



THE GREATNESS OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN MARY



Namely,



The Immaculate
Mother of God

should be loved, praised and
served by Her devoted children.



In commemoration of Glorious Palmarian Holy Year 2025,
50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Order of
Carmelites of the Holy Face





The Greatness of the Most Holy Virgin Mary

INTRODUCTION

Our desire is to exalt the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and see Her deeply beloved by everyone. Hence we will try to kindle the blessed flames of love for our beloved Queen in the hearts of everyone; given that our salvation depends on loving Mary and trusting in Her intercession. More than talking about the great privileges of Mary Most Holy, we want to talk here about Her immense compassion and Her powerful intercession, in order to inspire you with great confidence in Her mercy and power.

This book will help you to see the greatness of the Divine Mother's glories and excellencies, the grandeur of the Divine Mother, the extent of Mary's power, insofar as man can understand, to obtain from God everything She asks for Her devotees; how She favours them, and how great the need we all have for the patronage of our Heavenly Mother to save us, since all the graces that the Lord grants us pass through Mary's hands, She being Mediatrix of all graces. Hence it is that, unable as we are to obtain graces from God except through Mary, because this is the Will of God, no one is saved except through Mary.

Among the great and tender demonstrations of love with which the human race has been favoured by God, and for which we owe Him all the love of our hearts, one of the greatest is having created from our lineage such a creature as Most Holy Mary, Virgin of virgins, admiration and amazement of the Angels, glory of mankind, manifestation of Divine Omnipotence, whom He chose to be our dear Mother.

How we should show our love to God for having created Mary thus and made Her His Mother and given Her to us to be our Mother! We must thank Him with infinite love, and with infinite hearts, for this great good of having created Mary, not only so that we may thus love Him more, but also because He wants this to be by loving and serving Mary.

God is pleased and commands that we love and reverence and serve Him by loving and serving Mary; because to this creature, His Mother, He is tremendously indebted. Oh, good Jesus! If You did good to those who took Your life, can You ever cease to be grateful to the One who gave you life? Let us then serve Jesus by loving and serving Mary.

To Jesus we owe the satisfaction of His desire to see His Mother served, satisfaction that He so dearly and so justly longs for. We owe this same pleasure to the Holy Trinity Itself, to revere Their Temple. Let us give this pleasure to the Angels, to recognize their Queen. Let us give this pleasure to the Saints, to love their Mother. Let us give this pleasure to all creatures, to honour Her who is the honour of them all. All things exhort and compel us to this by their example. The Eternal Father loves Her as His dear Daughter and firstborn of pure creatures. The Son of God loves Her as His Mother, truly so and very tender and beloved. The Holy Ghost loves Her as His Spouse, esteeming Mary alone above all the Saints and above all the hierarchies of Angels. The sovereign spirits love Her as legitimate Queen. The greatest Saints held Her to be more than Mother to them. And finally, She deserves our love by innumerable titles, because whatever we owe to our Redeemer, we owe as well to Mary; because Her Son grants us no good unless by His Mother. Just as the cause of our perdition was Adam persuaded by Eve, so God has ordained that the cause of our salvation be Jesus by Mary's intercession. She, then, deserves our love for the benefits She has obtained for us, for all the loving care She lavishes upon us, for being our advocate; for Her grandeur and dignity; for being our Queen; for being our Mother; for the beauty of soul and body She possesses; for Her admirable virtues; for Her immense gratitude; for being our honour; because God so wills, and for the love we owe to our Redeemer Jesus,



a love which leads us to love His Mother.

Let us appreciate the grace of having been born in these last most blessed years in which Mary is crowned Queen of Mercy, in these times in which Mary reigns, to be able to know and love this sublime Lady.

1. Let's see how it pleases God that we love and serve Mary Virgin His Mother.

God wants us to revere His Mother. There are many things that, if we were to ask Him without Her mediation, He would deny us, but when we turn to Mary He grants with great pleasure. This is a clear indication of the great pleasure it gives to Him that we serve Her, and that if we love Jesus, we must love His dear Mother. Hence a Saint has said: "Who does not see the infinity of miracles and wonders that are performed every day through Mary? Because if we consider the miraculous images there are, very few are of Christ and countless of the Virgin Mary, and more frequented and famous because more and greater miracles have been performed in those places. Oh humble Jesus! If You said of the other Saints that they would perform wonders even greater than Yours, why should You not grant this grace to the one who brought You forth from Her womb, and is the holiest of Saints, to do greater wonders than Yours and those of all the Saints together, as we experience today?"

Because God loves Mary so much, and is so pleased that we love and serve Her, He has determined not to give or grant any grace except by Her means. Hence Saint Bernardine said that Mary has dominion over the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. It is all a very well-founded truth, that no grace is dispatched from God's throne except through Mary. So all good things in this world depend on Her.

Oh!, sweet occupation is this of Mary our Mother, and Mother of all sinners! With what pleasure She remembers the times She seasoned Her Son's food; the hardships She experienced banished from home and country for His sake; the steps She took following Him in His preaching; the tears She shed in His Passion!; and the humblest Mary wants to do over again for us all that She did and suffered for Him by raising Him and safeguarding His life, as members we are of Christ.

Mary grants us every good, for She knows that by the reverence Her Son feels for Her, and the desire He has to honour Her, that He has chosen to grant no favour except by Her mediation, and Mary does not overlook this. On the contrary, Her grace and Her tact are such with Her Son, that the world has never felt God so merciful, nor received more favours from His Majesty, than after Mary was crowned Queen of Heaven; She knowing well how to make Divine Goodness and Mercy shine forth.

God truly knew the One to whom He entrusted this care. How well He knew Mary to entrust Her with His honour and to do right by men!, now more precious in His sight after having seen them bought and appreciated at the price of the Blood of His beloved Onlybegotten. How well He understood the piety of Mary's heart for Her to distribute the infinite riches of mercy, and thus was the right choice of Divine Goodness, when He entrusted the entire distribution of His graces to this pious Maiden, to our own Mother, and who loves us so much. Can there be greater happiness in the world than ours? She Who is more than our fleshly mother and has so much power, Who loves us more, Who desires our good far more, and is more obliged by reason of this great charge that She has of being Almoner of God and Dispenser of His Mercies! Oh, my most loving Mother! Oh, my Lady! Oh, my comfort and joy! Was it necessary for You to be obliged to do me good by reason of Your charge to hasten and show me mercy? No. Without further obligation, your ardent charity was more than enough, which does not allow you to forget the needs of those whom your beloved Son Jesus loved so much, and for whom He gave His Blood and Life.

Well, if this is so, why should God tolerate our ingratitude to such a Benefactress, to such a Mother's compassion, and to such warmth and concern? How could God remain silent, and not show us something of how much we owe to Mary, so that we be grateful to Her? This most pious Maiden is His Mother; and God wants us to be grateful for all that we

owe Her, for Her mercy and concern for us, so caring for our good; and this is one reason why God so greatly likes us to love and serve Mary, because He greatly appreciates the virtue of gratitude, and even more so towards One who is so close to Him, and whom He loves so dearly, and loves more for Her undeniable charity than for having been born from Her womb. Therefore, just as all things are granted to us through Mary, it pleases God very much that we turn to Her in all things; and thus wants us to implore Mary, and to serve Her in all that we can; and that we be grateful remembering Her and trusting in Her intercession, and because we owe a deep affection and loyalty to someone who is so loving and faithful to us.



2. Why God is so pleased when He sees that we love and serve the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

In addition to God's pleasure at seeing our gratitude, there are many other reasons for His pleasure at the great tenderness and fidelity with which we reverence, serve and love Mary, and at the affection and love we show Her, and that we give Her all our affection and love. The Lord does and wants to do greater works through Mary than those He does of Himself. And He does not dispense any grace or mercy except through Mary, though it was certainly an infinite good and mercy that He showed us by entrusting to such a creature, our merciful Mother, this concern of always doing us good.

And to do so, what greater cause and reason can there be than that Mary is His Mother, and His obligation as Son? Because the humblest Jesus honours those to whom He owes nothing, those who were his enemies and slaves of the devil, conceived in sin, to such a degree that He wanted them to do greater wonders than Him, as was seen in Saint Peter, who perjured and denied his Master three times, and later on, not only with the hem of his tunic, but also with his shadow, falling on the sick, healed all those who awaited him; which Christ did not do. Well, how could this Lord not want to honour His Mother, to whom He owed so much, who was not conceived in sin, nor ever had sin, and was always most faithful and most holy? Jesus was not content with just teaching us by words, but wanted to edify us with deeds as well; and He does so now though He is in Heaven, fulfilling the fourth precept of honouring parents, by honouring His Mother so much, and wanting the souls of His redeemed to honour Her likewise. Having humbled Himself and knelt at the feet of the disciples, giving so much honour to His servants, to whom He owed nothing, then His Mother, to whom He owes His life, how could He fail to honour and want us all to do likewise?

No one can understand this reason well without understanding the immense humility of the Son of God and His uttermost gratitude, and on the other hand the great obligation of honouring parents, which is the first after the honour that is due to God, and how well the Virgin fulfilled Her role of mother. For just as there has been no son in the world who was more of a son than Jesus to Mary, nor more humble, nor more grateful, nor more holy, nor more honourable, nor who had more love for his parents; and on the other hand, there has been no mother in the world who was more mother than Mary was to God, nor better, nor one who loved her son more, nor one who treated him better; so what honour can Jesus fail to show Her? What gratitude can He fail to feel? And what pleasure will be His when everyone honours His Mother, to whom He owes more than any other born child! Other children do not owe their mothers the particular will of having wanted to give birth to them more than to others. Jesus, however, owes His Mother not only His birth from Her womb, but also this particular will of Hers to have wanted to be Mother of Him, and not of another; since Jesus was born into the world thanks to Her consent. And so the Son of God feels so obliged that He can never be grateful to nor honour Her sufficiently; and, not being content with the honour He showed Her in life, upon leaving this world He left all

His faithful as a substitute for His love and reverence, so that in all His members He might honour His Mother, since He wants us to be Her children, because we take His place; and the obligation that He wants us to fulfil towards Her is that of children.

He looked upon Mary as One to whom He owed an infinite good, since from Her He had received His life and humanity; and likewise as One who was the cause of His human incarnate nature, because She voluntarily desired to engender Him, so that in this way God had a similar obligation of gratitude to a Virgin that creatures have to God.

3. On other reasons why God wants us to love the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

But even apart from Mary being Mother of God, there is another important reason why His Majesty is pleased that we love and admire Her: Because She is the greatest work and most excellent creature of His among all pure creatures, on whom He employed all His great power and wisdom, to produce a most perfect work, a manifestation and exposition of His omnipotence. Truly, God made Mary to be seen, a work very much His own, in all perfection, in comparison with which all the beauty of Heaven, all the light of the sun is dross, to which all the loftiness of the seraphim and the sanctity of the saints cannot compare. Well, since God made Her as a demonstration and proof of His infinite Wisdom, where His goodness most appears and shines forth, the pleasure He receives when we admire and praise Her is great: because what artist is there who does not want praise for a singular work of his that he values most highly? Because all that praise and honour comes to redound to His own Person. So it is that whoever honours Mary, honours God, honours all the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, because this honour affects Each of Them very especially, and in a very personal way. Thus he honours the Eternal Father who fabricated such a creature, and gave Her such glory as His predilect Daughter. He honours the Son of God, for having chosen Her to be His Mother and made Her Co-Authoress of His Work of Reparation and Redemption. He honours the Holy Ghost for the love She gives Him as His Spouse and for being such a limpid Tabernacle in which to dwell; he honours the three Persons, for having chosen Her as Companion in Their Creation: The Father, for having created Her as Queen of everything He created and to have Her as Mother of His Son. The Son of God, for having taken Her as Co-Reparatrix of the Eternal Father and Co-Redemptrix of the world, for employing Her in the mysteries of our salvation, effectively applying His infinite merits to whomsoever She asks of Him. The Holy Ghost, for having chosen Her as a universal instrument for communicating His Graces and Gifts.

In addition to this, since God knows how much it is to our benefit and utility to serve and love His Mother, the joy He feels on seeing us deeply devoted to Her is great. Apart from this, the Most Blessed Virgin is for very just reasons our lawful Queen, Mistress of all creatures and Empress of all Angels and men. For if we owe great veneration to the Angels and Blessed, they being fellow servants of ours of the one who is Queen of all, how much greater does God value the reverence and love we owe to Her? If Christ Jesus was so much in favour of kings and superiors; and so loves obedience, respect and loyalty towards elders, that He Himself and by His Apostles took charge of revering and obeying them, though they might be accursed and unfaithful, so that we should show them the same respect as to Himself; and He, being Lord of the world, wanted to obey them, the further to oblige us by example: naturally, to Her who is far more our Lady and Queen and superior in everything, He is surely pleased that we revere Her with all our soul and that We show Her great loyalty and love. Finally, because of the love Jesus bears for Mary, He wants us all to love Her: because just as He loves Her more than He does all creation, above all spirits and souls, so He wants us to have no greater love than Her. Well, if we love God, and it is His wish that we love Mary, how can we fail to give Him that pleasure?, and yet more, since by loving His Mother, we do not cease to love Him, rather love Him as He wills, and love Him more dearly?

Jesus has declared this joy He has in seeing his Mother loved by several very tender

demonstrations that he has made to his Saints, by commending them to his Mother for succour and consolation in their tribulations, without wishing to succour them Himself at once, so that in this way they might feel greater affection for Her, as happened with Saint Gertrude several times. However, a singular demonstration among these occasions was when Christ asked his Mother to take care of the Saint and receive her affection, as if it were not enough for the Lord himself so to receive, and the Saint be content with that. This glorious virgin once saw sweet Jesus embrace His Most Blessed Mother, and give Her the tender caresses of a beloved Son with great love and affection; and then lovingly say to Her: ‘Remember, beloved Lady and Mother, that for Your sake I have had mercy on sinners. So then, look after this chosen Gertrude of Mine with such affection as if all the days of her life she had always served and pleased You with utmost devotion.’ Surely this is a great sign of the degree to which Jesus wants us to love Mary, namely to see how He wants Mary to love us.



4. On the love that the Most Blessed Trinity Itself has for Mary Most Holy, and the Trinity’s wish that we love Her on that account.

Let us consider how great and tender is this love that God has for Mary, so that we may imitate the example that He gives us of loving Her; and we shall find that He loves Her in every possible way and with all the species of friendship that philosophers tell of. There are three kinds of love: one natural, one useful, and another of friendship, because by all these titles God loves Mary with infinite affection and tenderness, and in each kind with all the species it contains. Let’s start with natural love, which is founded on kinship, or affinity, or birth; and the closest of these ties are: the love of parents for their children, of children for their parents, of a husband for his wife and vice versa, and that for one’s country. Any of these loves is wholly obligatory and in itself very vehement and persevering: what will it be when they all come together in one subject, as they do in Mary, to be beloved of God? Because Mary is a very special and very beloved Daughter of God the Father; and She is the natural Mother of God the Son, to whom She gave body and new life; She is the most faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost; She is like the Motherland of the Holy Trinity, since She is Their dearly beloved home or abode: because though it is true that though God has no origin nor can any place contain Him, nevertheless, He wanted to have an equivalent, that is, a place where He might enjoy Her affection, in whom He might preferentially live and be like His beloved Motherland. And just as the bird has its shelter and the dove its nest, so God also has Altars as His own place. At what altar does He stay with greater pleasure than in Mary’s Heart? What sweeter nest for the Holy Ghost than the purity of this Maiden, whose soul is the Temple most highly esteemed by God? Let us see what deeds have been performed and to what extremes men possessed of some of these affections have gone, that is, whether for love of children, or of parents, or of consorts, or of country and home, so that from this we may deduce what all these affections together will do, and even more so in God, whose His inclination is to love.

What have fathers and mothers not done for their children, esteeming them more highly than their own lives? Oh, Eternal Father, what pleasure will be Yours on seeing Your Firstborn Daughter, heir to Your mercies, the most beloved among all creatures, reign and rule in the world; and on earth and in Heaven and in hell Her Name be revered and all bow kneeling? Because though it is true that Mary is not God’s natural daughter, yet She is properly Daughter of the Father in all rigour by adoption at the first moment of Creation, and adoptive filiation by God is more intimate and greater than natural filiation by men, and in the Virgin much closer still: because God not only adopted Her as daughter, but also as firstborn Daughter, and because of Her birthright made Her His universal heir; and thus raised Her to a throne of

such immense glory so that She might reign over all the Angels.

It is quite another thing for God to be the Son of Mary, because He is Her natural Son, by a sure title of immeasurable love, which exceeds without comparison all the respect that children have had for their parents. The Emperor Alexander Severus loved his mother so much that he obeyed everything she ordered in the empire, even if it was against his taste. The Emperor Leo could not bear to reign alone without his father reigning: and so he removed the crown from his own head and put it on his father's. Jesus was not going to be colder and more distanced from His Mother, for His Heart cannot bear to deny Her anything that She asks of Him, nor could His Heart suffer to reign alone, but also crowned Her as Empress and Sovereign over all created things, as He legitimately is by the union of His Most Sacred Humanity with the Person of the Word. The greatest joy that Coriolanus, a distinguished Roman captain, had was to please his mother, and that she take pleasure in him, and he not deny her anything she asked of him. Being once very angry against Rome, and wanting to destroy it, the Romans had no other recourse but to call his mother to go out to meet him; and seeing her he said: "You have conquered and overcome my anger, mother: I forgive my country out of respect for you and I grant you mercy by not destroying it, though for such a just cause I am angry with it." Well, should Jesus respect and love his Mother less and remain angry in Her presence? It is a shame that not all men have learned how easy it is to win Jesus' favour by the intercession of his Most Holy Mother.

Furthermore, Mary was not only bodily Christ's Mother, but spiritually as well; because She is the whole Mother of the whole Christ, and not only did She conceive in Her womb the Head and Saviour of the entire Mystical Body, the Church; but in Her Heart She conceived all Her members, showing herself to be their Mother in spirit, cooperating by Her immense charity so that the faithful be born in the Church; because just as in the creation of the human race, God not only created Adam, but also gave him Eve as a companion and help, so that she might be the mother of all the living, so in Redemption our good Jesus wanted to have a companion and help; and who better than Mary, his Mother?, so that She could be spiritually and more truly and eternally Mother of the living, Mother of the times to come. And so He loves Her, not only as the Mother of His natural body, but of His entire Mystical Body, that is, of all the Saints, by Her collaboration in redeeming all others of human descent.

What thoughtfulness does the love of a husband not show? What did Jacob not do for Rachel? After serving as a slave for so many years, everything seemed little to him due to the greatness of his love. King Assuerus raised a poor captive to the majesty of his throne and sceptre, and denied nothing she desired, granting freedom to the whole people at Her request. How could the love of the Holy Ghost, Mary's loving Spouse, be less generous? How could He fail to give rights over all His graces to the One He chose as sweet Companion and Auxiliatrix in the labour of glorifying men? The greatness of His love could not await, and He filled Mary's Soul at creation with superabundant grace, as the Archangel Saint Gabriel said; He filled Her with His graces, gave Her the richest endowments, and gave Her all His gifts, so that She could distribute them at Her pleasure, Mary being as it were the hands and almsgiver of the Holy Ghost.

The love of country, for whose good many have wanted to die, has done no less than all this, but in part it is greater and more obligatory because in it the public good is considered, which must be put before all private good. For the love that the Holy Trinity has for Mary is not by the Eternal Father considering Her only as Daughter, nor by the Son only as Mother, nor by the Holy Ghost only as Spouse, but as a communal possession and rest and paradise of all Three Divine Persons, in whom all take solace and recreation within Her Soul. Mary is a public possession, because She is a possession for God, for the Angels, for men, for all of nature; and thus the Eternal Father is delighted with Her, and loves Her, not only as His first-born Daughter, but as admirable Mother of His Son, and tender Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and mutual Temple and Paradise of all Three Persons, and general good

of all Their creatures. God considers Her the Nuptial Chamber of His love, the Throne of His Majesty, the Tabernacle of His immensity, the Temple of His Holiness.

There is no creature more useful to God; because though His Majesty never lacked or lacks anything, nor does He need anything, nor does He receive comfort from his creatures; yet He has so much love for men that He assumes our usefulness as his own and holds it as such, and He is pleased that all rational natures give Him glory. God has not made nor will He make a pure creature to be the cause of greater glory to Him, or to be of more benefit to men, than Mary; and just as there is so much that interests God in the Virgin Mary, that His esteem for Her is infinite, and His love for Her greater, without comparison, than for all created things after Christ's Most Sacred Humanity. Because in addition to Mary being the occasion for other creatures to glorify God, the glory that She gives Him, the gratitude She shows Him, the praises with which She magnifies Him, are more than all that the nine choirs of the Angels do on their part, and the other Blessed, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins on theirs. And though with respect to the Divinity there cannot properly be anything necessary to God, and thus in all strictness it will not be found that God has this kind of useful love; but with respect to the humanity of Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin was truly and properly necessary and beneficial to Her Divine Son in all rigour, so it can be rigorously said that Mary is necessary to God Her Son, and therefore necessary to the Three Divine Persons.



Neither does God lack the noblest love of all, that of true friendship, for this beautiful creature and holiest soul, in whom He seeks no interest nor imposes any other obligation, without depending on kinship alone, by loving a person for their good qualities, kindness and virtue, even without any personal interest, or love on any other account; because the grandeur of Mary's goodness and holiness is such, as is the excellence of Her person, that even if She were not His Mother, nor provided Him with any benefits, He would love Her for Her dignity and holiness more than all the Saints, Angels and men put together. Well, if each of these titles of love is so imposing, altogether, what must they be? With what a blaze of charity must God love Mary? How can it fail to please Him that we love the One He loves so dearly: his Daughter, his Mother, His Spouse, His Paradise, His most highly esteemed and profitable beloved, the world's Public Good, the One who is cause of more glory to God and more health to men, who is holier and purer than all the Angels and Saints of Heaven and earth?

And because love is more highly valued when longstanding, the human person whom God first loved was Mary, choosing Her for Himself, predestining Her before all the other Saints, and loving Her more than He loves the rest of the Church. And because it is proper for one who loves to manifest himself to the person beloved, Mary's Soul in the glorious state ever enjoyed the vision of God in which Her two Bodies in this state always participated, save in Her Spiritual Death on Calvary. It was a great sign of love for the Virgin that He did not keep to His laws with Her, allowing Her to see God as He is from the Creation of Her Divine Soul in the beginning, and including in this life.

5. On the love that all the hierarchies of Angels bear for Mary Mother of God, and how we should imitate them.

When the holy Angels saw the way in which God loves Mary, how could they fail to follow His example and do the same as their Creator? In this way they gave Him this just pleasure, by taking such great pains in loving and serving His beloved creature and Firstborn Daughter, Mother of Jesus, beloved Spouse of His Divine Love, and Queen of the Angels themselves. Of course it is for us to blush to see our vileness and ungratefulness, that Mary being of our lineage and from whose hand we receive so many benefits, we neglect

Her service; and that the Angels, though not of Her lineage, rejoice intensely when kneeling before a Maiden of a nature other than their own, less noble. Assuredly, though it does not cost them so much to subject themselves to Mary, given that She immensely exceeds them in grace and other divine favours, withal the humility and simplicity of the loftiest Seraphim are to be appreciated, since without self-interest, without envy or self-esteem or duplicity, they love, serve and submit to a Woman, and consider it a great favour to be commanded by Her, and have such reverence and esteem for what She commends to them, that it was revealed to Saint Bridget that the respect and obedience that the Angels have for the Virgin is so great that they would rather suffer all the pains of hell than fail in one point whatever She ordains for them.

The spirits that make the greatest efforts in this subjection are the highest, who consider it a great favour to be chosen to serve Mary and throw themselves at Her feet, and be in Her presence; and this even before She was crowned in Heaven as their Queen. Saint Gabriel, who is one of the chief spirits, though Mary was not yet the Mother of God, had the most singular favour of being appointed to serve such a Lady, and, as is believed, to be her main guardian Angel, because many Angels perpetually attended the one who was to be crowned their Queen, and whose great pleasure was to be in Her presence, admiring such a creature and such holiness as they knew to be Hers. For just as it belongs to the majesty of a king to have many guards to accompany him, so Mary, Queen of Heaven, has to have many Angels to assist Her and follow Her wherever She goes. Certainly it would be worth seeing the accompaniment they provided when She went up with Saint Joseph through the mountains of Judea to the house of Zacharias, or when She went with Saint Joseph to register and pay tribute to Caesar, who never had such accompaniment or triumph in Rome as had that this humble Maiden in the deserts. What greater admiration (if one's soul's eyes were opened) than to see thousands upon thousands of spirits following a poor woman? But the Angels, as humble slaves, did not disdain to serve and accompany the One who considered Herself the Slave of the Lord, on Her way in obedience to a tyrant man.

But among the Angels who held it in highest esteem to attend Mary, and their greatest honour to serve Her, was Saint Gabriel. And Saint Michael, who is captain general of God's militia and guardian of the entire Church, was full of devotion to the Queen of Heaven, subjecting himself to Her and to Her Son when, fired with divine zeal, he banished the rebellious spirits from Heaven, which according to Saint Bernard and other Doctors, was due to their pride, for refusing to recognize as superior to themselves one who was by nature inferior. But Saint Michael commanded the good Angels to submit to another and less noble nature than their own, which was a great and considerate service he performed for Jesus and His Mother; and, recognizing Mary's greatness, it did not seem to him that he had done so great a service, that it was not humility but great honour and glory for him to submit to Her. It is necessary for Saint Michael to be very devoted to this Lady, and to have great favour in Her eyes, by coming and prostrating himself many times at Her feet; because, as he is the guardian and patron of the entire Church Militant under his care, he greatly needs the Mother of God to obtain from Her the favours that he intends to be given to the faithful; because, if not by Mary, he obtains nothing. Furthermore, Saint Gertrude says that all the spirits and blessed ones, when they hear the name of the glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph, bow and reverence him for the great dignity he has of being the Virginal Spouse of the Mother of God.

Other revelations show with how much devotion the courtiers of Heaven greet their Queen, saying the Hail Mary in choirs, giving us an example of devoutly praying the Rosary; and not only in Heaven, but when Mary was in wayfarer flesh on earth, armies of Angels came down to say the Hail Mary salutation, as Saint James heard.

They are also so happy that we honour Her and take Her as Mother and Intercessor, that whoever asks something of Mary, asks it in particular of all the Angels in Heaven; because

(as Her devout chaplain and most steadfast martyr of Jesus Christ, Father Edmund Campion said), when someone asks Mary for something, all the Blessed ask, so as to see their Queen honoured.

Let us consider how great is the love the Angels have for Mary, Mother of God. The love and loyalty that the Angels have for Mary is very intense and firm and founded on many reasons: though the main one is seeing that God is pleased by this, and the example that His Divine Majesty gives them. There are other very strong reasons, such as are the greatness, beauty and grace of the Virgin Herself, She being their legitimate Lady and Queen.

And since Mary is their Superioress and Queen, She alone being equivalent to a fourth and supreme hierarchy after God, they look upon Her as a Mother, with the love of children for Her sceptre, so gentle, loving and beneficial. Given that all the favours they receive from God depend on Mary, and that She is their Mistress and their light, for just as Angels of an inferior hierarchy are enlightened from a higher one, so are the spirits of the highest hierarchy enlightened and taught and perfected by the Virgin, receiving many lights, revelations and commands of God from this Mistress of theirs; for She alone (for by incomparable degrees She has no equal) is like a fourth and supreme created hierarchy; and thus, according to the order and disposition of God's House, all the heavenly spirits have to submit to Mary, given that all good things come from this Lady not only to men, but to Angels as well.

The Virgin Herself helps them, and She is more guardian of men, cities and kingdoms than the guardian Angels, Archangels and Principalities themselves. In addition to this, with the teaching She gives them by Her example: in all their ministries they have Mary as their model, who on Her own exercises all those ministries better without comparison than all the Angels combined. Most Holy Mary fulfils the office of all the different angelic choirs: She guards men, and each in particular; She watches over the nations; She looks after kingdoms; She incarcerates and represses the demons, more than the Powers themselves; She works more powerful miracles than the Virtues of Heaven; She intimates God's orders with more authority than the Dominations; God rests in Her with more pleasure and majesty than on the Thrones; She, enthroned, penetrates the Divine Essence. She teaches and enlightens the other Angels more than the Cherubim; She burns with love for God more than all the Seraphim, and sets them afire with Her example; and it could be said that She enkindles God Himself yet more in love and charity; that though God is the cause of all the good and greatness and love of Mary, and that all good is eminently and infinitely in His Majesty, and that the love of God always is and was infinite; but as for its effects, through Mary the graces that He grants to men have grown, and it seems that His love has grown, and that the Holy Ghost, who is the Love of God, yearns and loves by emulation, as though in rivalry to Mary. Let us try to understand this piety of Mary, and how She stimulates and enlivens that of God, in the manner that has been said, so that Divine Mercy might grow. Truly, if we compare the effects of God's love for men and Divine Mercy before Mary was born and after, the love of God in ancient times will seem like a child compared to what happens now; because, after Mary's birth and by Mary, God gave us his Son, He sent the Holy Ghost, who is His own Love, to men, and His mercies are without comparison far greater, given that the Holy Sacraments of the Church bear clear testimony to this truth. We can say that it was out of love that Mary ardently desired the Son of God to come into the world for its remedy, and God did not want to be less fervent in acting than Mary in desiring, as He later showed. Mary in her pious bosom desired greater graces for men, and that God might communicate Himself more than before: His Majesty then carried out what this Virgin desired. For the same reason, there is no pious cause desired by Mary that the Infinite Goodness of God does



not grant. And so that God might not be less liberal in giving than Mary was in wanting Him to give, the Holy Ghost entrusted Mary fully with the administration of His Graces and Gifts. Well, is it much that Mary teach the Seraphim to love? Is it much that the Seraphim love Her who loves God and men in this way?

O my most loving Mother! O paradise of charity! O Mistress of the love of God! Teach this needy and rude son of Yours what You taught to the most elevated and intellectual natures (because it is up to mothers to teach their children) so that, loving God, he may love You for God's sake, who wants this to be so. O kindest Lady! Who might have as many hearts to love You as he has members in his body? Who might have the burning wills of the Seraphim in his breast, so that, burning with all this fire in the love of God, he might burn in Your love!

For all the reasons mentioned, the celestial spirits love their Queen most ardently and, not only do they attend to the things of Her service with their great alacrity, but also assist anyone they see honouring their Lady, and come to that person's aid.

6. On how the Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
was desired by the Patriarchs and Prophets.

After Adam had sinned and fell from that blessed state, God declared to him that his loss was to have a very advantageous remedy through a Maiden; and She was his supreme joy and the greatest he had in his life, afflicted with the great penance he did; and he loved and desired with all his soul that Daughter of his, who was to be the Mother of his Life and of his Good.

Abraham received the same consolation, as the Angel told Saint Bridget; and loved Mary more than his son Isaac; and rejoiced far more in Her, and desired Her; and esteemed Her alone more than all his other descendants, though they were to be like the stars of the sky and sands of the earth. His son Isaac and his grandson Jacob also rejoiced in their souls with the hope of Mary's Incarnation, which they understood through revelation. For David, who also saw this Lady in spirit, how great the love and esteem he had for Her!, and sang with great joy Her greatness, and the beautiful variety of Her divine virtues. Solomon celebrated Mary in an entire book, where he says a thousand great things about Her, calling Her the All Beautiful, the Immaculate, the Spouse, the Friend, the Dove of God, the Well of Living Water, the Enclosed Garden. Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel and other prophets rejoiced in Her hope and made known Her greatness, celebrating it with various symbols and figures. The Virgin Mary, Mother of God, was desired by the Patriarchs and Prophets, and especially by Saint Elias who founded the first religious order in Her honour.

Saint John the Baptist, without seeing Mary, just by hearing Her, jumped with pleasure and joy, becoming perfectly devoted to this spiritual Mother of his, at whose visit he received Presanctification by the blessing of the Child Jesus from His Mother Mary's womb. He was the Precursor of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who imitated the virginity of Mary and was the standard-bearer of this virtue, later giving his life in defence of chastity. By this the Precursor showed that He valued purity, which shone so brightly in his mistress Mary; to whom he was always so devoted that he merited, when imprisoned, that together with Her Divine Son, the Virgin and Mother of his Redeemer might visit him in prison and console him and encourage him to martyrdom.

7. On the great love and reverence that the Apostles and disciples of Christ
had for Mary Mother of God; and on the love and tenderness
that other holy men have had for the Virgin Mary.

Jesus' Apostles and disciples, who knew Mary by sight and were familiar with Her, felt Her sweetness, received Her most prudent and holy counsels and saw Her heroic examples, how could they fail to love the Mother of their beloved Master, looking upon and contemplating Her greatness, lost in wonderment at the divine modesty of Her countenance and the other virtues which shone forth in Her and were by all admired? So great was the devotion they bore for Her and all they told of Her to the people to whom they preached and

communicated Her devotion, that the faithful went to see Her, and for this cause made pilgrimages from afar, as stated in numbers of testimonies and revelations as well. It is said as well, and confirmed by the grave authority of an ancient writer, that from Spain some travelled out to see this prodigy of sanctity; since on the occasion of the persecution in Jerusalem, raised up against Christ's disciples and faithful when Saint Stephen was stoned, the first Pope, Saint Peter, had sent out the seventy-two disciples, once ordained, to preach the Gospel in different provinces, and a number reached Spain, where they spoke such great things of the Virgin Woman chosen to be Mother of our God, He who had become incarnate for the Redemption of the world, that many, leaving their homes, went



off to see that miracle of grace; and there is no doubt but that from other provinces others made the same pilgrimage. One of these was Saint Denis the Areopagite who was converted on the occasion of Saint Paul's preaching in Greece at the start of the year 49. He made a long journey just to see Her, of whom he had heard such praise from Saint Paul; and when at last he saw Her, became enamoured and lost in wonderment. In a letter he wrote to the same Apostle, he thanked him for sending him with a recommendation to Saint John the Evangelist and, having seen Mary, says this: "I tell the truth as though in God's presence, that excepting God Himself, I did not believe it were possible to have before my eyes, nor to understand from any man what I saw, not with the eyes of the soul alone, but also those of the body. Because I looked and contemplated with my own eyes the greatest above all the Heavenly Spirits, bordering on the divinity, the Mother of Jesus Christ Our Lord, whom the Goodness of God, the authority of the apostolic hierarchy and the inexhaustible clemency of the Holy Virgin Herself allowed me to see. I say and confess over and over again before God's Omnipotence, the clemency of the Saviour and the glory and majesty of the Virgin His Mother that, when the Apostle John took me into the presence of the loftiest Virgin, I saw that She, still dwelling in Her wayfarer body, shone out like a sun in the Heavens; Her divine and immense splendour so struck me exteriorly, and interiorly filled me with such great light, and so great was the fragrance of all aromas and perfumes that entirely enveloped me, that neither the miserable body nor the spirit could suffer such a display of eternal happiness. My heart was faint, my spirit was faint, oppressed by the glory of such immense majesty. As witness I place God, who was with the Virgin, that I would have believed that She was the true God, if divine Christian doctrine had not taught me otherwise, since it seemed to me that the glory of the Blessed cannot be greater than that beatitude I experienced, and blissful, then savoured; unhappy now that I do not have the same. I give thanks to the Almighty and Most Benign God, to the Divine Virgin, to the most eminent Apostle John, and to you, Paul, hierarch and prince of the Church, through whom I came to witness these things." As John Menesius wrote, Saint Paul as well had made a pilgrimage to see and communicate and be taught by the Mother of God; and he experienced admiration like to Saint Denis' since, stunned at the wisdom and sacrosanct appearance of the Virgin, said: "Up till now, from the day of my conversion I have believed that Christ is the Son of God, but now I have recognized the Divinity of the Son from the Divine Presence of the Mother." Saint Ignatius, martyr, also visited this Lady, whose presence moved him to greater love for Jesus, so that he ever had this thought in remembrance: "Jesus Son of God and of Mary, Jesus Son of God and of Mary." Moved by the desire to see the Virgin from the great things he had heard of Her, in part he makes this known in a letter he wrote to Saint John the Evangelist, where he says: "In accord with accounts from those worthy of all faith, in Mary Mother of Jesus are joined the nature of angelic sanctity together with human nature; and we hear such things that enliven our heart and all within us, and force us to desire with vehemence to see this prodigy of Heaven, or most sacred spectacle." For the Apostles who



had greater light and conversed with Mary always until they spread out through the world, what would they have felt in their hearts? What sentiments, what devotion would they have had! And thus, from this great and almost immeasurable love for Mary which Christ saw in His Apostles, He left Her here below when He ascended into Heaven, that they might not be left wholly without consolation, and that by Her presence She might confirm those recently converted to the Faith, and by Her counsels and providence keep watch over the Church and help that tender plant to grow. And so She did, in response to the love and trust of the Apostles in Her. She gathered them in the Cenacle, as the Holy Bible says, so that the Holy Ghost might come upon them; She, by Her example, moved them to pray without cease; She counselled them in all that concerned God's glory. I doubt that any power on earth would

have been capable of separating them from Mary's presence, if it were not for the force of charity and the need there was in the world for their preaching, so that they left to fulfil their mission bearing Her in their hearts, preaching everywhere Her greatness, as the wise Raymund Jordan says, spreading Her devotion and exalting Her Most Pure Conception without original sin. However, at the end of the Virgin's life here, how evident was the love and attachment of the Apostles and of all the faithful to Her! The devotion and attachment of the Apostles increased when She rose up Body and Soul into Heaven, "full of light and majesty", all sang in concert, and as though beside themselves, out of their great devotion, intoning abundant praises to this Lady. That the Apostles did not praise Mary more while She lived on earth, they say was because they wanted to condescend to Her humility, and not give Her occasion for uneasiness at seeing Herself praised. However, after Her Dormition and Glorious Assumption, they made good by outdoing themselves in Her praise.

We know that the Apostles said great things about Mary, and were sweetly moved in Her praise and admiration with the memory of Her intercession; and it would be a great consolation if we had it written down now. Saint John Eusebius Nieremberg found that they composed the *Salve Regina*, with which they implored the help of their Queen and Mother of Mercy, though this prayer has been attributed to others, for having renewed it after it had fallen into oblivion. In the Hail Mary they also taught to invoke this Lady, asking Her to pray for us sinners, a phrase that was also forgotten over time.

It would be endless to speak of the affection and love with which the holy successors of the disciples of Christ have revered and served their Mother, Most Holy Mary; because the Apostles, having surpassed the other saints in holiness, also excelled in love and devotion to this Lady. In the same way the greatest saints who have later flourished in the Church, have been outstanding in Her devotion. For the same reason, the Patriarchs of the religious Orders, in which She was present with Her great sanctity and Spirit, as in an ark of water, that through the Patriarchs had to be communicated to their religious children, took great pains in this devotion. What tenderness did Saint Bernard not have towards Mary, as to his dear Mother? What hardships did Saint Dominic not suffer for publishing Her devotion? What other advocate for himself and his friars did Saint Francis choose? What work did Saint Ignatius undertake other than on the wings given him by this Lady, due to the great trust and devotion that he had for Her? He always experienced Her protection, and She visited him many times from Heaven, bringing him the gift of chastity, teaching him the rules of those divine Spiritual Exercises that he wrote, directing him in the constitutions that he ordained for his religious Order and confirming them. She also placed him next to Her Son and the Eternal Father; and Saint Ignatius saw Her many times praying for him. Finally, Mary loved this servant so much that She appeared to many while he was still

alive and told them to become his children and enter his Order. But because the devotion of these and other ancient holy Fathers of the Church towards the Virgin is well known, I do not want to delay in relating their tenderness and courtesies towards this Lady; I will be content with just bringing a few examples of what some holy men did to serve Mary, in order to encourage us to do the same, and so that we understand to what extreme (if extreme there can be) we should love and serve Her.

Saint Peter Damian writes of his brother Mariano, who was so inflamed with love for Mary that, desirous of pleasing Her and serving Her and being Her perpetual slave, He offered himself before an altar to this Lady to be Her humble servant; and to show how honoured He felt at being Her slave, He put a kind of ring around his neck. And the Most Blessed Virgin, gratitude itself, thanking us not only for our deeds, but also for the Hail Mary with which we greet Her, how could She fail to be grateful for this attention? She always held as a son the one who held himself unworthy to be Her slave; and at the hour of death She went to console and assure him of his salvation; because Her chains are bonds of our salvation.



Caesarius writes the same about Mary's devoted servant, Walter of Birbech, who, burning with the love He felt for this great Lady, put a rope around his neck, consecrated himself as Her slave before Her altar, paid Her a tribute, and acknowledged Her every year with a like tribute as his sole Mistress, received in return extraordinary favours from Her grateful hand, in life and death. O Queen of Heaven! O my Mother! What lukewarmness I see in myself, that though in my heart and desire I offer myself as Your slave, in practice and in deed it seems that I do not even value being Your son, since I do not perform the deeds of a son, nor do I serve You as a slave, nor do I reverence You as a son ought? Certainly our vileness is great that, seeing so many saints who considered it the greatest honour in the world to be slaves of Mary, we do not even want to be true and faithful children of Hers, and serve and love Her as Her love deserves, more than a mother's.

The fervent Father John de Trejo, of the Company of Jesus, was one of those who most prided himself on being a slave of Mary, on account of which He went on foot to a distant hermitage of this Lady, and watered and swept it, not just in any way, but with an admirable and never heard invention in which He showed the ardent love and deep reverence that He had for the Mother of God; because he watered the ground with no other water than from his eyes, shedding from them copious tears of devotion and tenderness that were enough to water it. Then He himself, considering it a great honour to be the most vile instrument in the world, in order to occupy himself in the service of this great Lady, would sweep that church with no other broom than with his own mouth and face, giving a thousand kisses very often to that holy paving, seeing that it was the home of his beloved Lady and Mother. In other things He similarly took care of his Lady's service with incredible zeal and vigilance; so that, having been entrusted by his superiors with a seminary of students that was run by the Company, He was so zealous for them, being congregants of the Virgin and dedicated to Her Name, that he hardly slept at night but, so that they might not displease his Lady any day or fail in anything against purity, which he knew She liked so much, he went to where they all slept, and at the foot of each bed, kneeling, made a devout prayer for each in particular, though so many, in order that the next day they might not offend God, or displease His Blessed Mother; which She reciprocated by granting him great mercies and favours. King Saint Stephen of Hungary held that a title more glorious than that of King was to be a slave of Mary; and so He wanted his royal house from then on to be called the family of the Virgin. He communicated this reverence to his vassals, who, following the example of their king, did not dare to pronounce the name of Mary, but only

to name Her 'our Mistress', or simply 'Lady'.

To the holy Father Martin Gutiérrez, humble and faithful slave of Mary, what visits and favours did this Lady not grant him? What favours did She not bestow upon him? Without stopping to write his life, we will only say something of the devotion of this servant of Mary, ignoring other extremes that many Jesuit saints have shown of the tender love they had for the Mother of God. Well, this same Father once saw the Queen of Heaven with the whole Company under Her mantle. And the sight of the Queen of Heaven so enkindled this great servant of God, that wherever He went and stayed, he communicated such a blaze from his devotion, that no one he asked to do anything for Mary's sake failed to comply; and this request was like a spell and divine charm, so that no one dared refuse anything, seeing that He did the same, thinking, speaking and always touched by Her remembrance, and with the concept He had formed of Her grandeur, and being so astonished at Her majesty, that every day, there being an image of this Lady at the door of the refectory, He would remain, after eating, by his great affection, levitated and absorbed for half an hour contemplating Mary's charity and majesty, and afterwards so alienated from his senses as to be unable to speak. His sensible devotion was so continuous and Christ's frequent visitations so impressive as to cast him to the ground, often with great trembling of hands and lips, and with such a countenance that it seemed his heart would burst from his chest from pure affection, and cast him to the ground, principally when he sought to repress those sentiments of his devotion. By often moving his lips quickly and loudly, without clear words, he seemed as though drunk and out of his mind owing to his devotion to Mary: his sobs and sighs continuous, in the meantime with acts of devotion like the son of Saint Bridget. This saint says of her son Charles that he used to say with all his heart: 'I am so glad that God loves the Virgin Mary, His Mother, above all things, that for me there is nothing at all, no creature that delights me more; and if it were possible that for a moment She cease to have the dignity She has, I would suffer all the pains of hell eternally so that Her grandeur might not cede in a single point.' All these sentiments earned salvation for this devout and tender youth.

So passionate in their devotion were these servants of Mary, and such tender lovers of Hers. Let us try to imitate these slaves of the Empress of Heaven, and introduce ourselves into Her holy family, for with such a Mistress and Lady, and such a Mother, in this life we will be privileged and in the other our inheritance bettered, since even in Heaven the Blessed pride themselves on having been servants of this great Lady, and make a show of being known as Her slaves.

Devotion to Mary then spread throughout the world, in all ages, through all states, to all nations, as this Lady prophesied, saying that because God looked upon the humility of His slave, all generations would call Her blessed, that is, all nations and at all times. Assuredly in Spain this has been thoroughly fulfilled, since here alone there have been more than eighty thousand temples dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the XVII century, having been diligently counted.

But is it so much for intellectual natures and rational men to honour and reverence Her who is Queen of all created things? That the Angels venerate Her? That the Patriarchs desire Her? That the Prophets console themselves with Her hope? That the Apostles admired Her? That the Saints served Her? That all nations honour Her? If even by irrational creatures Mary was rationally desired (if allowed to speak like that). Nature was groaning, and all creatures were in travail until Her birth, awaiting that by Mary all would be reformed and revealed and, according to Saint Bernardine, improved and perfected; because, He says, the world does not reach its final perfection except through Mary; for which reason Saint John Damascene writes that the centuries competed with each other to see Her Nativity and advent.

8. On the love and devotion to Mary shown by the Saints in their sentences.

Saint Bernard says to praise the one who did not know concupiscence when She conceived, nor pain when She gave birth. Preach Her who is revered by the Angels, desired by the

peoples, known beforehand by Patriarchs and Prophets, chosen from among all. Magnify Her who discovered Grace, the Mediatrix of salvation, the Restorer of the ages. Exalt the one who in Her Assumption was raised up to the heavenly realms and crowned Queen over the choirs of Angels. These things the Church sings to me of Her, and taught me to sing to Mary Herself and praise Her. Let Your mercy be silent, blessed Virgin, if there is anyone who has invoked You in their needs, and remembers having being left in want. From the most intimate of our hearts, with all our deepest sentiments, with all our desires, we are to venerate Mary; because this is the Will of God for Mary that He wills us all to have. Do you want to have



an intercessor for Christ?: take refuge in Mary, and She will be heard for Her reverence; because the Son will hear the Mother, and the Father will hear the Son. My little children, this is the stairway for sinners; this is crowning trust; this is the one fount of my hope. Those who are in Heaven and in Purgatory, those now here, those to come, those born and those to be born after them, those who are in Heaven for their greater happiness, those in Purgatory for their release, those who passed on, to be shown as true lovers of Mary; those who follow, to be glorified: all look to Her as the means, as the Ark of God, as the cause of things, as the concern of the ages. Therefore they will call You Blessed all generations, Begetter of God, Mistress of the world, Queen of Heaven, who engendered life and glory for all generations; in You the Angels found joy; the righteous grace; sinners forgiveness forever. With justice all creatures have fixed their eyes on You, because in You and by You and with You the benign hand of the Almighty repaired and re-created everything that He had created.

We finally conclude with the words of the devout Denis Richel: “With all our strength let us praise, venerate, love and reverence the most excellent Mother of God; and after we have done so, let us recognize that we have done nothing worthy of Her, and that Her benefits cannot be paid with sufficient gratitude, saying with Saint Augustine: What can we, such little creatures, and acting like children, offer in thanks by our praise? For even if we turned into tongues, we could not praise Her sufficiently.”

9. On the titles for loving Mary Mother of Jesus. The first: Her benefits.

Apart from the example by which they invite us to love Her, as does the Most Holy Trinity, the Angels, the Patriarchs, the Apostles, all the Saints – the Eternal Father by loving his first-born Daughter and beloved Creature; the Son of God his tender and beloved Mother; the Holy Ghost His Spouse chosen among thousands; the Angels their Queen, their Admiration, their Example, their Joy; the Patriarchs their Hope and Object of their desires; the Apostles their Mistress; all the Saints their Mother, their Advocate, their Glory and their Life, let's see the causes there are for serving and loving Mary with all our strength. There are many reasons, grounds and titles that are the basis for our obligation to serve this great Lady: for the good that She has done for us, for all She can and wants to do for us, for all we await from Her, for all we need from Her, for all that She loves us and cares for our good, for all She suffered and bore for us, for Her stupendous grandeur, for Her beauty, for Her goodness, for Her virtues, for Her gratitude, for being the Mother of our God, for having given us Her Son and, over and above all these titles: because God wants this so very much, which is the conclusive reason. How greatly is man indebted to You! How many reasons do we have to serve You! How many the obligations with which you have sweetly pledged our hearts! Are the benefits that I have received from You few, namely all those I have received? What obligation is this, in which Mary and God are (in certain fashion) on the same level, so that every grace I have received from Jesus - do I not also owe to His Mother? These two are the universal causes of my good: Jesus the origin, Mary the instrument; but an instrument of my good so universal and principal that no good has come to me nor ever will come except



from Her, passing through Her hands. Let every soul think that as many as are the divine benefits received, just as many are the obligations of love and devotion that the soul owes to Mary; because we owe to Her all the inspirations we have received from Heaven, all the occasions on which we have been freed from sin, all the grace and justification by which we have been adorned to appear with our faces unveiled before the Eternal Father; because Christ Jesus, beloved Son of this great Benefactress of ours, does not apply His infinite merits to us efficaciously in any way other than by His beloved Mother, She anticipating our needs by Her intercession, both of soul and of body, remedying more than we ask Her for, in things we neither know nor can know. This obligation that we have towards Mary, because it is all our good that we owe Her, is not only because She once gave us everything that makes up our good, namely Christ Jesus, enough to give Mary a thousand hearts if we had them, since it is an infinite good that She gave us at one instance; but also because Mary obtains

for us in particular any divine benefit whatsoever, even the least good thought we have.

The good She does for us is so great and universal that, according to some Saints, the world would have ended if it were not for Mary, through whose merits and intercession it endures until now. Saint Bernardine adds that, thousands of years before this great Lady was born, in Her pre-existent Divine Soul, She preserved the world, that is, ever since Adam sinned; and that God did not annihilate it because of the special reverence and the most singular love that He had for the Virgin Mary from whom the Most Divine Child Jesus was to be born. And thus he says that thanks to this most noble creature God saved our first parents when they transgressed His precept, and granted afterwards many other benefits that were bestowed on the ancient Fathers. I do not doubt, he says, but that God did everything only out of reverence for this blessed Maiden and for the love that He had for Her, since with so much art He determined from eternity to place Her before all His other works in predestination and honour. Those Saints foresaw the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Divine Souls of Christ and Mary, who exercised Their paternity and maternity from the beginning of the world and during the entire Old Testament, applying in advance the graces of Calvary in accord with the teachings of Saint Gregory XVII: "We, as Universal Doctor of the Church, teach you infallibly that the Divine Soul of Mary was full of the Holy Ghost from the very moment of Her creation. This Divine Soul of Mary was filled to overflowing with all virtues, all gifts, and the Divine Soul of Mary gratuitously received infused knowledge, raised up to unsuspected degrees. The Divine Soul of Mary was full of wisdom and all gifts, bestowed by the One called Supernatural Gift. Mary's Soul was full of Grace, which resided in Her never more to part from Her. The Divine Soul of Mary was created to the image and likeness of the Most Divine Soul of Christ. She possessed full knowledge that She did not belong to the number of the redeemed, since She belonged to the number of the Reparators and Redeemers; which means to say, fully associated with Christ. She also received most perfect light to know that one day She would be vested with Body, through which Blood would course; and She knew perfectly that by the intervention of the Holy Ghost, She would be Mother of the Divine Incarnate Word; and She knew most perfectly that She would be Mother of a True Man, and at the same time, True God. As likewise She knew that that Body and that Blood She would give to God to robe the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, would at the same time be true food and drink for the salvation of men; since the infinite Reparation having been accomplished, gratuitous Redemption would come for men. In the same way She understood with all precision that She would be Mother of Christ;

and She knew that She would be Mother of the Church Her Son was to found. We teach that the Most Holy Trinity was unstintingly generous towards that Soul, for that Most Holy and August Trinity, out of pure love, could deny Her nothing of all those graces that the Most Divine Soul of Christ most piously claimed to be granted to Mary's Divine Soul."

Nor are the benefits of this great and most powerful Empress limited to what we can receive in this life; but She extends Her clemency to the other, freeing the souls of Her devotees from the terrible pains of Purgatory. She herself told the most devout Father Jerome Cavalio how diligent She was to draw those of the Society of Jesus out of Purgatory; and She will do the same with Her other devotees. And to blessed Amadeus it was made known from Heaven, that the Virgin, before ascending body and soul to the throne of Her glory, went to take all Her devotees out of purgatory; because it was convenient for Her to ascend victoriously to Heaven with rich spoils.

Not only do we owe Mary the good She has done for us by being so beneficial to us in everything, but also the honour She has given us by wanting to adopt us as beloved children, giving us the honour of being children of a Queen, and not just any queen, but one who has the Seraphim as slaves.

This is not the greatest debt that we owe to Mary, since not only do we owe Her for all the good She does for us, but also all that we owe to Her Son. He wants us to repay our whole debt to Him by repaying His Mother, by serving Her and loving Her with all the cravings of our heart; and since these obligations to Jesus are infinite, we owe an infinity to Mary. To Mary we owe for the lashes that Jesus, meek Lamb, endured for us so patiently, without opening His lips. We owe to Mary for the thorns with which Jesus was crowned. We owe to Mary for the blow that Jesus received before the Pontiff. We owe to Mary for the gall and vinegar that Jesus tasted. We owe to Mary for the Coming of the Holy Ghost that Jesus sent us. We owe to Mary for the preaching by Jesus' Apostles. So we owe to Mary, not only our merits, insofar as we have them through the grace that She obtains from Her Son, but the same merits of Her Son and His whole Life and Death, our whole redemption, justification and salvation. Well, whoever recognizes that Jesus has designated His Mother as the one whom we must repay for all that we owe, how can we fail to give Him that pleasure for what is so beneficial to us and, on the other hand, is something we owe Her? Blessed be Jesus who wants us to serve and reverence Her whom, as an obedient Son, He revered.

10. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved and served for the incomparable benefit of our eternal salvation in all that depends on Her.

