to me.* Son, see how sorrowful I am; look at me and console me: but you look at me no more. Speak, say one word to me and console me; but you speak no more, because you are dead. O cruel thorns (then turning to those barbarous instruments she said), nails, pitiless lance, how could you so torment your Creator? But what thorns? what nails? ah sinners, she cried, it is you who have so ill-used my Son.

So Mary said then, and complained of us. But if now she were capable of sorrow, what would she say? and what pain would she feel in seeing that men, after her Son is dead, go on tearing him and crucifying him with their sins? Let us then torment this sorrowful Mother no more; and if in the past we too have afflicted her with our sins, let us do what she now tells us. This is what she says to us: *Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor.* (Isa. 46:8) — *Return, transgressors, to the heart.* Sinners, return to the wounded heart of my Jesus; return repentant, and he will receive you. *Ab ipso fuge ad ipsum* (she goes on speaking to us with Guerric the Abbot); *a Judice ad Redemptorem, a tribunali ad crucem — Flee from him to himself; from the Judge to the Redeemer, from the tribunal to the cross.*

LACUNA IN W1: printed pp. 150–151 are absent from the 1789 images; the text that follows is supplied from W2 = Le Glorie di Maria, Naples, Gabinetto Letterario, 1838, vol. II, pp. 200–203. The join is exact at both margins. The supplement carries the end of the Sixth Sorrow, its Prayer, its Example, AND the opening of the Seventh Sorrow. The pagination inside the fence is W2's. See ED-011.

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The Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that when her Son was taken down from the Cross she closed his eyes, but could not fold his arms: *Ejus brachia flectere non potui — I could not bend his arms.* Giving us thereby to understand that Jesus Christ willed to remain with his arms open, to receive all repentant sinners who returned to him. O World, then (Mary goes on to say): *Et ecce tempus tuum, tempus amantium.* (Ezech. 16:8) — *And behold, your time, the time of lovers.* Now that my Son, O World, is dead to save you, it is no longer a time of fear for you, but of love — a time to love him who, to show

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you the love he bears you, has willed to suffer so much. *Propterea*, says St. Bernard, *vulneratum est cor Christi, ut per vulnus visibile vulnus amoris invisibilis videatur.* (Serm. de Pass. Dom.) — *Therefore was the heart of Christ wounded, that through the visible wound the invisible wound of love might be seen.* If then, Mary concludes with the Idiota, my Son has willed that his Side be opened to give you his heart — *Præ nimio amore aperuit sibi latus, ut præberet cor suum — Out of exceeding love he opened his side, to offer his heart* — it is right, O man, that you give him your own heart. And if you would find a place in the Heart of Jesus without refusal, O Children of Mary, go (says Ubertino of Casale), go together with Mary, and she will obtain you the grace: *Filii hujus Matris ingredimini cum ipsa intra penetralia cordis Jesu — Children of this Mother, enter with her into the inmost recesses of the heart of Jesus.* In proof of this, here is a fine

Example.

THE Disciple relates (Prompt. Ex. V. Miser.) that there was a poor sinner who among his other crimes had killed his father and a brother, and therefore went about a fugitive. One day in Lent, hearing from a Preacher a sermon on the divine mercy, he went of his own accord to confession. The Confessor, hearing those enormities, sent him to an altar of Our Lady of Sorrows, that she might obtain for him sorrow and pardon for his sins. The sinner goes, begins to pray, and behold he was seen to fall down there dead on the spot. The next day, as the Priest was recommending to the people to pray for that dead man, there appeared in the Church a white Dove, from which a paper was then seen to fall before the Priest's feet. He took the paper, and there found written these words: *The soul of the dead man, scarcely gone forth from the body, has gone to Paradise. And do you go on preaching the infinite mercy of God.*

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Prayer.

O SORROWFUL Virgin, O soul great in virtues and great also in sorrows, since both these and those spring from that great fire of love which you bear to God, while your heart can love nothing but God: Ah Mother, have pity on me, who have not loved God, and have so greatly offended him. Your sorrows give me great confidence to hope for pardon. But this is not enough for me: I wish to love my Lord; and who else can better obtain this for me than you, who are the Mother of fair love? Ah Mary, you console all; console me too. Amen.

On the Seventh Sorrow, the Burial of the Body of Jesus.

WHEN a mother is present with a son who is suffering and dying, there is no doubt that she then feels and suffers all her son's pains; but when the tormented son, now dead, is to be buried, and the afflicted mother stands to take leave of her son — O God, that thought of never seeing him again is a sorrow that surpasses all the other sorrows. Behold the last sword of sorrow which we have to consider today, when Mary, after assisting her Son on the Cross, after embracing him dead, had at last to leave him in the Sepulchre, no more to enjoy his beloved presence.

But the better to consider this last sorrow, let us return to Calvary to look upon the afflicted Mother, who still holds her dead Son embraced: Son (it seems she then went on saying to him with Job c. 30. v. 21.), my Son, *mutatus es mihi in crudelem — you are changed towards me into one that is cruel.* Yes; because all

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your beautiful qualities — the beauty, the grace, the virtues, your lovable ways, all the signs of special love which you have shown me, the singular favours done to me — all are changed into so many arrows of sorrow, so that the more they have kindled me to love you, the more cruelly they make me feel the pain of having lost you. Ah my beloved Son, in losing you I have lost everything. So St. Bernard makes her speak: *O vere Dei nate, tu mihi pater, tu mihi filius, tu mihi sponsus, tu mihi anima eras! Nunc orbor patre, viduor sponso, desolor filio; uno perdito filio, omnia perdo.* (De Lam. V. M.) — *O truly born of God, you were to me a father, to me a son, to me a spouse, to me my very soul! Now I am bereft of a father, widowed of a spouse, desolate of a son; losing one son, I lose all.*

Thus Mary was consuming herself with sorrow, embracing her Son. But those holy Disciples, fearing that this poor Mother might there expire from the pain, moved to tear quickly from her breast that dead So-

End of the supplement from W2. The W1 text resumes at scan 0143 (p. 152) with the words "-n, to carry him to burial", in unit P2-S07.

The beginning of the Seventh Sorrow stands in the W2 supplement at the end of unit P2-S06, printed pp. 150–151 of W1 being absent. The W1 text resumes here mid-word: "... to tear quickly from her breast that dead So- | n, to carry him to burial".

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The running head of this page is printed "Sul VIII. Dolore" — On the Eighth Sorrow — in error: the Sorrows are seven, and this is the seventh. Retained as printed; p. 154 correctly reads "Sul VII. Dolore".

-n, to carry him to burial. So with reverent violence they took him from her arms, and embalming him with spices they wrapped him in the Shroud prepared, on which the Lord willed to leave us his figure impressed as a memorial, as is seen today at Turin. Behold, they now carry him to burial; the sorrowing Virgin now sets out; the Disciples lay him on their shoulders; the Angels from Heaven in troops go accompanying him; those holy Women follow him; and together with them goes the sorrowful Mother following her Son to the burial. Having reached the appointed place, oh how gladly would Mary have been buried there alive with her Son: *O quam libenter* (as she said to St. Bridget, l. 1. Rev.) *tunc posita fuissem viva cum Filio meo, si fuisset voluntas ejus! — Oh how willingly would I then have been laid alive with my Son, if it had been his will!* But because this was not the divine will, they hold that she herself accompanied the sacred body of Jesus into the Sepulchre, where (Baronius reports) they placed the Nails and the Crown of thorns.

And when they came to raise the stone to close the Sepulchre, those Disciples of the Saviour had to turn to the Virgin and say to her: Come, Lady, the Sepulchre must be covered; have patience, look on him for the last time, and take leave of your Son. Then, my beloved Son (so the sorrowful Mother must then have said), then shall I see you no more? Receive then, at this last time that I see you, receive the last farewell from me your dear Mother, and receive my heart, which I leave buried with you. *Animam* (wrote St. Fulgentius) *cum corpore Christi contumulari Virgo vehementer exoptavit — The Virgin vehemently desired that her soul might be entombed together with the body of Christ.* And Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget: *Vere dicere possum, quod sepulto Filio meo quasi duo corda in uno sepulchro fuerunt.* (Revel. l. 2. c. 21.) — *Truly I can say that when my Son was buried, it was as though two hearts were in one sepulchre.*

At last they take the stone and close in the holy Sepulchre the body of Jesus, that great treasure than which neither earth nor Heaven has a greater. Let us make a digression here: Mary leaves her heart buried with Jesus, because Jesus is all her treasure: *Ubi thesaurus vester est, ibi & cor vestrum erit.* (Luke 12:34) And where shall we keep our heart buried — in creatures, perhaps? in the mire? And why not in

Jesus, who although ascended to Heaven has yet willed to remain — not dead, but alive — in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, precisely to have with him and to possess our hear-

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-ts? But let us return to Mary. Before departing from the Sepulchre, St. Bonaventure will have it that she blessed that sacred Stone: O happy Stone (saying), which now enclose within you him who was nine months in my womb, I bless you and I envy you; I leave you to guard for me this my son, who is all my good, all my love. And then turning to the Eternal Father she said: O Father, to you I commend him who is your son and my son. And with this, giving her last farewell to her son and to the Sepulchre, she departs and returns to her House.

So afflicted and mournful did this poor Mother go that St. Bernard says: *Multos etiam invitos ad lacrymas provocabat — She moved even the unwilling to tears.* So that wherever she passed, *omnes plorabant, qui obviabant ei — all who met her wept.* All who met her could not keep themselves from weeping. And he adds that those holy Disciples and the Women who accompanied her *super ipsam potius, quam super Dominum plangebant — wept rather over her than over the Lord.*

St. Bonaventure will have it that her sisters veiled her with a mourning mantle: *Sorores Dominæ velaverunt eam tamquam viduam: cooperientes quasi totum vultum — Our Lady's sisters veiled her as a widow, covering almost her whole face.* And he says that, passing on this return before the Cross, still wet with the Blood of her Jesus, she was the first to adore it: O holy Cross (she said then), I kiss you and I adore you, since now you are no longer an infamous tree, but a throne of love and an altar of mercy, consecrated with the Blood of the Divine Lamb, who upon you has already been sacrificed for the salvation of the world. Then she leaves the Cross and returns home; where, having arrived, the afflicted Mother turns her eyes about and sees her Jesus no more; but in place of the presence of her dear son, there rise before her eyes all the memories of his fair life and of his pitiless death. Here she remembers the embraces given to her son in the stable of Bethlehem, the converse held with him for so many years in the workshop of Nazareth; she remembers their mutual affections, their loving looks, the words of eternal life that came from that Divine mouth. And then there is set before her the mournful scene beheld on that same day; there rise before her those nails, those thorns, that torn flesh of her son, those deep wounds, those stripped bones, that open mouth, those darkened eyes. Ah, what a night of sorrow was that night for Mary! The Sorrowful Mother, turning

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to the Magdalen: Daughter, tell me where your beloved is? O God, who has taken him from us? Mary weeps, and all who were with her wept. And do you not weep, my soul? Ah, turn to Mary and say to her with St. Bonaventure: *Sine, quæso, sine me flere; sit innocens es, ego sum reus — Suffer me, I pray, suffer me to weep; you are innocent, I am the guilty one.* Beg her at least to admit you to weep with her: *Fac ut tecum lugeam — Grant that I may mourn with you.* She weeps for love, and you weep for sorrow for your sins. And thus by weeping you may have the lot of that happy man of whom you will read in the following Example.

Example.

FR. Engelgrave relates (Dom. infra Oct. Nat. §. 2.) that there was a certain Religious so tormented by scruples that at times he was almost near despair; but because he was most devoted to Our Lady of Sorrows, he always had recourse to her in his agonies of spirit, and by contemplating her Sorrows he felt himself comforted. He came to die, and the Devil then more than ever pressed him with his scruples and tempted him to despair. When behold the merciful Mother, seeing her poor son in such distress, appeared to him and said to him: *E tu, fili mi, cur mœrore consteris, qui in mœrore meo toties me consolatus es? — And you, my son, why are you cast down with grief, you who so often consoled me in my grief?* My son, why do you fear so much and grieve, you who so many times have consoled me by compassionating my Sorrows? Come now (she said to him), Jesus sends me to you to console you: take comfort, be of good cheer, come with me to Paradise. And at these words the devout Religious, all full of consolation and confidence, peacefully expired.

Prayer.

MY Sorrowful Mother, I will not leave you to weep alone; no, I too will accompany you with my tears. This grace I ask of you today: obtain for me a continual memory, with a tender devotion, towards the Passion of Jesus and towards yours, so that all the days that remain to me of life may serve me for nothing else but to weep the Sorrows of you, my Mother, and of my Redeemer. These Sorrows, I hope, will at the moment of my death give me confidence and strength, that I may not despair at the sight of the offences I have committed against my Lord. These must obtain for me pardon, perseverance, and Paradise, where I hope then to rejoice with you and to sing the infinite mercies of my God for all eternity; so I hope, so may it be. Amen, amen.

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Whoever should have the devotion of reciting the Little Crown of the Sorrows of Mary will find it at the end of the Book. I composed it many years ago, and I will insert it again here for the convenience of the devout servants of Mary in her Sorrows, whom I beg, for charity's sake, to commend me there when they meditate upon her sorrows.

O Domina, quæ rapis corda hominum dulcore, nonne cor meum rapuisti? O Raptrix cordium, quando mihi restitues cor meum? Guberna illud cum tuo, & in latere filii colloca. Tunc possidebo quod spero, quia tu es spes nostra. — O Lady, who carry off the hearts of men by your sweetness, have you not carried off mine? O Ravisher of hearts, when will you give me back my heart? Govern it together with your own, and lay it up in the side of your Son. Then shall I possess what I hope for, since you are our hope. (S. Bernardus Med. in Salv. Reg. ap. S. Bon. Stim. c. 19. part. 3.)

ON THE VIRTUES

Of Mary Most Holy.

St. Augustine says that in order to obtain the favour of the Saints with greater certainty and abundance we must imitate them, because when they see us practising the virtues they themselves exercised, they are the more moved to pray for us. The Queen of Saints and our first advocate Mary, after she has drawn some Soul from the claws of Lucifer and has united it to God, wills that this soul set itself to imitate her; otherwise she will not be able to enrich it with her graces as she would wish, seeing it contrary to herself in its manners. Therefore Mary calls those blessed who diligently imitate her life: *Nunc ergo, filii, audite me. Beati qui custodiunt vias meas. — Now therefore, children, hear me. Blessed are they who keep my ways.* (Prov. 8:33) He who loves either finds himself like, or seeks to make himself like, the person loved, according to the famous proverb: *Amor aut pares invenit, aut facit — Love either finds equals or makes them.* Hence St. Jerome exhorts us that if we love Mary, we must seek to imitate her, because this is the greatest homage we can offer her: *Dilectissimi Mariam colite quam amatis; quia tunc vere amatis, si imitari volueritis quam amatis. — Beloved, honour the Mary whom you love; for then do you truly love, if you are willing to imitate her whom you love.* (S. Hier. Ser. de Ass. ap. Lohn.) Richard says that those are, and may be called, true children of Mary who seek to live according to her life: *Filii Mariæ imitatores ejus — The children of Mary are her imitators.* Let the child, then (St. Bernard concludes), take care to imitate the Mother, if he desires her favour; for then, seeing herself honoured as a Mother, she will treat and favour him as a child.

Speaking then of the virtues of this Mother, alth-

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-ough we read few things recorded of them in particular in the Gospels, yet since it is there said that she was full of grace, we are well given to know that she had all the virtues, and all in heroic degree. In such a way, says Thomas, that whereas among the other Saints each one has been excellent in some particular virtue, the Blessed Virgin has been excellent in all, and in all the virtues she has been given us for an example: *Alii Sanctorum specialia opera exercuerunt; alius fuit castus; alius humilis; alius misericors; sed B. Virgo datur in exemplum omnium virtutum. — Other Saints practised particular works: one was chaste, another humble, another merciful; but the Blessed Virgin is given as the example of all the virtues.* (Opusc. 8.) And likewise St. Ambrose said: *Talis fuit Maria, ut ejus unius vita omnium disciplina sit. — Such was Mary, that the life of her alone is the instruction of all.* (Lib. 2. de Virg.) Whence he afterwards left us in writing: *Sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariæ, in qua refulget forma virtutis. Hinc sumatis exempla vivendi ... quid corrigere, quid fugere, quid tenere debeatis. — Let the virginity and the life of Mary be to you as a picture drawn, in which the very form of virtue shines out. From this take your examples of living ... what you ought to correct, what to flee, what to hold fast.* (loc. cit.) And because, as the holy Fathers teach, humility is the foundation of all the virtues, let us therefore see in the first place how great was the humility of the Mother of God.

§ I. On the Humility of Mary.

Humilitas (says St. Bernard) *est fundamentum custosque virtutum — Humility is the foundation and the guardian of the virtues.* And with reason, for without humility there can be no other virtue in a soul; let it possess all the virtues, they will all fly at the flight of humility. And on the other hand, St. Francis de Sales used to say, as he wrote to Blessed Sister Jane de Chantal, that God is so great a lover of humility that he runs at once wherever he sees it. (Vit. l. 6. c. 2. §. 11.) Unknown in the World was this beautiful and so necessary virtue, but the very Son of God came upon earth to teach it by his own example, and he willed that in this above all we should seek to imitate him: *Et discite a me, quia mitis sum, & humilis corde. — And learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart.* (Matt. 11:29) And as Mary was the first and most perfect Disciple of Jesus Christ in all the virtues, so was she also in this one of humility, for which she deserved to be exalted above all Creatures. It was revealed to St. Mechtilde that the first virtue in which the Blessed Mother singularly

exercised herself from childhood was humility: *Prima virtus, in qua virgo nata, & infans se singulariter exercuit, fuit humilitas — The first virtue in which the Virgin, newly born and an infant, singularly exercised herself, was humility.*

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The first act of humility of heart is to hold a low opinion of oneself: and Mary always felt so lowly of herself, as was revealed to the same St. Mechtilde, that although she saw herself thus enriched with graces beyond all others, she never preferred herself to anyone: *Ita modeste de se sentiebat, ut cum tot gratias haberet, nulli se prætulit. — So modestly did she think of herself that, having so many graces, she preferred herself to no one.* Rupert the Abbot, explaining that passage, *Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa ... in uno crine colli tui — You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse ... with one hair of your neck* (Cant. 4:9), says that this hair of the spouse's neck was precisely the humble opinion which Mary had of herself, with which she wounded the heart of God: *In uno crine, idest in nimia humilitate cordis tui. Iste est crinis colli, humilis cogitatus ... Quid uno crine gracilius? — With one hair, that is, with the exceeding humility of your heart. This is the hair of the neck, the humble thought ... What is slenderer than a single hair?* (in d. l. Cant. 4.) W1 prints *cordis tui*; the passage of Rupert commonly reads *cordis sui*. Retained as printed.

Not indeed that the Holy Virgin esteemed herself a sinner, because humility is truth, as St. Teresa says; and Mary knew that she had never offended God; nor that she did not confess to have received greater graces from God than all other creatures, because a humble heart well recognises the special favours of the Lord in order to humble itself the more: but the Divine Mother, by the greater light which she had for knowing the infinite greatness and goodness of her God, knew all the more her own littleness; and therefore more than all others she humbled herself, and said with the sacred Spouse: *Nolite me considerare quod fusca sim, quia decoloravit me sol. — Do not consider me that I am brown, because the sun has discoloured me.* (Cant. 1:6) St. Bernard declares: *Appropinquans ille me nigram invenit — When he drew near, he found me black.* Yes, because St. Bernardine says: *Virgo continue habebat actualem relationem ad divinam majestatem, & ad sui nihilitatem. — The Virgin had continually an actual regard to the divine majesty and to her own nothingness.* Just as a beggar-woman, if she is clothed in a rich garment given her, does not grow proud of it, but on seeing it humbles herself the more before her giver, since then she the more remembers her own poverty; so Mary, the more she saw herself enriched, the more she humbled herself, remembering that all was the gift of God; whence she herself said to St. Elizabeth the Benedictine: *Pro firmo scias, quod me reputabam vilissimam, & gratia Dei indignam. — Hold it for certain that I*

accounted myself most vile, and unworthy of the grace of God. (Ap. S. Bon. de Vit. Christ.) And therefore, said St. Bernardine, there has been no creature in the World more exalted, because there has been no creature that has more humbled herself than Mary: *Sicut nulla post filium Dei creatura tantum ascendit in gratiæ dignitatem; sic nec tantum descendit in abyssum humilitatis. — As no creature after the Son of God has ascended so high in the dignity of grace, so neither has any descended so far into the abyss of humility.* (To. 2. Serm. 51. c. 3.)

Furthermore, it is an act of humility to hide the gifts of heaven.

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Mary willed to conceal from St. Joseph the grace of having been made Mother of God, even though to make it known then seemed a necessity, in order to free at least her poor spouse from the suspicions he might form about her honour on seeing her with child; or at least from his distress — as in fact St. Joseph, not being able on the one hand to doubt the chastity of Mary, and on the other knowing nothing of the mystery, in order to free himself from that distress *voluit occulte dimittere eam — was minded to put her away privately.* (Matt. 1:19) And if the Angel had not given him to understand that his Spouse was with child by the operation of the Holy Spirit, he would already have left her. Furthermore, the humble soul refuses praise for itself, and refers it all to God. See how Mary is troubled at hearing herself praised by St. Gabriel. And when St. Elizabeth said to her: *Benedicta tu inter mulieres, &c. Et unde hoc mihi, ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me? Et beata quæ credidisti, &c. — Blessed are you among women, etc. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? And blessed are you who have believed, etc.* (Luke 1) — Mary, attributing all those praises to God, answered with that humble Canticle: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum — My soul magnifies the Lord.* As if she said: Elizabeth, you praise me, but I praise the Lord, to whom alone the honour is due. You wonder that I should come to you, and I wonder at the divine goodness, in which alone my Spirit rejoices: *Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo — And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.* You praise me because I have believed; I praise my God, who has willed to exalt my nothingness: *Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ — Because he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid.* Whence it is that Mary said to St. Bridget: *Ut quid enim ego me tantum humiliabam, aut promerui tantam gratiam, nisi quia cogitavi, & scivi nihil a me esse vel habere. Ideo nolui laudem meam, sed solum datoris & creatoris. — For why did I so humble myself, or merit so great a grace, except because I thought and knew that I had nothing and was nothing of myself? Therefore I wished no praise of my own, but only that of the giver and creator.* (Rev. l. 2. c. 23.) Hence, speaking of the humility of Mary, St.

Augustine said: *O vere beata humilitas, quæ Deum hominibus peperit, Paradisum aperuit, & animas ab inferis liberavit. — O truly blessed humility, which brought forth God to men, opened Paradise, and freed souls from hell.* (Serm. 35. de Sanctis.)

Furthermore, it belongs to the humble to serve so printed in W1: "è de degli umili", for "è degli umili"; retained as printed: and Mary did not refuse to go and serve Elizabeth for three months. Whence St. Bernard said: *Venisse Mariam mirabatur Elisabeth, sed magnis miretur quod ipsa non ministrari venerit, sed ministrare. — Elizabeth wondered that Mary had come, but let her wonder more that she came not to be served, but to serve.* (Serm. de Nat. Virg.) W1 prints *magnis*; commonly *magis*. Retained as printed. The humble keep themselves withdrawn and choose the worst place; and therefore Mary — St. Bernard reflects — when the Son was preaching in that house, as St. Matthew relates (at chapter 12), wished to speak to him, but would not enter the house of herself: *Foris stabat* (says St. Bernard), *nec ma- — She stood outside, nor by a mo-*

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-terna authoritate sermonem interrupit; nec in domum intravit ubi filius loquebatur. — -ther's authority did she interrupt the discourse, nor did she enter the house where her Son was speaking. For this reason also, when she was in the Cenacle with the Apostles, she willed to place herself in the last place: so that St. Luke accordingly wrote: *Hi omnes erant perseverantes unanimes in oratione, cum mulieribus, & Maria matre Jesu. — All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus.* (Act. 1:4) The place cited is Acts 1:14; W1 prints "1. 4." Retained as printed. Not that St. Luke did not know the merit of the Divine Mother, for which he ought to have named her in the first place; but because she had set herself in the last place in the Cenacle, after the Apostles and the other women, St. Luke therefore described them all (as an Author reflects) according as they were placed in order. Hence St. Bernard said: *Merito facta novissima prima, quæ cum prima esset omnium, se novissimam faciebat. — Deservedly was she made first who was last, since being first of all she made herself the last.* (Serm. sup. Si. Ma.) The humble, finally, love to be despised; and therefore we do not read that Mary appeared in Jerusalem when her Son on Palm Sunday was received by the people with so many honours; but on the contrary, at the time of her Son's death she did not refrain from appearing in public on Calvary, bearing the dishonour of making herself known as the Mother of the condemned man, who was dying as a criminal by a criminal's death. Whence she said to St. Bridget: *Quid contemptibilius quam vocari fatua, omnibus indigere, omnibus indigniorem se credere? talis, o filia, fuit humilitas mea, hoc gaudium meum, hæc voluntas tota, quam nulli nisi meo placere*

cogitabam. — What is more contemptible than to be called a fool, to be in need of all, to believe oneself more unworthy than all? Such, O daughter, was my humility; this was my joy, this my whole will, for I thought to please none but my own.

To the Venerable Sister Paula of Foligno it was given to understand in an ecstasy how great was the humility of the Holy Virgin; of which she, afterwards giving an account of it to her Confessor, said, all overwhelmed with astonishment: *The humility of Our Lady! O father, the humility of Our Lady! In the world there is not even the least degree of humility, compared with the humility of Mary.* And the Lord another time gave St. Bridget to see two ladies, one all pomp and vanity: *This one*, he said to her, *is pride: this other, whom you see with her head bowed, courteous with all, and with God alone in mind, and who esteems herself as nothing — this is humility, and her name is Mary.* (Rev. l. 1. c. 29.) By which God willed to make plain to us that his Blessed Mother was so humble that she was humility itself.

There is no doubt that for our nature corrupted by sin there is perhaps, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says, no virtue hard to practise as is the virtue of hum- W1 prints "virtù difficile a praticare, che la virtù dell'umiltà", without the comparative *più*; the sense is "no virtue harder to practise than humility." Retained as printed.

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-ility. But there is no remedy: we shall never be able to be true children of Mary if we are not humble; *Si non potes virginitatem* (says St. Bernard then), *humilis imitare humilitatem virginis. — If you cannot imitate the virginity, imitate, in humility, the humility of the Virgin.* (Ho 1. sup. Miss.) She abhors the proud; she calls to herself none but the humble: *Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me — If anyone is a little one, let him come to me.* Richard said: *Maria protegit nos sub pallio humilitatis — Mary protects us under the mantle of humility.* This the Mother of God herself explained to St. Bridget, saying to her: *Ergo & tu filia mea veni, & absconde te sub mantello meo; hic mantellus humilitas mea est. — Come, then, you also, my daughter, and hide yourself under my mantle; this mantle is my humility.* And she then added that the consideration of her humility was a good mantle, which warms; but since (as she then said) the mantle does not warm any but the one who wears it, not only in thought but also in deed, so *nec humilitas mea proficit, nisi unusquisque studuerit eam imitari. Ergo filia mea* (thus she concluded) *induere hac humilitate. — neither does my humility profit, unless each one shall study to imitate it. Therefore, my daughter, clothe yourself with this humility.* Oh, how dear humble souls are to Mary! St. Bernard wrote: *Agnoscit virgo & diligit diligentes se, & prope est invocantibus se; præsertim iis quos videt conformes sibi factos in castitate, & humilitate. — The Virgin knows and loves those who love her, and is near to those who call upon her;*

especially to those whom she sees made like herself in chastity and in humility. (In Salv. Reg.) Whence the Saint afterwards exhorts all who love Mary to be humble: *Æmulamini hanc virtutem, si Mariam diligitis — Emulate this virtue, if you love Mary.* Marino, or rather Martino d'Alberto, of the Society of Jesus, for love of the Virgin used to sweep the house and gather up its refuse. The Divine Mother appeared to him once, as Fr. Nieremberg relates (in his life), and as if in thanks said to him: *How dear to me is this humble action done for love of me!* Then, O my Queen, I shall never be able to be your true child, if I am not humble; but do you not see that my sins, after having made me ungrateful to my Lord, have made me proud as well? O my Mother, do you provide the remedy; by the merits of your humility obtain for me to be humble, and so to become your child. Amen.

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§ II. On the Charity of Mary towards God.

St. Anselm says: *Ubi major puritas, ibi major charitas — Where there is greater purity, there is greater charity.* The purer a heart is and the emptier of itself, the fuller it will be of charity towards God. Mary most holy, because she was wholly humble and empty of self, was therefore wholly full of the divine love; so that she surpassed the love of all

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men and of all the Angels towards God, as St. Bernardine wrote: *Superat omnium creaturarum amores in filium suum — She surpasses the loves of all creatures towards her Son.* Whence St. Francis de Sales with reason called her *the Queen of love*. The Lord has already given man the Precept to love him with his whole heart: *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo — You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart.* (Matt. 22:37) But by men, says St. Thomas, this Precept will be perfectly fulfilled not on this earth, but in heaven: *Plene & perfecte in patria implebitur hoc præceptum; in via autem impletur, sed imperfecte. — Fully and perfectly this precept will be fulfilled in our homeland; on the way it is fulfilled, but imperfectly.* (2. 2. q. 24. vid. a. 6. & 8.) But here Blessed Albert the Great reflects that it would in a certain manner have been unbecoming in God to give a Precept which by no one had been perfectly fulfilled, had there not been his own divine mother, who perfectly fulfilled it; these are the words of Albert: *Aut aliquis implet hoc præceptum, aut nullus; si aliquis, ergo Beatissima Virgo. — Either someone fulfils this precept, or no one does; if someone, then the Most Blessed Virgin.* (super Miss. c. 76.) And Richard of St. Victor confirms this, saying: *Emanuelis nostri Puerpera in omni*

fuit virtutum consummatione perfecta. Quis illud primum mandatum sic unquam implevit: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo? In ea divinus amor adeo concaluit, ut qualiscumque defectus in eam incidere non posset. — The Mother of our Emmanuel was perfect in the whole consummation of the virtues. Who ever so fulfilled that first commandment: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart? In her the divine love so glowed that no defect of any kind could fall upon her. (lib. 2. de Em. c. 26.) The divine love, says St. Bernard, so wounded and pierced through the soul of Mary that no part was left unwounded by love; whence she then fulfilled without defect this first Precept: *Amor Christi Mariæ animam non modo transfixit, sed etiam pertransivit, ut nullam particulam vacuam amore reliquit: sed toto corde, tota anima, tota virtute diligeret, & esset gratia plena. — The love of Christ not only pierced the soul of Mary, but passed clean through it, so that it left no least part empty of love: that she might love with her whole heart, her whole soul, her whole strength, and be full of grace.* (Serm. 29. in Cant.) Hence Mary might well say: My beloved has given himself wholly to me, and I have given myself wholly to him: *Dilectus meus mihi, & ego illi — My beloved to me, and I to him.* (Cant. 2:10) The place cited is Cant. 2:16; W1 prints "2. 10." Retained as printed. Ah, even the Seraphim, says Richard, might have come down from heaven to learn in the heart of Mary the manner of loving God: *Seraphim e cælo descendere potuerant, ut amorem discerent in corde Virginis — The Seraphim might have descended from heaven to learn love in the heart of the Virgin.*

God, who is love (*Deus charitas est — God is charity*, 1 John 4), came upon earth to kindle in all the flame of his divine love; but no heart did he so inflame as the heart of his mother, which, being wholly pure of earthly affections, was wholly disposed to bu-

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-rn with this blessed fire. So says St. Jerome: *Totam eam incanduerat divinus amor, ita ut nihil esset mundanum, quod ejus violaret affectum, sed ardor continuus, & ebrietas profusi amoris. — The divine love had set her all aglow, so that there was nothing worldly which could violate her affection, but a continual burning and an inebriation of lavish love.* (Serm. aut Sofron. de Ass.) Whence the heart of Mary became all fire and flame: as we read of her in the sacred Canticles: *Lampades ejus, lampades ignis, atque flammarum — Her lamps are lamps of fire and of flames* (Cant. 8:6) — fire, burning within by love, as St. Anselm explains (ap. a Lap.), and flames, shining outwardly upon all by the exercise of the virtues. Mary, then, on earth, when she carried Jesus in her arms, might well be called *ignis gestans ignem — fire carrying fire* — better than a certain woman who once was so called in another

sense by Hippocrates, because she carried fire in her hand. Yes, since St. Idelfonso says: *Mariam, velut ignis ferrum, Spiritus Sanctus totam ignivit; ita ut in ea Spiritus Sancti flamma tantum videatur, nec sentiatur nisi tantum ignis amoris Dei. — The Holy Spirit set Mary wholly on fire, as fire sets iron on fire; so that in her only the flame of the Holy Spirit is seen, nor is anything felt but the fire of the love of God.* (De Ass. Or. 1.)