Thus, then, the perseverance necessary for salvation is not only one grace, but a multitude, or rather, an infinity of graces that make up a saint, until he is placed in Heaven; something that is owed to Mary. Of course, we must not only serve Her for the benefits that we have received from Her and from God, but also for those we hope to receive; not only in gratitude for the past, but to solicit new ones. We must go up to Mary as to a General Sacrament of all the graces and mercies of God, which come to us through Her; so that if we truly turn to such a Mother, and ask Her as we should, we will obtain them. And so the saintly Father Martin Gutiérrez, most devout son of this Lady, said that He had not asked the Virgin Mary for anything that had not been granted to him.

It is very important to understand this about Mary, and the great strength of Her intercession through which She obtains from God what is impossible for us; and though God is so observant of His laws, if Mary's prayers intervene, He has no scruple. And thus men have been seen resurrected to confess their sins, through the intercession of this great Lady; because being Queen of everything, in order for Her will to be fulfilled, She has no scruple, and Her Son wants to show the majesty of Her empire, by showing Her as Mistress of the laws, trampling on the inviolable and fixed ones, and wanting all things to serve Her, and be at Her command. But is it so much in all things to obey Her whom the Creator of all obeyed, He who even now in Heaven (say Saint Peter Damian and Godfrey Abbot) regards Mary's

requests, not as prayers, but as mandates and commands, recognizing Her rights as Mother?

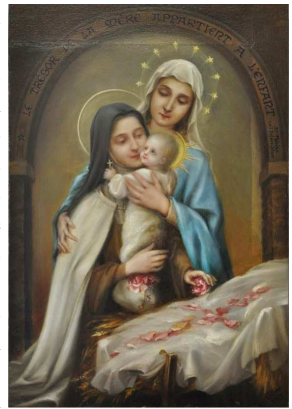
Let us also consider what Mary merited by a single act of virtue, not for Herself but for the rest, so that we may finally understand the force of Her intercession, in which She pleads all the merits of Her life. Because with just one act, even before being the Mother of God, that is, by simply saying from the heart that reply She gave to the Angel: "Behold the Slave of the Lord: be it done in Me according to your word," the Virgin Mary merited for Her children more than all creatures together, Angels and men, in everything, as many good thoughts as they had, works they performed and will perform. By this act She reaffirmed Her principality over the Seraphim of Heaven, Her empire over every creature, the Sceptre of the kingdom of Her Son, the fullness of all graces, all the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to become Mother of Jesus, and Coredemptrix and co-Fount of our good. Well, since She was Mother of God, what did She not merit for us? And what will She not obtain by that immensity of interior acts and exterior labours and deeds that She performed all Her life?

Saint Anselm and other doctors said that it is impossible for the Virgin's true devotee to perish; and on the contrary, the same Saint said that it was very possible to be lost by turning our backs on such a great Patroness.

11. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved for all that She loves us.

I do not know for certain what we, redeemed by Jesus, are to do if we do not serve and love with a thousand hearts, if we had them, His dear Mother and great benefactress of ours; because the obligations we have (even outside of Her love, which we must reciprocate) are truly infinite, without exaggeration or overstatement of any kind; because leaving aside what we owe to Her for the innumerable good things that She has done, does and will do for us with incredible loyalty and faith, rather, simply because Jesus has pointed Her out to us as our Creditor, whom He wants us to repay all that we owe Him for having redeemed us by such a dreadful death as was that of the Cross, we are infinitely obliged, and many times over, to serve Her and love Her, giving this pleasure so justly due to our beloved Redeemer. So the right that the Most Holy Mary has to our hearts for this reason is infinite, even if She of Her own accord had given us no succour, nor had we received any good from Her liberal hand, nor had She had any affection for us, nor had She been as She is, of Herself worthy of being loved, served and venerated as Queen by millions of choirs of Seraphim. Let us now add to this infinite obligation, the one we have for Her good works offered to God for our benefit, and then the obligation we owe for Her goodwill, which is such and so delicate and loyal to us, and with such great love and desire for our good, which, just for this predilection She has for us, even without any deeds, deserves, and most highly deserves, far greater love than we can have for Her, and far greater than all affection and devotion possible to us. And who will not be moved by what this Lady responded to Friar Saint Alfonso Rodríguez of the Company of Jesus? One day this servant of God was taken up with his Mother, and carried away in his simplicity by the burning affection of his breast, he said to Her without thinking: "Oh, my Lady!, I love You much more beyond comparison than I love myself; I love You more, my Mother, than You love me." But the Virgin, appearing to him later, corrected him saying: "It is not like that, my Alfonso, for I love you far more, beyond comparison, than you love Me." And with what greater tenderness can we show the love that this loving Mother of ours has for us than with the interventions She has made in our spiritual sufferings and ills? On one of the Canary islands there was a woman devoted to the Virgin, who, deceived by the devil, failed to confess some sins she had committed, until one day she saw our Lady with a tearful and saddened face, with continuous tears pouring from Her eyes. The woman felt very hurt by the pain that the Virgin showed and, asking Her the cause of Her tears, She replied: 'Because you do not confess well, and are losing your soul;' by which the woman, moved to great contrition for her sins, confessed integrally. Assuredly, it is a great testimony to the degree of the Virgin Mary's love for us that She shows Herself so compassionate towards us.

If in benefits, men value most of all the goodwill, what should we say of such great goodwill as seen in Mary, accompanied by such works? What should we say, or what should we do, since we lack the strength and possibilities to respond to it? I do not know, by the way, how we can forget or neglect someone who remembers us so much and solicits our good, according to the greatness of Her love, and Her love is as great as Her excellence and dignity. For just as the Virgin Mary is more than all the creatures there are, and holier than the Seraphim and all the righteous, both Angels and men; in the same way Her charity alone and Her love are greater than all the charity that all the Saints together have had and will have and the loftiest Seraphim ablaze with love of God. Oh, what joy it is to see ourselves loved like this, with such an invincible love, by such a great Lady, by the Mother of God Herself! To such an extreme and extent, that all love whatsoever that all the tenderest mothers in the world have had and will have for their most beloved children, is all a shadow, nothing, compared to that which Mary has for us.



Mary Most Holy is naturally inclined to goodness and love, and more delightful and sweeter than honey; and since She is better than any Christian there is, Her tenderness and affection are also greater towards us, even if we had been strangers and did not see us beloved of or ransomed by Jesus, the Son of Her Soul. But added to this is that She has also adopted us as children, and is determined for this reason to love us more, and this helps Her piety and most kind and loving dispositions; and above all since She saw with Her own eyes all that Jesus did and suffered for love of us; and She, loving Jesus so immensely, consented to suffer the entire Passion with Him, thus showing how She too loves us; because just as is Her esteem for the Blood and Passion of the Son of God, so too is Her inclination and love towards those who were redeemed at such a cost. Before having suffered with Her Son who died for love of men, and even before becoming the Mother of God, when She was a child, Her occupation and greatest care was – as was revealed to the Nun Saint Elizabeth – to pray to God for the human race, and that He grant mankind His grace by sending His Son for their good and in order to make reparation to the Eternal Father. Well, if so early She had such great love for us, later, after having suffered the Passion with Jesus, Her Son and the Father's Onlybegotten, crucified for us, and seeing men so highly esteemed by God, what will She now fail to do?

If as proof of the immense love that God the Father had for the world, it is said that He gave us His Onlybegotten Son, Jesus, we can say the same of the charity of the Virgin Mary, who gave such a good Son and God to us so many times, and we can exclaim: 'Mary so loved the world that She gave us Her Onlybegotten Son.' She gave Him to us when She brought Him forth; She gave Him to us when She presented Him in the Temple; She gave Him to us when She saved His life, that Herod might not kill Him; She gave Him to us when He left home with Her approval to preach; She gave Him to us when She did not object to Him leaving the Cenacle the night they arrested Him; She gave Him to us when He was imprisoned, accused, maltreated, insulted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and spoke not a word for Him; She gave Him to us a thousand times at the foot of the cross. O Lady! with what streams of tears, with what affections of Your heart You then offered up Your Son for us, making a sacrifice of Him and of Yourself, being in spirit Co-Priest of Christ, and all with such an ardent and anxious desire for the Reparation to the Eternal Father and Salvation of the world, that if no one were to be found to crucify Your Son, in order that the world be saved and the Will of God be fulfilled, You would have nailed Him to the cross Yourself, no matter how much You loved Him, and no matter how much it wounded Your soul to lose such a Child. Because, of course, Mary Most Holy

could not have had less perfection and obedience than Abraham, who offered up to God his own son, resolved to transpierce his heart himself and offer him up in holocaust.

This is certainly worthy of great consideration, and of great gratitude! Let's see how God rewarded that simple goodwill of Abraham by giving him, for the son he willed to sacrifice, fatherhood over many, and promising him His blessings. More, certainly, without comparison, do we owe to the Virgin Mary than God owed to Abraham. Infinitely better was the Son that Mary offered up for us, and incomparably more beloved, not only Her Firstborn, but far more, Her Onlybegotten. Mary loves us more for Her ineffable charity and love for God than Abraham loved God himself. Well, this greater goodwill, this love so delicate and far-reaching, must it remain without gratitude and remembrance? It would certainly not be right, rather we owe ourselves as children to Mary, and must not tire of blessing and praising Her. Let us learn from God to be grateful, who for the honour that the saintly Patriarch Abraham had given Him by that action and proof of his will, said to him: "I swear by Myself, word of God, that since out of love for Me you did not pardon your son, I will fill you with blessings and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea; your posterity will possess the cities of its enemies, and in a Descendant of yours all the nations of the Earth shall be blest, because you obeyed My voice." Well, with like fervour and determination let us say: 'Just as I have sworn, dear Lady, and with irrevocable resolve, as an oath, and firmer than rock, I determine to bless You and praise You for this great love of Yours; I will multiply Your family; I will increase the number of Your children, since You gave Your Onlybegotten for me, and received me as Your son, and I will seek that they too be all Yours, and very devoutly so. And this will not be by halves, rather I will procure to be Your son, like a star in heaven in purity and holiness, and like the dust of the earth in humility and silence, and like the sand of the sea in patience and suffering; and I will strive so that this new son of Yours rule the doors of his enemies with the perfect mortification of the senses, also seeking that Your Son Jesus be blest in me, by vesting myself in His charity and His mortification from head to feet, taking care by my life and words that everyone bless and praise Jesus, whom You offered up for me.' Abraham, in reward for having willed to offer up Isaac, who was no better than him, deserved to have the Son of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, God and man, in his lineage. Well, Mary, for having offered up Her Son, infinite God and Blessed Man, for us, what reward will She deserve? How can we repay Her for this love of Hers, if not by loving Her, by serving Her, by admiring Her, by blessing Her, by praising Her, by being Her children, by being brothers to Jesus?

To the Virgin Mary we owe Her offering of the Blessed Fruit of Her womb not only to natural death, but also that even while living She offered Him up to a moral death (I don't know if better to say civil): because She offered Him up for love of men to such a life that we men considered death, that is, to a painful, laborious, humble, persecuted life, such as no slave in the world had a harder one, wanting for our love that the Son whom She so dearly loved be like our slave in diligence, work and humility, to produce our health. For this reason, Richard of Saint Lawrence gave this memorable sentence: "Mary's charity towards us was seen at the Annunciation, when She replied: 'Behold the Slave of the Lord,' desiring to beget a son who would become our servant, for which He was called servant, because the son inherits the condition of the mother. Christ presented himself as the Father's Servant and the Son of His Slave; because the Son of the Virgin served us with the consent and good pleasure of the Mother, unto the washing of the feet, and even the suffering of the Passion, 'for the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life for the redemption of many.' Therefore we owe the Son and the Mother recompense for Their service, so that the rivers turn back to the source from whence they came. We must give Christ His salary and pay, and the same with the Mother, with great reason." All this is from Richard. Let us therefore thank Mary for all these kindnesses of love by offering ourselves up as Her faithful slaves, so that we become Her beloved children.

12. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved for what She suffered for us.

Because of this ardent and delicate love that Mary has for us, She should be served and loved with more love than our strength is capable of, and, moreover, seeing that Her love is not sterile, but very fruitful in so many good things that it has done for us, and very tested with the finest touchstone, which is patience: because She has not only shown the quality of Her love, giving us innumerable benefits, but also going through the most arduous and difficult trials for us that have ever existed in the world; and there has been no human person, nor will there be, who has suffered so much; and She suffered everything willingly for our good. What the heart of our most loving Mother the Virgin suffered in just one day, that is, from the time Her Son bade farewell to Her on the night of the Supper to go to die, until She buried Him, was more than the Martyrs have suffered and will suffer from the beginning of the world to its end, from Abel to the last one whom Antichrist



will torture. Without any doubt all these bodily pains that so many Saints suffered in all their limbs will not exceed the spiritual pain alone that Mary suffered in Her Heart; which will not seem impossible to those who understand the appreciation that the Virgin made of the Divine Person of Her Son, the immense love that She had for him, and the pitiful and shameful death that Jesus suffered, executed as a traitor, as a deceiver and agitator of the people, She thus recognized Him as innocent and as holy as the Holy Ghost himself; and for this reason the compassion She had for Him was incalculable, and to this we must add Her share in His pain in body and soul. For everything that Jesus suffered in His body, Mary suffered in Her own body really and spiritually through Her union with Him; and just as the love that this Lady bore for Her Son, who was also the Son of God (for which She loved him even more than for being Her son), was greater love than the one that the martyrs have had and will have for their own bodies, and also, since Jesus suffered more than all Martyrs combined, it is clear that Mary suffered physically and spiritually much more than them all. Saint Bernardine says that if the dolours that the Mother of God had were shared out among all creatures, with the share that each had, all would die of grief. To this add that there were torments that Mary felt and Jesus did not feel; for when the cruel lance pierced the Heart of our already dead Redeemer, Mary, entirely in Jesus, received this lance thrust, because Jesus no longer felt it, His Soul not being there. This was the greatest pain that the Most Holy Virgin suffered, Her Spiritual Death; and Saint Bernard affirms that in this She was more than a martyr. And since the Heart of this Lady received such a wound, we can say what Christ himself said to Saint Bridget: "We, My Mother and I, as one single Heart, save man: I suffering in the Heart and in the flesh; my Mother with the pain in Her Heart, and with Her love." Mary's pain also grew because of the sins of men, which were another immense source of tears and dolour, at the infidelity of the Jews, at the ungratefulness of all men and at the compassion that She also felt for the Saints as Her children, foreseeing the martyrdoms, penances and illnesses they were to suffer.

O children of the Church! Let us look at how much we owe to our Mother Mary, to the Most Holy Mother of our sweet Jesus, our Redeemer and our life: and how we repay Her with such little services and so short and meagre devotion, and though we had the devotion of a Seraphim, it should seem paltry if we form a complete concept of our obligations and of the incomprehensible appreciation She shows us, proven by such patience. What delicate love does Mary have for us, Her adopted children, when for our good She suffered to see Her natural and Onlybegotten Son executed, bearing in Her own body and soul all the sufferings of Her Son, born from Her womb! What spectacle more pitiful exists than to see,



in front of a tender mother, Her only son, whom She loved more than Her life, being executed with an atrocious death penalty, and in public, He being innocent? Mary bore this suffering very patiently for our good, and accepted the death of Her Onlybegotten Son, and such a Son, so that we, miserable creatures, might not die eternally. Oh, what admirable constancy of Mary! To have the courage to see Jesus hanging from a rood, affronted by all, upbraided by passers-by with a thousand insults they heaped upon Him, thereby adding to Her already immense pain with so many outrages.

We owe Jesus infinitely, since He suffered so much for us, allowing His Soul and Body to be subjected to so many torments and dolours. Mary subjected Her Soul and Body likewise to all those torments for us: let us see, then, what we owe Her for this. Of course, because the person of Jesus is infinite, for He is God, and because He loves us infinitely, we owe more to Him; But if this were not so, but rather that

people were equal, there could be serious doubt as to the one to whom we owe more: to this tender Mother, by allowing Her innocent only Son, so beloved, to suffer the death penalty and be executed, or to the Son dying. Mary foresaw this and submitted to it all voluntarily. It is appropriate to remember here the revelation of this Lady to a great servant of Hers: that the embassy of the Archangel Saint Gabriel lasted a few hours, in which the Archangel told the Virgin of the sufferings, Passion and death, and the great abandonment that Jesus, who was to be Her Son, would have to suffer, whom even the Eternal Father Himself was to abandon, at which Mary was so moved that She very willingly provided Her 'yes' to become Mother to the Son who was to be Man of so many Dolours, so as not to abandon Him in those dire moments in which the Apostles were going to abandon Him, with Her desire to cooperate in our Redemption, suffering with strong will everything that, being the Mother of the Redeemer of the world, had to come upon Her, and helping at all costs with Her conformity and blood for the good of the world, as much as depended on Her: so that we can see that if for something so important, such as redeeming the world, God awaited Mary's 'yes' and consent, for my salvation too He will also hear Her prayers. By Her 'fiat' in the Incarnation, "the Divine Mary offered Her greatest sacrifice, Her most agreeable and excellent, that would only be surpassed on Calvary. Besides, She gave Her acceptance with great joy and grief at the same time; for on the one hand She knew that the Eternal Father would thus receive infinite reparation, and via this reparation would come superabundant Redemption to men; and on the other hand She was grieved, for Her Divine Son, conceived in Her Virginal Womb, would become the opprobrium of men, rejected and crucified by His own people; and as well since many others would squander Redemption, trampling on Christ's Blood." (Treatise on the Holy Mass).

Quite rightly then, Saint Bernardine says that the Virgin was crucified with Christ at the hour of the Incarnation, when She conceived Him in Her womb; because at that hour She submitted, determined to suffer everything, and participate in as many torments as Her Son was to suffer.

We can draw great confidence in Mary, according to the argument that the Apostle makes, from the infinite charity and liberality of God: "If God is with us, His children, helping us by His Grace, who can prevail against us? For if God the Father did not even spare His own Son, but delivered Him up to death for our salvation, how after having given Him to us shall He fail to give us whatever else may be suitable for us, above all the Graces to enable us to be saved?" We can say the same of the Mother of Jesus. If Mary is with us, who can prevail against us? She who for us delivered up Her Son to die for our good, how will She not also

give us all things together with Him? Oh stupendous charity of Jesus' parents (God the Father and Mary) towards men! Oh amazing kindness and liberality of God and Mary, who delivered Jesus up for us, the most obedient Son of Both, out of the immense love they have for us, for which they suffered on seeing Him agonize innocently on the Cross! And since out of love for us the Father abandoned Him at that moment, the Mother also, out of that love, did not will to speak in His favour. Added to this is that this pain of the Virgin lasted Her entire life; because from the moment She conceived Jesus She knew what was to happen to Him; and so She felt the pain in Her inner self before and after He died. Even long before She knew that She was to be His Mother, She had great compassion for the Redeemer of the world; because She knew by Her infused science and by Holy Scripture all that the incarnate Son of God would suffer; and She always felt great compassion and tenderness for Him.

13. On how Mary, Most Blessed Virgin, should be loved for Her admirable majesty and goodness.

The strongest motive for loving Mary firmly with purity of love and without admixture of selfishness or self-interest, is for Her being who She is: worthy of all reverence and love. This reason for loving Her is far more powerful than for Her benefits, and the love with which She procures our welfare. There is no created person of greater majesty, of greater dignity, of greater holiness, of greater goodness, more worthy of admiration, or closer to God and dearer to that Infinite Good, than Mary. Because She is great in everything, in everything admirable: in Her motherhood, in Her virginity, in Her holiness, in Her goodness, in Her dignity, in infinite privileges and in the immense excellence with which She surpasses the most admirable creatures and the supreme Seraphim. Saint Jacob Rem, Priest of the Society of Jesus, very fine servant of God and deeply devoted son of this great Mother, being very desirous of knowing what to call Her so that something of Her greatness might be understood, once while the litanies of this Lady were being said by the students, whose spiritual Father he was, saw an inexplicable clarity and light from Heaven, and in it our Lady, who told him that many of Her greatnesses were summed up in these words: 'Mater Admirabilis', that is, admirable Mother: leaving the saintly Father so full of joy and of the concept he had formed of the greatness of the Lady, that unrestrainedly he called out loud, all exalted and out of his mind: 'Admirable Mother, Admirable Mother,' repeating and savouring these words. For how could She not be an admirable and most wonderful Mother being the Mother of God, Mother of Him who was from all eternity, Mother of Him who is Father of all creatures, Mother of Her Creator, Mother of the best Son in the world, Mother of a Son as good and holy as the Holy Ghost Himself, Mother of a Son, than whom God has none better, Mother of Him who is our life, Mother of our Redeemer, Mother of One who is an Infinite Person, Mother of One who is God and Man? How could She not be an admirable Mother who is Mother and Virgin, who is more mother than all the mothers in the world, and who is more virgin than all virgins? Admirable Mother, because She is a Mother without pain when giving birth, without impairment of Her virginity when conceiving and without labour during pregnancy. Admirable Mother, because She did not want to be mother except to the Son She willed; and wished no other child than God himself; other mothers not having this choice. Admirable Mother, who, being Mother of God, wills to be Mother of sinners, Mother of the happiness of men, and Mother of the wretched. Admirable Mother, because She is Mother of Consolation, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, Mother of virgins and Mother of all virtues.

Admirable Mother, because She is admirable Mother, just as God is admirable Father, because He is Virgin Father and Father of One who is God. Mary is also Virgin Mother and Mother of God. Tell me what is more admirable, that God begets a Son who is God, or that a creature begets God Himself? – that God begets being Virgin, which cannot be otherwise, or that a maiden begets being virgin, which cannot be? – that God begets his Son in eternity, or that Mary begets the Eternal in time? – that God begets his Son without having been



begotten, or that Mary begets Him who was begotten in eternity? – that God begets Him who is one substance with himself, or that Mary begets Him who is one substance with God? – that God begets the Everlasting, or that a creature begets the Everlasting incarnate? Oh admirable Father of mercies! Oh admirable Father of Light! We know our darkness and miseries; because we cannot glimpse all there is to admire in your loftiest way of generating. But, if we have to talk about only what we can grasp, it is more to admire to see Mary Mother than to see You, Father. It is clear that if God was to beget, the begotten also had to be God. It is clear that God had to engender being virgin, that is, without a consort; because there was no need for help, the divine nature being sufficiently fertile; and so, since you are a Father, it does not surprise me that you are a virgin Father, nor that you generated a person who is God and equal to You. But it is greatly to be admired and marvelled that a poor maiden give birth to Him who is God; and that She conceived being virgin, without having a human co-principle; and that She has God as Her Son, and ranks before Her Son in this by Her rights as Mother, to whom He who was God owed respect and obedience, since in this sense the saying of Henry of Consfeldia applies, that Mary was greater than Her Son.

With reason, then, is Mary called ‘Admirable Mother’, since She is wonderful in so many ways. But perhaps She is yet more admirable, because there is something in Her yet more worthy of admiration than being an Admirable Mother, that is, because there is something greater in Mary than being the Mother of God. It does not seem that greater excellence and dignity can be conceived in a created person than in having given life to Her Creator, and being the Mother of Her God; and this, as Saint Thomas says, is a somewhat infinite dignity: and truly, to get an idea of the greatness of Mary, we must have an idea of what it means to be Mother of God. However, through the mouth of Jesus and even of the Virgin herself, there is something yet greater in Her, and a greater reason for praising and exalting Her and calling Her blessed, than for being Mother of God according to flesh and blood. For when that good woman began shouting out to bless the Mother of Jesus, saying to the Lord himself: “Blessed be the womb that bore You and the breasts that nursed You!” The Lord, as if correcting, or improving, that prayer, or blessing, said: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice!” Blessed Jesus said this, not because He did not consider His Mother to be blessed, but because that woman did not praise Her for what was greatest in Her, namely that amazing and ineffable holiness, charity, humility and obedience with which She observed the Divine Word and Will in everything and for everything; giving us to understand that this is better in Mary, and that for this reason She is more blessed than for having given birth and suckled the Son of God Himself. (Similarly we say that the dignity of a priest who brings God to the altar is admirable; but what makes him blessed is a life of holiness and fulfilling God’s Will.) Great is the grandeur of Mary for being the Mother of God, for having given Him Her blood; but a greater thing is Her littleness and, in the midst of so much greatness, Her humility and Her obedience to the Divine Will. This is a greater thing than all the greatness of being the Mother of God Herself considered in itself; because by Her obedience and charity She pleased God more than by Her dignity and privilege and benefit of being His Mother. And so the Virgin Herself, filled with the Holy Ghost, in that canticle She composed, says that She will be called Blessed throughout all ages, because God gazed upon Her humility and was pleased with Her: “My Soul magnifies the Lord, and My spirit rejoices in God My Saviour. Because He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave, henceforth all generations shall call Me Blessed. Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me.” That holiness of Mary, that charity and

goodness, that virtue above all virtue, are incomprehensible, ineffable, stupendous qualities of this great Lady; for which She deserves to be esteemed, admired, venerated, served and loved by thousands of worlds. For this reason, Saint Ignatius rightly calls Her a 'heavenly prodigy'; Saint John Chrysostom, 'great miracle'; Saint Damascene, 'the newest of all miracles'; Saint Epiphanius, 'stupendous miracle in Heaven and on earth'; Saint Ephrem, 'most excellent miracle of the universal world', and Saint Bernardine, 'miracle of miracles'.

It is also very noteworthy that Jesus, loving Mary so much, and being so pleased to be Her Son, and that She was His Mother rather than any other woman of all those who were born and are possible, yet we rarely read in the Gospel that He called Her 'Mother'. I think one of the causes of this is as we just said; because He esteemed Her more for Her virtues than for being His Mother according to flesh and blood; though for this reason She was already highly esteemed and revered by Him. He esteemed Her, therefore, above everything created and above all nature, and above all the grace that men and Angels have, for Her admirable holiness and love, humility and purity, and for Her union with the Will of His Father. For the same reason also, when they said that His mother and brethren were awaiting Him, He replied that those who did His Father's Will were His mother and brethren: "My Mother and My brethren are those who hear the word of God and keep it." Because as He knew just how great this is, and Mary possessed it in a more eminent way than the Seraphim themselves, fulfilling the Will of God on earth better than the Blessed Ones in Heaven, when He heard His Mother mentioned, His soul and heart and the words of His lips always turned to this, for which He wanted Mary to be specially exalted and admired. However, because He also greatly values being Her Son, at the end of His life Jesus wanted to reward Her and grant Her this name of 'Mother'; And so, since He did not call Her Mother on many occasions, for just and most high reasons of His Infinite Wisdom, He willed that She never cease to hear this loving name countless times. Therefore He entrusted Her to His beloved disciple, and in him to all the faithful, saying: "Behold your Mother," so that Saint John and all of us would call Her that, without tiring of saying: Mother, our Mother, Mother of sinners, Mother of Mercy, Mother of Grace, and, above all, not only Mother of Jesus, but Mother of God, just that, nothing more to say. O good Jesus! O most obedient Son of Mary! Blessed be You from a thousand worlds of Seraphim for the honour You gave Your Mother, and for the honour You gave us. You honoured your Mother for what She should be most honoured, and You honoured us by allowing us to call Mother the one who gave birth to You and who pleased You so much, and who is above all the Seraphim.

14. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved for Her admirable beauty and majesty.

Let us not cease, then, to admire this stupendous greatness and supreme perfection of the person of Mary, of this Miracle of miracles and Masterpiece of the omnipotent arm of God, who sought to produce a work worthy of Himself. Zeuxis, the ancient Greek painter, to obtain a consummate and exquisite painting, copied the most refined and perfect features from five very beautiful maidens. But to form Mary, God put in Her the best there is in the natural order and in the order of grace, and the best there is in all the Saints and in the choirs of Angels. And though it is true that the beauty of Her soul and the divine gifts with which the Holy Ghost beautified Her are greater than the perfection of the body, (because of how much of the body comes from the soul), however, because our rudeness cannot understand what spiritual beauty is, and prefers to deal with this rough cortex of the senses, we will say something about the physical perfection and beauty of this great Queen of ours, though the lesser part of Her. God has not created nor will He create a human person, or another pure creature more composed, more modest, or more beautiful than Mary, whose majesty and purest beauty of face left others in amazement, and as though in glory, as Saint Denis the Areopagite confesses, who, when Saint John the Evangelist led him into Mary's presence, was so astonished by the divine joy bathing his soul and body that

he says with an oath that, if Faith did not tell him otherwise, he would have believed that he had already entered the Glory of Divine Heaven, and that Mary was God. Well, if this Saint, so spiritual and contemplative, says this about the physical beauty of the Virgin, and being in this vale of tears, what shall we say about Her spiritual beauty, in comparison with which physical beauty is nothing? Many afflicted people were consoled by just looking at Mary, and went to see Her just for this reason; but in addition to the respect and joy of heart that She instilled in those who gazed at Her, She inspired chastity and purity in them.

Truly, Saint John Damascene rightly calls this Lady the beauty, the bloom, the splendour of nature. And Saint Augustine said: If I called You God's Countenance, You are worthy of this name. And to Saint Denis the Areopagite, as eyewitness, She seemed like this. For Mary was so perfect in everything that, if She were not the Mother of God, then due to the superabundance of Her excellent and super-eminent qualities, by right She was worthy of Sovereignty over the whole world, and to be Mistress of the universe. The fame of Her beauty and majesty was so great that it was divulged among the first Christians, who spread Her fame from one province to another, and it was told from parents to children, so that some fell into error, understanding that Mary was a divine person who had true deity. Mary is not a divine person; but is such that, though not a divine person, no one is better than Mary, no one surpasses Her.

Now in glory, what will be the majesty of the Queen of Heaven? She will surpass all the beauty of Heaven, and will shine out upon all the blessed, Angels and men, however many their number, and Mary's splendour will fill them all with greater dignity and clarity. Speaking of Her radiance, a Doctor says: 'If all the sands of the sea, all the plants of the earth, all the atoms of the sun, all the stars of the sky, were turned into as many suns, there is no way they could all together reach the clarity of the Virgin Mary.' Grave authors write that a devout cleric, very fond of Mary Most Holy Our Queen, having heard Her beauty praised so much, ardently desired to contemplate, even just once, his Mother and Lady, and humbly asked Her for this grace. It was revealed to him by an Angel that the Holy Virgin would come to see him and show Herself to him, but warned that he would be unable to resist such a beautiful spectacle without becoming blind, since it was not fitting for eyes that have seen the Queen of Heaven to gaze at anything else of this earth. The devout clergyman, who was dying from the longing and desire to see Our Lady, said that he did not mind going blind. But later he thought that, if he lost his sight completely, he would have to beg from door to door, because he would have nothing to live on, and so it seemed to him that the answer would be to open just one eye, keeping the other closed, so as neither to fail to see the Virgin, nor undergo the rigours of poverty. He did so, but as soon as the most beautiful among the daughters of men, Mary, appeared to him, full of ineffable clarity and light, then, fascinated by that sublime beauty, the better to see it, he wanted to open the eye that he had kept closed. But Mary immediately disappeared; which only made him weep, not for the loss of sight in one eye, but for not contemplating Her with both and losing both in exchange for contemplating Her yet better whom the Angels themselves wish to see. He was so disconsolate at having taken into account poverty and the goods of this world and at not having lost his two eyes, and his life, the better to see the Virgin, that he said to himself: "I wish my whole self were nothing but eyes, I wish all the members and joints of my body were so many eyes to see Mary again." And begging this Lady with sighs from the heart to manifest Herself to him again, he told Her: "Happy and content will I be to lose my sight, O my Lady, for such a beautiful cause, because I will fall more in love with You and Your beauty!" The most benign Virgin granted him as he had requested. She appeared to him as Beautiful as She was before, and not only did She not deprive him of his sight, but restored to him the eyesight he had lost in one eye. Mary is so caring and so fond of doing good.

But what surprise is it that a mortal man should admire the beauty of this Lady when it causes admiration and amazement to the Blessed themselves? O Holy Virgin, says Saint

Epiphanius, who left the Angel Hosts astonished! A stupendous miracle in the heavens is a Woman clothed with the sun; stupendous miracle on earth is a Woman who bears the Light in Her arms. Saint Peter Damian also sings great praises of Mary, admiring Her beauty, when he thought of Her. Queen of Heaven, he says, Mother of our Father, source of the living Fount, origin of the Beginning, Lady, no longer a slave, all the more merciful, the more powerful, who loves us with an inexpressible love; to see Mary is the zenith of glory after the vision of God, Virgin begetter of God, at whose beauty the sun and the moon are amazed.

Oh, how the gaze of the Blessed is fixed on Mary! How the wisest Cherubim admire Her! And even the Son of God Himself does not take His eyes off His Mother. Agreeing with this, Saint Gabriel said to blessed Amadeus that in Heaven the Virgin was not so much next to Her Son, but rather facing Him, so that He might always gaze upon Her face; and that when Jesus Christ, or His Mother, move from one place to another, it is always without turning Their heads, but rather gazing at each other face to face.



15. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved for the admirable beauty of Her soul.

The beauty of Mary's soul, the divine gifts that the Holy Ghost placed in Her, the superabundant grace with which She was endowed, Her incomparable sanctity, Her heroic virtues, who can know and understand? But though in the rough, let us see some things our shortcomings allow. Mary alone is holier, and has more grace and love of God, than all the orders of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones; more than all the hierarchies of the sovereign spirits; than all the armies of martyrs, confessors and virgins; than all the choirs of the other saints, than all the Blessed in Heaven together; than all the righteous there are, have been and will be on earth; because She excels so much as She has inherited a more excellent name. And what does the name of mother have to do with that of servant? To what angelic or human person can Jesus say, but to Mary: 'You are my Mother; You begot me?' And what creature, if not Mary, will be able to say to Her Creator: 'You are my Son; I begot You?' In the College of Salamanca of which he was Rector, the saintly Father Martin Gutiérrez had this truth defended, that of the merits and sanctity of Mary over all the Blessed altogether; and in this way his disciple, the very learned Father Saint Francis Suárez, began to defend the holiness of Mary. This most grateful Lady came from Heaven to thank the Rector for the service he was doing Her. In Suárez's sermons another revelation is told, which was made to another religious saint, of the greatness of glory by which the Queen of Heaven surpasses that possessed by all the Angels and saints. Saint Gabriel revealed the same thing to the devout Amadeus. But this does not declare all of Mary's holiness, according to the Fathers of the Church speaking about Her when considering Her dignity; that not only does it exceed all the holiness of the Blessed together, Angels, men who are and will be, but She alone has more grace than all the righteous there are, have been and will be, and that which the spirits and righteous men who at any time lost it: and this is no small grace, since without a doubt it was quite lost by so many apostate angels, who were innumerable, and the grace lost by very holy men, who later perished, as well as the Grace of their Sacraments, as also that of their good works. Because God has not given less grace to His Mother than he has distributed elsewhere; that is, all that He has given in various ways to the rest of creatures.

Mary was created full of grace, and when She conceived the Son of God in Her womb, in addition to the ineffable grace that She deserved for us by that act of obedience, humility and charity, when She said: "Behold the Slave of the Lord: be it done in Me according to Your word," for which She alone merited more for us than all the Saints put together (as Saint Bernardine said), She also received as though sacramentally for that action performed



in Her by the Holy Ghost in the Incarnation, more graces for us than those that were given in all the seven Sacraments to all men in the world, and in the martyrdoms that have been suffered. So the grace that was given to Mary, without regard to Her merit, was greater than what has been given in whatever way to other creatures, whether they have saved themselves or perished; and the grace that was given to Her for Her merits was also much greater than that which has been given to all other creatures for their merits, whether they have increased it or lost it. But Mary increased and multiplied everything, doubling it perpetually, and accumulated infinite Graces, not for Herself, but for the benefit of humanity. On how much the Virgin merited by the ‘fiat’ She gave for the Incarnation of the Son of God, there is a declaration from Heaven, which confirms Saint Bernardine’s words, and it was manifested to a very holy person, that the Virgin at that

hour, obeying God and believing the words of the Angel, won greater merit than all the Angels won in obeying God; greater than all martyrs in their toils; greater than all confessors and virgins in all their works of penance, and in the virginal purity they kept.

Mary exceeds in Grace all the other Saints together, and the advantage that this Lady brings to the other Blessed must be considered as infinite, since She is the One Full of Grace, as something immense and endless. Thus Saint John Chrysostom said that there is an infinite difference between the Mother of God and Her slaves. Saint Peter Damian says that the greatness of the glory that Mary received has no beginning, which is the same as saying that it is infinite. Saint Ildephonsus called it ‘incomprehensible’. Saint Bonaventure affirms that the grace that filled Mary was immense. It is also the sentence of Saint Anselm, who agreed that the Mother of God shines out with such purity that after that of God no greater can be conceived.

The graces that Most Holy Mary merited for the benefit of humanity are incalculable. The Virgin, with each new act She performed, accumulated great merits for Her pure and humble love; She never hindered God, but did everything She could do, according to the motion of the Holy Ghost, and these acts of the Virgin were so continuous that even when sleeping She did not cease to merit. She was so quick to multiply them that She soon merited more grace than the entire multitude of the elect; and this even if each of the innumerable number of the saved had ten million degrees of graces.

To appreciate this superabundance of merits of the Virgin over the merits of so many Saints, let us consider that if in each meritorious act, Mary exceeded so much in merits, how much more so in seventy-five years of life, meriting day and night and increasing them at every moment. Thus, having begun to live with such a flow of grace that neither the greatest seraphim nor any saint ended with as much grace as that with which the Virgin began, incomparably greater, She merited in Her least act more than the greatest Saint in his entire life. Well, what will we say if we add to this the grace that was granted Her on many occasions, such as at the Incarnation of the Son of God, at the Nativity, on the day of the Passion, on the day of the Resurrection, in the coming of the Holy Ghost? Then if in the Sacraments the faithful receive grace according to their dispositions, and Mary’s dispositions was so immensely admirable, She received grace in the corresponding degree. Mary is Full of Grace, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of all the Saints and Angels, everything of each and every one, are in Mary with eminence.

What great consolation is this for us poor wretches, children of this great Mother, to see that Her greatness is so incomparable and so immense? Because just as Her grace is great, Her love and mercy are great; and so we can rejoice to see ourselves so singularly and so immensely loved by this Lady; because with the same love with which She loves God,

She loves us. Since Her love for God was such, She wanted to participate fully in the Passion of Christ to complete the Reparation to the Eternal Father. It is a great consolation to see ourselves loved in God by the One who loved Him so, that Her love was stronger than death. Yet the Sacrifice of Mary was in such fashion indispensable that without it the Sacrifice of Christ would have been incomplete, the Eternal Father having eternally decreed the need for Coreparation and Coredemption by Her as Mother She is of Christ's Mystical Body; without which the infinite Graces of Calvary would not have been applied to humanity at any of the historic moments of the Church. Oh! And what a joy it is to see Mary full of grace; see this Vessel of Mercy all full and overflowing! Because with any prayer of ours that includes Her, it is not possible but that She pour into us something of the grace with which She is full.

16. How Mary, Mother of God, should be loved for Her limitless gratitude.

Just as Mary's mercy, humility and all other virtues are in proportion to Her immense grandeur and goodness, so too is Her gratitude, something that usually captivates hearts greatly. We will only speak of this here briefly; because it would be too long if we were to stop at all the virtues for which She should be loved. We will deal here with Her gratitude, because it is a great virtue for captivating souls, seeing that She is so grateful for what is done for Her, even if doing something we should not, since Mary has such an ardent inclination and desire to do us good that She seeks occasions to show Her gratitude. This great Lady had such gratitude in life; and now She continues to be tremendously grateful from Heaven. It is clear that no person did any good deed for Mary while She was alive for which She did not thank him by winning eternal life for him. Those good shepherds who, in the extreme need She had in Bethlehem when She gave birth to Her Son, visited Her and helped Her with their rustic presences, later became saints. Better known are the Three Magi Kings, for whom She also obtained great sanctity. Also those good Marys, Her sisters, who collaborated closely with Her, were saints; and She obtained from Her Son that He choose Her sisters' sons and acquaintances as Apostles. Of Mary's family and relatives, whom She knew, we know that at least thirty became saints, that is, almost all of them, having in the hierarchy of the Church and in the choirs of Heaven saintly cousins, nephews and nieces. The most beloved Apostles, ten in all of that sacred College, were Her relatives, including the prince of the Apostles and head of the Church, Saint Peter. That blessed thief who confessed Jesus in agony on the cross had previously done a service to the Virgin, they say; and Mary, who was present, seeing him crucified next to Her Son, so blind as to be cursing Him, pitying him, commended him to Blessed Jesus, and the Lord heard the prayers of His afflicted Mother; because the conversion of that man, so miraculous, was owing to Mary's mercy. And it surely warms the heart the remembrance She had, at the time of the Dormition, of two good women who had done Her favours of good neighbourliness. Well, the Virgin remembered this, and commissioned Saint John to distribute Her poor utensils between them; because the Queen of Heaven was so poor in earthly goods that, apart from what She was wearing, She had nothing else.

Well, in Heaven from where it would seem that from the majesty which She has She owes us nothing, the gratitude She shows us is incredible. Saint Bernardine in a sweet sentence, and of great consolation, explains the most grateful humility (even there in Glory) of this Lady, and speaks like this: "Most affable is the glorious Queen Virgin Mary, who cannot be greeted without Her returning the greeting in an admirable way. If you devoutly say a thousand Hail Marys every day, you will be greeted a thousand times by the Virgin." We know from Adam of Saint Victor that because he greeted the Virgin, saying: "Hail, Mother of Mercy, and Triclinium of the Holy Trinity," the Virgin greeted him and gave thanks. She also came from Heaven, as we have said, to thank the saintly Father Martin Gutiérrez, of the Society of Jesus, for having spread for Her cause the knowledge of the excellence of Her merits over those of all the blessed together. For a very appropriate service that Saint Ildephonsus did



for Her by convincing some heretics, who denied Her perpetual virginity, he was so acknowledged that, being in the church with King Recesvintus, She sent him a message, publicly thanking him with very meaningful words. In the sight of all, the stone was removed from Saint Leocadia's tomb, virgin and martyr, and the Saint stepped out and approached the holy pontiff, giving him the message of the Virgin, and saying to him: "O Ildephonsus, through you my Lady's honour lives!" What greater courtesy and gratitude than this, to confess that, by Her servant, Her honour lived? After this, the messenger from Heaven returned to Her tomb, and the servant kept some tokens of this favour. The most grateful Mary was not content with thanking Her devout Ildephonsus by a third person; but wanted to do so Herself, and with deeds, bringing him a rich gift, which was that precious chasuble with which She vested him, the Queen of the Angels Herself, coming down from Heaven to do so. To another saintly priest from Tortosa, as a sign of Her gratitude, She brought a cincture that is today kept in the church

of that city. Saint Benedict and Saint Thomas Becket received another rich garment from the grateful hands of Mary. While still young and in conversation with other companions, in which each one boasted of some mad love and of the favours done to them by some maidens, the saintly young Thomas Becket of Canterbury, who had no interests apart from the Queen of Heaven, said that there was a person whom he loved more than his life, and from whom he had received greater favours than any other man from the person who loved him most. Afterwards he felt some remorse at having boasted about it. Being in this anguish, all of a sudden Mary appeared to him, and with sweet grace said to him: "Thomas, what are you afraid of? You have been right in saying that you love Me, and that I love you. Confirm it to your companions, and as a sign of the love I have for you, let them see this gift I have for you." The gift was a casket, in which there was a chasuble the colour of blood, as a sign that Mary, because of the love She had for him, had obtained for him from God the grace of becoming a Priest and martyr: as in fact happened, since first he was Priest and Bishop of Canterbury in England; from where, once persecuted by the king, he fled to France to a Cistercian monastery, and there, wanting to mend the sackcloth shirt he usually wore, which had become unstitched, and being impractical in doing so, his beloved Queen appeared to him, and with extraordinary affection took the hairshirt from his hands and mended it as it should be. Afterwards, he returned to Canterbury, where he died a martyr. For the king, in a fit of anger, made known his desire to be rid of him and, upon hearing this, four barons of the court murdered the Holy Bishop in order to gain the king's favour.

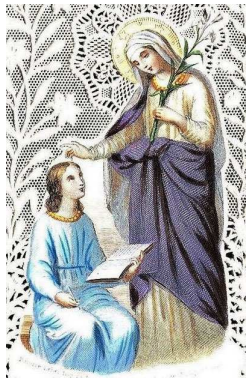
In cases like that of this holy martyr, not only gratitude is evident, but also extreme humility and affability, which are so many virtues that greatly accompany love, and more so when they are found in superiors; and who is greater than Mary among so many well-bred people there are? And who more humble? For She who is Queen of all that is created wants to be on the level of Her slaves, and strives to respond to them, repaying so well the love they have for Her, as if they did not owe it to Her. What better response? And what greater humility than an event many authors say happened to an honest soldier, whom the devil sought to make fall in a strong temptation of lascivious desire for a woman? He, on the advice of a hermit, prayed to the Virgin Mary one hundred Hail Marys every day for a year. At the end of the year, when he was leaving the church after fulfilling his devotion, he found a most beautiful Lady, who incomparably surpassed all other beauty, who stopped his horse. The soldier was amazed, and beside himself to see such grace and beauty. The most chaste Virgin said to him: 'Does My beauty please you?' He replied: 'I have never seen anything more beautiful in my life.' The humble Mary replied: 'Would you be happy if you could

have Me as your Spouse?’ The soldier replied: ‘Certainly the greatest king in the world would be considered more than blest with such company.’ Then the Virgin said: ‘Well, I will be your Spouse, come close to Me, and receive My embrace as a sign of chaste love;’ and doing so, the Virgin added: ‘Now the wedding has begun, and on such-and-such a day the celebration will finish before My Son.’ And then, oh!, wonderful humility of Mary!, She made him ride on horseback, commanding him to do so, while he trembled with fear and reverence. By this he was freed from that temptation and, without any preceding illness, died on the day that the Virgin had set, on which their espousal was to be perfected.

She also espoused Saint Alan de la Rupe, of the Order of Saint Dominic, giving him a ring, which She had made from Her hair. The espousal of Saint Herman Joseph was also very solemn. The Virgin appeared to him accompanied by the Angels; one of them said: ‘Who is the chaste spouse of this Most Pure Virgin?’, and another answered: ‘Herman, the one who is present, is Her spouse.’ The saint, hearing these words, full of shame and fear, went up to them, and said that he was very unworthy of such a name and such a singular favour. Though the saint refused such a great favour with humility, one of the Angels took his hand and joined it to that of the Most Holy Virgin, saying to him: ‘This is your Most Pure Bride and Virgin, given to you by Heaven through us, as in another time She was given to Joseph: gaze at Her, and serve Her as a dear Spouse; and from now on you will be called Joseph, as Her first spouse was called.’

It is no less admirable to see how Mary esteems our word and our love. Vincent of Burgundy says that a certain young man had received a ring from a woman of whom he was fond; and wanting to play some game, so that it might not hinder him, he entered a church, to give it there to a person he might know. He noticed an image of the Virgin; and considering Her beauty, his heart changed, and he said: ‘Truly, Lady, You are more beautiful than the one who gave me this ring; and so from now on I leave that love for Yours, for all I want is for You to love me, and I You.’ Saying these words, he put the ring on the Virgin Mary’s finger; which the Virgin accepted by bending Her finger, agreeing to become his Spouse. Later, however, that young man was inconstant and wanted to marry, which the Virgin would not allow; and She went to reclaim him, showing him the ring and accusing him of being unfaithful to Her until, finally, he completely left the world, and dedicated his entire life to the service of the Most Holy Virgin. Saint Edmund also espoused this great Queen and Lady by placing on her hand a very rich ring which he had ordered for Her, who most faithfully reciprocated. What more humble and grateful heart than that of Mary, who for love of Her devotees and slaves lowers herself to their level, accepting a name and role at their level?

Because of Mary’s deep gratitude, Her devotion is considered a sign of salvation; which some have called (in accord with Saint Bonaventure’s teachings) the character and mark of the elect. Others affirm that it is morally impossible for someone who is a true devotee of Our Lady to damn himself, which also seems to be in accord with Saint Anselm, and with reason; because since the Virgin is so inclined to do good, however undeserving we be, this gracious inclination combined with the gratitude that She imposes on Herself for any service, rains down on Her faithful devotees heavenly gifts. And these are great pledges of salvation, being in the hands of such a great patroness without whom no one is saved, and who can do so much before God, as She Herself revealed to a religious saint, as the Disciple says in his sermons. Thus the Queen of Heaven said to that devotee of Hers that, among the ineffable joys She had in the glory and blessedness of Heaven, one of the chief ones was that Her will and that of the Most Holy Trinity are as one, that everything that pleases Her is granted with ineffable kindness from God, and that the payment and reward of those who serve Her in this life are remitted to Her will and free decision. And of course, in Her prayers and mercies



She will put Her devotees first; so that they can live assured with humble confidence of their salvation. Because just as it would be impossible to save those from whom the Virgin turns Her face away, and those from whom She turns Her eyes of mercy away, says Saint Anselm, hence justification and salvation is necessary and almost essential for those happy men upon whom this sovereign Princess mercifully lays Her eyes to plead and intercede for them. For this same reason it happens that true devotion to the Virgin is like the measure of holiness; because in the measure one becomes holier, one commonly experiences feeling more a child of and more devout to this great Mother. And God, who with assured tenderness disposes the means according to the end, not only seems to mark the elect with this sign of filial affection for His Most Holy Mother, but also, for one He chooses to grant an eminent degree of sanctity and greater glory, He likewise disposes to profess an excellent piety and greater devotion to the one who is Ark of Grace and Queen of Glory, as we can well term Mary, for Her to impetrate salvation for him; as David called Jesus, Her Most Holy Son, ‘King of Glory’, for having merited for us that we might merit Her.

17. On how Mary, Mother of God, should be loved,

being our Queen, our Mother, the Mother of God, and because God so Wills.

Mary must be loved and revered under many other titles, such as for being crowned our legitimate Queen, for which we owe Her all loyalty, love and reverence. Oh, Christians! Let us console ourselves with such a Mistress, for all Her greatness is for our good; and She is all the more merciful, the more powerful She is. Oh, most affable, most meek power of Mary, who does everything to show us mercy! All things are subject to God’s empire, including the Virgin Herself; and all things are also subject to the Virgin’s empire, including God Himself. So great is the power of this great Queen, that She can always succeed in drawing God’s mercy down upon us, however many sins we have, provided we so request. The Angels, who are of a different nature and have already obtained their salvation, are full of joy and consider themselves highly honoured to be under Mary’s empire. Well, since in nature this Lady is so similar to us and our need of Her so great!, how very serious are the reasons we have to gaze at Her with the greatest reverence, the greatest loyalty, the greatest obedience! So let us learn from the Angels this respect and subjection when they swore that She was their Queen, and let us swear likewise that She is our Empress. In the trial of the angels, they recognized the royalty and empire of the Most Holy Mary over the angelic nature and venerated Her. The formula of veneration and homage that the Angels paid to Mary when She was assumed into Heaven and crowned as Queen and Mistress of all Creation, and that Saint Michael, who had previously defended Her honour, pronounced on behalf of them all, was revealed to blessed John Menesius, and is the following: “Today we all acclaim Thee, O Mary!, as our Queen, we honour Thee, Queen of Heaven: the Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim confess Thee with humble voices. All of us recognize Thee as superior: we all venerate Thee as the Mother of our God.” They are those who recognized and accepted the divine supremacy of the Human Word and the royalty and empire of Mary over the angelic nature, and paid Them due homage on the day of their trial. How come we are not edified by this example of the Angels? That we are not ashamed, given that they do not owe as much as we do, and reverence, serve, obey and love Her more than we who are of Her lineage, and are so in need of this sovereignty of Mary’s Kingdom? The devout John Tauburn says: “Mary is completely indispensable, and has been constituted Queen of the Universe over the entire house and family of God; and She presides and is superior over all things in such a way that, without some word from Her mouth no one can move a foot, or possess anything, or even say a word in the entire universe. Though this is not now evident, it will be manifest to the world when, want it or not, all generations will have to proclaim Her as their blessed Queen.”

After this, Mary must be loved for being our Mother, because though She is not our natural mother She is our true Mother by adoption, and for being our Cocreator; because we have received this immense favour from Her, that She is our Mother by engendering us to

the supernatural life of Grace, has willed to adopt us as children and have us as such, we being as we are, since many other women would not want us to be their children. So because of this very close in-law relationship between Mary and us, we owe Her the love and reverence that we would owe Her if She were our natural mother, and even more so; because this relationship is to be esteemed no less than blood relationship, this kinship of affection in love that is born of love; and is all the more to be appreciated the less Her obligation to it, being totally free and by grace.

This filiation is not a dead title, or simply an honorary one, but very loving; because we not only enjoy this incomparable honour of being called children of such a powerful Queen as Mary, but we also enjoy the fruits and benefits that being Her children by nature would have brought us; because the Virgin takes care of us as if we had been born from Her womb, and spares no efforts to take care of Her little children. Cardinal Saint Peter Damian says that, when a clergyman, a devout son of this Lady, was about to die, the Virgin went to visit him as a mother and, standing by his bedstead, She began to caress him, like a pious mother her beloved son, by which he was then healed. This pious Mother grants these gifts to fill us with love for Her Son. Well, the Virgin, so that we give Jesus our love, does such favours, and if She is invoked with the name of Mother, feels yet more obliged. When Baldwin, Count of Flanders, made the journey to the Holy Land, Pope Innocent III ordered that all the monasteries of the Cistercian Order contribute, giving one fortieth of their assets. The General and the Superiors of the Order begged His Holiness for dispensation from that mandate, as it was against the privileges of other Supreme Pontiffs. Pope Innocent took this very badly, and, deceived by false reports, determined to suppress the Order. The holy monks were greatly distressed; and, not finding sufficient favour on earth, they turned to their patroness and protectress, their heavenly Mother, who in their Patriarch Saint Bernard had adopted them as special children. They made a procession every day in their monasteries, walking barefoot and crying out to their Divine Mother, repeating these words: '*Ave Maris stella; monstra te esse matrem*': Show that you are our Mother: show that you are our Mother, O Mary star of the sea! They hadn't turned to a mother with a heart of stone; they did not cry out to a mother who was deaf; because while they were invoking Her, She appeared to Raynero, the Pope's confessor, and said to him: "Give Innocent this message from Me: You intend to destroy My children: you will not be able to achieve this; but you and everything yours will be destroyed first." With this threat from Heaven the heart of the Pontiff was changed; He ceased in his attempt, and favoured the Cistercian Order with this privilege, that any business this Holy Order had in Rome would be preferred to others. In this way the Virgin showed that She was the Mother of those who called upon Her as such.