St. Thomas of Villanova says that the Bush which Moses saw burning all over without being consumed was a symbol of the Virgin's heart. Therefore with reason (says St. Bernard) was she seen by St. John clothed with the sun: *Et signum apparuit in cælo, mulier amicta sole — And a sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun.* (Apoc. 12:1) Since, says the Saint, she was so united to God by love that it seems a creature cannot be more closely united to God: *Jure ergo Maria sole perhibetur amicta, quia divinæ sapientiæ, ultra quam credi valeat, penetravit abyssum; ut quantum sine personali unione creaturæ conditio patitur, luci illi inaccessibili videatur immersa. — Rightly, then, is Mary declared clothed with the sun, because she penetrated the abyss of the divine wisdom beyond what can be believed; so that, as far as the condition of a creature allows short of personal union, she seems immersed in that inaccessible light.* (Sor. in Sign. Magn.) So printed: "Sor.", probably for "Ser." Retained as printed.

St. Bonaventure then attests that the Holy Virgin was never tempted by Hell, inasmuch as he says that, as flies flee from a great fire, so from the heart of Mary, all a flame of charity, the demons were driven off, so that they did not dare even to draw near to her. *Sicut magnus ignis effugat muscas, sic a sua inflammata charitate dæmones pellebantur, quod non ausi sint illi appropinquare. — As a great fire drives off flies, so by her inflamed charity the demons were driven away, so that they did not dare to approach her.* (Tom. 2. Serm. 51. a. 3.) And Richard likewise says: *Virgo Principibus tenebrarum terribilis fuit, ut ad eam accedere, eamque tentare non præsumserint, deterrebat eos flamma charitatis. — The Virgin was terrible to the Princes of darkness, so that they did not presume to approach her or to tempt her: the flame of her charity frightened them away.* (p. 2. c. 26. in Cant.) Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget that in this world she had no other thought, no other desire, nor other

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joy, than God: *Nihil nisi Deum cogitabam, nulla mihi nisi Deus placuerunt. — I thought of nothing but God; nothing pleased me but God.* Whence her blessed Soul, being almost always on this earth in the contemplation of God, the acts of love which she made were without number; so wrote Fr. Suarez. *Actus perfectæ charitatis,*

quos B. Virgo habuit in hac vita, innumerabiles fuerunt, quæ fere totam vitam in contemplatione transegit, & tunc amoris actum frequentissime repetebat. — The acts of perfect charity which the Blessed Virgin had in this life were innumerable, for she passed almost her whole life in contemplation, and in it she repeated the act of love most frequently. (Tom. 2. in 3. p. D. 18. S. 4.) And I like still better what Bernardine de Bustis said: that Mary did not so much repeat acts of love one after another, as the other Saints do, as that by a singular privilege she was always actually loving God with one, but continual, act. *Tamen ipsa gloriosissima Virgo de privilegio singulari continue & semper Deum amabat actualiter. — Yet that most glorious Virgin, by a singular privilege, loved God actually, continually and always.* (p. 2. Serm. 4. de Nat. Virg.) Like a royal Eagle she kept her eyes always fixed upon the divine sun, in such a manner (says St. Peter Damian) that neither did the actions of life hinder her loving, nor did love hinder her acting: *Adeo ut nec actio contemplationem minueret, & contemplatio non desereret actionem. — So that action did not lessen contemplation, nor did contemplation abandon action.* (Ser. 1. de Nat. Virg.) So that a figure of Mary, says St. Germanus, was the Altar of propitiation, on which the fire was never quenched, neither by day nor by night.

Not even sleep hindered Mary from loving her God. And if such a privilege was given to our first Parents in the state of innocence, as St. Augustine asserts, saying that then *tam felicia erant somnia dormientium, quam vita vigilantium — the dreams of the sleeping were as happy as the waking life* (lib. 5. Jul. c. 9.) — it certainly must not be denied to the divine mother, as Suarez and Rupert the Abbot well grant us, with St. Bernardine and St. Ambrose, who left it in writing, speaking precisely of Mary: *Cum quiesceret corpus, vigilaret animus — While the body rested, the mind kept watch.* (Lib. 2. de Virg.) So that there was verified in her what the Wise Man said: *Non extinguetur in nocte lucerna ejus — Her lamp shall not be put out in the night.* (Prov. 21:28) The place cited is Prov. 31:18; W1 prints "21. 28." Retained as printed. Yes, because while her blessed body took its necessary rest in a light slumber, *Anima ejus* (says St. Bernardine) *libere tunc tendebat in Deum, unde illo tempore erat perfectior contemplatrix, quam unquam fuerit alius dum vigilavit. — her soul then freely reached out towards God, so that at that time she was a more perfect contemplative than any other has ever been while awake.* So that she might well say with the spouse: *Ego dormio, & cor meum vigilat — I sleep, and my heart watches.* (Cant. 5:2) *Tam felix dormiendo, quam vigilando — As happy sleeping as waking*, as Suarez says. In short, St. Bernardine asserts that Mary, while she lived on

this earth, was continually loving God: *Mens Virginis in ardore dilectionis continue tenebatur — The Virgin's mind was held continually in the ardour of love.* (to. 2. Ser. 51. a. 3. c. 3.) And he says further that she never did anything but what she knew to be the good pleasure of God; and that she loved him as much as she judged that she ought to love him: *Nihil unquam elegit nisi quod divina sapientia demonstrabat; tantumque dilexit Deum, quantum a se diligendum existimabat. — She never chose anything but what the divine wisdom pointed out; and she loved God as much as she judged he was to be loved by her.* (loc. cit.) So that, as Blessed Albert the Great speaks, it may well be said that Mary was filled with so much charity that a pure creature on this earth could hardly hold more: *Credimus etiam, sine præjudicio melioris sententiæ, B. Virginem in Conceptione filii Dei charitatem talem accepisse, qualis & quanta percipi poterat a pura creatura in statu viæ. — We believe also, without prejudice to a better opinion, that the Blessed Virgin received at the Conception of the Son of God such charity, and so great, as could be received by a pure creature in the state of this life.* (Lib. de Lau. Virg. c. 96.) Whence St. Thomas of Villanova said that the Virgin by her burning charity made herself so beautiful, and so enamoured her God, that he, taken by love of her, came down into her womb to make himself man: *Hæc Virgo sua pulchritudine Deum a cælis allexit, qui amore illius captus est, & humanitatis nostræ nexibus irretitus. — This Virgin by her beauty drew God down from the heavens; he was captivated by love of her, and caught in the bonds of our humanity.* (Conc. 5. in Na. Do.) Hence St. Bernardine then exclaims, saying: Behold a maiden who by her virtue has wounded and carried off the heart of God. *O virtus Virginis matris! una puella vulneravit & rapuit divinum cor! — O power of the Virgin Mother! One maiden has wounded and carried off the divine heart!* (To. 2. Serm. 61. a. 1. c. 4.)

But since Mary so loves her God, certainly she requires nothing so much of her devout servants as that they should love God as much as they can. So indeed she said one day to Blessed Angela of Foligno, on a day when she had received Communion: *Angela, be blessed by my Son; do you strive to love him as much as you can.* And to St. Bridget the same Blessed Virgin said: Daughter, if you would bind me to yourself, love my Son: *Si vis me tecum devincire, ama filium meum — If you wish to bind me to yourself, love my Son.* Mary desires nothing more than to see her beloved, who is God, loved. Novarino asks why the Holy Virgin, with the spouse of the Canticles, begged the Angels to make known to her Lord the great love she bore him, saying: *Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei, quia amore langueo. — I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I languish with love.* (Cant. 5:8) Did God not already know how much she

loved him? *Cur vulnus ostendi quærit dilecto, qui vulnus fecit? — Why does she seek to show the wound to the beloved, who made the wound?* (lib. 4. n. 306.) The aforesaid Author answers, and says that by this the divine mother willed

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to make her love plain not indeed to God, but to us, so that as she was wounded, she might also wound us with divine love: *Ut vulnerata vulneret — That, being wounded, she may wound.* And because she was all fire in loving God, therefore all those who love her and draw near to her, Mary sets them all aflame and makes them like herself: *Quia tota ardens fuit, omnes se amantes, eamque tangentes incendit, & sibi assimilat. — Because she was all burning, she kindles all who love her and who touch her, and makes them like herself.* (S. Bonav.) Whence by St. Catherine of Siena Mary was called *Portatrix ignis — the bearer of fire* — the carrier of the fire of divine love. If, then, we too would burn with this blessed flame, let us always strive to draw near to our mother with prayers and with affections.

Ah, Queen of love, Mary, *the most lovable, the most loved, and the most loving of all creatures* (as St. Francis de Sales used to call you), ah my mother, you burned always and wholly with love towards God: deign to give me at least one spark of it. You prayed to your Son for those spouses who lacked wine: *Vinum non habent — They have no wine*: and will you not pray for us, who lack the love of God, whom we are so bound to love? Say then: *Amorem non habent — They have no love.* And do you obtain for us this love. No other grace do we ask of you but this. O mother, by all the love you bear to Jesus, hear us, pray for us. Amen.

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§ III. On the Charity of Mary towards our Neighbour.

Love towards God and towards our neighbour is laid upon us in the same Precept. *Et hoc mandatum habemus a Deo, ut qui diligit Dominum, diligat & fratrem suum. — And this commandment we have from God, that he who loves the Lord should love his brother also.* (John 4:21) The reason is, says St. Thomas, because he who loves God loves all the things that are loved by God. St. Catherine of Genoa said one day to God: Lord, you will that I love my neighbour, and I cannot love anyone but you. And God answered her precisely this: He who loves me loves all the things loved by me. But since there has not been, nor will there be, one who loved God more than Mary, so there has not been nor will there be one who has loved our Neighbour more than Mary. Fr. Cornelius a Lapide, on that passage, *Ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon .... media charitate constravit propter filias Jerusalem — King*

Solomon made himself a litter ... the middle he paved with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem (Cant. 3:9), says that this litter was the womb of Mary, in which the Word Incar-

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-nate dwelling filled his mother with charity, so that she might help all who have recourse to her: *B. Virginis sinus fuit ferculum ferens Verbum, ideoque media charitate constratum propter filias Jerusalem, quia Christus qui est ipsa charitas maximam charitatem B. Virgini aspiravit, ut ipsa ad illam recurrentibus opem ferret. — The bosom of the Blessed Virgin was the litter bearing the Word, and therefore paved in the midst with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem; because Christ, who is charity itself, breathed the greatest charity into the Blessed Virgin, that she might bring help to those who have recourse to her.* Mary was so full of charity while she lived on earth that she came to the help of the needy without even being asked: as she did precisely at the marriage of Cana, when she asked her Son for the miracle of the wine, laying before him the distress of that family, *Vinum non habent — They have no wine.* (John 2) Oh, what haste she made when it was a question of relieving her neighbour! When she went on an office of charity to the house of Elizabeth, *abiit in montana cum festinatione — she went into the hill country with haste.* (Luke 1) She could not, then, show her great charity more than by offering her Son to death for our salvation; on which St. Bonaventure said: *Sic Maria dilexit mundum, ut filium suum unigenitum daret — So Mary loved the world, that she gave her only-begotten Son.* Whence St. Anselm says to her: *O benedicta inter mulieres, quæ Angelos vincis puritate, & Sanctos superas pietate. — O blessed among women, who surpass the Angels in purity and outdo the Saints in mercy.* Nor has this charity of Mary towards us (says St. Bonaventure), now that she is in heaven, grown less; but there it has much increased, *quia magis nunc videt hominum miserias — because she now sees more clearly the miseries of men.* (Spec. c. 8.) Hence the Saint wrote: *Magna fuit erga miseros misericordia Mariæ adhuc exulantis in mundo, sed multo major est regnantis in cælo. — Great was the mercy of Mary towards the wretched while she was still an exile in the world, but far greater is it now that she reigns in heaven.* (ib.) And the Angel said to St. Bridget that there is no one who prays and does not receive graces through the charity of the Virgin: *Ex dulcedine Mariæ nullus est, qui non per eam, si petitur, sentiat pietatem. — Such is Mary's sweetness, that there is no one who, if he asks, does not feel her mercy through her.* (Rev. l. 3. c. 30.) Poor us, if Mary did not pray for us! Jesus himself said to the same Saint: *Nisi preces matris meæ intervenirent, non esset spes misericordiæ — Unless the prayers of my mother came between, there would be no hope of mercy.* (l. 6. c. 29.)

Blessed is he (says the divine mother) who hears my teachings and observes my charity, so as afterwards to use it towards others in imitation of me: *Beatus homo qui audit me, qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie, & observat ad postes ostii mei. — Blessed is the man who hears me, who watches daily at my gates and waits at the posts of my door.* (Prov. 8:34) St. Gregory Nazianzen says that there is nothing by which we can more win for ourselves the affection of Mary than by showing charity to our neighbour: *Nulla res est, quæ Virginis benevolentiam conciliat, ac misericordia. — There is nothing that wins the Virgin's good will like mercy.* Whence, as God exhorts us: *Estote misericordes, sicut & Pater vester misericors est — Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* (Luke 6:63)

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So too it seems that Mary says to all her children: *Estote misericordes, sicut & mater vestra misericors est — Be merciful, as your mother also is merciful.* The place cited is Luke 6:36; W1 prints "Luc. 6. 63.", the "63.)" carried over as the catchword. Retained as printed. And it is certain that according to the charity we shall use towards our neighbour, God and Mary will use it towards us. *Date, & dabitur vobis. Eadem quippe mensura, qua mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis. — Give, and it shall be given to you. For with the same measure with which you measure, it shall be measured back to you.* (Luke 6:38) St. Methodius used to say: *Da pauperi, & accipe Paradisum — Give to the poor, and receive Paradise.* For the Apostle wrote that charity towards our neighbour makes us happy in this life and in the other. *Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est; promissionem habens vitæ, quæ nunc est, & futuræ. — Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* (2 Tim. 3:5) The place cited is 1 Tim. 4:8; retained as printed. And as St. John Chrysostom notes on the words of the Proverbs: *Fœneratur Domino, qui miseretur pauperi — He lends to the Lord who has pity on the poor.* (2. 2.) The place in Proverbs is 19:17; W1 prints "(2. 2.)". Retained as printed. The Saint says that whoever relieves the needy makes God his debtor. *Si Deo fœneratur, is ergo nobis debitor est. — If it is lent to God, then he is our debtor.* O mother of mercy, you are full of charity towards all; do not forget my miseries. You already see them. Commend me to that God who denies you nothing. Obtain for me the grace to be able to imitate you in holy charity, both towards God and towards my neighbour. Amen.

§ IV. On the Faith of Mary.

As the Blessed Virgin is mother of love and of hope, so also she is mother of faith. *Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis, & timoris, & agnitionis, & sanctæ spei. — I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope.* (Ecclus. 24:24) And with reason St. Irenaeus says it, since the harm that Eve did by her unbelief, Mary repaired by her faith: *Quod Heva ligavit per incredulitatem, Maria solvit per fidem. — What Eve bound by unbelief, Mary loosed by faith.* Eve (Tertullian confirms), because she chose to believe the serpent against what God had said, brought death; but our Queen, believing the words of the Angel — that remaining a virgin she was to become the mother of the Lo-rd — brought salvation to the world: *Crediderat Heva serpenti, Maria Gabrieli: Quod illa credendo deliquit, Hæc credendo delevit. — Eve had believed the serpent, Mary Gabriel: what the one by believing did amiss, the other by believing blotted out.* While St. Augustine says that Mary, by giving her consent to the Incarnation of the Word, through her faith opened Paradise to men: *Fides Mariæ cælum aperuit, cum Angelo nuncianti consensit. — The faith of Mary opened heaven, when she consented to the Angel who announced it.* With Richard, who on the words of St. Paul, *Sanctificatus est enim vir infidelis per mulierem fidelem — For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife* (1 Cor. 7:14) — wrote: *Hæc est mulier fidelis, per cujus fidem salvatus est*

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Adam vir infidelis, & tota posteritas. — This is the believing woman by whose faith Adam, the unbelieving husband, and all his posterity were saved. Whence for this her faith Elizabeth called the Virgin blessed: *Beata quæ credidisti: præficientur in te, quæ dicta sunt tibi a Domino. — Blessed are you who have believed: the things that were told you by the Lord shall be accomplished in you.* (Luke 1:45) And St. Augustine added: *Beatior Maria percipiendo fidem Christi, quam concipiendo carnem Christi. — More blessed was Mary in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ.*

Fr. Suarez says that the Holy Virgin had more faith than all men and all the Angels. She saw her Son in the stable of Bethlehem, and believed him the Creator of the world so printed: "modo" for "mondo"; retained as printed. She saw him fleeing from Herod, and did not cease to believe that he was the King of Kings. She saw him born, and believed him eternal. She saw him poor, in need of food, and believed him Lord of the universe; laid upon the hay, and believed him almighty. She observed that he did not speak, and believed that he was infinite Wisdom. She heard him weep, and believed that he was the joy of Paradise. She saw him at the last in death, reviled and crucified; but though in the others faith wavered, Mary stood

always firm in believing that he was God. *Stabat juxta crucem Jesu mater ejus — There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother.* On which words St. Antoninus wrote: *Stabat Maria fide elevata, quam de Christi Divinitate fixa retinuit. — Mary stood, upheld by the faith which she held fixed concerning the Divinity of Christ.* And for this reason, says the Saint, in the Office of Tenebrae one candle alone is left alight. And St. Leo on this subject applies to the Virgin that passage: *Non extinguetur in nocte lucerna ejus — Her lamp shall not be put out in the night.* (Prov. 21:18) The place cited is Prov. 31:18; W1 prints here "21. 18.", and at p. 163 "21. 28.", for the same passage. Both retained as printed. And on the words of Isaiah, *Torcular calcavi solus, & de gentibus non est vir mecum — I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the gentiles there is no man with me* (6:3) The place cited is Is. 63:3; W1 prints "(6. 3.)". Retained as printed. — St. Thomas wrote: *Dicit vir propter Virginem, in qua nunquam fides defecit. — He says "man" on account of the Virgin, in whom faith never failed.* Whence at that time (says Blessed Albert the Great) Mary exercised a most excellent faith: *Fidem habuit in excellentissimo gradu, quæ, etiam Discipulis dubitantibus, non dubitavit. — She had faith in the most excellent degree, who did not doubt even when the Disciples doubted.* Hence Mary by her great faith deserved to be made the light of all the faithful, as she is called by St. Methodius: *Fidelium fax — The torch of the faithful.* And by St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Queen of the true faith: *Sceptrum Orthodoxæ Fidei — The sceptre of the Orthodox Faith.* And the holy Church herself, for the merit of her faith, attributes to the Virgin the defeat of all Heresies: *Gaude, Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo. — Rejoice, O Virgin Mary; you alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world.* (Ant. 1. Noct. 3.) For St. Thomas of Villanova, explaining the words of the Holy Spirit, *Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa ... in uno oculorum tuorum — You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse ... with one of your eyes* (Cant. 4:9) — says that these eyes were the faith of Mary, by which she greatly pleased God: By-

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Per oculos Fidem designant, qua Dei Filio Virgo maxime complacuit. — By the eyes they signify Faith, by which the Virgin was most pleasing to the Son of God.

Here St. Idelfonso exhorts: *Imitamini signaculum Fidei Mariæ — Imitate the seal of Mary's Faith.* But how are we to imitate this Faith of Mary? Faith is at once a gift and a virtue. It is a gift of God, inasmuch as it is a light which God infuses into the soul; and then a virtue, as regards the exercise which the soul makes of it. Whence Faith has to serve us not only as a rule of believing, but also of acting. Hence St. Gregory said: *Ille vero credit, qui exercet operando quod credit — He truly*

believes who puts into practice by his works what he believes. And St. Augustine: *Dicis credo, fac quod dicis, & Fides est. — You say "I believe"; do what you say, and it is Faith.* And this is to have a living Faith, that is, to live according to what one believes. *Justus autem meus ex fide vivit — But my just man lives by faith.* (Heb. 10:38) And so the Blessed Virgin lived, unlike those who do not live according to what they believe, whose Faith is dead, as St. James says: *Fides sine operibus mortua est — Faith without works is dead.* (20:16) The place cited is James 2:20 (or 2:26); W1 prints "(20. 16.)". Retained as printed. Diogenes went about the earth looking for a man: *Hominem quæro — I am looking for a man.* But God, among so many of the faithful as there are, seems to go about looking for a Christian: *Christianum quæro — I am looking for a Christian.* Since very few are they who have the works of it; the greater part have only the name. But to these should be said what Alexander said to that cowardly soldier who was also called Alexander: *Aut nomen, aut mores muta — Either change your name, or change your manners.* But it would be better still to shut these wretched people up (as Fr. Master Avila used to say) like madmen in a prison, believing that a happy Eternity is prepared for those who live well and an unhappy Eternity for those who live ill, and then living as though they did not believe it. Hence St. Augustine exhorts us to see things with Christian eyes, that is, with eyes that see according to Faith: *Oculos Christianorum habete — Have the eyes of Christians.* For St. Teresa used to say that from the lack of Faith all sins are born. And therefore let us pray to the Holy Virgin that by the merit of her Faith she may obtain for us a living Faith: *Domina: adauge nobis Fidem — O Lady, increase our Faith.*

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§ V. On the Hope of Mary.

From Faith is born Hope, since to this end God enlightens us by Faith to the knowledge of his goodness and of his promises, so that from there we may raise ourselves by Hope to the desire of possessing him. Since, then, Mary had the virtue of an excellent Faith, she had also the virtue of

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an excellent Hope, which made her say with David: *Mihi autem adhærere Deo bonum est, & ponere in Deo spem meam. — But it is good for me to cleave to God, and to put my hope in the Lord.* (Ps. 72:28) Mary was that faithful spouse of the Divine Spirit of whom it was said: *Quæ est ista quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum? — Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing*

with delights, leaning upon her beloved? (Cant. 8:5) For she, being always wholly detached from affection to the World — which she esteemed a desert — and therefore trusting nothing to creatures nor to her own merits, but leaning wholly upon the Divine grace, in which alone she trusted, advanced ever in the love of her God. So Ailgrino spoke of her: *Ascendit de deserto, scilicet de Mundo, quem sic deseruit, & tanquam desertum reputavit, ut ab ipso omnem suum averterit affectum. Innixa super dilectum suum; nam non suis meritis, sed ipsius innitebatur gratiæ, qui gratiam tribuit. — She comes up from the desert, that is, from the World, which she so forsook and so accounted a desert that she turned from it all her affection. Leaning upon her beloved; for she leaned not on her own merits, but on the grace of him who bestows grace.* (ap. Cornel. in loc. cit.) The name is printed "Ailgrino". Retained as printed.

And the Holy Virgin well showed how great was this confidence of hers in God, first when she perceived that her holy spouse Joseph, not knowing the manner of her wondrous pregnancy, was troubled and minded to leave her. *Joseph autem ... voluit occulte dimittere eam — But Joseph ... was minded to put her away privately.* (Matt. 1:19) It then seemed, as was considered above, a necessity that she should disclose to Joseph the hidden mystery; but no, she would not of herself make known the grace she had received; she thought it better to abandon herself to Divine providence, trusting that God himself would defend her innocence and her good name. So indeed said Cornelius a Lapide, commenting on the aforesaid passage: *B. Virgo autem noluit ultro secretum hoc Josepho pandere, ne sua dona jactare videretur, sed Dei curæ idipsum resignavit, certissime confidens, Deum suam innocentiam & famam tutaturum. — The Blessed Virgin would not of her own accord disclose this secret to Joseph, lest she should seem to boast of her gifts, but resigned the matter to God's care, most certainly trusting that God would guard her innocence and her good name.* She showed her confidence in God further when, near to her delivery, she found herself driven out in Bethlehem even from the lodgings of the poor, and reduced to give birth in a stable: *Et reclinavit eum in præsepio, quia non erat ei locus in diversorio — And she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.* (Luke 2:7) Not a word of complaint did she then utter, but wholly abandoned in God she trusted that he would assist her in that need. So too the Divine Mother made known how much she trusted in Divine providence when, warned by St. Joseph that she must flee into Egypt, that same night she set out on so long a journey to a strange and unknown coun-

-try, without provision, without money, without the company of any but her infant Jesus and her poor spouse: *Qui consurgens accepit puerum, & Matrem ejus nocte, & secessit in Ægyptum. — And he arose and took the child and his Mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt.* (Matt. 2:14) Much more did Mary show this confidence of hers when she asked her Son for the grace of the wine for the spouses of Cana; for when she had said, *Vinum non habent — They have no wine* — Jesus answered her: *Quid mihi & tibi, mulier? nondum venit hora mea. — What is that to me and to you, woman? My hour is not yet come.* (John 3) The place cited is John 2:4; W1 prints "Joan. 3." Retained as printed. But after this answer, by which it seemed clear that her request was refused, she, trusting in the Divine goodness, said to the servants of the house that they should do whatever her Son told them, because the grace was certain: *Quodcumque dixerit vobis facite — Whatever he says to you, do it.* As in fact Jesus Christ had the jars filled with water, and then turned it into wine.

Let us learn, then, from Mary to trust as we ought, chiefly in the great business of eternal salvation, where, although our own cooperation is also needed, we must nevertheless hope for the grace to obtain it from God alone; distrusting entirely our own strength, and each one saying with the Apostle: *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat — I can do all things in him who strengthens me.* (Phil. 4:13)

Ah, my most holy Lady, Ecclesiasticus tells me of you that you are the Mother of Hope: *Mater sanctæ spei — Mother of holy hope* (24); the holy Church tells me of you that you are Hope itself: *Spes nostra salve — Hail, our hope.* What other hope, then, do I go seeking? After Jesus you are all my hope: so St. Bernard called you, and so I too will call you: *Tota ratio spei meæ — The whole ground of my hope.* And I will always say to you with St. Bonaventure: *O salus te invocantium, salva me — O salvation of those who call upon you, save me.*

§ VI. On the Chastity of Mary.

After the fall of Adam, sense having rebelled against reason, the virtue of chastity is for men the virtue hard to practise. *Inter omnia certamina* (says St. Augustine) *duriora sunt prælia castitatis, ubi quotidiana est pugna, & rara victoria. — Among all conflicts, the battles of chastity are the harder, where the fight is daily and the victory rare.* Yet let the Lord be always praised, who in Mary has given us a great model of this virtue. With reason, Blessed Albert the Great says, is Mary called the Virgin of Virgins; for she, being the first to offer her Virginity to God without counsel or example of any oth-

-er, has since given him all the Virgins who have imitated her: *Virgo Virginum, quæ sine consilio, sine exemplo munus Virginitatis Deo obtulit, & per sui imitationem omnes Virgines germinavit, — The Virgin of Virgins, who without counsel and without example offered the gift of Virginity to God, and by imitation of herself brought forth all Virgins,* (Mar. p. 9.) As David long ago foretold: *Adducentur Virgines post eam in templum regis — After her shall Virgins be brought to the king's temple.* (Ps. 43) The place cited is Ps. 44:15 (Vulg.); W1 prints "Ps. 43." Retained as printed. Without counsel and without example, yes — for St. Bernard says to her: *O Virgo, quis te docuit Deo, placere Virginitate, & in terris Angelicam ducere vitam? — O Virgin, who taught you to please God by Virginity, and to lead upon earth an Angelic life?* (Hom. 4. sup. Miss.) Ah, to this end, Sophronius answers, God chose this most pure Virgin for his Mother, that she might be to all an example of chastity: *Christus Matrem Virginem elegit, ut ipsa omnibus esset exemplum castitatis — Christ chose a Virgin Mother, that she herself might be to all an example of chastity* (ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 1. The parenthesis is not closed in W1. Retained as printed. And therefore Mary is called by St. Ambrose the Standard-bearer of Virginity: *Quæ signum Virginitatis extulit — Who raised the standard of Virginity.*

By reason of this her purity the Holy Virgin was also called by the Holy Spirit beautiful as the turtle-dove: *Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis — Your cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's.* (Cant. 1:9) *Turtur pudicissima Maria — Mary, the most modest turtle-dove* — comments Aponius. And for this reason too she was called a lily: *Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias — As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters.* (Cant. 1:2) The place cited is Cant. 2:2; W1 prints "Cant. 1. 2." Retained as printed. Whereon St. Denis the Carthusian notes that she was called a lily among thorns because *omnes aliæ Virgines spinæ fuerunt vel sibi, vel aliis; B. Virgo nec sibi, nec aliis — all other Virgins have been thorns either to themselves or to others; the Blessed Virgin, neither to herself nor to others.* For she, by the mere sight of her, infused into all thoughts and affections of purity. *Intuentium corda ad castitatem invitabat — She invited the hearts of those who looked upon her to chastity.* (Id S. Dio.) And St. Thomas confirms it: *Pulchritudo B. Virginis intuentes ad castitatem excitabat. — The beauty of the Blessed Virgin stirred those who beheld her to chastity.* (ap. Par. loc. cit.) St. Jerome asserts that he is of opinion that St. Joseph kept himself a virgin through the companionship of Mary; for against the Heretic Helvidius, who denied the Virginity of Mary, the Saint writes thus: *Tu dicis Mariam Virginem non permansisse; ego mihi plus vindico, etiam ipsum Joseph virginem fuisse per Mariam. — You say that Mary did not remain a Virgin; I claim yet more, that Joseph himself*

was a virgin through Mary. (ap. Par. loc. cit.) An Author says that the Blessed Virgin was so great a lover of this virtue that to preserve it she would have been ready to renounce even the dignity of Mother of God. And this is gathered from the very words she answered the Archangel: *Quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco? — How shall this be done, since I know not man?* (Luke 1) And from the words which at the end she added: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum — Be it done to me according to your word.* Signifying by this that she gave her consent according as the An-

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-gel had assured her, that she was to become a Mother by no other operation than that of the Holy Spirit.

St. Ambrose says: *Qui castitatem servavit, Angelus est, qui perdidit Diabolus. — He who has kept chastity is an Angel; he who has lost it, a Devil.* Those who are chaste become Angels, as the Lord once said: *Erunt sicut Angeli Dei — They shall be as the Angels of God.* (Matt. 22) But the unchaste become hateful to God, like the Demons. And St. Remigius used to say that the greater part of adults are lost through this vice. The victory over this vice is rare, as has been said with St. Augustine at the beginning; but why is it rare? Because the means of overcoming it are not practised. Three are the means, as the Masters of the spiritual life say with Bellarmine: *Jejunium, periculorum evitatio, & oratio — Fasting, the avoiding of dangers, and prayer.* By fasting is understood mortification, especially of the eyes and of the palate. Mary most holy, although she was full of Divine grace, was nevertheless so mortified in her eyes that she always kept them cast down, and never fixed them upon anyone, as St. Epiphanius and St. John Damascene say; and they say that from her childhood she was so modest that she was the wonder of all. And therefore St. Luke notes that in going to visit St. Elizabeth she *abiit cum festinatione — went with haste*: that she might be the less seen in public. As for food, Philibert relates that it was revealed to a Hermit named Felix that Mary as a child took milk once a day. And of her whole life St. Gregory of Tours attests that she always fasted: *Nullo tempore Maria non jejunavit — At no time did Mary fail to fast.* St. Bonaventure asserting: *Nunquam Maria tantam gratiam invenisset, nisi cibo temperatissima fuisset; non enim se compatiuntur gratia, & gula. — Never would Mary have found so much grace, had she not been most temperate in food; for grace and gluttony do not go together.* In short, Mary was mortified in all things, so that of her it was said: *Manus meæ stillaverunt myrrham — My hands dropped with myrrh.* (Cant. 5:5)

The second means is flight from occasions: *Qui autem cavet laqueos, securus erit — But he who avoids snares shall be secure.* (Prov. 11:14) The place cited is Prov. 11:15; retained as printed. Whence St. Philip Neri used to say: *In the war of the senses it is the cowards who win* — that is, those who flee the occasion. Mary fled as much as she could the sight of men; wherefore St. Luke noted that at the visitation of St. Elizabeth she *abiit in montana cum festinatione — went into the hill country with haste.* And an Author notes that the Virgin departed from Elizabeth before she gave birth, as is gathered from the Gospel itself, where it is said: *Mansit autem Maria cum illa, quasi mensibus tribus, & reversa est in domum suam. Elisabet autem impletum est tempus pariendi, & peperit filium. — And Mary stayed with her about three months, and returned to her own house. Now Elizabeth's full time of being delivered came, and she brought forth a son.* (Cap. 1:56) And why did she not wa-

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-it for the birth? To escape the conversation and the visits which after the birth were bound to follow in that house. The third means is Prayer. *Et ut scivi* (said the Wise Man) *quoniam aliter non possum esse continens, nisi Deus det ... adii Dominum, & deprecatus sum illum. — And when I knew that I could not otherwise be continent unless God gave it ... I went to the Lord and besought him.* (Wis. 8:21) And the Holy Virgin revealed to St. Elizabeth the Benedictine that she had no virtue without labour and continual Prayer. (Ap. S. Bon. de Vit. Chr. c. 3.) The Damascene says that Mary *pura est & puritatem amans — is pure and a lover of purity* — and therefore cannot endure the impure. But whoever has recourse to her will certainly be delivered from this vice by merely naming her name with confidence. And the Venerable John of Avila used to say that many who were tempted against chastity have conquered by devotion to Mary Immaculate alone. O Mary, O most pure Dove, how many are in Hell for this vice! Lady, deliver us from it; grant that in temptations we may always have recourse to you and call upon you, saying: Mary, Mary help us. Amen.

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§ VII. On the Poverty of Mary.

Our loving Redeemer, to teach us to despise the goods of this world, willed to be poor upon this earth: *Propter vos* (says St. Paul) *egenus factus est, cum dives esset, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis. — For your sakes he became poor, when he was rich, that by his poverty you might be rich.* (2 Com. 8:9) The place cited is 2 Cor. 8:9; W1

prints "2. Com." Retained as printed. Whence Jesus Christ then exhorted anyone who wished to be his follower: *Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende quæ habes, & da pauperibus ... & veni, & sequere me. — If you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor ... and come, follow me.* (Matt. 19:21) Behold his most perfect disciple, Mary, who indeed followed his example. Fr. Canisius proves that the Holy Virgin, with the inheritance left her by her parents, could have lived very comfortably; but she was content to remain poor, keeping for herself a small portion and distributing all the rest in alms to the Temple and to the poor. Many hold (ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 1.) that Mary also made a vow of Poverty; and it is known that she herself revealed to St. Bridget: *A principio vovi in corde meo nihil unquam possidere in Mundo. — From the beginning I vowed in my heart never to possess anything in the World.* (Lib. 1. c. 10.) The gifts received from the holy Magi were certainly not of small value, but she distributed them all to the poor: so St. Bernard attests: *Aurum sibi oblatum a Magis non modicum, prout decebat eorum regiam Majestatem, non sibi reservavit, sed pauperibus per Joseph distribuit. — The gold offered her by the Magi, no small amount, as befitted their royal Majesty, she did not keep for herself, but distributed to the poor through Joseph.* (ap.

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Par. loc. cit.) And that the Divine Mother had at once distributed the said gifts is deduced from seeing that when she afterwards went to the Temple she did not offer the lamb, which was the offering of the well-to-do (as in Leviticus: *Pro filio ... deferet agnum — for a son ... she shall bring a lamb*, 12:6), but the two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, the offering of the poor alone: *Et ut darent hostiam, secundum quod dictum est in lege Domini, par turturum, aut duos pullos columbarum. — And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.* (Luke 2:24) Mary herself said to St. Bridget: *Omnia quæ habere potui dedi indigentibus, nihilque nisi cibum tenuem & vestitum reservavi — All that I could have I gave to the needy, and kept nothing but plain food and clothing* (Rev. l. 1. c. 10.)

For love of poverty she did not disdain to marry a poor workman, such as St. Joseph was, and afterwards to support herself by the labour of her hands, by spinning or sewing, as St. Bonaventure attests. The Angel revealed to St. Bridget, speaking of Mary: *Mundanæ divitiæ velut lutum sibi vilescebant — The riches of the world were as worthless to her as mud.* In short, she always lived poor and died poor: for at her death it is not known that she left anything but two poor garments to two Women who had assisted her in life, as the Metaphrast and Nicephorus report. (Ap. l'Aut. della Vit. di Maria l. 5. c. 13.)

He who loves possessions will never become a saint, St. Philip Neri used to say. And St. Teresa added: *It rightly follows that whoever goes after things that are lost is himself lost too.* On the other hand the same Saint used to say that the virtue of poverty is a good which comprehends all other goods. I said *the virtue of poverty*, which, as St. Bernard says, does not consist in being merely poor, but in loving poverty: *Non paupertas, sed amor paupertatis virtus est — Not poverty, but the love of poverty, is the virtue.* Therefore Jesus Christ said: *Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est Regnum Cælorum — Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* (Matt. 5:3) Blessed, because those who want nothing but God find every good in God; and they find in poverty their Paradise upon earth, as St. Francis found it in saying: *Deus meus & omnia — My God and my all.* Let us love, then, that one good in which are all goods, as St. Augustine exhorted: *Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona — Love the one good, in which are all goods.* And let us pray to the Lord with St. Ignatius: *Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, & dives sum satis — Give me only your love together with your grace, and I am rich enough.* And when poverty afflicts us, let us console ourselves in knowing that Jesus and his Mother were poor too, like us: *Pauper* (said St. Bonaventure *de Vit. Christ.*) *multum consolari potest de paupertate Mariæ, & de paupere Christo. — A poor man may take great comfort from the poverty of Mary and from the poor Christ.*

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Ah my most holy Mother, well had you reason to say that your joy was in God: *Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo — And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.* Because in this World you desired and loved no other good but God. *Trahe me post te — Draw me after you*: Lady, detach me from the World, and draw me after you to love that One who alone deserves to be loved. Amen.

§ VIII. On the Obedience of Mary.

For the love which Mary bore to the virtue of Obedience, when she was greeted by St. Gabriel she would call herself by no other name than that of Handmaid: *Ecce Ancilla Domini — Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* Yes, says St. Thomas of Villanova, because this faithful Handmaid never contradicted the Lord either by deed or by thought, but stripped of all will of her own she lived always and in all things obedient to the Divine will: *O vera Ancilla, quæ neque dicto, neque facto, neque cogitatu unquam contradixit Altissimo, nihil sibi libertatis reservans, sed per omnia subdita Deo. — O true Handmaid, who never contradicted the Most High by word, or deed, or thought, keeping back no liberty for herself, but in all things subject to*

God. (Conc. de Annunc.) She herself declared that God had been pleased with that obedience of hers when she said: *Respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ — He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid.* (Luke 1) For this is the humility proper to a servant, to be all readiness in obeying. St. Augustine says that the Divine Mother by her obedience remedied the harm that Eve did by her disobedience: *Sicut Heva inobediens & sibi & universo generi humano causa facta est mortis; sic & Maria Virgo obediens & sibi & universo generi humano facta est causa salutis. — As Eve, being disobedient, was made the cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race; so Mary the Virgin, being obedient, was made the cause of salvation both to herself and to the whole human race.* (ap. Parav. p. 2. cap. 11.) The line of this citation is blurred in the W1 impression and the reading "cap. 11." is not certain; the same author is cited at p. 172 as "ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 1." and at p. 177 as "ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 12." The obedience of Mary was far more perfect than that of all the other Saints, since all men, being inclined to evil by original sin, all feel difficulty in doing good; but not so the Blessed Virgin, wrote St. Bernardine: *In B. Virgine nullum fuit omnino retardativum, proinde rota volubilis fuit secundo omnem Spiritus Sancti motum. — In the Blessed Virgin there was nothing whatever to hold her back; she was therefore a wheel turning easily at every movement of the Holy Spirit.* (T. 3. Serm. 11. a. 2. c. 1.) Mary, being free from original sin, had no impediments in obeying God, but was like a wheel which moved readily at every Divine inspiration; whence she did nothing else upon this earth (as the same Saint says) but always look to and carry out whatever pleased God: *Virgo semper habuit continuum aspectum ad Dei beneplaci-*

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-tum, & ferventem consensum. — The Virgin always had a continual regard to the good pleasure of God, and a fervent consent to it. (To. 2. S. 41. a. 3. c. 2.) Of her it was said: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus meus locutus est — My soul melted when my beloved spoke.* (Cant. 4:6) The place cited is Cant. 5:6; W1 prints "Cant. 4. 6." Retained as printed. To which Richard adds that the soul of the Virgin was like a molten metal, ready to take all the forms that God willed: *Anima mea liquefacta est per incendium charitatis, parata instar metalli liquefacti decurrere in omnes modulos divinæ voluntatis. — My soul was melted by the fire of charity, ready like molten metal to run into every mould of the divine will.*

Mary indeed showed in fact how ready she was in obedience: first, when to please God she willed to obey even the Roman Emperor, in making the journey to Bethlehem, a full ninety miles long, in winter time, with child, and so poor that she was afterwards forced to give birth in a stable. So too she was prompt at St. Joseph's

warning to set out at once that same night on the longer and more calamitous journey into Egypt. And here Silveira asks why the revelation to flee into Egypt was made to St. Joseph and not to the Blessed Virgin, who was to feel the hardship more. And he answers: *Ne Virgini subtrahatur occasio exercendi actum obedientiæ, ad quem erat paratissima. — Lest the Virgin should be deprived of an occasion of exercising an act of obedience, for which she was most ready.* But above all she showed her heroic obedience when, to obey the divine will, she offered her Son to death with such constancy that (as St. Idelfonso said) she would have been ready to crucify her Son, had the executioners been wanting: *Parata enim stetit, si deesset manus percussoris. — For she stood ready, had the striker's hand been wanting.* (ap. Parav. p. 2. c. 12.) Whence it is that on the words which the Redeemer said to that Woman of the Gospel, when she exclaimed, *Beatus venter qui te portavit — Blessed is the womb that bore you* — and Jesus answered, *Quinimo beati qui audiunt verbum Dei, & custodiunt illud — Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it* (Luke 11:27) — the Venerable Bede wrote that Mary was happier for her obedience to the divine will than for having been made mother of God himself: *Et inde quidem beata, quia Verbi incarnandi ministra facta est: sed inde multo beatior quia ejusdem semper amandi custos manebat æterna. — Blessed indeed for this, that she was made the minister of the Word to be incarnate: but far more blessed for this, that she remained the eternal keeper of him who is always to be loved.* (c. 49. in Luc.)

Hence it is that those who are lovers of obedience are very pleasing to the Virgin. She appeared once to a Franciscan Religious named Accorso in his cell; but he, because he was called by obedience to go and hear the confession of a sick man, departed; and on returning he found that Mary was waiting for him, and she then much praised his obedi-

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-ence. As on the contrary she much reproved another Religious who, when the Refectory bell rang, delayed to finish certain devotions of his own. (Ved. il P. March. Diar. della Mad.) Then the Virgin, speaking to St. Bridget of the security there is in obeying one's Spiritual Father, said to her: *Obedientia omnes introducit ad gloriam — Obedience brings all into glory.* (Rev. lib. 6. c. 11.) For St. Philip Neri used to say that God requires no account of things done out of obedience, having himself said: *Qui vos audit, me audit; & qui vos spernit, me spernit. — He who hears you hears me; and he who despises you despises me.* (Luke 10:16) The Mother of God then revealed to St. Bridget that by the merit of her obedience she has obtained from the Lord that all sinners who have recourse to her in repentance are pardoned: *Pro obedientia mea tantam potestatem obtinui, quod nullus tam immundus peccator, si*

ad me cum emendationis proposito convertitur & cum corde contrito, non habebit veniam. — For my obedience I have obtained such power, that there is no sinner so unclean who, if he turns to me with the purpose of amendment and with a contrite heart, shall not have pardon. Ah Queen and our Mother, pray to Jesus for us; obtain for us, by the merit of your obedience, to be faithful in obeying his will and the Precepts of our spiritual Fathers. Amen.

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§ IX. On the Patience of Mary.

Since this Earth is a place of merit, it is justly called a valley of tears; for here we are all set to suffer, and by patience to win our souls unto eternal life, as the Lord once said: *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras — In your patience you shall possess your souls.* (Luke 21:19) God gave us the Virgin Mary for an example of all the virtues, but especially for an example of patience. St. Francis de Sales reflects, among other things, that precisely to this end at the marriage of Cana Jesus Christ gave the most Holy Virgin that answer by which he showed that he set little store by her prayers: *Quid mihi & tibi, mulier? &c. — What is that to me and to you, woman? etc.* — precisely to give us the example of the patience of his holy Mother. But why do we go looking further? The whole life of Mary was a continual exercise of patience; for, as the Angel revealed to St. Bridget, the Blessed Virgin lived always among sufferings: *Sicut rosa crescere solet inter spinas: ita hæc venerabilis Virgo in hoc mundo crevit inter tribulationes. — As the rose is wont to grow among thorns, so this venerable Virgin grew up in this world among tribulations.* (Serm. Ang. cap. 10.) The compassion alone for the sufferings of the Redeemer was enough to make her a Martyr of patience; whence St. Bonaventure said: *Crucifixa Cru-*

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-cifixum concepit — Crucified, she conceived the Crucified. And how much she then suffered, both on the journey and during the stay in Egypt, and through all the time that she lived with her Son in the Workshop of Nazareth, has already been considered above in speaking of her Sorrows. The single act of assistance which Mary gave to the dying Jesus on Calvary was enough to make known how constant and how sublime her patience was: *Stabat juxta Crucem Jesu mater ejus — There stood by the Cross of Jesus his mother.* At which time, precisely by the merit of this her patience, as Blessed Albert the Great says, she became our Mother, who brought us forth to the life of grace: *Maria facta est mater nostra, quos genuit filio compatiendo. — Mary was made our mother, and brought us forth by suffering with her Son.*

If, then, we desire to be children of Mary, we must seek to imitate her in patience. And what, says St. Cyprian, can enrich us more with merit in this life and with glory in the next, than to suffer pain with patience? *Quid utilius ad vitam, vel majus ad gloriam, quam patientia? — What is more useful for life, or greater for glory, than patience?* God said through Hosea: *Sepiam viam tuam spinis — I will hedge up your way with thorns.* (2:6) To which St. Gregory adds: *Electorum viæ spinis sepiuntur — The ways of the elect are hedged about with thorns.* Just as a hedge of thorns guards the vineyard, so God surrounds his servants with tribulation, that they may not attach themselves to the earth. Whence St. Cyprian concludes that patience is what delivers us from sin and from Hell: *Patientia nos servat — Patience preserves us.* And patience is what makes the Saints: *Patientia autem opus perfectum habet — And patience has a perfect work.* (James 1:4) — bearing in peace both the crosses that come to us directly from God, that is, sickness, poverty, etc., and also those that come to us from men: persecutions, injuries, etc. St. John saw all the Saints with palms (the sign of Martyrdom) in their hands: *Post hæc vidi turbam magnam ... & palmæ in manibus eorum. — After this I saw a great multitude ... and palms in their hands.* (Apoc. 7:9) — signifying by this that all adults who are saved must be Martyrs either of blood or of patience. Gladly, then, St. Gregory exclaims: *Nos sine ferro martyres esse possumus, si patientiam custodimus. — We can be martyrs without the sword, if we keep patience.* If we suffer the pains of this life, as St. Bernard says, *patienter, libenter, & gaudenter — patiently, willingly, and joyfully* — oh how much every pain borne for God will yield us in Heaven! Hence the Apostle encourages us: *Momentaneum & leve tribulationis nostræ ... æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis. — Our momentary and light tribulation works for us an eternal weight of glory.* (2 Cor. 3:17) The place cited is 2 Cor. 4:17; W1 prints "3. 17." Retained as printed. Fine were the counsels of St. Teresa on this subject; the Saint used to say: *He who embraces the cross does not feel it.* And in another place: *When someone resolves to suf-*

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-fer, the pain is over. And when we feel ourselves pressed by crosses, let us have recourse to Mary, who is called by the Church *Consolatrix afflictorum — Consoler of the afflicted* — and by St. John Damascene *Omnium dolorum cordium medicamentum — The medicine of all the sorrows of hearts.* Ah my most sweet Lady, you who were innocent suffered with such patience, and shall I, who deserve Hell, refuse to suffer? My Mother, this grace I ask of you today: not indeed to be delivered from crosses, but to bear them with patience. For the love of Jesus I beg you to obtain me this grace from God without fail; from you I hope for it.

§ X. On the Prayer of Mary.

There has never been any soul upon this earth who has carried out with such perfection as the Blessed Virgin did that great teaching of our Saviour: *Oportet semper orare, & non deficere — We ought always to pray, and not to faint.* (Luke 18:1) From no other, says St. Bonaventure, can we better take example, and learn the necessity we have of persevering in prayer, than from Mary: *Maria exemplum dedit, quam oportet sequi, & non deficere. — Mary gave the example which we must follow, and not grow weary.* (Spec. cap. 4.) For Blessed Albert the Great attests that the divine mother, in the virtue of prayer, was after Jesus Christ the most perfect of all who ever have been or ever will be: *Virtus orationis in B. Virgine excellentissima fuit — The power of prayer in the Blessed Virgin was most excellent.* (Sup. Mis. 80.) First, because her prayer was continual and persevering. From the very first instant in which she had life, and together with life the perfect use of reason — as we said above in the discourse on her birth — she began to pray. Therefore also, the better to attend to prayer, she willed as a child of three years to shut herself up in the retirement of the Temple, where, among the other times she had appointed for prayer, she herself told St. Elizabeth the Virgin that at midnight she always rose and went to pray before the altar of the Temple: *Surgebam semper in noctis medio, & pergebam ante altare templi, & ibi petitiones meas præsentabam. — I always rose in the middle of the night and went before the altar of the temple, and there presented my petitions.* (V. ap. S. Bon. de vit. Chr. c. 3.) To this same end also, that she might always meditate upon the sufferings of Jesus, Odilo says: *Loca dominicæ nativitatis, passionis, sepulturæ frequenter visitabat. — She frequently visited the places of the Lord's nativity, passion, and burial.* Furthermore her prayer was wholly recollected, free from every distraction and from every disordered affection: *Nulla un-*

-quam (wrote St. Denis the Carthusian) *inordinata affectio, nec distractio mentem virginis a contemplationis lumine revocavit, nec occupatio ulla exterior. — No disordered affection ever, nor any distraction, nor any outward occupation, called back the Virgin's mind from the light of contemplation.* (De Laud. Virg. l. 2. art. 8.)

And therefore the Blessed Virgin, for the love she bore to prayer, afterwards so loved solitude that, as she told St. Bridget, in the Temple she refrained from conversing even with her own holy parents. St. Jerome reflects on the words of Isaiah: *Ecce virgo concipiet, & pariet filium, & vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel — Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.* (c. 7) And he says that in Hebrew the word *Virgo* properly means *a*

Virgin withdrawn; so that from the prophet's own time the love which Mary was to bear to solitude was foretold. Richard says that the Angel spoke those words to her, *Dominus tecum, merito solitudinis quam ipsa summe diligebat — The Lord is with you, by the merit of that solitude which she supremely loved.* (Lib. 1. c. 6.) And therefore St. Vincent Ferrer asserts of the divine Mother: *Nunquam exibat e domo, nisi quando ibat ad templum; Et tunc ibat tota composita, semper habens oculos suos ad terram. — She never went out of the house except when she went to the temple; and then she went wholly composed, always keeping her eyes upon the ground.* (Serm. in Virg. Nat.) Therefore, going to visit St. Elizabeth, she *abiit cum festinatione — went with haste*; from which St. Ambrose says that Virgins should learn to flee from public view. St. Bernard asserted that Mary, from her love of prayer and of solitude, was all intent on avoiding conversation with men: *In proposito erat hominum fugere frequentias, vitare colloquia. — It was her set purpose to flee the crowds of men and to shun conversations.* Hence the Holy Spirit called her a Turtle-dove: *Pulchræ sunt genæ tuæ sicut turturis — Your cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-dove's.* (Cant. 1:9) Vergellius explains (ap. S. Bon. Dist. 7): *Turtur est solivaga, & signat mentis virtutem unitivam. — The turtle-dove wanders alone, and signifies the unitive power of the mind.* Whence it was that the Virgin lived always solitary in this World as in a desert; and therefore it was said of her: *Quæ est ista quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi? — Who is this that goes up through the desert, like a slender column of smoke?* (Cant. 3:6) On which words Rupert the Abbot wrote: *Talis ascendisti per desertum animam habens solitariam. — Such did you go up through the desert, having a solitary soul.*

Philo said that God does not speak to souls except in solitude: *Dei sermo amat deserta — The word of God loves the desert.* And God himself declared it through Hosea: *Ducam eam in solitudinem, & loquar ad cor ejus — I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart.* (2:14) And hence St. Jerome exclaimed: *O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur, & conversatur? — O solitude, in which God speaks and converses familiarly with his own!* Yes, says St. Bernard, because solitude, and the silence enjoyed in solitude, compel the soul to go out in thought from the Earth and to meditate upon the goods of Heaven: *Silentium, & a strepitu quies cogit cælestia medi-*

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-tare. — Silence, and rest from noise, compel one to meditate on heavenly things. The common Latin reads *meditari*; W1 prints *meditare*. Retained as printed. Most holy Virgin, obtain for us the love of prayer and of solitude, so that, detaching ourselves from the love of creatures, we may aspire to God alone and to Paradise,

where we hope one day to see you and for ever to praise and love together with you your Son Jesus, world without end. Amen.

Transite ad me omnes qui concupiscitis me, & a generationibus meis implemini. — Come over to me, all you that desire me, and be filled with my generations. (Ecclus. 24:25) The generations of Mary are her virtues.

Nec primam similem visa es, nec habere sequentem, Sola sine exemplo placuisti fœmina Christo. — No woman before you was seen like you, nor any after; you alone, without example, pleased Christ. Sedulius.

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VARIOUS ACTS OF HOMAGE

Of Devotion towards the Divine Mother, with their practices.

So liberal and so grateful is the Queen of Heaven that for the small acts of homage of her servants she renders great things: *Cum sit magnificentissima, solet maxima pro minimis reddere — Since she is most magnificent, she is wont to render the greatest things for the least* — says St. Andrew of Crete. (Or. 2. de Dorm. Virg.) For this, nevertheless, two things are needed: the first, that we offer her our homage with a soul clean of sin; otherwise Mary will say to us the same that she said to a vicious Soldier who (as St. Peter Celestine relates, *Opusc. c. 23.*) performed some act of homage to the Virgin every day. Now while one day he was suffering great hunger, Our Lady appeared to him and presented him with certain choice dishes, but in a vessel so filthy that he could not bring himself to taste them. I am, Mary then said, the Mother of God, who have come to relieve your hunger. But in this vessel, the soldier answered, I cannot taste them. And how then do you expect (Mary rejoined) that I should accept your devotions, offered to me with a soul so foul? By this the soldier was converted; he became a Hermit, lived thirty years in the desert, and at his death the Virgin appeared to him again and led him to Heaven. We said in the first part that it is impossible, morally speaking, that a devout servant of Mary should be lost. But this is to be understood on the condition that he either

lives without sin, or at least has the desire to get out of it; for then Our Lady will help him. But if on the contrary anyone should wish to sin in the hope that Our Lady will save him, he would by his own fault make himself unworthy of, and incapable of, the protection of Ma-

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-ry. The second condition is that he persevere in his devotion to Mary. *Perseverantia sola meretur coronam — Perseverance alone earns the crown* — says St. Bernard. (Ep. 129.) Thomas à Kempis, when he was a youth, used every day to have recourse to the Virgin with certain prayers; one day he left them off, then he left them off for some weeks, and then he left them off altogether. One night he saw Mary in a dream, embracing his companions; but when she came to him: What are you waiting for (she said), you who have left off your devotions? Go away, for you are unworthy of my embraces. At this Thomas awoke terrified, and took up his accustomed prayers again. Hence Richard well said: *Qui tenuerit Mariam perseveranter, hic beatus erit in spe, quia omnia optata ei succedent. — He who holds to Mary perseveringly shall be blessed in hope, for all he desires will come to him.* (Lib. 2. p. 48.) But because no one can be sure of this perseverance, therefore no one can make himself certain of his salvation until death. Very memorable, then, was the great lesson which Brother John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus left his companions at his death, when, being asked by them to tell them what homage most dear to Our Lady they might pay in order to gain her protection, he answered: *Quidquid minimum, dummodo sit constans — Whatever is smallest, provided it be constant.* I therefore add here at the end, plainly and briefly, the various acts of homage which we can pay to our Mother in order to gain her grace: a thing which I esteem the most profitable of all that I have written in this little Work. But I do not so much recommend to my dear Reader to practise them all, as to practise those which he shall choose, with perseverance, and with fear of losing the protection of the divine Mother if he then becomes careless in continuing them. Oh, how many who are now in Hell would be saved, if they had kept up towards Mary the acts of homage they had once begun!

Homage I. On the Hail Mary. The most Holy Virgin is greatly pleased with this Angelic greeting, since then it seems that the joy is renewed in her which she felt when she was told by St. Gabriel that she had been made Mother of God; and we with this end should often greet her with the *Hail Mary*. *Salutate eam* (says Thomas à Kempis) *Angelica salutatione, quia vocem hanc audit valde libenter. — Greet her with the Angelic salutation, for she hears this word most gladly.* (Serm. 31. ad Nov.) The Divine Mother herself told St. Mechtilde that none could greet her

better than with the *Hail Mary*. Whoever greets Mary will be greeted by her in return. St. Bernard once heard himself greeted, perceptibly, by a Sta-

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-tue of the Virgin, which said to him: *Ave, Bernarde — Hail, Bernard.* (March. 20. Aug.) And Mary's greeting, says St. Bonaventure, will be some grace with which she always answers whoever greets her: *Libenter nos salutat cum gratia, si libenter salutamus cum Ave Maria. — She gladly greets us with grace, if we gladly greet her with the Hail Mary.* (Vide Auriem. aff. scamb. tom. 1. cap. 6.) And Richard adds: *Si quis veniat ad matrem domini dicens, Ave Maria, numquid poterit ei gratiam denegare? — If anyone comes to the mother of the Lord saying, Hail Mary, can she possibly deny him grace?* Mary herself promised St. Gertrude as many helps at death as she should have said *Hail Marys*. Blessed Alan asserted that at the saying of the *Hail Mary*, just as all Heaven rejoices, so the Devil trembles and flees: *Cælum gaudet, Satan fugit, cum dico, Ave Maria. — Heaven rejoices, Satan flees, when I say, Hail Mary.* As indeed Thomas à Kempis attested from experience, that at the saying of the *Hail Mary* the Devil, who had once appeared to him, at once fled. (Serm. 1. ad Nov.)

Let the practice of this homage be: I. To say every morning and evening, on rising and on going to bed, three *Hail Marys* with the face to the ground, or at least kneeling, adding to each *Hail* that short prayer: *By your pure and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, make my body pure and my soul holy.* Then to ask Mary's blessing as our Mother, as St. Stanislaus always did; and then to place oneself under Our Lady's Mantle, praying her to guard us from sin during the day or night that follows. And to this end it is useful to keep near the bed a beautiful Image of the Virgin. II. To say the *Angelus Domini*, etc., with the customary three *Hail Marys*, in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. The first who attached an indulgence to this devotion was John XXII, on the occasion (as Fr. Crasset relates, tom. 2. tr. 6. prat. 2.) of a criminal condemned to the fire who, by invoking Mary on the Vigil of her Annunciation, remained unharmed in the midst of the fire, even in his clothes. Latterly Benedict XIII granted a hundred days' Indulgence to whoever recites it, and at the end of the month a Plenary Indulgence to whoever recites it having confessed and communicated. Fr. Crasset records that other Indulgences were attached by Clement X for whoever adds at the end of each *Hail Mary*, *Deo gratias, & Mariæ — Thanks be to God and to Mary.* (Loc. cit.) Formerly, at the sound of the bells, everyone knelt to say the *Angelus Domini*; now some are ashamed of it: but St. Charles Borromeo was not ashamed to get down from carriage or horse to recite it in the street, sometimes even in the middle of the mud. It is related that, there be-

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-ing a certain slothful Religious who would not kneel at the signal of the *Hail Mary*, he saw the bell-tower bow itself three times, with a voice that said: Behold, do you not do what senseless creatures do? Let it be noted that, as Benedict XIV has explained, in Paschal time in place of the *Angelus Domini* the Antiphon *Regina cæli*, etc., is said; and from the Vespers of Saturday through all Sunday the *Angelus Domini* is said standing. III. To greet the mother of God with the *Hail Mary* every time the clock is heard to strike. Alphonsus Rodriguez greeted Mary every hour; at night, when the hour passed, the Angels woke him, so that he should not have interrupted this devotion. IV. On going out of the house and on coming in, to greet the Virgin with the *Hail*, so that without and within she may guard us from sin, kissing her feet each time, as the Carthusian Fathers do. V. To reverence with the *Hail* every Image of Mary that we meet. And to this end, whoever is able to do it, let him have some beautiful Image of the Virgin set in the walls of his house, that it may be reverenced by those who pass along the street. In Naples, and still more in Rome, there are most beautiful Images of Our Lady along the streets, set there by devout people. VI. The holy Church ordains that at all the Canonical hours of the Office the Angelic salutation be said first, and that the Office end with it; whence it will be well always to say a *Hail Mary* at the beginning and at the end of every action. I say of every action, whether spiritual — such as Prayer, Confession and Communion, spiritual reading, hearing a Sermon, and the like — or temporal, such as study, giving advice, work, going to table, to bed, etc. Happy those actions which shall be enclosed between two *Hail Marys*! And so too on waking in the morning, on closing the eyes to sleep, in every temptation, in every danger, in every burst of anger, and the like, always to say a *Hail Mary*. My dear Reader, put it into practice, and you will see the exceeding profit you will draw from it. Noting that for every *Hail Mary* there are twenty days' Indulgence (ap. Viva de Ind. §. ult.). Moreover Fr. Auriemma reports (l. cit.) that the Holy Virgin promised St. Mechtilde a good death if she should recite every day three *Hail Marys* in honour of her power, her wisdom, and her goodness. Furthermore, she herself told Blessed Joan of France that the *Hail Mary* was most acceptable to her, especially said ten times in

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honour of her ten virtues; *ap. Maracci p. 25.*, who reports many Indulgences attached to these ten *Hail Marys*.