Apart from this, the titles 'Mother of God', 'Mother of our Redeemer Jesus', obligate us greatly; because, even if She were not our Queen, nor our Mother, nor had She done us any good, nor remembered us, nor been as thoroughly good and holy as She is, nor did we see any other virtue in Her, just for being the Mother of our Saviour Jesus, of our Benefactor, of our Life, of our God, She should be revered, cherished and loved by the whole world, if in us there is any affection and fidelity and love for Jesus, our only good and legitimate King of glory, True God.

Over and above all this, the strongest reason there is to love and serve Mary is that God so wills, and wills so very dearly. We must love and revere Her more for this reason than for any other, however great; because in this way our love for Mary is refined charity; and thus Our Lady herself will be more pleased, who wants us to love Her rather to give pleasure to God, than to Herself; because She wants us to love God more than Her, because She loves God more than Herself; and by loving Mary because God so wills, we comply



with these two purposes; doing what pleases God, which is loving Mary, and doing what pleases Mary, which is not seeing herself loved without God being loved far more. And for the same reason, in True Devotion to the Virgin, this must be observed carefully, giving Her this pleasure, that we love God very much and in all purity, and that we do not love anything that is not for God, loving far more His Majesty. For this it is necessary to form lofty concepts of four things: what God is, what Mary is, how much God wants us to love Her, and how rightly so. From these concepts must arise a very cordial and intense love for this Lady, loving Her because God so wants; and He wants it so truly and so intensely that, in order that we have such a love, He has determined to grant us nothing except through Her. And this He wants for very just reasons: because of the great love He has for Her; because of the great love She has for us (since it pleases God that we reciprocate fully to such a refined love as Hers and be well mannered); because of the innumerable benefits that She obtains for us, as His Majesty also wants us to be grateful for the benefits that She can and wants to obtain for us; and because, as God desires our good, He also wants us to do what feels good to us (as much as we feel good by loving such a grateful, kind and loving Mother). The true lover of Mary must have these feelings and affections, and must bear them in mind every time he sees Her image; and must love Mary, both because God, of Himself, so wants, and because Our Lady Herself so wants.

18. On how Mary, Virgin Mother of God, should be served and loved
owing to the great sweetness that comes from serving Her.

We have seen enough reasons obliging us to love and serve Mary, Mother of God, being so good and honourable for us: because what greater good and honour exists than being beloved children of a Queen, and more so if Queen of Heaven? But because the sense of taste is very powerful for some, I also want to make a point of this; I don't know what it is about the name of Mary, from which a filial affection is born for such a Mother, who pours out honey and softness, and a most chaste delight that fills the soul with sweetness; and truly for me this is a great argument for the convenience and need for this devotion to Our Lady for us, and God's great desire for it, because it is so important to us and pertains so particularly to divine Providence regarding the elect. For just as God gave a natural inclination to all things convenient to them; and in our senses and appetites He put special delight and taste in the actions necessary for the welfare and conservation of the individual; in the same way, in the order of grace, a great inclination and affection for this Lady being so good and beneficial for all the faithful, in Her devotion and service He has sown great serenity and pleasure, being so necessary to us. I leave this to the experience of each, if he truly dedicates himself to the service of this Queen, because he will soon feel such sweetness and gentleness of affection and piety that will fill him with a joy and holy delight that satisfies and recreates the heart more than however many joys there are here on earth. Because just as it is more important for the life of the soul to serve Mary than all actions by the senses necessary or convenient for preserving the life of the body, so likewise the inward pleasure of Her devotion is greater than all the pleasures of the senses. Hence Richard of Saint Lawrence said: "In Mary each and every one of our senses finds its sweetness, its delight and its contentment." And elsewhere he says: "Mary is sweeter than honey, because Her sweetness exceeds all the sweetnesses of this world and those of bodily delights."

Sometimes the sweetness of the soul has been seen to be so abundant that there is more than enough to overflow into the body. A noble and pious lady told Marsilius, Bishop of Tuscia, when they were in the Church of Saint Severinus in Cologne, that She could not pronounce the sweetest name of Mary without Her mouth and heart filling with an ineffable sweetness and suavity. Admiring such a singular gift and favour, Marsilius asked her the reason, and she replied that it was her devout custom to pray fifty Hail Marys every day, with as many bows and greetings, before the Holy Virgin, from whom she had obtained the favour that truly the saliva in her mouth seemed tastier than honey to her, while she

was praying this devotion. Marsilius himself wanted to try it; and, having done the same devotion for barely six weeks, he felt in his mouth, palate and throat, such great suavity and sweetness, that honey seemed tasteless compared to the sweetness he felt praying his devotion; and the same thing, he says, happened to another religious of the Cistercian Order.

At least with respect to serenity and inner devotion, let anyone who does not feel them, complain to Mary, if he serves Her faithfully. Let's listen to some with experience. Abbot Eckerberth says: 'O great and powerful Lady, we cannot even name You, or take You onto our lips, without You scorching our souls; nor think of You, without You rejoicing the hearts of those who love You! You never came to knock on the doors of the pious remembrance of Your devotees except to fill them with heavenly sweetness and suavity.' Saint Bernard felt and confessed the same; because the favour that the Virgin granted to this Saint of giving him Her milk, if She granted it to him sensibly once or twice, She did so invisibly countless times. With this same



experience, Saint Augustine said that Mary was the land of promise flowing with milk and honey. And elsewhere: 'There is nothing sweeter than love: but there is no creature's love comparable to that of Mary; hence nothing is sweeter than She is.' Saint Ephrem called Her 'paradise of delights'; Saint Ambrose 'manna'; because what Ecclesiasticus says is truly well understood about Mary: "My Spirit is sweeter than honey, and My heritage suaver than the honeycomb." Therefore Richard of Saint Lawrence said: 'The spirit of Mary is sweet, because She is a very singular treasury of the Holy Ghost, who is called the Sweetness of the Father and the Son,' and then he adds: 'Mary is that honey which by tasting lights up the eyes of the righteous.' 'This Lady (says Saint Peter Damian in his sermon on the Annunciation), is the one whose sweet remembrance is enough to sweeten our sentiments, and whose consideration recreates the soul. This Lady is the one upon whom the sweetest God descended and poured into Her soul all the gentleness and sweetness of His deity; and so She could not help but become utter sweetness, though in Herself She was already so gentle, sweet and peaceful.' What great delight or what suavity will not be enjoyed by one who keeps Mary in remembrance, or rather, for whom She is the book of his sweet remembrance? And if solely the remembrance or consideration of Mary in this way fills the soul with sweetness and serenity, what will Her presence do, as Saint Peter Damian infers? A great servant of God saw this sweetness felt by the devotees of Our Lady, because he happened to see the Virgin walking among them, giving each some divine nectar, which She bore in a glass: a sign of the sweetness and devotion She was infusing into them.

19. On the way we should love and serve Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Angels.

It remains now to state how the delicate and true love for the Mother of God must be, and how our Queen, Mother of Her faithful children and true devotees, must be served and revered. For this, what we have already noted is worthy of much consideration (and it does not matter if it is repeated because it is very important), that the Virgin Mary be loved for the chief reason that God so wills, above all else, above all other reasons for which She deserves to be loved and revered by a thousand worlds. Well, we cannot love Mary to Her greater content than because God so wills. That is, we must love Her with a love of charity, loving God Himself and ever maintaining great esteem for this Lady. For God's esteem for Her is as immense as His desire that we love and reverence Her; and very rightly so, for Mary's merits on Her part, and debt on God's part, because He knows that He owes much to His dear Mother, whom He loves as His soul and life.



It is also important to have the sentiments of slaves and children for Mary, to revere and serve Her humbly as our sovereign Queen and Lady over all created things, and to trust in Her and turn to Her as the sweetest and tenderest Mother. Together with this we must consider Her as Mediatrix between Her Son and sinners, always turning to Her pious and kind bosom, so that She may appease God and obtain from Him the remedy for our needs and, through Her, offering up all our services, prayers and devotion. Because just as all the favours that God grants come to us through Her, so all the gratitude that we have to show Him, and whatever services we do, must also be through Her. For it is right that, by the same channels through which all benefits come to us, the return we make must also go, that is, through the blessed hands of Mary. Because just as God does

nothing that is not through Mary, neither should we do anything that is not through Her, so that She may offer it to Her Son, and Her Son to the Father of Mercies. Of the fruits that emanate from doing this, we have some experiences from among the Jesuits. It suffices to say that, through this devotion, living in the Company, two of them arrived, one in only nine months, and the other in eight, not only to perfection, but to such an eminent degree of sanctity that the first, namely Saint Stanislaus of Kostka, has until now raised up eighteen from the dead; of whose devotion, because it is well known in Europe, I do not want to speak further here. The second was another holy youth who, though younger in age, because he lived only seventeen and a half years, and less time in religion, which was but eight months, imitated him in virtue and holiness. The reason was his like devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. This is the chaste and angelic youth Alonso de Obando, among whose admirable virtues stands out the affection he had for this Lady. He did no work that was not out of love for the Virgin and remembering Her. That is why he said that the love he had for the Mother of God was his daily bread, and it entered into all his devotions; and it is so; because as bread is habitual food, and a common delicacy at all meals, so must devotion to the Virgin be habitual and common, and must enter into all devotions, as happened in those of this young saint. He himself confessed to his spiritual father that he did nothing, no matter how little, that he did not offer up to the Virgin, and that his thoughts were constantly centred on the services he could perform for Her; whether leaving this or that in the meal, or saying this or that when he was resting, or sitting or standing up and other things of that kind; whatever occurred to him, he would do out of pure love for the Virgin and offer up to God through Her, because he said: 'Since I am such a great sinner, I do not dare to ask God directly; and so I take refuge in my Mother, so that She may intercede for me; and I mortify myself during the day for Her love.' He also confessed that he never allowed himself to be overcome by temptation, and that those he most commonly had were to lukewarmness; which God so allowed, because the way he defeated them pleased Him. He said that he achieved this very easily, just by thinking and saying: 'I do this for the Most Blessed Virgin;' whom he kept in mind in all his actions, asking himself how the Virgin would perform them. By this he was ever in good spirits, always trying to do things as Her son, striving mainly for purity of soul and body and possessing an eminent gift of chastity. Besides this, he continually greeted Her, and very often repeated: '*Monstra te esse Matrem.*' When he spoke at recreation, it was always of the greatness and virtues of this Lady, and if She was not in the conversation, he would fall silent. The Virgin rewarded him for this zeal of his, for just on thinking about the Mother of God, whether by day or by night, he told his Confessor that he melted in sweetness and suavity, apart from other favours received from Mary's hands. (Alonso de Obando was a Jesuit novice, born in Spain. From his early years he was a model of virtue and was considered an angel. To preserve angelic purity, he dressed in hairshirts, and covered his body with lesions from taking disciplines. His devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin was so tender that, when he thought of Her, he burst into tears of devotion. He offered

all his actions to Her, striving to make them acceptable to Her as His Queen and Mother. He was extremely exact in his observance of the rules, and was never known to utter an idle word. His death closely resembled that of Saint Stanislaus, whose virtues he had imitated. He died at the age of seventeen years and six months, in Lima, Peru, on November 6th, 1614.)

After having acquired great affection and tender love for the Mother of God as our dear Mother, we must needs never fall away from the dignity of children of such a great Lady, nor fail to live up to it in deeds; because most of all the Virgin desires this: that we not only call Her 'Mother, Mother,' nor that we pride ourselves by word alone on being Her children, but that we be so truly, and by our deeds show it; and whoever wants to be a child of Mary must be like Her Onlybegotten Son whom She bore in Her womb, Christ Jesus; because this great Mother is accustomed to having God as Her Son; She is accustomed to seeing before Her eyes a Son as good and as holy as the Holy Ghost, and She wants all others She adopts as children to be like Her natural Son, whom She sets up for us as the Model and Example we must resemble. Let us look, then, at Jesus' life, and let us imitate Him in everything, those of us who want to be His brethren, and children of His Mother; and let us do nothing that this Lord, the obedient and only worthy Son of Mary, would not do. A younger person should consider what Jesus would do at twelve or fourteen years of age; how he would act and with what obedience and subjection to Mary, Joseph and other elders. The young man should look at Jesus' actions when at His age, twenty or twenty-two years; with what modesty His virginal face; what restraint and prudence in His words; what soundness and maturity in His actions and what respect for His Mother. Let the man also consider Jesus already a man; the gravity of His person, the heavenly doctrine on His lips, and the heroism in the works He performed. Finally, those of all ages should consider the meekness, patience, humility, prayer, and charity of this humble Son of the humble Mary, and try to please His Mother, and conform himself to Her Son Jesus. And since in the hard-working and humble life of the Son of God and Mary, it is in humiliation and mortification that He should be most imitated, those who want to become like Jesus and please his Mother, must strive especially in these two virtues. With singular favours She has shown how much She rewards these virtues that please Her so much. The devout Father Martin de Alberto, great servant of God and gifted son of the Virgin, among the other heroic virtues in which he excelled, was humility. As he used to collect the garbage from all over the house (even when he was a Priest), while thus employed, the Mother of humble Jesus appeared to him, praising him for that humble action and thanking him with such gracious phrases, that the sweetness he experienced from those words of the Virgin lasted for many years. This great Mother is no less pleased to see in us the mortification of our Lord Jesus Christ, Her Son. In order for a certain devotee of Hers to be mortified and truly embrace the cross, She did him this favour that Caesarius relates: While the loving servant of this Lady, named Walter of Birbach, was hearing Mass with many other people, when the Priest raised the chalice, on the corporal he found a cross, and a document that read as follows: 'Give this cross on my behalf, that is, from Mary, Mother of Christ, to my friend Walter.' As the Priest read the document after Mass, he asked, having gone up to the pulpit, if there was anyone there who bore that name. That person, who was there, having been called aside, the Priest gave him the cross on behalf of the Virgin, telling him everything that had happened. He took it with reverence, and understanding all that the Virgin wanted of him, he embraced the cross and the mortification of Jesus Christ closely. This obligation to imitate the Son of Mary, Jesus, is felt very much by those who receive Communion, who can consider themselves more children of the Virgin, since in a certain way they become Her natural children. The rest are children of this Lady by adoption or affection; but those who go up to receive Communion can boast of being more than this, as if they were children by nature. The reason is because they become one body and blood with the Body and Blood of Jesus, whom Mary bore in Her womb, and since they become one flesh with that of Mary's natural Son, they are also like Her natural children; and She

looks upon them as Her body and blood, and treats them as if She had given birth to them, for She gave birth to Him with whom they become one with real and substantial union; and it is not surprising that the Virgin looks upon them in that way, since Jesus himself looks at them as if His own body. Therefore, those of us who receive Communion many times, especially Priests, must look on Mary as a natural Mother, and more our Mother than of others. From here a very pleasant devotion to this Lady must be drawn, which is to receive Communion with great devotion, and to have great attachment to this Sacrament; by which we become like natural children of Hers. Let us consider that what is given to us is only what Jesus took from this Lady, which is the flesh and blood that He received from Her womb; and that we have no other bones and relics of Mary's body except in the Blessed Sacrament; which, as the Saints say, is an extension of the Incarnation, so it can also be said that it is an extension of the natural sonship of this great Mother. This leads us to the point that Mary reveres those who receive Communion as if they were Christ himself; as was revealed to Saint Bienvenida, and also to Saint Benedict, after he had said Mass, which the Virgin heard, then giving him a beautiful vestment. The Eucharist is a very typical gift from Mary to remedy the damage of the morsel that Eve offered to Adam, to our perdition; that just as that damage came from Eve, so from Mary came its antidote; and just as it was no more than poison that Eve gave, so it is medicine that Mary gives. Consider also how much God valued the body He received from the Virgin, from which He never separated the Divinity; and though He separated that Body from his own Soul, the Divinity never left Him: He died in His Humanity; but that body formed from the flesh of Mary never ceased to be God.

Also very pleasing to the Virgin is our devotion to maintaining purity and chastity; since She was the purest creature there ever has been and ever will be, and the Mother of virginity, for which reason She is titled Virgin of virgins, so that those whom She sees outstanding in purity oblige Her more and belong more to Her family. Saint Joseph was a virgin; Saint John the Evangelist, with whom She later lived, was also a virgin. The first favour that She did to any man, after consecrating Her womb with the Son of God, She also did to a virgin; because She granted it to John the Baptist, who was a virgin all his life and died for chastity.

20. On the virtues of Mary, Virgin Most Holy and Mother of God.

According to what has been said, we should contemplate the loftiest virtues of Mary and Her stupendous holiness in order to seek to imitate Her. The first thing is to observe that fervour of Her spirit, that fire of charity in Her soul, those interior acts, so ardent and intense that She had in Her heart, and which She repeated more times than She breathed, growing in such great steps in holiness and merits to the benefit of Her children. She was always doubling them, and making them ever more fervent and intense than before, so that the last was as fervent and meritorious as all the others in the rest of Her life together; and in this way was treasuring grace and holiness until the moment when Her last act was worth all the others She had performed (though they were innumerable, very intense and all full of charity) in seventy-five years of life. This is tenacity of virtue, fervour of spirit; this is to build up a great treasure; and this we must imitate with all our strength.

In addition to these prodigies of grace taking place in the Virgin's burning Heart, entirely a holocaust of love, we must also imitate the external virtues in which She took most pains; though all of Her virtues were equal, that is in sovereign perfection as though infinite. With Her fervent charity and mercy, when She learnt of the state Saint Elizabeth was in, so burdened with years and pregnant, She flew at once to serve her and sanctify her son John, leaving Her own home, and the quiet and rest of Her seclusion, pleasant and sweet as all this was to Her; but She overcame everything, sacrificed the extraordinary love She bore for retirement; and passed through mountainous country in great haste to do that work of spiritual charity, for the sanctification of the child John in his mother's womb, and to serve the same mother in Her pregnancy. What She was unable to do by deed, She did by charity with Her prayers. It was enough to tell the most pious Virgin of some need for Her then to ask Her Son for a

remedy, as happened at the wedding in Cana, when the wine ran out; which the Virgin noticed, paying more attention to whatever need there was to remedy than to the banquet; and then, so that the bridegroom might not feel ashamed, She Herself asked Her Son for a remedy and concealed the deficiency by requesting and calling the servants, telling them to do as Jesus was to tell them. We can cultivate this virtue in imitation of this Lady, when we see a need, and cannot remedy it ourselves; we commend it to God; and pray a Hail Mary so that She obtain the remedy.

And as for the immense humility She possessed, how did She exercise it? Not only by calling herself a slave, but by other great humiliations, which She sought more than others seek honours. According to Saint Bernard, he who does not want to be humiliated is not truly humble. It is truly to marvel how the Virgin Mary subjected herself to everyone, She who, without need, sought the lowest place and last seat for Herself; and being so far from seeking Her own glory, that just by seeing Herself praised by the Angel, She became troubled. And what more heroic act than they say happened with Saint Luke, while he was writing the Acts of the Apostles, when She asked him so sincerely and heartily to name Her in the last place when he named those who were awaiting the Coming of the Holy Ghost, until forcing the saintly Evangelist to condescend to Her requests? In all things She wanted to give preference to the Apostles, and did not want to be involved in their meetings and Councils, by which they governed the Church; but as if She were useless in the world, She remained silent until they asked Her, then responding with heavenly prudence as if the Holy Ghost Himself were speaking. It is also worth noting the humility that this Lady showed when, purer than the Angels, She was not ashamed to be in the company of such a public sinner as Magdalen, with whom, as with other sinners, She also humbled Herself, according to Denis the Carthusian. And it was no small humility that when able to call Herself Mother of God, She was not so named, nor did She sign except as the Slave of Jesus, seeking the lowest name for one who had the greatest title of all. Well, in imitation of the Virgin we must be humble, and seek to be humiliated.



No less did She show us how we should follow evangelical poverty, not only with affection, but effectively; because this Lady, even before hearing Her Son's teachings, renounced Her property. Because Her parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, were rich landowners, and She was a favourite daughter, yet She left everything for the love of God and lived poorly, marrying a poor craftsman, who had renounced his wealth, and ate from the work of his hands and the sweat of his brow. Later throughout Her life She maintained such poverty that, except for what She was wearing, She had nothing; because even to bury Her Son it was necessary for them to give Him what was needed. When the end of Her life on earth came She did not have a single piece of jewellery that She could dispose of. That Her chemises were made of tow was found out at a Compostela Council. We must do well to imitate such extreme poverty of the Queen of Heaven, and not be content with sentiments alone, but rather renounce with works the infinite superfluous things that we enjoy.

We do not want to fail to add here what was revealed to blessed John Menesius; because he declares to us the great poverty and humility of Mary, with a notable devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Well, he says that when the Apostles and other disciples came from different parts to attend the Transit of the Virgin, the poor Mary, so rich in merits, from Her blessed Son obtained a way of maintaining them and treating them very well, by having them receive the Body of Her Son, so that the holy Apostles sustained themselves the days they were there with the Blessed Sacrament alone. In Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament we also have much to imitate in this great teacher of virtues, who always had the Most Holy Sacrament in Her room, which was Her oratory, constantly in prayer before

It. She received Communion every day; She rejoiced in It; and prepared for Holy Communion by heroic acts of charity and humility and with burning devotion, and very intense acts of love for God, which She performed in the presence of this Divine Sacrament, until finally arriving at Her Transit. Regarding chastity, with what extreme delicacy did Mary observe it, something in the world until then almost unknown, except in the religious Order dedicated to Her! And then, with what modesty did She live in perpetual recollection, with much penance, with many rigours of fasting and prayer and holy reading and other penitential works, in which since childhood She spent Her days and nights in the temple? She had such modesty that She never raised Her eyes from the ground, with such admirable decorum and composure that She caused veneration and respect in everyone, and instilled chastity. She was kind to everyone, and terrible only to the less pure.

Mary's obedience was no less admirable. She submitted to Her parents, fulfilling the vow She had made of that virtue; then She was subject to the priests of the temple, doing nothing just for pleasure; She then subjected Herself to a poor and humble carpenter. She complied with the laws, both ecclesiastical and imperial, even when not obliged to do so. She purified Herself, being excepted from this law since Hers was a supernatural and virginal childbirth; but in order not to be singular, and to humble Herself further, She chose to comply, obeying the shadow of a precept. She travelled many leagues from Nazareth to obey the command of a tyrant, who ordered everyone to be registered, and She was not obliged by such a law, nor had the duty to obey it to Her great discomfort, even if it were otherwise just. For afterwards She did not want to be less obedient to the prelates of the Church that Her Son had founded, showing great reverence for the Apostles, and deferring to them with great humility and submission. Obedience to God, born of Her ineffable charity, who can declare it? It suffices to say that for this great obedience and resignation of judgment, the Eternal Word wanted to do this particular favour to such a distinguished virtue of Mary, that by an act of Her obedience He performed one of the greatest wonders that He has performed, and can perform, that was the Incarnation. And with Her Son dying, something that pierced Her soul, what conformity She had with the Divine Will, without speaking a word for Him, nor did She go weeping and crying out to the judges!

This, even if it had not benefited anything, is a sign of the heroic and stupendous virtue of Mary, with which She endured something that She felt more than losing millions of lives. And though the silence of Christ in his Passion was admirable, it is not known whether it was greater than His Mother's; because we do not know that She spoke a word, either to Her Son, or to the beloved disciple, or to the Apostles, or to the judges, or to the ministers, or to the accusers, or to the people, or to any born person to move them to compassion. And at the foot of the Cross, what constancy and conformity She showed, without going to extremes, without absenting Herself, without fainting! Though Her Heart was pierced with a penetrating sword of pain, Her deep obedience to God and conformity with the Will of the Father worked that great miracle of keeping Her courageous; for without a doubt, if it were not for Her gift of immortality, She would have died of pain long before Her Son. I do not know for certain what more singular example of obedience any saint could leave us, obeying without quibbles, with great alacrity, with subjection of judgment, without paying attention to whether the commandment was binding or not, without considering whether the command was just or not, without considering the person commanding, and with constant contempt for all personal preference in seeing the divine will fulfilled. Of all these three virtues, chastity, poverty and obedience, Mary Most Holy is the supreme model, consecrating in Herself religious life.

And silence, which is also an emblem and mark of religiosity, how did Mary observe it all the time that Jesus went out preaching? From before each time She spoke it was to give glory to God: when the Angel greeted Her, when She visited Saint Elizabeth, when She found Her lost Son, and when She remedied that need of the Cana wedding, each of these occasions shows us many virtues. Prudence and constancy in Her purpose, when the Angel

greeted Her; since She did not then see a way to combine that motherhood with Her vow of perpetual virginity and Her condition as espoused, in something as great as being the Mother of God, She did not dare to accept, until She understood that God was to do it, and that Saint Joseph had already given his consent, so She asked no further. When She visited Saint Elizabeth, She showed us Her affability, humility and courtesy, first greeting her, and also an ardent devotion and gratitude to God with the canticle of the 'Magnificat'. When She found Her Son in the Temple of Jerusalem She showed us heroic love and esteem for God, and how we should truly seek Him, and with what a broken heart, if we have lost Him. At weddings She gave us an example of Her charity and mercy, that there be no need for our neighbours to ask us for help when we know their needs. After Christ performed this first miracle to please Mary, it is not read that She spoke a word that was not profitable; for She spoke when Lazarus fell sick, and She spoke to encourage, correct and prudently guide the disciples and Apostles, always motivated by the glory of God and the good of souls. The Treatise on the Holy Mass says: "During Jesus' Gospel period, Mary showed herself visibly as Disciple and as well as Mistress, for She was model of docility to Her Divine Son's instructions and at the same time, as Divine Doctress, She instructed and enlightened many with magisterial wisdom, chiefly Christ's disciples and the holy women who accompanied Her. Moreover, the Divine Mary acted many times personally and visibly as intermediary before Jesus in remedying manifold needs; for Her Son, to demonstrate the power of His Divine Mother's Universal Mediation, sometimes appeared deaf to the petitions of those who went up to Him, so that they might do so through Mary. At other moments, Christ left His disciples alone with His Divine Mother in order for Her to encourage them and also reprove them with motherly love and tenderness, as She had a special influence upon the disciples. Mary's activity centred principally on Her direct dealings with many of those who came up to hear Her Divine Son's teachings, disposing their souls to fuller acceptance and comprehension of the doctrine. And given the confidence that Jesus' Mother inspired and the delicacy of Her ways, many sinners, moved by Mary's counsels, requested remission of their sins from the Divine Master."



There is another thing that we must very particularly imitate in Mary, and that is Her endearing devotion and love for the Mother of the Messiah, and the desire She had to serve as Her slave when, with infused knowledge veiled, She was unaware that it was to be Her. Because as She understood from Holy Scripture (which She meditated continually) what the prophets had said (better than the prophets themselves who said it), about how the Son of God was to be born of a Virgin for the good of the world, inestimable was the love and esteem that Mary conceived of such a Virgin, without knowing that it was to be Her. She thought continually of the happiness of such a maiden, of Her dignity, of Her greatness; and She would have considered Herself very happy to be her little slave; and She would have served her on Her knees; and She would have kissed the ground she trod a thousand times. The Virgin Mary Herself – declared Saint Elizabeth a Nun – with great urgency prayed to God for the good of the world and to let Her see that Virgin through whom so much good would come to Her, ardently begging His Majesty to allow Her to be the most despised and least slave of Her house. We must imitate this devotion for the Mother of God that Mary had when She was far from thinking that it would be Herself, as far as heaven is from earth. We must esteem, desire, love and honour such a Maiden, who was able to respond with humility to such an immense dignity, and consider ourselves highly blessed and honoured to be Her slaves, since She holds such as beloved children, and let us ask Her that we continually have the reverence of slaves, the love of children, Her mercy on our misery and Her intercession and protection as sinners.



21. On asking the Virgin for Her love and devotion.

The humble Mary is the One Full of Grace, the One Full of Glory, Mother of our God, our loving Mother, only hope of the children of Adam, only hope of the afflicted. Let us, wretches, turn to Her tender and merciful bosom that Jesus consecrated, so that She may incline towards us Her loving Heart, full of the Holy Ghost, and incline Her pious eyes, the first before all to see our Redeemer born. Let us ask Mary for our remedy, so that what our sweet Jesus intended may be done in us: that we love His Father, the Eternal God, and Mary his dear and tender Mother, to whom He is immeasurably grateful for the sweet hospitality She gave Him. He sought to thank this Lady for being His Mother, by giving me to be Her son. May Mary admit me even if among Her humblest slaves, that I be one of Her

family, in the last place of all. By my sins I do not deserve to be considered, but not on this account do I lose confidence, because Mary is the 'Hope of sinners' and 'Mother of Mercy'; and thus, where there is more misery, there She has to be more mother. For my Lady I will have the respect of a slave and the love of a son; but if Mary were not to obtain this for me from my God, She could not expect anything good from me; by Her most merciful bosom, and for my great misery, for Her sweetness, for Her gentleness, as Mother of the meek Jesus, and for Jesus Himself, may She grant this pleasure to Him, and to me this mercy: that I may love Mary, my Mother, and serve Her, for She is my Mistress.

I see well that She has no need of my services, since before Mary the Seraphim kneel, the Cherubim worship Her as Queen; before Mary the Thrones humble themselves, the Dominations are subject, the Powers of Heaven yield, the highest Virtues abase themselves; before Mary the Principalities prostrate themselves, the Archangels bend the knee, and all the other Angels feel honoured to be Her vassals. The Patriarchs preach Her; the Apostles bless Her; the Martyrs magnify Her; the Pontiffs praise Her; the Confessors extol Her; the Virgins follow Her, and God Himself obeys Her. Among so many who serve and revere Her, She will not need me; yet it will not be too much to ask that She admit a bad servant among so many good ones, so that by their company and example they teach me to love and serve Her. The Angels edify me by the love they show for Her, selfless, as mine is not. The Patriarchs shame me, loving Her before being conscious of Her mercies. The Apostles teach me to serve Her, because even before She was crowned Queen of all creation, they served Her as their Mistress. Yet after the innumerable benefits I have received from Mary, and after benefiting so greatly from Her compassion, after seeing Her constituted my Queen and my Mother, I still do not pour myself out in Her devotion and love. Where is my gratitude? Where my acknowledgement, where my love for God, and where my love for myself, if I don't love the One who loves me so much, if I don't love the Fount of all my good?

If I do not turn to Our Lady, from where can I expect any good, since all my happiness comes from Her? If I don't turn to Mary, in whom can I confide, since Mary is the one who loves me most after God; the one who loves me with all fidelity and justice; the one who loves me incomparably more than I myself? If I do not turn to my Lady, where can I find sure refuge? Mary alone is Mother of God; She alone the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; She alone has the authority to be heard by divine Justice. Her Son loves Mary so much that for love of Her He will forgive His enemies. I have no one in whom to hope but Mary. Though Her Son be angered with me, I trust that Mary will be able to appease Him, since Her merits please Him more than My ingratitude can anger Him. It is in Mary's power to soften His anger, for He is meek and humble of heart, even with strangers; so towards His Mother, and such a Mother, what tenderness will He not show? What meekness will He not demonstrate? Why is She called Mother of Mercy? Why did They make Her Mother

of Most Merciful Jesus, but so that we can experience His mercy and Mary's too? From where can I expect a remedy, if not from where everyone else has received? How can it be that I fail to receive Her mercy, if the whole world receives it?

The Son of Mary came to look for the lost sheep; how can Mary let it be lost, when He is seeking that sheep yet more? Her Son came to call sinners; how can Mary not hear someone who calls out to Her from the heart? Her Son prayed for those who crucified Him; and can't Mary obtain forgiveness for those who implore Her? I trust that Our Lady will prove in me that She is true Mother of Mercy, true Mother of our Redeemer, Hope of men, Consolation of sinners, Conciliator of God, Treasures of the Holy Ghost, Dispensatrix of His Graces. If David found mercy so easily, it was because God wanted the Redeemer and the Co-Redemptrix to apply graces in advance from the infinite treasure of Calvary; and I shall obtain mercy more easily now that She is my Intercessor, now that we have Her Son, so excellent, crucified for us, and Mary, good Mother, who bore it all with patience, because it was for my good. May I feel that Mary is the cause of my happiness, along with my Redeemer Jesus crucified for me!

I see Jesus look at his weeping Mother, and Mary look at Her Son bleeding to death. I will ask Jesus, through His beloved Mother, and Mary, through Her beloved Son, to have mercy on me. Jesus, the obedient Son, so good, of Mary, and Mary, so good and loving a Mother of Jesus, are the cause of my good; and new sufferings are not needed to redeem me. It is not necessary for Jesus to shed Blood, nor for Mary to shed tears, because Their Sacrifice is perpetuated at Holy Mass. Before the just Judge, to whom shall I turn but to the pious Advocate, to Her who reconciles the world? Oh! If my Advocate rejects me, how can the Judge acquit me? But for whom will this Mother of Salvation plead, if not for the one lost? For whom will the Mother of the Redeemer intercede, if not for His redeemed? Whom should the Mother of Mercy defend, if not the wretched? Or else, tell me if there is any other refuge for me; if there is any other human person of greater mercy, or who loves me more, or if there is anyone else more powerful with God. If there is not, what excuse can this Advocate have? Perhaps my little faith? My few good sentiments? My great sins? For this reason I ask Mary for a great feat of Her mercy, that one who does not deserve to be heard, She hear; that one who deserves to be damned, She save, that one who deserves to be rejected, She protect; and that I, who deserve to be a son of wrath, be one of mercy, and be a brother of Her Son, be a son of God!, be a son of Most Holy Mary!

Beloved children: We have the ardent desire to fill you with greater confidence and love for the Most Holy Virgin Mary. For this purpose, it will be well for you to see Her power, Her goodness and Her love for sinners, including by examples, and to show the need we have for Her power and favour to make our way through the dangerous ways of this world and happily reach the haven of our eternal bliss. Let us see some of the wonders of Mary Most Holy and of the great displays of the power which God has granted Her, since they reflect Her sublime graces and privileges.

Seven sorrows or swords of Mary Most Holy.

When we speak of the Wonders of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the first thing we observe is God's power in creating Mary Immaculate, full of Grace and virtues, to be the worthy Mother of God and Temple of the Most Holy Trinity. After Christ's Sacred Humanity, She is the masterpiece of Creation: Mary Immaculate. In the adornment of Her Innocent Soul the Creator placed such care that He exempted Her from all sin and from all the power of the enemy on creating Her Divine Soul at the beginning of Creation, before pronouncing the sentence of condemnation against prevaricating mankind in earthly Paradise: He gave Her the stars as crown, the brilliance of the sun as apparel, and the moon as footstool. He enriched Her with all the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost for Her to be His Temple; He endowed Her with all the inspirations of eternal Wisdom, to be His Mother; the Father of Lights enlightened Her with all radiance from on high to be His Daughter. The Blessed spirits are



rapt in admiration at the presence of such beauty and such an accumulation of perfections and, in reverence, fall prostrate at Her feet and join their praises to those of the Eternal One thrice Holy.

But besides recognizing the wonders that God did for Mary, we should as well take a deep look at the wonders that Mary Most Holy performed for God, as Our

Lord explained to Saint Bertha Frances Petit in 1911: "The Heart of My Mother has the right to the title 'Sorrowful', and I want it to be added to that of 'Immaculate' as She has more than merited it... In My Mother's case the Church has defined what I Myself had ordained: Her Immaculate Conception. According to My express desire, the right My Mother has to this title of justice is to be universally known and accepted. She has gained it for Her identification with My dolours by Her sufferings, by Her sacrifices and by Her immolation on Calvary borne in perfect response to My grace for the salvation of mankind. The nobility of My Mother resides in Her Coredemption, and I therefore ask that the invocation I have demanded be approved and diffused throughout the Church. She has already obtained many graces for you; She will obtain yet more when the Church is exalted and the world renewed by way of its consecration to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of My Mother... The Church has recognized in My Mother what I Myself gave Her. It is now necessary, and I so Will, that the right My Mother has to a title in all justice be recognized and understood as well, a title She deserves for Her identification with all My Dolours, by Her sufferings and sacrifices and by Her immolation on Calvary accepted in perfect response to My grace and borne for the salvation of mankind. It is above all in Her response to grace that My Mother is great and hence I ask that the invocation 'Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary, pray for us', just as I have dictated it, be approved and spread throughout the Church, directed to My Heart, and be recited by each of My Priests after the Sacrifice of Mass. It has already obtained graces for all Her children and will obtain yet more. This request is consequence of My act on Calvary giving My Mother over to John as Her son. Did I not entrust to Her the Sorrowful Motherhood over the whole world? The worst calamities that She has announced have been unleashed, so that the time has come, and I Will: that the Peoples turn to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of My Mother. Let one single cry burst forth from all hearts: 'Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary, pray for us.' Let this invocation, designated by My Love as a last refuge, be approved and indulgenced, not only partially and for a small portion of My flock, but for the whole world, so that it spread as a breath of reparation and purification to placate My wrath. This devotion to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart will rekindle faith and hope in torn hearts, and in broken families will help to repair the ruins, sweeten suffering; it will be a new force for My Church, leading souls not only to trust in My Heart, but also in the Dolorous Heart of My Mother. It is the Immaculate Heart of My Mother that I want to lead to triumph, because after having co-operated in the salvation of souls, this Heart has the right to one and the same co-operation in the manifestation of My Justice and of My Love. Great is My Mother, but especially Her martyred Heart transpierced by the same wound as Mine. Hence, desiring a clamorous triumph for this Heart, I have awaited the hour of universal misery, so that mankind may find a boundless echo in the Dolorous Heart of Mary, as it likewise finds in Mine. To adopt this devotion and spread it is to fulfil My Will and to respond to the hopefulness in My Heart. In consequence, thanks to supplication and consecration to this Heart, graces of light will be obtained, which will lead souls slowly to the full knowledge of Our Hearts, united, transpierced by the same wound, inexhaustible fount of all good for men, and whose glory forms the happiness of the elect. The salvation of your country, peace in the interior, the moral revival of the people, confidence

in My Church, will be reborn by way of the active devotion and the consecration I want, so that the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of My Mother be loved and glorified. Salvation will thus be the work of Our Hearts, the triumph of Our Love towards the people who will make this consecration, trusting in My promise. Make My Mother's Heart beloved, transpierced as it is by the Sorrows which tear Mine apart. It is essential to think of Her Heart as you think of Mine... To live in that Heart, as you want to live in Mine, to give yourself to that Heart, as you give yourself to Mine. I have made known the desires of My Heart regarding that of My Mother. Make It beloved. This love will be for you and for the world a fount of graces and will bring down great blessings. Abandon yourself to My Love." Our Lady appeared to Saint Bertha and revealed to her the bodily martyrdom She had undergone at the foot of the Cross, and Bertha saw Her forehead wounded and bleeding, and Her hands and Her Heart transpierced. Then Mary said: "Now you can understand the dolours that My Heart bore and the sufferings of My whole being for the salvation of the world... With resolute Will My Son wishes to see souls having recourse to My Dolorous Heart; I await this movement of souls with Heart full of tenderness, asking nothing other than to be able to transmit to My Son's Heart all that He entrusts to Mine, and thus obtain for all the graces of salvation." Our Lord Jesus Christ said to Bertha: "It is by the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of My Mother that I will triumph, since having co-operated in the redemption of souls, that Heart has to share a similar co-operation in the manifestations of My justice and of My love. My Mother is noble in everything, but especially so in Her wounded Heart, transpierced by My wound."

Meditate frequently on Mary's Dolours. Essentially, this practice pleases Jesus, and He Himself revealed to Saint Veronica that while tears shed for His Passion are highly agreeable to Him, yet owing to the immense love He has for His Mother, He prefers that the Dolours Mary suffered when He was nailed to the Cross be meditated. Take special pains to honour the Dolours of Our Lady and it will not be long before you experience the effects of this devotion. By this holy practice graces are obtained that would not be obtained by any other means.

In the first place, the Most Holy Virgin Mary suffered by participating to the full in all the sufferings of Her Divine Son, by the espousal of the Divine Souls, as Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix. Mary Coreparatrix, present in Christ's Passion, spiritually bore all the afflictions that Christ suffered in His Flesh. But She also suffered from Her tenderest years on seeing the world's sins and forgetfulness of God. She suffered on seeing the doors closed on God become Man who had come into this world. She suffered on hearing the prophetic announcement that Her Son was to be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce Her own Heart. She suffered on leaving in haste for Egypt to prevent Herod from assassinating Her Son. She suffered on losing Her Son in Jerusalem, three endless days of darkness. She suffered at the death of Saint Joseph, Her support, Her help and Her companion, faithful and prudent servant. She suffered on knowing all the mockery, attacks and persecution Jesus had to bear; and at the unbelief, harshness, blindness, obstinacy, hatred, and callousness of those hearts which did not accept Jesus. She suffered on knowing of Jesus' arrest, betrayal, abandonment, scourging, crowning with thorns, death sentence. She suffered on meeting up with Her Son, covered with wounds, laden with a cross, on the way to crucifixion. She suffered on seeing Her Son die on a Cross. She suffered when the Sacred Hearts were transpierced by the lance and at Her own spiritual death. She suffered when He was laid in Her motherly lap. She suffered in the deep and bitter solitude of Holy Saturday, deprived of the Son of Her Womb. She suffered when the Mystical Body of Her Son, the Church, received her first blows, on seeing the Apostles persecuted, scourged, stoned, imprisoned and martyred. She suffered seeing the black ingratitude of men at the goodness of God in the Salvific work of Reparation and Redemption, the meagre response to Divine Love, the sacrileges by the unworthy reception of the Sacraments, and the loss of innumerable souls lacking heart for



serving and loving God. She suffered at the loss of religious vocations by those who had gifts and talents, and did not use them, or used them badly, or abused them, or who were called to battle for God's glory and crossed their arms. She suffered on seeing that Her stay on earth was prolonged and that her longing to be with Her Son went unsatisfied. One characteristic of Mary's Love is its faithfulness, ready to bear the greatest pain for that Love's sake; since that love which shows itself faithful amid troubles, amid abandonment, in absence, amid suffering, proves itself to be a true and real love.

The Most Holy Virgin wept, and wept torrents. Mary wept in Her earthly life and, more admirably, though now in Heaven enjoying the promise of consolation, mysteriously She continues to weep over us and over the offences which we men commit against Her Son and against Her Person. She wept in La Salette,

towards the middle of the XIX century in a period during which Christianity in France faced growing hostility. She lamented in Fatima, and the children described the sadness of the Virgin on speaking of how God is deeply offended by sin and on showing the little shepherds the horror of Hell and how many souls go there. In Lourdes she appeared weeping, hurt and Dolorous, exhorting to penance to avoid tragedies and chastisements for mankind. And in Syracuse, at the end of World War II, She deigned to perform the singular miracle that a simple image weep real tears which could be observed and seen, together with the greater prodigy that, having gathered and analysed them, they were shown to be real tears of the same composition as human tears. In this period too, the image of the Virgin of Czestochowa, Poland, wept. Many images of *Rosa Mística* have shed tears of water and blood.

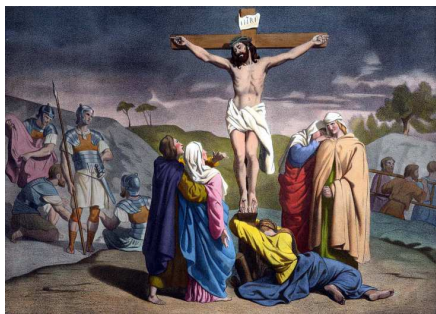
What does our Mother wish to tell us through this weeping by way of images? Why does the Virgin weep if She is in Heaven? Let us see what Pope Saint Pius XII said on the occasion of the celebration of the Marian Year 1954, on referring to the tears of the Syracuse statue: "There is no doubt that Mary is in Heaven eternally happy and suffers neither dolour nor sadness; but She is not insensible, rather always breathes love and piety over this wretched human race, to which She was given as Mother, when, dolorous and weeping, She stood at the foot of the Cross. Will men understand the language of those tears of Mary? They were tears of compassion for Jesus and sorrow for the sins of the world. Does She still weep for the wounds being renewed in Jesus' Mystical Body? Or does She weep for so many children for whom error and sin have smothered the life of Grace and who offend God grievously? Or are they tears awaiting the return of Her children, once faithful and today drawn away by false charms into the ranks of God's enemies? Let us gaze at our Mother's Heart circled by thorns for all the offences and injuries by which She is hurt, and let us try to console Her." Let us all listen to this calling; let us become consolatory and reparatory souls for Mary's Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart. By meditating on the seven Sorrows of Our Most Holy Mother we have one way of sharing in the deepest sufferings of Mary's life on earth.

Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori says: "The Virgin's gratitude when Her Dolours are remembered is shown by an occurrence in the year 1239 when She appeared to seven devotees of Hers – later to become the Founders of the Congregation of the Servants of Mary, or Servites – and imposed upon them a black habit saying that if they wanted to please Her, to meditate frequently on Her dolours, and it was on this account that She wanted them to wear a black habit in memory of them. Jesus Himself revealed to Blessed Monica of Binasco that for us to feel compassion for His Mother pleased Him much, and spoke thus: 'Daughter, I am deeply thankful for the tears shed over My Passion; but loving My Mother Mary with immense love as I do, meditation on the Dolours She underwent at My Death is supremely pleasing to Me.' Hence the graces promised by Jesus to the devotees

of Mary's dolours are so great. Pelbarto relates that to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary it was revealed that Saint John, after the Virgin's Assumption, blazed in desires to see Her; and obtained the grace that His beloved Mother appeared to him together with Jesus Christ. He heard that Mary requested special graces from Her Divine Son for the devotees of Her Dolours, and Jesus promised these special graces: 1.- That whoever invokes the Mother of God recalling Her dolours will have the grace to do true penance for all his sins. 2.- That He will console them in their troubles, especially at the hour of death. 3.- That He will impress on their souls the remembrance of His Passion and in Heaven will be rewarded. 4.- That He will entrust these devotees to Mary for Her to dispose of them to Her pleasing and obtain all the graces She desires for them."

To confirm all that has been said, let us see the following example of a conversion at death's door and how much devotion to Mary's dolours favours eternal salvation: In the revelations of Saint Bridget we are told of a gentleman whose loose living and lax morals went hand-in-hand with the nobility of his birth. By an express pact, he had committed himself body and soul to the devil and for the space of sixty years had served as a vile slave to his infernal lord, estranged from the Sacraments and leading a disorderly and empty life. The man finally fell ill, and Jesus Christ, wanting to act mercifully towards him, told Saint Bridget to send her Confessor to visit him and exhort him to confess. The Saint's Confessor went to see the patient, who told him that he had no need as he had confessed many times. The Confessor went a second time, and the slave of Satan refused to confess, and dismissed him showing the blindest obstinacy. The Lord again appeared to Saint Bridget asking for the Priest to visit the sick old man once more. When he went the third time, he believed it well to tell him of the revelation given to the Saint, and that he had come so many times in the name of Jesus Christ, for He had so requested of His servant Saint Bridget, to be an instrument of His mercy. These words moved the wretched patient and he broke into tears saying: "But can there be pardon for me who for sixty years have been a slave of Satan and have stained my soul with countless sins?" "Be of good heart, my son, – the Priest told him – doubt not God's mercy; it is enough for you to repent so that I, in the Name of Jesus Christ, pardon you." The sinner, opening up his heart, confided to the Confessor: "Father, I thought myself damned and had despaired of my salvation, but now I feel such great sorrow for my sins that it encourages me to hope for pardon from God. Since the Lord has not abandoned me, I want to confess right away." That day he confessed four times with great sorrow; on the following day he received Holy Communion. A week had not gone by when he died peacefully and resigned. Shortly afterwards Jesus Christ revealed to Saint Bridget that the man had saved himself, and that he was in Purgatory. And He said more: that he had been saved thanks to the intercession of His Most Holy Mother, since, amid his sinful and disorderly life, he had always kept up devotion to Mary's Dolours, since whenever he thought of them he could not but feel pity for Her.

The Most Holy Virgin communicated to Saint Bridget of Sweden: "Look at all who live in the world to see if there is anyone who feels compassion for Me and meditates on My Dolours, since I find very few to ponder My trials and sufferings. Hence you, My daughter, do not forget Me who am forgotten and despised by many. Look upon My Dolours and imitate Me as far as you can. Consider My anguish and My tears, and grieve that God's friends be so few." Our Lady promised her to grant seven graces to souls who honour Her daily with seven Hail Marys, considering Her tears and dolours: "1.- I will give peace to their families. 2.- They will be enlightened in the Divine Mysteries. 3.- I will console them in their troubles and accompany them in their labours. 4.- I will grant them all they ask of Me that does not oppose My Son's adorable Will and the sanctification of their souls. 5.- I will defend them in spiritual combats against the infernal enemy, and will protect them at every moment of their lives. 6.- I will assist them visibly at the moment of their death: they will see the Countenance of their Mother. 7.- I have obtained from My Divine Son that those



who propagate devotion to My tears and dolours be taken from this earthly life directly to eternal bliss, for all their sins will be blotted out and My Son and I will be their eternal consolation and joy.”

The Order of the Servants of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, or Servites, propagated devotion to the ‘Seven Dolours’ of Mary Most Holy. Though the Seven Dolours of the Virgin have always been meditated, it should not be forgotten that seven is not a finite or limiting number, but one of totality and plenitude. “Oh Virginal Heart,

portrayed with seven swords, which with seven hundred should be portrayed. Neither the number of stars in the heavens, nor of drops of water in the sea are comparable to the Dolours of the Virgin Mary,” exclaimed Saint Bernard. Mary Most Holy suffered countless other dolours, since each offence against God caused Her a new dolour.

The Seven Dolours of the Most Holy Virgin Mary are the following: 1.- the prophecy of aged Simeon. 2.- the flight into Egypt. 3.- the loss of the Child Jesus in Jerusalem. 4.- the meeting with Jesus on the way up to Calvary. 5.- the Death of Christ on the Cross. 6.- the lance-thrust, and when Mary received Jesus’ Body taken down from the Cross. 7. Jesus’ burial and Mary’s solitude. These represent the seven crowning moments of the dolours of the Most Holy Virgin, who has been represented with one sword or with seven swords piercing Her Heart, though in reality there were as many swords for the Mother as there were dolours for the Son. Mary Most Holy wills us to meditate on Her dolours. Hence, placing ourselves at Her side, let us try to live in our hearts what She experienced in Her Heart, that of the tender and pure Mother at each one of those moments, so dolorous, of Her life. If we do so, we will go on to discover the marvellous fruits of this devotion: we will begin to live our dolours as She did and understand the spiritual value of dolour. If Mary, who had no guilt, experienced dolour, why not us?

Saint Alphonsus of Liguori explains with great unction how we should take pity on our Divine Mother in Her Dolours: Mary was Queen of martyrs because Her martyrdom was more prolonged and greater than that of them all. Will there be a heart so hard as to remain unmoved on hearing the saddest event ever to occur? There was a noble and holy mother who had but a single son; he was the kindest that could be imagined: innocent, virtuous, handsome and most loving towards his mother, to the point that he had never given her the least upset, but had always shown her total respect and obedience with all the tenderness of his heart. And afterwards, what happened? That this son, out of envy, was accused by his enemies; and the judge, though he knew and himself confessed his innocence, solely in order to avoid enraging his enemies, condemned him to the most infamous death, just as bawling out they had requested. And that poor mother had to undergo the dolour of seeing them seize that son so loving and beloved in the flower of his life, against all justice, and deal him an atrocious end, since they put him to death by force of torture, leaving Him to bleed to death in the sight of the people on a shameful gallows.

What can we say? Is this event and this maternal dolour not worthy of pity? You already know of whom I speak. This son so cruelly executed was Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, and this mother was the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who for love of us consented to watch Him being sacrificed to Divine Justice by the savagery of men. This great dolour of Mary, offered up for us, which cost Her more than a thousand deaths, warrants our compassion and gratitude. And if we are unable to respond in any other way to so much love, let us at least linger to consider the cruelty of this dolour by which Mary became Queen of martyrs, since Her martyrdom surpassed the dolour of all martyrs, Hers having been, firstly, the most prolonged, and secondly, the most cruel.

Mary was a true martyr. Just as Jesus is called King of Dolour and King of martyrs, since in His life He suffered more than all other martyrs, so too is Mary called, with all propriety, Queen of martyrs, having merited this honour for having suffered the greatest martyrdom that can be undergone after that of Her Son. Hence, by all rights, She is called ‘Martyr of martyrs’ by Richard of Saint Lawrence. She was crowned with the crown of tribulation; that is, that the crown with which She was proclaimed Queen of martyrs was Her own suffering, greater than that of all martyrs put together.

That Mary be Queen of martyrs cannot be placed in doubt, given the common opinion that to be a martyr it is sufficient for there to be enough dolour to cause death, though not actually dying. Thus Saint John the Evangelist is considered martyr despite not having died in the cauldron of boiling oil; on the contrary, he emerged unscathed, including younger than when put in, as some commentators say. Saint Thomas says that to merit the glory of martyrdom, it is enough to offer oneself up in obedience unto death. Mary was martyred, says Saint Bernard, by the bitterest dolour of Her Heart, and above all by Her spiritual Death at the moment of the Lance-thrust with the privation of the beatific vision in Her whole being. This privation for the Divine Co-Victim was the greatest suffering of Her earthly life, since it incomparably surpassed all the others; including those of Her bloody participation in the sufferings proper to Her Divine Son, and all She suffered physically in Her Immaculate Heart at the same lance-thrust. If Her body was not wounded by the executioner’s action, nonetheless Her Heart was physically transpierced miraculously, and in this way received the same effects of the Lance-thrust. Her Heart was transpierced by the sword of dolour of Her Son’s Passion, a dolour sufficient to have caused Her not one but a thousand deaths. And so Mary was not only a true martyr, but Her martyrdom surpassed that of all others by being a more prolonged martyrdom, since all Her life, so to speak, was a kind of constant dying.

As Jesus’ Passion began with his Birth as Saint Bernard says, so too Mary, like Her Son in everything, underwent Her martyrdom all Her life long. The Palmarian Holy Bible affirms that the name of Mary, among other things, means “sea of bitterness”. Thus to Her is applied the passage from Jeremias: “Immense as the sea is Your grief.” Surely, for just as there is nothing as limitless as the sea in this world, so too was Mary’s life full of bitterness at the prospect of the future Passion of Her Son. Enlightened by the Holy Ghost more than all the Prophets, She understood better than all of them the prophecies relating to the Messias contained in Sacred Scripture. Thus did the Angel tell Saint Bridget. So that just as that same Angel assured, the Virgin, on understanding how much the Word Incarnate would have to suffer for the salvation of men, began to suffer a cruel martyrdom interiorly even before becoming Mother, on compassionating the innocent Saviour who was to face execution by such an atrocious death for transgressions not His own.