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Homage II. On Novenas. The devout servants of Mary are all attention and fervour in celebrating the Novenas of her festivals; and in these the Holy Virgin is all

love in dispensing to them innumerable and most special graces. St. Gertrude saw one day beneath Mary's mantle a throng of souls upon which the great Lady was gazing with great affection, and she understood that these were they who in the preceding days had prepared themselves with devout exercises for the feast of the Assumption. The exercises which can be practised in Novenas are the following. I. To make mental Prayer morning and evening, with a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to add to it nine *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys*, and *Glory be to the Father*. II. To make three visits to Mary before some image of her, thanking the Lord for the graces granted to her, and asking the Virgin each time some special grace. And at one of these visits to read the prayer which is placed above at the end of each of her feasts. III. To make many acts of love (at least a hundred, or fifty) to Mary and to Jesus, since we can do nothing more pleasing to her than to love her Son, as she said to St. Bridget: *Si te mihi vis devincire, ama filium meum Jesum — If you wish to bind yourself to me, love my Son Jesus.* IV. To read every day of the Novena for a quarter of an hour some Book which treats of her Glories.

V. To make some outward mortification of hair-shirt, discipline, or the like; with fasting, or else some abstinence at table from fruit or from other food one likes, at least in part, and also chewing some bitter herb; and then on the vigil of the feast to fast on bread and water. But all these things always with the leave of one's Spiritual Father. And best of all to be used in these Novenas are the inward mortifications, such as refraining from looking or listening out of curiosity, keeping withdrawn, keeping silence, obeying, not answering impatiently, bearing contradictions, and similar things, which can be practised with less danger of vainglory and with greater merit, and for which no leave of the Director is needed. And the most useful exercise will be to set oneself from the beginning of the Novena to correct some fault into which the person more usually falls. It is useful, therefore, at each of the said three visits, to ask pardon for past fal-

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-ls, to renew the resolution to fall no more, and to implore Mary's help in it. The homage dearest to the Virgin is to imitate her virtues; whence, besides this, it will be well in every Novena to set oneself some special virtue of Mary most suited to the mystery — as, for example, on the feast of the *Conception*, purity of intention; on the *Nativity*, the Renewal of spirit, coming out of lukewarmness; on the *Presentation*, detachment from something to which we see ourselves more attached; on the *Annunciation*, humility, by bearing contempt, etc.; on the *Visitation*, charity to our neighbour, by giving alms, etc., or at least by praying for sinners; on the *Purification*, obedience to Superiors; and finally on the *Assumption*, to practise

detachment and to do everything as a preparation for death, adapting oneself to live as if every day were the last of life. So the Novenas will turn out of great profit.

VI. Besides Communion on the day of the feast, it is well to ask it more often of one's Spiritual Father for the days of the Novena. Fr. Segneri used to say that we cannot honour Mary better than with Jesus. And she herself revealed to a holy soul (as Fr. Crasset records, *to. 2. tr. 6. prat. 6.*) that nothing dearer could be offered her than holy Communion; since there Jesus Christ gathers in souls the fruit of his Passion. Whence it seems that the Virgin desires nothing more of her servants than communion, saying to them: *Venite, comedite panem meum, & bibite vinum quod miscui vobis — Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you.*

VII. Lastly, on the day of the feast after Communion we must offer ourselves to serve this divine Mother, asking her the grace of the virtue set for the Novena, or some other special grace. And it is well every year to set apart, among the others, some festival of the Virgin to which we have greater devotion and tenderness, and on this to make a particular preparation in order to dedicate ourselves anew and in a more special manner to her service, choosing her for our Lady, Advocate, and mother (*At the end of the Book you will find two forms of this Dedication, one for oneself, the other for the family*). And then we shall ask her pardon for our negligences in serving her during the past year, and shall promise her greater fidelity for the year to come. We shall beg her at the end to accept us for her servants, and to obtain for us a holy death.

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Homage III. On the Rosary and the Office. The devotion of the most Holy Rosary is known to have been revealed to St. Dominic by the divine mother herself, when the Saint, being afflicted and complaining to his Lady of the Albigensian Heretics, who at that time were doing great harm to the Church, the Virgin said to him: *This ground will always be barren, until the rain falls upon it.* St. Dominic then understood this rain to be the devotion of the Rosary, which he was to make known. As in fact the Saint went about everywhere preaching it, and this devotion was embraced by all Catholics; in such wise that at present there is no devotion more practised by the faithful of every state of persons than this of the most Holy Rosary. The modern Heretics — Calvin, Bucer, and others — what have they not said to discredit the use of the beads? But the great good which this noble devotion has brought to the world is well known. How many by means of it have been delivered from sin! how many led to a holy life! how many have made a good death and are now saved! Let the many books that treat of it be read. Let it be enough to

know that this devotion has been approved by the holy Church, and that the Sovereign Pontiffs have enriched it with Indulgences. To whoever recites the third part of the Rosary an Indulgence of seventy thousand years is granted, and to whoever recites it whole, eighty thousand, and more to whoever recites it before the Chapel of the Rosary. And Benedict XIII lately annexed to the Rosary (for whoever recites at least the third part of it on Beads blessed by the Dominican Fathers) all the Indulgences attached to the Little Crowns of St. Bridget, that is, a hundred days for every *Hail Mary* and *Our Father* that is said. And moreover, whoever recites the Rosary gains the Plenary Indulgence on all the principal feasts of Mary and of the holy Church, and also of the Dominican Saints, by visiting their Churches after Confession and Communion. But let it be noted that all this is understood of those who are enrolled in the book of the Rosary; to whom, on the day they are enrolled, having confessed and communicated, the Plenary Indulgence is also granted; and a hundred years if they carry the Rosary; and to whoever makes mental Prayer for half an hour a day, seven years each time, and a Plenary Indulgence at the end of the month.

Now, to gain the Indulgences attached to the recitation of the Rosary, one must at the same time con-

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-template the Mysteries, which are already set down in many books; and when anyone does not know them, it will be enough that he contemplate some one of the Mysteries of the Passion of Jesus Christ, such as the scourging, the death, etc. The Rosary must then be recited with devotion; on which let it be noted what the Holy Virgin said to Blessed Eulalia, namely, that she was better pleased with five decades recited with pauses and with devotion than with fifteen in haste and with less devotion. Therefore it is well to say the Rosary kneeling, and before some Image of Mary, and at the beginning of each decade to make an act of love to Jesus and Mary, asking of them some grace. And let it be noted further that it is more profitable to say the Rosary in company with others than to say it alone.

As for the little *Office* of Our Lady, which is related to have been composed by St. Peter Damian, Urban II attached many Indulgences to it for whoever recites it; and the Holy Virgin has many times shown how pleasing this devotion was to her, as may be seen in Fr. *Auriem.* (t. 1. c. 8.) She is also much pleased with the Litanies, to which there are two hundred days' Indulgence each time; with the Hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, which she ordered St. Bridget to recite every day; and still more with the Canticle of the *Magnificat*, since with this we praise her in the words with which she praised God.

Homage IV. On Fasting. Many are the devout servants of Mary who on Saturdays and on the vigils of her feasts are accustomed to offer her a fast on bread and water. It is known that Saturday is a day dedicated to the honour of the Virgin by the holy Church, because on this day (says St. Bernard) she stood constant in faith after the death of her Son: *Per illud triste sabbatum stetit in fide, propterea aptissime S. Ecclesia diem sabbati per totum anni circulum celebrare consuevit. — Through that sorrowful Sabbath she stood firm in faith; therefore most fittingly has the holy Church been accustomed to keep the day of Saturday throughout the whole circuit of the year.* (Cap. 2. de Pass.) Therefore the servants of Mary do not fail on this day to offer her some particular homage, and especially the fast on bread and water, as St. Charles Borromeo practised it, and Cardinal Toledo, and many others. Indeed the Bishop of Bamberg, Nittardus, and Fr. Joseph Arriaga of the Society of Jesus tasted no food at all on Saturday. The great graces which the mother of God has since dispensed to those who have paid her this homage may be read in Fr. Auriemma (at *tom. 1. c. 17.*). Let one stand for all: the mercy shown to that Chief of bandits who,

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by this devotion, was made worthy to remain alive although his head had been cut off — the wretched man finding himself in disgrace with God — and to be able to confess before dying; for after having confessed he declared that the Holy Virgin, for this fast offered to her, had preserved him in life, and then at once he expired. (ap. *Auriem. l. c.*) It would not then be a great thing that someone who claims to be a special servant of Mary — and precisely one who had already deserved Hell — should offer her this fast on Saturday. I say that whoever practises this devotion will hardly be lost; not indeed that, if death overtakes him in a state of mortal sin, Our Lady must deliver him by a miracle, as happened to that bandit — these are prodigies of the divine mercy which very rarely occur, and on which it would be madness to build one's eternal salvation. But I say that for him who pays her this homage the divine mother will easily obtain perseverance in the divine grace and a good death. All the brothers of our least Congregation (those who are able to do it) fast on bread and water on Saturday in honour of Mary. I said those who are able to do it, meaning that if anyone were prevented by his health from practising it, let him at least on Saturday be content with one dish, or make the common fast, or abstain from fruit or from other food that pleases him. On Saturday one must pay special homage to Our Lady: make one's Communion, or at least hear Mass, visit some image of the Virgin, wear the hair-shirt, and the like. And at least on the vigils of Mary's seven feasts let her servant take care to offer her this fast on bread, or in

another way as best he can. W1 prints "peseveranza" for "perseverenza". Retained as printed.

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Homage V. On Visiting the Images of Mary. Fr. Segneri says that the Devil has found no better way to console himself for the losses he suffered in the destruction of Idolatry than by persecuting the sacred Images through the Heretics. But the holy Church has defended them even with the blood of Martyrs; and the divine mother has shown also by prodigies how much she values the veneration of, and the visits to, her Images. St. John Damascene had his hand cut off for having defended with his pen the Images of Mary; but his Lady miraculously restored it to him. Fr. Spinelli relates that in Constantinople every Fri-

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-day after Vespers a veil that stood before the Image of Mary opened of itself, and when the Vespers of Saturday had been said, it also closed of itself. To St. John of God likewise a veil over an Image of the Virgin once opened of itself, so that the Sacristan, believing the Saint to be a thief, gave him a kick — but his foot was left withered. All the devout servants of Mary therefore are wont with great affection to visit often her images and the Churches dedicated in her honour. These are precisely, in the Damascene's words, the cities of refuge, where we find escape from temptations and from the punishments deserved for the sins we have committed. St. Henry the Emperor, on entering any city, first of all visited some Church of Our Lady. Fr. Thomas Sanchez was not accustomed to return home without first visiting some Church of Mary. Let us not then find it irksome to visit our Queen every day in some Church, or Chapel, or in our own house — where it would be well to this end to make in the most solitary place a little Oratory with her Image, which should be kept adorned with cloths, flowers, candles, or lamps; and before it let the Litanies, the Rosary, etc., also be said. To this end I have made a little book (which has already been reprinted eight times) of visits both to the Most Holy Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin for every day of the month. Some devout servant of Our Lady might also have one of her feasts celebrated with solemnity in some Church or Chapel, having the Novena precede it with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and with Sermons too.

But it is well to note here the fact which Fr. Spinelli relates in his *Miracles of Our Lady* at *num. 75.* In the year 1611, at the famous Sanctuary of Mary at Montevergine, it happened that on the vigil of Pentecost, the people who had gathered there having profaned that feast with dances, revelling, and immodesties, a fire was seen to break out suddenly in the wooden house where they were, in such a

way that in less than an hour and a half it burned it to ashes, and more than fifteen hundred persons were left dead there. Five persons who remained alive deposed on oath that they had seen the mother of God herself, who with two lighted torches went about setting fire to the Hospice. By this I beg the devout servants of Mary as much as I can to refrain, and to see that others also refrain, from going to such Sanctuaries of Our La-

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-dy at the time of the feasts; for then Hell draws from them far greater fruit than the divine Mother does honour. Whoever has this devotion, let him go to visit them at a time when there is no crowd.

Homage VI. On the Scapular. Just as men count it an honour to have some who wear their livery, so Mary most holy is pleased that her devout servants should wear her Scapular, in sign of being dedicated to her service and of being of the number of the household of the mother of God. The modern Heretics deride this devotion, as usual; but the holy Church has approved it with so many Bulls and Indulgences. And Fr. Crasset reports (t. 2. tr. 6. part. 4.), and Lezzana (in Marc. c. 5. n. 10.), speaking of the Scapular of Carmel, that about the year 1251 the Holy Virgin appeared to Blessed Simon Stock the Englishman, and giving him her Scapular told him that those who should wear it would be free from eternal damnation, in these words: *Accipe, fili dilectissime, hoc tui Ordinis Scapulare, meæ Confraternitatis signum, tibi & cunctis Carmelitis privilegium; in quo quis moriens æternum non patietur incendium. — Receive, most beloved son, this Scapular of your Order, the sign of my Confraternity, a privilege for you and for all Carmelites; wearing which, whoever dies shall not suffer eternal fire.* (ap. Lez. l. cit.) And moreover Fr. Crasset records that Mary, appearing another time to Pope John XXII, commanded him to make known to those who should wear the said Scapular that they would be delivered from Purgatory on the Saturday after their death; just as the same Pontiff then declared in his Bull, afterwards confirmed by Alexander V, by Clement VII, and by others, as the aforenamed Fr. Crasset reports in the place cited. And as we have noted in the First Part (c. 8. §. 2. pag. 153.), Paul V indicates the same, and seems to explain the Bulls of the preceding Pontiffs, prescribing in his Bull the conditions to be observed in order to gain the Indulgences attached to it so printed: "Indulenze" for "Indulgenze"; retained as printed — namely, the observance of chastity according to one's own state, and the recitation of the little Office of the Virgin; and whoever cannot recite it, at least that he observe the fasts of the Church, abstaining from eating meat on Wednesday. The Indulgences then attached both to this Scapular of Carmel and to the others — of the sorrows of

Mary, of Mercy, and singularly to that of the Conception — are innumerable, daily and plenary, in life and at the point of dea-

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-th. For my own part I have made a point of taking all the said Scapulars. Let it be known in particular that to the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, which is blessed by the Theatine Fathers, besides the many particular Indulgences, there are annexed all the Indulgences granted to any Religious Order, pious place, or person. And especially, on reciting six *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys*, and *Glory be* in honour of the Most Holy Trinity and of Mary Immaculate, one gains *toties quoties* all the Indulgences of Rome, of the Portiuncula, of Jerusalem, and of Galicia, which come to 433 Plenary Indulgences, besides the temporal ones, which are innumerable. All this is drawn from a sheet printed by the Theatine Fathers themselves.

Homage VII. On entering the Confraternities of Mary. Some disapprove of the Confraternities, saying that they sometimes turn out to be sources of quarrels, and that many go to them for human ends. But just as Churches and the Sacraments are not condemned because many are found who abuse them, so neither should the Confraternities be condemned. The Sovereign Pontiffs, instead of condemning them, have approved them with much praise and enriched them with Indulgences. St. Francis de Sales (in his *Introd. p. 2. c. 15.*) earnestly exhorts lay people to enter the Confraternities. And St. Charles Borromeo — what did he not do to establish and multiply these Confraternities? And in his Synods he expressly urges Confessors to see to it that their penitents enter them: *Confessor pro viribus suadebit, ut alicui societati Pœnitentes adscribantur. — Let the Confessor urge as much as he can that Penitents be enrolled in some society.* (Act. Med. to. 1. c. 6. 58.) And with reason, since these Confraternities, especially those of Our Lady, are like so many Arks of Noah, in which poor lay people find refuge from the flood of temptations and of sins that overwhelms the World. We, by the practice of the Missions, have well come to know the usefulness of the Confraternities. Speaking as a rule, more sins are found in one man who does not go to the Confraternity than in twenty who frequent them. The Confraternity may be said to be the Tower of David: *Turris David, mille clypei pendet ex ea, omnis armatura fortium. — The Tower of David: a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of the valiant.* (Cant. 4:4) And this is the reason for the great profit which the Confraternities produce: because in them those enrolled acquire many defences against Hell, and there are practised those means for keeping oneself in Divine

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-Grace which outside the Confraternity lay people hardly ever use.

First, one of the means of being saved is to think upon the eternal Maxims: *Memorare novissima tua, & in æternum non peccabis — Remember your last end, and you shall never sin.* (Ecclus. 7:40) And so many are lost because they do not think of them: *Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde. — With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considers in his heart.* (Jer. 12:11) But those who go to the Confraternity do indeed recollect themselves to think of them, in the many Meditations, Readings, and Sermons that are given there. *Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt — My sheep hear my voice.* (John 10:27) Secondly, to be saved it is necessary to commend oneself to God: *Petite, & accipietis — Ask, and you shall receive* (John 16:24); and in the Confraternity the brothers do this continually; and God hears them the more, since he himself has said that he grants his graces very willingly to prayers made in common: *Si duo ex vobis consenserint super terram; de omni re, quamcumque petierint, fiet illis a Patre meo. — If two of you shall agree upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father.* (Matt. 18:19) On which St. Ambrose said: *Multi minimi, dum congregantur unanimes, fiunt magni; & multorum preces impossibile est non audiri. — Many little ones, when they are gathered of one mind, become great; and it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard.* Thirdly, in the Confraternity the Sacraments are more easily frequented, both by the Rules and by the examples of the other brothers there. And by this, perseverance in Divine grace is more easily obtained; the sacred Council of Trent having declared Communion to be *tamquam antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, & a peccatis mortalibus præservemur — as an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins.* (Sess. 13. c. 2.) Fourthly, besides the Sacraments, in the Confraternities many exercises are made of mortification, of humility, of charity towards the sick brothers and towards the poor. And it would be well if in every Confraternity this holy custom were introduced of assisting the sick poor of the district. It would also be of the highest profit if there were introduced, in honour of the Divine Mother herself, the *secret Confraternity* of the more fervent brothers. I wish here to note briefly the exercises usually practised in the *secret* ones. 1. Half an hour of reading is made. 2. Vespers and Compline of the Holy Spirit are said. 3. The Litanies of the Virgin, and then the brothers appointed make some mortification by holding the cross upon their shoulders, and things of that kind. 4. A quarter of an hour of Meditation is made on the Passion of Jesus Christ. 5. Each accuses himself of the faults committed against the Rules, and receives the penance for them from the Father. 6. There are re-

-ad out by an appointed brother the little acts of mortification made in the past week, and then the Novenas that fall due are announced, etc. At the end the discipline will be taken for the length of a *Miserere* and a *Salve*, and each will kiss the Feet of the Crucifix set at the foot of the Altar. The *Rules* then would be that each brother: 1. Make mental prayer every day. 2. The visit to the Most Holy Sacrament and to Our Lady. 3. The examination of conscience in the evening. 4. Spiritual reading. 5. Let him flee games and worldly conversations. 6. Let him frequent Communion, and some mortification of the little chain, the discipline, etc. 7. Let him commend to God every day the souls in Purgatory and sinners. 8. That when any brother is sick, all the others be bound to visit him. But let us return to our point.

Fifthly, it has already been said how much serving the Mother of God avails for salvation; and the brothers — what else do they do but serve her in the Confraternity? There, how much they praise her! how many prayers they present to her! There from the beginning they consecrate themselves to her service, choosing her in a special manner for their Lady and Mother, and they are entered in the book of the children of Mary; whence, as they are servants and children of the Virgin in a distinct way, so she then treats them with distinction and protects them in life and in death. So that a brother of the Confraternity of Mary may say that with the Confraternity he has received every good: *Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa — All good things came to me together with her.* (Wis. 7:11)

To two things, then, must every brother attend: first, to the end — that is, to go to the Confraternity for no other end than to serve God and his Holy Mother, and to save his soul. Secondly, not to leave the Confraternity on the appointed days for the affairs of the World, since there he must go to treat the most important business he has upon this earth, which is his eternal salvation. And let him also strive to bring as many others as he can to the Confraternity, and especially to bring back to it those brothers who have left it. Oh, the terrible chastisements with which the Lord has punished those who have abandoned the Confraternity of Our Lady! In Naples a certain brother left the Confraternity; being afterwards urged to return to it, he answered: *I shall return there when my legs are broken and my head cut off.* And he was a prophet: not long after, some enemies of his did just that — his legs were bro-

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-ken and his head cut off. (ap. Sarm. d. Congr. p. 1.) On the other hand, the brothers who persevere are provided by Mary with temporal and spiritual goods: *Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus — All her household are clothed with double garments.* (Prov. 31:21). Let there be read in Fr. Auriemma (at to. 2. c. 4.) the

special graces granted by Mary to those enrolled, in life and in death. But especially in death. Fr. Crasset relates (to. 2. pr. 5.) that in 1586 a young man, being at the point of death, fell asleep; but on waking he said to his Confessor: O Father, I have been in great danger of being lost, but my Lady has delivered me. The Demons presented my sins before the Tribunal of the Lord, and were already making ready to drag me to Hell, but the Holy Virgin came, and said to them: *Where are you taking this young man? What claim have you upon a servant of mine who has served me so long in my Confraternity?* The Demons fled, and so I have been saved from their hands. The same Author reports just after this that another member of the Confraternity also had at the point of death a great battle with Hell, but then, having conquered, exclaimed all jubilant: *O what a good thing it is to serve the Blessed Mother in her Confraternity!* And so, all consoled, he died. He then adds that in Naples the Duke of Popoli, as he lay dying, said to his son: My son, know that the little good I have done in my life I owe to my Confraternity; whence I have no greater good to leave you than the Confraternity of Mary. I esteem it more to have been a member of the Confraternity than Duke of Popoli.

Homage VIII. On alms in honour of Mary. The devout servants of the Virgin are accustomed, especially on Saturday, to give alms in honour of the Divine Mother. That holy Cobbler, as St. Gregory relates in his Dialogues (called St. *Deusdedit*), distributed to the poor on Saturday all that he had earned during the week; whence afterwards a sumptuous Palace was shown in a vision to a holy soul, which God was preparing in Heaven for this servant of Mary, and which was built only on Saturdays. St. Gerard, again, at all times never refused anything that was asked of him in the name of Mary. The same was done by Fr. Martin Gutierrez of the Society of Jesus; who afterwards confessed that he had never sought a grace from Mary which she had not obtai-

-ned for him. And when this servant of hers had been killed by the Huguenots, the Divine Mother appeared to his companions with some Virgins, by whom she had the body wrapped in a sheet and carried away. (ap. P. Pepe to. 5. Lez. 235 in fin.) The same was practised by St. Eberhard, Bishop of Salzburg, and therefore a holy Monk saw him in the likeness of a child in Mary's arms, and she said: *Hic est Filius meus Eberardus, qui nihil mihi unquam negavit — This is my son Eberhard, who never refused me anything.* The same was the custom of Alexander of Hales, who, being asked in the name of Mary by a Lay-brother of St. Francis to become a Franciscan, left the world and entered the order. (P. Auriem. to. 1. c. 12.) Let it not then be irksome to the devout servants of the Virgin to give some small alms every

day in her honour, and to increase it on Saturday. And if he can do nothing else, at least for love of Mary let him do some other work of charity: assisting the sick, praying for sinners and for the souls in Purgatory, etc. Works of mercy are very pleasing to the heart of this Mother of mercy.

Homage IX. On having frequent recourse to Mary. I say that among all the acts of homage none pleases this our Mother so much as having frequent recourse to her intercession, asking her help in all particular needs — as in taking or giving counsel, in dangers, in afflictions, and in temptations, especially in temptations against purity. Then the Divine Mother will certainly deliver us, if we have recourse to her with the Antiphon *Sub tuum præsidium*, etc., or with the *Hail Mary*, or by merely invoking her most holy Name of Mary, which has particular power against the Demons. Blessed Santi the Franciscan, in an impure temptation, had recourse to Mary, and she, appearing to him at once, laid her hand upon his breast and delivered him. It is useful then also to kiss or to clasp the Rosary or the Scapular, or else to look upon some Image of the Virgin. And with this let it be known that to whoever pronounces the Names of Jesus and of Mary, Benedict XIII granted fifty days' Indulgence.

Tenthly and lastly, I gather here various other acts of Homage which may be practised in honour of Mary. I. To celebrate, or have celebrated, or at least to hear Mass in honour of the Holy Virgin. It is not denied that the holy Sacrifice of the Mass can be offered to none but God, to whom it is principally offered in acknowledgement of his supreme dominion; but this does not prevent,

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says the sacred Council of Trent (Sess. 22. c. 3.), that it may at the same time be offered to God in thanksgiving for the graces granted to the Saints and to his most Holy Mother, and so that, we making memory of them, they may deign to intercede for us. And therefore it is said in the Mass: *Ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem — That it may avail to their honour, and to our salvation.* This homage of the Mass, as also of saying three *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys*, and *Glory be* to the Most Holy Trinity in thanksgiving for the graces given to Mary, she herself revealed to a soul to be very pleasing to her; for since the Virgin cannot fully thank the Lord for all the privileges granted her, she greatly rejoices that her children help her to thank God. II. To reverence the Saints most closely joined to Mary, such as St. Joseph, St. Joachim, St. Anne. The Virgin herself recommended to a nobleman devotion to St. Anne her mother (Barry Pa. ap.); and likewise to honour the Saints most devoted to the Divine Mother, such as St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, St. Bernard, St. John Damascene the defender of her Images, St. Idelfonso

the defender of her Virginity, etc. III. To read every day some book that speaks of the glories of Mary. To preach, or at least to urge upon all, especially upon one's own kin, devotion to the Divine Mother. The Virgin said one day to St. Bridget: *Make your children my children.* To pray every day for the living and the dead who are most devoted to Mary.

Let there be noted, further, the many other Indulgences granted by the Pontiffs to those who honour this Queen of Heaven in various other ways. 1. To whoever says, *Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, a hundred years' Indulgence is granted; and when after the word *Immaculate* there is added *and most pure*, Fr. Crasset records that there are further Indulgences for the souls in Purgatory. 2. To the *Salve Regina*, forty days. 3. To the Litanies, two hundred days. 4. To whoever bows the head at the Names of *Jesus* and of *Mary*, twenty days. 5. To whoever says five *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* to the Passion of Jesus and to the Sorrows of Mary, ten thousand years. And for the convenience of devout souls I wish to note here other Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs to other devotions. 1. To whoever hears Mass, 3800 years. 2. To whoever makes the Christian Acts, with the purpose of receiving the Holy Sacraments in life and in death, Benedict XIII grants seven years; and continuing them for a Month, a Plenary Indulgence appli-

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-cable to Purgatory, and to oneself *in articulo mortis*. 3. To whoever recites fifteen *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* for sinners, the remission of a third part of his sins. 4. To whoever makes mental prayer for half an hour a day, Pope Benedict XIV has granted several Indulgences, and a Plenary one once a Month, on confessing and communicating. 5. To whoever recites the prayer *Anima Christi*, etc., three hundred days. 6. To whoever accompanies the Viaticum, five years, and if with a light, six; and whoever cannot, by reciting an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*, gains a hundred days. 7. To whoever genuflects before the Most Holy Sacrament, two hundred days. 8. To whoever kisses the Cross, a year and forty days. 9. To whoever bows the head at the *Gloria Patri*, thirty days. 10. To Priests who before Mass recite *Ego volo celebrare Missam*, etc., fifty days. 11. To whoever kisses the Religious Habit, five years. Other indulgences may be read in Fr. Viva, *Append. Indulg. in calce Tract. §. ult.*) The parenthesis is closed without having been opened. Retained as printed.

Let each one then, in taking the said Indulgences, take care to make an act of Contrition, so as to make himself fit to gain them.

I leave aside other devotions which are found in other Books, such as those of the seven Joys, of the twelve Privileges of Mary, and the like. And I end this Work with the beautiful words of St. Bernardine (Ser. 61.): *O woman blessed among all Women, you are the honour of the human race, the salvation of our people. You have a merit that has no bounds, and an entire power over all creatures. You are the Mother of God, the Lady of the world, the Queen of Heaven. You are the dispenser of all graces, the ornament of the holy Church. You are the example of the just, the consolation of the Saints, and the root of our salvation. You are the joy of Paradise, the gate of Heaven, the glory of God. Behold, we have published your praises: we beseech you then, O Mother of goodness, to supply for our weaknesses, to excuse our boldness, to accept our service, and to bless our labours, by imprinting in the heart of all your love, so that, after having honoured and loved your Son upon earth, we may praise him and bless him eternally in Heaven. Amen.*

And with this, my dear Reader and brother, lover of our Mother Mary, I leave you, and I say to you: go on gladly to honour and to love this good Lady, and strive also to have her loved by as ma-

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-ny as you can; and do not doubt, but trust with assurance, that if you persevere in true devotion towards Mary until death, your salvation will be certain. I make an end, not because I lacked things to say of the Glories of this great Queen, but so as not to weary you further. The little I have written may well suffice to make you fall in love with this great treasure of devotion to the Mother of God, to which she will indeed respond with her powerful patronage. Accept, then, the desire I have had in this Work of mine to see you saved and holy, by seeing you made a loving and devoted child of this most lovable Queen. And if you find that this Book of mine has helped you in this even a little, for charity's sake I beg you: commend me to Mary, and ask her for me that grace which I ask of her for you — namely, that we may see one another one day in Paradise together at her feet, united with all her other dear children.

And turning at the last to you, O Mother of my Lord and my Mother Mary, I beg you to accept these poor labours of mine, and the desire I have had to see you praised and loved by all. You already know how much I have longed to finish this little Work of mine on your Glories before my life should end — a life which is already drawing near its close. Now I say that I die content, leaving upon earth this book of mine, which will go on praising you and preaching you, as I have striven always to do in these years of my conversion, which through you I obtained from God. O Mary immaculate, I commend to you all those who love you, and especially

those who shall read this book of mine; and still more particularly those who shall do me the charity of commending me to you. Lady, give them perseverance, make them all holy, and so lead us all to praise you together in Heaven. O my most sweet Mother, it is true that I am a poor sinner, but I glory in loving you, and I hope great things from you, and among the rest to die loving you. I hope that in the anguish of my death, when the Devil sets my sins before me, first the Passion of Jesus and then your intercession will comfort me to go forth from this wretched life in the grace of God, so as to come and love him, and to thank you, my Mother, for ever and ever. Amen. So I hope, so may it be.

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Domina dic pro nobis Filio tuo, vinum non habent. Calix hujus vini inebrians quam præclarus est! Inebriat amor Dei ad contemtum mundi; calefacit, facit fortes, somnolentos ad temporalia, & ad invisibilia promptos. — Lady, say for us to your Son: they have no wine. How glorious is the inebriating cup of this wine! The love of God inebriates unto contempt of the world; it warms, it makes men strong, drowsy to temporal things and ready for the unseen. (S. Bern. aut quisquis est auctor in Salv. Reg. Serm. 4.)

Tu es ager plenus, plena virtutum, plena gratiarum. Tu processisti ut aurora lucida, & rubicunda; quia superatis originalibus peccatis, nata es lucida cognitione veritatis, & rubicunda amore virtutis; nihil omnino inimicus proficit in te, eo quod mille clypei pendent ex te, sed & omnis armatura fortium; Nihil est enim virtutis quod in te non resplendeat, & quicquid singuli habuere sancti, tu sola possedisti. — You are a full field, full of virtues, full of graces. You came forth like the dawn, bright and red: for, original sin being overcome, you were born bright with the knowledge of truth and red with the love of virtue. The enemy prevails nothing at all against you, because a thousand bucklers hang upon you, and all the armour of the valiant. For there is no virtue that does not shine out in you; and whatever the saints have had singly, you alone have possessed. (Id. ib.)

O Domina nostra, mediatrix nostra, advocata nostra, tuo filio nos commenda. Fac, o benedicta, per gratiam quam meruisti, ut qui, te mediante, dignatus est fieri particeps nostræ infirmitatis & miseriæ, te quoque intercedente, participes nos faciat bentitudinis & gloriæ suæ. — O our Lady, our mediatrix, our advocate, commend us to your Son. Grant, O blessed one, by the grace you have merited, that he who through your mediation deigned to become a partaker of our weakness and misery may, by your intercession also, make us partakers of his blessedness and glory. (Idem ib.) W1 prints *bentitudinis* for *beatitudinis*. Retained as printed.

Fair Rose, if in pity

you already love me, make me long for
so great a love, that my heart
may one day die for you.
O my Lady, grant me the lot
of loving you always, and in death
of breathing out my soul in calling upon you.
Sweet Mary, my Hope,
you are indeed that happy Star
who must guide me to the harbour, to Heaven.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa.

End of the Second Part.

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APPENDIX

OF VARIOUS EXAMPLES

Belonging to Mary Most Holy.

SOME, priding themselves on being free of prejudice, make it a point of honour to believe no Miracles but those recorded in the sacred Scriptures, esteeming the rest as little more than tales and old wives' fables. But it is well to note here a just observation of the learned and pious Fr. John Crasset (to. 2. tr. 6. prat. 20.), who says that the readier good people are to believe Miracles, the readier the wicked are to deride them; adding that, just as it is weakness to give credit to everything, so on the contrary to reject miracles which are attested by grave and pious men savours either of unbelief, in thinking them impossible to God, or of rashness, in denying credit to such a class of authors. Can we give credence to a Tacitus, to a Suetonius, and can we deny it without rashness to learned and upright Christian Authors? *There is less danger* (said Fr. Canisius, *l. 5. de Deip. c. 18.*) *in believing and accepting what is reported with some probability by good people, and not disproved by the learned, and serves for the edification of our neighbour, than in rejecting it with a contemptuous and rash spirit.*

Example. In Germany a certain man fell into a grave sin. Not being willing to confess it out of shame, and on the other hand not being able to bear the remorse of conscience, he went to throw himself into the river; but then he held back, and wept, praying God to pardon it him without Confession. One night as he slept he

felt his shoulder shaken, with a voice that said to him: *Go, confess.* He went to the Church, but still did not confess. Another night he heard the same voice. He returns to the Church; but when he had come there he said that he would rather die than confess that sin. But as he was already about to return home, he wished first to go and commend himself to Mary most holy, whose Image stood in that same Church; and scarcely had he knelt when he felt himself wholly changed. He rose at once, called the Confessor, and weeping bitterly for the grace received from

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the Virgin he confessed entirely; and afterwards he said that he had felt greater contentment than if he had gained all the gold in the World. (*Annal. Sol. 1650. ap. Auriem. Aff. Scamb. t. 3. c. 7.*)

E. 2. A young nobleman travelling by sea set himself to read an obscene book, to which he was much attached. A Religious said to him: Come now, would you give something to Our Lady? He answered yes. Well then (the other added), I should like you, for love of the Holy Virgin, to tear up that book of yours and throw it into the sea. Here it is, Father, said the young man. No, I want you yourself to make this gift to Mary. He did it; and the Mother of God, as soon as he returned to Genoa his native place, so inflamed his heart that he went and became a Religious. *Ann. Marian. 1505.*

3. A Hermit on Monte Oliveto kept in his Cell a devout Image of Mary, before which he made many prayers. The Devil, not being able to endure such devotion to the Holy Virgin, tormented him continually with impure temptations; so that the poor old Hermit, finding himself not freed from them by all the prayers and mortifications he made, one day said to the enemy: *And what have I done to you, that you will not let me live?* Then the Devil appeared to him and answered: *The torment you give me is greater than the one I give you. Come now* (he then added), *swear me secrecy, and I will tell you what you must leave off doing, and I will trouble you no more.* The Hermit gave the oath, and then the Devil said to him: *I want you never again to turn towards that Image which you keep in your cell.* The Hermit, confounded, went to take counsel about it with Abbot Theodore, who told him that he was not bound by the oath, and that he should take care not to leave off commending himself to Mary in that Image as he had done before. The Hermit obeyed, and the Devil was left shamed and defeated. (Bonif. Ist. Virg. c. 6.)

4. There came once to confession to Fr. Onofrio d'Anna, a Pious Worker in the Kingdom of Naples, a Woman all terrified, who had carried on a dishonest relationship with two young men, one of whom out of jealousy had killed the other. She related to the Father that at the very hour when that wretched young man had

died, he had appeared to her clothed in black, girt with chains, sending out fire from every part, with an iron in his hand; and that as he raised his arm to cut her throat, she then, trembling, said: *Ah so-and-so* (naming his name

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), *what have I done to you, that you would kill me?* To this the damned man, full of scorn, answered: *Wretch, wretch, wretch, you ask me what you have done to me? you have made me lose God.* Then she invoked the Blessed Virgin, and at hearing the most Holy Name of Mary named, that shade vanished and was seen no more. (in *Vit. P. Ant. de Collel. c. 32. §. 5.*)

5. While St. Dominic was preaching at Carcassonne in France, there was brought there an Albigensian Heretic who, because he publicly discredited the devotion of the most Holy Rosary, had been possessed by the Demons. Then the Saint commanded the enemies on God's behalf to make known whether the things he had said concerning the most Holy Rosary were true. They, howling, said: *Hear, Christians: all that this enemy of ours has said of Mary and of the most Holy Rosary is entirely true.* And they added further that they had no power at all against the servants of Mary; and that at death many, against their own deserts, were saved by invoking Mary. Lastly they said: *We are constrained to declare that no one is lost who perseveres in devotion to Mary and to the most Holy Rosary, because Mary obtains for sinners a true repentance before they die.* Then St. Dominic had the people recite the Rosary; and — oh wonder — at every *Hail Mary* many Demons came out of the body of that unhappy man in the form of burning coals, until, the Rosary being finished, he was left entirely free. At this event many Heretics were converted. *Paciuch. in Sal. Ang. Exc. 4. n. 10.*) The parenthesis is closed without having been opened. Retained as printed.

6. There was in a Monastery the daughter of a certain Prince, who, although she was of good disposition, nevertheless, because in that place the spirit was relaxed, advanced little in virtue. But having then begun to say the Rosary with the Mysteries, as a good Confessor had suggested to her, she was so changed that she was the example of all. Whence the other Nuns, taking offence at her withdrawnness, made great assaults upon her to make her give up the life she had undertaken. One day, while she was reciting the Rosary and praying Mary to assist her in that persecution, she saw a Letter fall from on high. On the outside was written: *Mary Mother of God, to her daughter Joan, greeting.* And within: *My beloved daughter, go on saying my Rosary: withdraw from dealings with those who do not help you to live well: guard yourself from idleness and from vanity, and take out of your cell two superfluous things, and I will protect you with God.* Then,

the Abbot of that Monastery having come to visit it, he sought to reform it, but accomplished nothing. And one day he saw many Demons entering all the Cells of the Nuns, but not that of Joan; for from there the Divine Mother drove them away, and before her he saw Joan praying to her. Learning then from her of the devotion of the Rosary she practised, and of the Letter she had received, he ordered that all should say the Rosary; and the History relates that that Monastery became a Paradise. (*Bonif. l. 4. c. 4. ex B. Alan. &c.*)

7. There was in Rome a woman of evil life called *Catherine the fair*. She, having once heard St. Dominic preach the devotion of the most Holy Rosary, had herself enrolled in the Book of the Sisters and began to say it; but she did not give up her dishonest life. One evening a young man who seemed noble came to find her; she received him courteously, and as they sat together at supper she saw that from the young man's hands, as he broke the bread, certain drops of blood fell; and then she observed that all the dishes he took were stained with blood. She asked him what that blood was. The young man answered *that a Christian must take no food that is not stained with the Blood of Jesus Christ, and not seasoned with the memory of his Passion.* At this she, astonished, asked him who he was. *Presently* (he answered) *I will let you know.* Then, having withdrawn into another room, the young man changed his appearance and showed himself to her crowned with thorns, his flesh all torn, and said to her: *Do you want to know who I am? Do you not know me? I am your Redeemer. Catherine, when will you have done offending me? See how much I have suffered for you. Come now, you have grieved me enough; change your life.* Then Catherine broke into a great fit of weeping, and Jesus said to her, encouraging her: *Come now, love me now as much as you have offended me; and know that you have received this grace from me for the Rosary recited to my Mother.* And he vanished. Catherine went in the morning to confess to St. Dominic; then she gave to the poor all she had, and led a life so holy that she attained a high perfection. The Virgin appeared to her many times; and Jesus himself revealed to St. Dominic that this penitent had become very dear to him. (*Diotall. t. 2. Domen. Quinquag.*)

8. Blessed Alan relates that there was a Lady called Domenica who at first used to recite the Rosary, but afterwards, having left it off, fell into such pover-

-ty that one day out of despair she gave herself three strokes with a knife. But while she was breathing her last, and the Demons were preparing to carry her off to Hell, Mary most holy appeared to her and said: Daughter, you have forgotten me, but I have not wished to forget you, for the sake of that Rosary which you once recited to

me. Come now (she added), if you will go on reciting it, I will restore you your life, and your goods too which you have lost. Then she rose up whole, and having taken up the Rosary again she recovered her property; and at her death she was visited again by Mary, who praised her for her fidelity, and she died a holy death. (*ap. Auriem. tom. 2. c. 11.*)

9. There was in Saragossa a certain nobleman, but a most wicked one, called Peter, a kinsman of St. Dominic. Now while the Saint was preaching one day, he saw Peter entering the Church, and prayed the Lord to show that congregation the state of that wretched sinner. And behold, Peter then appeared as a monster of Hell, dragged along and surrounded by many Devils. All began to flee — even his wife, who was in the Church, even the servants who accompanied him. Then St. Dominic sent word to him by one of his companions that he should commend himself to Mary and begin to recite that Rosary which he was sending him. The message delivered, Peter humbled himself and sent to thank the Saint; then he himself had the grace of seeing the Demons who stood about him. He then went to confess with many tears to the same Saint, by whom he was assured that he had already been pardoned. And continuing to say the Rosary, he came at length to so happy a state that one day the Lord made him appear in Church, in the sight of all, crowned with three crowns of roses. (*Cartag. t. 4. l. ult. §. 114.*) Whoever should want further Examples of the Rosary, let him read those set down in the *first part* at pages 27, 40, 63, 135, and 157.

10. In the mountains of Trent there lived a famous robber who, being one day admonished by a Religious to change his life, answered that for him there was no remedy left. No, said the Religious then, do this that I tell you: fast on Saturday in honour of Mary, and on that day molest no one, and she will obtain for you the grace of not dying out of God's favour. The robber carried out the good counsel, and made a vow of it; and so as not to fail in it from then on, on Saturday he would go fas-

-ting, unarmed. It happened that on a Saturday he met the officers of the law, and he, so as not to break his vow, let himself be taken without resistance. The Judge, seeing him old and quite white-haired, wished to spare him from death; but he, already stricken with compunction by the grace of Mary, said that he wished to die in punishment for his sins. Then in the very hall of the Tribunal he wished to confess in public all the faults of his life, and with so many tears that all wept for tenderness. He was beheaded, and a pit having been dug, he was buried with little honour. But afterwards the mother of God was seen, who had the corpse drawn out

of that place by four holy Virgins and wrapped in a rich cloth embroidered with gold; and when they themselves had carried it to the gate of the city, Our Lady said to the guards: Tell the Bishop on my behalf to give this dead man honourable burial in such and such a Church, because he was my faithful servant. And so it was done, all the people having gathered at that place, where they found that corpse already with the rich pall and the bier on which it lay. And from then on, says Caesarius, all in that Region took to fasting on Saturday. (*Theoph. Rayn. de S. Lacr. c. 15.* The parenthesis is not closed in W1. Retained as printed.

11. A devout servant of Mary in Portugal practised all his life the Saturday fast on bread and water in honour of Mary, and took St. Michael and St. John the Evangelist as his advocates with her. When he came to die, behold, the Queen of Heaven appeared to him with those Saints who were praying for him; and the Holy Virgin, looking upon her servant with a glad countenance, answered those Saints: I shall not depart from here without taking this Soul with me.

12. To one of the Fathers of our Congregation, on a Mission, after the Sermon on Mary which we are accustomed to give, there came an old man of many years to confess, all consoled, saying: Father, Our Lady has done me the grace. What grace has she done you? the Confessor asked him. Know, Father (he answered), that for thirty-five years I have made sacrilegious confessions, being ashamed of one sin, and that although I have passed through so many dangers and have been several times at the point of death — so that if I had died then I was certainly damned — now Our Lady has done me the grace of touching my heart. And he said this weeping with so many tears that it was a thing of tenderness. Now the Father, having already heard his confession, asked him what devotion he ha-

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-d had. He said that he had never on a Saturday failed to abstain from milk foods in honour of Mary, and that therefore the Virgin had had compassion on him. And he gave that Father leave to preach the fact.

13. In the parts of Normandy a certain robber had his head cut off by his enemies; but the head, after having been thrown into a valley, was heard to cry out: *Mary, give me Confession.* A Priest ran up and heard his confession; and asking him what devotion he had had, the robber answered that he had done nothing else but always fast on one day of the week in honour of the Holy Virgin, and that therefore Our Lady had obtained for him the grace of being delivered from hell by that Confession. (*Cantiprat. lib. 3. c. 10. p. 18.*)

14. Two young noblemen were in the City of Madrid, and each helped the other to lead a foul life full of vices. One of them saw in a dream one night that his friend

was seized by certain black men and carried off to a stormy sea. They meant to do the same with him, but he had recourse to Mary, vowing to become a Religious, and he saw himself delivered from those Moors. Then he saw Jesus on his Throne in anger, and the Holy Virgin obtaining mercy for him. When the other friend came to find him, he told him the vision, and the other mocked at it — but at that same time was killed with daggers. Whereupon the young man, seeing the vision verified, made his confession, confirmed his purpose of becoming a Religious, and to that end sold all he had; but then, instead of giving the money to the poor as he had purposed, he spent it on revelling and impurity. He then fell sick, and had another vision: it seemed to him that he saw hell open, and the Divine Judge already condemning him to it. He had recourse again to Mary, and Mary again delivered him. He recovered, and went on worse than before. He then went over to Lima in the Indies, where, falling sick aga-

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-in, and being there in the Hospital, he was again touched by God and confessed to Fr. Francesco Perlino, a Jesuit, to whom he promised amendment — but neither did he keep it. At last, the same Father entering one day another Hospital far off, saw lying on the ground that wretched man, who exclaimed: Ah, despairing that I am! for my greater punishment this Father has come here to see my chastisement. I came here from Lima, where by my vices I am reduced to this pass; and now I am going to hell. And saying this he expired, without that Father having even time to help him. *Bovio esempio d. SS. Verg. tom. 3. Es. 9.*) The parenthesis is closed without having been opened. Retained as printed.

15. There was in Germany a certain criminal condemned to death, but he, being obstinate, would not confess. A Jesuit Father — what did he not do to convert him? He begged him, wept, threw himself at his feet; but seeing that he was wasting his time, he said to him at last: Come now, let us recite an *Ave Maria* together. The condemned man did so, and behold, he began to weep bitterly, confessed with great sorrow, and wished to die embracing the image of Mary. (*An. Mar. an. 1618.*)

16. There was in a city of Spain a godless man who had given himself wholly over to the devil and had never confessed; he did no other good but say an *Ave Maria* every day. Fr. Eusebius Nieremberg relates that when this man came to die, the most Holy Virgin appeared to him in a dream and looked upon him; and Mary's merciful eyes so changed him that he sent at once to call the Confessor, to whom he confessed with bitter weeping, and made a vow to become a Religious if he lived; and so he died. (*Appr. Auriem. tom. 1. cap. 7.*)

17. A devout servant of Mary was always charging her daughter to recite the *Ave Maria* often, especially in any danger. It happened that this daughter, while she was resting one day having come from a ball, was assailed by the devil, who visibly wished to carry her off with him and had already seized her; but as she said *Ave Maria*, the enemy vanished. (*Bovio tom. 5. Es. 7.*)

18. A woman of Cologne, keeping up an evil friendship with a Priest, one day found him hanged in his own room. After this she entered a Monastery, where, the devil troubling her — and visibly too — she no longer knew what to do to free her-

-self of it. A companion suggested that she say the *Ave Maria*; and as she did so, the devil said: Cursed be she who taught you that. And he appeared no more. (*Cesar. lib. 3. cap. 33.*)

19. A certain Captain of evil life being in a castle of his, a good Religious came there by chance, who, being then enlightened by God, begged the Captain to have all his servants come there. They all came, but the valet was missing. When at last he was brought by force, the Father said to him: Come now, I command you on the part of Jesus Christ to say who you are. He answered: I am a demon of hell, who these fourteen years have served this wicked man, waiting for the day when he should leave off those seven *Ave Marias* which he has chosen to recite, so as to strangle him and carry him off to the fire. Then the Religious ordered the demon to depart, which it did, vanishing at once; and the Captain threw himself at his feet, was converted, and afterwards led a holy life. (*Spec. Ex. B. num. 69. & Crass. tom. 2. tract. 6. pr. 1.*)

20. Blessed Francis Patrizi, most devoted to the *Ave Maria*, used to recite five hundred of them every day. Mary warned him of the hour of his death, so that he died like a Saint; and after forty years there was seen coming out of his mouth a most beautiful lily (which was afterwards carried into France), on whose leaves was written the *Ave Maria* in letters of gold. (*Bolland. 15. Maii.*)

21. Caesarius relates that a Cistercian lay-brother knew no other prayer than the *Ave Maria*, and recited it continually with great devotion. After his death there grew out of the place where he was buried a tree, on whose leaves was written *Ave Maria gratia plena.* (*ap. Crass. tom. 2. tr. 6. pr. 1.*)

22. Three devout Virgins, by way of preparation for the feast of the Purification of Mary, and by the counsel of their Confessor, recited the whole Rosary for forty days over the course of a year. When the vigil came, the divine Mother appeared to the first sister in a rich robe embroidered with gold, and thanking her, she blessed her. Then she appeared to the second sister in a plain robe, and thanked her too. But

this one said to her: And why, Lady, did you come to my sister in a richer robe? Because she (Mary answered) has clothed me more richly than you. Afterwards she appeared to the third sister in a robe of sackcloth, whereupon that one begged her pardon for her lukewarmness in honouring her. In the

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following year all three prepared themselves well for that feast, saying the Rosary with great devotion. And behold, on the night before the feast Mary appeared to them all in splendour and said to them: Prepare yourselves, for tomorrow you shall come to Paradise. As indeed on the following day, the Confessor having been told of it, in the Church where they received Communion in the morning, at the hour of Compline they saw again the most Holy Virgin, who came to take them; and amid the songs of the Angels they sweetly expired one after another. (*Tesor. del Rosar. lib. 4. Mir. 17. Diotall. tom. 1. Agg. Es. 7.*)

23. Fr. Crasset relates that a certain Commander of soldiers told him that once, after a battle, he found on the Field a soldier who held in his hand a *Rosary* and a *Scapular of Mary*, and was asking for a Confessor. His forehead was pierced by a musket ball which had come out at the back of the head, so that his brain could be seen coming out on both sides; so that naturally he could not live. This man raised himself, confessed to the Chaplain with great feeling, and after receiving absolution expired. (*Crass. tom. 2. tr. 6. pr. 14.*)

24. The same Author adds that the same Captain reported to him that, being present at a pistol shot which was fired at a Trumpeter of the Company by one who stood near him, he went to look at his breast where the man said he was wounded, and found that the ball had stopped upon the *Scapular* of the Virgin which he wore, without touching the flesh; whereupon he took it and showed it to all. (*Crass. loc. cit.*)

25. A young nobleman called Eskil, having been sent by the Prince his father to study at Hildesheim, a city in Saxony, gave himself over to a disorderly life. He then fell so gravely ill that he was given up for dying. Being in this extremity, he had this vision: he saw himself shut in a furnace of fire, and already believed himself to be in hell; but then it seemed to him that he escaped from it by chance through a hole and took refuge in a great palace, in whose hall he saw Mary most holy, who said to him: Rash man, do you dare to appear before me? Away, get out of here, and go to the fire as you deserve. The young man then begged the Virgin for pity, and then turned to some persons whom he saw in that place, begging them to commend him to Mary. They did so; and the divine Mother answered: But do you not know the dishonest life of this man, and that he has not deigned to say to me so much as one

Ave Maria? The Advocates replied: Lady, he will change his life. And the young man took it up: Yes, I promise to amend myself in earnest, and I will be your servant. And then the Virgin, her displeasure clearing, said to him: Very well, then, I accept your promise; be faithful to me, and meanwhile by my blessing remain free from hell and from death. And having said this, the Visio-

-n vanished; and Eskil, coming to himself, blessing Mary told the others the grace he had received. And leading a holy life from then on, always keeping a great affection for Our Lady, he was made Archbishop of the Church of Lund in Denmark, where he converted many to the faith; and at the end of his life, being old, he resigned the Archbishopric and became a Monk at Clairvaux, where he lived four years and died a holy death. Whence by Authors he was numbered among the Saints of Cîteaux. *Ann. Cisterc. an. 1151. cap. 5. & Bov. tom. 5. Es. 6.*) The parenthesis is closed without having been opened. Retained as printed.

26. A certain brother of the Confraternity of Mary was invited by a friend to dine with him one morning. He promised to go; but he wished to go first to the Confraternity, after which he forgot the promise. Whereupon the friend took such offence that, meeting him, he went to kill him; but by the just judgement of God he killed himself. At once the brother was seized by the Court, believed guilty of that man's death, and was condemned to die. He commended himself to the Virgin, and inspired by her had himself carried before the dead man, of whom, asking how he had died, the man confessed that he had killed himself; and the brother was set free. (*V. P. Aurim. tom. 2. ex cap. 4.*)

27. In the year 1604, at Dole, a brother lay gravely ill. One feast day, saying: At this hour my brothers are in the Confraternity praising Mary, and I am lying here? — he rises, goes to the Confraternity, in an instant the fever leaves him, and he returns home well. (*Auriem. tom. 2. cap. 6.*)

28. Another member of the Confraternity, a fisherman in Naples, was many days ill from the disciplines taken in the Confraternity. Having somewhat recovered, being poor and with a family, he returned to his fishing, saying to the most Holy Virgin: Lady, for your sake I have suffered this loss; help me. Our Lady made him catch as much fish as he could have caught in all the time he had lost. (*Aur. c. 5.*)

29. Another brother was about to go to prison for not being able to satisfy his creditors; he commends himself to Mary, and the most Holy Virgin inspired six of his creditors to remit his debt, and so it came about. (*Ann. Cong. an. 1598.*)

30. A young man who used to go to the Confraternity of the Virgin afterwards left it and gave himself over to a dissolute life. One night the devil appeared to him in a frightful form; he invoked Our Lady. In vain (said the

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enemy then) do you invoke her whom you have left; you are mine for your sins. The young man, trembling, knelt down and began to recite the brothers' formula, *Most Holy Virgin Mother, etc.* Then the Mother of God was seen to appear, at the sight of whom the devil fled, leaving a great stench and an opening in the wall. And Mary then, turning to the young man, said to him: You did not deserve my help, but I have chosen to show you mercy, so that you may change your life and return to the Confraternity. In the morning he at once confessed with great weeping, and returned to the Confraternity. (*Lecnero Sodal. Partb. lib. 3. c. 3.*)

31. In Bragança there was another young man who, having left the Confraternity, abandoned himself to so many vices that one day out of despair he went to throw himself into a river. But before throwing himself he turned to Our Lady, saying: O Mary, I have served you in the Confraternity; help me. The most Holy Virgin appeared to him and said: And you now, what would you do? would you lose your soul and your body? Go, confess, and return to the Confraternity. The young man, brought to his senses by this, thanked the Virgin and changed his life. (*Ann. Son. 1550.*)

32. A certain Religious in Spain, carried away once by anger, killed his Superior. After this excess he fled into Barbary, where he renounced the faith and took a wife. Living then so unworthy a life, he did no other good but say one *Salve Regina* a day. One day, being alone, he said his *Salve*, and behold, Mary appeared to him, reproved him, and encouraged him to change his life, promising him her help. He then returned home, where his wife, seeing him distressed, questioned him; and he, weeping, made known to her his state and the vision he had had. Whereupon she, pitying him, gave him money for the return journey, and one of the sons she had by him as well. He returned to the Monastery, where he wept so much that he was received again into the Order, together with his son; and there he persevered, and then died with the reputation of a saint. (*Auriem. tom. 2. cap. 7.*)

33. A schoolboy, by his Master's teaching, began to greet the most Holy Virgin with these words: *God save you, O mother of mercy.* When he came to die, Mary appeared to him and said to him: *Son, do you not know me? I am that mother of mercy whom you have so many times greeted.* And then the Virgin's devout servant stretched out his arms as if to follow her, and sweetly expired. (*Auriem. tom. 2. cap. 7.*)

34. A certain sinner

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who lived in sin kept no other devotion than to recite every day the *Sub tuum præsidium*. One day the Virgin so enlightened him that, leaving his evil life, he entered Religion, where he lived fifty years an exemplary life, and so died. (*Ann. Marian. 15. Jul.*)

35. In Turin there was an obstinate Heretic in 1610 who, having come to die, would not even be converted, for all that many Priests who assisted him for eight continuous days could say to him. At last one of them constrained him almost by force to have recourse to Mary with these words: *Mater Jesu, assiste mihi — Mother of Jesus, assist me.* Then the Heretic, as if awakened from sleep, said: *I want to die a Catholic.* And in fact, reconciled with the Church, within two hours he died. (*Barri Par. ap. cap. 2.*)

36. Another unbeliever in the Indies, being at the point of death and abandoned by all, and having heard the Christians praise the power of Mary so much, had recourse to her. The Virgin appeared to him and said to him: Here I am, I am she whom you invoke; go and be made a Christian. At once he felt himself well, and was baptized; and many at this prodigy were converted. (*Patr. Menol. 18. Settembre.*)

38. A certain man in Madrid in the year 1610, being most devoted to Mary, and especially to an Image called *of Antioch*, married a woman who out of jealous suspicions gave him no rest. He went every Saturday barefoot, and early in the morning, to visit that Image; but his wife, believing that he went elsewhere, once in particular loaded him with so many insults that he, blinded by impatience, took a rope and hanged himself. But being about to breathe out his soul, when perhaps he could no longer help himself, he invoked Mary to help him; and behold, he saw before him a most beautiful Lady, who drew near to him and cut the rope. The people outside the door became aware of it, and then he told what had happened. At which his wife too was moved to compunction; and from then on they lived in peace, and devoted to the divine mother. (*Andrado del Battes. di n Don. E'l P. Rho Sab. Es. 71.*)

38. A certain man of Valencia in the year 1613 fell into a sin which he was then ashamed to confess, so that he made his Confessions sacrilegiously. But not being able to hold out against the remorse of conscience, one day he went to visit Our Lady of Halle to obtain help. Having come to the door of the Church, which stood open, he saw himself thrust back by an invisible force; then he purposed to confess, and at once went in; he confessed enti-

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-rely, and went home all consoled. (*An. Soc. ap. Auriem. tom. 2. c. 1.*)

39. Blessed Adam the Cistercian, going one evening to visit the Holy Virgin in a Church, found the doors shut, whereupon he knelt outside to greet her; but scarcely had he knelt when he saw the doors open. He entered, and beheld the Queen of heaven in the midst of a great splendour, who said to him: Adam, come here; do you know who I am? Adam answered: No, Lady; who are you? I am (she said) the mother of God. Know that for the service you do me I will always have care of you. And laying her blessed hand upon his head, she delivered him from a great pain which the Blessed man suffered there. (*Cronic. Cisterc.*)

40. A devout servant of Mary, having gone one day to visit a Church of Our Lady without her husband's knowledge, could not because of a great storm return home that night. Whereupon she took great fright, that her husband would show great resentment at it. She therefore commended herself to Mary; she returned home and found her husband all kindness and good grace. In short, prying and asking, she found that the divine Mother had taken her form the evening before, and had done all her household services like a servant. Then she told her husband all that had happened, and both lived most devoted to the Blessed Virgin. (*Chron. Min. 104. lib. 5. cap. 23.*)

41. A certain Knight of the city of Doul in France called Ansaldo received in a battle an arrow which so entered the bone of his jaw that it was not possible to draw out the iron. After four years, the wretched man being no longer able to bear the pain, and being besides gravely ill, they thought to open the wound again to extract the iron. Then he commended himself to the Blessed Virgin, and made a vow to visit a devout Image which was in that place, giving a certain sum every year, if he obtained the grace. Scarcely had he made the vow when he felt the iron fall of itself into his mouth. The next day, ill as he was, he goes to visit the Image; and scarcely had he laid the promised money on the Altar when he felt himself wholly well of his sickness too. (*Chron. Dul. to. 1. del Labbeo, e 'l P. Rho Es. 27.*)

42. In Spain there was a man who kept an evil relationship with a kinswoman. Now while a devout Vir-

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-gin was at prayer, she saw Jesus on his Throne, about to send that guilty man to hell; but his Holy Mother, saying that he had once honoured her, obtained for him thirty days to repent. Whereupon the Woman, by order of the Divine Mother herself, went to tell everything to her Confessor, who, disclosing it all to the Young man, he at once confessed with many tears and promised amendment. But because he did not remove the occasion, which was in his own house, he returned to his

vomit. He came again to confess, again promised, but again fell back. The Father, not seeing him any more, went to find him at home; but he dismissed him rudely. The last of the thirty days having come, the Father returned there, but in vain; whereupon he begged the servants to let him know at any turn of events. Behold, that night the wretched man was seized with great pains; being called, the Father hurried there and sought to help him; but the unhappy man, saying, Ah, I die of a lance in the heart, and giving a howl of despair, so expired. (*P. Andrand. lib. 2. Imit. del V. cap. 23.*)

43. A certain gambler in Milan, called Masaccio, was so lost that one day he gambled away even his clothes; whereupon in his fury he wounded an Image of the Virgin with a knife. From the wound came a gush of blood which struck him in the face. He then, moved to tenderness, began to weep, thanked Mary who had obtained for him time for penance, and became a Cistercian; attaining, by the good life he afterwards led, even to the gift of prophecy. And after forty years in Religion he died a holy death. (*P. Rho Sab. Es. 42.*)

44. A great sinner, weeping once at the feet of a Crucifix, begged it to give him a sign of pardon. But not having the sign he desired, he turned to Mary of Sorrows, who then appeared; and he saw her present his tears to her Son, saying: *Fili, istæ lacrymæ peribunt? — Son, shall these tears be lost?* And then he understood that Christ already pardoned him; and from then on he lived a holy life. (*P. Sinisc. Mart. di Mar. Cons. 38.*)

45. To one of our Fathers, called D. Cesare Sportelli (lately deceased in the odour of sanctity, and found incorrupt after many months), there came on a Mission to confess a man of advanced age, after our customary Sermon on the powerful intercession of Mary, which we always give on Missions. Having come to the Confessor's feet he said: Father, Our La-

-dy has done me the grace. This is her way, answered the Father. But you (the man went on) will not be able to absolve me, because I have never confessed. And in fact, although he was a Catholic, he had never confessed. The Father encouraged him, heard his confession, and absolved him with great consolation.