Mary suffered with progressive intensity. Such dolour had no measure once She became Mother of the Saviour. On contemplating with dolour all the torments Her poor Son would have to undergo, She suffered a long and continuous martyrdom. The vision of Saint Bridget in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major means just this, when she saw the Virgin together with the agèd Simeon and an Angel who bore a great sword dripping blood, indicating by this the bitter and prolonged dolour which transpierced Mary throughout Her life. Abbot Rupert shows Mary as saying the following: ‘Redeemed souls, My dear daughters, do not feel compassion solely for the hour in which I saw My beloved Jesus die, for the sword of dolour prophesied by Simeon transpierced My soul all My life. When I nursed My Son and while I gave Him warmth in My arms, I already dwelt on the bitter death awaiting Him; consider then how long and cruel was the pain I had to bear.’

Her whole life was spent amid dolour and tears, as She suffered compassionating Her



beloved Son for His Passion, which She always had before Her eyes, ever contemplating all the pains and the death He would have to suffer one day.

Time ordinarily mitigates the dolour of those who suffer. Mary's suffering, however, increased as time went on, for as Jesus grew He appeared more handsome and lovable on the one hand, and on the other, being closer to the hour of His death, the dolour of having to lose Him in this life grew ever more in Mary's Heart. As the rose grows among thorns, said the Angel to Saint Bridget, so did the Mother of God spend the years among trials; and, as the roses grow the thorns grow with them, so Mary, that Rose elected by the Lord, the more She grew, the more the thorns of Her dolour tormented Her.

Mary, Queen of martyrs. Mary was not only Queen of martyrs because her martyrdom was more prolonged than all others, but also because it was greater. Who can measure the greatness of her dolour? It seems that Jeremias could find no one to compare with this dolorous mother on contemplating Her sufferings at the death of Her Son, and says: "To whom shall I compare You, or to whom shall I liken You, Daughter of Jerusalem? To whom shall I equal You, and how shall I console You, O Virgin Daughter of Sion? For immense as the sea is Your grief: who shall succour You?" Cardinal Hugh, commenting on these words, says: "O blessed Virgin, Your dolour surpasses all other dolours." Thus Saint Anselm assures that if God had not conserved Mary's life by the very special Gift of immortality, He would not have kept Mary alive, since Her dolour would have been sufficient to cause her death at any moment of Her life. Saint Bernardine of Siena actually says that Mary's dolour was so great that if shared out among all men it would have been sufficient for every one of them to die all of a sudden.

But let us consider the reasons that Mary's martyrdom was greater than that of all the martyrs. In the first place, it should be considered that the martyrs have suffered their martyrdom in the body by way of the sword or fire; whereas Mary suffered Her martyrdom in body and soul, as Simeon already foretold: "And a sword shall pierce your own Soul, which is espoused to His." As though the aged Saint had said: 'O sacrosanct Virgin, the other martyrs will see their bodies lacerated by the sword, but You will be martyred including in Your soul by the Passion of Your own Son.' And as the soul is nobler than the body, so much the greater was Mary's dolour than that of all martyrs. So said Jesus Christ to Saint Catherine of Siena: "There is no comparison between dolour of the body and that of the soul."

Mary delivered up the life of Her Son, a life She loved more than Her own. Saint Antonine says that the other martyrs sacrificed their own lives, while the Virgin Mary suffered on sacrificing the life of Her Son, whom She loved more than Her own life. Thus She suffered in Body and Soul all that Her Son suffered in Body and Soul, and besides the sight of Her Son's sufferings caused immense dolour in Her Heart.

That Mary suffered in Her Heart all the outrages done to Her Jesus, no one doubts. The whole world knows that the afflictions of children are those of their mothers as well, seeing them suffer. Saint Augustine, considering the torments suffered by the mother of the Machabees on seeing her children being executed, says: "She, seeing them suffer, suffered for all; and as she loved them all she suffered in Her soul as they in their bodies." The same for Mary: the scourging, the thorns, the nails and the cross afflicting Jesus' innocent flesh likewise penetrated Mary's Heart to consummate Her martyrdom. Saint Amadeus writes: "He suffered in the Flesh, She in Her Heart." In such fashion that Mary's Heart was like a mirror where Her Son's dolours were reflected. There the spittle, the blows, the wounds and all that Jesus suffered were to be seen. And Saint Bonaventure considers that those wounds covering Jesus' whole Body all became one in Mary's Heart.

In this fashion, by compassion for Her Son, the Virgin was scourged, crowned with thorns, scorned and nailed to the Cross in Her loving Heart. The same Saint, contemplating Mary on Mount Calvary assisting Her dying Son, asks himself: 'Tell me, Blessed Lady, where were You then? Just beside the Cross? No, I would rather say that You were crucified on that

same Cross together with Your Son.’ Richard, commenting on the words of Isaias referring to the Redeemer: “Upon Him alone God laid the iniquity of us all,” adds: ‘Lord, You are right in saying that in the work of man’s Redemption You were alone in suffering, and that there was no man to show sufficient compassion; but You have a Woman who is Your Most Holy Mother, who suffered in Her Heart all that You suffered in Your Body.’



But all this fails to ponder Mary’s dolour sufficiently, since, as we have said, besides all She suffered watching the torments of Her beloved Jesus, She suffered really and mystically all the mockery and death of Her Son in Her own Person. Generally speaking, parents feel the afflictions of their children more than their own. Though not always true, it was for Mary, as it was certain that She loved the Son immensely more than Her own life, more than Herself and a thousand lives that She might have. Saint Amadeus testifies that the afflicted Mother, at the dolorous sight of Her beloved Jesus’ torments, suffered intensely, as She loved Him far more than Herself, and therefore suffered so terribly. Mary suffered as Coreparatrix and Coredemprix together with Christ. The unspeakable sufferings the Most Dolorous Mother underwent at the foot of the Cross upon which Her dead Son hung during Her Spiritual Agony, were chiefly: a) deep affliction contemplating the lifeless Body of Her Son shamefully disfigured by the Passion and scorned by that perfidious Jewish people; b) the feeling of bitterest solitude on finding Herself deprived of the solace of Her Beloved Son, then dead; c) terrifying contemplation of the great multitude of the eternally damned, of the immense ingratitude and indifference of many children of the Church, and of sins of every kind, principally sacrileges against the Eucharist, sacred images, Priests and everything else sacred; and in general the persecutions against Christ’s Mystical Body to which She would give birth; d) most dolorous quickening of the stigmas of the Passion of Her Divine Son impressed on Her Immaculate Motherly Body, as Queen She is of stigmatics. Mary suffered unspeakably since, as Saint Bernard says, the soul is more where it loves than where it enlivens or where it lives. The first to say so was the Saviour Himself: “Where your treasure is, there too is your heart.” For if Mary lived more in Her Son than within Herself, she surely suffered more at the Death of Her Son than if they had caused Her the cruellest death in the world.

And now, another reflection to show us that Mary’s martyrdom was superior to that of all other martyrs. The martyrs suffered in the torments given them by the tyrants, but love for Jesus made their dolours sweet and precious. Saint Vincent underwent his martyrdom on the rack, torn by iron hooks, burnt with red hot laminas, but what? Saint Augustine says that it seemed that the one who spoke was other than the one who suffered. He rebuked the tyrant with such fortitude and with such scorn for the torments, that the Vincent who suffered and the Vincent who spoke seemed different, so sweetly did God comfort him by His love amid those tortures.

Saint Boniface suffered the laceration of his body by iron hooks, splinters forced in between flesh and nail, and molten lead poured upon him, while he did not tire of repeating: “Thank You, My Lord Jesus Christ, thank You!” Saint Mark and Saint Marcellianus were tortured tied to a post with feet nailed, and when the tyrant told them: “Wretches, apostatize and free yourselves from torture,” they replied: “What torture are you are speaking of? From what tortures? We have never been so cheerful now that we are suffering with pleasure for love of Jesus Christ.” Saint Lawrence, while on the grill, as Saint Leo says, the interior flame of love consoled him in his soul more powerfully than the embers tortured his body; and that love made him so strong that he even came to rebuke the tyrant telling him: “Tyrant, if you want to eat my flesh one side is already done, turn me over and eat.” But how could he joke in that way amid such tortures while suffering that prolonged agony? Saint Augustine replies

that intoxicated with the wine of divine love, he felt neither torture nor death.

The Treatise on the Holy Mass explains: "The suffering of the passible state of Mary's Soul, as well as the suffering of the Accidental Body deprived of impassibility, was attenuated many times with spiritual consolations. Still, during the Most Sorrowful Passion of Christ, She was deprived of many of those consolations as well, in order to drain the measure of suffering to the full." And as well: "Thanks, then, to the beatific state of the Soul of the Divine Mary, as wayfarer She was never deprived of the vision of the Divine Essence, except at that precise instant of the Lance-thrust on Calvary. In a strict sense therefore, the Divine Mary's spiritual death at the foot of the Cross, at the instant the Lance-thrust opened Christ's Right Side, was the momentary privation in Her entire being, and for seven seconds, of the vision of the Divine Essence; by which the Divine Mary's suffering greatly surpassed all that She had suffered up till then during the Most Sorrowful Passion and Death of Christ that She had shared, and all that She was to suffer afterwards until Her Gentlest Dormition. Nevertheless, during the space in which the Spiritual Death of the Divine Mary took place, which was Her most dolorous childbirth of the Church, at the same time that Her entire Soul suffered, Her very Soul maintained a sublime supernatural joy that wholly inundated it."

The Palmarian Holy Bible teaches that the Work of our Redemption consoled Mary Most Holy, since on Calvary the Mother's Dolorous Heart was fully consoled by the presence of the good works of mankind there on Calvary, "for She sees in them the fruits of so bloody a Passion, whereby many are ransomed from the bondage of sin and the devil, and begotten to the life of Grace."

Mary suffered in proportion to Her love. The martyrs, the more they loved Jesus, the less they felt torture or death, and the contemplation of a God crucified was sufficient to console them. But did our Dolorous Mother perhaps feel consoled by love for Her Son and at the sight of His sufferings? Surely not, since the Son Himself who was suffering was the whole cause of Her dolour, and the love She felt for Him was Her one most cruel executioner, for Mary's martyrdom consisted in seeing and compassionating the innocent and beloved Son who was suffering beyond measure.

So that the more She loved, so much the bitterer was Her dolour. Love mitigated the afflictions and healed the wounds of the other martyrs, but for You, Queen of Heaven, who has assuaged Your great afflictions? Who has alleviated the wounds of Your Heart, so dolorous? Who will have compassion on You if that same Son Who was able to console You, is by His torments the reason for Your sufferings, and the love You hold for Him is that which causes You this whole martyrdom? Other martyrs are represented with the instruments of their martyrdom; Saint Paul with the sword, Saint Andrew with the cross, Saint Lawrence with the grill, but Mary is represented with Her Son dead in her lap, since Jesus was the only instrument of Her martyrdom, by reason of the love She held for Him. Saint Bernard condenses all that has been said in a few words: "In other martyrs the greatness of love alleviates the dolour of the tortures; in Mary, the more She loved, the greater was Her suffering and crueller Her martyrdom."

It is certain that the greater the love for something, the more its loss is felt. The death of a brother is felt more than that of an irrational beast, and the death of a son more than that of a friend. But to understand the intensity of Mary's dolour at the death of Her Son it would be necessary to understand the intensity of the love She held for Him. But who can measure such a love? Saint Amadeus says that in Mary's Heart two forms of love for Her Son were joined; the supernatural love by which She loved Him as Her God, and the natural love by which She loved Him as Her Son. And of these two loves one single love was formed so immense that William of Paris came to say that the Most Holy Virgin loved Jesus all that the human creature is capable of loving. So that just as there is no love like Her love, so there is no dolour like Her dolour. And if Her love for Her Son was immense, Her dolour on losing Him by death had likewise to be immense. Where there is supreme

love – says Saint Albert the Great – there too is supreme dolour.

Let us imagine that the Mother of God, at the sight of Her Son dying on the Cross, applying the words of Jeremias, tells us: “O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like My sorrow” – ‘You who pass by the way of life and have no compassion for Me, stay a moment and contemplate Me now while I see My beloved Son die, and then consider if among all those afflicted and tormented there be anyone with a dolour like unto Mine.’ O Dolorous Mother, no dolour bitterer than Yours can ever be found, since no Son more beloved than Yours can be found. Never was there any son so lovable as Jesus, nor mother more loving towards her son than Mary. If no love like unto Mary’s has ever existed in the world, how can a dolour like Mary’s ever be found?

Hence Saint Ildephonsus doubted not in affirming that it was too little to say that the dolours of the Virgin surpassed the dolours of all martyrs together. And Saint Anselm adds that the most cruel tortures of all the martyrs were light in comparison with Mary’s dolours of martyrdom. Saint Basil writes that just as the sun outshines the brilliance of all the stars, so do Mary’s sufferings surpass those of all the martyrs. So great was the dolour this tender Mother underwent in Jesus’ Passion, that only She was capable of feeling due compassion for the death of God made Man.

Mary accepted Her suffering for love of us. Saint Bonaventure, addressing this blessed Virgin, asks Her: “My Lady, why did You go up to be sacrificed on Calvary? Was a Crucified God not sufficient to redeem us, but that His Mother too had to be crucified?” The Treatise on the Holy Mass clarifies: the Sacrifice of Mary was in such fashion indispensable that without it the Sacrifice of Christ would have been incomplete, the Eternal Father having eternally decreed the need for Coreparation and Coredemption by Her as Mother She is of Christ’s Mystical Body. Without this, the infinite Graces of Calvary would not have been applied to mankind at any historical moment of the Church.

Hence, just as we have to be grateful to Jesus for His Passion, borne for love of us, so too must we be full of gratitude towards Mary for the martyrdom She willingly bore in order to save us at the Death of Her Son. Spontaneously, She willed to bear it since, as the Angel revealed to Saint Bridget, our pious and benevolent Mother preferred to suffer all martyrdoms together rather than accept that souls be left without redemption, abandoned to perdition. The great relief for Mary in the midst of Her immense dolour at the Passion of Her Son was Her indescribable joy of Mother on seeing that by His death the redemption of the errant world and the reconciliation of God with men, His enemies, was achieved. She rejoiced in Her Dolours because the Sacrifice was offered for the Redemption of all, and by it the Offended Divinity was appeased.

Mary deserves our love and devotion. Such great love for us deserves entire gratitude to Mary. And our gratitude should consist at the very least in consideration of and compassion for Her dolours. She lamented to Saint Bridget that very few felt compassion for Her and the greater part lived without considering Her. “Hence My daughter – the Virgin said – though many forget Me, yet may you not forget Me, contemplate My dolours, have all the compassion you can and imitate Me.”

All that the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church have said about Mary’s sufferings show that they were unable to express all they felt, since they lacked Palmarian Doctrine which declares that, because of the espousal of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which is the espousal of the Divine Bodies of Them both, Mary suffered all that Christ suffered physically, mentally and morally. Hence, when Jesus was scourged and crucified, Mary as well received the same wounds as Jesus received, but no one saw them. Longinus’ lance physically wounded



Mary's Heart owing to the espousal of Jesus' and Mary's Bodies. Mary was tortured and crucified physically in Her Body the same as Her Son Jesus. This can be glimpsed in theologians' work in the past, who nevertheless could not understand how this had taken place.

Let us devoutly consider the 'Seven Dolours' Mary Most Holy suffered.

First Dolour: the prophecy of the agèd Simeon. Mary knows Her future sufferings. In this vale of tears, every human being is born crying and has to suffer the troubles that each day befall us. But how agonizing life would be if we were to know the evils that are to come upon us. Seneca says: 'calamitous is the situation of anyone who knows the future, since before the miseries come he would already feel wretched.' The Lord condescends to us by leaving us ignorant of the crosses awaiting us, so that, if we have to suffer them, we suffer them once only. But He did not have this consideration with Mary, who – because God wished Her to be Queen of Dolour and in all like unto Her Son – He wanted Her to have all the pains awaiting Her ever before Her eyes and continuously suffer them. These pains were those of the Passion and Death of Her beloved Jesus. Here, then, the agèd Saint Simeon in the Temple, after having received the Divine Infant into his arms, foretold that Her Son would be a sign of all the contradictions and persecutions of men: "This Child is placed for the downfall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and as a sign which shall be combated;" and hence the sword of dolour would have to pierce Mary's Soul: "And a sword shall pierce your own Soul, which is espoused to His."

The Virgin told Saint Matilda that, faced with such a pronouncement as Simeon's, all Her joy turned into grief. For as revealed to Saint Teresa, that the most blessed Mother, though aware from the beginning that Her Son was to sacrifice His life and offer it up for the salvation of the world, yet as from this prophecy She was aware in particular and in greater detail of the pains and pitiless death which were to befall Her beloved Son. She knew that they would oppose Him in everything; in doctrine, since on affirming that He was the Son of God, instead of believing Him they made Him out to be a blasphemer, as the impious Caiphas declared when he said: "He has blasphemed, what need have we now of witnesses?... He is guilty of death!" They went against the esteem due to Him for His noble lineage, and was scorned as from the lowest class: "Is He not the son of Joseph the carpenter? Is He not the carpenter, son of Mary?" He was Wisdom itself and was treated as ignorant: "How does He know the Sacred Scriptures without having studied them?"; as a false prophet: "Covering His whole Head, they rained punches down upon Him, and asked Him saying: 'Tell us, O Christ, who was it who struck You?'" They treated Him as mad: "He is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" He was treated as a hard drinker and glutton and friend of sinners and publicans. They considered Him a sorcerer: "He casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub, prince of devils;" as heretic and possessed: "Do we not say rightly that You are a samaritan and bedevilled?" In short He was treated as a criminal so notorious that He needed no trial in order to be sentenced, as they shouted out to Pilate: "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

In His Soul too he had to be afflicted, since even His Eternal Father, in order to satisfy divine justice, would not attend to the prayer He made to Him in the Garden, when He implored: "My Father, to You all things are possible. If it be possible let this chalice pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." And the Father abandoned Him in the midst of fear, tedium and grief, so that the Lord, afflicted, exclaimed: "My Soul is sorrowful unto death," and overwhelmed with anguish He even sweated drops of Blood. He was opposed and persecuted in His Body and His life, for it is enough to say that He was tormented in all His sacred members: in Hands and in Feet, in His Face and His Head, in His whole Body; until finally He died, drained of His Blood and disparaged, on a vile rood.

Mary lived in continuous immolation. David, amid all his pleasures and royal grandeur, when he heard the Prophet Nathan announce that his son was to die, found no peace; he wept, fasted, slept on the ground. Mary, on the other hand, received with sovereign peace

Her Son's Death sentence, and with the same tranquillity continued to bear Her suffering; but what dolour was Hers on finding Herself ever before that Son, most loving, hearing Him pronounce those words of eternal life and contemplating his conduct utterly holy?

Abraham underwent great torments during those three days in which he lived with his beloved son Isaac knowing that he would lose him. But, O God, not during three days, but during thirty years Mary had to suffer suchlike torture. I say suchlike? They were so much the greater in accordance as the Son of Mary was more lovable than the son of Abraham.

The Virgin Herself revealed to Saint Bridget that there was no hour in which this dolour did not pierce Her through. "As often as I looked at My Son, whenever I wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, each time I contemplated His hands and His feet, a new dolour pierced my Soul, thinking of the moment of His crucifixion." Abbot Rupert, contemplating Mary thinks that, while nursing Her Son, She told Him: "Spray of myrrh is My Beloved to Me. With sublime tenderness I will nurse Him in My lap." As though saying: My Son, I hold You tightly in My arms since You are most beloved of all to Me; but however much more I love You, all the more are You transformed into a spray of myrrh and cause of My dolour, for I only think of Your sufferings.

Mary considered, says Saint Bernardine, that the Fortitude of the Saints had to agonize; the Beauty of paradise had to be deformed; the Lord of the world had to be tied up as guilty; the Creator of all be bruised by blows; the Judge of all, sentenced; the Glory of Heaven, despised; the King of kings, crowned with thorns and treated as a mock king.

It was revealed to Saint Bridget that the afflicted Mother, knowing all that Her Son had to suffer, "feeding Him, thought of the gall and vinegar; when She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes She thought of the cords with which His hands were to be tied; when She held Him in Her arms She imagined Him nailed to the Cross; when She saw Him asleep She remembered that one day He would be dead." And on dressing Him in His tunic She remembered that one day they would pull it off to crucify Him; and when She contemplated His sacred Hands and His sacred Feet, the nails that were to pierce them through came to Her mind. Mary said to Saint Bridget: "My eyes filled with tears and My heart shuddered with grief."

Mary accepted progressive suffering with fortitude. The Evangelist says that, "the Child Jesus grew and gained in strength, full of wisdom and grace before God," and also that "the Child Jesus grew in years; and, according to the divine plan, gradually revealed before God and men the fullness of Grace and wisdom that He always possessed." Which means to say that He grew in wisdom and grace before men with respect to their opinion; and before God, from the beginning He had absolute fullness of Grace and wisdom by the hypostatic union. If Jesus grew in the esteem and love of the people, how much more would He have grown in Mary's esteem and love. But the more He grew in this love, the more the grief of having to lose it by such a cruel death; and the closer the Passion of Her Son came, so much more and greater the dolour of the sword prophesied by Simeon transpiercing the Mother's Heart. Thus did the Angel make known to Saint Bridget telling her: "According as the Son drew closer to the Passion, the sword of the Virgin, hour by hour, became more dolorous."

Given that Jesus our king and His Most Holy Mother did not refuse to suffer for our love such cruel pain in the course of Their lives, we have no right to lament at our own sufferings, surely less grave. Jesus Christ appeared to Sister Magdalen Orsini, Dominican, who had been suffering a great trial for some time, and encouraged her to remain on the cross with Him bearing that dolour. Sister Magdalen, lamenting, replied: Lord, You only suffered on the Cross for three hours, but I bear this torture for years. And the Redeemer then replied: "What are you saying? I, from the first moment of My birth suffered in My heart all that



I later suffered in My Body on the Cross.” Hence when we suffer any affliction at all, and we start to lament, let us imagine that Jesus and His Holy Mother are telling us the same.

Example. An eighth sword in Mary’s Heart. Father Reviglione, Jesuit, narrates that a youth practised the devotion of visiting every day an image of the Dolorous Virgin with seven swords in Her Heart. One night the sorry youth fell into mortal sin; on going to visit the image in the morning, in the Virgin’s Heart he saw not seven swords, but eight; while he gazed at them amazed, he seemed to understand that the new sword in Mary’s Heart was owing to his sin. Touched and contrite he went at once to confess, and through the intercession of his Advocate recovered the Grace of God.

Second Dolour: The Flight into Egypt. Mary, companion to dolour. As the wounded deer bears its pain just where the wounding arrow struck, so the Mother of God, after Simeon’s prophecy, as we saw on considering the first dolour, always bore Her pain with the continual remembrance of the Passion of Her Son. At each moment Mary’s continuous thoughts of Jesus’ Passion made Her see the Blood which one day would have to flow from His Wounds. “Your mind, Mary, and Your thoughts were tinged by the Blood of the Lord’s Passion, in such fashion that it was as though You constantly saw the Blood running from the Wounds.” The Son Himself was the dart in Mary’s Heart, since He, the more lovable He became, wounded Her so much the more with the dolour of having to lose Him by such a pitiless death. Let us go on to consider the second sword of dolour which wounded Her in the flight into Egypt which She had to undertake owing to Herod’s persecution.

Herod, hearing that the Messias had been born, foolishly feared that He would snatch away his kingdom, so that Saint Fulgentius, recriminating the king’s madness, speaks to him thus: “Herod, why are you disturbed in this way? This King who has just been born has not come to dethrone kings by battle, but to subjugate them in a wonderful way by His Death.” The impious Herod awaited the Magi Kings to bring him news of where the King had been born, in order to take His life, but finding himself misled by the Magi Kings he ordered the killing of all children under the age of two years in Bethlehem. Hence the Archangel Saint Gabriel appeared in dreams to Saint Joseph and told him: “Arise, and take the Child and His Mother and flee into Egypt.” And that same night Joseph told Mary and, taking the Child, They began their flight. “Arise, and take the Child and His Mother and flee into Egypt.” “O Lord – Mary could then say – does He who has come to save men have to flee from men?” And then the afflicted Mother understood that the prophecy of Simeon was already beginning to come true in Her Son: “This Child is placed as a sign which shall be combated;” seeing that no sooner had He been born than He was persecuted to death. What suffering for Mary’s Heart to hear that She was given the order to go with Her Son to such hard exile. She flees from Her own to strangers, from the Temple to the see of devils. What greater tribulation than to see the Newborn clinging to His Mother’s neck obliged to take flight?

Mary on the way to exile. Let us each consider how Mary suffered on this journey. The distance down to Egypt was great and had to last many days. The route was rough, unknown and little frequented, the climate harsh. Mary was a young and delicate damsel, not accustomed to such journeys. They had no servants to attend Them. They were their own servants, as Saint Peter Chrysologus says: “O Lord, what a pain to see such a tender Virgin bearing in Her arms that Newborn Child on His flight through the world!”

Saint Bonaventure asks: How did they manage to eat? Where did they spend the nights? Wherever did they lodge? What else could they eat but what Saint Joseph had brought or obtained from alms? Where did they stay overnight during the long journey but on the sand under any shrubbery, in open country and under the open sky, where thieves and wild beasts prowled around? Whoever would have met up with these three personages, the most illustrious in the world, why should They not have taken them for three poor vagrant beggars?

Mary with Joseph and Their Son in Egypt. They lived in Egypt with privations during those years. They were unknown strangers, without income, without money, without

relations. They had to maintain themselves by their modest labours. Saint Basil says: As they were poor, it is evident that they had to earn their living by the sweat of their brow.

The Gospel refers that Herod having died, the Archangel again appeared to Saint Joseph and told him to return to Judea. Saint Bonaventure, speaking of this return journey, thinks that the Most Holy Virgin suffered more than on the first journey owing to the weariness that Jesus must have felt at the age of seven years, since at that age He was too big to be borne in arms, but still little so that the way was very hard for Him, despite the help of their donkey.

To see Jesus and Mary with Saint Joseph wander errant and fugitive through the world should move us to live as well on earth as pilgrims, without becoming attached to the goods the world offers us, as persons who will soon have to leave all and pass on to eternal life. "We have no lasting city here, instead we go in search of the heavenly one that is to come." (Hebrews). To which Saint Augustine adds: You are a guest, glance and pass on.

They teach us besides to embrace the Cross, since no life in this world is possible without crosses. Blessed Veronica of Binasco, an Augustinian Nun, went in spirit to accompany Mary with the Child Jesus and Saint Joseph on this journey from Egypt, and at its end the Mother of God told her: "Daughter, you have seen the troubles we bore on this journey; be aware that no one receives graces without suffering. Whoever desires to feel relief in the sufferings of this life must needs go in company with Jesus and Mary." "Take the Child and His Mother." Whoever in his heart bears this Son and this Mother with love, all pains become light, sweet and lovable. Let us love and console Mary by enthroning Her Son in our hearts, He who is persecuted and ill-treated now as well by men with their sins.

Example: *Our sins pursue Jesus and Mary.* Mary appeared to Blessed Colette, a Franciscan Nun, and showed her the Child Jesus covered in wounds, and told her: "Thus do sinners treat My Son continually, renewing in Him His death and in Me My dolours. Pray for them, My daughter, so that they be converted." And the Venerable Sister Joan of Jesus and Mary, also a Franciscan, meditating one day on the Child Jesus persecuted by Herod, heard a great tumult, like armed people in persecution of someone; and then saw before her an incredibly beautiful Boy, thoroughly alarmed, who came running up to her and told her: "My Joan, help me, hide me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, and I come running from sinners who persecute me as did Herod and want to kill me. You can save me."

Third dolour: The Child Jesus lost in Jerusalem. Mary suffers the loss of Her Son. The Apostle Saint James the Less writes that our perfection consists in the virtue of patience: "Your faith in Christ is proven by the exercise of patience, for thereby the virtues take deeper root, so that you become perfect and consummate." So then, having given us an example of perfection in the Virgin Mary, it was necessary for Him to lavish sufferings on Her so that we might admire and imitate Her heroic patience. Among the Mother of God's greatest sufferings in this life which we shall now meditate, is the loss of Her Son in Jerusalem.

Whoever has been born blind suffers little at not seeing the light of day; but whoever has for some time seen and enjoyed the light, feels his blindness more keenly. In like fashion, those unhappy men who, blinded by the murk of this world, have scarcely known God, feel little regret at not finding Him; but those who, on the contrary, illumined by the light of Heaven have been found worthy of knowing the love and sweet presence of the Sovereign Good, how it hurts to feel deprived of Him. Let us see, then, how dolorous this third sword had to be for Mary, accustomed to enjoy the sweetest presence of Her Jesus when, stricken with His loss in Jerusalem, She found Herself deprived of Him for three days.

The Gospel narrates that the Virgin, with Saint Joseph Her Spouse and with Jesus, had the custom of visiting the Temple for the Paschal solemnity, and They went there, as was



customary, when the Child was twelve years of age: but Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem on the return, and She did not realize, thinking that He was with the caravan. So when night came on, She asked for Her Son, and not finding Him, returned hastily to Jerusalem in search of Him. And She did not find Him till three days had gone by.

Let us now consider the eagerness this afflicted Mother felt during those three days in which she had to go asking everywhere for Her Son, like the spouse of the Song of Songs: "Have you, by any chance, seen Him whom My Soul loves?", without anyone answering Her. Mary, with ever greater tenderness, tired and exhausted without Her Beloved, could say as did Ruben of his brother Joseph: "The boy does not appear. What will I do now?", without anyone giving him an answer. My Jesus does not appear and I know not what more to do in order to find Him, but where do I go without My Treasure?

She, weeping constantly throughout those three days, could repeat with David: "Tears are my bread day and night, while my enemies afflict me saying: 'Where is your God in whom you trust so much?'" Those nights the afflicted Mother did not sleep, weeping and imploring God to help Her find Her Son. And during this time, according to Saint Bernard, She frequently addressed Her own Son in the words of the Spouse: "Tell me in which lush meadows He pastures His sheep or under which spreading tree He reposes come noontide: Lest wandering about amid my dark night, I delay longer in finding Him." Son, let Me know where you are so that I do not wander about seeking You in vain.

Mary suffers the greatest bitterness. There are some who say that this dolour of Mary's is not only among the greatest she suffered, but that it was the greatest and bitterest of all, and not without reason. Firstly because in the other dolours Mary had Jesus with Her. She suffered at the prophecy of Simeon in the Temple and in the flight into Egypt, but always with Jesus; in this dolour however She suffered far from Jesus, without knowing His whereabouts. "My heart is perturbed, My strength has forsaken Me, and even the light of My eyes is lacking." Thus did She speak, weeping: Ay! The Light of my Eyes, My beloved Jesus, is not with Me, He lives apart from Me and I do not know where.

Origen says that because of the love which this saintly Mother bore for Her Son, She suffered more by the loss of Jesus than any martyr could have suffered from the pains of his martyrdom. How long were those three days for Mary! They seemed to Her like three centuries. Bitter days, without anyone able to console Her. And who could console Me, She said with Jeremias, if the only one who could console is far from Me? Hence My eyes do not tire of weeping. "Therefore do I weep, and my eyes are fountains of water, because the consoler, who revives my soul, is gone far from me." And with Tobias repeated: "What joy can I have deprived of my sight and with my soul desolate?"

Mary is unaware of the cause of Jesus' absence. The second reason is that in the other dolours, Mary understood the reason and purpose of the same, that is, the Redemption of the world and the Divine Will; but in this case She did not know the reason for Her Son's absence. The disconsolate Mother suffered on seeing Herself far from Jesus, all the while Her humility made Her think that She was not sufficiently worthy to have Him at Her side to care for and possess such a rich treasure. Did She think that She had not served Him as He deserved? Had She committed some negligence for which He had abandoned Her? Origen says that they sought Him fearful that He might have left Them. And surely there is no suffering for a God-loving soul greater than the fear of having offended Him deeply. Hence Mary lamented no dolour like this one, complaining lovingly when She found Him: "Son, why have You done this to us? See how, anguished, Your Father and I have sought You." By these words Mary did not seek to reproach Jesus, as some befuddled heretics say, but wanted to display the dolour She had felt at His loss, having the love for Him that She had. It was not a reproach, says Saint Denis the Carthusian, but a loving complaint.

In short, this sword of sorrow was so dolorous for the heart of the Virgin, that Blessed Bienvenida, desiring one day, and pleading with the Holy Mother to grant Her to be able to

accompany Her in this Sorrow, Mary appeared to Her with Jesus in Her arms. Bienvenida was enjoying the sight of that amazing boy, but all of a sudden saw Him no more. Such was the pain the Blessed felt that she had recourse to Mary to ask Her, for pity's sake, not to let her die of grief. The Most Holy Virgin appeared to her again after three days and told her: You should know, My daughter, that your dolour has been no more than the tiniest portion of what I suffered on losing My Son.

Mary is an example in desolation, how to suffer the silence of God. This dolour of Mary should firstly serve as consolation for those in desolation and who do not enjoy the sweet presence of their Lord which at other times they felt. They weep, yes, but with peace, as Mary wept at the loss of Her Son. They recover spirits and do not fear to have lost divine grace, listening to God's words to Saint Teresa: 'No one is lost without knowing it; and no one is deceived without wishing to be deceived.' If the Lord withdraws the sensation of His presence from one He loves, it does not follow that He withdraws from the heart. He conceals Himself so that the person then seeks Him with greater desire and more ardent love. But whoever wishes to find the Lord must necessarily seek Him not among the delights and pleasures of this world, but among crosses and mortifications, as did Mary; let him learn from Mary to seek Jesus.



For the rest, the one good we should seek is Jesus. When Job lost all that he possessed, property, children, health and honour, to the point of having to sit on a dung-heap, despite everything he was happy as he possessed God. Saint Augustine says of him: "He lost what God had given him, but he had God." Truly unhappy and forlorn are those who have lost God. If Mary wept the loss of Her Son for three days, with greater reason poor sinners should weep who have lost the Grace of God and those of whom the Lord could say: 'you are no longer My people nor am I your God.' For this is what sin does – it separates the soul from God: "the Lord God of Hosts who now conceals His Countenance in the face of the iniquities of His people." Your guilt separates you from God, and your sins make Him conceal His Countenance. Hence though very wealthy, once having lost God, everything on earth is no more than smoke and anguish, as Solomon confessed: "all was vanity and vexation of spirit." But the great misfortune of these blind poor, says Saint Augustine, is that if they lose an ox they go out after it; if they lose a sheep they take every care to find it; if they lose an ass they do not rest until they recover it. But they lose the Sovereign Good which is God and eat and drink tranquilly.

An example. *The dagger with which to wound the Lord.* The annual letters of the Company of Jesus relate that a youth in the Indies, deciding to leave his house to commit a sinful act, heard a voice telling him: "Stay. Where are you going?" He turned and saw a statue of the Dolorous Virgin. She drew out the dagger piercing Her heart and handed it over to him saying: Take this dagger and strike Me first, but do not strike My Son with any such sin. On hearing this, the youth prostrated to the ground and, wholly repentant, dissolving into tears, asked pardon from the Lord and the Virgin Mary for his sin.

Mary's participation in the Prayer and Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives: The Treatise on the Holy Mass thus describes it: "The Most Holy Virgin Mary, in Her indispensable and most dolorous mission as Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix, from the Cenacle accompanied Her Divine Son in the Most Dolorous episode of the Gethsemani Prayer and Agony. So the moment having come for the bloodiest Offering to begin, the Gentlest Mother of Dolours, without ceasing to be seen in the Cenacle, became present meanwhile in the Garden of Olives, where the Most Patient Man of Sorrows suffered in utter abandonment; sharing with Him, without anyone else seeing Her, the contemplation of the world's sins, the Father's uncontrollable rage and Calvary's most bloody sufferings. So that the Divine Mary might



drain suffering to the utmost, Our Lord Jesus Christ suspended as never before, not solely the gift of impassibility in the passible state of Her Soul and Accidental Body so that both elements might become inordinately sensitive to pain, but He also veiled in great part Her infused knowledge, so that She would be deprived of the knowledge of certain mysteries of Her mission as Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix. The Divine Mary's Prayer and Agony in the Cenacle lasted four consecutive hours and was in two phases: the first sharing with Her Most Divine Son Jesus His own Agony for three hours; and then suffering Her own Agony for the following hour..."

"In the second phase of Her spiritual Agony in the Cenacle, during the fourth hour, from three to four in the morning, the Most Holy Virgin Mary contemplated Her own spiritual Death on Calvary, that which corresponded to Her as Co-Victim and Mother of Christ's Mystical Body; immolation which was to consist in finding Herself deprived for seven seconds of the vision of the Divine Essence which She ever enjoyed. As this was to be more piercing and dolorous for Her than any other suffering, She again sweated Blood in the passible state of Her Purest Accidental Body, while with most acute affliction She asked the Father to free Her from such a pitiful Death if by some other means it were possible to consummate as Co-Victim the Salvific Work, ever desired by Her; therefore She again submitted to the divine plan, pronouncing a solemn fiat to Her own Spiritual Death on Calvary."

"... Consolation did come shortly before the hour of Her own spiritual agony concluded; since having pronounced here the last solemn fiat, She recovered that part of infused knowledge which had been suspended in Her Soul in the passible state; thus being invigorated in that state and full of jubilation on considering with sublime penetration the fruit which Her own spiritual death at the foot of the Cross was to bring; since thereby She would give birth to the Church and consummate Her coreparatory and coredemptory mission as Divine Co-Victim."

Fourth dolour: Mary encounters Jesus on the way up to Calvary. Mary suffers in the measure of Her love. To have an idea of Mary's great dolour on losing Her Son by His death, we must needs meditate this Mother's love for Him.

All mothers feel the pains of their children as their own, so that the Canaaness, when she asked the Saviour to free her daughter from possession by the devil, she told Him to take pity on her, the mother, more than on the daughter: "Lord, Son of David, have pity on me; my daughter is grievously tormented by the devil." But what mother loved her son as Mary did Jesus? He was Her only Son and raised with so many cares, a Son most beloved of the Mother and so loving towards Her; Son and at the same time Son and God Who, having come down to earth to kindle the fire of Divine Love in all, as He Himself said: "I came to put fire on earth; and what do I wish, but that it blaze up? For I have come to set the earth ablaze with the Fire of Charity," what flames of love would He not kindle in the Heart of His Most Holy Mother, pure and empty of all worldly attachments? The Most Holy Virgin Herself told Saint Bridget that Her Heart was one with that of Her Son by love. That combination of slave and mother, and of Son and God, kindled in Mary's Heart a blaze of love composed of a thousand fires. But this whole blaze of love, at the time of the Passion, became a sea of dolour.

Saint Bernardine says when meditating this mystery: All the dolours of the world, if gathered together, would not be so intense as the dolour of the glorious Virgin Mary. And so it is in truth, since this Mother, however more tenderly She loved, so much the deeper was her dolour. However more tenderly She loved Him, so much greater the dolour on seeing Him leave, especially when She encountered Her Son, then condemned to death, on His way with the Cross up to the place of execution. And this is the fourth sword of dolour we shall consider.

Mary bidding farewell to Jesus. The Virgin revealed to Saint Bridget that when the time for the Passion was coming, Her eyes were always full of tears thinking of the beloved Son She was to lose on earth, and that She had a cold sweat at the fear which assailed Her on considering the coming spectacle so full of dolour. And when the day was close, Jesus went tearfully to take leave of His Mother to go to death. Saint Bonaventure, considering Mary that night, speaks to Her thus: You spent it without sleep, and while the others slept You kept watch. The Apostles of Jesus Christ reached this afflicted Mother to bring Her the dolorous news of Jesus' seizure, while She fulfilled the text of Jeremias: "She weeps inconsolably at night, and the tears course down her cheeks in torrents. There is no one among her lovers to console her."

She felt the ill-treatment meted out to Her Son in the house of Caiphaz; She spiritually suffered the scorn Herod showed for Him; She was grieved when the most unjust Pilate condemned Him to death on the Cross; truly, most unjustly, because this wicked judge sent Him to His death. O Dolorous Mother, Your Son has now been sentenced to death and has already gone out bearing the Cross Himself on the way up to Calvary, recorded thus in the Gospel: "They led Jesus bearing His Cross out to be crucified, along the Way of Sorrows which was to end on Calvary;" come, if You want to see Him and bid Him the last farewell on the way by which He has to pass.

Mary present when Jesus passes by. The Most Holy Virgin Herself heard the death sentence passed on Jesus. What excess of suffering it was for Her to see the nails, the hammers and the cords born ahead by the executioners, and all the horrible instruments to kill Her Son! And what a sword it was for Her Heart to hear the bugler announcing the sentence against Her Jesus! But see here that after the executioners with their instruments of martyrdom, the town crier and the ministers of Justice had passed by, She raises Her eyes, and what does She see? She sees a young man covered with blood from head to foot, wearing a crown of thorns, with a heavy cross on His shoulders; She contemplates Him and scarcely knows Him, saying then with Isaias: "We reputed Him as a leper, and as a man struck by the hand of God and humbled." Yes, because the wounds, the bruises and the congealed blood gave him the aspect of a leper, so that He was unknown: "Despised and the least of men, Man of Sorrows, acquainted with hardship and suffering; His Countenance seemingly covered over with shame, and scorned, so that no esteem is shown Him." (Isaias)

But in the end love led Her to recognize Him, and once She knew Him, as Saint Peter of Alcántara says: What a struggle began between love and fear in Mary's Heart. On the one hand, She wanted to see Him; but on the other, She feared to see something so worthy of compassion. The Most Afflicted of mothers goes out to meet the most afflicted of sons; and how much derision against Her Son, and very likely against Herself did She have to hear from the jews, who knew Her. Finally, Their glances crossed; the Son, brushing aside a blood clot that hindered His vision, as revealed to Saint Bridget, and the Mother looked at the Son. And Their glances full of dolour were like so many other arrows which transpierced those two enamoured souls. Margaret, daughter of Saint Thomas More, when she saw her father on his way to death, could say no more than: "Father, father!" And fell faint at his feet. Mary, when She saw Her Son on His way to Calvary, did not faint, no; for the Mother of God could not lose the use of reason; nor did She die, since God was reserving Her for a greater dolour, but if She did not die She underwent a dolour capable of causing a thousand deaths.

The Virgin wanted to embrace Him, as Saint Anselm says, but the bailiffs kept Her back, and pushed the adored Lord forward, and Mary followed Him. Holy Virgin, where do You go? To Calvary? Do You dare to see Him who is Your life hanging from the Cross? Saint Lawrence Justinian tells Her: 'O afflicted Mother, stay. Where would You go? If You go with Jesus You will be tormented by His Dolours and He with Yours.' But despite the sight of Jesus having to cost Her such excruciating pain, the loving Mother did not wish to leave Him. The Son went on ahead, and the Mother not far from Him to be crucified with Him.



William says: The Mother bore Her cross and followed Him to be crucified with Him. As Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great defines: “The Most Holy Virgin Mary, spiritually carrying the Cross, became physically wounded in Her Right Shoulder just like Christ; but no one saw it.” Of all the wounds, that which caused Our Lord Jesus Christ the most pain was that of His Right Shoulder. As corresponded to Her sublime mission as Co-Victim, the Most Dolorous Mother shared with Her Divine Son each of the three falls along the Way of Bitter Sorrow; accordingly, Her immaculate and most sensitive Accidental Body felt spiritually prostrate on the ground and physically bruised and wounded, without anyone perceiving.

The Treatise on the Holy Mass: “Mary’s dignity and grandeur, then, did not pass unnoticed. She was observed attentively by many, with gestures of admiration, on seeing Her unalterable magnanimity, integrity and patience in the face of Her Son’s sufferings. Mary’s heroic bearing was the sublime manifestation of Her continued and necessary fiat so that the Cross might have the Most Divine Victim, Jesus Christ; Who, as Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great defines, ‘was delivered up to the gibbet by the Heavenly Father and by the Divine Mary, His Mother;’ since She, unable to renounce Her mission of Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix, in Her eagerest longing for the Father to be given reparation and mankind to be redeemed, would have even been capable of crucifying Her Most Divine Son with Her own hands, if there had been no one else to do that.”

Saint John Chrysostom writes: We even take pity on wild animals. If we saw a lioness following after her cub being taken off to slaughter, we would feel compassion. And do we not feel compassion seeing Mary beside Her Immaculate Lamb being taken off to die? Let us show compassion for Mary and try as well to accompany Her and Her Son, bearing the cross Our Lord has ordained for us with patience. Saint John Chrysostom asks: “Why did Jesus Christ wish to suffer alone in His other torments and on the contrary on bearing the Cross wanted to be helped by the Cyrenian?” And replies: “In order that you understand that the Cross of Christ is of no value without your own cross. The Cross of Jesus alone will not be enough to save us if we do not bear our own up till death.”

Example: *The cross unites us to God.* The Saviour appeared to Sister Dominica, a Nun in Florence, and told her: “Think of Me and love Me, and I will always think of you and love you.” And He offered her a bouquet of flowers with a cross, signifying by this that the consolations of the saints in this world must always be accompanied by the cross. Crosses unite souls to God. Saint Jerome Aemiliani, once a soldier full of vices, fell into the hands of the enemy, who confined him to a dungeon. There, moved by his adversities and enlightened by God to change his life, he had recourse to the Most Holy Virgin, and with the help of this Divine Mother began to lead a saint’s life. He won the grace to see the throne of glory God had prepared for him in Heaven. He was the Founder of the Company of Servants of the Poor Abandoned, died like a saint and has been canonized.

The Palmarian Holy Bible: “Along the Way of Bitter Sorrow, the Most Dolorous Mother had shared all of Jesus’ sufferings in a bloody and invisible way; and on Calvary She likewise shared in the most bitter taste of the wine mixed with gall and the cruellest stripping of garments. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, Co-Priest of Christ and Propitiatory Co-Victim, at the same time as Christ stripped of His garments knelt and prayed to the Heavenly Father, She, standing, likewise implored consolation; and the Eternal Father answered Her: ‘My beloved Daughter, I will sustain You up till the last moment.’ This dialogue was heard by the Lord and the Apostle John.”

Fifth Dolour: Jesus’ Death. Mary at the foot of the Cross. A new class of martyrdom, something to admire: a mother condemned to see her Son die before Her eyes executed

with barbarous torments, an innocent Son whom She loved with Her whole heart. His Mother stood beside the Cross. Nothing else occurs to us to say in meditation of Mary's martyrdom. Observe Her beside the Cross in the sight of Her dying Son and then say if there is dolour like Her dolour. Today, let us too linger on Calvary to consider this fifth sword which transpierced Mary's Heart at Jesus' death.

Scarcely had the Redeemer arrived on Calvary, wholly exhausted, when the executioners despoiled Him of His garments and fixed His sacred Hands and Feet to the Cross with nails, not sharpened but blunt for greater torment, as Saint Bernard says. Once crucified they raised up the Cross and left Him there till He died.

The executioners abandoned Him, but Mary did not abandon Him. She moved up closer to the Cross to assist at His death. The Most Holy Virgin told Saint Bridget: "I did not separate from Him and was very close to His cross." Saint Bonaventure speaks thus: "Lady, of what use was it for You to go up to Calvary to see this Son die? Why did the shame and horror of such a crime not detain You? The shame should have detained You, since His dishonour was Yours as well, being His Mother. At least the horror of such a crime, seeing a God crucified by His own creatures, should have detained You." But the same Saint replies: "It is that Your Heart thought nothing of Your own suffering, but only of the dolour and of the death of the beloved Son; and so You wanted to assist Him Yourself, at least by accompanying Him."

Abbot William says: 'O true Mother, Mother full of love, whom not even the dread of death could separate from the beloved Son.' But, O Lord, how desolate a spectacle to see this Son agonizing on the cross and see this Mother agonizing, suffering all the pains that Her Son bore! Mary revealed to Saint Bridget the lamentable state of Her dying Son as She saw Him on the Cross: "My beloved Jesus was on the Cross with all the anguish of death: the eyes sunken, half closed and dulled; the cheeks black and blue, His countenance disfigured, the mouth ajar, the hair bloodied, the head fallen against the breast, the waist drawn in, the arms and legs swollen and the whole Body full of lesions and Blood."

Mary shares in all the dolours of Her Son. All these sufferings of Jesus, says Saint Jerome, were at the same time sufferings of Mary. However many lesions there were in Christ's Body, those in Mary's Body and Heart were as many. Whoever had then been on Calvary, says Saint John Chrysostom, would have found two Altars on which two great Sacrifices were being consummated: one in Jesus' Body and the other in Mary's, where at the same time that Her Son sacrificed His Body by death, Mary sacrificed Her Soul by compassion. But it seems to me better assured as Saint Bonaventure says, that there was one single Altar, that is, the one Cross of the Son, on which, together with the victim, namely this divine Lamb, the Mother too was sacrificed, so that the Saint asks Her: 'O Mary, where were You? Beside the Cross? Ah! With greater propriety I will say that You were on the same Cross sacrificing Yourself with Your own Son'. Thus does Saint Augustine express himself: "The Cross and the nails were the Son's and Mary's; the Son crucified, the Mother crucified as well." In effect, as Saint Bernard says, what the nails did in Jesus' Body, love did in Mary's; so that at the same time as the Son sacrificed His Body, the Mother sacrificed Her Soul.

Mary shows the greatest strength. Generally mothers do not want to be present at the deaths of their children; but if a mother is forced to attend a dying son, she tries to give him every possible relief; she accommodates him in bed to be as comfortable as possible, supplies him with fresh drinks, and the unhappy mother thus consoles her own grief. O Mother! The most afflicted of all! O Mary, it is for You to attend to Jesus in His Death, but You have been unable to give Him any relief! Mary hears Her Son, who says: "I thirst", but cannot give Him a little water to refresh Him. She could say nothing else but this: 'Son, I have no water other than My tears.' Besides, the expression "I thirst", She said as well at the same time, for that same thirst for the salvation of souls consumed Her as well. She saw that the Son on that bed of dolour, hanging from those nails, found no rest; She wanted to embrace Him to give Him relief, at least so that He might expire in Her arms,



but that was impossible. She wanted to embrace Him, but stretched out Her hands in vain, drawing them back empty.

She saw Her poor Son in that sea of dolour seeking someone to console Him, and there was almost no one with Him to help; but who would want to console Him if almost all men were His enemies, if even on the Cross they blasphemed and mocked Him, some in one way, others in another? "The many who passed by on Calvary, for at the place of events many continually came and went, blasphemed against Jesus, derisively wagging their heads." Some told Him to His Face: "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." And others: "He saved others and cannot save Himself; let Him save Himself now if He is the Christ,

the Chosen One of God." "If He is the Christ, the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the Cross." The Most Holy Virgin said to Saint Bridget: "I heard some who called My Son a thief and others who called Him an impostor; and some said that no one deserved death as He did; and all these things were like new swords of dolour."

In the Palmarian Holy Bible we read: "And in the midst of that most dreadful feeling of orphanhood... Jesus cried out in a great voice saying: 'Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani?', that is: 'My God, My God, look upon Me! Why have You forsaken Me?', without receiving any reply from His Father..." And the Treatise on the Holy Mass teaches: "The Most Holy Virgin Mary, on Mount Calvary, asked the Eternal Father the same as Christ: 'Why have You forsaken Me?' And neither did She receive any reply. The Divine Mary spoke these words in private, at the same time as Christ pronounced them publicly... the Most Holy Virgin Mary on Mount Calvary, the same as Christ, and with the same aims, asked the Eternal Father to stay pendent from the Cross suffering until the end of time; and the Eternal Father gave Her to understand, as He had Christ, that such a sacrifice would be sterile. And forthwith She thirsted. The Divine Mary manifested that eager desire to suffer at the same time as Her Most Divine Son, having, as He did, part of infused knowledge in the passible state of Her Divine Soul veiled."

But what most augmented Mary's dolour, together with compassion for Her Son, was to hear Him lamenting that even the Eternal Father had abandoned Him: "My God, My God, look upon Me! Why have You forsaken Me?" Words which, as the Mother of God told Saint Bridget, She could not put out of mind or heart, while She did nothing other than offer the life of Her Son for our salvation. Hence we understand that She, by the merits of Her dolours, cooperated in giving birth to us to the life of grace, by which we are children of Her Dolours.

Mary, Mother of all at the foot of the Cross. Christ wanted Her to be present for Her to co-operate in our redemption; since He had decreed to give Her to us as Mother, and She was to give birth to us as Her children on the Cross. And if the Heart of Mary found some relief in that sea of bitterness, this was the only one that then consoled Her; to know that by means of Her dolours She was giving birth to us for eternal life. Jesus revealed the same to Saint Bridget: "Mary, My Mother, by Her compassion and charity, became Mother of all in Heaven and on earth." And in effect these were the last words with which Jesus took leave of Her before He died, this was His last memento, to leave us as Her children in the person of John when He said: "Woman, there is Your son."

Mary exercises towards us the office of good Mother, as already noted at that moment since, as Saint Peter Damian testifies, the good thief was converted and saved by Mary's prayers: that is why the good thief repented, since the Most Holy Virgin, standing between Her Son's Cross and that of the thief, prayed for him, thereby rewarding him for a service he had rendered Her time back. By this he alludes to what ancient authors affirm saying that the thief's family, in the Flight into Egypt with the Child Jesus, had been courteous towards Them. The Most Holy Virgin continues to perform this office of intercession.

Example. *A sinner is saved by the dolours of Mary.* In Perugia, a youth promised the devil that if he were to facilitate a certain sin for him, then his soul would be the devil's, and wrote up the corresponding deed signed in his blood. The sin committed, the devil wanted to carry out the promise and took him to the rim of a well, threatening that if he did not throw himself in, he would take him body and soul to Hell. The wretched youth, thinking himself unable to escape his clutches, went up to the well rim to plunge in, but terrified at the spectre of death, told the enemy that he had no valour to throw himself in, and that he should push him in. The youth wore the scapular of the Dolorous Virgin around his neck, so that the devil told him: 'take that off, and I will help you keep the promise'. But the youth, understanding that thanks to the scapular the Mother of God continued to protect him, said that he did not want to remove it. After much squabbling the devil withdrew ashamed and the sinner, recognizing in this the Dolorous Mother, went to thank Her for the great favour, and repentant of his sins hung up the fatal document, framed, on the altar of the church of Saint Mary Nova, in Perugia.