46. Blessed Bernardo Tolomei, Founder of the Olivetan Fathers, most devoted to Mary from childhood, was one day in great distress in his Hermitage of Accona, called Monte Oliveto, with the fear of not being saved, and that God had not yet pardoned him. The Divine Mother appeared to him and said: What do you fear, my Son? Be of good cheer; God has already pardoned you, and is pleased with the life you lead; go on, and I will help you, and you will be saved. The blessed man went on

living in holiness, until at last he had a happy death in Mary's arms. (*In Vita B. Bern. Tolom.*)

47. In the parts of Germany a young woman called Agnes fell into sin with her own Father. She became pregnant, and fled into a desert place, where she gave birth. Then the Devil appeared to her in the form of a Religious, and made her throw the child into a pond. Afterwards he urged her to throw herself in as well. Hearing this the woman said: Mary, help me; and the Devil vanished. (*Spec. Ex. V. Beata Maria Ex. 10.*)

48. A Soldier taking his wife to the Devil in a wood, according to the promise he had made him — on condition that the Devil should provide him with money — passed before a Church of the Virgin. Then the woman begged her husband to allow her to greet Mary in that Church. She went; but then, in place of her, the Divine Mother came out, who, having taken her likeness, mounted the horse. Having come to the wood, the Devil said to the husband: Traitor, how is it that in place of your wife you bring me the Mother of God, my enemy? And you, answered Mary, how have you dared to seek to harm this devout servant of mine? Go, flee to Hell. And you (turning then to that man she said), change your life, and I will help you: and she vanished. Whereupon that wretched man afterwards came to his senses, and for the future changed his life. (*Giac. di Vorag. in Fest. Ass. & Spec. Es. 31.* The parenthesis is not closed in W1. Retained as printed.

49. There was in Mexico a sinful woman who, having fallen ill, came to her senses and made a vow to Mary that if she recovered she would present her with her hair. She recovered, brought the hair, and they made of it a wig for the statue

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of the Virgin. But the woman then, falling back into sin, fell back into her sickness and died impenitent. After which one day Mary from that Image spoke to Fr. Giammaria Salvaterra, a Jesuit, in the presence of a great crowd, and said: Take off my head this hair, which is that of a damned and dishonest soul, and does not sit well on the head of the Mother of purity. And so the Father did, throwing it into the fire himself. (*Patrign. Men. 8. Lu.*)

50. Many Christians in Spain, having been made slaves by a Saracen called Petran, commended themselves to the Holy Virgin. And Mary appeared to the Saracen and said to him: Petran, how do you dare to keep my devout servants as slaves? Release them at once, obey. And who are you, that I must obey you? answered the Moor. I am (she said) the Mother of God; and because they have had recourse to me, I will that you give them their liberty. Then Petran felt himself changed. He goes indeed and frees the Christians, and then offered himself to the

Virgin; and Mary, having first instructed him, herself baptized him at a spring, where afterwards a Church was built, and a Monastery of Benedictines. (*Euf. Nier. Troph. Mar. l. 2. c. 14.*)

51. A certain Canon, while he was reciting certain praises to the Divine Mother, fell into the river Seine and was drowned; and because he was in mortal sin, the Demons came to carry him off to Hell. But at that same moment Mary appeared, who said to them: How do you dare to carry off this man, who has died while he was praising me? Come now (turning then to the sinner she said), amend yourself, and be devoted to my Conception. He returned to life, became a Religious, and never ceased thanking his deliverer, and spreading everywhere devotion to her Immaculate Conception. (*Jod. Clictov. in Ser. Concept.*)

52. While the Monks of Clairvaux were reaping in the fields and were praising the Queen of Heaven, Mary most holy was seen caressing them, and two other Saints wiping away their sweat. (*Spec. Ex. verb. Laborare. Es. 7.*)

53. The brother of the King of Hungary recited every day the Office of Mary. Once, having fallen gravely ill, he made a vow of chastity to the Virgin if she gave him his life; and at once he recovered. But his brother having died, and he marrying a young woman, while they were already about to celebrate the wedding, he withdrew into a room to say his customary Of-

-fice; and having come to those words, *Quam pulchra es, & decora — How beautiful you are, and comely* — etc., he saw Mary, who said to him: And if I am beautiful, as you say, why do you now leave me for another bride? Know that if you leave this one, you shall have me for your bride, and the Kingdom of Heaven in place of that of Hungary. After this the Prince fled into a desert place near Aquileia, where he lived a holy life. (*S. Ans. in ep. ap. Auriem. tom. 1. c. 8.*)

54. St. John Climacus relates that there was a devout Religious called Carcerio who often used to say little Songs in praise of Mary, and always greeted all her images with the *Ave Maria*. Now this man then fell into an illness so painful that in his agony he bit his lips and his tongue; so that, having lost the power of speech, he was already at the end of his life. But while they were already commending his soul, the Mother of God appeared to him and said: I have come to heal you, not being able to bear that you should suffer any longer in that mouth with which you have so much praised me. Come now, be well, and go on praising me. And having said this she sprinkled him with certain drops of her milk. In fact he recovered at once, and in his life never ceased to praise her, until, visited again at his death by his Lady, he died sweetly in her hands. (*Prato Fior. l. 3. Es. 105.*)

55. While St. Francis Borgia was in Rome, an Ecclesiastic came to speak with him; the Saint, being occupied, sent Fr. Acosta to him, to whom the man said: Father, I am a Priest and a Preacher; but living in sin, and distrusting the Divine mercy, after having preached one day against the obstinate who then despair of pardon, there came to confess to me one who told me all my own sins, and at the end said to me that he despaired of the Divine pity. I, to do my office, said that he should change his life and trust in God; then that penitent rose to his feet and rebuked me. And you who preach thus to others, why do you not amend yourself, and why do you despair? Now know, he said, that I am an Angel come for your help; amend yourself, and you shall be pardoned. And having said this, he vanished. I abstained for a few days from my dishonest vices, but when the occasion came I returned to sin. Another day, as I was celebrating, Jesus Christ spoke to me perceptibly from the Host: *Why do you treat me so ill, while I treat you so well?* After this I resolved to amend, but

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at the new occasion I fell back again. Then, a few hours ago, as I was in my room, there came to me a young man who drew out from under his cloak a Chalice, and from this a consecrated Host, saying: Do you know this Lord whom I hold in my hand? Do you remember the many graces he has done you? Now behold the punishment of your ingratitude. And as he said this, he grasped a sword to kill me. I then cried out: For the love of Mary do not kill me, for I truly wish to amend. And he said to me: This means alone has been able to save you; know how to use it, for this is the last mercy for you. And having said this, he left me; and I have come at once, and beg to be received among you. Fr. Acosta consoled him; and the Priest, by the counsel of St. Francis too, then entered another Order of strict observance, where he persevered in holiness until death. (*Andr. nel suo Itin. Grad. 7. ap. Bov. tom. 4. Esemp. 5.*)

56. In the year 1228, a Priest being at the altar to celebrate Mass on a Saturday in honour of Mary most holy, certain Albigensian Heretics came and cut out his tongue. In this state he betook himself to the Monastery of Cluny, where those good Religious received him with much charity, having compassion on the pain which went on afflicting him from his severed tongue. But the devout Priest's greater grief was at not being able to say Mass any more, nor to recite the Divine Office and that of the Virgin as he used to. When the Epiphany came, he had himself carried into the Church, where before the Altar of the Holy Virgin he begged her to restore to him the tongue lost for love of her, so that he might praise her as he did before. Behold, Mary appeared to him with a tongue in her hand and

said to him: Since for the Faith, and to give honour to me, you have lost your tongue, I give you a new one. And having said this, with her own hands she set the tongue in his mouth; whereupon at once the Priest, raising his

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voice, recited the *Ave Maria*. The Monks came running, and among them the Priest, made a Religious, chose then to remain, in order always to go on there praising his benefactress. And the mark of the scar left in his tongue could be seen by all. (*Cæsarius l. 7. Dial. c. 24.*).

57. In the year 589 there was in Rome that famous plague in which men fell dead while sneezing. St. Gregory the Great, carrying the image of St. Mary Major in procession through the City, at that place which is now called Castel Sant'Angelo, saw an Angel in the air putting back into its sheath a sword dripping with blood. Then he heard the Angels sing: *Regina Cæli lætare alleluja, quia quem meruisti portare alleluja, resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluja. — Queen of Heaven rejoice, alleluia; for he whom you deserved to bear, alleluia, has risen as he said, alleluia.* And then St. Gregory added: *Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluja — Pray to God for us, alleluia.* The plague ceased at once; and from then on the greater Litanies began to be celebrated every year on the 25th of April. (*Sigon. de Re. It. ap. Diotall. to. 1. in fin. Es. 4.*)

58 A small City of France, called Avenon, was once besieged by enemies. The Citizens, praying Mary to defend them, set at the gate of the City an Image of hers taken from a Church. One of the Citizens having hidden behind the Image, an enemy Soldier shot an arrow at him, saying: Now indeed that Image of yours will not save you from death. But the Image stretched out its knee, in which the arrow remained fixed (as is seen to this day), and so saved the life of her devout servant. And at this prodigy the enemy also raised the siege. (*Discip. Promt. ex. 83.*)

59. In Naples there was a Moor, a slave of D. Ottavio del Monaco, who, for all that he had been admonished to leave his Mohammedan sect, remained obstinate; but he never failed to light every evening at his own expense a lamp before an image of Mary which was in that house. And he used to say: I hope that this Lady is going to do me a great grace. One night the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and told him to become a Christian. The Turk still resisted; but she, laying her hand on his shoulder and saying to him: Come now, Abel, resist no longer; be baptized, and be called Joseph — he in the morning at once had himself instructed, and was baptized on the 10th of August 1648, together with eleven other Turks. Note this: when the Divine Mother appeared to him, after having converted him she made as if to depart; but the Moor took her by the mantle, saying to her: Lady, when I find myself in distress, I beg you to let me see you. And she promised it him; and in fact

once, when he was in trouble, he called her, and Mary showed herself to him again, and saying to him *have patience*, wholly consoled him. (*P. Alloza Cielo Stell. di Mar. l. 3 c. 3. Es. 60.*)

60. A certain Parish Priest of Asella called Balduino became a Dominican. Being then in the Novitiate

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there came to him the temptation that he could do greater good in the world in his Parish, and he had already resolved to return there; but as he was going to take his leave at the Altar of the Rosary, Mary appeared to him with two vessels of wine. She gave him to drink of the first, but the Novice, having scarcely tasted it, turned his mouth away, because although the wine was good, it was nevertheless full of dregs. The second she then said was good wine, and without dregs. Now just so (the most Holy Virgin then said) does life in the world differ from life in Religion, which you lead under obedience. Whereupon Balduino persevered, and died a good Religious. (*Chron. Ord. ap. Aur. tom. 2. c. 6.*)

61. Another Novice, also overcome by temptation, went to depart from the Monastery; but stopping to say an *Ave Maria* before an image of the Virgin, he felt himself nailed fast, unable to rise. Then he, coming to his senses, made a vow to persevere; then he rose freely, asked his master's pardon, and persevered. So printed: "liberamemnte". Retained as printed. (*Aur. loc. cit.*)

62. Blessed Clement the Franciscan one morning left off going to the common table, in order to stay and recite certain customary devotions of his to the most Holy Virgin; but she told him from an image that he should go with the others, since obedience pleased her more than all other devotions. (*Ann. Min. ap. Aur. to. 1. c. 4.*)

63. While Angela, daughter of the King of Bohemia, was in a Monastery, Mary appeared to her, and an Angel said to her: Rise, Angela, and flee to Jerusalem, for your Father means to give you as bride to the Prince of Hungary. The devout maiden set out at once; and on the journey the Divine Mother appeared to her again and encouraged her to go on with the journey. She was then received in Jerusalem among the Carmelites, and afterwards was commanded by the Blessed Virgin herself to return to her own Country, where she lived a holy life until death. (*P. Rho Sab. del. B. V. l. ex. 75.*)

64. St. Gregory relates that there was a maiden called Musa, very devoted to the Mother of God; but because through the bad example of her companions she was in danger of losing her innocence, Mary appeared to her one day with many holy women and said to her: Musa, will you too come with these? And when she answered yes, she added: Come now, withdraw from your companions and prepare

yourself, for a month from now you shall come. Musa in fact withdrew, and told the vision. When the thirtieth day came, she was brought to the point of death; and behold, then again

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the most Holy Virgin appeared to her, who called her; and she answering, *Behold, Lady, I come*, sweetly expired. (*S. Greg. l. 4. Diat. c. 17.* The parenthesis is not closed in W1. Retained as printed.

65. Anna Caterina Gonzaga was the first wife of Ferdinand I, Archduke of Austria. Her husband being dead, she entered the Order of the Servites of Mary, and had a crown made for herself on whose beads were carved the Sorrows of the Virgin; and she used to say that for this crown she renounced all other crowns of earth. And in fact she refused marriage with the Emperor Rudolf II. And when she was told that her younger sister had been crowned Empress, she answered: Let my sister enjoy her imperial crown; to me a thousand times dearer is this habit with which my Queen Mary has crowned me. The most Holy Virgin appeared to her many times in life, and at last this good Religious made a holy death. (*Jos. Mar. Barchius, in Vita*)

66. A certain Cleric, playing ball with other young men, and fearing to lose in play a ring given him by a woman, went and put it on the finger of an image of Mary which stood there. Then he felt himself moved to promise the Virgin that he would renounce the World and choose her for his bride. He made the promise; and behold, Mary closed her finger as if to accept the promise. But some time having passed, when he wished to marry another woman, Mary appeared to him and reproached him with his infidelity; whereupon he fled into a desert place, where he lived in holiness to the end. (*Spec. Ex. verb. B. Virg. Ex. 3.*)

67. About the year 850, Berengarius Bishop of Verdun in Lorraine, going one day into a Church where a certain Priest called Bernerius was saying the Office of Mary prostrate before the Choir, stumbled over him, whereupon, seized with impatience, he gave him a kick. That night the most Holy Virgin appeared to him and said: And how is it that you kicked my servant while he was praising me? Come now (she added), because I love you, I will that you pay the penalty for it. And then she withered his leg. He lived, and died a saint; and after many years his body was found wholly incorrupt, except in that leg. (*Chron. Virdun. ap. P. Rho.*)

68. A young man left rich after the death of his parents squandered all he had on gambling and revelling with friends — though he always kept his virginity. An uncle of his, seeing him reduced to poverty by his

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vices, exhorted him to say every day a part of the *Rosary*, promising him that if he persevered in it he would procure him a good marriage. The young man persevered; and having already changed his life, on the evening of the wedding he rose from the table to recite his Rosary. At the end of it Mary appeared to him and said: Come now, I will repay you the homage you have paid me. I do not will that you lose your virginity: within three days you shall die, and shall come with me to Paradise. And so it came about: at once a fever came upon him; he told the vision, and on the third day died with the greatest contentment. (*Cantip. l. 2. c. 29. p. 6.*)

69. The devout Author of the Book *A Secret for Every Grace* relates, in praise of the most Holy Rosary, that when St. Vincent Ferrer said to a despairing dying man: Why do you want to be damned, when Jesus Christ wants to save you? — that man answered that in spite of Christ he meant to be damned. And the Saint replied: And in spite of yourself you shall be saved. He begins the Rosary with the household, and behold, the sick man asks for Confession, confesses weeping, and so dies.

70. He relates further that in the last earthquake a poor woman was buried under a house which fell upon her. A Priest had the stones dug away, and beneath they found this mother with her children in her arms, all safe and sound. Being then asked what devotion she had had, she said that she had never left off saying the Rosary, and visiting her Chapel.

71. He relates further that another woman was living in an evil relationship, thinking that otherwise she could not live. She was advised to commend herself to Mary with the Rosary. She did so; and behold, one night the Divine Mother appeared to her and said to her: Leave the sin; and as for your maintenance to live on, trust in me, for I will see to it. In the morning she went to confess, left the sin, and Mary most holy indeed provided for her.

72. A sinner did not trust himself to abstain from impure sin; he begins to say the Rosary, and is freed from it.

73. Another person keeping up an evil friendship, by saying the Rosary felt an abhorrence of the sin. He fell back some other times, but with the Rosary at last was entirely freed of it.

74. Another woman was dying hating her husband; a good Priest who was assisting her, no longer knowing what to do to convert her, withdrew to say

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the Rosary; at the last decade that Woman comes to herself, repents, and forgives her Husband.

75. Lastly the said Author recounts that, having once given the Mission to the men condemned to the galleys at Naples, there were some obstinate men who

would not confess. He suggested to them that they should at least have themselves enrolled in the Company of the Rosary and begin to recite it. They did so; and scarcely had they recited one when they sought to confess, and confessed, after not having confessed for many years. These modern examples serve to revive our confidence in Mary, seeing that she is at present the same as she has always been towards those who have recourse to her.

76. St. Gregory reports that a holy Prelate, Bishop of Ferentino, was inclined to almsgiving from childhood. It happened one day that a certain Priest, his nephew, having sold a horse for ten gold scudi, took the money and locked it in a chest; but the Bishop, being asked by the poor and having nothing to give, broke open the chest and distributed that money to them. On learning it the nephew made such an uproar that the holy Prelate, not knowing what to do, had recourse to a Church of Mary. And behold, on the robe of the Image he saw ten scudi; he took them and gave them to his Nephew. (*S. Greg. Dialog. lib. 1. cap. 9.*)

77. A Lutheran Woman in Augsburg in Germany, who was most obstinate, passing one day by a little Chapel of the Catholics, moved by curiosity wished to enter. She saw there an Image of Mary with the Infant Jesus in her arms, and felt inspired to make her a gift; she goes home, takes a silk cloth, and brings it to her. When she had returned home, the most Holy Virgin enlightened her to know the falsity of her Sect; whereupon she goes at once to find the Catholics, abjures the Heresy, and is converted to God. (*An. Son. 1656. ap. Aut. tom. 2. c. 6.*)

78. In the City of Cesena there were two sinners who were friends. One of them, by name Bartolomeo, amid so many vices of his kept the devotion of reciting every day to Mary of Sorrows the Hymn *Stabat mater*. Once, as Bartolomeo was reciting this very Hymn, he had a vision in which he saw himself standing in a lake of fire together with his evil companion; and he saw that the most Holy Virgin, moved to pity, stretched out her hand to him and drew him out of the fire, and counselled him to seek pardon of Jesus Christ, who showed that he pardoned him for the prayers of his Mother. The vision

being ended, at that same moment Bartolomeo had the news that his friend had died of a harquebus shot, whereby he knew the truth of the vision. Then he left the World and entered the Order of the Capuchins, where he led a most austere life and died with the reputation of sanctity. (*P. Sinisc. Mart. di Mar. Conf. 15.*)

79. Blessed Jerome, Founder of the Somaschan Fathers, being Governor in a certain place, was taken by enemies and shut in the bottom of a tower. He turned to Mary, making a vow to go and visit her at Treviso if she delivered him. Then the

most Holy Virgin appeared to him in the midst of a great light, and with her own hands loosed him from his chains and gave him the keys of the prison. Having come out and set off for Treviso to fulfil his vow, after a few steps he found himself in the midst of enemies; again he had recourse to his Deliverer, and she, appearing to him again, took him by the hand and led him through the midst of the enemies, accompanying him to the gates of Treviso, and vanished. He made the visit, left at the foot of Mary's Altar the irons of his imprisonment, and thereafter gave himself to a holy life; whereby he has lately deserved to be placed by the holy Church among the number of the Blessed. (*In Vita*).

80. A Priest very devoted to *Mary of Sorrows* often went to a little Church, where, shut in, he stayed alone to have compassion on the Sorrows of his Lady; and out of an affection of compassion he used with a linen cloth to wipe the tears of a Statue of the Sorrowful Virgin which stood there. Now this man once, in a grave illness, was given up by the Physicians; but while he was near to expiring, he saw before him a beautiful Lady, who consoled him with her words and with a handkerchief gently wiped the sweat from his brow; and by this she healed him. Then the Priest, seeing himself well, said: But, Lady, who are you, who show me so much charity? *I am* (Mary answered) *she whose tears you have so many times wiped away*; and she vanished. (*Cantiprat. lib. Apum, ap. Sin. Conf. 9.*)

81. A noble Lady who had an only son was one day told that her son had been killed, and that the murderer had taken refuge by chance within her own Palace. She then, considering that Mary forgave those who crucified her Son, chose to forgive that guilty man too for love of Mary of Sorrows. And not only did she forgive him, but she provided him with a hor-

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-se, with money and clothes, so that he might save himself. Then her son appeared to her and told her that he was saved, and that for that generous act she had done towards her enemy the Divine Mother had delivered him from Purgatory, where otherwise he would have had to suffer for a long time, and that he was already going to Paradise. (*P. Thausc. de SS. Mar. dol. l. 2. c. 26.*)

82. A like heroic act was done by Blessed Bionda. Certain Enemies killed her only son, an innocent boy, purely out of the hatred they bore his Father, who was already dead. And with unheard-of barbarity they secretly gave the poor Mother the heart of the murdered Youth to eat so printed: "occultameute"; retained as printed. Now she, after the example of Mary most holy, set herself to pray for the murderers and to do them all the good she could. The Divine Mother was so pleased with this act that she called her to be enrolled in the third Order of the Servites, where she

deserved to lead a life so holy that in life and in death she worked many miracles. (*Ann. Ord. Serv. Cent. 2. l. 4. c. 13*)

83. St. Thomas of Canterbury, finding himself one day when he was young in a conversation with other Young men, of whom perhaps each was boasting of some mad love, the holy youth declared that he too loved a great Lady, and was loved by her — meaning to speak of the most Holy Virgin. Then some remorse came to him at having boasted of it. Being in this distress, behold, Mary appeared to him, and with sweet grace said to him: Thomas, what do you fear? You were right to say that you love me, and that you are loved by me. Confirm it to your companions, and in sign of the love I bear you, take them to see this gift which I make you. The gift was a little casket in which was a Chasuble of the colour of blood, in sign that Mary, for the love she bore him, had obtained for him from God the grace of being a Priest and a Martyr — as in fact came to pass. For he was first made a Priest, and Bishop of Canterbury in England, where, being persecuted once by the King, he fled into France to the Cistercian Monastery of Pontigny; and there, wishing to mend the hair-shirt he used to wear, since it had come unstitched, and being little skilled in doing it well, his beloved Queen appeared to him, and with extraordinary affection took the hair-shirt from his hands and mended it for him as it ought to be. Then, having returned to Canterbury, he died a Martyr, having been killed out of hatred of

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the zeal he had for his Church. (*in vita, & ap. Bov. tom. 4. Es. 36.*)

84. In a place in the Papal State a certain young Woman devoted to Mary met with a Chief of bandits. Fearing some outrage, she begged him for love of the most Holy Virgin not to molest her. Do not fear (he then answered her); since you have begged me in the name of the Mother of God, I ask only that you commend me to her. And in fact he himself accompanied her along the road and brought her to safety. The following night Mary appeared to the Bandit in a dream, and thanking him for that action done for love of her, told him that she would keep it in memory, and that in due time she would repay him for it. The Robber was afterwards taken by the Court and condemned to death. Behold, on the night before the day appointed for execution the Blessed Virgin showed herself to him again in a dream, and first asked him: Do you know who I am? He answered: I think I have seen you another time. I am (she takes it up) Mary the Virgin, who have come to repay you for what you then did for me. Tomorrow you shall die, but you shall die with such contrition that you shall come at once to Paradise. The Condemned man awoke, and felt such sorrow for his sins that he broke into bitter weeping, thanking Our

Lady aloud. He had the Confessor called at once, to whom he confessed with many tears, telling the vision he had had; and he begged him to publish everywhere this grace done him by Mary. He went to his death with great gladness; after which it is related that his face breathed an air of the blessed, making all believe that the Divine Mother's promise had come true. (*P. Recup. de Sign. Fruct. Sign. 12.*)

85. Blessed Joachim Piccolomini, most devoted to Mary, from childhood visited three times a d-

-ay an Image of Mary of Sorrows which stood in a Church; and on Saturday in her honour he tasted no food of any kind. Moreover, at midnight he would rise to meditate on her Sorrows. But let us see how Mary repaid him. First she appeared to him when he was young and told him to enter the Order of her servants, as the Blessed man then did. Then, towards the last years of his life, she showed herself to him again with two crowns in her hand: one of rubies, in reward for the compassion he had cultivated towards her Sorrows; the other of pearls, in reward for the purity he had consecrated to her. At his death finally she came to appear to him again, and then the Blessed man asked her the grace of dying on the day on which Jesus Christ died; and the most Holy Virgin consoled him, saying to him: Come now, prepare yourself, for tomorrow, Friday, you shall die at once, as you desire; and tomorrow you shall be with me in Paradise. And so it came about; for as the *Passion* of St. John was being sung in Church, at the words *Stabat juxta Crucem Jesu Mater ejus — There stood by the Cross of Jesus his Mother* — he fell into his last swoons. And as the words were said, *Et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum — And bowing his head he gave up the spirit* — the Blessed man too rendered his spirit to God; and at that same moment the Church was filled with a great splendour and a most sweet fragrance. (*Rossig. Pietà Ossequ.*)

86. Fr. Alfonso Salmerón of the Society of Jesus, having been most devoted to the Blessed Virgin, died saying: To Paradise, to Paradise! Blessed be the hour in which I served Mary; blessed be the Sermons, the labours, the thoughts I have had for you, my Lady: to Paradise. (*In vita*).

87. To St. Romuald there was presented by a certain Prince called Farnulfo his son Guido, a youth who desired to become a Camaldolese. The holy Founder accepted him with pleasure. One day Mary appeared to this good young servant of hers with the Infant Jesus in her arms; he, thinking himself unworthy of so great a grace, stood fearful. What do you doubt (the Divine Mother then said to him, drawing near to him), what do you fear, Guido? I am the Mother of God; this is my son Jesus, who wishes to come to you. And saying this, she gave him into his arms.

Then not even three years were ended since Guido had been in Religion when he came to die. Then St. Romuald saw that the poor Youth writhed and trembled all over, saying: O Father, do you not see how many Moors are in this cell? Son (the Saint said to him), might you remember something unconfessed? Yes, Father (he answered), I remember not having performed the Prior's order of obedience to gather up certain brooms; now I confess it. St. Romuald absolved him; and afterwards the scene changed, the Demons fled, and the Virgin appeared again with Jesus, at the sight of whom Guido died all consoled. (*Franc. Lelli in Vita.*)

88. A Cistercian Nun in Toledo called Maria, being at the point of death, the Divine Mother appeared to her. She then said to her: Lady, the grace which

you do me in visiting me makes me bold to ask you another grace: to die at the same hour at which you died and entered Heaven. Yes (Mary answered), I will content you; at that hour you shall die, and you shall hear the songs and the praises with which the Blessed accompanied my entrance into Heaven. Go now, prepare yourself. And having said this, she vanished. The Religious, having heard her speaking to herself, suspected that she was raving; but she reported to them the vision and the grace promised. She was therefore awaiting the desired hour; and when it had come (the Writer did not say what hour it was), on hearing the clock strike: Behold, she said, the hour foretold me. Behold, already I hear the music of the Angels; at this hour my Queen ascended to Heaven. Remain in peace, for I now go to see her. And as she said this she expired; and as she expired her eyes became bright as two stars, and her face was clothed with a fair colour. (*Menol. Cist. alli Santi d'Agost.*)

89. In the City of Sens in France, about the eighth century, lived St. Opportuna, daughter of Lords of royal blood. This holy Virgin, most devoted to Mary, having become a Religious in a Monastery not far from there, and having come to die, one morning towards dawn saw before her St. Cecilia and St. Lucy. Sisters (she then said), you are welcome; what does my Queen send to tell me? They answered: She awaits you in Paradise. After this the Devil appeared to her, and the Saint courageously drove him off, saying: Ugly beast, what have you to do with me, who am the servant of Jesus? The hour of her death, foretold by herself, having then come, after receiving the most Holy Viaticum, turning towards the door she said: Behold the Mother of God, who comes to take me. Sisters, to her I commend you; farewell, we shall see one another no more. And saying this she raised her arms as if to embrace her Lady, and sweetly expired. (*Surius die 22. Aprilis*).

Precatio Blosii ad B. V.

Ave, benignissima misericordiæ mater, salve, veniæ consolatrix; optatissima Maria, quis te non amet? Tu in rebus dubiis lumen, & in mœroribus solatium; in angustiis levamen, in periculis & tentationibus refugium. Tu post unigenitum tuum certa es salus, beati qui diligunt te, domina! Inclina quæso aures tuæ pietatis precibus hujus servi tui, hujus miseri peccatoris, & caliginem vitiorum meorum radiis tuæ sanctitatis dissipa, ut tibi placeam. — Hail, most kind mother of mercy; hail, consoler of pardon; most longed-for Mary, who would not love you? You are light in doubtful things, and solace in sorrows; relief in distress, refuge in dangers and temptations. After your only-begotten Son you are our sure salvation; blessed are they who love you, O Lady! Incline, I beg, the ears of your pity to the prayers of this your servant, this wretched sinner, and scatter the darkness of my vices with the rays of your holiness, that I may please you. (Blosius Or. ad B. V.)

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Prayer to Mary of St. Ephrem, abridged.

App. Crass. tom. 2. Sec. IV.

O Immaculate and entirely pure Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of the World, Hope of the despairing: you are the gladness of the Saints; you are the peacemaker of sinners with God; you are the advocate of the abandoned, the safe harbour of the shipwrecked. You are the consolation of the World, the ransom of slaves, the refreshment of the afflicted, the salvation of the universe. O great Queen, under your protection we take shelter. *Non nobis est alia quam in te fiducia, o virgo sincerissima — We have no other trust than in you, O most sincere virgin.* Lady, after God we have no other hope but in you. We bear the name of your servants; do not permit the enemy to carry us off to hell. *Ave, Dei, & hominum mediatrix optima — Hail, best mediatrix of God and of men.* I greet you, O great mediatrix of peace between men and God, O Mother of Jesus our Lord, love of all men; and to God, honour and blessing with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas.