Sixth Dolour: The Lance thrust. Jesus is taken down from the Cross and laid in the arms of His Most Holy Mother. Mary, Mother all Dolorous. "O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." (Jeremias). Devout souls, listen to the Dolorous Virgin's words: 'Beloved daughters, My Heart was disconsolate after the Death of My beloved Jesus. If you want to please Me, this is what I want of you: cease to offend Him by your sins, love Him sincerely, thank Him, and contemplate Me and see if in the world there has ever been a dolour like unto Mine, seeing them snatch away so cruelly the One who was all My love.'

Her two sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, at Calvary's crucial moments, united themselves to the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Her dolour. Lady, since You admit this consolation amid such dolour, allow me as well to unite myself to You, and contemplate Your dolours. But by the Death of Your Son Your sufferings have not ended. You will be struck by a new sword of dolour on seeing the side of Your own Son already dead transpierced by a cruel lance, and afterwards You will have to receive Him into Your arms when taken down from the Cross. This is what we shall consider in the sixth dolour afflicting this poor Mother. This claims our attention and our tears, since the dolours of Our Lady the Virgin Mary did not torment Her one by one, but on this occasion seemed to come all in a rush to assail Her.

It is enough to tell a mother that her son has died to revive all her love for that lost son. Some, to relieve mothers when their sons have died, try to remind them of the upsets caused by them. But, my Queen, if I wanted to relieve Your dolour for Jesus' Death in this fashion, what upset could You remember Him having given You? No, because He always loved you, always obeyed You, always respected You. And now You have lost Him. Who will be able duly to ponder Your suffering. You alone who bore it can explain.

Mary offers Her Son up to the Father. Our Redeemer having died, a pious author says, the first thought of the Mother of God was to accompany Her Son and present Him to the Eternal Father. Mary would tell Him: 'My God, I present Your Son and My Son, who has now obeyed You even unto death; receive Him into Your arms. Your Justice is now satisfied and Your Will fulfilled; the great Sacrifice worthy of Your eternal glory has been consummated.' Afterwards, gazing at Her Jesus' dead body, She would say: 'O Wounds, wounds of love, I adore You and with You I am full of joy, since by Your means the world's salvation has been wrought. You will remain open in the body of My Son to be the refuge of those who have recourse to You. How many will receive the forgiveness of their sins by You and by You will be inflamed in love for the Supreme Good!'

The lance-thrust. Mary, while weeping the death of Her Son, saw a soldier give Him a violent lance-thrust and by so doing open Jesus' side. "the soldier Cassius opened up Jesus' Right Side with a lance, which pierced His Heart, from which the last remaining Drop of Blood issued forth. Water too issued forth." (Holy Bible)



At the thrust of the lance, the Cross shook and Jesus' Heart was opened, as was revealed to Saint Bridget. The Saviour wished to shed the last Drop of Blood left to Him to let us know that He had no more Blood to give us. The outrage of this lance-thrust was for Jesus, but the dolour was for Mary. Lanspergius says: "Christ shared with His Mother the suffering of this wound, so that He received the outrage and Mary the dolour." The holy Fathers affirm that this was the sword that aged Saint Simeon foretold, a sword not of steel but of dolour, which transpierced Her Blessed Soul; since the Lance, on transpiercing Jesus' Heart where She ever dwelt, mystically transpierced Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Thus Saint Bernard, among others, says: "The Lance which pierced His side pierced as well the soul of the Virgin, unable ever to separate Herself from Him." The Mother of God revealed

to Saint Bridget: "On seeing the side of My Son transpierced, My Heart was then transpierced." The Angel told Saint Bridget that Mary's sufferings were such and so many that it was a miracle of God that She did not die; that is, only by the essential gift of Immortality that She possessed, did She not die. In the other dolours She at least had the Son to pity Her; on this occasion She did not have Her Son to console Her.

"O Mother of Sorrows! O Queen of martyrs! The lance of Longinus pierces the Side of Your most beloved Son, dead upon the Cross; and fulfilling the prophecy of the aged Simeon, the same lance-thrust really and truly pierces Your own Immaculate Heart, united to that of Christ on the Cross... What cruel and unparalleled pain and, at the same time, what sublime and inexpressible joy of Mother! Cleansed and renewed, the Church issues forth from Your Sacred Hearts, fulfilling as well Your mystical Death at the foot of the Cross, whilst You give birth to me also, a sinner, the cause of Your sorrows."

The Treatise on the Holy Mass says: "The Divine Mary at the foot of the Cross underwent the second phase of Her Spiritual Death at the moment of the Lance-thrust, by which She culminated Her Reparation to the Father for the forgiven mortal sins of all mankind; since by Her Spiritual Death, She suffered as never before the pains of loss and of sense corresponding to those sins. The bloody Spiritual Death of Mary at the foot of the Cross, that which properly corresponded to Her as Co-Victim of Calvary, took place, then, at the same instant that Her Immaculate Heart was pierced through when Longinus's lance transpierced Christ's Deific Heart. This Spiritual Death meant finding Herself deprived in Her whole being of the vision of the Divine Essence during seven seconds, on being thus decreed by the Most High. This privation was, for the divine Co-Victim, the greatest suffering of Her earthly life, as it indescribably exceeded all others put together; including those of Her bloody participation in the sufferings proper to Her own Divine Son, and that which Her Immaculate Heart suffered physically from the Lance-thrust itself; since, however unimaginably dreadful all those sufferings were to Her, they could never be compared to the excruciating pain of finding Herself deprived of the contemplation of God, this being inherent to the essentially glorious state of Her Soul and Her bodies, since the beatific vision constitutes the culmination of the soul's life."

Sermon of Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great: "Look, Saint John the Evangelist gave testimony to what he saw on Calvary: he saw blood and water flow from Christ's right Side; and his testimony is true. And there the fruits of the nuptial couch of Christ and the redeeming Cross came forth, because though reparation to the Eternal Father had already been made by Christ's death on Calvary, still Redemption was not wrought until the lance-thrust opened His Side. All the sacrifices of the Church accompanied the lance-thrust, and then the Drop of Blood came forth, though Christ had already been dead one hour; but the Drop of Blood came forth that indicated the birth, then. See, what depths!... in order for the

fruit of the espousal of Christ and the redeeming Cross to come forth, it was necessary for Christ's right Side to be transpierced; we might say that it was necessary to carry out what is nowadays called a caesarean for women whose child has to be drawn out, because it cannot leave, but must be drawn out, using the scalpel. Contemplate this mystery: what they did to Christ's right Side without their realizing what they were doing... Even this was necessary. This suffering was no longer for Christ, since He was already dead. This suffering was for Mary. Mary's giving birth to us, Her children, was exceedingly dolorous. She, Who did not suffer when She gave birth to Christ, did indeed suffer when She gave birth to us. Look, what depths! When Longinus' lance pierced the right Side of Christ and reached Mary's Heart, because Mary is enthroned in Christ's Heart, Mary felt as if they had carried out a brutal Caesarean operation on Her to extract the fruits, the Mystical Body of Christ, us. Have you meditated on these depths? See how Mary now arrives, the Mother, Christ's most loving Spouse, whole Mother of the whole Christ, Mary, this is Her moment, now She is here. This pain was no longer for Christ. He had been dead for an hour. The pain was now for Mary, for the Mother, for Her Who was to deliver, give birth to the Mystical Body of Christ, which She had conceived when She conceived Christ Our Lord by the action of the Holy Ghost. Consider, what depths! Mary giving birth to the Church through the right Side of Christ already dead. How profound this is! Beloved children,... meditate on this mystery. We have come forth from the right Side of Christ, and nonetheless we have been conceived by Mary. The truth is that we emerged from the right Side of Christ because the lance penetrated the Heart of Mary enthroned in the Heart of Christ; and Mary gave birth to us, opening a way out for us through the right Side of Christ. That has been the way out for the Most Holy Virgin Mary's children, us, the Mystical Body of Christ. We have come forth from the right Side of Christ, because the Immaculate Heart of Mary was pierced by Longinus' lance when it transpierced the right Side of Christ. Behold, a sublime caesarean. This is profound: Mary, Who did not suffer when She gave birth to Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, the Divine Word made Flesh, nonetheless suffered when She gave birth to the Mystical Body of Christ, us, the members of the Church. Mary suffered, spiritually, understand, in Her Immaculate Heart enthroned in Christ's Heart, a sublime caesarean, by which we members of the Mystical Body of Christ came forth; since in order for Mary's Drop of Blood to come forth, and with it the Holy Ghost in the form of water, it was necessary for the right Side of Christ, already dead, to be transpierced."



The descent. The Dolorous Mother, fearing new outrages against the beloved Son, requested of Joseph of Arimathea to obtain from Pilate the Body of Jesus so that at least in death She might be able to care for Him and free Him from fresh outrages. Joseph went to Pilate and explained the dolour and desire of this afflicted Mother. Saint Anselm says that the Mother's compassion touched Pilate and moved him to grant the Saviour's Body.

They now lowered Jesus down from the Cross. O Sacrosanct Virgin, after You, with so much love, have given the world Your Son for our salvation, now the thankless world gives Him back to You. But, O Lord, how is the return made? Mary would then tell the world: "'My Beloved is gallant and considerate,' but you hand Him over full of bruises, and red, not from the colour of His Flesh but from the lesions you have inflicted upon Him." He won hearts by His semblance and now fills with pity whoever gazes upon Him. How many swords, asks Saint Bonaventure, wounded this Mother's soul when presented with Her Son taken down from the Cross! Enough to consider the suffering of any mother presented with a dead son.

Treatise on the Holy Mass: "The Deific Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ was then lowered down from the Cross in the measure that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus gradually

played out the sheet sustaining Him, gently and without any effort. This was indescribably moving, for all was done with such great care as though they feared to cause Jesus the least harm; so that the same love and veneration they had felt for the Saviour in life they now showed for the Sacred Dead Body. This unforgettable scene was contemplated by the pious bystanders with abundant shedding of tears and in the deepest silence and respect."

Mary receives the Body of Her Son. Meditate on the afflicted Mother who, stretching out Her hands, rises up to receive Her beloved Son, embraces Him and then sits at the foot of the Cross with Him in Her lap. And She sees that half-open mouth, clouded eyes, lacerated flesh, bared bones. She removes the crown of thorns and sees the havoc caused to His Sacred Head; She sees those hands and those feet transpierced, and says: 'My Son, to what has the love You bear for men reduced You! What wrong have You done them to be treated so?' Saint Bernardine de Bustos has Her say: 'For Me You were a father, a brother, a spouse, My delight and My glory; You were everything to Me. Son, see how afflicted I am, look upon Me and console Me. But You can see Me no longer. Speak a word of relief to Me; but You can speak no more, for You are dead. Oh, cruel thorns,' She said, contemplating those fearful instruments, nails, pitiless lance, 'how come you have been able to torment your Creator so? But, what thorns, what nails? O sinners,' She exclaimed, 'you are the ones who have ill-treated My Son in this way.'

Saint Louis of Granada describes the way Mary received Jesus' lifeless body on Her lap: "When the Virgin held Her Son in Her arms, what tongue can explain all She felt?... O Angels of peace! Weep with this Sacred Virgin; weep, heavens, weep stars of heaven; and all creatures of the world, accompany Mary's mourning. The Mother embraced that tortured Body and pressed it tightly to Her breast; for that alone did She have strength. She sets Her Head among the thorns of the Sacred Head, face to face; the Mother's face tinged with the Son's Blood, and the Son's watered by the Mother's tears. Oh gentle Mother! Is this by chance Your Sweetest Son? Is this the one You conceived with so much glory and gave birth to with so much joy? Then what has become of Your past joys? Where did Your former happiness go? Where is that mirror of beauty on which You each gazed? Now there is no profit for You in gazing upon His Face, for His eyes have lost the light..." All those who were present wept, those holy women wept, those noble men wept, heaven and earth wept, and all creatures accompanied the tears of the Virgin."

O adorable Face of Jesus! Your Mother, by Her tears, cleansed You and left You as pure as when She gave You Her first kiss in the Bethlehem stable. Mary then was the one who performed the greatest and most complete act of reparation. In the splendourous throne of Her lap You were received, my Jesus, as a Prince who returns victorious and full of glory. From the arms of the Cross, where You won the victory against sin and death of souls, You passed on to those of Your Most Holy Mother. Her countenance, bathed in tears, joined to Your Holy Face, bloodstained, with the pallor of death, and a motherly kiss and reverent love, left the two aglow, for the victory won by the Son Redeemer of the world was the glory of the Mother, consecrated by the Son Himself as Mediatrix and Advocate, as well as Mother for all men. Adorable Jesus! By the channel of Our Mother the Most Holy Virgin, may my tears of dolour rise up to cleanse You of so many stains as disfigure You, and may my prayers reach the throne of the Most High in request for the conversion and forgiveness of the blasphemous.

Treatise on the Holy Mass: "When the Divine Mary saw Her beloved Son in Her arms, lacerated, His beauty disfigured, the dolours of Her Immaculate Heart were renewed; but at the same time it was utmost joy for Her, to be thus in possession of Her Most Divine Treasure. The Divine Mother adored Her Divine Son upon Her lap with supreme worship and reverence, and with Her the whole Heavenly Court, as also John, the holy women and Jesus' other followers there present..."

Palmarian Holy Bible: "To Her who was to be Mother of the Most High, it was necessary

and proper to give two sisters, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, for Her human consolation at the crucial moments of Calvary. Those were the divine plans: to give two sisters to the Most Holy Virgin Mary for them to unite to Her in sorrow.” Message given to Father Ferdinand, later Pope Saint Gregory XVII: “What loftiness, that of these two holy women, to console the Redeemer’s Mother at the hour of offering the Victim to the Eternal Father! I can say that My Mother, the Virgin Mary, before anyone else, after Myself, was the first to fulfil the mission of Priest, on offering the Victim to the Eternal Father. She held Me in Her lap, and raising Her eyes to Heaven, offered Me to the Eternal Father, just as I had offered Myself as Propitiatory Victim. And the other Marys, My aunts, had the mission of coadjutrices, helping Mary who was offering up the Victim. They both, one at each side of My Most Holy Mother, helped to raise slightly My dead Body, to give strength to the Queen of Heaven and Earth to offer up the Victim; and the two of them dried My Mother’s tears. They embraced Her tightly. My Mother rested Her head on Her sisters’ shoulders. Can there be greater love of a God for His Mother?”



Only if we avoid sin does Mary find consolation. Mary so stated, and that She so lamented was our fault. But if She could now suffer, what would She say? What dolour would She not feel seeing that men, after the Death of Her Son, have continued to persecute Him and crucify Him by their sins? Let us not torment this Dolorous Mother further; and if in the past we have afflicted Her through our own fault, let us now do as She says, namely, think things over. Sinners, turn back to Jesus’ wounded Heart, turn back repentant, He will take you back. He seems to tell us: ‘Flee from Him to take refuge in Him; flee from the Judge, to the Redeemer; from Judgement, to the Cross.’ According to the revelations of the Virgin to Saint Bridget, holding Her Son lowered down from the Cross, She was able to close His eyes, but found it hard to cross His arms, as if He wanted to Her to understand that Jesus Christ wanted to keep His arms wide open to take in all repentant sinners who turn back to Him. ‘Oh, world,’ Mary seems to go on saying, ‘this is your time, time to love and to be loved. Look, oh world, My Son died to save you and this is no time for fear, but for love, time for loving Him who, to show the love He bears for you, wanted to suffer so much.’

Saint Bernardine says: “That is why Christ’s Heart was pierced, so that by way of a visible wound, the invisible wound of love be seen.” If, then, Mary wanted Her Divine Son’s side to be opened so as to give you His Heart, it is only reasonable that you as well give Him yours. And if you, children of Mary, want to find a place in Jesus’ Heart without being rejected, go up with Mary, and She will obtain this grace for you. And in proof of this, here is an example of God’s Mercy towards a repentant sinner:

The ‘Disciple’ (byname of John Herolt) relates that a poor sinner, after having committed every crime in the book, eventually killed his father and a brother and, as is natural, fled away a fugitive. This man, one day in Lent, hearing a preacher speak on Divine Mercy, went to confess to him. The confessor, hearing such great sins, after absolving him, sent him to the Altar of the Dolorous Virgin to recite his penance there. The sinner went and began to pray, and all of a sudden fell dead. The following day, the Priest recommended the people to pray for the deceased’s soul, and at that moment a white dove was seen to fly through the church, and from its beak let fall a note at the Priest’s feet in which the following words were written: “The soul of the deceased had scarcely left the body, when it entered Paradise; and you, continue to preach on God’s mercy and devotion to Mary’s Dolours as the most efficacious means to obtain such happy results.”

Seventh Dolour: Jesus is laid in the sepulchre. Solitude of Mary. When a mother is beside a son who is suffering, she doubtless undergoes all the pains of the son; but when the tormented son has died and is taken to be buried and the mother has to bid farewell to

her son, the thought that she will no longer see him is a greater dolour than all the others. This is the last sword of dolour which we shall now consider, when Mary, after having assisted the Son on the Cross, after having embraced Him dead, must finally leave Him in the sepulchre, deprived of His beloved presence.

But in order to consider this last mystery of dolour better, let us go back to Calvary to contemplate the afflicted Mother still embracing Her dead Son. She seems to be saying: 'Son, My Son, You have become cruel to Me; surely, since all Your wonderful qualities, Your beauty, Your grace, Your virtue, Your pleasant ways, all the very special demonstrations of love You have shown Me, have turned into so many other stabs of pain, and the more they inflamed Me in Your love, the more I feel the cruel pain of having lost You. My Son so beloved, on losing You I have lost all.' Saint Bernard imagines that She speaks thus: 'O true Son of God, You are Father, Son and Spouse to Me; You are My soul! Now I find Myself orphaned of Father, widow without Spouse, desolate without Son; having lost the Son, I have lost everything.'

In this way, Mary was flooded with dolour on embracing Her Son; the holy disciples, however, fearing that this poor Mother might die there of dolour, made haste to take the lifeless Son from Her lap and give Him burial. To do so, they reverently take Him from Her arms and bear Him to the sepulchre to give Him burial: the disciples bear Him on the sheet used for lowering Jesus down from the Cross; the Angels of Heaven accompany Him; the holy women follow behind, and with them the Dolorous Mother following Her Son to the sepulchre. Having reached the place, they wrapped Him in the sheet on which the Lord willed to leave to the world his figure impressed, as seen today in Turin. How Mary would have wished to stay in the tomb with Her Son if this had been His Will. But as this was not His divine wish, at least accompany the sacred Body of Jesus inside the vestibule of the sepulchre while they were placing Him in the inner mortuary chamber. As they rolled up the stone to close the sepulchre, Mary resigned Herself to gazing upon Him for the last time and bidding farewell to Her Most Beloved Son, and this Sorrowful Mother offered Him Her Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart which She left buried with that of Her beloved Son. The Virgin said to Saint Bridget: "I can say with truth, My Son having been interred, two Hearts were buried there."

At last they rolled up the stone and Jesus' Body was enclosed in the Holy Sepulchre, that great Treasure, none greater either in Heaven or on earth. Let us make a digression here: Mary left Her Heart buried in the sepulchre with Jesus, since Jesus was Her whole Treasure. "Where your treasure is, there too is your heart." And we, where have we placed our heart? Perhaps in creatures? In the mire? And why not in Jesus Who though having ascended into Heaven has willed to stay – not now dead, but living in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar – to have us with Him and possess our hearts.

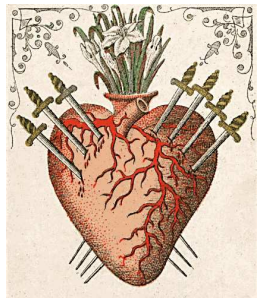
Mary takes leave of Her Son. But let us go back to Mary. In the words of Saint Bonaventure, on leaving the sepulchre She blessed it saying: "Sacred stone, fortunate stone that now keeps watch within over the One who stayed for nine months in My womb, I bless you and envy you; I leave you to guard My Son Who is all My Good and all My Love." And afterwards, addressing the Eternal Father, She was to say: "O Father, I commend to You this Son of Yours and Mine."

The Treatise on the Holy Mass says that at those moments: "The Divine Mary, while physically alive in the Cenacle, partook of Christ's Death in the sepulchre, She being mystically dead and buried with Him by virtue of the enthronement in Christ's Deific Heart of a Particle of Her Motherly Heart; for as we know the mutual indwelling of Hearts between Christ and Mary was never sundered."

This poor Mother was left so sad and afflicted that, according to Saint Bernard, without so wishing She drew tears from many, with the result that wherever She passed, those who saw Her could not hold back their tears. And adds that those who accompanied Her wept for the Lord and for Her at the same time. Saint Bonaventure affirms that the holy women placed on

Her a bereavement veil like widows have, which greatly hid her face.

Mary in solitude. Entering the Cenacle, Mary looks about, but no longer sees Jesus, and the remembrance of his whole beautiful life and piteous death comes to Her. She remembers the first embraces She gave to Her Son in the Bethlehem Grotto, the talks She had with Him during all those years in the Nazareth home; the constant shows of mutual affection come to Her mind, the tender looks full of love, the words of eternal life always spoken by His divine lips. But then the terrible scenes lived that same day become present to Her; those nails, that lacerated flesh of Her Son, those deep wounds, those bones bared to sight, that half-open mouth, those lifeless eyes. What a night of pain for Mary! Contemplating Saint John, the dolorous Mother would ask him: John, where is your Master? Then She asked Magdalen: Tell Me, daughter, where is your Beloved? Who has taken Him away? Mary weeps and all those accompanying Her as well.



Pope Saint Gregory XVII established that the “Stabat Mater” be sung every day in the Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar before the Way of the Cross. This Latin hymn associates us to Most Holy Mary’s intense Dolour at the foot of the Cross on Calvary. It was written by Pope Saint Innocent III at the start of the XIII century. For centuries the Stabat Mater was frequently used at worship, and in 1727 Saint Benedict XIII ordered it to be prayed at Mass on the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. We give here a translation so that you can feel Her tender compassionate sentiments:

The Mother, dolorous, stood by the Cross while Her Son there hung;

His sorrow sharing, with the sword of dolour piercing Her grieving soul.

How sad and afflicted, that blest Mother of the Only Son!

Pining and tormented, the pious Mother beheld her glorious Son’s agony.

What man would not weep to see Christ’s Mother in such distress?

Who would not be grieved when contemplating the Mother of Christ suffering with Her Son?

She saw Jesus tormented, rent by scourging for His people’s sins.

She saw Her gentle Son, desolate and dying, till His spirit forth He sent.

O Mother, font of love, let me feel Your anguish, with You will I weep.

Set my heart ablaze with love for my God and in doing His Will.

Holy Mother, I pray You, let the Wounds of the Crucified yet pierce my heart.

May Your tortured Son, who suffered so for me, share with me His pain.

Let me weep with You, condole with You for the Crucified while I yet live.

Beside the Cross to be with You, to grieve with You, is my desire.

Virgin of all virgins blest, let me not be bitter for You, let me with You weep.

Let me weep the death of Christ, His Passion share, His Wounds bear.

May His Wounds be mine, and with the Cross rapt up, with Your Son’s Blood enthralled.

Lest in flames I burn, do You defend me on judgment day.

Christ, when I must needs depart, grant that to victory’s palm Your Mother guide me.

When my body dies, may my soul be granted the glory of Paradise. Amen.

And you, my soul, do you not weep? Turning to Mary, tell Her with Saint Bonaventure: “Allow me, my Lady, to weep with You, You are the innocent One, and I the guilty.” Plead with Her at least to allow you to weep with Her: so that She may weep with you. She weeps from love, you weep from grief over your sins. In this way, weeping, you can receive the grace given to the one spoken of as follows:

Example. *Visit of Mary to a dying Religious.* Father Engelgrave tells of a Religious who lived so tormented by scruples that he sometimes came to the border of despair. But as he was most devout to the Virgin of Dolours, he always had recourse to Her in his spiritual struggles, and contemplating Her dolours felt comforted. The hour of death came to him,

and then the devil assailed him more than ever with his scruples and tempted him to despair. All of a sudden the pious Mother, seeing Her poor son in such anguish, appeared to him and told him – and you, My son, are you still consumed by anguish after having consoled Me so many times in My dolours? My son, why so saddened and fearful, you who have done nothing but console Me by your compassion for My dolours? Jesus sends Me to console you, so then be of good heart, be joyful and come with Me to Paradise – and on saying this, the devout Religious, full of consolation and trust, serenely expired.

Other examples of devotion to the Sorrows of God's Mother:

She used to share Mary's Sorrows. Saint Gemma Galgani said: "Whoever so wishes, let him contemplate Jesus on Tabor; I, in company with my dear Sorrowful Mother, will contemplate Him on Calvary." At last, one day, Jesus, wanting to associate her fully to the Dolorous Virgin at the foot of the Cross, appeared to her and told her: "Gemma, take courage! I await you on Calvary!" It was the 8th of June 1899. Listen to the Saint: "At night I felt such an intense grief over my sins that I was at death's door." Note that she had never knowingly committed a single venial sin. The Saint goes on: "Following interior recollection I lost the use of my senses. I found myself in the presence of my Heavenly Mother, who addressed me these words: 'Daughter, in Jesus' Name, your sins are forgiven you.' Afterwards She added: 'My Son loves you deeply and wants to grant you a grace. Will you be worthy of it?' I did not know what to reply, and She encouraged me saying: 'I will be your Mother. You will behave like My good daughter!' At that instant Jesus appeared with His wounds open; but instead of blood, fiery flames blazed out from them which, touching my hands, feet and side, caused me such mortal pain that if my Heavenly Mother had not sustained me, I would have rolled about on the floor. I stayed in that position for several hours, covered by the mantle of my Most Holy Mother, who kissed me on the forehead. Afterwards everything disappeared. On returning to myself, I noticed that I was kneeling on the floor, that my hands, feet and side hurt much; and on rising from the floor, I saw that blood was flowing from the painful parts. From that day, the phenomenon was repeated regularly, from Thursday night at about eight, until Friday at three in the afternoon." One of those who saw Gemma in these ecstasies affirmed under oath that the abundance of blood was such that it flowed down onto the floor. God wanted this holy virgin to share not only in the wounds, but in all of Jesus' dolours, and be associated to the Passion in company with the Sorrowful Mother. Here is her account of how Jesus gave her to share in the dolours of the Crowning with thorns: "On the night of the 19th of July 1900, I experienced great recollection. Jesus was close by. As on other occasions, the recollection was followed by the loss of the use of my senses. I found myself with Jesus suffering dreadful torments. How to see Jesus without helping Him! A great desire of suffering with Him took hold of me so that, repeatedly requesting, I implored Jesus to grant me that grace. At once my desires were satisfied. Jesus came close and, removing the crown of thorns from His Most Sacred Head, with His Most Holy Hands He placed it on mine, and pressed it down onto my temples. Those were moments of pain, but happy ones. I spent an hour suffering thus with Jesus." "Events took charge of showing – said her Director – that this narration of the Saint was not a product of her imagination but a living reality. Gemma's head was seen to be encircled with wounds, from which blood ran. And not only encircled but all over her head, from under her hair." Every week Jesus granted her the same grace, uniting her to Mary's Dolours. Glory be to God!

Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin: In Assisi, homeland of Saint Francis, he was born in March 1838 to Santos Possenti and his wife Agnes Frisciotti, who, out of devotion to Saint Francis, gave him the name Francis. With a good character, quick on the uptake and compassionate of heart, he was the consolation and hope of his parents. From the age of twelve to eighteen, he struggled against the inclinations of nature. He decided wholly to renounce the world and become a Passionist Friar. On the 15th of August 1856, Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, a revered and beautiful image from Espoleto Cathedral was taken

in procession, and the youth, in company with his father, who was governor of the city, awaited the Virgin's float on his knees and, fixing his eyes on Her face, it seemed to him that She said: "Francis, what are you waiting for?" He withdrew from the crowd and began to weep. The Virgin had touched his heart. Out of love for the Passion of the Lord and his devotion to the Virgin of Sorrows, he decided to enter the Congregation of the Passionist Fathers.

He ever spoke of the Virgin. Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin did not wait for circumstances or opportunities to speak of Mary. Any occasion seemed right to him to praise Our Lady and compassionate Her Sorrows. Everything drew him to speak of Her, everything suggested singular ideas to turn the conversation that way, and to continue on afterwards. Everyone knew that to strike up conversation with him was to speak of Mary or, at least, to relate the topic to Our Lady. For Gabriel this was a moral need; Mary had captured his heart and there was no remedy. It was impossible that in one way or another he fail to talk of Her in whom he had placed all his delights. Several times Our Mary's lover had to deal with the loftiest superiors and with high officials. So then, despite his polished manners and the courtesy which always accompanied him, he had to speak of Mary to everyone, he had to exhort all to profess tender affection for the Mistress of his soul, with the enthusiasm he ever possessed. He sanctified himself in few years, dying before he reached the age of twenty-four and is today venerated on the Altars with public worship, under the name of Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin. For having died so young, and for the vibrant example he had given, he was taken as Patron of Youth together with Saint Louis Gonzaga and Saint Dominic Savio.

A devotee of Our Lady of Bitter Sorrow. Those who during their lives have been devotees of Mary's Sorrows experience great consolation at death. Blessed Joachim Piccolomini, celebrated for his tender devotion to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, from childhood began to visit an image of Our Lady of Sorrows three times a day, and besides on Saturdays fasted in her honour and rose at midnight to meditate on Her Sorrows. The Most Holy Virgin did not leave this devotion unrewarded: First She appeared to him in his youth and inspired him to take the habit of Her Servants in the Order of the Servites, as he did. Later the Virgin presented him with two crowns, one of rubies as a reward for the tender compassion he always had for Her Sorrows, and another of pearls to recompense the purity he had always consecrated to Her, and finally, in Her last apparition, after this Blessed had implored Her to grant him the grace to die on the same day as Jesus Christ, She told him: "Prepare, for tomorrow Friday, you will die all of a sudden, and you will be with Me in Paradise." Thus did it happen in fact the following day, when the Passion of Christ was sung in church; at the words, 'the Divine Mary placed Herself to the right of the Cross', Blessed Joachim entered into agony and, on reaching the words, 'inclined His head and expired', the Blessed too gave up his soul to the Lord, all the while the church was illuminated by an admirable radiance, and filled with a suave aroma.

A soldier devoted to Mary acquires Her powerful protection in a visible manner. A soldier called Beau-Séjour prayed seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys every day in honour of the seven joys and seven sorrows of the Most Holy Virgin. He had never left out this devotion, and if some day he went to bed without having remembered it, he at once arose and said his prayers kneeling. One day in battle, Beau-Séjour was positioned on the front line facing the enemy and expecting the signal to attack, when he remembered that he had not prayed his usual prayers, and at that moment made to do so, beginning with the sign of the Cross. His companions noticed what he was doing and began to laugh and mock, but he continued his prayer without paying attention, and hardly had he finished when the enemy fired its first volley and all those in his line fell dead except for him. On



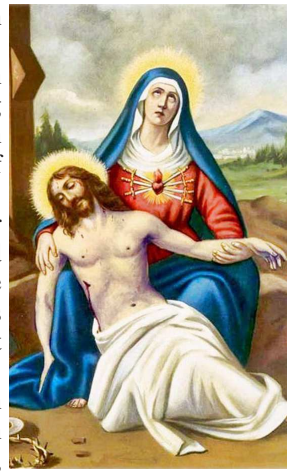
seeing them stretched out on the ground, all those who moments before had mocked him and his devotion, he could be no less than horrified, but recognized the hand of the Powerful Virgin which had saved him. The rest of the battle, as also the whole campaign, was deadly; but that soldier received not the least wound, and having afterwards obtained absolute discharge, he went back home and everywhere published praises of Her whom he recognized as the One to whom he owed his life and health.

A sinner converted by devotion to Mary's Sorrows. This example is not in the books, but was referred to me by a Priest companion of mine, for it happened to him. While this Priest was confessing in a church – the city is not mentioned out of prudence, though the penitent gave licence to publish his case – a youth came up before him who seemed unsure whether to confess or not to confess. The Priest, glancing at him several times, finally called him up and asked if he wished to confess. He replied that he did, but as it seemed that the confession would take long, the Confessor went with him to a separate room. The penitent began by saying that he was a noble stranger and that he could not understand how God could pardon him given the life he had led. Besides the countless sins of impurity, homicides and others, he said that having despaired of his salvation he had given himself up to sin, not so much for the satisfaction as out of scorn for God and the hatred he felt for Him. He said that shortly before, that same morning, he had gone up to commune; but what for? To trample on the consecrated Host. And in effect, having communed, he was about to carry out his dreadful thought, but was unable since the people could see him. And at that moment he handed over to the Priest the sacred Host wrapped in paper. He related afterwards that passing in front of that church he had felt a very great impulse to enter, and that unable to resist he had entered. Afterwards he was seized by great remorse of conscience with a confused desire to confess, which was why he had stayed facing the confessional, but while there his confusion and mistrust were such that he wanted to leave, but it seemed that someone held him back by force; ‘until you, Father, called me. Now I find myself here to confess, but I do not know how’. The Father asked him if he had practised any devotion to the Virgin Mary during this time, for such sudden conversions do not happen unless by Mary’s powerful hands. “What devotion could I have? Nothing, Father, I was damned.” But placing his hand on his chest, he noted that he had the Scapular of the Dolorous Virgin. “Son, – continued the Confessor – don’t you see that it is the Virgin who has granted you this grace? And you should know that this Church is consecrated to the Virgin.” On hearing this the youth was touched, began to feel compunction and weep. While he declared his sins, his compunction and tears grew to the point that he fainted. The Father revived him and finally ended the confession, absolved him with great consolation, and thoroughly contrite and resolved to amend his life, he bade him farewell to return to his country, after giving the Confessor licence to announce publicly the great mercy shown to him by Mary.

She cleansed the sweat of his brow. A Priest, very devout to the Virgin of Sorrows, used to shut himself up in a lonely chapel to meditate and compassionate Mary’s Dolours; and at times his compassion went so far as to dry the tears of a statue of the Dolorous Mother there. The Priest fell grievously ill, and the doctors declared him incurable. When at the point of expiring, he saw a Lady of incomparable beauty who consoled him with tender and gentle words, and with a very fine cloth cleansed the sweat from his brow. And at once he felt wholly cured, and the Priest asked: “Lady, who are you, who have shown me such charity?” – “I am – Mary replied – the lady whose tears you wiped away so often.” And disappeared.

Saint Jerome Aemiliani in his youth was a great libertine, so that there was no worldly satisfaction he had not tasted to the full. Having enlisted in the military, he led the unthinking and dissipated life of many who follow the call to arms; but the Most Holy Virgin, who loved him tenderly, permitted him to fall prisoner in a battle, and be put into a dark dungeon, without any hope of leaving. The darkness and wretchedness of the prison brought him back to himself, and made him realize the dreadful obscurity of his soul, loaded with so

many and such enormous sins. This consideration aroused such lively remorse in him that he was at the point of despair. Abandoned by all, he felt the need to turn back to God, but on raising his heart heavenwards, he did so without hope, believing that the Lord would be unable to listen to the voice of a man burdened with so many and such grave sins. At the point of allowing himself to be borne along by a fatal movement of despair, he remembered the Most Holy Virgin, and brought to mind Her terrible Dolours, and the mortal anguish Her tenderest Heart had to suffer during the hours when Jesus was held prisoner in the hands of His implacable enemies. The remembrance of Mary's Dolours moved Jerome deeply, and led him to turn to the Most Holy Virgin, asking Her by the sufferings She underwent in Jesus' Life, Passion and Death, to deign to raise the hope of salvation in his soul, which he thought lost. "If together with resignation in the pains I suffer, You obtain for me true repentance for my sins,



and their forgiveness, Sorrowful Mother of mine – he told Her – I promise You sincerely to be forever Your devotee and do penance up till my death." The most pious Mother of Jesus could not be deaf to the pleas of Her afflicted son, who placed in Her his hope of returning to the friendship and grace of God, so that She not only obtained for him true contrition for his faults and the assurance that they had been pardoned, but moreover wished the new convert to receive his liberty shortly afterwards. Having left prison, Jerome spent the rest of his days bitterly weeping the excesses of his life and doing hard penance for them. He founded the Order of the Somascos, to care for the poor, the sick and orphans. He died in the Lord, and the Church has included him among the Saints. Learn never to distrust God, and to place your cause in the blessed hands of Mary, sole hope for sinners.

Soul of suffering, don't ever believe that because your life is full of aches and pains that God loves you less, quite the contrary. God loves no one as He does His Most Holy Mother and, while She led Her life on earth, it was entirely in the exercise of every kind of virtue with the poverty She bore and all the sufferings that She had to undergo, above all in the constant remembrance She had of the eventual destiny of that Son who was to be martyred and crucified for love of His brethren. So then, soul of suffering, may this be for you a consolation; offer up your pains to your Heavenly Mother, to spread further the Reign of Her Son on earth.

That You be there. "I know not whether I am to die in bed, with my family and all my dear ones beside me... But I want You to be there, Sorrowful Virgin. I know not whether I am to die after an operation, surrounded by doctors... But I want You to be there, Mother. Neither do I know if I will die from a heart attack during the night, alone in bed, unable to turn the light on, or call anyone, unable to confess... But I want You to be there, my Mother, to help me to die well. I want to repeat the Act of Contrition often, to say it well at the moment of death."

Mary's Twelve Stars.

You will have read in the Treatise on True Devotion to Mary Most Holy that Saint Louis Mary Grignion recommends us to "honour the twelve privileges and wonders of the Most Holy Virgin. This practice is very longstanding and has its basis in Sacred Scripture. Saint John saw a Woman vested with the sun, Her head crowned with twelve stars, and with the crescent-moon beneath Her feet. This woman is Mary." The Twelve Stars with which the Most Holy Virgin is generally represented, refer principally to Her privileges and wonders. It is well that we know what these twelve privileges and wonders are, so as to thank God for all His benefits and bless and praise the Most Holy Trinity especially for the privileges granted to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and which are the greatest of all Her gifts.

Among other mysteries, Mary's Twelve Privileges represent Her Twelve principal virtues.



Saint Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort explains that true devotion to the Most Holy Virgin is *Holy*. That is, it leads us to avoid sin and to imitate the Most Holy Virgin's virtues.

The twelve principal virtues of the Most Holy Virgin Mary are: 1) Her deepest humility. 2) Her lively faith and acceptance of the Word of God. 3) Her generous obedience. 4) Her thoughtful charity. 5) Her divine wisdom. 6) Her deepest piety. 7) Her patience and fortitude in exile and in labour. 8) Her poverty borne trustingly in the Lord. 9) Her unshakeable hope. 10) Her ardent love for God. 11) Her perfect modesty. 12) Mary's virginal purity.

The twelve Stars moreover symbolize the Apostles, who represent the entire Church gathered around Mary; since the twelve stars are a symbol of the Church which Christ founded on the Apostles, born on Calvary from the Most Sacred Transpierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They also represent Israel's twelve tribes faithful to God in the Church

of the Old Testament. The twelve stars are so important that the Most Holy Virgin Mary Herself wanted to see them engraved on Her Miraculous Medal.

When we are before an image of the Most Holy Virgin and gaze at Her Purest eyes, it seems to us that the noblest tendencies of the soul rise up in our breast. On seeing the Virgin Mother crowned with stars, one feels a desire, a nostalgia, a wordless longing to become good, gentle, pure. Perhaps some will say that "we exaggerate" in our tenderness and devotion to the Mother of God, or that this love might come to be an obstacle between the Lord and us. A Bishop said regarding protestant's criticism of our Marian love: "If the sole accusation by our Lord against me on the day of judgement were that I had loved His Mother to excess, I would then be entirely happy."

But veneration of Mary, does it not diminish the honour we have to render Our Lord Jesus Christ? By no means! Veneration of Mary goes in parallel with the honour due to Jesus Christ, since how can I respect the Son if I do not render homage to His Mother? There is nothing to fear: However much we honour Mary, we cannot honour Her as much as did God Himself by choosing Her as Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Well do we know that all the goodness and beauty we attribute to Mary are gifts from God. Hence all the praises we give Her, we give to the Lord. Therefore theologians teach us that all the honour attributed to the Mother redounds indubitably in glory for the Son. This has to be our insignia: 'To Jesus by Mary'.

Good children make sure to imitate the good examples and virtues of their parents. If we want to be eternally happy and win a lofty throne in Heaven, let us imitate Mary, Our Heavenly Mother, chiefly Her intentions. She does everything for the greater glory of the Lord. We are tugged away in all directions... Tugged one way by our pride. Our deeds are mainly moved by self-love, pride. Let us ask ourselves: "Why have I done this? What motive did I have?" And, if we are sincere, we will have to reply: "So they see me, think well of me, take me into consideration..." Well, this never occurred with the Most Holy Virgin. We are tugged another way by our eagerness for money or human advantage. What people do to get money! If it was for God, as the Virgin Mary did, they would rise up to the heights of virtue. To think that material gain moves us more than God's glory...! We get another tug from our desire for comforts. We do many things for comfort, to avoid suffering. About Her own comfort the Most Holy Virgin had no worry. She knew that Her Divine Son had come to suffer, not to enjoy Himself... Let us imitate Mary's lofty intentions. Our works' value is scant; but performed with upright intention for God's glory, they are transformed: ennobled with value enhanced.

Example. *The three mirrors*. A girl with pious sentiments, but who from time to time gave

way to vanity and ambition in her soul, from the boarding school where she was educated, wrote to her mother asking for a mirror as a reward for her good behaviour and high marks obtained. The mother, who wanted to educate her daughter to be a good Christian, did not think it convenient to deny the favour she requested; but, at the same time, wanted to give her daughter a kindly lesson to correct the repelling defect of vanity. With this idea she wrote thus: "Beloved daughter, I am sending you the mirror you ask me for, except that... instead of one, three." Three? The girl said, raising her eyes from the paper. What does she mean? Afterwards, continuing the interrupted reading, saw that she said: "In the first you will see what you are, in the second what you will be, and in the third what you should be." Once she had read the letter, the girl was left perplexed, and she fell into a thousand conjectures, but without the least result. She had to resign herself to waiting, though highly annoying at her sixteen years! Meanwhile she tired of counting the days, hours, minutes till the announced packet reached her hands. But then, at last, after three interminable days, she received a missive. Once in possession, she went running to her room, and finding herself alone, opened it impatiently. Shortly after beginning to unpack the parcel, her eyes fell upon an object well wrapped with the number 1. She unwrapped it with extreme care, while her heart beat violently, and saw a modest but faithful mirror, which, according to her mother's promise, showed her as she was, her youth, her graces and the charms of the spring of life. "How good my mother is!" exclaimed the daughter, and joyful, radiant with jubilee, she contemplated herself once and again before the mirror. But what could the second object, heavier than the first, contain? She opened it anxiously and found the picture of a cranium, most faithful image as well of what she would be one morning more or less far away. The sight of the object could do no less than excite grave reflections in her mind and, catching on to the lesson her mother had wanted to give her, she lingered with the second mirror far longer than with the first. She still had the third object to unwrap; however, taught by the discovery in the second, her hands wavered. At last she decided ...when behold, all of a sudden an immense cry of joy escaped from her lips. In the third, wrapped in the finest linen, was a splendid statue of Mary Immaculate! "This here is what I ought to be," she exclaimed, "this I will be by the grace of God," and prostrate on her knees, she prayed lengthily. I know not whether from then on our lass yet consulted the first mirror; what I do know is that she always kept preferably before her eyes the second and the third. And when she felt disheartened at the sight of the miseries of the second, she raised her eyes to the third, whereby courage, hope and joy were again reborn in her soul. Let us raise our thoughts and heart to Mary. Let us gaze upon Her, so beautiful and so pure! Let us take Her virtues as a mirror. In this fashion we shall know what we should be and, thanks to Her protection, really come to be. There is no other way to be worthy children of such a Mother.

Let us recall and meditate on the meaning of Mary's Twelve Stars, namely those Twelve Privileges of Mary Most Holy, which are the following: 1) Mary's Eternal Predestination to be the Mother of God and Creation of Her Divine Soul. 2) The Immaculate Conception of Mary Irredeemed. 3) Mary's wholehearted submission and perfect conformity to God's Will. 4) Mary's eminent Sanctity without a trace of venial sin. 5) The Annunciation to Mary. 6) Mary's Divine Maternity and holiest Childbirth. 7) Mary's Perfect and Perpetual Virginity. 8) the Martyrdom of Mary's Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart beside the Cross of Her Son as Coredemptrix and Coreparatrix. 9) Mary's joy at the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. 10) The Immortality and Assumption of Mary into Heaven in Body and Soul. 11) The Royalty of Mary, Queen and Mother of all the Angels and Saints, and of all created things. 12) Mary's Universal Mediation in the Dispensation of all graces and Her Omnipotent Intercession before the Lord obtaining everything She desires.

Mary Most Holy is Queen of Creation, of the Angels and of the Saints, from Heaven She fulfils Her mission of Suppliant Omnipotence, of Mediatrix and Dispensatrix of the graces of Redemption. The powerful intercession of Our Heavenly Mother can be shown by the



countless miracles She has wrought in favour of Her children on earth in every epoch. She, and always She, because Mary is Mother of Mercy, our Advocate before Her Divine Son, Suppliant Omnipotence, Mediatrix of all graces. The deeds and sayings which follow are taken from real life. Devotion to Mary, as the Saints affirm, is a pledge of salvation.

Wonders of Most Holy Mary in examples

Mother of God. The Council of Ephesus was held in the year 431 in order to refute and condemn the errors of Nestorius, who denied the Divine Maternity of Mary. The population of the town and its surroundings gathered in the square facing the Church where the Council was being held. It was celebrated, and they stayed there almost the whole day, impatient to know the results. When at last, in the evening, it was learned that Nestorius had been condemned

and anathematized, and that the Church's Doctrine formally declared Mary to be the Mother of God, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no limits; they cried out loud: "Mary is truly the Mother of God! Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!" By then it was night and the men lit torches to take the Council Fathers back home. The entire town was illuminated and signs of true faith and joy were seen everywhere, as proof of their love and devotion to Mary.

Health of Humanity. Abbot Pleury, author of an Ecclesiastical History, tells us of the following event, which took place in Rome during the pontificate of Gregory I the Great: Never, he says, had such a terrible misfortune been seen; never had such a cruel plague ever been experienced. No remedy availed, and the evil daily claimed an excess of victims of all ages, sexes and conditions: some died sneezing, others yawning, and almost no one with time to realize. In vain the pious Pontiff preached penance and fasting; in vain he ordered public prayers to be made. At last he thought of addressing himself entirely to the Most Blessed Virgin, and as if by inspiration he went to look for an image painted by Saint Luke, and he paraded it in procession through the streets of Rome on Resurrection Sunday. Oh prodigy! As soon as the image of the Mother of God left Her Sanctuary, the plague ceased in such a fashion that no shadow of a doubt remained of a true miracle. At the same moment Archangel Saint Michael appeared over Hadrian's tomb, after this called Sant-Angelo Castle, in human form, sheathing a bloody sword as sign of the epidemic's end, and the Celestial Spirits were heard singing in honour of Mary the following hymn of recognition: 'Regina Cœli, lætare, alleluia...' to which the Sovereign Pontiff added: 'Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.' The Church later adopted this hymn to greet the Queen of Heaven during the Easter season, which is the time of Her joys.

Faithful Virgin. Mary rewards everything done in favour of Her servants as though done for Herself. In a locality in the Papal States, a young woman very devoted to Mary fell into the power of a bandit leader, and fearing that he would outrage her in some way, she begged him, out of love for the Holy Virgin, not to do her any harm, to which the thief answered: "Fear nothing, since you implore me in the name of the Mother of God: I only demand of you that you commend me to Her in your prayers;" and immediately he accompanied her on her way until leaving her in a safe place. The following night the Virgin appeared to the thief in a dream, and after praising his good deed, She promised to bear it in mind and even reward him for it. Some time later he fell into the hands of justice, and having been sentenced to death, on the eve of the execution the Virgin appeared to him again and asked him if he knew Her. The prisoner replied that he thought he had seen her on another occasion, to which Mary added: "I am the Mother of God, and I come to announce to you, in reward for what you did for Me, that tomorrow you will die, but with such contrition that you will immediately enter Paradise." These words awoke in the bandit such repentance for his sins that he shed abundant tears, giving thanks to the Holy Virgin. Afterwards he confessed with

true contrition, he reported his vision to his confessor and begged him to publish everywhere the grace that Mary had just granted him, and bore his sentence with the greatest resignation. On his face the unmistakable signs of the blessed were noted.

Divine Missionary and Evangelizer. Even unbelievers experience the effects of Mary's charity by invoking Her holy name. The influence that Mary has received from Her Divine Son has been beneficial in all the countries where She has exercised it. It is reported that when an Indian was on his deathbed and abandoned by everyone, he turned to Mary, whose power he had heard being celebrated by Christians. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him saying: "Here I am; I am the one you invoke. Rise up and become a Christian." The Indian, who suddenly felt cured, arose and went to look for a missionary to instruct and baptize him, this miracle being the reason for many others to convert.

Mother of the Forsaken. In the life of Sister Catherine of Saint Augustine it is told that in the same place where this servant of God dwelt there lived a woman named Mary who in her youth had been a sinner and even in old age continued obstinate in her perversity so that, thrown out of the town, she was forced to live confined in a cave, where she died abandoned by everyone and without the Last Sacraments, and so was buried in open ground. Sister Catherine, who used to commend to God with great devotion the souls of those she knew had died, after learning of the unfortunate death of that poor old woman, did not even think of praying for her, considering her damned as everyone else did. Four years passed, and one day a soul in torment appeared to her and said: "Sister Catherine, what misfortune is mine! You entrust to God the souls of those who die and on my soul alone have you had no compassion". "Who are you?" – the servant of God said to her. – "I am – she replied – poor Mary who died in the cave." – "But have you been saved?" , Sister Catherine asked. – "Yes, I have been saved by the mercy of the Virgin Mary." – "But how?" – "When I saw myself at the doors of death, seeing myself so full of sin and abandoned by everyone, I turned to the Mother of God and said to Her: 'Lady, You are the refuge of the forsaken; I now find myself abandoned by everyone; You are my only hope, only You can help me, have mercy on me.' The Holy Virgin obtained an act of contrition for me, I died and was saved; and now my Queen has granted me that my torments be shortened, letting me suffer in intensity what I should have purged for many years; I just need a few Masses to be freed from Purgatory. I beg you to have them celebrated and I promise to pray for you always, especially to God and Mary."

Predilect Daughter of God the Father. A doctor was visiting a patient who had an ulcer on his leg. He dressed it with great diligence and exquisite care. The sore was closing, but when it seemed about to heal over, it worsened and opened again. Dressed again, and almost healed, it opened again. "But what is there about this bedevilled ulcer that it never closes?", the doctor said perplexed. "Look, doctor, don't tire yourself further; I see that I will always have this open sore and it will never close. Because I'm going to confess something. We were three friends in a war and we came across a statue of the Virgin Mary on a road. We took it as a target for our rifles. 'Let's see who is the best shot.' One friend shot and hit it on the forehead; the second shot and hit it in the chest; I shot third and hit it in the leg. A few days later the first fell in combat wounded in the forehead; the other, wounded in the chest, and I, wounded in this leg. Since then this wound has not closed and will not close. It is the wound of the Justice of God." This evidences how severely God chastises those who offend His Most Holy Mother and splendidly rewards those who honour Her.

Our Defence and Divine Treasuress. Caesar and Vincent de Beauvais report that a young noble, who had squandered all his fortune with his excesses and dissolute life, was reduced to begging for the sustenance he needed so as not to perish. Ashamed of his condition, he decided to leave a country where previously he had been one of the richest, and having set out on his way, at a very short distance he found a former servant of his father, who, seeing him so afflicted, tried to console him by telling him that he would present him to a very



powerful and liberal prince with whom he would undoubtedly make his fortune. He then accompanied the young man and, crossing a wood, he led him to a place where there was a kind of pool, where the servant began a conversation with someone invisible. The young man asked the servant with whom he was speaking, and the detestable servant, who was nothing but a sorcerer, replied: "With a demon." The young man was frightened; but the perverse servant told him to fear nothing, and addressing the demon, he added: "Sir, this young man is in the greatest misery, and he would like to recover his former fortune." "Very well," the enemy responded, "I will make you even richer than before as long as you obey me, and from this moment on the first thing I demand is that you deny God." The unfortunate young man was horrified to hear such a proposition; but forced and seduced by the sorcerer, he ended up consenting. "Furthermore," said the demon, "it is necessary that you deny the Virgin Mary, our mortal enemy." "No!" said the young man, "I

will never do that! I prefer to beg than deny my Holy Mother," and abandoning his two interlocutors, instead of continuing on his way, returned to his country. There was a church dedicated to the Most Blessed Virgin on the road, and the young man, filled with the deepest remorse, fell to his knees, and with tears in his eyes begged Mary, whose image was on the altar, to obtain forgiveness for his sins, and above all the horrific crime of having denied his Creator. Oh prodigy! At that moment he seemed to hear a voice coming from the mouth of the image, whereby Mary was interceding with her Son who, agreeing to all Her requests, refused nothing that his Holy Mother asked of him. All this took place in the presence of a rich man from the country, who had bought the property of the dissipated young man. Mary's mercy towards this sinner and the signal signs of protection that he had just received, had such an effect on the spirit of the rich man that He gave him his only daughter in marriage and named him heir to all his property. In this way the young man recovered the grace of God at the same time as the goods of fortune through the mediation of Mary.

Immaculate Conception. During the winter of 1862, a German protestant university professor, Dr. Gustav Bickel, a learned orientalist, was in London busy copying some unpublished poems by Saint Ephrem, Doctor of the Church, who lived in the 4th century. These poems are full of praise for the Most Blessed Virgin and, among other privileges of Hers, celebrate that of Her Immaculate Conception. While the learned German orientalist went over them, he made this reflection: "If in the Church of the IV century the Marian beliefs were the same as those professed by Catholics today, the protestantism that rejects them cannot be the true religion." He studied the question thoroughly and, soon after, in 1865 embraced Catholicism. Two years later, he was ordained Priest and celebrated his first Mass at the main altar of the former Benedictine Abbey of Saint Boniface of Fulda.