O most Blessed, most sweet Virgin Mary, full of mercy, I commend to your pity my soul and my body, my thoughts, my works, my life and my death. O my Lady, help me and strengthen me against the snares of the Devil; obtain for me true and perfect

love, with which I may love with all my heart your most beloved son and my Lord Jesus Christ; and after him may I love you above all things. O my Queen and Mother, by your most powerful intercession grant that this love may last in me always, until death, after which I may be led by you to the Homeland of the Blessed. (*Ex Offic. Præd. & Diar. 7. Mart.*)

In te spem meam toto ex animo collocavi. — In you I have placed my hope with my whole soul. S. Jo. Damascenus.

Non est fas, o domina, te posse deserere eum, qui spem suam ponit in te. — It is not lawful, O Lady, that you should be able to forsake him who places his hope in you. S. Bernardus.

Tantummodo velis salutem nostram, & vere nequaquam salvi esse non poterimus. — Only will our salvation, and truly we cannot fail to be saved. S. Anselmus.

Ave, filia Dei Patris, ave, mater Dei filii, ave, sponsa Spiritus Sancti, ave, templum totius Trinitatis. — Hail, daughter of God the Father; hail, mother of God the Son; hail, spouse of the Holy Spirit; hail, temple of the whole Trinity. Simon Garcia.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa.

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LITTLE CROWN

OF THE SORROWS OF MARY.

Deus in adjutorium, &c. — *O God, come to my assistance*, etc.

My Mother, make my Heart
keep company with your Sorrow
in the death of Jesus.

First Sorrow. I have compassion on you, Sorrowful Mother, for the first sword of sorrow which pierced you, when in the Temple, through St. Simeon, there were set before you all the torments which men were to inflict on your beloved Jesus — which you well knew from the Divine Scriptures — even to making him die before your eyes hanging on a shameful tree, drained of blood and abandoned by all, without your being able to defend or help him. For that painful memory, then, which for so many years afflicted your heart, I beg you, my Queen, to obtain me the grace that always in life and in death I may keep imprinted on my heart the Passion of Jesus and your Sorrows. *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, *Glory be*, etc. *My Mother*, etc.,

as above. *Which verse is always repeated.*

Second Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my Sorrowful Mother, for the second sword which pierced you, in seeing your innocent son, scarcely born, persecuted to death by those very men for whom he had come into the World — so that you were then obliged by night and in secret to flee into Egypt. For all those hardships, then, which you, a delicate maiden, suffered in the company of your exiled Child on the long and toilsome journey, through desert and harsh lands, and in the stay in Egypt, where, being unknown and strangers, you lived through all those years poor and despised — I beg you, my beloved Lady, to obtain me the grace to suffer with patience in your company until death the hardships of this wretched life, so that in the other I may escape the eternal hardships which I have deserved in Hell. *Our Father*, etc. So printed: "compagina" for "compagnia". Retained as printed.

Third Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my Sorrowful Mother, for the third sword which wounded you in the loss of your dear son Jesus, who remained for three days

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far from you in Jerusalem. Then you, not seeing your love beside you, and not knowing the cause of his absence, I well think, my loving queen, that on those nights you did not rest, but did nothing else but sigh for him who was all your good. For the sighs, then, of those three days, too long and bitter for you, I beg you to obtain me the grace never to lose my God, so that, embracing God, I may live always, and so depart from the world at the moment of my death. *Our Father*, etc.

Fourth Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my Sorrowful Mother, for the fourth sword which pierced you, in seeing your Jesus condemned to death, bound with ropes and chains, covered with blood and wounds, crowned with a bundle of thorns, falling along the way under the heavy cross which he carried on his wounded shoulders, going like an innocent lamb to die for love of us. Then eyes met eyes, and your looks became so many cruel arrows, with which you wounded together your enamoured hearts. For this great sorrow, then, I beg you to obtain me the grace to live wholly resigned to the will of my God, carrying gladly my cross in the company of Jesus until the last breath of my life. *Our Father*, etc.

Fifth Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my Sorrowful Mother, for the fifth sword which pierced you, when on mount Calvary you found yourself present to see dying before your eyes, little by little, amid so many agonies and insults, on that hard bed of the cross, your beloved son Jesus — without being able to give him even the least of those comforts which are granted at the point of death even to the most wicked. And I beg you, by the agony which you, a loving mother, suffered together

with your dying son, and by the tenderness you felt when he from the cross spoke to you the last time, and taking leave of you left us all, with John, to you as sons, and you then steadfastly watched him bow his head and expire — I beg you to obtain me the grace from your crucified love to live and to die crucified to all the things of this world, so as to live for God alone all my life, and so to enter one day to enjoy him face to face in Paradise. *Our Father*, etc.

Sixth Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my Sorrowful Moth-

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-er, for the sixth sword which pierced you, in seeing wounded through and through the sweet heart of your son already dead — and dead for those ungrateful men who not even after his death were sated with tormenting him. For this fierce sorrow, then, which was wholly yours, I beg you to obtain me the grace to dwell in the heart of Jesus, wounded and opened for me: in that heart, I say, which is the fair cell of love, where all the souls that love God take their rest, and where, while I live, I may think of and love none but God. Most sacred Virgin, you can do it; from you I hope for it. *Our Father*, etc.

Seventh Sorrow. I have compassion on you, my sorrowful mother, for the seventh sword which pierced you, in seeing in your arms your son already dead — no longer fair and white, as you received him one day in the stable of Bethlehem, but bloodied, livid, and all torn by the wounds which had laid bare even his bones. Son, you said then, son, to what has love reduced you! And when he was carried to burial, you too willed to accompany him, and to lay him in the sepulchre with your own hands, until, giving him the last farewell, you left your loving heart buried there with your son. For so many martyrdoms, then, of your beautiful soul, obtain for me, O mother of fair love, the pardon of the offences I have committed against my beloved God, of which I repent with all my heart. Do you defend me in temptations; do you assist me at the moment of my death; that I, being saved by the merits of Jesus and your own, may come one day with your help, after this wretched exile, to sing in Paradise the praises of Jesus and yours for all eternity. Amen. *Our Father*, etc.

Ora pro nobis, virgo dolorosissima,
Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.
— Pray for us, most sorrowful virgin,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

DEus, in cujus Passione, secundum Simeonis Prophetiam, dulcissimam animam gloriosæ Virginis & Matris Mariæ doloris gladius pertransivit, concede propitius, ut qui dolores ejus venerando recolimus, Passionis tuæ effectum felicem consequamur; Qui vivis & regnas in sæcula, &c. — O God, in whose Passion, according to Simeon's Prophecy, a sword of sorrow passed through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary: mercifully grant that we who venerate and call to mind her sorrows may obtain the blessed fruit of your Passion; you who live and reign for ever, etc.

Benedict XIII granted 200 days' Indulgence for every Our Father and every Hail Mary to whoever recites the said Little Crown in the Churches of the Servite Fathers, and the same to whoever recites it on Fridays and in Le-

-nt in any place; and on other days a hundred days for each Our Father and Hail Mary; to whoever recites it entire, seven years. To whoever recites it for a year, a Plenary Indulgence applicable to the Souls in Purgatory. (Sinisc. iu fin. part. 3. pag. 3.) So printed: "iu" for "in". Retained as printed.

Little Crown of Mary Immaculate, which is customarily recited in some Churches.

Deus in adjutorum, &c. *Gloria*, &c. So printed: "adjutorum" for "adjutorium". Retained as printed.

Then one *Our Father* is said to the Eternal Father for the graces done to Mary, with four *Hail Marys*; and the same to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. At the end of each *Hail Mary* is said: *Praised for ever be the immaculate Conception of Mary.* And after every four *Hail Marys* the following little song is said:

As a lily among thorns
are you, blessed Virgin,
preserved from fault,
because chosen mother by the Lord.

At the end, ℣. *Ora pro nobis, Virgo immaculata. — Pray for us, immaculate Virgin.*
℟. *Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.* — *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let us pray.

Famulis tuis quæsumus, Domine, cælestis gratiæ munus impartire, ut quibus beatæ Virginis partus extitit salutis exordium, Conceptionis ejus votiva commemoratio pacis tribuat incrementum. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen. — Grant to your servants, we beseech you, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace; that as the childbearing of the blessed Virgin was the beginning of their salvation, so the votive commemoration of her Conception may bestow an increase of peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dedication of oneself to Mary.

MOST holy Virgin, mother of God, Mary, I N., although most unworthy to be your servant, yet moved by your wonderful mercy and by the desire of serving you, choose you today, in the presence of my Guardian Angel and of all the heavenly court, for my particular Lady, Advocate, and mother; and I firmly purpose to love and serve you always for the future, and to do all I can that you may be loved and served by others also. I beseech you, mother of God, and my most merciful and most lovable mother, by the blood of your divine son shed for me, that you receive me into the number of your other devout servants, as your son and perpetual servant. Assist me in all my thoughts, words, and works; in every moment of my life:

so that all my steps and breaths may be directed to the greater glory of my God; and that by your most powerful intercession I may never again offend my beloved Jesus, but may glorify him and love him in this life, and love you, my most beloved and dear mother, so as afterwards to love and enjoy you for all ages in holy Paradise. Amen.

My Mother Mary, I commend to you my soul: above all in the hour of my death.

Dedication of the family to Mary.

BLESSED and immaculate Virgin, our Queen and mother, refuge and consolation of all the wretched: I, prostrate before your Throne with all my family, choose you for my Lady, mother, and advocate with God. I with all mine dedicate myself for ever to your service; and I beg you, O mother of God, to place us in the number of your servants, taking us all under your protection, succouring us in life, and still more at the time of our death. O mother of mercy, I constitute you Lady and governess of all my house, of my kindred, of my interests, and of all my affairs. Do not disdain to take charge of them; dispose of everything as it pleases you. Bless, then, me and all my family, and do not permit that any of us should offend your son. Do you defend us in temptations, deliver us from dangers, provide for us in our

needs, counsel us in our doubts, console us in afflictions, assist us in sicknesses, and chiefly in the anguish of death. Do not permit the devil to have the glory of holding in his chains any of us who have already been consecrated to you; but grant that we may all come into heaven to thank you, and together with you to praise and love our Redeemer Jesus for all eternity. Amen. So may it be.

Let it be noted further, concerning the various Indulgences registered above, that there are 700 years' Indulgence for the dead, granted by Clement XII to whoever says the De profundis kneeling at the signal of the bell.

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LITTLE SONGS

In honour of Mary Most Holy.

O my fair hope,
my sweet love Mary,
you are my life.
My peace are you.
When I call on you, or think
of you, Mary, I feel
such gladness and such content
that it ravishes my heart.
If ever a troubling thought
comes to disturb my mind,
it flees away as soon as it hears
your name called.
On this sea of the world
you are the friendly star
that can bring the little ship
of my soul to safety.
Under your fair mantle,
my beloved Lady,
I want to live, and still
I hope one day to die.
For if it falls to my lot
to end my life
loving you, Mary,
then heaven falls to me as well.

Stretch out your chains,
and chain my heart;
for a prisoner of love
faithful to you I will be.
So that my heart, Mary,
is yours, no longer mine.
Take it, and give it to God,
for I want it no more.

To Mary our mother. By Mons. Majello.

WHEN I think upon my lot,
that I am your son, O Mary,
every trouble, O my mother,
goes far away from me.
Yes, you are my mother,
who are the mother of my God;
what then can I fear,
O Mary, if you love me?
I fear only this, that I might
see myself deprived of your love:
but if I love you, whether I die or live,
then I am always blessed.
Without you, my fair rose,
every joy is bitter pain:
but with you the pain is dear,
and dying is sweet as well.
He cannot miss the way of heaven
who holds to your guiding:
he who serves you and trusts in you
is sure of every good.

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O happy he who to love you
sighs and longs ever more!
O the good fortune of him who loves you,
and burns with love for you!
Grant that I too, O my Queen,
may love you always, until in heaven
I come one day without a veil

to see your beauty.

To Mary our Queen.

FROM your heavenly throne,
Mary, turn upon us
your merciful looks
for one time only.
And if then you do not feel
your heart moved to pity,
then we are content
that you look on us no more.
See, we are guilty of death
along with your Lord:
Mary, his fair heart
is angered with us.
But if you would appease him,
one word of yours is enough.
Fair Mary, you alone
can win us pardon.
O high and great queen,
if you would save us, tell him
only that we are your children,
and he will have pity on us.
For so many faults it is true
that we are no longer worthy
to be your children still:
but you are our mother yet.
Open that fair mantle of yours,
in which without fear
we shall stand, if with love,
Mother, you take us in.
O sweet and dear mother,
hear the one who calls you;
save, O Mary, the one who loves you
and trusts so much in you.

Invocation of Mary as our mother.

YOU are pure, you are holy,
you are fair, O Mary;
every soul knows it,
that a sweeter mother the world has not.
O blessed mother,
given to us from heaven,
your great mercy —
what fair hope, what joy it gives me!
You are pure, you are holy, etc.
O divine mother,
queen of the world,
who has ever heard
that anyone went away from you unsatisfied?
You are pure, you are holy, etc.
O merciful mother,
O loving mother,
ah, pray for me,
who love you, and sigh with love for you.
You are pure, you are holy, etc.
O powerful mother,
all know that Jesus
denies you nothing;
he does all you ask, and all you will.
You are pure, you are holy, etc.
O mother of love,
obtain for my heart,
which sinned ungratefully,

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love for my God, who so loved me.
You are pure, you are holy, etc.

Affections to Mary.

DO you know what I want,
sweet Mary?
My hope,
I want to love you.
I want to stay always
close to you,

fair Queen;
do not drive me away.
And then tell me,
my lovely rose,
lingering mother,
what you want of me.
I have nothing more to give you —
here is my heart;
by the hand of love
I give it to you.
But you, Lady,
had taken it already,
since you loved it,
and it loved you.
My dear mother,
ah, do not leave me
until I come
to be saved.

Praise to Mary.

THE fairest little maiden,
my dear Mary, is you.
A creature so pure
as you there never was.
Your face is a Paradise
full of grace and purity.
More divine and rare
than yours, after God, no beauty is.
Two fair and lovely Stars
are your eyes breathing love;
your glances are darts
that wound every heart.
Of pearl, so that at the sight of them
one falls in love, are your hands;
and they are full of every good
for those souls that come to you.
You are a queen, to whom bow down
earth, hell, and heaven too:

but your heart is all love
towards the just and the sinner.
When, O God, shall I too one day
come to see you in heaven?
When, when, sighing,
O Mary, shall I go to you?
From your ancient enemy
oh, how many souls you save always!
Grant, then, O my Lady,
that I may not lose my Lord.
Come, let us sing, let us praise
him who gave us such a mother;
praised and ever loved
be that great God who created her.
Long live, long live, long live the name

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of Mary, let us all cry aloud;
let every heart with love
praise Mary and Jesus for ever.

On the Beauty of Mary.

COME, praise, O valleys, O mountains,
meadows, grasses, rivers, and springs,
the fairest little Maiden
that the creator has made.
Little streams with your murmuring,
and birds with your singing,
to your great queen
come, do honour, you too.
Say it out: O little Maiden,
O Mary, how fair you are!
Praised and blessed be
that God who created you.
You are the sun, for the love
with which your fair heart burns:
and you are the Moon, shining
with heavenly purity.
You are rose, lily, and flower,

scattering fragrance everywhere:
you have no stain nor fault;
wholly lovable are you.
What makes you most pleasing
to that God who is your life
is to see you so beautiful,
and so rich in humility.
Dear to God, fair Mary,
sweet to us, merciful and kind,
by all the love you bear your fair son,
have pity on us.

On the death of Mary.

LET us praise in song
the daughter, the spouse,
the loving mother
of him who formed her.
And long live Mary,
Mary, and long may she live,
and long live Mary,
and he who created her.
When Mary,
parted from her son,
like a lily among thorns
remained among us.
And long live Mary, etc.
And it is repeated after every strophe.
Her heart burning
to be uni-

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to be united with God,
with humble desire
she sought for death.
He who so loved her,
her dear spouse,
to full repose
called her in Heaven.
She was awaiting death

to open the gates:
but death, when it came,
halted far off.
Love came instead
with its sweet arrow,
and the mortal blow
it dealt upon her heart.
Then in peace,
being already wounded,
languishing with love,
happily she expired.
The fair dove
then loosed her flight;
the Son received her,
and bore her to Heaven.
Now while in Heaven,
O fair Queen,
you already sit beside
him who exalted you,
ah, do not forget
me, a sinner;
grant that my heart may love
him who always loved me.

Of Mary Assumed.

TO Heaven, my soul,
to Heaven with Mary,
come, away with you, go.
She is made a Queen,
and close to her Son
she dwells rejoicing.
To Heaven, my soul, etc.
It is always repeated.
How shall I go on living,
if I am left deprived
of so great a beauty?
Ah, hard parting!
Who will give me hope, who life,

who help?
But though far away,
our Sovereign
will be kind.
Like a loving Mother,
courteous and merciful,
she will pray for us.
Her dear children
amid so many perils
she cannot forget.
Well does she look upon
the one who longs and sighs
for her purity.
Happy that heart
which, burning with love,
shall be able to follow her.

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Another Little Song to Mary Assumed.

YOUR heart, O Mary, lived always of love,
and loved so much that at the last it died of love.
Happy death, if death indeed it be,
which God granted to you, fair Virgin!
In a sweet repose, in a smile
you go from this earth to Paradise.
Go then, my Mother, go, my life,
where your Son awaits you, and Heaven invites you.
I desire to end my days with you,
so that with you I too may come to Heaven.
O fortunate soul! O blessed me!
if it is given me one day to stand at your feet,
and above all the heavenly ranks
to see the Mother beside her Jesus.
Come and find me in that last hour too,
when my end shall come, O my Lady.
So I hope from you, so may it be done,
that I may breathe out my soul then in your arms.

Mary of Sorrows speaking on Calvary.

O vos, qui transitis per viam, attendite, & videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus. — O you who pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow. The place is Lam. 1:12; W1 prints "O vos, qui transitis", omitting "omnes". No chapter or verse is printed. Retained as printed.

O you who, amid so many bitter pains of mine,
go gladly along this way,
see, O God! whether there be
any sorrow equal to my sorrow.
This one who before me, torn and bloodless,
lies dying for me upon that wood —
this is my Son, who is not deserving
of torments and mockeries, but only of love.
This is that Son whom the great maker
of all the World claims for his Father;
and this is he who for his Mother
destined me before the world was.
He is my God, whom on that night
I first saw made a little child,
who with his fair Divine beauty
from that moment made me fall in love.

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He chose me for his beloved,
the faithful companion of his life,
and then he kept me always wounded
and enamoured of his beauty.
And this is he whom now I see before you
on that grievous bed of anguish
dying amid such pains, so afflicted and sad
that even the stones are moved to grief.
Wherever he turns he finds
no one to defend or comfort him;
but he sees all intent and busy
to make his suffering harder still.
Eternal Father, you who so love him,
how can you bear from Heaven
to see such a Son suffer so much,
and have no pity on him at all?

But, O God! the Father sees him clothed
in the faults of others, and angered
he shows himself towards him, until he sees him
breathe his last on the Cross for love of us.
Beloved Son, now that to death
you are already near, if only I knew
how to console myself, or at least were able
to let you breathe your last in my arms!
Ah, that I cannot give you relief:
rather that I myself, with my grief,
bring more pain to your fair heart,
and make your dying more bitter.
Loving souls, love, love
him who, all afire with love for you,
all content for you is dying,
and asks of you nothing but love.

Another Little Song of Mary of Sorrows, by Fr. D. Matteo Testa.

O YOU who know what love is,
look, look upon my afflicted heart;
see whether there be any anguish
more tyrannous
than that which afflicts this soul continually.
I am the poor Mother of a sorrowing Son,
afflicted and oppressed by a treacherous people:
by those he has most loved
betrayed, and abandoned
in the midst of anguish, to every harsh sorrow.

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Never was there in a mother's breast a love
greater than that which my beloved awoke in me;
and yet I saw him
with these eyes of mine —
my dear one, overwhelmed by an unbelieving people.
With his harsh Cross I saw him on the mount
going with a crown of thorns upon his brow:
I saw my treasure
amid hard chains

fall under the weight of that cruel wood.
Weep, weep, O loving souls,
or at least have compassion on my bitter tears.
The savage people
cast upon the Cross,
before me his Mother, my beloved treasure.
I saw my Son by those inhuman men
pierced with nails through the feet and the hands;
and all covered with wounds
that body so beloved
I saw, which once I had pressed to my breast.
At the foot of the Cross the bitter agony
of my dear Son was mine as well;
his cruel pains
were mine as well,
and only his death was not my death.
But I remained alive, never to have done —
my Son being already dead — with dying always.
O beloved souls,
at least console
me, a poor Mother, by loving Jesus.

Love to Mary.

I LIVE the lover of that Lady
who has a heart so sweet and so tender
that, seeing one who seeks her love,
though he be unworthy, she cannot despise him.
High in Heaven she sits a Queen,
but from Heaven she looks down in mercy
on the devout soul who sighs with love
for her pure and heavenly beauty.
This Virgin so fair and so pure,
who was chosen by the most high Lord
for his Mother and his beloved spouse —
this is she who stole my heart away.

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Oh that one day I might see
all hearts languish with love

for so fair a Queen, and hear
her name praised everywhere;
so that on earth to every border
it might resound with sweet harmony:
Long live, long live Mary for ever;
long live God, who so loved her!
Let him seek another love who will:
let him love, if he can love in peace,
another fair one; it pleases me to love
that fair one with whom God fell in love.
Stretch out then your hand, O Mary,
my dear sweet thief of love.
Stretch it out and take from my breast my heart,
which sighs and languishes for you.
Set it aflame in that fire of love
in which you live, burning for God,
and grant that I too may burn happily
in the love of my dear Jesus.

Live Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Teresa.

Here W1 prints a typographic ornament. End of the Canzoncine.

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REPLY

To an Anonymous writer, who has censured what the Author has written in Ch. V, § I of the First Part; and together with it the moral Work of the same.

A BOOK having come into my hands, published last year, 1755, entitled *Lamindi Pritanii Redivivi Epistola Paraenetica ad P. Bened. Piazza*, I found towards the end an Appendix in which the Author, who is Anonymous, censures also what I have written in the cited place of this little Work, concerning the pious opinion which I there maintained with Fr. Piazza — that all graces come to us through the Divine Mother — against what the celebrated Lodovico Muratori wrote in the book of the *Regolata Divozione*, under the aforesaid name of Pritanius.

The said Anonymous writer says first that I have erred in asserting that Pritanius had written this opinion to be a hyperbole and an exaggeration that fell from the

mouth of the fervour of certain Saints. Therefore, fearing that I had made a mistake, I have re-read his book, and I have seen that although Pritanius does not join the said words strictly to the place where he expresses the said opinion, nevertheless from the context of his discourse it is seen that he refers them also to the Saints who have spoken on this point. He says thus: *This is to be understood soberly* (speaking of another proposition which he mentions first, namely that Mary commands in Heaven) *and other similar expressions, which, having fallen from the mouth of the devout fervour of certain Saints, do not hold when they are set against true Theology.* And then he says: *Her* (that is, the Church) *we must listen to, and not the hyperboles of some private Author, however holy.* (And immediately he adds) *Likewise we may meet with one who asserts that no grace, no good comes to us from God except through the hand of Mary.* Note that *Likewise*. And afterwards he says: *Devout exaggerations would be those of one who should claim that all the Divine benefactions pass through Mary.*

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But even if Pritanius, now dead, had not said this, or had not meant to say it, there is Pritanius Redivivus, who says it at *n. 545* of his book, where among other things he remarks that the Saints have at times, in praising the Holy Virgin, spoken by Hyperbole and by Tropes. To him, then, I now answer, and I say that there is no doubt that Tropes — such as Hyperbole is — are not charged with falsehood when from the context of the discourse the excess beyond the truth is perceived of itself: such as what St. Peter Damian said, that Mary *Accedit imperans, non rogans — approaches commanding, not asking.* And what St. Anselm said, that she weeps in Heaven for those who offend God. So that Tropes are lawful when in the discourse there can be no deception. But this does not hold for assertive propositions, where the Hyperbole constitutes a real deception which others cannot detect. But let us come to the principal point of the disputed opinion. I do not extend myself to prove the intrinsic reasons that can support it; it is enough for me here merely to indicate those which I have brought forward in my book: namely, because God wills thus to honour this beloved of his, who so honoured him in her life. St. Thomas says (*Ep. 8.*) that the Saints, in proportion to the merit by which they have gained grace, can save many others; but that the Redeemer and his Mother have merited so much grace that they can save all men: *Magnum enim est in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum; & hoc est in Christo, & B. Virgine. — For it is a great thing in any saint when he has as much grace as suffices for the salvation of many; but when he should have as much as would suffice for the*

salvation of all, that would be the greatest; and this is so in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin. Furthermore, because, she being the universal advocate of all men, it is fitting that all who are saved should obtain salvation through her. Moreover — and this reason seems to me the strongest — because, just as Mary cooperated by her charity (as St. Augustine says) in the spiritual birth of the faithful, so God wills also that she cooperate by her intercession in making them obtain the life of grace on this earth and the life of glory in eternity. And therefore the Church has us call her, in unqualified terms, our *Life* and our *Hope*. But what has weighed and still weighs most with me in this opinion is to see it maintained not only by so many learned Authors, but by Saints as well. The Anonymous writer believes that he has shown in particu-

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-lar that St. Bernard never meant to assert that all graces come to us through the hand of Mary, but only that through her we have received Jesus Christ, who is the fount and the fullness of all graces. But I believe, on the contrary, that I can clearly show the opposite, by what I here add.

St. Bernard says that Mary has received the fullness from God. He then explains what this fullness is. Principally, he says, Mary has received the fullness because she has received into herself Jesus Christ, the fount of all graces; but then he says that the Holy Virgin has consequently received another fullness, which is the fullness of graces, to dispense them from her own hand to all men, as their mediatrix with God. See how he speaks in the Sermon (*in Domin. infr. Oct. Assumpt. col. 1. lit. F.*): *Quid ad Mariam accedere trepidet humana fragilitas? Nihil austerum in ea, nihil terribile: tota suavis est, omnibus offerens lac & lanam. Age gratias ei qui talem tibi mediatricem providit. Omnibus omnia facta est, sapientibus & insipientibus copiosissima charitate debitricem se fecit. Omnibus* (note what follows) *misericordiæ sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant universi, captivus redemptionem, æger curationem, peccator veniam, justus gratiam, Angeli lætitiam, Filius carnem, ut non sit qui se abscondat a calore ejus. — Why should human frailty be afraid to approach Mary? There is nothing austere in her, nothing terrible: she is all sweetness, offering milk and wool to all. Give thanks to him who provided you with such a mediatrix. She has become all things to all, and has made herself a debtor by her most abundant charity to the wise and to the foolish. To all she opens the bosom of her mercy, that of her fullness all may receive: the captive redemption, the sick healing, the sinner pardon, the just man grace, the Angels gladness, the Son flesh — so that there is none who can hide himself from her warmth.* Note then that *ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant universi*, from which it is seen that here St. Bernard is speaking not of the

first fullness, which is Jesus Christ — otherwise he could not say that *de plenitudine ejus* the Son too receives his flesh — but he speaks of the second, or consequent, fullness, as we have said, which Mary has received from God in order to dispense to each of us the graces we receive. And note that other clause, *non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.* If anyone were to receive graces, but not through Mary, he could remain hidden from the warmth of this Sun; but St. Bernard says that there is no one who can hide himself from the warmth of Mary. And in this same place he says: *Per te accessum habemus ad Filium, o inventrix gratiæ, Mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat, qui per te datus est nobis. — Through you we have access to the Son, O finder of grace, Mother of salvation, that he who through you was given to us may through you receive us.* By which the Saint clearly means to signify to us that, just as we have no access to the Father except throu-

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-gh the Son, who is the Mediator of justice, and who by his merits obtains for us all graces, so we have no access to the Son except through the mother, who is the mediatrix of grace, and who by her prayers obtains for us all the graces that Jesus Christ has merited for us.

This is made still clearer to us by what the same Saint says afterwards in the sermon *de Aquæductu*, where at the beginning he says that Mary has received from God the principal fullness, that is, Jesus Christ, in order to give us a share of him too. But afterwards he speaks clearly of the second fullness, which she has consequently received, of the graces which we obtain through her prayers; the Saint saying thus: *Verum id quidem, sed parum est (ni fallor) desideriis vestris. — True indeed, but it is little (if I am not mistaken) for your desires.* It is true, says St. Bernard, that Mary has obtained from God Jesus Christ, the fount of graces; but this perhaps does not fully content your desires, since you would long that she herself by her intercession should obtain for you from Jesus Christ these graces merited for you. Hence the Saint goes on to exhort us not to fail to venerate and to have recourse with great confidence to this Divine Mother, saying that what we desire God has already done, by placing in Mary the fullness of every good, so that whatever we receive from God we may acknowledge as wholly obtained through Mary: *Altius ergo intueamini, quanto devotionis affectu a nobis eam voluerit honorari, qui totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria: ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare, quæ ascendit deliciis affluens. Hortus deliciarum* (observe that the Saint goes on speaking of the graces which are actually dispensed to us through Mary's hand), *quem non modo afflaverit veniens, sed & perflaverit superveniens auster ille divinus, ut undique*

fluant & affluant aromata ejus, charismata scilicet gratiarum. — Consider more deeply, then, with how great an affection of devotion he willed her to be honoured by us, who placed the fullness of all good in Mary: so that accordingly, if there is any hope in us, any grace, any salvation, we may know that it overflows from her who comes up flowing with delights. A garden of delights, which that divine south wind not only breathed upon in coming, but blew right through in coming again, so that on every side her spices might flow and overflow — that is, the gifts of graces. And alluding to the first text I cited above, *Non est qui se abscondat a calore ejus*, I add here: *Tolle corpus hoc solare quod illuminat mundum, ubi dies? Tolle Mariam hanc maris stellam, quid nisi caligo & tenebræ relinquuntur? — Take away this body of the sun which lights the world — where is the day? Take away Mary, this star of the sea — what is left but gloom and darkness?*

Then he goes on to exhort us to commend ourselves to Mary, and to take her as our Advocate with Jesus Christ, encouraging us by saying that if she prays for us she is certainly heard by the Son: *Ad Ma-*

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-riam recurre: non dubius dixerim, exauditur ipsa pro reverentia sua. Exaudiet utique matrem filius, & exaudiet filium pater. — Have recourse to Mary: I would say without hesitation, she herself is heard for her reverence. The Son will surely hear his mother, and the Father will hear the Son. And he immediately added: *Filioli, hæc peccatorem scala, hæc maxima mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ. — Little children, this is the sinner's ladder, this is my greatest confidence, this is the whole ground of my hope.* Here, then, certainly the Saint, for this reason alone — because he regards her as the intercessor and the dispenser of all graces — calls her the Ladder of sinners, and the whole ground of his hope. A *Ladder*, because, just as on a ladder one does not climb to the third rung without setting foot on the second, and one does not reach the second without setting foot on the first, so one does not come to God except through Jesus Christ, and one does not come to Jesus Christ except through Mary. He then calls her his *greatest confidence, and the whole ground of his hope*, because, since God wills that all graces pass through Mary, he counts himself deprived of graces and of hope without Mary's intercession. And hence he exhorts us to do the same: that is, to place all our hopes in Mary, giving us to understand that if Mary prays for us we shall certainly be saved; since, just as the Son cannot fail to be heard by the Father, so the Mother cannot fail to be heard by the Son. And on the other hand he tells us that if Mary does not pray for us we shall not obtain salvation, because Mary will find for us the grace of which alone we have need, and by which alone we are saved. Here are the Saint's words, which could not

be clearer: *Quid enim? potestne filius aut repellere, aut sustinere repulsam? non audire, aut non audiri filius potest? Semper hæc inveniet gratiam, & sola est gratia qua egemus .... Nimirum sola est gratia qua salvamur. — For what? Can the Son either refuse, or suffer refusal? Can the Son fail to hear, or fail to be heard? She will always find grace, and grace alone is what we lack .... Assuredly grace alone is that by which we are saved.* And he concludes: *Quid nos alia concupiscimus? Quæramus gratiam, & per Mariam quæramus; quia quod quærit invenit, & frustrari non potest. — Why do we desire anything else? Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; for what she seeks she finds, and cannot be disappointed.*

Furthermore I have then reported many other passages, with the citations of the places, in my book — both of Saints and of other renowned ancient Authors — which I do not see how they can be explained otherwise than for our opinion. I will simply report them here in a bundle, without comment, and I leave the judgement of them to my Reader.