Crusher of Satan's head. The story of Saint Mary of Egypt is famous, told in the first book of the Lives of the Desert Fathers. At the age of twelve she ran away from her parents' home and went to Alexandria, where her bad life was the scandal of the entire city. After another sixteen years, she left there and, wandering about, arrived at Jerusalem, when the Feast of the Holy Cross was being celebrated and, seeing many people entering the church, wanted to enter as well, more out of curiosity than out of devotion; but at the door she felt an invisible hand stopping her. She wanted to enter again, and the same thing happened to her, for the third and fourth time. Then the unhappy woman, retiring to a corner of the plaza, understood by Divine Light that her evil conduct had separated her from the Church. She raised her eyes and saw there close at hand, by the grace of God, an image of Most Holy Mary, to which she began to speak, weeping, in this way: "Oh, Mother of God, have mercy on this sinner! Neither do I deserve that You look upon me, but You are the refuge of sinners;

protect me and favour me for the love of Jesus Christ, Your Most Holy Son. Make it possible for me to enter the church, and I will change my life, and will go to do penance wherever You tell me.” Then she heard an inner voice, as of the Virgin, who told her: “Well, since you have turned to Me and want to change your life, enter the church, which from now on will no longer be closed to you.” She entered, adored the Holy Cross with abundance of tears, returned to the image, and said to her: “Here I am ready, dear Lady: where do You want me to retire to do penance?” – “Cross the Jordan – the Virgin answered – and there you will find your rest.” She confessed and received Communion and, crossing the river, arrived at the desert, and understood that there she should stay. For the first seventeen years she had to suffer terrible assaults from demons; But she always turned to the Virgin Mary, and the Most Holy Virgin gave her the strength to resist and overcome. Finally, having spent fifty-seven years in that solitude, being now eighty-seven years old, by Divine Providence she was found by Saint Zosimus, Abbot, to whom she referred her entire life, begging him to return the following year with Holy Communion. The abbot did so, and the penitent Mary asked him the same for another year, after which he returned, but found her by then dead, though surrounded by a great radiance, and with these words written by her hand: “Bury here the corpse of this sinner and pray to God for her soul.” All of a sudden a lion came up and made a hole with its claws. The Saint buried her, and returned to the monastery, telling everyone about the mercies that God had wrought upon that happiest penitent.

Consolation of the Afflicted. A legend says that, when the inhabitants of Nazareth were afflicted by some sorrow or tribulation, they would say: “Let’s go to our ‘solace’.” And they went in search of Jesus and Mary in the Nazareth workshop, where they found peace, consolation, calm. If we turn to the Virgin in all our needs of body and soul, we will always find peace, compassion and consolation.

Cause of Our Joy. Father Auriema narrates that a poor shepherd girl who used to guard her flock loved Mary so intensely that her whole delight consisted in visiting Our Lady’s hermitage in the sierra and staying there, leaving the flock to graze, while she talked and paid tribute to her beloved Mother. As the image, which was carved, was devoid of vestments, she made a mantle for it as best she could. Another day, with flowers from the fields she made a garland and, going up onto the altar, she placed the crown on the Virgin, saying: “My mother, I would very much like to gird you with a crown of gold and precious stones, but since I am poor, receive this crown of flowers from me and accept it as a pledge of the love I hold for You.” With these and other gifts this devout girl ever sought to serve and honour her beloved Lady. But let’s see how this Good Mother rewarded the visits and love of this daughter of Hers. The young shepherdess fell seriously ill, and it happened that two Friars were passing through that area. Tired from the journey, they rested under a tree. One of them fell asleep, but both had the same vision. They saw a procession of the loveliest maidens, among whom one stood out in beauty and majesty. “Who are you, dear Lady, and where are you heading by these roads?” one of the Religious asked the maiden of unequalled majesty. “I am the Mother of God,” she replied, “and I am going with these holy Virgins to visit a shepherd girl who is dying in the next village and who has visited me so many times.” With that, the vision disappeared. The two good servants of God said to each other: “Let us go and visit her as well.” They set out and soon found the little house and the shepherd girl on her straw bed. They greeted her and she said to them: “Brothers, pray to God that He show you the company attending me.” They knelt down and saw Mary standing next to the dying maiden with a crown in her hand, comforting her. Then the Holy Virgins of the procession began a very lovely canticle. In the transports of such heavenly harmony and while Mary was about to place the crown on her, the blessed soul of the shepherd girl left her body and went with Mary to Paradise.

Most Chaste Mother. A young Genoese who was travelling by sea in the company of a Friar began to read an obscene book, to which he was very attached. The Religious,



observing the immoral conduct of his companion, sought to dissuade him, saying: “Do you want to do something for the Most Blessed Virgin? – Yes, answered the young man. – Well, I would like you to tear up that book and throw it into the sea in Her honour. – Here is the book, my Father: do with it whatever you will.” – “No,” the Religious replied, “I want you to be the one to make this sacrifice in honour of Mary.” The young man immediately threw the book away and the Holy Virgin so touched his heart that upon arrival in Genoa he became a Friar. Let us love and prefer Mary to everything we are most attached to, and our love will not be long in reaping its reward.

Our Lady of the Snows. Uplifting story of the miraculous founding of the Church of Saint Mary Major in Rome. In the middle of the IV century, in the pontificate of Pope Saint Liberius (352-366),

and during the reign of the Emperor Constantius, the patrician John, from one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Rome, even more illustrious for his piety than for his birth, wanted to give some public proof of his love for the Most Holy Virgin, to whom he was singularly devoted. As he had no children, he resolved in agreement with his wife, not inferior to him in nobility and virtue, to make Mary the heir of all their goods, being the One who, after God, occupied the pre-eminent place in his heart. Once this resolution had been made, they did prayer and gave alms in order to be worthy that the Most Blessed Virgin might show them how best to employ the wealth they had consecrated to Her. This Mother of Mercy deigned to listen to the petition of her pious servants, and on the night of August 5th She appeared to the spouses separately in dreams, expressing Her pleasure at their devotion, and telling them that the Will of Her Son and Hers was for them to use their wealth to build a church in Her honour on the Esquiline Hill, in the exact place that they would find miraculously traced out by snow. Convinced that this vision common to both of them was supernatural, they went to see the Pope, who that same night had dreamt a similar dream, and seeing that this was something from Heaven, he wanted to verify the fact for himself. For this purpose, he ordered the clergy, the people, the patrician John and his wife, to go in procession to the designated place. When they arrived they found it covered in snow, despite it being the hottest season. Such a prodigy filled all those present with admiration which they could not but help express in unison, and their admiration was followed by the most lively feelings of recognition, respect and devotion. The temple was immediately built according to the plan miraculously traced out by the snow and at the expense of the patrician. This wonder, which had been quite visible, could do no less than encourage public devotion, and everyone began to look at this Church as a place singularly blessed and privileged by the Most Holy Virgin, who had deigned to choose it. Though in Rome, as in all towns, there were oratories consecrated to God and His Holy Mother, it can be said that this was the first Church in Rome dedicated to the Mother of God, whose dedication is celebrated on August 5th, the day of the feast of Our Lady of the Snows, who gave rise to the construction of this temple, known in Rome under the title of Saint Mary Major.

Gateway to Heaven. The history of the founding of the Society of Jesus in the kingdom of Naples tells of a young Scottish nobleman named William Elphinstone. He was a relative of King James and, having been born in heresy, continued in it. However, illuminated by divine grace, which made him see his errors, he moved to France where, with the help of a good Priest, also Scottish, and, above all, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, he finally discovered the truth. He renounced heresy and became a Catholic. He then went to Rome. One day a friend saw him very distressed and weeping, and asking him for the cause, he replied that the previous night his mother had appeared to him, damned, and had said to him: “Son, happy are you for having entered the true Church; I, having died obstinate in

heresy, have been lost.” From then on he became more and more fervent in his devotion to Mary, choosing Her as his only Mother, and She inspired him to become a religious, and to this he bound himself by vow. But since he was ill, he headed for Naples to be cured with a change of scenery. And in Naples, God wanted him to die as a religious. In fact, shortly after arriving, he fell seriously ill, and with prayers and tears begged the superiors to accept him. And in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, when Holy Viaticum was brought to him, he took his vows and was declared a member of the Society of Jesus. After this, it was admirable the way he moved everyone with the expressions with which he thanked his Mother Mary for having led him to die in the true Church and in the house of God, among his religious brethren. “What a joy,” he exclaimed, “to die in the midst of these angels!” When they exhorted him to try to rest, he responded: “No, it is no longer the time to rest when the end of my life is approaching!” Shortly before dying he said to those around him: “Brothers, don’t you see the Angels accompanying me?” Hearing him utter some words under his breath, a Religious asked him what he was saying. And he responded that the Angel had revealed to him that he would be in purgatory for a very short time and that he would very soon go to Paradise. Afterwards he went back to converse with his sweet Mother Mary. And saying: “Mother, Mother!”, like a child leaning back in his mother’s arms to rest, he peacefully expired. Shortly afterward a Religious learnt by revelation that he was already in Paradise.

Mother of Mercy. Saint Blanche of Castile, mother of Saint Louis IX, King of France, was known throughout the kingdom for her merciful and compassionate heart. Once when she was spending a certain day with the ladies and gentlemen of her court near the Paris prison, a prisoner, from a high window, implored the noble lady for mercy. “On my own,” the noble lady replied, “I cannot give you the freedom you so long for, but I will intercede so that it may be granted to you.” And she was very willing to fulfil her promise, because, without wasting a moment, she went to her son, took him to the same prison and, once there, said to him: “For the love that you have for me and that I have for you, grant freedom to that poor unfortunate man who is wasting away in prison.” This is exactly what the king did; he ordered that the prisoner be brought to his presence, and before releasing him, told him: “You are free, but do not forget that you owe everything to my mother; without her you would have achieved nothing...” Neither is the King of Heaven able to deny a request from His Mother. This is taught quite clearly by the event of the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, where Jesus, at Mary’s request, worked His first public miracle.

Celestial Stairway. A gracious legend, taken from the Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi, justifies the hope of Mary’s devotees for the day of judgment. The Queen of Heaven has made this promise: “I will stand before my servants at the hour of their death, so that they may pass the threshold of this world without being struck by the enemies that surround them.” Saint Bernard calls Mary “the stairway of sinners,” and the following legend agrees with this doctrine. Fray León, one of the first companions of Saint Francis of Assisi, saw in dreams the terrible scenes of Universal Judgment. He saw that on a vast plain, the Angels, to the sound of trumpets, gathered an immense crowd of people. There were two ladders on that plain, one of gold and the other of silver, that reached from Earth up to Heaven. At the top of the golden staircase was Our Lord Jesus Christ, with His face severe like that of a Judge, and a few stairs below was Saint Francis who, exhorting his Sons gathered there in large numbers, said to them: “Come, Brethren, come and be not afraid, approach this Sweet Saviour with confidence, for He is the one who invites you.” Encouraged by the words of their Father, the friars began to climb; but some, who were barely on the first steps and others already halfway up the ladder, fell miserably. Not a single friar was left on the stairway. In view of this, Saint Francis, turning to Our Lord, begged Him with fervent prayers not to cast them far from Him; But Jesus, showing His wounds flowing with blood, said to him: “See how your brethren have treated me.” Then the Holy Patriarch, going down some steps, said to his sons: “Do not be discouraged, have



confidence; go to the silver ladder and by it climb up safely.” At the top of that ladder the Glorious Virgin then appeared, crowned with great splendour, full of clemency and mercy and, as the Religious ascended, this Most Pious Mother gave them Her hand and with Her help all entered Paradise. Sad for us if we do not turn to this Sovereign Lady, by whose means those who are not worthy of climbing up by the stairway and upright path of Righteousness must obtain their salvation!

Beacon of Salvation. In Nant, a small town in the department of Aveyron, where I was some time ago, I had the opportunity of meeting an elderly woman worker, whose sadness had caught my attention. I learnt that she had lost her only son and, wanting to show her my sympathies, I began to talk to her about her misfortunes. Here, word by word, is what I heard shortly after from her lips: “I had one only son, and I loved him as much as you can imagine. He knew how to respond to me; He was smart,

and at school he always deserved first prizes. This made me perhaps too proud. At the age of sixteen, in an open examination, he won a job, and was proposed in first place. I opposed his departure. But a brilliant future for him was promised to me; I was told that it was very convenient to let him go; so I consented and gave in to his insistence. At the moment of separating, I said to him, hugging him: ‘My son, you are devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin; remember that She never abandons those who turn to Her: do you promise not to forget Her?’ ‘Yes, mother,’ Charles answered, holding me in his arms. He arrived in Marseilles. At first he wrote to me frequently; His letters were very affectionate; but little by little they became scarcer. Afterwards... I cried, I begged, I waited, and not a single word of him reached me. One day, a long time later, I received a telegram in which I was told: ‘Set out on your way immediately; your son needs you.’ Twenty-four hours later I was in Marseilles. I ran to Charles’ house. The doorman wouldn’t let me up. – ‘I am his mother,’ I told him: and, heedlessly, in a mad rush I entered my son’s bedroom despite the fact that two gentlemen tried to prevent me. – Poor Charles; my dear son!... he was very sick and hugging me he told me: ‘Mother, I have implored the Virgin and She has listened to me. Find me a Priest.’ – I calmed him down and he told me how he had been saved ...”

House of Gold. In a church in Rome, a little old woman, having heard a sermon on the Immaculate Conception, went to the sacristy and offered the Priest five thousand liras to say a Mass for her intentions. The Priest, amazed at her alms, told her: “Oh, perhaps you have received some grace from the Virgin!” – “Oh, no; I haven’t received anything special. I have acquired this money from my own efforts and savings, and I generously offer it up to the Lord for having made the Most Blessed Virgin so beautiful;” – all beautiful like a House of finest Gold He has embellished inside and out.

Our Mother and Companion. John Ciudad Duarte, 1495-1550, was his name. Francis I, at war with Charles V, laid siege to Fuenterrabía. Don Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Count of Oropesa, went with his soldiers, including John, to the frontier city. It was the year 1521, the same year in which a French bullet wounded the noble Ignatius of Loyola in Pamplona. John, who was 26 years old at the time, was loved by everyone because of his gentleness and humility; but his contact with the dissipated soldiery gradually cooled the fervour of his usual devotions. One day, on the wings of charity always lively in him, he departed on a mule, recently taken from the enemy, in search of water for his wounded and sick companions. But he lost control of his mount and, in a crazy gallop, was taken far from his own and into French territory, until he ended up injured on the roadside. When John came to himself, seeing himself injured and far from his own, he turned to the Virgin; and at once She appeared to him in the form of a shepherdess who, after giving him water to drink from the hollow of

Her most pure hands, told him: "I am the One whom you have called to your aid." She reproached him for his lukewarmness and charged him not to abandon prayer. Regretting his past lack of fervour, he fell to his knees and prayed... until an Angel appeared and ordered him to go in search of his own. Back in his camp, he resumed his duties as a soldier, but without neglecting his religious practices. As a rich booty entrusted to his custody had been stolen, he was on the verge of being hanged. He commended himself to the Virgin and She saved him at the last moment through the intervention of a high-ranking officer, who happened to arrive at the gallows where John was, and, having compassion on him, spared his life, commuting his sentence to expulsion from the army. He later enlisted among the soldiers who went to the defence of Vienna, besieged by the turks. After his military career, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary encouraged him to work with the poor and sick. The Child Jesus gave him the name 'John of God' and directed him to Granada. And at the end of his days, when he was about to die, Saint John of God



awaited the visit of Mary, of whom he was so great a devotee; but not yet seeing Her, felt afflicted and complained to Her grieving. But when his time came, at the opportune moment the Mother of God appeared to him, and almost rebuking him for his lack of confidence, she pronounced these tender words that should encourage all Mary's devotees: "John, it is not my custom to abandon my devotees in their last moments;" as if saying: "John, my son, what were you thinking? That I had abandoned you? Don't you know that I cannot abandon my devotees at the hour of death? I didn't come earlier because it wasn't the right moment; Now that it is, I am here to take you. Come with Me to Paradise!" Shortly after, the Saint expired, entering Heaven to thank his most loving Queen eternally.

Auxiliatrix of the Dying. Admirable effects of turning to Mary, even in the most deplorable situation. There was in Turin, in 1610, a heretic so obstinate that not even at the point of death did he agree to be converted, despite the fact that several Priests had exhorted him eight days before. Finally one managed, almost by force, to have him pronounce these words: "Mother of Jesus, help me", and at that moment, it seemed as if the heretic woke up from a dream, and said: "I want to die a Catholic." In fact, within two hours he was reconciled with the Church and had surrendered his soul.

Tower of David. It is a story from the time of Napoleon III. France, as a token of gratitude, and with the cannons of Sebastopol, was to raise a magnificent statue to the Mother of God, for long ages Empress of the Franks. A Jesuit was in charge of collecting donations from the people. One day, and with that objective, he introduced himself to a millionaire Jew, who exclaimed, more indignant than surprised at the request: "How!" he said, "do you not know that I am a jew?" —"Precisely that is why I ask you," the Jesuit replied, imperturbably, "besides being the wonder of Heaven and earth, Mary is the glory of Israel." This reflection convinced the jew who, without replying a single word, went to his desk and, without counting, gave the petitioner some thousand-franc bills. Two years later, prostrate before the gigantic sculpture once erected, from which Mary seemed to watch over France, among the restless crowd a man had been praying for a long time, as prayer should be made amid the Angels up above in Heaven. He was the Jew. The Virgin had repaid his banknotes with that ardent faith that bankers on earth cannot give.

Anchor of Salvation. While Saint Francis Borgia, General of the Society of Jesus, was in Rome, an ecclesiastic appeared who wanted to speak to him. But the Saint, who was very busy at the time, in his place sent Father Acosta to whom the ecclesiastic told the following: "I am, he said, a Priest and preacher: I have profaned the holy habit that I wear with the most shameful disorders. And as the limit of the offences I have given to God, I have come to the

point of distrusting His Infinite Mercy. One day when I had just preached against obstinate sinners who live sunk in sin and despair of forgiveness, a man came before me for confession, and after having told me his story, he concluded by saying that he was damned beyond hope. To fulfil my ministry I answered that if he changed his life he could expect everything from God's Goodness. Then the man stood up and said to me: 'And you who know how to preach to others so well, why don't you abandon sin instead of living in despair? Know that I am an Angel sent from Heaven and the sins I have told you are yours. Return to the Lord and He will forgive you.' Having said these words, he disappeared; leaving me with the firm intention of taking advantage of his warning, and for some time I abandoned my bad habits; But then I sinned again as before, and while I was celebrating one day, Jesus Christ spoke to me sensibly from the Host: 'Why do you maltreat Me, when I treat you with such kindness?' This warning made me think again, but I was no stronger than before and I returned to my past habits. Today, finally, finding myself alone in my room, I saw a young man enter and, from under his cloak taking out a Chalice and from it a Host, and looking at me with eyes burning with anger, he said to me: 'Do you recognize the Lord that I have in my hands? Do you remember all the graces He has given you? Well, here is the punishment for your ingratitude.' And taking out a sword that was hanging from his belt, he prepared to take my life. I got down on my knees and exclaimed: 'In the name of Mary and for Her love I ask you to let me live to do penance.' The young man held back the blow, and told me: 'Only this recourse was left to save you from death; But take advantage of it, because it is the last for you.' Then he disappeared and I come to beg you to admit me into the Company." Father Acosta tried to encourage the ecclesiastic, who, on the advice of Saint Francis, entered, not into the Company, but into another religious Order where he lived and died in holiness.

Mother of Mankind. The famous Viennese singer Miliza Korjus (1909-1980), at the peak of her career, in the middle of a professional tour, was about to lose half of her life: her voice, according to the diagnosis of the best specialists. That voice that had given her so many triumphs, would now only remain on cinema films. The tour that began in Mexico in 1946 would be interrupted, like so many other pending contracts. What to do in those circumstances? Humanly, everything was lost. That was when the memory of the 15,000 pilgrims whom she, as a tourist, had seen passing through the Basilica of Tepeyac, began to take on new importance in her agitated mind. She herself, a protestant, had witnessed that spectacle during her visits, but admired it only with the eyes of a tourist, as picturesque. Now the Marian fervour of that motley people moved her trustingly to invoke the Virgin of Guadalupe, asking Her for a cure. The day set for the unavoidable operation arrived. Before performing it, doctors routinely performed the preliminary examination. Admiration was drawn on their faces. They looked again and confirmed, astonished, that it was true. – "But, what have you done?" – "I took the medicines that were prescribed to me to prepare for the operation." – "No, no. What have you done to be cured?" – "I asked the Virgin of Guadalupe to heal me." – "And have you tried your voice yet?" – "You forbade me to sing." – "Well, see if you can sing." The artist's voice resounded clear and melodious. They examined her carefully and declared her completely healthy. The next day, one more pilgrim joined the river of people going to kneel at the feet of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Another white marble plaque appeared, days later, at the entrance to the sacristy of the Basilica. It only said: "Thank you, dear Mother - Miliza Korjus." On the eve of her return to Europe, she declared to a journalist: "I came here a protestant and I go back a Catholic, because everything I have asked of the Virgin of Guadalupe has been granted to me."

Mirror of Justice. A prince's son, named Eskil, was sent by his father to study in Hildesheim, a city in Lower Saxony. However, the noble young man gave himself up to a licentious and wasted life. Falling seriously ill, within a few days he was at death's door. Seeing himself at the end of his life, he had a vision: he saw himself in a fiery furnace; He believed he was in hell but, without thinking, he was able to leave, and found himself in a palace. Upon entering

a large hall he saw the Most Holy Virgin who said to him: “How come you have the boldness to appear in My presence? Get out of here and go to the fire of hell that you well deserve.” The young man implored mercy of the Virgin, and turning to some people who were in the room, asked them to join their prayers to his. They did so, but the Holy Virgin said to them: “Do you not know the licentious life that he has led without having even deigned to pray a Hail Mary?” The lawyers told her: “My Lady, he will amend his life.” To which the young man added: “I promise truly to mend my ways and I will be Your faithful and loyal servant.” The Virgin then mitigated her severity, and She replied: “Very well, I accept your promise, be faithful to Me, receive my blessing, so that you may be freed from dying in sin and from hell.” With that, the vision of Our Lady disappeared. Eskil, coming out of the vision, told others of the grace he had received from Mary. From then on he began to lead a holy life, always nurturing in his heart a great and tender love for Mary. He was later appointed Archbishop of Luna, in Denmark, where he converted many infidels. When he was older, he renounced the mitre and became a monk of Clairvaux, where after four years of a penitential and retired life he died the death of the just. Some authors count him among the Cistercian saints.



Sweet Stay of Her Devotees. Father Razzi, a Camaldolese, tells how as a young man, when his father died, he was sent by his mother to the court of a prince. His mother, who was very devoted to the Virgin, when she said goodbye to him, made him promise that he would pray a Hail Mary every day with this invocation: “Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of death.” Arriving at court, soon the young man became so dissolute that the prince sent him away. Desperate and not knowing what to do, he became a highwayman. Nevertheless, he did not stop praying as he had promised his mother. He finally fell into the hands of justice and was sentenced to death. In prison, the day before he was to be executed, thinking about his disgrace and the pain he was going to cause his mother, and frightened at the death that awaited him on the scaffold, he cried inconsolably. The demon, seeing him oppressed by such great sorrow, appeared to him in the form of a gallant young man and told him that he could free him from prison if he did as he told him. The condemned man gave in to everything. Then the pretended young man told him that he was the demon come to his aid. First of all, he demanded that he renounce Jesus Christ and the Holy Sacraments. The young man accepted. Next the demon demanded that he deny the Virgin Mary and renounce Her protection. “I will never do that,” the young man replied at once; and turning to Mary he said his usual prayer: “Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of death.” Upon hearing these words, the demon disappeared. The young man was dismayed by the infamy he had committed by denying Jesus Christ. But turning to the Virgin he asked Her to grant him great sorrow for all his sins, then he confessed very contrite and dissolved in tears. On the way to the scaffold, in a niche, he saw an image of Mary, and he greeted Her with his customary prayer: “Blessed Virgin, help me at the hour of death.” And the statue, in full view of everyone, bowed its head in greeting. Moved, he asked to be allowed to kiss the feet of the image. The bailiffs did not wish this, but given the uproar starting up among the people, they let him. When the young man leant down to kiss the feet of the image, Mary reached out her arm and grabbed his hand so tightly that there was no way to free him. Faced with such a portent, everyone began to shout out requesting pardon for the man condemned to death. And pardon was granted. Returning to his homeland, he led an exemplary life, living with great fervour his devotion to Mary who had freed him from temporal and eternal death.

Most Efficacious Protectress. The venerable Father Bernard, who had so much fame in Paris in the 17th century, for his charity towards prisoners and for his devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, one day helped a man condemned to death on his way of being led to the

scaffold. This unfortunate man, who added to his past crimes the most horrible blasphemies, had already exhausted the patience of all who had exhorted him to convert; but Father Bernard, who did not despair of being able to achieve his conversion, accompanied him to the foot of the gallows, climbed the stairs with him, and when, as a result of his pious zeal, he was about to embrace him, received a kick from him that made him fall from the highest point. Father Bernard, though hurt, did not on that account fail to get up, and on his knees invoked his powerful Protectress with his customary prayer: 'Remember, etc.' But oh admirable effect of Mary's Protection! Before finishing his prayer, it was seen that the prisoner, melting into tears of remorse, publicly asked forgiveness, confessed, and edified as much by his repentance as he had horrified by his obstinacy.

Queen of all Creation. On May 31st, 1889, due to torrential rains, an immense reservoir located near Johnstown (United States) suddenly broke its dikes and 20 million tons of water escaped with unprecedented violence, flooding the city and a large number of surrounding towns. About two thousand people perished in the catastrophe, with which the truly prodigious event that we are going to relate is linked. At the time when the frightful flood broke upon Cambria City, the month of May was being celebrated with all pomp; The church was full of faithful, who, upon hearing the noise of the approaching torrent, fled hastily. In a few minutes the water level in the church reached a height of more than four meters. The flood wreaked havoc inside and outside the church, breaking everything in its path. When it became possible to enter the church, the spectacle of the most complete devastation was to be seen. A single object had stayed free from the fury of the waters. The statue of the Most Holy Virgin, dressed and adorned for the month's exercises, appeared intact as the day it had been placed. The flowers, the crowns and even the lace veil, everything was clean and intact. It was impossible to discover the slightest stain on her. And yet, the traces remaining on the four-metre-high walls indicated to everyone that the statue of the Most Holy Virgin, which was only one meter from the ground, had been submerged under a mass of water, furiously agitated, more than three meters high, without suffering harm. Those who saw the statue after the flood could not doubt the miracle, and confessed that the event was supernatural. This prodigy, which many witnesses can certify, produced a great sensation throughout the United States.

Virginal Mother. It is told of Michelangelo Buonarroti that he showed a very beautiful image of the Virgin that he had just executed to another artist, who replied that She looked very young. And Michelangelo answered: "She was always young and She was always beautiful, because She was always a Virgin." How right he was! All honorific titles can be given to Mary because She possesses them all to heroic degree. But we call Her the Virgin because what stands out most about Her is Her immaculate, virginal purity.

Liberator of souls. Father Rheo and Father Lereo, report that in Gelderland around the year 1465 there lived a young woman named Maria, who was sent by her uncle to Nijmegen market, in order to make some purchases, instructing her that if it was too late to return by daylight, she should spend the night at the house of another aunt who lived in that city. The young woman obeyed. But when she went to her aunt's house in the afternoon, the aunt sent her off so harshly that she had no choice but to make her way back, desperate and full of fear. Night fell along the way, and in one of those terrible moments she, enraged, called out loud to the demon to help her. The demon then appeared to her in the form of a young man who offered to accompany her and serve her in everything as long as she made him a promise, and the unfortunate woman answered: "I will do whatever you ask." "I only demand of you," said the demon, "that from now on you do not make the sign of the Cross again and that you change your name." "As for the sign of the cross," replied the young woman, "I promise not to make it; but my name of Mary is too dear to me to change it." - "Alright! but I will not help you," said the demon. Finally, after a great debate, they agreed that the young woman would take the name of the first letter of Maria, that is, Eme or Emma, and with this

agreement they set out on the road to Antwerp, where that unfortunate woman lived for six years in the company of her detestable companion, leading a wretched life, to the scandal of everyone. At the end of this time the young woman wanted to return to her homeland, and the demon, though opposed at first, finally agreed to her request and they set out for Nijmegen. Upon reaching this city they went to the theatre, where a play was being performed whose subject was taken from the life of the Most Blessed Virgin, and poor Mary, because of that little devotion to the Mother of God she had left, burst into a bitter weeping. "What!" said her companion, "do you want me to witness two tragedies at the same time?" And saying this he grabbed her arm to take her out of that place, but she resisted; so he, seeing that his prey was slipping through his hands, became angry and, lifting her up in the air, threw her into the middle of the hall. The unfortunate young woman, when she recovered from the stunning produced by the fall, recounted her sad story, and went to look for a Priest to confess her; but he sent her to the Archbishop of Cologne, who sent her on to the Pope. The Sovereign Pontiff, after having heard her confession, as penance gave her to wear three iron rings, one around her neck and one on each arm, and the penitent, after having obeyed, went to Maastricht, where she shut herself up in a convent of Magdalens where she lived for fourteen years practising the most austere penance. One day, when she woke up, she saw that the three rings had broken off by themselves, and two years later she died in the odour of sanctity, asking to be buried with those rings that, from being a slave to hell, had turned her into a happy slave of her Liberator, most Holy Mary.



Fountain of Grace. In March 1842, a young Russian prince, Sergius of Chetzoulepnikof, presented himself to Abbot Desgenettes, and told him how, overcoming a thousand difficulties and fighting against all the power of the Moscow empire, he had left the Greek schism and been converted to Catholicism, just because he had read the Annals of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Heart of Mary, which a Polish lady by chance left in his hands. When the prince reached the French capital, as the persecutions of the Russian government continued against him, and he found it impossible to return to his country, he fell into such languor, melancholy, and discouragement that he became seriously ill, and was already hesitating about whether or not he would persevere in the Catholic Faith he had so heroically embraced. Many prayers were then offered up for the unfortunate young man to the Most Pure Heart of Mary in the Archconfraternity of Paris. Admirable thing! At that same time the generous prince ceased to waver and not only reaffirmed his Catholic sentiments, but renounced the world and its vanities, embraced an ecclesiastical career, became an apostolic missionary, and devoted his entire life to propagating the true Faith of Christ in the United States.

Morning Star. "Returning from a pilgrimage to El Palmar during Holy Week 1979, Saint Scholasticus Mary told me that he thought Our Lady would give us a sign, since this was the most penitential pilgrimage we had ever had. Returning to Ireland, as we travelled by car from Dublin Airport to Howth at approximately 8 am, the sky was cloudy with intermittent sunshine. Looking at the sky, I thought how could there be two suns, one directly east and one directly north? Upon closer inspection, I could clearly see the silhouette to the north, not of the sun, but of Our Lady as described in the hymn 'Beautiful Thou Art.' Later, as I approached the sea road, I saw an extraordinary dance of the sun, turning left and right and pulsing toward our windshield. Saint Scholasticus Mary, who was in the car, asked me later if I had seen anything other than the dancing sun. I explained to him that I had seen Our Lady in Heaven. 'Oh, you saw Her too,' he said. I explained to him that I had seen Her in silhouette vested in the sun. He told me that he had seen Our Lady clearly and explained to me that She was smiling in our direction. Though Saint Scholasticus Mary

spoke to others about how we had seen the sun dance, never, to my knowledge, did he mention that we had also seen Our Lady.” – A Palmarian faithful.

Fortitude of the dying. The Blessed Virgin protects and helps Her true devotees, sometimes in an even visible way. When Saint Anthony of Padua reached his last hour, after he had received the Holy Sacraments, the Celestial Lady appeared to him and consoled him by showing him Her Divine Son, who smiled at him and stretched out His arms to him... *Saint Jerome* assures that Mary is not content with assisting Her devotees at the last hour, but besides goes out to meet their souls, and that She herself presents them and intercedes for them before her Divine Son. Besides, the Church teaches that by Her discourse at particular judgement, Mary greatly assists all those who reach judgement in the state of Grace, and moves the soul to make necessarily an act of perfect love for God by which all venial sins will be forgiven, with the possibility of acquiring new merits and partial or total indulgence of temporal pain. And She helps all those who arrive in mortal sin to choose salvation and so be saved.

Most Faithful Mother. A young woman who had lived for many years in the greatest disorders nevertheless wept in silence over the shameful sins to which both vice and indigence had led her. One day, however, when she was in her room, very worried, thinking about her sad state, to her surprise she saw her accomplice enter with eyes downcast, confused, with a wallet in his hand, and said these words: “We have lived in disorder for quite some time. We must renounce this kind of life and think about doing penance. I shall retire to atone for my sins, and you must do the same. In this wallet you will find what is necessary for your subsistence for all the rest of your days; retire, consecrate to God the heart that you have given to the creature.” The young woman heard him at first with astonishment; but when the words of her lover had penetrated the depths of her soul, she felt the chains that enslaved her breaking, and with a contrite heart and fully recognizing the grace of God which had made her conversion easier, she ran to look for a Priest who might guide her in the new life of penance that she sought to take up, and that she continued efficaciously for the rest of her days. The Confessor, surprised by such a happy change, asked her if even in the midst of her disorderly life she had observed any pious practice, to which she replied that on no Saturday had she failed to hear Mass in honour of the Most Blessed Virgin, because her mother in the last moments of her life had told her to do so. Both then understood that the Mother of God had wanted to reward that slight show of piety on her part with such notable favours.

Help of Christians. Glorious Saint Stephen I, king of Hungary, is an example of the truth of the saying of Saint Anselm, that just as it is impossible for someone to be saved if Mary turns her eyes of pity away from him, so it is impossible for someone to be a reprobate and be lost who constantly offers up gifts and love to Her. From childhood Stephen did so with singular tenderness and, once king, wanted Her to be called the Great Mistress of his whole kingdom. He placed his crown and sceptre and all his power in the hands of the Queen of Heaven, wanting to be reputed and considered one of her most humble servants. In the year 1030 Conrad II, Holy Roman Emperor and ambitious prince, decided to conquer Hungary. As soon as Stephen learnt that the troops of the Empire were already on the borders and were advancing by forced marches to surprise him, far from being intimidated, he gave the appropriate orders in order to stop the invasion and then, prostrating himself in front of Mary’s image, he said this brief prayer: “If, Lady, you want part of your dominions to be devastated, I beg You not to allow this to be attributed to my lack of confidence in Your protection; if the pastor has deserved the punishment, let him alone pay the penalty.” He arose, and went out to campaign with invincible courage. But he had gone barely half a day when a courier brought him the news of the imperial army’s retreat, having received an order to return to Germany, an order that, without a doubt, was communicated from above, because the emperor had no knowledge of it. The holy king then ruled his kingdom in peace and with great wisdom for forty-two years, and the Lord crowned his merits with a precious death on the very day of the Assumption of Our Lady, according to the vehement desires

that he had always felt to celebrate the triumph of the Virgin among the chosen, increasing their number on such a precious day.

Queen of All Saints. Caesarius narrates that a Cistercian Monk, deeply devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, had a very great desire to see his beloved Mistress, and did not stop asking Her for this favour. He went out one night to the monastery garden, and, contemplating the starry sky, breathed out ardent sighs that he addressed to the Queen of his loves and of his desires. Suddenly he saw a beautiful virgin approaching upon the air, surrounded by radiance, who said to him: “Would you like to hear my song, Thomas?” – “Of course!” replied the Monk. She, that virgin then sang with such a sweet melody that the devout Friar believed himself transported to Heaven. The singing ceased and the vision disappeared, whereupon the Monk greatly desired to know who had appeared to him. He was thinking about these things, when another virgin also of incomparable beauty appeared to him, who let him hear her heavenly melodies. This time Thomas could not



control his desire to know who it was who had sung like that, and asked her name: “The one you saw recently,” his vision answered, “was Catherine of Alexandria; I am Agnes of Rome, both of us martyrs of Jesus Christ. Our Lady has sent us to console you. Give thanks to Mary and prepare to receive a greater grace,” she said and disappeared. With this the Monk conceived greater hopes of finally seeing his Heavenly Queen. He was not mistaken in his wishes, because a few moments later he felt his breast flooded with pure joy. Then he perceived a great beacon of light and, within the radiant light, he saw the Virgin Mother of God, surrounded by Angels, of a beauty incomparably greater than that of the previous Saints, and She said to him: “Dear servant and son of Mine, I appreciate your homage, and I have listened, benignly, to your prayers. You had a great desire to see Me; here I am; and now I too want you to hear My song.” And the Most Holy Virgin began to sing, but with such gentleness and harmony that the devout Religious, out of pure joy, lost consciousness and fell as if in a faint upon the ground. The bell for matins rang. The Monks gathered in choir and, not seeing Thomas, went to look for him in his cell and other places in the monastery. Finally, they entered the garden and found him unconscious. The Superior told him to declare what had happened; and the Monk, at the voice of obedience, came to himself and recounted, in the presence of all, the favours that the Virgin Mother of God had granted him.

Queen of Fine Arts. The Holy Virgin, Queen of battles, is also Queen of the Fine Arts. If not to Her inspiration, then to whom does Murillo owe his Conceptions, Raphael his Madonna and above all to whom are owed the divine figures of the Virgin Mother of God and the Angels left to us by that celestial painter whom artists call Friar Angelico and Christians Saint John of Fiesole?

Immaculate Mother. To one of the residences of a humble Congregation, a woman came to tell one of the Fathers that her husband had not confessed for many years, and that the poor woman did not know what to do to convince him, because in speaking to him about confession he used to beat her. The Father told her to give him an image of Mary Immaculate. As evening fell, the woman again begged her husband to confess, and since he did not pay attention to her, she gave him the image of the Virgin. And as soon as he received it from her he said: “Well, when do you want me to confess? I’m ready.” The woman began to cry with joy upon seeing such a sudden change. When morning came she went with her husband to the church. When the Father asked him how long it had been since he had confessed, he replied that it had been twenty years. “And what moved you to come and confess?” the Father asked him. “I was stubborn,” he replied, “but yesterday my wife gave me a picture of Our Lady and at once I felt my heart change, so much so that each moment seemed like a



thousand years waiting for day to arrive so that I could come to confess.” He confessed with great sorrow, changed his life and continued for a long time confessing to the same Father.

Queen of Martyrs. In the year 870, the Danes were causing the most terrible devastation in Scotland and England. When the Nuns of Coldingham, on the coast east of Edinburgh, Scotland, heard that they were approaching their convent, they were terrified, but God and the Most Blessed Virgin took care to raise their courage to confront the danger that threatened them.

Saint Ebba, who was the abbess, more anxious to preserve her virtue and that of her Nuns than to defend life, gathered all the Sisters in a chapel dedicated to the Most Blessed Virgin, and there she addressed this moving prayer to the Immaculate Mother: “O Mary! O Purest of virgins! Stretch out Your compassionate Hand to Your humble servant, and inspire her with the means of preserving her virtue and that of her Sisters. Stretch out over us that powerful Hand that dissipates storms and tempests, and give us strength to die if necessary, rather than consent to the loss of virginity...” As soon as she had concluded her prayer, the cries or rather the howls of those furious beasts were heard, who came up vomiting a thousand blasphemies from their infernal mouths. The holy abbess rose up at once and spoke in these terms: “Those who love God and the precious treasure of their purity, imitate my example and fear nothing. Death is sweet to those who know how to give their lives for virtue.” And, taking a sharp knife, with it she disfigured her face dreadfully. Moved by such a heroic example, the other Nuns did not hesitate to follow it, and thus disfigured and bathed in blood, they presented themselves to the infamous persecutors. At this spectacle, the barbarians turned back horrified and chilled with shock. But soon, yet more furious, seeing their hopes frustrated, like the lion who sees its prey snatched away, they set fire to the convent, which burned down completely, and withdrew, leaving behind a pile of corpses and ruins. As for the noble victims of angelic virtue, God rewarded them a hundredfold for the passing beauty they had sacrificed with such generosity; and their faces, according to the beautiful expression of the holy books, “will shine out one day like so many other suns in eternal splendour.”

Promise of salvation. In September 1839, a young woman who had been brought up in moral freedom, far from any religious influence, was dying in Paris. The disease that she was suffering from was pulmonary tuberculosis in its final stages, so it was feared that from one moment to another that the poor consumptive would die estranged from God and consummate her sins with eternal perdition. Several pious people had exhausted their efforts to obtain that the patient cleanse her conscience and receive the helps of religion; but the dying woman did not even want to talk about a Priest, and was in such a state of agitation, terror and despair, that all those who saw her were filled with alarm. A zealous Priest from the Parish where this was happening went several times to offer spiritual relief to that miserable woman, but she always rejected them with mulish stubbornness. What to do, then?... A good and charitable lady of the neighbourhood, unable to find any other resource with which to move that impenitent soul, headed for the temple of Our Lady of the Victories, and begged the Pastor, the Abbé Desgenettes to have prayer made for the conversion of the stubborn young woman in the Archconfraternity of the Compassionate Heart of Mary, and on the altar to have the adorable sacrifice of the Mass celebrated for this same intention, on September 3rd. All this was done in absolute secrecy. Admirable thing!: At the moment Mass began, the patient, unable to suspect what had been done for her, with her perverse dispositions undiminished by any external influence, that impenitent and desperate woman spontaneously requested a Priest, confessed all her faults very contritely and received Holy Viaticum full of piety and joy. Shortly afterwards she died

with manifest signs of eternal salvation. Great miracles of Mary's compassionate Heart!

Mother of Fair Love. At dawn on November 4, 1632 and, on his knees before the altar of the Rosary, Saint John Macías contemplated the bas-relief of the birth of Jesus and asked the Divine Child very truly to come down into his heart. Amid a great radiance, he saw the Virgin, beautiful and joyful, who presented the Child Jesus to him and said: "Here is the Divine Infant; embrace Him, caress Him with all your love, as you have so wished; I am the one who gives Him to you." Overwhelmed at such a happiness and stunned by Her humility, he did not dare to receive Him, but begged Him to show him mercy. This act of humility so pleased God that, as a reward, the Most Blessed Virgin obtained from Her Son the grace that he be unable to desire anything other than Jesus Christ from then on. Three times She placed the Divine Infant in his arms, and as many times the Saint felt himself rejoicing in Heaven with Him.

Staff of the Flock. A Palmarian faithful writes: "Around 1977, when I was returning home from work, I visited a Roman Catholic Church in Clontarf called Saint John the Baptist Church. A Mass had just begun and I decided to stay until it was over. During the Communion of the faithful, the Priest with his acolyte left the communion rail and proceeded to give Holy Communion to the faithful who were all standing to receive. I approached to receive, but I had decided to receive on my knees as Our Lady told us to do. As I knelt and received the sacred Host, I felt the palm of a hand on my head. I could not understand this. However, on my next visit to Palmar while praying alone in front of the statue of the Divine Shepherdess then located outside the main entrance, I felt a similar palm on my head. I then understood this to be a sign Our Lady had given me."

Refuge of sinners. The story of Theophilus is famous, written by Eutychian, Patriarch of Constantinople, an eyewitness to the events, later recounted by Saint Peter Damian, Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Antonine and others. Theophilus was archdeacon of the Church of Adana, in Cilicia, and served the Church to the great edification of all. He was so esteemed by the faithful that they wanted him as their bishop; but he, out of humility, refused. However, having been slanderously accused by some villains and deposed from office, he felt such pain that, blinded by passion and to take revenge on his enemies, he went in search of a Jewish magus who could invoke Satan to help him in his misfortune. The magus did so, warning him: "Do not make the sign of the cross." When he appeared, the demon demanded that, if he wanted his help, he renounce Jesus and Mary, His Most Holy Mother, and declare this in a document signed by his hand. Theophilus signed the abominable document. And the devil then told him: "Go now, and I will get them to give you back your post." The next day, the Bishop, having recognized the falsity of the calumny, asked his forgiveness and reinstated him in his post. The magus then told Theophilus: "What do you think of the way our patron works?" But Theophilus began to feel sad and guilty of conscience, and said with tears: "Woe to me! Wherever shall I go? To whom shall I turn to ask for help and remedy, since I denied Christ and His Mother?" And from that moment on, Theophilus, torn by remorse for his enormous sin, did nothing but weep. The thought came to him of taking no intercessor other than the Virgin, Our Lady. And what did he do? He went to the church one night and prostrate at the feet of an Image of Mary, weeping, he said: "O Mother of God, I do not want to despair having You who are so pious and able to help me. Do not abandon me, as I did Your Son and You." And so he remained for four days before the Holy Virgin, crying and praying. And then, at last, by night, the Mother of Mercy appeared to him and said: "Theophilus, what have you done? You have renounced My friendship and that of My Son. And what for? To hand yourself over to My enemy and yours?" "Lady," answered Theophilus, "forgive me and obtain for me Your Son's forgiveness." Then Mary, seeing his confidence, said to him: "Be calm, I want to pray to My Son for you." Encouraged by this, Theophilus redoubled his tears, his prayers and his penances, not leaving the image's side. And behold, Mary appeared to him again, and with a smiling face She said: "Theophilus,



rejoice, I have presented your tears and prayers to God and He has received and forgiven you. From today on you will be grateful and faithful to Him.” “Madam,” Theophilus said to her, “this is not enough to fully console me. The enemy has in his possession that impious writing in which I signed my renunciation of You and Your Son; You can make him restore it to me...” After three days, when Theophilus woke up, he found the fatal writing on his chest. The next day, while the Bishop was officiating in the Church, in the presence of all the people, Theophilus went to prostrate himself at his feet and confessed all that had happened, crying his eyes out, and gave him the accursed writing, which the Bishop immediately had burnt in front of all the faithful, who did nothing but weep with joy, exalting the Goodness of God and the Mercy of Mary towards that great sinner. Theophilus, returned to the church of the Virgin, where after three days he died full of content, giving thanks to Jesus and to His Most Holy Mother.

Rose of Roses. Saint Rose of Lima, that angelic maiden, thought of nothing but belonging entirely to Jesus, helped by Mary. Waiting one day for a chrysanthemum to blossom, to place it before Jesus with its flowers open, she found it nevertheless uprooted. Being very sad about this, Jesus however appeared to her and said: “Why so sad? Am I not the Flower of the field, better than your chrysanthemum and all the flowers of Paradise? I want to be your only flower, and that is why I Myself uprooted your chrysanthemum.” One day she had her garden full of roses, and the Virgin and Child appeared among them, ordering her to bring her apron full of them. Mary took one of them, saying: “This is you; I keep it for myself. With the others do as you please.” Rose took them all, made a garland with them, and crowned the Child Jesus with them. Who does not want such heavenly joys for themselves, even at the price of any toil? O Mother of purity, Virgin of virgins, make our hearts pure and like unto Yours!

Ransomer of Captives. In an ambush during the European war in 1914, Jacques Riviere fell prisoner into the hands of the Germans. In his dungeon impenetrable darkness reigned; but that of his soul was more dense and gloomy. Infected by materialism, he began to indulge in his religious doubts. “I take pleasure in... never finding my answer,” he said. But She who is the Ransomer of Captives came down to his prison one day and broke his chains. “Yesterday afternoon,” he wrote, “praying the *Salve Regina*, I made one of those happy discoveries that are made from time to time in prayer; one of its phrases, written for me and pronounced until then without dwelling on its meaning, suddenly melted all its sweetness in my mouth: ‘And after this our exile, show unto us... Jesus’.” His shackles broken and his darkness dispelled, he became a fearless champion of the Catholic cause.

Mother and Divine Shepherdess of Souls. “A few years ago, while I was at university, my aim was to enrol in a prestigious Computer Science program at a renowned university, several miles away. Students there studied fascinating, avant-garde technologies such as advanced computer games, robotics, machine learning, and cybersecurity, and went on to land lucrative jobs in the world’s top companies. I had completed all the studies I could do at my current university and had very good grades, generally among the best in the subjects I took. I meticulously drafted my college application, doing my best to show how qualified I was. Full of confidence, I waited eagerly, preparing to attend college in the fall. At the end of the summer I received a message from the university. That year they had received too many applications and only accepted a third of the best students. After reviewing my application, they decided not to accept me. I was devastated. In my arrogance, I had made no alternative plans and it was not time to apply to another university for several months. Additionally, I had applied for financial assistance from the government to pay for my

studies and missing a few months of school would complicate this financial assistance. I didn't know what to do, I was completely discouraged. Later, as my family prepared to pray the daily Holy Penitential Rosary, I felt moved to offer my problem to Heaven, especially to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, because I knew that I could not solve the problem on my own. Minutes later the phone rang. A local university, which was launching a new Computer Science program, was inviting rejected applicants from the better-known university to join. Because it was new, it lacked the reputation and many of the interesting courses at the University I had applied to. But it was obvious that this was the reply of the Most Blessed Virgin, so I accepted. Only later did I realize how perfectly Heaven had planned it. As the prestigious university was several kilometres away, living on campus or facing a three-hour commute would not have allowed me to attend Holy Mass when the Palmarian missionary Bishop was with us, something I had stupidly overlooked. The local university, however, was just a few minutes away. Also, upon graduation, they connected me with a local company, not the global giant I imagined, but with a decent salary that allowed me to stay close to the Palmarian chapel. This was also a blessing, as most of the jobs available at the time were in larger, more remote cities. My Blessed Mother knew that in my plans I was making a mistake and, like the Good Mother She is, She guided me in the right direction, for the benefit of my soul, instead of the worldly motives which her foolish son was considering!" - A Palmarian faithful.

Most Generous Mother of Her devotees. Saint Bridget had a son who took up a military career and died in the wars. Upon hearing the news of his death, she became very concerned about his salvation, having died in such dangerous circumstances. As God often favoured her with revelations, of which she composed a book, two subsequent revelations assured her of the salvation of her son. In the first, the Most Blessed Virgin revealed to her that She had assisted her son with particular protection at the hour of death, having strengthened him against temptation and obtained all the graces necessary for him to have a holy and happy decease. She then declared the cause of that singular help She had given to her son, and said that it was a reward for the great and sincere devotion that he had shown Her during his life, having loved Her with a very ardent affection and striven to please Her in all things.

Powerful Virgin. It is narrated in the Chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers that there was a famous lawyer in Venice who through fraud and wicked dealings had become rich, so that he lived in a bad state. The only good thing he did was to recite a prayer to the Virgin daily. And this little devotion saved him from eternal death through Mary's compassion. Let's see how. Fortunately for him, he became a friend of Father Matthew de Basso, and begged the Father so much to come to his home to eat that one day he finally acquiesced. Once at home the lawyer told him: "Now, Father, I am going to show you something that you have never seen before. I have an admirable monkey who serves me as a servant; he washes the dishes, he serves me at table, he opens the door for me..." "Be careful – the Father replied – lest the monkey be something quite other... Let them bring it here." They called him and called him again; they kept looking for him everywhere, and the monkey didn't appear. They finally found him hiding under a cot in the basement, but the monkey refused to come out. "Let's go to where he is," the Religious decided; and together they went down to where he was. The Religious cried at him: "Infernal beast, come out, and on behalf of God I command you to tell us who you are." And lo and behold, the monkey replied that he was the devil, waiting for the day when that sinner would stop his customary prayer to the Mother of God, because as soon as he did, he had permission from God to strangle him and thought to take him off to hell. Faced with such a statement, the poor lawyer prostrated himself at the feet of the servant of God, asking for his help. He encouraged him and ordered the demon to leave that house without causing harm. "I only give you permission to leave a hole in the wall, as a sign of having left." As soon as he told him this, a hole opened with a great noise in the wall, which for a long time, no matter how hard they tried, God did not allow them to cover over until, by the advice of the servant of God, they were able to cover it by putting a marble



plaque with the sculpture of an angel. It is to be hoped that the converted lawyer persevered until death in his new life.

Mother of the Divine Word. Indomitable defender of the Divine Motherhood of Mary was glorious Saint Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, whose virtues have been proclaimed by the testimony of private persons and by the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. This Holy Shepherd burned with devotion to Most Holy Mary and with zeal for the salvation of souls. He worked unspeakably to preserve his people from the fatal errors and heresies that abounded in the East against the Incarnation of the Word and the Mother of God. Saint Cyril was sent by the Supreme Pontiff Saint Celestine I the Great to preside over the Council of Ephesus. At this Council the heresy of Nestorius was condemned and the Divine Motherhood of Mary was proclaimed. In that circumstance, he composed a beautiful prayer in honour of the Virgin Mother, which was recited

by everyone. It is not surprising that he drew upon himself the wrath of his adversaries and was thrown out of the episcopal see. He, glorying in suffering for the Truth, continued to defend with word and pen the dogma of Mary's Divine Motherhood. The Virgin did not fail to reward Her faithful servant with abundant graces and with the return to his See, triumphantly welcomed by his people, where he died in the Lord in the year 444, his soul flying up to see the Virgin Mother of God, whom he had so revered and defended in life.

Vessel of Singular Devotion. The year was 1826. A valiant soldier garrisoned in Metz de Lorraine, one day found a nine-year-old boy on a street corner crying his eyes out, and asked him: "Why are you crying, child?" – "Because I am very unfortunate," answered the boy. – "What's the matter with you, then?" – "Two days ago I lost my father and my mother, I have no one else left and I don't know what to do." – "Is that true?" – "Oh! Yes sir; write to the Priest and he will tell you the same thing." The generous soldier, moved with compassion, took the child by the hand and led him to a decent hostel, paid in advance, and said: "Look after this child for me and take good care of him." He immediately wrote to the Parish Priest, who replied: "Unfortunately it is true that this child is an orphan of both father and mother. Send him to me; maybe I can find some kind soul who wants to take care of him." The soldier responded at once that he himself was taking care of the child, that he adopted him and that he would act as father and mother towards him. As he was about to finish his mandatory service, he re-enlisted in the army for a sum of 1800 francs. With this money he went to the director of a school, and told him: "Here you have the boarding fee for this child for six years. He is my adopted son; teach him well and give him a Christian education." And he immediately went to prostrate at the feet of the Most Blessed Virgin: "Holy Virgin – he told Her – I give and consecrate my son to You, take care of his soul; I will provide for the needs of his body; he is a poor orphan, be a Mother to him." After a year, the soldier saw his protégé again; but what a disappointment! The boy had not reciprocated his kindness; he was lazy, dissipated, full of vices and defects. "Take your son," the Director told him, "because I find nothing profitable in him, and everything I do for him goes to waste." The soldier reflected for a moment; pain showed on his forehead, and great tears rolled down his cheeks. Then, with a voice trembling with emotion, he replied: "I beg you to be patient for a further six months, Sir Director; I trust that God will have mercy on him and me, that he will amend and return to better ways." The Director agreed to do so, and the pious soldier went to prostrate himself again at Mary's feet, and, with an accent that showed his soldier's faith, he said to Her: "But, Holy Virgin, it seems that You have no thought of the charge I commended to You... I entrusted You with my son, I asked you to be a Mother to him, and will You let him be lost? I have sold myself for him, will You do nothing to save him? Come, Most Loving Mother, I hope

that You will protect him now, for I promise to invoke You and love You always.” After a year the soldier returned, and had the ineffable consolation of seeing that Mary had attended to his promises, since the boy had amended and, due to the regularity of his conduct, was a source of edification for the school. Later he entered the Council Seminary to progress in virtue and learning and had the fortune to be ordained Priest, and was a model for his colleagues as he had been for his fellow students. Happy child for having found a charitable soldier! Happy soldier for having exercised such charity towards an abandoned orphan!

Her Sweet Glance is afire with Love. The Founder of Opus Dei, Saint Joseph Mary Escrivá de Balaguer, relates in one of his homilies how in 1935 he made a pilgrimage to a well-known hermitage of the Virgin in the vicinity of Ávila. It was an intimate act: only three people went, to offer their love to Most Holy Mary. “In that pilgrimage to Sonsoles I learnt the origin of this devotion to the Virgin, a detail without much importance, but a filial manifestation of love by the people of that land to Her. The image of Our Lady that is venerated in that place was kept hidden for some time, at the time of the wars between Christians and Muslims in Spain. After a few years, the statue was found by some shepherds who, according to tradition, upon seeing it commented: ‘What beautiful eyes! They are suns!’” (Spanish: ‘Son soles’)

Our Mother and Auxiliatrix. A Palmarian faithful writes: “Since I learnt love for our Heavenly Mother, I have become a different person. I have found very great inner peace. In fact She helps me every day to accept and cope with the difficulties and ups and downs of life. If I had encountered that great love for Mary and God earlier, then I would not have had to suffer so many tears and griefs. The following incident occurred a few years ago. I had a small nodule on my right hand, which caused me great pain during certain movements. I was alone at work, in the shop, and was trying to remove a heavy pallet from the storeroom at the back. At first I couldn’t, but then it moved so suddenly that my hand became trapped between the pallet and a metal container. I had to sit and lean my head against the wall, as the pain in my hand made me dizzy. Outside, in the business, people started calling for the cashier and I said: ‘I’m coming.’ I thought to myself, ‘what shall I do now?’, and stayed seated bearing with the pain in my hand. Then I said: ‘My Mother, please help me.’ From one moment to the next, the pain disappeared completely. I was able to get up, go to the cash desk and take, feeling no pain in my hand. The pain did not return afterwards either. A few weeks later the nodule on the same hand also disappeared. I have put my life in Her hands and I thank God for this great grace.”

Staff of the Sick. There was a Priest attending a rich man who was dying in a deluxe mansion surrounded by servants, relatives and friends; but he also saw demons in horrible forms, ready to take his soul off to hell for having lived in sin and being about to die without any sign of repentance. Later the Parish Priest was notified to assist a humble woman who was dying and wanted to receive the Holy Sacraments. Having to stay with the rich man, who was in great need of help, he sent a curate, who brought Holy Viaticum to the sick woman. In that good woman’s house he saw no servants or companions, or precious furniture, because the sick woman was poor and her bed was of straw. But what did he see? He saw that the room was illuminated by a great radiance and that beside the bed of the dying woman was the Mother of God, Mary, who was comforting her. Seeing his confusion, the Virgin gave the Priest a sign to enter. The Virgin gave him her seat so that he could attend to the sick woman in Confession; she confessed and communed with great devotion and expired, happy, in Mary’s arms.

Most Loving Mother of God the Son. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus used to say: “If we direct our supplication to the Saints, they will make us wait a little, of course; they have to send their request on to a hierarchy higher up still, so that from there it can pass on to God Himself. But if we turn directly to Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God, if we raise our petitions directly to Her, the favour will reach us without delay. Try it, and you will soon

be convinced that what I tell you is a great truth..." To Jesus through Mary.

Guiding Star. Having decided to become a Religious, the Viceroy of Catalonia and a great friend of Emperor Charles V, the famous Duke of Gandía, Saint Francis Borgia, hesitated between the Order of Saint Francis and the Company of Jesus. After many prayers and penances, one day he went to his oratory with Friar Juan de Tejada, a Franciscan, and, both kneeling before a crucifix, he asked Friar Juan to tell him his opinion on which of the two Orders would be more pleasing to God. The holy Friar requested four days to answer him, and afterwards took Borgia by the arm, led him to the oratory and, kneeling in the same place, said to him: "God and his Most Holy Mother want you to enter the Society of Jesus." Then, at the request of the Duke, the Friar described this vision: "This morning I was prostrate on the ground, with many tears, asking the Queen of Heaven to enlighten us, as the Star She is, when I felt forced to raise my eyes, and saw Mary, unspeakably benign, who told me: 'Tell the Duke to enter my Son's Company, because that is My desire and what most pleases My Son; he will illustrate and greatly raise up this Order, now poor and unknown, and will be an instrument of great services to the Church'." The Blessed Virgin Mary afterwards appeared to Saint Francis Borgia himself, who was so heartily imploring counsel, and said: "Francis, enter My Son's Company."

Most Merciful Mother. The Belovacense refers that in the city of Radulph in England, year 1430, a young nobleman named Ernest lived who, having distributed his goods among the poor, entered a monastery where he led such an edifying life that the Superiors appreciated him greatly, especially for his devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. In the populace the plague was declared, and people went to the monastery asking for prayers. The Abbot sent Ernest to pray to the Virgin before Her altar and not rise from there until he had obtained a reply from the Lady. There the young man stayed for three days until he obtained Mary's reply, who commanded Rogations to be made, and when celebrated the plague ceased. But later this young man cooled in devotion to Mary. The demon attacked him with many impure temptations so that he might flee the monastery. For not having commended himself to Mary, he decided to take flight over the monastery walls. When on his way to make his attempt, passing by an image of Mary in the cloister, the Mother of God spoke, telling him: "My son, why do you leave Me?" Ernest, confused and remorseful, fell to the ground and replied: "Lady, but don't You see that I can no longer resist? Why don't you help me?" The Virgin replied: "And why haven't you invoked Me? If you had commended yourself to Me, you would not find yourself in this state. From now on commend yourself to Me and doubt not." Ernest returned to his cell. But the temptations persisting, neglecting to turn to Mary, he finally fled the monastery, giving himself up to a bad life. Going from sin to sin, he became a murderer. He rented an inn where, at night, he killed the poor travellers and despoiled them. One night he killed the cousin of the governor who, suspecting the innkeeper, prosecuted him and sentenced him to die on the gallows. Before he was arrested, a young gentleman arrived at the inn. The villainous inn-keeper, according to his custom, entered his room at midnight to kill him; But behold, he saw no gentleman in the bed but a crucified man full of wounds who, looking at him piously, said: "Isn't it enough, ungrateful, that I have died for you once? Do you want to kill me again? You can do so!" The unhappy Ernest prostrated himself sobbing and said: "Lord, I am all Yours; since you have shown me such great mercy, I want to be converted." At that same moment he left the inn and followed the path to the cloister to do penance. But justice seized him along the way. They took him before the judge, where he confessed all his crimes. He was immediately sentenced to the gallows, without giving him time even to confess. He commended himself to Mary, and the Virgin caused that when hanged he did not die. She Herself took him down from the gallows and told him: "Go back to the monastery, do penance; and when you see in My hand a document forgiving your sins, prepare yourself for death." Ernest returned to the convent and, having told everything to the Abbot, did penance. Years later, in Mary's hands he saw the bond of pardon for him.

He prepared for death and gave up his soul in holiness.

Mystical Rose. “Following the ordinations at El Palmar de Troya in January 1976, a cenacle was organized in Dublin for Palmar followers. Before the prayers, a serious argument broke out between those who believed in the validity of the ordinations and others who opposed them. I suggested that this matter could not be resolved by arguing, so we separated into two cenacle prayer groups: those believing in the validity of the ordinations and those opposing them. I was in the group believing in the validity of the ordinations, and throughout practically the entire Penitential Rosary I perceived strong heavenly perfumes of roses, which I attributed as coming from the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.” – A Palmarian faithful.

Our Peacemaker. When Saint Anthony Mary Claret was studying to be a priest in Vich, he had a great temptation, from which he emerged victorious, thanks to having invoked the Holy Virgin, as he himself says: “In winter I had a cold: they told me to stay in bed and I obeyed. And on one of those days, at ten-thirty in the morning, I experienced a really terrible temptation. I turned to Mary Most Holy, I invoked my Patron Saint and those of my special devotion, I made every effort to focus my attention on indifferent objects to distract myself and thus disperse and forget the temptation, I signed my forehead so that the Lord might free me from evil thoughts... But all in vain. Finally, I turned to the other side of the bed to see if the temptation might disappear, when, behold, Mary all Holy, most beautiful and most gracious, appeared to me... At the same time that I was in bed, I saw myself as a boy in white, very beautiful, kneeling and with hands joined; I did not lose sight of the Most Blessed Virgin, who spoke to me and told me: ‘Anthony, this crown will be yours if you prevail.’ I was so overcome that I could not say a word to Her, and I saw the Virgin placing the crown of roses She held in Her right hand upon my head. I also saw a group of Saints who were on Her right side in an attitude of prayer. Then, to my left, I saw a great crowd of demons in formation, like soldiers retreating after a battle, and I said to myself: What a crowd and how formidable! As soon as this happened, I found myself free from temptation and with such great joy that I did not know what had happened to me.”

Mother and Mediatrix. Pharaoh gave Joseph full power over all Egypt. To all those who implored his help, he remitted them saying: “Go to Joseph.” This is how God works too. To those who implore Him for help, He says: “Go to Mary.” That is why we Christians can say to Mary with far greater reason than the Egyptians to Joseph: “Our salvation is in Your hands.” Hence Saint Bernard could say: “God has decreed to grant us every grace, favour and mercy through Mary.”

Divine Nurse. In the proceedings in Rome for the beatification of the famous Lily of Quito, Saint Mariana of Jesus de Paredes, the delicacies received by this privileged soul from the Queen of the Angels, Mary Most Holy, are recounted. Saint Mariana, while still a young girl, had a deformed finger, which not only caused her great pain, but also threatened to become gangrenous. Another girl who was raised with Mariana – who afterwards recounted the miracle – moved by compassion, warned her with great affection that the problem was serious, and that it was necessary to show so that it could be seen by a doctor. “Don’t worry,” Mariana replied happily, “it’s not that serious.” And as if possessed by a superior spirit, she added: “Now you will see how I shall be cured.” She knelt before a little image of Mary, which was her delight, and giving us an example of the faith with which we should also act in the needs of the body, she turned full of confidence to the Celestial Lady, and humbly implored Her help. No sooner said than done. The painful finger appeared at once healthy and sound, as if it had never suffered the slightest harm. Both girls were surprised to see such a portent occurring so swiftly; but quickly recovering from the surprise, Mariana



first gave infinite thanks to her distinguished Benefactress, and then begged her companion not to say a word about it to anyone, either inside or outside the house.

Mother and Dispenser. Glorious Saint Ildephonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, ornament and glory of Spain, was an integral model of the most solid and illustrious virtues; but what most distinguished him was his devotion to Our Lady, inborn from his mother's womb and, it may be said, imbibed with her milk. He gave good proof of this by coming out in defence of the Celestial Lady against some unfortunates who, renewing the ancient heresy of Elvidius, denied Her perpetual virginity. Saint Ildephonsus went out to meet the enemies, convinced them in public dispute and, in honour of one of the most sublime prerogatives of his Heavenly Mother, he wrote the wonderful book entitled 'On Mary's Perpetual Virginity'. The Queen of Heaven could not be outdone in generosity, and thus sought to reward his services with sovereign largesse. It was December 18th, 667, Feast of the Expectation of the Most Holy Virgin's Childbirth. The Holy Archbishop, accompanied by his retinue and clergy, came down at midnight to sing matins. The deacons, on opening the doors of the church, suddenly halted, dazzled by the brilliance of an intense light that filled the holy place. The faithful, frightened at the novelty of this prodigy, all fled; the saintly Prelate alone was unafraid; rather, with steadfast heart and gazing at the brightness with eagle eyes, he entered the church and began to pray before the altar, as he ever did and, raising his eyes, saw the Most Holy Virgin accompanied by choirs of Angels and Virgins of Heaven, seated on the throne from where he used to preach to the people. The feelings and inner stirring this vision caused in the heart of Saint Ildephonsus cannot be explained or understood. He was dazed at the unexpected, confused at his own vileness, fearful for the reverence due to such a Sovereign Majesty and, struggling with his spirit, knew not what he should do: look at himself or look at the Virgin, withdraw or move closer. Seeing Her servant indecisive, between fear and hope, She gave him courage and spoke to him thus: "Because you kept your virginity and defended Mine with purity of heart, fervent faith and tender love, I will honour you today with a gift from Heaven's treasures, and by My own hand will adorn you with this glorious vestment, for you to use on My feastdays." And saying this, handed him the chasuble She bore in Her hands. That heavenly vision then began to disappear, leaving the temple filled with a very suave and ineffable fragrance.

Suppliant Omnipotence. One day Saint Benedict appeared to Saint Frances Romana and, taking her under his protection, promised to be her advocate before the Most Holy Virgin. Hence he spoke thus: "Lady, everything that the prayers of all the Saints united to Yours can do, You can do by Your intercession alone, because You are the Mother of Our Saviour, Spouse of God, Queen of Heaven and of earth." Heart of Mary, be my salvation.

Haven of Religious Souls. In the chronicles of the Order of Saint Francis it is read that while two of his friars were on their way to visit a sanctuary of the Virgin, nightfall caught up with them in the middle of a thick forest; so that confused and afflicted they did not know where to turn. But, moving on a little further, it seemed to them that in the darkness they saw a large house. They arrived, looked for the entrance, knocked, and heard someone ask from inside: "Who is there?"—"We are Friars on a pilgrimage; we have been surprised by night in the forest and are looking for shelter." They then heard the door open and saw two richly dressed pages who received them with great courtesy. The friars asked who lived in that palace. The pages answered that a very pious Lady lived there. "We would like to greet her and thank her for taking us in," they said. "Let's go right there, because She also wants to talk to you," the pages responded. They climbed the stairs, finding the rooms all illuminated, elegantly decorated, and there was an odour in them that seemed heavenly. Finally they entered the presence of the mistress of the house, and found a Lady of very distinguished and sovereignly beautiful bearing, who received them with great affability and courtesy, and then asked them where they were going. They answered that they were going to visit a Church of the Most Blessed Virgin. "This being so, when you leave I want to give you a

letter of mine that will be very useful to you,” said the Lady, and while She spoke to them, they felt inflamed in the love of God, experiencing a joy that they had never felt before. They then went to rest, though unable to fall asleep amid such joy flooding their hearts. In the morning they again appeared before the Lady to take their leave of her, thank her and at the same time take the letter that they affectionately received, and left. They had barely gone a short distance from the house, when they noticed that the Lady’s letter had no address, so they went back, searched, and found the house no longer. Finally, they opened the letter to see to whom it was addressed and find out its contents; They found that Most Holy Mary was writing to themselves, and made them understand that She was the Lady they had seen that night, and that because of the devotion they had for Her, She had provided them with lodging and food in that forest; She exhorted them to continue serving and loving Her, that She would always reward them with Her gifts, and would help them in life and death. And at the bottom of the letter they saw the signature that read: “I, Virgin Mary.” Let everyone consider here how very expressive the gratitude those good Friars would surely have rendered to the Divine Mother, and how much greater their vehemence in desiring to love and serve Her for the rest of their lives.



Mother of Grace. In a town in Saxony, Ponickau, two brothers were digging in a well. One day, due to heavy rain, there was an earth movement and they were buried. Another brother of theirs, working nearby, rushed over and began the rescue work, with the ardour and eagerness that can be expected. After several days of very hard and fruitless fatigue, believing, due to the time that had passed and not hearing any sign of life, that his poor brothers had died, he decided to fill in the well and place a tombstone in their memory. When the mother learnt of the decision taken, she immediately went out and, with cries and demands, succeeded in having the excavations continue. Everyone considered the work useless, since eight days had already passed; but they wanted to yield to the desires of the mother, who wished at least to see the corpses of her two sons. At last they reached the unfortunates who were in an extreme state of exhaustion, but still alive! They said they had heard the voices and noises of the rescue work distinctly; but owing to their bodily exhaustion and their will so weakened, they were unable to answer. When asked how they had been able to resist those eight days, they said that they had drunk the water that oozed from the walls of their gloomy confinement and chewed the straps and shoes they were wearing. Their mother’s love saved them. The same thing happens with many sinners, sunk in the mire of vices. All the efforts of men to lead them to the right path are in vain. From the bottom of the deep abyss into which they fall no rumour of life comes any more. They seem dead to grace forever. But there is a Mother who watches over them, and She is the Virgin Mary. If She intercedes on their behalf and implores Jesus Christ for the salvation of those wayward children, the miracle of miracles will occur: they will recover the spiritual life of grace, which will entitle them to the eternal life of glory.

Health of the sick. Saint John Damascene, great defender of the worship of images, was condemned by the Caliph of Damascus to have his right hand cut off. Dripping blood, he went to prostrate himself before the image of the Virgin Mary, saying to her: “You know well, O Holy Virgin! the reason why they have cut off this hand that I had consecrated to Your service. If the Will of God does not ordain otherwise, You can give me back this hand they have cut off, since more than ever it would be Yours.” And while he made the supplication, he felt his pains assuaged, which were not long in disappearing. A peaceful dream came upon him, in which the Most Holy Virgin appeared to him and restored the hand, charging him to continue writing in defence of Holy Church. A thin red line around



his wrist was left to accredit the miracle.

Queen of Peace. Elsewhere in the Salerno diocese, while we were giving a holy mission, there was a man deeply at enmity with another who had offended him. One of our Fathers spoke to him about forgiveness for injuries, but he replied: “Father, have you seen me on the mission? No; and that is why. I already understand that I am damned, but there is no remedy, I have to take revenge.” The Father made an effort to convert him, but seeing that he was wasting time, told him: “Take this holy picture of Our Lady.” “And why do I want this?” He replied; yet, he accepted it. And at once, his rancour forgotten, he gladly agreed to what the Father asked of him. “Father, do you want me to forgive my enemy? I am ready to do so.” Reconciliation was postponed until the next morning. But come morning he had changed his mind and wouldn’t even hear about

reconciliation. The Father offered him another picture of the Virgin. For nothing would he receive it. Finally, reluctantly, he took it. It was hardly in his hand when he said: “It’s over; where is the notary?” Reconciliation was made and he confessed.

Support of the Dying. Once a Scottish Bishop was surprised at night in a forest... After wandering about for some time, he saw a cottage occupied by a poor family, who welcomed him with love. But the Bishop noticed that the family could not conceal a certain sadness, and he made it known to them. –“Oh, yes!” the mother explained, “we are sad because in the next room my father is seriously ill and he thinks he is better than he is...” –“Could I see him?” asked the Bishop who, covered with a cloak, gave no sign of his episcopal dignity... And the good woman replied: “With pleasure... Come with me to the next room...” The poor old man had a cadaverous appearance and, in view of this, the Bishop, after addressing him some words of consolation, made a discreet allusion to the possibility of dying in which the sick man was... But the sick man cut him short: “No, I will not die yet. Since my First Communion, every day I have asked the Virgin for the grace to die with a Priest at my side...” The Bishop then took off the cloak that covered him and revealed the pectoral cross on his chest. Then he said to the patient: “You see, the Virgin has heard you, because She has sent you a Bishop who was walking about lost in the forest at night...” –“Now I really think I am going to die...” said the sick man, and after receiving the Sacraments, he died like a saint.

Queen of the Angels. Saint Bernard, back from dealing with some important Church affairs, at the moment he arrived at his residence in Clairvaux, saw the Most Serene Queen of Heaven at the door, being borne in procession to the church surrounded by countless Angels. The devout Saint, seeing that the Angels made room for him in the procession, dared to reach the place where the Most Pure Virgin was and, with him in the middle, the procession arrived at the church. The Virgin went up to the main altar, and the Angels then sang the *Salve Regina* with great accompaniment of music, helped by the Holy Abbot. They finished with the verse and prayer used in the Cistercian Order: *O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo María.*

Star of the Sea. “The strongest celestial perfume I received was when I was praying in our Palmarian Chapel a special prayer to Our Lady of Carmel, at the words ‘O Star of the Sea, help me and protect me, show me you are my Mother’.” – A Palmarian faithful.

Most Benign Mother. Maluenda relates, quoting Blessed Humbert, that a devout woman from Lombardy, hearing the Dominicans sing the *Salve Regina* after Compline with great devotion, was rapt up in spirit, and saw things admirable. She saw that when the Religious reached the words of the *Salve*: ‘Hail... our Hope,’ the Blessed Lady greeted the Friars with great sweetness and love; and when they sang: ‘most gracious Advocate’, the Most Benign Lady knelt before her Son, pleading and interceding for them. When they sang: ‘Turn then... Thine eyes of mercy towards us’, the Most Holy Virgin gazed at them with a joyous and

gentle look; and at the end, reaching the words, 'show unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb, Jesus', taking the Child Jesus into Her hands, the Most Holy Virgin showed Him, full of tenderness, to each Religious, who, with inexplicable joy, adored Him. The Salve concluded, the Sovereign Queen disappeared, leaving them with the consolation that can be imagined.

Virgin of Virgins. Mary's love is preferred to the possession of an earthly kingdom. The brother of a king of Hungary, who had the habit of praying the office of the Most Blessed Virgin daily, during a dangerous illness took a vow of chastity in case he should recover his health, as in fact happened. After the death of his brother he thought of marrying a young princess. One day, when all was prepared for the wedding, he began to pray the office as he usually did, and when he reached the words "How beautiful you are!" Mary appeared to him and said: "If I am as beautiful as you say, why are you leaving Me? Know that if you renounce that marriage, I will be your Spouse and you will possess the Kingdom of Heaven instead of that of Hungary." When the prince heard these words he retired to the desert of Aquileya, where he died in holiness.



Coredemptrix of Humanity. In Milan there was a man named Masaccio, so taken up with his betting that one day he even staked his clothes. Seething with rage, he stabbed an image of Mary with a knife. A stream of blood sprang from the wound, spraying his face. Moved to compunction by his sin, he began to sob, thanking Mary because She had granted him this favour in time, so that he could do penance. He then became a Cistercian Religious, and lived a life of such perfection that God favoured him with the gift of prophecy. After forty years of religious life, he died a holy death in the Lord.

Mother of Mercy. In Spain, a certain Religious, abandoned by God, after having killed his prelate, left the monastery very hurriedly and, changing his clothes, went with all secrecy and diligence to the seacoast. Finding the opportunity he embarked for Barbary, or land of the moors in North Africa, where he renounced God and his Church, and indulged his appetites for a long time. A wealthy and important Moorish lady took a liking to him and married him. They lived together in marriage for many years, and he had three children by her. One day, when this monster went out to see his estate and some of his and his wife's mines, after arriving, went aside alone to pray a 'Hail Holy Queen' to Our Lady, which he used to pray every day, even after having renounced his Faith. While he was praying, Our Lady appeared to him and, having rebuked him for so many and so grievous sins, She promised him Her help if he returned to his monastery with humble repentance and persevered in Her devotion. The Virgin disappeared, and he went home very sad and thoughtful, and as his wife gave him a look, she asked him the cause of his sorrow, whether it was some disaster. He, weeping, told her his life story, and what had happened to him in the mines. The Moorish woman said to him: "Do not be remorseful, sir, because I will not only let you go to your country, if you wish, but will give you property with which you can live honourably there, and one of these sons of yours who will go with you." He gave her the deepest thanks, and very happily took his son, reached the sea coast, embarked, and went to Spain and to the monastery which he had left. He knocked at the door, telling the porter to inform the Superior that a foreign gentleman needed to speak with him. He came, and the visitor told him that the business he had in hand should be proposed to the entire monastery. The Superior had the entire monastery gathered together and then the gentleman, leaving his servants outside, entered Chapter with his son and, having sat down, asked if anyone had news of a friar from that monastery, named so-and-so, who had killed his Superior so many years before. Some said they remembered him well. Then he, prostrate on the ground, said with impressive feeling and tears that he was that villain. He recounted the events of his wasted life, and the

mercy and favour of the Most Blessed Virgin, and how he came willing to receive any penance. He begged them, for the love of Christ and his Blessed Mother, to receive him and the child, a son of his. The Friars all wept with tenderness and devotion on hearing such a strange case. They received them very willingly. They gave the father a light penance, but the penance he did for the rest of his life was such as to show clearly that his vocation had been true, divine and miraculous. He lived and died in holiness.

Queen of the Chaste. Most Holy Mary always ardently desires that men should love Her Divine Son Jesus exceedingly, He who loved them with an infinite love, and became a Child for their cause. Doubtless with this in mind, She took from the world and transplanted to religious life, as to a chosen orchard, many precious plants she had tended in the world with the most exquisite favours. One of them was blessed Saint Stanislaus Kostka, whom we could call the angel of the Society of Jesus and one of the most beloved children of the Virgin. He descended from a very illustrious family in Poland, with many palatines, electors, prelates, captains and other important figures. At the age of thirteen, he was sent to study in Vienna, where his progress in learning was notable, though his chief satisfaction was to hold the rosary in his hand, or read some verses in praise of Most Holy Mary, or do something else he believed would be pleasing to the Divine Lady. In these occupations he was attacked by an illness, which seemed to have been expressly sent to him by the Virgin, to show him Her love, since She first had Saint Barbara visit him, a special devotion of his, accompanied by some Angels, who gave him Holy Communion. Then Mary Herself came down to visit him in person and showed him a thousand kindnesses. Among others, bearing Her Divine Son in Her arms, she placed Him on his bed, and the sick youth held him with indescribable consolation. When Our Lady was about to leave, She told Stanislaus that it was Her wish that he enter the Company of Jesus. The angelic youth had to overcome no few difficulties to do so. It suffices to say that he had to walk more than one thousand five hundred kilometres on foot, an unaccustomed exercise for him; but everything was made easier by the love that burned in his breast. His conduct soon revealed his origins, since in less than ten months of life as a Religious, he reached a point that only the most spiritual elders can barely reach. While Saint Stanislaus was living completely consecrated to Mary's love, it happened that on August 1st 1568, he heard a sermon by Saint Peter Canisius (December 21st) preaching to the novices of the Society of Jesus, in which he instilled in all the great counsel to live each day as if it were the last of their life, after which Saint Stanislaus told his companions that this special counsel had been like the voice of God for him, since he was going to die that same month. He said this either because God had revealed it to him or because he had a kind of inner presentiment, as will be seen from what happened. Four days later, in the company of Father Sa, he went to Saint Mary Major and, speaking of the forthcoming feast of the Assumption said to him: "Father, I think that on that day a new Paradise will appear in Heaven, when contemplating the glory of the Most Holy Virgin crowned as Queen of Heaven and Earth and placed very close to the Lord above all the choirs of Angels. And if it is true that every year, as I believe, that feast is renewed in Heaven, this year I hope to be present at that feast in Paradise." The glorious martyr Saint Lawrence having been chosen by lottery for Saint Stanislaus as his protector for the month, that day the youth wrote a letter to his Most Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, in which he implored Her to obtain for him the grace of contemplating Her feast in Paradise. On Saint Lawrence's Day, August the 10th, he communed and begged the Saint to present that letter to the Mother of God, and intercede for him so that Most Holy Mary might hear him. Curiously enough, at the end of the day he had a slight fever which, though slight, he took as a certain sign that he had obtained the grace of his coming death. When he went to bed, smiling and jubilant he said: "I will never get up from this bed." And to Father Acquaviva he added: "My Father, I believe that Saint Lawrence has obtained for me from Mary the grace to be in Heaven for the Feast of the Assumption." But no one took any notice of these things. The vigil of the feast arrived and the illness was still

mild, but the Saint told a Brother that the next night he would be dead, to which the Brother replied: "It requires more of a miracle to die from something so slight than to cure it." But after noon he was attacked by a fatal weakness, with cold sweat and a general loss of strength. The Superior came, whom Stanislaus begged to place him on the ground on ashes so as to die as a penitent. To satisfy him, they placed him on the ground on a mat. Then he confessed and received Holy Viaticum, not without tears among those present, because when the Most Blessed Sacrament entered the room they saw him resplendent, his eyes sparkling with heavenly joy and his face inflamed with such holy ardour that he seemed a seraphim. He also received Holy Extreme Unction, and meanwhile raised his eyes to Heaven or otherwise contemplated and feelingly clasped Mary's image to his breast. A Father asked him why he had a rosary in his hand if he couldn't pray it, and he replied: "It comforts me because it is something of the Virgin Mary's." – "How much more," the Father replied, "it will comfort you to see Her and kiss Her hand in Heaven." Then the Saint, with a flushed face, raised his hands, thus expressing his longing to be soon in Her presence. His Beloved Mother then appeared to him, as his face radiant with joy indicated, and as he himself declared to those present, and shortly before dawn on August 15th, he expired in the hands of his Divine Mother with his eyes fixed heavenwards, without effort or agony, and with a serene and smiling expression. Those present brought up the image of the Virgin, and seeing that he made no sign, they understood that his soul had flown to Heaven beside his beloved Queen. Eyewitnesses, moved by such a beautiful spectacle, commented: "Oh, to die in Mary's arms, how sweet and touching it is!"



Most Loving Mother of Christians. It happened in 1896, a few months after the battle of Adua in Ethiopia, in which the Italian armies were defeated. One day the Emperor of Abyssinia Menelik summoned an Italian prisoner of war and, in front of everyone present, read the following letter: "I am a poor mother of one of the prisoners of war. Great Emperor! Have mercy and return to an unfortunate mother her son. In the name of the Mother of God I beg you. In our church I have offered a candle before Her image, and it seemed to me that Mary smiled at me and told me: 'Be confident. Menelik will return your son to you.' And so, in Her name, I ask you again for my son." Silence of expectation!... The Emperor turned to the prisoner and said: "You are free. Go back home. Here you have money for the trip; and tell your mother that it was not Menelik, but Mary, who gave you back your freedom. She is also my Mother; and if the Mother says yes, I cannot say no."

Model of Holy Imitation. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, Mother to Italian immigrants, once had a very singular vision. She saw the Virgin passing among the beds of a hospital, cleaning, helping, attending the sick. The Saint ran to help her, but the Virgin refused, saying: "No, no, I am doing what you do not want to do." Saint Francis Xavier understood the warning. She later opened a Catholic hospital in New York for Italian immigrants.

Fount of graces. Suetonius refers that Emperor Titus found such great pleasure in granting favours to those who asked them of him, that if perchance a day were to pass that offered him no occasion to grant some grace, saddened, he declared, "I have lost this day." If our Mother, the Virgin Mary, were to pass a day without granting us a grace, which is impossible, She would say the same. And it is quite certain that the Virgin is more desirous of sharing out Her graces than we in receiving them.

Queen, Mother and Heart of Creation. A Missionary Father in the Philippine Islands had a parrot which had managed to learn these two phrases: "Hail Mary Most Pure" and "Don't be in a hurry." He had learnt them because the Missionary constantly repeated them. One day the Missionary found the cage open and the parrot gone. A few days later a youth appeared with the parrot and declared that he had wanted to hang himself, but the

parrot surprised him, saying “Hail Mary Most Pure. Don’t be in a hurry.” The feelings of that youth are easy to understand.

Mother of the Church. Cardinal Saint Alfred Ottaviani told the International Marian Congress of Lourdes in 1958 that: “In no age have the Most Holy Virgin’s Apparitions been so splendid as in our days.” We are in ‘Mary’s Age’. She, our Mother, appears solicitous to remedy the dangerous dechristianizing and demoralizing activities of our days. Only the confusion of the XX century, satanically propped up by the enemies of Mary and the Church, in the hour of darkness spoken of by Saint Paul VI, could induce so many Christians to fall into the incredible deception of holding the devotion to the Most Holy Virgin Mary they had received as children to be practically a superstition. The modern plan to debase Mary has been inspired by Satan. To counteract this disaster, Saint Paul VI, after the bishops gathered in the ruinous Vatican II conciliabulum had refused to subscribe to his proposition: ‘Maria, Mater Ecclesiae’, he himself, on his own initiative and personal authority, on the 21st of November 1964, made the proclamation, and included it in the Litany of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in perpetuity. On the 12th of August 1978 Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great declared it infallibly as a Dogma of Faith.

Parapet against Divine Wrath. Here is an event from one of the most famous representations in the world of the Passion: that of Oberammergau. It occurred during the scene of Judas’ remorse and desperation. Thousands attended the spectacle, held in the open air. Judas bitterly rued his betrayal, but the high priest made fun of him. The traitor then began to consider the possibility of suicide. He lamented: “Where can I go? All is lost!” The auditorium, alarmed, observed in silence Judas’ departure, who left in despair. All of a sudden, the chirpy voice of a girl was heard: “Mama, why doesn’t he go to see the Virgin?”

Caudilla of Christ’s soldiers. While the Catholic Sovereigns were making preparations for the siege of Granada, one night Hernán Pérez del Pulgar penetrated into the city with fifteen intrepid warriors. While these battled with the garrison guarding the gate by which they had entered, he galloped forward towards the mosque, nailing a parchment in it with the inscription “Ave María”, as a sign that he took possession of the mosque in the name of the Queen of Heaven. The poster, written by Pulgar himself, read in large letters: “Ave María”, followed by the phrase: “Be witnesses that I take possession in the name of the Sovereigns and to the pledge I give to come to rescue the Virgin Mary whom I leave prisoner among the infidels.” According to others, it read: “Be witnesses that I take possession of this mosque in the name of the Castile Sovereigns, consecrating it from now on to the Virgin of Heaven, who has been our guide.”

Universal Mediatrix of all graces. A mother’s heart, that of so many, is an abyss of goodness. How then will the Most Holy Virgin Mary’s be? “Mary’s Heart – says the Holy Curé of Ars – is so tender towards us that all mothers together are no more than a block of ice beside Her.” In Heaven She continues to be our Mediatrix. While there are children of Hers on earth, Her task as Mother has not ended. This saintly Priest also affirmed: “I believe that after the end of the world, the Most Holy Virgin can be quite at ease, but as long as the world lasts, She is needed everywhere. She seems like a mother who has many children: She is forever busy going from one to another.”

Admonisher of souls in danger. Saint Alan, assaulted by a strong temptation, was at the point of losing grace for not commending himself to Mary; but the Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to him; and in order that he might be better prepared for another occasion, She gave him a slap in the face and told him: “If you had commended yourself to Me, you would not have been in that danger.” If we took care to invoke the name of Mary in temptation with all confidence, surely we would never fall.

Eminent and Worthy Mother of God. A Priest recounted to a friend of his something that had just happened to him. He had received a letter from an Andalusian couple, friends of his. The wife, a delicate and good soul, wrote these words: – “A tender hug for your

mother.” “She sends the greeting to me,” the Priest commented, “but so that it goes by the best route, she sends it by way of my mother; Andalusian mothers are like that!” This reminds us in a way of the delicacy of the Palestinian woman – “Blessed be the womb that bore You!” a praise for the Son... by way of the Mother. And a complement for the Mother.

Sweet Mistress of Holiness. Saint Rose of Lima, flower of America, was specially devoted to the Virgin. She had scruples about her name Rose, since her name was Isabel, but her mother, who saw a flower in her face, called her Rose. So she then tearfully entreated Mary for clarity and correctness in this, and She approved the change, but told her to add ‘of Holy Mary’. All the virtues were gathered together in that Rose of Holy Mary, who lived as the purest nun amid this world. As from eleven years she enjoyed great familiarity with the Virgin and frequently Her visits. In her accounts of conscience written by order of her director, she says that she often saw the Most Holy Virgin, beautiful, kind and sweetly tender, and that “She used to stay longer before Her eyes than Jesus Christ’s Humanity, who also often appeared to her, but briefly.” So great was Mary’s love for that little angel that She came to serve her, as the Canonization Bull says, even as a maid. As Rose filled her bed with pebbles and splinters, and when going to bed put a crown of thorns on her head, she did not sleep at night, and at dawn, overcome by sleep, she did not awake at the hour for rising. The Virgin promised to wake her up every day. And every day She came punctually to her bedside, telling Rose: “Rise up My daughter, rise up to pray, it is time.” One day, neither with this call could she come round. Though she sat up in bed her eyelids closed unconsciously, and she slept. The Virgin came back to wake her, gave her a pat on the back, shook her a little with motherly fondness and told her: “Get up, My daughter, don’t be lazy.” She rose at once, but as a penalty she did not see the Virgin that day, just when She was leaving, without seeing Her face. One day she forgot a hairshirt in her bed, and unable to return to her room, and fearing they might see it, implored the Virgin to hide it. Afterwards she found the hairshirt where she normally hid it.



Consolation of the Crossbearers. Listen carefully. That room you see there was used by a woman who had become a widow. The poor lady had lost everything with the death of her husband who had sustained her; all comfort and wellbeing came to an end, and all her relatives turned their backs on her... She was left in complete and utter misery!... She had but one angelical child, diligent and pious like her mother, who lived with her, and the two, by working all they could, supported each other. Poor souls!... But no, they weren’t... Look... We were in the depths of winter, the night was overcast. Outside great snowflakes fell... all in silence... The mother, whose hair was turning grey, warmed her numbed hands over a small stove, while at her side the daughter was sewing as fast as she could to finish a warm coat before midnight, before Sunday began. A poor oil lamp lit up the two faces, their shadows falling on the wall where a picture of the Virgin Mary hung. The two kept silence... nothing but their breathing was to be heard... when suddenly, the daughter lifted up her head and, gazing at her mother with a sad smile, told her: “Poor Mama, you have never been so poor as now!” How bitter must that thought have been! And in that voice, those words, went much tenderness... together with anguish. “Believe me, my daughter, God knows very well what He does. On losing your father, I believed that the Lord had abandoned us, but look, we have a Mother left to us, Most Holy Mary.” The lass lowered her head and continued to sew in silence; but the mother saw that from her eyes tears were falling onto the cloth. “Don’t cry, little one. In a word, if we are good Christians, what can be wanting to us? There are so many who still lack a roof! We, in truth, have to get by with very little, but that little has never failed us. Nothing remains to me of my

wealth either, but you are still left to me, and surely I would not change you for the best kingdom on earth.” On hearing this, the girl let her needlework fall from her hands and threw herself onto her mother’s neck, tenderly embracing her... Do you think they were unhappy? Did the tears they then shed not savour of Heaven?

Our Advocate. The classical writer Plutarch recounts: Antipater wrote a letter to the perverse Alexander the Great, his emperor, in which he accused Olympia, Alexander’s mother, of a grave offence. Alexander read the letter and then told his courtiers without batting an eyelid: “But does Antipater not know that a tear of my mother’s can wipe out a thousand letters like this accusing her?” If a tear from his mother’s moved this perverse man to compassion, we can well imagine the value of a word from the Most Holy Virgin Mary before Her Son. Hence She is ‘our Advocate’, the most trustworthy of all.

Generalissima of God’s Hosts. A colonel in the French army tells of the following event: “Wounded by a bullet in the thigh, I awaited the arrival of stretcher bearers. Not far from me lay one of my soldiers with a great wound in the head. From his pocket he drew out a small silver crucifix and began to recite the Hail Mary in Latin. At this, another quieter voice was heard responding: ‘*Sancta María, Mater Dei...*’ My good soldier turned his head around and spied another soldier at his side, mortally wounded like himself. He was a German gazing at him with his great blue eyes. The Frenchman reflected for a moment and then reached out his crucifix to his enemy, by then almost agonizing. The German took hold of it, pressed it fervently to his heart and returned it. They both shook hands and one added: ‘We can die in peace, we have done our duty.’ – ‘We can leave,’ the other replied, ‘for a homeland where hatred has no place.’ Shortly afterwards they breathed their last and the two entered the eternal kingdom of peace and love.”

The Sweet Name of Mary is Celestial Balm. Blessed Alan used to preach: “The glorious name of Mary is comparable to oil outpoured since, as oil cures the sick, irradiates fragrance, feeds the lamp, thus too the name of Mary heals sinners, recreates the heart and inflames it in Divine Love.”

Queen of Virgin Souls. Among the Founders whom the Most Holy Virgin chose for setting up the Order of the Servites, Saint Alexis Falconieri was singularly blessed for his purity. Born in Florence into a noble and wealthy family at the start of the XIII century, he spent his youth in works of piety, and was outstanding especially for his tender devotion to the Queen of Virgins. He took every pain to avoid all that could stain holy purity in the very least. The better to obtain it, he took up prayer and penance. Having consecrated himself completely to the service of Mary Most Holy, he made every effort to mortify his senses, to conserve intact the white lily of chastity. After a long life, full of heavenly favours, having fallen gravely ill, he was consoled by a vision of the Child Jesus, who placed a crown of roses on his head, symbol of the most unblemished chastity. At one hundred and ten years of age, after the elderly Saint had recited a hundred Hail Marys, as was his custom, on the 17th of February 1310, he flew to Heaven to receive the reward of his merits and to contemplate the Immaculate Lamb in the choir of virgin souls.

Mother of Bitterness. To Saint Bernadette, the Virgin in Lourdes told her: “If My people have no wish to amend, I will find Myself forced to allow the Arm of My Son to fall upon them. It is so heavy that I cannot sustain it any longer! The violation of Holydays and blasphemies are the crimes which make My Son’s Arm so weighty!” Truly blasphemy, profanation of Feastdays and impurity are the three great sins which cry out to Heaven for vengeance. Let us strive to lighten Jesus’ Arm by leading a holy life.

Channel to Jesus. A penitent refused to confess, led by despair and horror at his life full of grievous sins. Saint Vincent de Paul appeared and told him: “My friend, knowing that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for you, do you doubt his Mercy?... I want to draw you away from eternal damnation.” And he invited those present to pray the Hail Mary with faith so as to obtain the conversion of the unmoved sinner... And, then! the heart of that

unfortunate was moved, he confessed and died consoled.

Fortitude of Her devotees. Some years ago a student at the Polytechnic School in Paris found a rosary in a classroom. Indignant that objects of superstition, according to him, were still to be found in that illustrious School, he said so to his fellow students. Gathered in the courtyard, after the military exercise or training, they placed the rosary in a tree, and the pupil who found it shouted out: "If anyone of us has lost this rosary, then come and collect it, if he has the mind and courage to do so." A long silence capable of unnerving the boldest. But the young Christian did not hesitate, a certain C.T., known as the first to leave the army that year, came forward serene and at peace, took his rosary and, turning to the one who had made the challenge, said: "I thank you, friend. I keep this rosary which my mother gave me, which has kept me Christian. I don't think that I have thereby dishonoured the Polytechnic School." "Well said!" sounded from every side. "Here is a man with courage!" A distinguished Marshall, witness to the scene, stretched his hand out to the soldier and told him with deep feeling: "Bravo, friend! When there is valour to publicly confess and show one's conviction and faith, there will be valour as well to defend one's country and die for the homeland."



Mother of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Flammin and a great number of authors refer that a distinguished young lady, by name Alexandra, miraculously converted and inscribed into the Confraternity of the Rosary by Saint Dominic, appeared to the Saint after death to tell him that she was sentenced to seven hundred years of purgatory owing to the sins she had committed or made others commit by her worldly vanities. She implored him to relieve her and obtain her relief with the prayers of the Rosary Confraternity members. The Saint did so and fifteen days later, Alexandra appeared to him again, brighter than the sun. She had been freed from the sentence in such a short time thanks to the prayers of the Rosary members in her favour. She also gave Saint Dominic to know that she came on behalf of the souls of purgatory to exhort him to continue preaching the Rosary and to tell the souls' relatives to give them a share of their prayers, for which they would be abundantly recompensed by them when they arrived at glory.

Gateway to Glory. In the life of Saint Bernard Morlaàs, a Dominican Friar, it is read that, being sacristan at the Santarem priory in the kingdom of Portugal, he used to teach two boys who out of devotion dressed in the holy habit of Saint Dominic, above all to instil in them the holy fear of God, and true devotion to Jesus and Mary. It often happened that, taking lunch before an image of Mary who bore the Good Jesus in Her arms, they invited Him to eat, and the Virgin Most Holy lowered Him down from Her arms so that He might enjoy the meal with those candid boys. They told their teacher Saint Bernard of the affair, and he instructed them, in order that they might ask the Divine Infant and His Most Holy Mother to invite them as well and their teacher to the House of His Heavenly Father. So they did; and the Good Jesus replied that their invitation was in three days' time, when His Glorious Ascension into Heaven was to be celebrated, which for the year 1277 in which this happened, was on the 6th of May. So then, on that day, the three made ready to celebrate the solemnity, and after having heard Holy Mass and received Holy Communion, on giving thanks to God, the three died in holiness, and went on to the eternal possession of the invitation to glory... Do you not see, dear children, how Jesus and Mary respond? For God's sake love Mary deeply; commend yourself to Her from the heart; make Her some gift every day, and I assure you that by Her intercession you will obtain the Love of God in life, and after death will be even better rewarded in Heaven.

Mary, Refuge of sinners, converts a young materialist. Desiderius, aged thirty, a sweet, frank and loyal character, had lost his bearings on giving himself up passionately to false

philosophical ideas. From one error to another, he finally fell into the most crude materialism. Above all he looked at the Catholic Religion with horror, and had conceived an implacable hatred for Priests, whom he said were the scourge of humanity, and called them destroyers of mankind. Attacked by pulmonary tuberculosis, his end was close. A very virtuous sister of his, who loved him dearly, lavished him with her care. All her efforts to bring him to reason were useless. Desiderius ever protested that he did not believe there was a God, and with blasphemies rejected all the truths presented to him. A pious lady from the Parish of Our Lady of Victories, Desiderius' sister's friend, aware of the condition and disposition of the unhappy youth, had the idea of commending him to the prayers of the Association, thinking that the means for acquiring Mary's protection for him, despite his impiety, was to have him registered in the Confraternity of Mary's Immaculate Heart, Refuge of sinners. To do so meant deceiving the Parish Priest, whom she went to see one Saturday, and asked him to have the goodness to enrol a gravely ill youth, and commend him to their prayers, to obtain for him the grace to receive the Last Sacraments by means of the Virgin's protection. On the following day at half-past-seven in the evening he was commended; public prayers were offered for him, and on the following Monday several Communions were offered in his favour. That day was one of the cruellest for the poor patient; who went through many successive crises which reduced him to a state of torpidity. In the evening, at around half past seven he received the visit of his doctor, a pious Christian. The patient asked about his condition, and the doctor replied that there was no cure, and that his death was approaching: "Friend" he added "an eternity of glory is offered to you, and if you want to earn it, you still can." Desiderius, his face serene, and with firm voice replied: "Esteemed Doctor, I have already made my profession of faith... I don't want to listen to this language... I am not going to change. I don't believe there is a God: besides, if there is a Heaven and an eternity, I have nothing to accuse myself of. For seven years I have been sacrificing myself for mankind, and if I die it is for them." It was to be noted that Desiderius was not only a slave to massive impiety, but also a fanatical partisan of all those political ruses by which so many speakers seduce youth. The doctor went on for a few minutes with his pious warnings; and the patient turned his head away giving to understand that he did not want to listen to him. They had called a Sister of Good Succour to care for him. When the doctor left, Desiderius told her: "What a bothersome man! All those times he has spoken to me of religion! I can well say that it tires me: he does not want to hold his peace." This good Sister who observed his weakness and dejection, was content to say: "Yet, friend, if there is a God, what will be your destiny? No man can say in God's presence that he has no stain." O Benign and Omnipotent Mary! This was the hour of your triumph! Desiderius glances at the Sister, reflects for a moment, and cries out with extraordinary strength given his condition: "Yes! I remember a miracle, undeniable; the whole people saw it, that is, the multiplication of the five loaves in the desert! I recognize Jesus Christ as my God. Have a Priest come to confess me this evening; tomorrow perhaps there will be no time." Oh! Grace of Jesus Christ! Omnipotent grace! It was Your work. A few minutes before this sinner was an infidel who had renounced God, who boldly challenged His justice, and suddenly, in the bat of an eyelid, had become a penitent sinner, an obedient faithful. Ah! Deign to take command of our hearts, and consecrate them forever to love and fidelity to the God of forgiveness and mercy. Though it was already late and Desiderius very tired, as the danger was imminent, and the sick youth so insistent, Confession could not wait for the morrow. During his illness, many Priests had been called; some had been rejected; a few others had been received, but then dismissed with disdain. Come the moment for confession, the patient himself designated one of those worst received to confess him, so as, he said, to make reparation. This ecclesiastic was a member of a venerable congregation from Desiderius' neighbourhood. At his arrival, Desiderius said to him: "Father, I am in my last moments... I want to confess." His confession lasted five quarters of an hour. From that moment Desiderius was unrecognizable; the old

man, the impious man, the man dominated by his passions had disappeared, giving way to the new man, the sweet and docile Christian. Shortly before he was deeply sad; now he was exceedingly cheerful, and knew not how to express his cheerfulness. Shortly before he had been downcast, dejected, moribund; but he now feels enlivened by an extraordinary strength. He did not sleep all night; he spoke continually of his joy and his happiness, and asked them to make him recite prayers. They tell him to be silent, to rest. "Oh!" he says "now I feel much better... I am not tired... I am the happiest of men." On the 20th of June he confessed again with evident signs of deep repentance. Several times during the day he made known his ardent desire to receive Holy Communion. "When then shall I receive the Lord?", he said. On the morning of the 21st, his confessor announced to him that he was to administer Most Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. He then asked what Extreme Unction was, and once explained, he was left in admiration at Divine Goodness deigning to dispense so many graces to him. He asked them to repeat the articles of Faith to him, and give him some explanations. "O my God – he added – How far astray I was! How unhappy not believing what I now find so credible!" After Communion his heart felt so satisfied that he did not know how to express his happiness, and confused at the goodness the Lord had shown to him, he exclaimed: "Oh! How rich I am! What can I do to give due thanks to God! Never! Never will I find expressions to..." Here he paused, raised his eyes to Heaven, and concluded saying: "... to give Him proof of my acknowledgement!" He then had the fortune to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Lord Archbishop of Paris, having gone to administer this Sacrament on the 23rd of June in Saint Clotilde, condescended to pass by his house, and confirmed him. From that moment, his fervour appeared to increase; he spoke of nothing but God and religion, but admirably, as if he had been engaged in nothing but these sublime subjects. He frequently said: "I ask God for nothing but a few more days of life to have more pains to offer Him in satisfaction for my sins, for I can scarcely pray." Not because he did not pray, but because he would have prayed without cease if he had not been forbidden to the point of demanding that he promise to pray no more without asking permission, to which he submitted with the docility of a child. His love for God made him desire ardently the grace to consecrate himself to His service in some religious Order, so that he asked and obtained permission to take the corresponding vow in case God were to restore his health. He would frequently say: "If God wants to take me out of this world, I am resigned; but if He restores health, I will labour to convert all those I love; yes, I will convert my friends. If I were to become a Parish Priest, I would have to convert all my parishioners who had the misery to be impious... I would go to visit the poor." If a word of impatience escaped him, he would then look at his crucifix and say: "Oh! How much my Saviour suffered! It is I who have crucified Him! Ah! I will complain no longer; let me suffer all You wish, no longer will I ever complain." And joining his hands, he said: "Forgive me, my God, I have sinned, forgive me." Then it behoved to hearten him. One day he said: "How happy I would be if God were to grant me the grace to attend the Holy Sacrifice of Mass just once! I who denied the Sacraments, Jesus Christ's Divinity, the whole of religion! In this way I would show how different my sentiments are now; it would be a reparation. But, well, if He does not so wish, He reads my heart, and sees that I am resigned to His Will." After his conversion he had the happiness to commune several times. Three weeks passed by, in which he enjoyed great freedom of spirit, and spent in the continuous exercise of his precious sentiments. The fourth week, the last of his life, he spent in delirium, yet during those days of delirium, he was seen to be absorbed in religious ideas. He was heard to say: "My friends, my friends, they all say they have a religion... materialism... materialism... Oh! A time will





come in which men will understand that they are not here on earth just to sow... Where are those who do not believe in Hell?... Hapless if they do not convert!" Desiderius came back to himself two days prior to his death, and spent them in continuous union with God. At last, on the 16th of July, Feast of Our Lady of Carmel, on pronouncing these words: "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I offer You my heart, my spirit and my life," he lost consciousness, and gave up his soul to the Creator, who had lavished so many graces upon him, while the divine Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for him in honour of Mary, Refuge of sinners, to implore the grace to protect this son of Her mercy to the very last moment.

Mary Most Holy, espoused to all the living souls of the Church's faithful. 'Gerard, why don't you marry?', his neighbours in Muro asked him, seeing his unconcern, more

interested in going from one Chapel to another than in finishing his tailor's assignments. But Saint Gerard Mary Majella replied: "I married the Virgin!" A few linked this reply to a happening on the recent Feast of the Immaculate Conception. At the start of the procession, Gerard was there in the forefront, absorbed in contemplating the Image. All of a sudden they saw him move forward, remove a ring and place it on the finger of the Image, crying out: "I have espoused Mary Most Holy." By this act, seemingly an adolescent's folly, Gerard became forever bound to the Mother of God. On another occasion, when in Deliceto, Father Cáfaró ordered him to accompany two young Redemptorist aspirants to Ciorani. Halfway there, they spent the night in Pontorola hostelry. The supper was served by a lass accustomed to dealing with coarse travellers and was now drawn by Gerard's good manners. The following morning, when he was paying the bill, she contrived to confess her love for him at first sight. Gerard, at once alarmed and amused, replied with a smile: "What a shame, but for some time now I have been married to a very beautiful woman." And before the girl could react, he added: "I am espoused to the Virgin." And so went his way.

Perpetual Succour of souls. During the cruel wars of 1814 taking place between Napoleonic France and the allied powers of Russians, Germans, English and Spanish, the inhabitants of the Alps abandoned their valleys to escape the fury of those enemies, who ravaged the country, to the point of frequently abducting women and girls; but the barbarous soldiers pursued them to the most remote refuges. One of them, yet more ferocious than his companions at arms, had the cruelty to kill a father, for daring to defend the honour of his daughter. This maiden, horrified, covered with her unfortunate father's blood who had just died for her, at once fled to the mountains. At the sight of the terrified lass, light-footed over the sharp rocks, other soldiers ran out in her pursuit. They came up close... were about to seize her... but when the heroic girl reached the highest point of the rocks, she paused, measured the depths of the precipice, her only protection from the barbarous aggression, raised her eyes to Heaven and cried out: "Mother of Pity, Virgin unstained, be my Succour!", and at once launched out into the depths of the abyss. The soldiers, in turn astonished, approached the spot where the girl should have fallen dashed onto the rocks, but, oh prodigy! They saw her kneeling, hands joined, eyes raised heavenwards, giving thanks to Our Lady of Good Succour, who had protected her in such a marvellous manner from imminent danger. At this sight, the soldiers, impelled by an omnipotent force, fell prostrate, implored forgiveness for their crime, and published the amazing wonder they had witnessed throughout the army, and as from that day the enemies ceased their horrible savagery in the countries through which they passed. The tender virgin, after having given thanks to the Mother of God, who had protected her so visibly, went to seek refuge in the French soldiers' encampment, who were aware of her miraculous escape, took her under

their protection and, to perpetuate the memory of such a great mercy, formed the project of raising up an altar in honour of the Queen of the Angels in the same spot in which the tender maiden had been miraculously saved. She herself felt the duty to consecrate to God the life He had conserved for her, sold her inheritance and from the proceeds had a small hermitage built in which she spent the rest of her days in penance and the practice of pious exercises. She lived from the alms brought to her daily by charitable souls, and in exchange offered her benefactors the suffrages of her fervent prayers. The pious anchoress died in the year 1829, and in accord with her wishes was buried under the first step of the altar. From then on people never ceased to visit her sepulchre and to implore her protection, since no one doubted that God would have admitted a soul so pure and virtuous into His bosom, and all considered her a new patroness for their country. Travellers too were pleased to visit the tomb of the heroine of the Alps. The sight of those places so long inhabited, and the charms of innocence and virtue favoured by Heaven, filled them with holy emotion, and caused the desire of amendment to be born in their hearts, since the power of virtue is so great that it makes itself felt in the souls least disposed to practise it. They deposited their offerings on the sepulchre of the humble virgin, trustingly imploring her for the succour of her prayers, which they doubted not would favour travellers who came to render the tribute of their pious homage to her virtue. (Abbé Victor of Saint Mary).