St. Jerome (or, as others will have it, Sophronius, a contemporary of the Saint, Author of the sermon on the Assump-

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-tion of Mary): *In Christo fuit plenitudo gratiæ sicut in capite influente, in Maria sicut in collo transfundente. — In Christ there was the fullness of grace as in the head that flows into the body, in Mary as in the neck that transmits it.* St. Bernardine of Siena: *Per Virginem a capite Christi vitales gratiæ in ejus corpus mysticum transfunduntur. A tempore quo virgo mater concepit in utero Verbum Dei, quandam (ut sic dicam) jurisdictionem obtinuit in omni Spiritus Sancti processione temporali; ita ut nulla creatura aliquam a Deo obtinuit gratiam, nisi secundum ipsius piæ matris dispensationem. Ideo omnia dona, virtutes, & gratiæ, quibus vult, quando vult, & quomodo vult, per ipsius manus dispensantur. — Through the Virgin the vital graces are transmitted from Christ the head into his mystical body. From the time when the virgin mother conceived the Word of God in her womb, she obtained a kind (so to speak) of jurisdiction over every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit; so that no creature has obtained any grace from God except according to the dispensation of this loving mother. Therefore all gifts, virtues, and graces are dispensed through her hands, to whom she wills, when she wills, and how she wills.* St. Bonaventure: *Cum tota natura Divina intra Virginis uterum extiterit, non timeo dicere, quod in omnes gratiarum effluxus quandam jurisdictionem habuerit hæc virgo, de cujus utero quasi de quodam divinitatis Oceano flumina emanabant omnium gratiarum. — Since the whole Divine nature was within the Virgin's womb, I do not fear to say that this virgin had a kind of jurisdiction over all the outflowings of graces — she from whose*

womb, as from a certain Ocean of divinity, flowed the rivers of all graces. The same: *Sicut luna inter corpora cælestia & terrena est media, ut quod ab illis accipit, ad inferiora refundit; sic & virgo Regia inter nos & Deum est media, & gratiam ipsa nobis refundit. — As the moon is midway between the heavenly and the earthly bodies, so that what it receives from the former it pours down on the latter, so the royal virgin is midway between us and God, and pours out grace upon us.* The same: *Ipse sine ea non salvabit te. Quemadmodum infans sine nutrice non potest vivere, ita sine domina nostra nec possis habere salutem. — He will not save you without her. As an infant cannot live without a nurse, so neither can you have salvation without our Lady.* St. Ephrem: *Nobis non est alia quam a te fiducia, o virgo sincerissima. — We have no other trust than that which comes from you, O most sincere virgin.* St. Germanus: *Si nos deserueris, quid erit de nobis, o vita Christianorum? — If you forsake us, what will become of us, O life of Christians?* St. Idelfonso: *Omnia bona quæ illis summa majestas decrevit facere, tuis manibus decrevit commendare; commissi quippe sunt tibi thesauri, & ornamenta gratiarum. — All the good things which the supreme majesty decreed to do for them, he decreed to commit to your hands; for to you have been entrusted the treasures and the ornaments of graces.* St. Antoninus: *Qui petit sine ipsa, sine alis tentat volare. — He who asks without her tries to fly without wings.* St. Peter Damian: *In manibus tuis omnes thesauri miserationum Dei. — In your hands are all the treasures of the mercies of God.*

Gerson: *Mediatrix nostra per cujus manus Deus ordinavit dare ea quæ dat humanæ naturæ. — Our mediatrix, through whose hands God has ordained to give what he gives to human nature.* The Idiota: *Dispensatrix gratiarum divinarum; nihil enim con-*

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-cedit nobis filius ejus, quin pertranseat per manus ejus. — The dispenser of the divine graces; for her Son grants us nothing that does not pass through her hands. The same: *Salus nostra in manu illius est. — Our salvation is in her hand.* Cassian: *Tota salus mundi consistit in multitudine favoris Mariæ. — The whole salvation of the world consists in the abundance of Mary's favour.* Which is said likewise by St. Bernardine of Siena: *Tu dispensatrix omnium gratiarum; salus nostra in manu tua est. — You are the dispenser of all graces; our salvation is in your hand.* Richard: *Deus quicquid boni dat creaturis suis, per manus matris virginis vult transire. — Whatever good God gives to his creatures, he wills it to pass through the hands of the virgin mother.* The same makes Jesus Christ say: *Nemo venit ad me, nisi mater mea suis precibus traxerit eum. — No one comes to me unless my mother has drawn him by her prayers.* Richard of St. Laurence, alluding to the saying of the Proverbs, *Facta est quasi navis*

institoris — She is become like the merchant's ship — says: *In mare mundi submergentur omnes illi, quos non suscipit navis ista. Ideo, quoties videmus insurgentes fluctus hujus maris, clamare debemus ad Mariam: Domina, salva nos perimus. — In the sea of the world all those will be drowned whom this ship does not take aboard. Therefore, as often as we see the waves of this sea rising, we must cry out to Mary: Lady, save us, we perish.* The same: *Sicut lapis, subtracta terra, delabitur in profundum; ita, subtracto Mariæ adjutorio, homo delabitur in peccatum, & inde in Infernum. — As a stone, when the ground is taken from beneath it, falls into the depths, so, when Mary's help is withdrawn, a man falls into sin, and thence into Hell.*

I add to this what weighs greatly with me: namely, to see that the faithful commonly, for all the graces they desire, always have recourse to the intercession of this divine mother; so that it seems the said pious opinion is almost a common sentiment of the Church. It is precisely of this argument — the common sentiment of the faithful — that Petavius avails himself to prove the opinion (which I hold as certain) of Mary's Immaculate Conception in the first instant. For the rest, since it seems to me, as to so many other Authors — such as Segneri, Paciucchelli, Crasset, Mendoza, Nieremberg, Poiré, and others — very pious and very probable, this said opinion that all graces pass through the hands of Mary, I shall always count myself content to have held and preached it; if for no other reason, at least because this inflames me to devotion towards Mary, and the opposite cools it: which does not seem a light harm.

§ II.

THE said Anonymous writer then leaps on to censure my moral Work; and after having loaded it with the heaviest insults in superlative terms, he does me the charity of warning me to forbid my companions to read it, wishing to constrain me to do so for the unburdening of my conscience. I answer my learned confessor (whom I revere, although I do not know him), and I say first

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of all before God that certainly I did not put my Moral Theology into print out of a desire to be named and praised. I should have been a madman if, after leaving the world and withdrawing into the Congregation to weep for my sins, I had then wished uselessly to spend so many years of labour (this Work having cost me some ten years of excessive and most wearisome labour) — and for what? To get a little smoke out of it, and from a few persons; since, dealing with matters so controverted, I ought already to have supposed that many who held the contrary opinions would contradict me, treating me either as too rigid or as too lenient — as indeed both the

one and the other has befallen me. My purpose in making this Work has been only, first the glory of God, and then to be of use to the young men of our Congregation, where those enrolled, by their own institute, are employed in giving Missions for nine months of the year to the abandoned people of the countryside. Seeing therefore that for them, as Missionaries and devoted to a continual employment of hearing Confessions, the science of Moral Theology is above all necessary, I made this Work in order to give them in brief the knowledge of the most important doctrines, and especially of many Bulls and Decisions of which I found no mention made in other books; and further, because it did not seem to me suitable to give young men other books of Moral Theology, because they are either too brief or too voluminous, either too rigid or too lenient.

As for the scruple which my revered Censor wishes to impose on me for the things I have written, I tell him that I do indeed fear the account I have to give to God of the evil life I led in the world (in Jesus my Redeemer chiefly, and then in Mary my mother and Advocate with Jesus Christ, rest my hopes of pardon); but as for the doctrines I have set down in my Work, I have no ground to fear having to give an account of them to God. In the more doubtful questions I have not spared labour in examining the Authors, modern as well as ancient, of the lenient as well as of the rigid opinion — such as Merbesius, Genet, Contenson, Natalis Alexander, Habert, Juenin, Cabassut, the Petrocorensis, Concina, the Continuator of Tournely, etc. Especially I have taken pains to examine at their source all the Canonical texts belonging to the matters treated. When I have found some passage of a holy Father bearing on the controverted matters, I have taken care to note it in his own words, giving it every consideration and all the weight that his authority deserved. Furthermore, I have been careful to transcribe and to make use of the doctrines of St. Thomas, seeking to examine them all in their own sources. Moreover, in the more intricate controversies, not having been able to resol-

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-ve my doubts by the reading of the Authors, I have taken care to take counsel with various learned men.

In the choice of opinions, then, I have always sought to prefer reason to authority; and before giving my judgement I have taken care to put myself into a total indifference, and to strip myself of every passion that might have carried me away to defend some opinion not sufficiently solid. And of this it seems there is sufficient proof in the fact that I have not shrunk, to my own shame, after making better reflection, from retracting in the second edition which I have made of my book many opinions which in the first I had held. For the rest, in the questions I

have indeed almost always set out my own view, to content the desire of Readers, who are wont to be sickened by those Authors of Moral Theology who, after setting out the doubts, fail in the end to give their own judgement; but for the rest I have registered the principal reasons on the one side and on the other, so that the Reader might attach himself to that which seemed to him more reasonable. Where I have found a convincing reason, I have never dared to give the contrary opinion as probable, even though I had seen it defended by several authors — which has earned me discredit with some. Where on the contrary I have not found this convincing reason, I have not dared to condemn the opinions opposed to mine, as some do all too easily, disallowing without certain foundation many opinions held by many grave Authors.

I have then had no difficulty in calling certain opinions probable, even though my own had seemed to me more probable, because I hold it certain that there can be (at least speaking speculatively) opinions which are truly probable even alongside more probable ones. And among other reasons, one seems to me evident: because otherwise, if the more probable opinions, in comparison with the less probable, could be reckoned morally certain, then the more probable could lawfully be followed even in controversies over the invalidity of the Sacraments; but in these it is certain that we must hold the safer opinions, or at least those which are absolutely morally certain, not the more probable. For the rest, whether in practice opinions that seem less probable, or less safe, may or may not be followed, I do not enter into; I refer myself to what others, especially in our own day, have

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written more than sufficiently upon it. *Utinam moderationes se tenuissent! — Would that they had kept within moderation!*

Other opinions, again, even though they had not seemed to me sufficiently probable, I have not dared (as I said above) to condemn — not meaning thereby to approve them, but to leave the judgement of them to others; since I have had equal scruple (as I judge every Author of Moral Theology ought to have) both about admitting some opinions not sufficiently founded, and about condemning those which are supported by some foundation, though I myself did not hold it sufficiently solid. For St. Antoninus teaches me (having taken it from St. Thomas) that it is a very dangerous thing to make oneself the cause of the damnation of others, by condemning as certainly gravely sinful those actions which are not seen to be forbidden by the express authority of Sacred Scripture, or of the Church, or by evident reason: *Nisi habeatur* (these are the Saint's words) *auctoritas expressa Sacræ Scripturæ, aut Canonis, seu determinationis Ecclesiæ, vel evidens ratio, nonnisi*

periculosissime determinatur; nam si determinetur quod sit tibi mortale, & non sit, mortaliter peccabit contra faciens; quia omne quod est contra conscientiam ædificat ad gehennam, &c. — Unless there is the express authority of Sacred Scripture, or of a Canon, or of a determination of the Church, or an evident reason, a thing is determined only most dangerously; for if it be determined that something is mortal for you and it is not, the one who acts against it will sin mortally, since everything that is against conscience builds towards hell, etc. (Part. 2. tit. 1. c. 11. §. 28.) The same was said earlier by St. Raymond: *Unum tamen consulo, quod non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam. — One thing, however, I advise: that you be not too ready to judge sins mortal where it is not established for you by certain Scripture.* (Lib. 3. tit. de Pœnit. & Remiss. §. 21.) And the same is taught me by Fr. Concina, saying that nothing must be condemned as mortal sin *nisi evidens ratio id suadeat — unless evident reason persuades it.*

But someone will say to me: You have made use of bad principles, of probabilistic principles. I do not care to know whether the principles I have followed are probabilistic or antiprobabilistic. I would only wish that this man would teach me whence I am to take these principles, in order to determine myself in the questions. In the Sacred Scriptures I find many of them, but not all, for deciding all moral controversies; nor can I find them there, as my dead Pritanius wisely teaches me — that is, Ludovico Muratori, in his learned Treatise on Jurisprudence which I have read, where he tells me precisely that in Scripture there are not the clear principles for deciding all the questions of Moral Theology. Nor again do I find all these principles among the holy Fathers, who in their books have treated little of

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moral cases, since they were intent on determining the dogmas of the faith amid so many Heresies as were then creeping about in the beginning of the Church. The sacred Canons likewise have established few things concerning morals. On the other hand the science of Moral Theology is so vast and so obscure, where a reason which to some Learned men appears certain, to others seems groundless. How many Authors of the more rigid opinion have stated propositions which the more lenient probabilists have then judged lax! How many examples of this could I bring forward here? Where (I add) a reason which at one time convinced us no longer persuades us at another.

Now in a science so obscure and intricate, where it is so dangerous (as we have seen) both to approve and to condemn opinions, it seems there can be no safer way of not erring than to follow the rule approved by all the Wise: namely, that in the

sciences those principles are to be followed which are most received by the learned. *Ubi est aliqua obscuritas, id sequendum est in praxi, quod prudentissimi quique judicant. — Where there is any obscurity, that is to be followed in practice which the most prudent judge.* So says the learned continuator of Tournely, speaking of an opinion more commonly received, although it had many Authors against it. Therefore I justly believe that I have not erred in governing myself by those principles which on the one hand seemed to me more conformable — indeed wholly conformable — to reason, and on the other hand I saw commonly, or at least by far more commonly, approved by Theologians ancient and modern. And not having had the means, nor believed I could find it, to weigh and discern among these which were the wisest, I judged that I ought to conform myself to those principles which I observed to have been most received by the greater part of the Authors who are commonly esteemed as pious and learned, and who have treated *ex professo* of the science of Moral Theology, and have published their books in the face of the Church, which without doubt has examined their Works and their principles.

Nor does it avail to say that the Church does not approve all that she does not condemn, but often tolerates; for this may be said when speaking of particular opinions, but not of those others which contain general doctrines, such as the principles of Moral Theology, on which then depends the direction of consciences in all particular cases — since St. Augustine says (*Ep. 119.*): *Ecclesia Dei multa*

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tolerat, & tamen quæ sunt contra fidem sanctam, vel bonam vitam, nec approbat, nec tacet, nec facit. — The Church of God tolerates much, and yet what is against the holy faith or against good life she neither approves, nor keeps silent about, nor does. And St. Thomas (*Quodlib. 9. art. 15.*) also teaches: *Quod vergit in commune periculum, non est ab Ecclesia sustinendum. Sed Ecclesia sustinet; ergo non est periculum peccati mortalis. — What tends to common danger is not to be borne with by the Church. But the Church does bear with it; therefore there is no danger of mortal sin.*

The aforesaid Author, then, my admonisher, comes down to reproving me for two particular propositions. First, I wrote in the second edition of my book (where I have revised the first, and made it especially to this end) thus: *quod autem dicit Busembaum hic, quod Confessarius debet absolvere Pœnitentem, etsi judicet falsam illius opinionem, intelligendum* (thus I have limited the Doctrine of *Busenbaum* and of other Authors who state it), *nisi judicet omnino falsam; quia tunc nec tenetur, nec potest absolvere; cum Pœnitens, præsertim rudis, teneatur hoc casu suam dimittere opinionem, aliter non esset bene dispositus, ut recte advertunt Lugo, & Auctor de Offic. Confes. apud la Croix. Secus vero, si opinio illa haberet aliquam existimatam*

probabilitatem, ita ut reputatus vere probabilis inter DD. probatæ auctoritatis; tunc enim, si Pœnitens tenet eam ut probabilem, Confessarius, quamvis putet improbabilem (not most improbable), *tenetur eam absolvere, semper ac illa opinio non sit omnino improbabilis ex evidentia rationis, aut ex prohibitione Ecclesiæ. — As for what Busenbaum says here, that the Confessor must absolve a Penitent even if he judges his opinion false, this is to be understood unless he judges it wholly false; because then he is neither bound nor able to absolve, since the Penitent, especially an unlearned one, is bound in this case to give up his opinion, otherwise he would not be well disposed — as Lugo rightly notes, and the Author of the Office of the Confessor in la Croix. It is otherwise, however, if that opinion had some reputed probability, so as to be accounted truly probable among Doctors of approved authority; for then, if the Penitent holds it as probable, the Confessor, although he thinks it improbable, is bound to absolve him, provided that opinion is not wholly improbable by evidence of reason or by prohibition of the Church.* So it stands at *lib. 1. n. 25. vers. Quod autem.* And the reason which I have brought for this is that the Penitent is not bound to follow the Confessor's opinion in order to be judged disposed; but it is enough that he form his conscience — that is, the practical judgement of acting rightly — with that opinion which he judges solidly probable. And on the other hand the Confessor is not the judge of controversies, but, as is declared in the Council of Trent (*Sess. 13. cap. 6. & 8.*), in two things only is he judge over Penitents: first, in judging of the gravity or slightness of the sins confessed according to the knowledge they have had of them, and of the fitting penance to be imposed; second, of the quality of the sorrow and purpose as regards certain faults. For as regards doubtful ones, it is enough, as has been said, that the Penitent judge that he has grave ground (although the Confessor does not reckon it grave enough) that he may with a safe conscience follow some opinion, so as to b-

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-e sufficiently disposed, and to have a *right* to Absolution, by reason of the Confession of his sins already made. So that the Confessor would then do him an injury if he refused to absolve him — as Soto, Toledo, Navarrus, Suárez, Layman, and innumerable other Doctors say most commonly. Otherwise, even in the case where the Penitent were more learned than the Confessor, and his opinion were truly probable in practice — indeed were more probable, and even morally certain — the Confessor, because he does not go so far as to reckon that opinion (as perhaps it already is) sufficiently probable, could (I say) refuse him Absolution after having heard his sins; so that by his own doubt he would come to deny that absolution to which the Penitent has a certain and strict *right*. Which I have never

understood, nor can I understand, how it can be done in good conscience. Others nevertheless say that it can be done, and that so it must be done: *ipsi videant — let them see to it.*

But what I have said, I find, not only the Probabilists have taught, but the Probabiliorists too, and indeed the ancient Authors who are reckoned supporters of the rigid opinion. Cabassut (*Theor. Jur. lib. 3. cap. 13. n. 13.*) says thus: *Quivis Confessarius absolvere debet Pœnitentem qui non vult ab opere abstinere, quod secundum probabilem piorum & doctorum aliquot hominum non reprobatam in Ecclesia auctoritatem est licitum, quamvis juxta probabilem pariter aliorum auctoritatem, quam ipse sequitur Confessarius, habeatur ut minus probabilis. — Every Confessor must absolve a Penitent who does not wish to abstain from an act which is lawful according to the probable authority of some pious and learned men, not disallowed in the Church, even though by the equally probable authority of others which the Confessor himself follows it is held as less probable.* Let it be noted that this Author is a Probabiliorist, and among Probabiliorists it is a certain maxim that one may not follow a probable opinion alongside a more probable one — unlike the Probabilists, who hold the opposite. Cardinal Toledo (*lib. 3. c. 20. n. 7.*) says: *Cum aliquid est sub opinione, si casu accidit Confessarium esse opinionis esse illicitum, & Pœnitentem esse licitum, potest Pœnitens obligare Confessarium, ut ipsum absolvat in sua opinione. — When something is a matter of opinion, if it happens that the Confessor is of the opinion that it is unlawful and the Penitent that it is lawful, the Penitent can oblige the Confessor to absolve him in his own opinion.* Silvius, Doctor of Douai (*2. 2. q. 154. art. 2.*): *Si Confessarii non possint clare percipere, utrum ibi sit mortale, an solum veniale, persuadeant quoad possunt, ut Pœnitens abstineat; Si tamen nolit, non ei faciant conscientiam de mortali, ne deinceps mortaliter peccet, ubi aliquis non peccaret: neque absolutionem neget. — If Confessors cannot clearly perceive whether the matter is mortal or only venial, let them persuade as far as they can that the Penitent abstain; if however he will not, let them not form his conscience that it is mortal, lest thereafter he sin mortally where another would not sin: nor let him refuse absolution.* But above all, leaving others aside, it serves me here to bring forward the authority of St. Anto-

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-ninus, who (*par. 3. tit. 17. cap. 16. §. 2.*) writes thus: *Caveat Confessor, ne sit præceps ad dandam sententiam de mortali, quando non est certus, & clarus; & ubi in aliqua materia sunt variæ opiniones quamplurium, & solemnium Doctorum ... consulet quod tutius est, non tamen contemnet contrariam opinionem tenentes, nec propter hoc deneget Absolutionem. — Let the Confessor beware of being hasty in pronouncing a*

judgement of mortal sin when he is not certain and clear; and where in some matter there are various opinions of very many and weighty Doctors ... let him counsel what is safer, yet let him not despise those who hold the contrary opinion, nor for this refuse Absolution. He then says: *Si autem omnino conscientia Confessoris dictaret, illud esse mortale — But if the Confessor's conscience should altogether dictate that it is mortal* — then he says that he cannot absolve the Penitent. But when? When *conscientia omnino dictaret, illud esse mortale.* And still more clearly in another place (*part. 3. tit. 16. cap. 20. in fine*) he says: *Si credit (Confessarius) quod sit peccatum, debet ei conscientiam facere, quod constans diligenter se informet de illo facto, utrum sit peccatum. Sed dato quod ille non vellet cognoscere, illud esse peccatum, nihilominus tenetur eum absolvere, nec reputare eum inhabilem ad absolutionem: quia ex ratione, & non ex protervia hæc opinio est. — If the Confessor believes it to be a sin, he ought to form the man's conscience, that he should steadily and diligently inform himself about that act, whether it is a sin. But granted that he should not be willing to acknowledge it to be a sin, nevertheless the Confessor is bound to absolve him, and not to reckon him unfit for absolution: because this opinion of his rests on reason, and not on obstinacy.* I add only here, and repeat, the doctrine of St. Raymond brought forward above, who, speaking to the Confessor, says: *Unum tamen consulo, quod non sis nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata, ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam. — One thing, however, I advise: that you be not too ready to judge sins mortal where it is not established for you by certain Scripture.*

My Censor sets against me the third Proposition condemned by Innocent XI, which said: *Generatim, dum probabilitate, sive intrinseca, sive extrinseca, quantumvis tenui, modo a probabilitatis finibus non exeatur, confisi aliquid agimus, semper prudenter agimus. — Generally, whenever we do something trusting in a probability, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, however slight, provided we do not go beyond the bounds of probability, we always act prudently.* But it is clear that the Proposition speaks of one who acts (*confisi aliquid agimus*), and not of the Confessor who absolves a disposed Penitent. One thing is the act of the Penitent, who wishes to act according to that opinion which he reckons slightly probable; another is the act of the Confessor, who absolves the Penitent who holds that opinion to be gravely probable, although to the Confessor it seems of slight probability. So that he is already well disposed, and therefore has a *right* to Absolution; since then it is not that the Confessor follows that opinion, but only that he *negative se habet — holds himself negatively* — as regards the truth of the opinion, whether it has grave or slight probability; and in absolving him he does nothing but refrain from condemning him as indisposed (as indeed he cannot

condemn him), and render him the certain *right* which that man has to absolution.

Nor does it stand in the way to say that the Confessor in absolving also acts; because here one must consider the different re-

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-gards which the Penitent and the Confessor must respectively have. The Penitent, in order to act according to some opinion, must consider whether the probability of it is truly grave and well founded; otherwise, if he holds it as slight, or as doubtful (which is the same thing), he cannot act according to that opinion. The Confessor on the other hand, not being the judge (as we have said) of the truth of opinions, is under no obligation to consider whether the opinion which the Penitent wishes to follow is certainly probable; but provided he does not hold it as altogether false — so that he remains in doubt whether perhaps it is true or not — he has only to consider the disposition of the Penitent: whether that man has truly formed the judgement that this opinion is certainly probable, and that with it he may lawfully act; because then he has a certain *right* to Absolution.

In the second place the Anonymous writer criticises me because I do not disallow the opinion of Lessius, of the Salmanticenses, of Sporer, and of others, who say this (see at *lib. 3. num. 391. vers. Quando*): *Si fœmina sit tibi consanguinitate valde propinqua, posses, etiam fœmina ad copulam consentiente, ejus invasorem occidere, si alias tuam infamiam evitare nequeas. — If the woman is very closely related to you by blood, you could, even with the woman consenting to the union, kill the man who assails her, if you cannot otherwise avoid your own infamy.* For my part, in the first edition of my Moral Theology I had said that this opinion could not be maintained, and I had grounded myself on the text of *cap. Si vero, 1. de Sent. excom.*, where it is said that one who strikes a Cleric *turpiter agentem cum matre, filia, aut sorore — acting shamefully with his mother, daughter, or sister* — is free from the excommunication, but not from the fault. But in the second edition — because (I repeat) I have every scruple about condemning those opinions which have some notable foundation — considering better that the text speaks not of the time before the shameful act, but of when the act has already taken place, I therefore did not dare to disprove the said opinion, which speaks of the case in which the act, and the fact of the infamy, is still to come.

Against this the Author sets me another condemned Proposition, namely Proposition 18 condemned by Alexander VII, which said: *Licet interficere falsum accusatorem, falsos testes, ac etiam Judicem a quo iniqua certo imminet sententia, si alia via non potest innocens damnum evitare. — It is lawful to kill a false accuser, false witnesses, and even the Judge from whom an unjust sentence certainly threatens,*

if the innocent man cannot avoid the harm by any other way. My Censor therefore says that, just as the Accused may not kill the Judge in order to avoid the harm of an unjust sentence, so the husband may not kill the adulterer

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in order to avoid the infamy of the adultery. But who does not see the difference between the case of the opinion of the said Doctors and the case of the condemned Proposition? In the case of the Proposition it is evident that the Judge may not be killed: first, because in such a case (whatever the Author of the Proposition might say) there is always another way by which the innocent man can protect himself, or recover from the harm of the unjust sentence. Secondly, because if the Proposition were allowed, the guilty could easily persuade themselves, deluded by the passion of their own interest, that they were being unjustly condemned, and so many unjust homicides would follow, to the common harm of the Commonwealth. But such drawbacks are not present in the case of the said opinion, where it is supposed that there is no other way of avoiding the infamy, and where certainly there is no danger of self-delusion.

For the rest, that in order to avoid an infamy of deed (not of words, or of signs) it is lawful to kill the Assailant, this is commonly said by so many grave Authors — such as Navarrus, Molina, de Lugo, Lessius, Vásquez, Layman, Azor, Filliucci, Cárdenas, the Salmanticenses, Pichler, Roncaglia, Sporer, Tapia, Fagundez, etc. (see at *lib. 3. n. 381.*, where the places are cited). And the reason is that, although the life of one's neighbour ought to be preferred to one's own honour, this nevertheless holds when the neighbour is in extreme necessity, but not when he spontaneously exposes himself to the danger of death. Otherwise, for one who found himself morally certain of being in the grace of God it would not be lawful to kill the Assailant of his life, who at that moment is certainly in mortal sin; since the spiritual life of one's neighbour must certainly be preferred to one's own temporal life. But we have several Canonical texts where it is said to be lawful for anyone, by every law, to kill an unjust assailant: so it stands in *cap. Significasti 8. de Homic.* and in *cap. Si vero 3. de Sent. excom.*, where it is written: *Cum vim vi repellere omnes leges, omniaque jura permittant &c. — Since all laws and all rights permit force to be repelled by force, etc.* And this is founded on Scripture: *Si effringens fur domum, sive suffodiens inventus fuerit, & accepto vulnere mortuus fuerit, percussor non erit reus sanguinis. Exod. 22. — If a thief be found breaking open a house or undermining it, and be wounded so as to die, he that slew him shall not be guilty of blood. Exodus 22.* On which text St. Thomas (*2. 2. quæst. 74. art. 7.*) writes thus: *Sed multo magis licitum est defendere propriam vitam, quam propriam domum. — But it is far more*

lawful to defend one's own life than one's own house. By which it is proved that the holy Doc-

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-tor held the opinion that it is lawful to kill not only the assailant of one's life, but also of one's goods, when they are of notable value, and much more of one's honour. And why? Because the unjust assailant spontaneously exposes himself to the danger of his own death; whence he must impute the harm of his death, if it befalls him, to his own malice alone. So printed: "spontaneameute". Retained as printed.

I make an end. A great thing! My Censor, without having examined my book (I speak of the second edition, not of the first, which I have already revised, as he already does with his *Deo gratias*), makes it out to be pernicious and full of falsity, even to saying to me: *Tu auctoritate qua polles, qui Præsul es, absoluto æternoque præcepto prohibe eis* (to my brethren) *ut imposterum tuam hanc Theologiam abjiciant procul a corde, a manibus, etiam a cella. — Do you, by the authority in which you are strong, since you are a Prelate, forbid them by an absolute and everlasting precept to cast this Theology of yours henceforth far from their heart, from their hands, and even from their cell.* But on the contrary our reigning Pontiff Benedict XIV — who, besides so many other sciences that he possesses, is seen from his Works to be deeply versed in Moral Theology — says quite the opposite of what my Censor wishes to persuade me. The Pope, in the letter which with such kindness he sent me (and it is printed at the beginning of the book), when I sent him my Work, already dedicated to him, wrote to me thus: *We thank you for the gift; and having run through the book of your Moral Theology, we have found it full of good information, and you may rest assured of its universal acceptance and of its public usefulness. From time to time we shall go on reading it, and we hope that what we shall read will correspond to what we have read.* For the rest I declare here that, however many censures may appear hereafter against my Moral Theology, I am not going to reply again, submitting myself first to the judgement of Holy Church, and then to the sound discernment of my Readers.

THE END.

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FINIS

Colophon

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