Honour and Glory of Her devotees. In the Dolo monastery of the Benedictine Order, built in honour of Our Lady, there was a monk very devoted to the Queen of Heaven called Iostio. He heard an Archbishop from the Holy Land say that there they revered the Mother of God with five psalms according to the five letters of Her name, which are the first letter 'M' of: 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum;' and then four psalms in order beginning with the other letters: A, R, I, A, together with a few other prayers. This monk as faithful soul desirous of holiness, did not lose the occasion and thus followed that example. The good are like that, and from all good conversations draw out flowers and make honey and sweetness for their souls. So did this saintly religious, and persevered in this holy devotion for many years until the year 1186 in which he died on the 29th of November, vigil of glorious Apostle Saint Andrew. When the Monks rose for matins, at roll call held by the subprior of the monastery, he found that the only one missing was Iostio, his own brother. He then took a lantern and went to look for him in the dormitory, where he found him in his cell dead on the bed; but he saw something marvellous, five roses springing from his face, one from the mouth, very beautiful with some golden letters which read 'Magnificat', another two from the eyes and another two from the ears with the beginning of the psalms as we said. The Father Subprior, seeing all this, went to choir and, matins over, related all he had seen to the monks, who went there very readily, and seeing such a great miracle did not dare to touch him without first sending for the Archbishop of that diocese, who then came greatly pleased on contemplating such a miraculous occurrence never seen, and after seeing raised his eyes heavenwards and gave thanks to God and to His Most Holy Mother, and vesting in pontificals in solemn procession with lanterns, candles and censers with pleasing aromas, arrived at the poor bed of the saintly monk Iostio. Drawing out the rose which sprang from the mouth, which easily followed the hand that took it, thus, fresh and lovely as it was, he placed it with great reverence under a glass cover on an Altar of the Cathedral Church for all to see in testimony of the miracle, but the other four, on being drawn out of the eyes and ears, then withered and dried up. And the Archbishop had the body taken to the major church – dedicated to the glory and honour of the Queen of the Angels – where it received interment before the main Altar with great veneration. There was no lack of many miracles there, for God to show the clemency of His Most Holy Mother and the glory of the saint. This miracle was taken from the book by Father Jerome Taix, and taken up by Vincencio Valvasense for the faithful to see how the Virgin honours Her devotees with roses and flowers even here in this world.



The Miraculous Medal.

This Medal is known the world over, but the wonders of the Apparitions which accompany the revelations by which the Virgin taught it to Saint Catherine Labouré, and their doctrinal content, are often little known. We shall explain the Apparitions briefly.

Saint Catherine Labouré was born on the 2nd of May 1806 in the village of Fain-les-Moutiers, in Burgundy, France, and was the ninth of a family with eleven children. Her parents, Peter Labouré and Louise Magdalen Gontard, owners of the farm they themselves ran, were deeply Christian. They brought up their numerous family in the fear and love of God.

But in 1815, when Catherine was no more than nine, her mother died. Now an orphan of her earthly mother, the child sought another mother in the Most Holy Virgin. Effectively, shortly afterwards, one of the farm maids surprised her standing on a table with the statue of Mary she had taken from the mantelpiece, which she pressed closely to herself.

At the age of twelve, her father entrusted the household to her, and from the age of fourteen, despite her exhausting work, on Fridays and Saturdays Catherine began to help at the poorhouse in the neighbouring town of Moutiers-Saint-Jean, three kilometres away.

As from her First Communion she had heard the call of God, and dreamt of the religious life. She had doubts, however, about which community to choose. A dream helped to make up her mind. She saw herself in Fain, praying alone, in the Chapel of the Most Holy Virgin as she usually did, when all of a sudden she saw a venerable Priest, whom she did not know, leave the sacristy to celebrate Mass. The Priest, who fixed his eyes on her every time he turned towards the people, on finishing made a sign for her to follow him into the sacristy; but Catherine, hesitant, left the Church, and visited a sick person in the house of a friend. Hardly had she entered, she saw behind her the venerable Priest, who had followed her, and told her: "It is good to care for the sick. You flee from me now, but one day you will come to me. God has plans for you, do not forget."

Who was this Priest? What did his words mean? The mystery did not take long to clear up. Some time later, Catherine had the opportunity to visit a convent of the Daughters of Charity. On entering the parlour, her attention was drawn to a picture hanging on the wall. "That is the Priest – she exclaimed – I saw in my dreams! What is his name?" They told her that he was Saint Vincent de Paul. Vividly impressed at this reply, she made her dream known to the Parish Priest there, who told her decidedly: "Yes, my daughter, I believe that the elderly Priest who appeared to you in the dream was Saint Vincent de Paul, and what he wants is for you to become a Daughter of Charity."

This was how, after waiting two years for her father's consent, in April 1830 she entered the Noviciate of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, Rue du Bac. Some days later, she had the happiness of attending the solemn translation of the relics of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Her noviciate was spent in fervour, as the extraordinary graces with which she was favoured show; and her Marian soul deeply appreciated the devotion which the Daughters of Saint Vincent had to the Immaculate Conception. However, nothing about her drew the attention of those around her.

The Apparitions: Heaven came down to earth... From July up till December 1830, Sister Catherine, young novice of the Daughters of Charity, received the immense favour of conversing with the Virgin Mary three times.

In the preceding months, Catherine had been favoured with other apparitions. Saint Vincent de Paul showed her his heart. On three successive days, when in prayer in the chapel, Catherine saw the heart of Saint Vincent de Paul in three different colours. First it

appeared white, the colour of peace; then red, colour of fire; and lastly black, sign of the evils which were to fall upon France in general and upon Paris in particular.

Shortly afterwards, Catherine saw Christ present in the Eucharist, beyond the appearances of bread: "I saw Our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament during the whole time of my noviciate except for every time I doubted." And on the 6th of June, Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, Christ appeared as Crucified King, stripped of all His royal attributes.

One summer's night, Sunday the 18th of July 1830, then eve of Saint Vincent de Paul's feast, the novice mistress had spoken to them of devotion to the Saints, and in particular to the Queen of them all, Mary Most Holy. Her words, steeped in faith and ardent piety, intensified in Sister Catherine's heart the desire to see and contemplate the Countenance of the Most Holy Virgin. As it was the eve of Saint Vincent, to each of them a tiny piece of a surplice of the Saint had been distributed. Catherine swallowed it and dreamt thinking that Saint Vincent, together with her Guardian Angel, would that same night obtain for her the grace to see the Virgin as was her desire. The previous favours she had received in different apparitions of Saint Vincent to Sister Catherine had precisely enlivened in her heart a confidence without limits towards her blessed Father, and her candour and lively hope did not deceive her. "Confidence obtains all it hopes for," said Saint John of the Cross.

It was the eve of the feast of Saint Vincent, whom she so dearly loved. Catherine turned to this Saint who had shown her his heart overflowing with love, asking that her great desire to see the Most Holy Virgin be at last fulfilled.

Silence reigned in the ward where Sister Catherine slept, when she heard her name called three times. She awoke and opening the curtains of her bed a little she looked to the side where the voice came from and saw there a child dressed in white, who seemed to be four or five years of age. He told her: "Rise up quickly and come to the Chapel; the Most Holy Virgin awaits you." Sister Catherine hesitated, she feared to be noticed by the other novices, but the boy replied to her inner concern and told her: "Fear not, it is 11.30 at night, all are deeply asleep. Come, I await you." She no longer delayed one moment; she dressed with haste and placed herself at the disposition of her mysterious guide, "who remained standing without separating from her bed."

With Sister Catherine dressed, the child began to walk, and she followed him going "at his left side." Wherever they passed, the lamps lit up. The body of the child radiated gleaming brilliance, and as he passed by everything lit up. On reaching the door of the Chapel, she found it shut, but the boy touched the door with his little finger and it opened at once. Catherine says: "My surprise was more complete when, on entering the Chapel, I saw all the candles and torches lit, which reminded me of midnight Mass." (She does not yet see the Virgin).

The boy took her to the sanctuary area beside the seat kept for the Father Director, from where he used to preach to the Daughters of Charity, and there she fell to her knees, with the boy standing to the right the whole time. The wait seemed very long to her, as she was eager to see the Virgin. She looked with some unease towards the gallery to the right in case the sisters on vigil saw her, as they used to pause to make an act of adoration.

At last the longed-for time came, and the boy said: "See here the Virgin, here She is." Sister Catherine heard a rumour like the rustle or swish of a silk garment coming from the gallery side, beside the picture of Saint Joseph. She saw a Lady of extreme beauty majestically crossing the sanctuary, "who went to sit in a chair on the Main Altar steps, on the Gospel side."

Sister Catherine in the depths of her heart doubted whether she was or was not truly in the presence of the Queen of Heaven. The boy told her: "Behold the Most Holy Virgin." But she doubted on believing it; it was almost impossible for her to describe what she felt at that moment, what took place within her, but it seemed to her that she was not seeing the Most Holy Virgin. The boy then spoke to her, not like a child, but like a man, more vigorous and with very strong words: "Can the Queen of Heaven not appear to a poor mortal creature the way that most pleases Her?" Catherine ran to kneel before Mary seated on the chair.



“Then, looking at the Virgin, in a moment I was by her side. I knelt in the sanctuary, with hands resting on the Most Holy Virgin’s knees. There I spent the sweetest moments of my life; it would be impossible for me to say what I felt. The Virgin told me how I should behave towards my director, the way to act in griefs, and come to throw myself (showing me with Her left hand) at the foot of the Altar and there unburden my heart, since there I would receive all the consolations of which I had need. Then I asked Her the meaning of the things I had seen, and She explained it all to me.” Catherine received the notice of a mission and a petition: that a Confraternity of the Daughters of Mary be founded; which Father Aladel was to do, ten years later, on the 2nd of February 1840.

Instructions of the Most Holy Virgin: “God wishes to confide a mission to you, it will mean work for you, but you will overcome thinking that you do it for God’s glory. You will

know how good God is. You will have to suffer until you tell your director. Contradictions will not be lacking to you; but grace will assist you, fear not. Speak to your director trustingly and simply; have confidence, fear not... The times are quite ruinous... The whole world will be afflicted by calamities of all kinds (on saying this the Virgin was very sad). Come to the foot of this Altar, where graces will be lavished on all who ask for them with trust and fervour; all, great and little, rich and poor. I desire to pour out graces on your community, ardently I wish to do so. Great abuses in observance cause me grief, seeing that the rules are not kept, with so much laxity in both communities despite the great souls there are in them. Say so to the one in charge of you, though he be not the superior. He will soon be placed at the head of the community. He should do all he can to re-establish the rigour of the rule.” The Virgin showed Her desire that the Association of Daughters of Mary be founded so as to celebrate the Month of May dedicated to Her with great solemnity. She told me: “I like these feasts greatly and grant many graces.” After being with Her for about two hours, She disappeared from Catherine’s sight like a shadow which fades away.

Apparition of the 27th of November 1830:

On the evening of Saturday the 27th of November 1830, eve of the First Sunday of Advent, in the Chapel, Sister Catherine was doing her meditation, when she seemed to hear the rustle of a silk garment which brought to mind the previous Apparition. The Most Holy Virgin appeared, dressed in white silk with long sleeves and tunic fastened up to the collar. A white veil covered Her head which, without concealing Her figure, fell down on either side to the feet. When she wanted to describe Her face, she could only say that She was the Virgin Mary in Her greatest beauty. Her feet rested on a white globe of which only the upper part was visible, and they crushed a green serpent with yellow spots. Her hands, upraised to Her Heart, held a small golden globe, with a cross on top.

The Most Holy Virgin maintained a supplicating posture as though offering the globe to the Lord. Sometimes She looked up to Heaven and at others at the earth. All of a sudden Her fingers were filled with rings adorned with precious stones which gleamed and shed their light in all directions, surrounding Her at that moment with such clarity that to see Her was impossible. She had three rings on each finger, the largest closest to the hand; a smaller one on the middle joint and the smallest on the fingertip. The light rays shining out from the precious stones lengthened out downwards and filled the whole lower part.

While Sister Catherine contemplated the Virgin entirely resplendent, and that beautiful rays of light shone out from Her hands towards the ground, the Virgin looked at her and spoke to her heart: “This globe you see (under the Virgin’s feet) represents the entire world, France, and each soul in particular. These rays symbolize the graces I pour out on those who

request them. The precious stones which send forth no rays are the graces which souls do not request of Me.” By these words, the Virgin made Herself known as Mediatrix of the graces coming to us from Jesus Christ. The golden globe then disappeared and the Most Holy Virgin stretched her hands out towards the earth, resplendent with light. Her open arms stretched out, while the rays of light continued to fall upon the white globe at Her feet.

The Miraculous Medal: At this moment an oval form appeared about the Virgin and on the interior edge in a semicircle appeared the following invocation in golden letters: “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee!” These words formed a semicircle which began at the height of the right hand, passed over the Most Holy Virgin’s head and ended at the height of the left hand.

The Apparition then made a half turn, and Sister Catherine, in the same place, saw the reverse of the medal. In it appeared the initial letter of Mary, an ‘M’, over which there was a cross resting on a bar which traversed the letter at a third of its height, and underneath the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which Catherine could distinguish, as one was crowned with thorns and the other transpierced by a sword. Around the monogram there were twelve stars.

She again heard the voice in her interior: “Have a medal struck according to this model. Whoever wears it will receive great graces. The graces will be more abundant for those who wear it with confidence.”

One day, Sister Catherine, unsure what inscription to put on the reverse of the medal, during prayer heard the Virgin tell her: “The ‘M’ and the two Hearts are sufficiently eloquent.”

In the month of December that same year 1830, while at prayer, Catherine again heard a rustling, this time from behind the Altar, and was favoured with a new apparition in which the Most Holy Virgin repeated the order to have a medal struck according to the model She had showed her on the 27th of November, and showed her again in this apparition. The same picture of the medal was presented beside the Tabernacle, behind. The Most Holy Virgin wanted to leave the symbolisms of Her Apparition quite clear, so that She again recalled and explained them: “These rays are the symbol of the graces that I obtain for those persons who request them of Me... From now on, my daughter, you will see Me no more; but you will hear My voice in prayer.” It was the end of the Apparitions. Catherine communicated the Virgin Mary’s petitions to her Confessor, Father Aladel. He received her very badly, and forbade her to think of them. The shock was severe. On the 30th of January 1831, her noviciate ended. Catherine took the habit. The following day, she went to a poorhouse, the one in Paris East, a district full of miseries where she was to attend the poor over a period of 46 years. Her testimony was faithful and fruitful, and she was so discreet and humble that she revealed nothing of her secret to her companions all her life long.

The sweetest Queen of Heaven and earth, for love of men, showed Herself to Her servant Sister Catherine, with hands full of light rays, so as to show the world that She wanted to pour out abundant graces over all those who ask Her with confidence. Let us ask our Mother to pour into our souls the necessary light to recognize our nothingness and our misery, and how much we owe to God our Father for all the very many benefits He has dispensed to us, so that by fulfilling His Will in this life we may enjoy Him in company with Mary Most Holy eternally in Heaven.

What joy to consider that our Most Loving Mother has such great desires to grant us Her favours, that She awaits only that we turn to Her to remedy our ills and fill us with Her graces and gifts. Let us always turn to Mary, Queen of the Heavenly Court, as our sole hope.

We can confidently repeat in the words of Saint Bernard: Never was it known that anyone who fled to Her protection, implored Her help or sought Her intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto Her, Virgin of Virgins, our Mother. To Her do we go, before Her we stand, sinful and sorrowful. May the Mother of the Word Incarnate despise not our petitions, but in Her mercy hear and answer us.



What great consolation we feel in our hearts when we contemplate the Image of the Most Holy Mother of God, Our Lady and tender Mother, as Sister Catherine saw Her, with a globe in Her Divine Hands, representing the whole earth and press it to Her breast, symbolizing thus the love She bears for men. Let us ask the Divine Mother, our Mother, that we may respond well to so much love, and seek to imitate Her virtues.

Let us go up to the most holy Altar of the Immaculate Virgin, to ponder Her virtues and tell Her our griefs. What encouragement for our spirits on approaching Her Sacred Image!, where we see in representation the deepest humility, an admirable modesty, and all the other perfections with which the Lord God has adorned our Heavenly Mother.

Mary is the Queen of the Clergy, of the Apostles, Mother of the Messias, Predilect Daughter of God the Father. Let us always heed the motherly advice of this Divine and Heavenly Lady, so that repentant of our faults and imitating Her virtues, we may win the immense happiness of being with our Most Holy Mother in Heaven for all eternity.

Speaking of the Virgin's appearance, Saint Catherine strove to find words: "The Virgin was standing, of medium height, dressed in white, Her Countenance so beautiful that it would be impossible for me to describe Her beauty. She wore a pale-white silk dress, made, as they say, 'in the virgin style', smooth sleeves, without low neck. The head was covered by a white veil which fell to the feet on either side. Under the veil She wore Her hair parted and straight under a kind of shawl, edged in lace some two fingers wide, not gathered up, lightly resting on the hair, the face quite uncovered. The eyes as soon raised heavenwards as lowered. The feet resting on a sphere, that is, a half sphere, or at least it seemed a half to me."

Diffusion and efficacy of the Miraculous Medal:

Saint Catherine overcame all the obstacles and hindrances announced to her by the Most Holy Virgin, and after two years of interviews and observance of her conduct, the priest informed the Archbishop of Paris of what had happened without revealing Catherine's identity. The proposal was accepted, and in 1832 the Church authorities approved the striking of the Medal, which spread rapidly. Once widely diffused, events gave proof of the divine origin of its message.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was not yet official, but the Medal with the words 'Conceived without sin' influenced Pope Saint Pius IX the Great to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th of December 1854.

In February 1832 in Paris, a terrible cholera epidemic was declared, which was to leave more than 20,000 dead. In June the Daughters of Charity began to distribute the first 2,000 medals minted at the petition of Father Aladel. It was originally named 'Medal of the Immaculate Conception', but the cures, as well as the protections and conversions obtained by it, were so numerous that it began to be called the Medal which cures, the Medal which saves, the Medal which works miracles, and finally it was popularly titled 'the Miraculous Medal'.

By autumn 1834 more than 500,000 medals had been distributed, and in 1835, more than a million in the whole world. In 1839 the Medal had been spread to the point of exceeding ten million exemplars. At the death of Saint Catherine, in 1876, the total amount was over one hundred million medals.

The Church approved the Medal, first in a general way, and then, having studied in detail the different circumstances of its many manifestations, it was granted a special Mass for the 27th of November, the day when Our Lady made it known and ordered it to be coined.

This Medal, seemingly insignificant, by the spectacular miracles performed by its means, has made known beyond doubt that She who came from Heaven to give it to us is none other than *Virgo Potens*, the Virgin all-powerful in God's presence.

It seemed that there was no illness able to resist it. At its contact, there disappeared, at that moment or following a novena, insanity, leprosy, scurvy, tuberculosis, tumours, dropsy, epilepsy, hernias, paralysis, typhoid fever and other fevers, venereal disease, fractures, mumps, heart palpitations, cholera. In the spiritual order, the same variety: conversions of hardened sinners, protestants, jews, apostates, unbelievers, freemasons, evildoers, hypocrites. A third category comprised graces of protection and safeguarding: the Medal limited the disastrous effects of the war, and avoided shipwrecks, accidents and duels.

At the sight of these extraordinary events, the Archbishop of Paris, Msgr. Quelen, ordered an official investigation to be made on the origin and effects of the Miraculous Medal. Here is his conclusion:

“The extraordinary speed with which this medal has spread, the prodigious number of medals which have been coined and distributed, the wonderful events and singular graces which the faithful have obtained by their trust in it, seem truly to be the signs by which Heaven has wished to confirm the reality of the Apparitions, the veracity of the account of the seer and the importance of the diffusion of the medal.” And in Rome, in 1846, as consequence of the sensational conversion of the jew Alphonse Ratisbonne, Pope Saint Gregory XVI, with all his authority, confirmed the conclusions of the Paris Archbishop. To wear the holy medal is to proclaim our faith in the petitions of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, as Universal Mediatrix before God.

Lourdes and the Miraculous Medal:

The Miraculous Medal is known the world over. But with frequency it is not known that the Apparitions of Our Mother to Sister Catherine Labouré in the Chapel of her convent in Rue du Bac, prepared for the great events of Lourdes.

The invocation of the Medal. “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee,” spread everywhere by the Miraculous Medal, gave the impulse to the great movement of faith which “moved Pope Pius IX in 1854 to define the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.” Four years later, the apparition at Massabielle confirmed the definition by Rome in an unexpected way.

“The Lady of the Grotto appeared to me just as She is represented in the Miraculous Medal,” Saint Bernadette declared, who wore it hanging from her neck.

In 1954, on the occasion of the centenary of the definition, the Holy See minted a commemorative medal. On the reverse, the image of the Miraculous Medal and that of the Grotto of Lourdes, closely associated, they place in relief the intimate bond which unites the two Apparitions of the Virgin with the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Just as Lourdes was an inexhaustible fount of graces, the Miraculous Medal is always an instrument of the untiring goodness of the Most Holy Virgin towards all the sinners and unfortunate of the earth.

Christians who are able to meditate on its meaning will find in it the symbolism of a great part of the Church’s doctrine on the providential place which Mary occupies in Redemption, and in particular on Her Universal Mediation.

What do the symbols of the Miraculous Medal mean?

The Miraculous Medal is truly a miniature and complete catechism on the person and work of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

On the obverse: A reflection of the Apocalypse. The twelve stars about Mary’s head and the colour of her dress show the Woman clothed with the sun in the Book of the Apocalypse. The same as in the apparition of Knock in 1879, it is a notice that the apocalyptic times are approaching. We see the Virgin Mary radiating light, with the inscription: “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.” Mary’s identity is explicitly revealed to us here: She is Immaculate from Her Conception. The immense power of intercession She exercises in favour of those who raise their petitions to Her, stems from this privilege, so that the Virgin Mary invites all to turn to Her, full of confidence, in any difficulty. The



famous inscription affirms the Virgin's Immaculate Conception, this detail was made known to Saint Catherine on the 27th of November 1830, long before the Dogma was proclaimed in 1854. Likewise it indicates the Mother of God's mission of intercession.

Mary's royalty. The globe, which represents the earth, is found beneath the feet of the Virgin, Queen as She is of Heaven and earth.

Triumph over Satan. On the same obverse of the Miraculous Medal the Virgin appears upon the world, Her feet crushing the head of the serpent upon the world. This indicates that the Immaculate has all the power, by virtue of Her grace, to triumph over Satan. Her feet in the centre of the globe crush the head of a serpent. This globe represents the earth, the world; the serpent personifies Satan and the forces of evil. The Virgin Mary takes part in the spiritual combat, the struggle against the devil and sin, on the battlefield which is our world.

Rays of grace. The outstretched hands emitting rays of grace are the sign of the Virgin Mary's mission as Mother and Mediatrix of the graces which She pours out over the world and over

whoever asks for them. The rays of light remind us that all divine graces pass through Mary's hands in order to reach our hearts. This is Mary's Universal Mediation. The rings on Her fingers, adorned with precious stones, are a symbol of the Mysteries of the Rosary, fount of graces for those who pray with devotion.

On the reverse: there is a letter 'M' crowned with a Cross. 'M' is Mary's initial, the Mother of the Crucified, symbol of Mary and of Her spiritual Maternity. The Cross is that of Christ, it is the mystery of the Reparation and Redemption, the price which Christ paid: obedience, sacrifice, service; and it is interwoven with the 'M' in such a way that they cannot be separated without destroying them, which shows that Mary and the Cross are inseparable, and thus the two signs linked together show the indissoluble bond existing between Christ and His Most Holy Mother. Mary has been associated by Her Son Jesus to the work of Reparation and Redemption of mankind, and takes part in the very same Reparatory and Redemptory sacrifice of Christ; for the Treatise on the Holy Mass explains that "the Sacrifice of the Divine Mary was in such fashion indispensable that without it the Sacrifice of Christ would have been incomplete, the Eternal Father having eternally decreed the need for Coreparation and Coredemption by Her as Mother She is of Christ's Mystical Body; without which, the infinite Graces of Calvary would not have been applied to humanity at any of the historic moments of the Church. The most bloody transpiercing of Her Immaculate Heart implied for the Divine Mary, then, Her Spiritual Death, this being Her most dolorous giving Birth to the Church."

Under the 'M' the two Hearts are represented: the Sacred Heart of Jesus Crowned with thorns, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary transpierced by the sword announced by Simeon. They signify the indissoluble unity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, mutually enthroned by way of a particle of Heart and a Drop of Blood of each; they recall Mary's Co-reparation and Co-redemption and announce that the reign of both Most Sacred Hearts will come.

Around these sacred signs there are twelve stars, an allusion to the great vision of the Apocalypse: "A great sign appeared in the heavens: a Woman clothed with the sun, her head crowned by twelve stars, and the crescent moon under her feet." They correspond to the twelve Apostles, and represent the Church born on Calvary from the transpierced Sacred Hearts. They also represent the twelve principal privileges of Mary Most Holy.

Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great, in his 47th Pontifical Document, explains the teaching contained in the Miraculous Medal. "In this apparition, sublime and of great Mariological depths, the Most Holy Virgin Mary presents Herself with arms lowered, with plentiful rays issuing from Her fingers, some lighted and others unlit. These rays

represent the Dispensation of Graces by means of Mary. Being Treasures of inexhaustible treasure, She is full of Grace to the point of overflowing, in such fashion that She is empowered to share out Graces. In the lighted rays are symbolized those who turn to Her imploring Graces. The unlit rays symbolize those who do not implore Graces from Mary. They do not implore because they do not want to, since it is Infallible Doctrine that Mary is empowered to share out all necessary Graces.” To light up all those unlit rays of the Miraculous Medal, Saint Gregory XVII abolished the practice of paying Priests to apply Masses for the intentions of the donor, called Mass stipends, and bestowed the fruits of all Masses on the Most Holy Virgin Mary, so that She, with full liberty, might apply each Mass to the person or intention that She wishes. Thus the Most Holy Virgin Mary puts into each Mass the intention of greater need and, above all, greater spiritual need, and so thus applies those graces symbolized in the unlit rays. Hence those fruits having been bestowed on Mary, at each Mass the Priest confirms his profession of slavery of love to Mary, Most Pure Spouse of Priests.



Message of Palmar. On the 3rd of March 1971, in the Sanctuary of the Miraculous Medal, Paris, France, the Most Holy Virgin Mary under the title of the Miraculous, appeared to Clemente Domínguez, presented the seer with the Miraculous Medal She had brought for him to kiss, and gave him the following message: “My children: propagate devotion to My Miraculous Medal; it will be an excellent shield against the enemies. Keep it joined to your Rosaries, and invoke Me under that sweet name. I do for you what you believe to be even quite impossible. I am the Miraculous. Do not wonder that I convert a corrupt city if prayer and penance are done. Europe, the great war awaits you! The atom will annihilate many of your nations, for you have known the Truth and have not practised it. These chastisements will spread to other nations of the universe... Tell the world: I am the Miraculous Virgin. If you ask Me with true confidence, I will obtain from the Most Holy Trinity that all these chastisements be diminished. Do prayer and penance... My children: do constant prayer and penance, for you will be given few warnings now. The Heavenly Father is on the point of unleashing His Holy Wrath upon ungrateful mankind.”

Miracles performed by Mary, Queen of all Apparitions.

The Miraculous: *Conversion of Alphonse Ratisbonne by the Miraculous Medal.* Alphonse Tobias Ratisbonne (1814-1884), was an exceedingly rich lawyer and banker from Strasburg, 27 years of age. A fanatical Jew and libertine, he loathed Catholicism to death, and particularly despised the clergy, as he bore resentment ever since his brother Theodore had been converted and ordained Priest, and had as his emblem the Miraculous Medal and battled for the conversion of the Jews.

Alphonse thought of marrying in due course his elder brother's daughter, Flora, ten years younger than himself, when in January 1842, on tour to Naples and Malta, owing to a train mix-up he arrived in Rome. His cultured intelligence, his arrogant figure, his polished manners and more than all else his immense wealth, gave him entry into Roman aristocratic society. He visited the monuments of the great capital, and though despising the religious ideas they expressed, as a person of artistic sensitivity admired the beauty of Christian art. He spent whole hours in the Vatican museums, in the Basilica of Saint Peter and in other churches where fine art abounded.

In Rome he felt obliged to visit a family friend, Baron Theodore de Bussiere, a French protestant converted to Catholicism, a devout man conscious of his responsibility to evangelize. The baron received him very warmly and offered to show him around Rome. In a meeting in which Ratisbonne spoke horrors against Catholics, the baron heard him with great patience and, appreciating the nobility of soul in his friend Ratisbonne, took

pains to make him aware of the truths of Christianity and the joys to be experienced in her bosom, and told him about the miracles which were occurring by means of the Miraculous Medal, which Ratisbonne rejected, branding it as a superstition. The baron did not give up and challenged Ratisbonne to submit to a simple proof of the medal's efficacy. He was to wear it and pray the 'Memorare' or 'Remember, O Most Loving...' every day. Ratisbonne, at the insistence of the Baron and to show that nothing would lead him to conversion, said: "I accept just to give you satisfaction but I am far from believing in the efficacy of this kind of talisman." The baron hung it on his neck and made him recite the prayer of Saint Bernard, the "Remember, O Most Loving..."

'I had copied Saint Bernard's prayer by typewriter – he himself wrote – and yet, the following day, without cease and despite myself, I repeated it wherever I went. O my God! How could those words take hold of my spirit in such a way?... In vain I tried to forget them; they came to my memory and to my lips at every moment in the way that certain musical compositions seem to persecute us, and in the end exasperate us and keep us humming against our will.'

The baron asked for prayers from several persons, among them Count Laferronnays who told him: "If you have put the Miraculous Medal on him and made him pray the 'Remember, O Most Loving...', he will be converted for sure." This Count was very ill, and offered his life for the conversion of the 'young jew'. Two days later he had a heart attack, received the Sacraments and died, and it was known that he had gone to the Saint Mary Major Basilica during those two days to pray one hundred 'Remember, O Most Loving...' for Ratisbonne's conversion.

In the Spanish Plaza area the baron met up with Ratisbonne on his last day in Rome, 20th of January 1842, and invited him for a walk. But beforehand he had to pass by the Church of Saint Andrew to sort out the funeral for the Count. Ratisbonne accompanied him to the church. Here then is his testimony of what happened to him: "Moments after finding myself in the church, I felt dominated by an inexplicable uneasiness. I raised my eyes and it seemed to me that the whole building disappeared from my sight. In one of the Chapels (that of Saint Michael) all the light had concentrated, and amid that splendour, over the altar, appeared the Most Holy Virgin, radiant and full of majesty and sweetness, just as She is engraved on the medal. An irresistible force impelled me towards the Chapel. The Virgin then made me a sign with Her hand as though indicating to me that I kneel... The Virgin did not speak to me but I understood everything."

The baron took only a few moments and returned in search of his friend. Great was his surprise when he found him in the church, in the Chapel of Saint Michael, kneeling, bathed in tears and praying with hands joined. Bussiere approached him and shook him repeatedly without his presence being noted. At last Ratisbonne, full of emotion and his words hesitant, told him: "I saw Her! I saw Her!" – drawing out his medal and covering it with kisses and tears. A strong impression dominated him and he could hardly express himself. The Virgin had appeared to him... He was converted.

Outside the church, and when his spirits had calmed, he said: "A moment ago I was inside the church when an inexplicable commotion took hold of me. I raised my eyes, and the whole building had disappeared from sight; a single Chapel remained in which all the light was concentrated, and amid that splendour, standing on the Altar, great, brilliant, full of majesty and tenderness, appeared the Virgin Mary, just as She is engraved on the Medal. An irresistible impulse impelled me towards Her. The Virgin made me a sign with the hand to kneel and it seemed to me that She said: 'Very good!' She did not speak to me but I understood everything!"

Ratisbonne, on making this short description, interrupted it many times to breathe and moderate the impression which oppressed him. "We heard him with holy fear, mixed with joy and recognition, admiring the impenetrable judgements of the Most High and the ineffable

treasures of His Mercy. One phrase above all had impressed us for its mysterious profundity: ‘She did not speak to me but I understood everything!’” It was not easy for Ratisbonne to give more details about all he had seen. “Nonetheless”, said M de Bussiere, “he told us that the previous night he had been unable to sleep; constantly present in his mind he saw a great cross, in a particular way and without Christ. He added: I had made incredible efforts to separate that image from me, without success. Some hours later, looking by chance at the reverse of the ‘Miraculous Medal’, I recognized the cross engraved on it, crowning the initial of Mary’s name.”

Questioned again in a last conversation, he candidly related that when the Queen of Heaven had appeared before his eyes in all the splendour of Her glory and immaculate purity, he had at once felt unable to gaze again upon the dazzling charms of Mary’s beauty, and when, impelled by the wish, he had three times tried to raise his eyes, as many other unavailing efforts had barely allowed him to see Her blessed hands, from which a torrent of graces streamed.

Until then, Ratisbonne had lived in the most complete ignorance. He did not know the Catholic religion nor the judaic. He himself confessed that he had never ever wanted to read any work that might instruct him in the divine teachings. He blasphemed without realizing, judged without hearing, despised without examining...

And admirable to say! He who had been in the darkness of ignorance, after the heavenly vision, all of a sudden became instructed in religious knowledge; he possessed the Faith and the concepts of Catholics. Father Villefort, of the Company of Jesus, was chosen to prepare the new neophyte. When he sought to begin the instruction, he was astounded. “Who has taught you?”, he exclaimed. “She did not speak to me, but I have understood everything,” the young israelite had said. Ah! Yes, he ‘understood everything.’ He has seen the Mother of Divine Grace, the Throne of Wisdom and has received the Gift of God... Enlightened by infused knowledge he understands the unity of the Church... her Infallibility... the sanctity of her morals, the sublimity of her mysteries, the greatness and loftiness of her expectations. The Most Holy Virgin had brought him the torch of Truth and of Faith.

Ratisbonne recognized the errors of his whole life. He understood how much Heaven is worth, and was no longer the same man. Desires, projects, thoughts, worldly attachments, what became of you?... The Immaculate Mother of Jesus removed the blindfold which hid the truth from the poor sightless man, dissipated the darkness, and clear, brilliant and eternal light appeared! He then said that he wanted to prepare to enter the Church the sooner the better and confess.

This conversion had an extraordinary repercussion in Rome, and shortly, on the 31st of January, a young man, vested in the white tunic of a catechumen amid a great concourse led by Baron de Bussiere, was seen in the Church. Pope Saint Gregory XVI sent Cardinal Patrizi for the solemn Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion. “What name do you wish to take?” the Officiant asked. “*Mary Alphonse*” he replied with unspeakable gratitude. The people wept, touched. By order of the Pope, a canonical process was begun, and it was declared “a true miracle”.

The conversion of Ratisbonne became widely celebrated and had a great impact on a culture highly influenced by rationalism, which rejects spiritual realities. Mary Alphonse Ratisbonne entered the Company of Jesus. Ordained Priest in 1847, he was destined to Paris where he helped his brother Theodore in the catechumenates for the conversion of jews. After having been a Jesuit for ten years, with permission he left the Order, and helped his brother, Father Theodore, in the foundation of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, as cofounder of the Order. In just the first ten years, Ratisbonne succeeded in converting 200 jews and 32 protestants. He laboured more than words can say in the Holy



Land, and succeeded in buying the terrain occupied by Pilate's former praetorium, where he had a convent adapted with a church for the Nuns. He also succeeded in moving these Nuns to found a poorhouse in Ain Karem. This Jew, converted by the Mother of God, was afterwards Father Ratisbonne, whose aspect was majestic, with long beard, notable forehead, black eyes and white hair; he seemed a model for an ancient patriarch. He lived in Palestine, consecrated to take in Jewish children and convert them to Catholicism. Father Ratisbonne died in Ain Karem on the 5th of May 1884 at the age of seventy, thus fulfilling his desires and presentiment; and after an ecstasy, sweet portent of the eternal happiness awaiting him, his soul flew to the Mansion of the Lord.

She will protect you. A French general whose private virtues were no less distinguished than his military virtues, had just been named Commander-in-Chief for the Crimean War. His name was Canrobert. Before leaving he went to pay his respects to the empress Eugenia. Her Majesty, at the leave-taking, gave him a medal of the Most Holy Virgin, telling him: "General, wear this medal with confidence; it will protect you." These words, joined to a great spirit of piety, had their fulfilment. One day the general, on the battlefield, felt a blow on the chest. It was a fragment from a grenade. But his valiant breast bore the Miraculous Medal of the Most Holy Virgin, and the metal fragment which would have meant his death, struck the blessed medal. The general wrote to Empress Eugenia giving her his thanks.

A conversion by the Miraculous Medal. In Strasburg, there was a man who displayed a kind of unbelief, culpable, sadly very common in our days. It is unnecessary to say that he did not practise his religion in the very least. In the year 1835 he fell gravely ill. His family, afflicted, aware of the extreme danger the sick man ran, wanted a confessor to be called quickly; but no one knew how to devise a way, not only to speak to the patient of the salvation of his soul, but also to have a Priest reach his bedside, in case he might consent to receive him. In effect, the unbeliever had taken his precautions in anticipation against what he called 'the debility of the dying'; he had said to one of his friends: "I hope to find you at my side during my last illness; well then, do not forget, I wholly forbid any visit by a Priest; my prohibition is final; I trust in you and hope that you will be able to fulfil my will." Nonetheless, someone who had read about the Miraculous Medal proposed to place one on the sick man while he slept. This happy idea was taken up and accepted at once. Mary's triumph was not long awaited. At that same moment, the unbeliever felt entirely changed, and his friend, also moved by grace, placed not the least obstacle to calling a respectable cleric. The sick man received him with singular warmth. He confessed with manifestations of faith and of contrition which deeply moved the Confessor; he received the Sacraments and gave up his soul to God with such fervour as to move to tears those assisting – (News about the Miraculous Medal).

Devotion blazes up in the Parish of Our Lady of the Victories. There is a Parisian parish which, some time back, was almost unknown to its own population. It was situated between the Royal Palace and the Stock Exchange, in the city centre, and in its area theatres and pleasure haunts abounded. It is the district where voluptuousness flourished and was the abode of the most criminal passions. Its church dedicated to Our Lady of the Victories remained deserted; not one man, not even one, complied with the Paschal precept. No one went to High Mass, and in this parish, which counted with seventeen thousand souls, scarcely fifteen or twenty women approached the Sacraments. Four years previously, in 1836, it had been entrusted to Father Desgenettes, the worthiest of Priests, an octogenarian. He, seeing that all his efforts to convert the souls commended to him by Providence were useless and, in his deep humility attributing the scarce or nil results of his ministry to the unworthiness of the minister, for some time previously had been toying with the idea of presenting his resignation to the Archbishop of Paris. One day in the month of December, he began Mass under the impression of that idea. Such an extraordinary anxiety took hold of his soul that, on reaching the 'Sanctus', he felt obliged to halt so as to free himself from that state of mind

and recover his calm. While he thus forced himself to recover his peace of heart, suddenly, without anyone near him, he heard a voice, clear and distinct, addressing him these words: “Consecrate your church and parish to the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary!” Full of admiration the afflicted Priest took that voice as an illusion of his disturbed senses. ‘So then, I am not only a bad Parish Priest – he said to himself – but I am also losing my judgement and going mad. I should not hesitate: I must present my resignation without delay.’ And encouraged by this resolve, he finished the with reasonable calm and peace. He spent longer than usual in giving thanks. Once again worries and anguish seized hold of him, and he resolved ever more firmly to resign from a post for which he believed himself evidently unworthy. He was alone in the choir, kneeling on a *prie-dieu*. He was



about to arise and return home and write to the Archbishop, when the same mysterious voice resounded at his side, telling him with an accent of majesty and command: “Consecrate your church and your parish to the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The holy Priest, moved to the depths of his heart, could no longer doubt the reality of what was happening to him. He prostrated humbly and asked God to tell him what he should do. Back in his lodgings he started to draw up the statutes of a Confraternity of Our Lady of the Victories in honour of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. “All said and done – he muttered to himself – no harm will come from making an attempt.” Surprised in extreme at the unusual ease with which he had carried out the writing, he presented it to Monsignor Quelen, of pious and saintly memory, Archbishop of Paris, who, having read the statutes, not only authorized him to set up the new Confraternity but also ordered him in the most categorical way: “You will begin this coming Sunday,” he added. And he told him this on Friday. Come Sunday, on announcing it in the morning at Mass to the few women who composed his audience, the pious pastor hoped that in the afternoon there might come at most fifty or sixty faithful. What was his surprise when, on entering the church he found four or five hundred faithful! Who had led them? The greater part did not know what it was about. He gave the instruction or address, which was followed by the sung Litany of the Virgin. On reaching that invocation so dear to our hearts ‘*Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis*’; ‘Refuge of sinners, pray for us,’ a spontaneous and supernatural emotion took hold of the entire gathering, which with one voice repeated it three successive times, like a great cry of confidence and repentance: ‘*Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis!*’ Extraordinary graces and favours came to increase the confidence of Father Desgenette; a great number of sinners amended; the indifferent took heart, the church began to be invaded, and the parish soon came to be one of the most pious in Paris. More than three million faithful, among whom figures the immortal Pius IX, were inscribed in this admirable Confraternity. All, in sign of recognition and love, wore the Medal on the breast, to which they had given the title ‘Miraculous Medal’, owing to the remarkable graces of which it has been the instrument.

Grace requested, grace granted. In the afternoon of that splendid day, while the pious gathering in the Church of Our Lady of the Victories sang with unaccustomed enthusiasm: *Refugium Peccatorum, ora pro nobis!*, the pious Parish Priest of the Church, Fr. Desgenettes, pronounced the following prayer to the Queen of Heaven: “O Kind Mother, attend benignly these sinners who call upon You as their Refuge. Deign to adopt as Your own this pious association, and to show that this is pleasing to You, deign to win me the conversion of M Joly.” The latter was elderly, over eighty years of age at the time, who had been educated in all the errors of the impious rationalists of the XVIII century, and professed no religion. He had been one of the last ministers of the martyred king Saint Louis XVI, and was close to death, hardened in impiety. Up to ten times the zealous Parish Priest had gone to this man’s home, and had always been harshly dismissed. This time,

confiding in the special protection of Mary's Sweetest Heart, on Monday the 12th of December, Curé Desgenettes went to make a last visit to the stubborn old man and, admirably!, he was received attentively by him, and without any kind of preamble he asked the Curé to bless him, and then told him: "O Father Curé, the good you do to me by your visit! I cannot see you as I am blind, but since you have been at my side I feel an interior peace, serenity and joy such as I have never experienced in my life." He then made his confession with the same Parish Priest and was reconciled to God, and lived yet four months, and dedicated the whole time following his conversion to the practice of the Christian virtues, to repentance for his faults, to the Love of God and to the most complete submission to His Divine Will. Portentous conquests by Mary's Sweetest Heart!

Conversion of a sacrilegious sinner. In a letter of Abbé Bernard, Parish Priest of La Boissière, he relates the following event which shows how we should never lose our trust in Mary. "A man from my parish who, owing to his uprightness enjoyed a good reputation, for a time had been the object of scandal; but for nine years had lived an orderly, quite respectable life, following the counsels of his pastor. In the month of November 1844 he attended spiritual exercises in a mission and received the Sacraments; but ever afterwards felt tormented by cruel remorse, and on the 29th of April 1845, day before the eve of the Ascension, formed the infernal project to do himself to death. At the moment when the Rogation Procession was being held and while I was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, the wretch, tying a rope around his neck, fastened it to a beam and hanged himself. Two months previously he had joined the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and still wore on his breast the Miraculous Medal, and the Mother of Mercy was watching over him. One of his neighbours was about to sit down at table for his breakfast, had already said grace when, moved by a providential hand, said to himself: 'I shall first speak with G...', and went to see him to agree about a job they had to do together. What was his terror on finding him hanging from the ceiling and about to expire! He climbed up hastily to untie the rope and was fortunately able to save him. The news spread in the act throughout the city. After reaching my hearing I went to visit him. The wretch could not speak a word; but he understood everything said to him; and four hours later was able to speak. On the Sunday following the Ascension he came to confess, still not feeling sufficiently at peace. Those who surrounded him feared a second attempt; and in effect, such suspicions showed they were well-founded, on Friday preceding Pentecost. Armed with two cutthroat razors, he hid them in his bed, so that if one failed with the other he might succeed in his purpose. At four in the morning, while his wife slept, he took one of the razors and gave himself such a deep cut in the throat that he breathed by it as by the mouth. His wife heard the noise of the bubbling blood, rose and sought help. I came again and, despite the protests of those present that no recourse could save him, I sent for a doctor to stitch up the wound. Three hours went by before he arrived. At a moment when the patient thought himself alone, he took the other razor to give himself another cut. Happily someone was present to hold back his hand. The doctor, after examining the wound, declared that the man could not live for more than three or four days. Nonetheless he performed the suture. I spent almost the whole day beside the unfortunate man inspiring him with Christian sentiments and trying to pacify him. The following day, eve of Pentecost, those accompanying him, knowing that a large number of penitents were awaiting me, told me not to worry, as the sick man was calm. But after midnight on Pentecost Sunday, he despaired again in such a fashion that he cried out like a wild animal. At four in the morning they called me in great haste telling me that the gestures of the wretch made the nurses at his side afraid. For two hours I spoke to him of the Goodness of God, of His Infinite Mercy, citing the most notable cases from Holy Scripture and from tradition that I could remember. I excited him to have confidence in Mary, who not in vain is called Refuge of sinners, and narrated several prodigious events owing to Her mediation. He listened to me with interest, yet interrupting me at each moment to tell me: 'O Father, I agree with

everything you say, but none of those sinners has been so bad as me; I am lost; I am damned; it is impossible for me to be saved...' I could not get him to kiss a crucifix. When I held it out to him: 'No, no – he would say – I am a Judas.' I withdrew with heart oppressed. But the thought of a last recourse came to me. The Month of Mary was then being celebrated in the five villages which compose my parish. Men and women, all attended this dear feast, almost with the same regularity as Holy Mass. The state of this unhappy sinner was public and notorious; in one of the instructions I earnestly recommended him to the prayers of the faithful; the people were consternated. During my exhortation I could observe the notable effect which the deplorable catastrophe had produced on the people, and I urged all those attending to ask the Most Holy Virgin to obtain from God that the man might not succumb into the hands of the devil. I also invited those there to apply their Communion for that intention, offering to do the same myself. Ineffable mystery of grace! The Mass ended, the sick man was entirely changed, was calm, spoke of God and invoked Him fervently. The following morning he called me with lively interest to confess him, and the same man who had previously not allowed a crucifix to touch his lips, now pressed it in his arms and watered it with his tears. It is easy to understand his repentance in those circumstances. I heard his confession. Death withdrew. He took five or six weeks to heal, and he spent almost all this time in prayer, reciting the Holy Rosary several times a day. The man has recovered completely, attends divine office regularly; confesses every two months, and his conduct is edifying. He has authorized me to make known the origin of his wretchedness, so that God's glory and Mary's protection be made known. The principal cause of his waywardness was lack of sincerity in the Sacrament of Penance."



The headstrong moribund. Doctor Joseph Claude Anthelme Récamier, a famous Paris physician and excellent Christian, refers the following case: "I was visiting a patient, in my judgement irrevocably condemned to die. Visiting him one morning, his appearance alarmed me. I took his pulse, I auscultated him. I believed he would not last more than a few hours... I encouraged his wife and his mother, telling them to commend him to God. I offered to do the same as well... I returned in the afternoon, without warning, and I found him alive. The same the following day. The lungs malfunctioning, hypertrophy obstructing the whole chest, breathing impossible... his life seemed to me a miracle. About his neck he wore a medal and the Scapular of Carmel. Will the Virgin want to heal him? His wife made use of the occasion: 'Look, the doctor will tell you. Is it not true that the Last Sacraments have saved many sick?' 'Leave me!' he shouted, 'leave me!, you are torturing me to death!' Out of prudence, I made a sign for silence and, going up to the patient, told him: 'Well then, give me your hand and let us be good friends; not a word more'. He took my hand and said goodbye. On leaving I told the family: 'Have confidence; I saw the Scapular on Frederic's chest, pray to the Virgin and wait'." Despite the late hour, Récamier headed for the Sacred Heart College and asked for prayers for a moribund, and then a Priest, for him to pray the Rosary. Doctor Récamier prayed at home with his family and, at the end, three Hail Marys for a moribund. On rising he lost his balance and broke the glass on his watch. He rose at six in the morning and went to see his patient. The mother came out to the stairs to give him thanks; the wife shook his hand full of gratitude. "Come, doctor, come – said the patient – now I am happy. I have made my peace with God, give me a hug." The patient, without a word to anyone, had asked for a Priest and calmly received all the Sacraments. Shortly afterwards, with Récamier present, he died without the least agony. To ease the pain for the family, the doctor asked: "At what time did Frederic ask for the Priest and the Sacraments?" "At half past nine." Récamier drew out his watch and found it had stopped at that time. "Look, at precisely half past nine we finished praying the Rosary and three Hail Marys for him, since on standing up at the

end was when the watch stopped. The Virgin granted us what we had all wanted: the health of his soul."

A Medal to convert two souls, by Mary's Clemency. Claude Newman was an Afro-American aged 20 years. In 1943, he was arrested and declared guilty of homicide, for which he was sent to prison in the death row sentenced to die in the electric chair. The major part of this information comes from the prison chaplain, a Priest who came to know Claude well during his imprisonment. One night, while he was in prison awaiting execution, Claude saw a Miraculous Medal hanging from a cord around the neck of another prisoner. Curious, he asked what medal it was. The young prisoner was Catholic, but apparently did not know (or did not want to speak) about the medal, and took it off. Claude took it and placed it around his neck, though he had no idea whose image it was; for him it was just a trifle, but for some reason he felt drawn to it and wanted to wear it. During the night, while asleep in bed, a touch on the wrist awoke him. On awakening, startled, as Claude later said, standing there "was the most beautiful Woman God has ever created", for the Most Holy Virgin Mary had appeared to him. At first he was quite scared, without knowing what to do, or what to say to this extraordinarily beautiful and resplendent Woman. The Lady soon calmed Claude and told him: "If you want me to be your Mother and you want to be my son, send for a Priest of the Catholic Church." And after saying these words, She disappeared. Moved, Claude began to shout out that he wanted a Catholic Priest. The Chaplain was called and went to see Claude, who told him what had happened the night before. Deeply impressed by the events, Claude and another four men in his pavilion asked for instruction in the Catholic Faith. The Chaplain began the instruction, and learnt that Claude knew practically nothing about religion or the Christian Faith. He knew that there was a God, but did not know that Jesus was God. However when the Chaplain was about to instruct on the Sacrament of Confession, Claude said: "Oh, I know that! The Lady told me that when we confess we do not kneel before a Priest, rather we kneel beside the Cross of Her Son. And that when we really repent of our sins, and confess them, the Blood which He shed flows over us and washes all our sins away." And he said to the other prisoners: "You should not be afraid of confessing. You are really confessing your sins to God, not to the Priest. You know? The Lady said that Confession is something like a telephone. We speak to God by way of the Priest, and God replies to us by way of the Priest." Claude indicated that the Virgin had also taught him about the Eucharist, and related: "The Lady told me that at Communion I will only see what appears to be a piece of Bread. But She told me that It is really and truly Her Son, and that He will be with me just as He was with Her before His birth in Bethlehem. She told me that I should spend my time as She did during Her life with Him: loving Him, adoring Him, thanking Him, praising Him and asking Him for blessings. I should not be distracted or troubled by anyone or anything else, but just spend those minutes in my thoughts alone with Him." When the Catechism instruction ended, Claude and the other prisoners were received into the Catholic Church, in January 1944. Shortly afterwards the moment came for Claude's execution which was to be on the 20th of January. He was cheerful and said: "I am not going to die, just this body. I am going to be with Her." He prepared to receive Holy Communion a moment before his execution. But fifteen minutes before the execution, the sheriff came racing up the stairs shouting out: "Reprieve! Reprieve!, the Governor has granted a reprieve of two weeks!" Claude did not know that the prosecutor was trying to obtain a suspension of the execution to save his life and, when he learnt, began to cry, and said: "But you don't understand! If you were ever to look at Her face and see Her eyes, you would not want to live a day longer!" Claude sobbed as though his heart was utterly broken, and said: "Why do I have to stay here another two weeks?" The Chaplain then had a sudden inspiration. He spoke to him of James Hughs, a white prisoner in the same prison, who hated Claude intensely. This prisoner had led a terribly dissipated life and, like Claude, had also been sentenced to execution for murder. James had been brought up a Catholic, but was now a degenerate and rejected God and

everything Christian. The Father then said: “Perhaps Our Most Holy Mother wishes you to offer up this delay to be with Her for his conversion. Why don’t you offer up to God each moment you are separated from your Heavenly Mother for this prisoner, so that he may not be separated from God for all eternity?” Claude thought for a moment, then he agreed and asked the Father to teach him the words for making the offering. During his two weeks reprieve, Claude generously offered up his sacrifice and prayers for his prison companion, the monstrous James Hughs. Claude was finally executed in the electric chair on the 4th of February 1944. Regarding the holy death of Claude, the Chaplain testified: “Never have I seen anyone go to death with so much joy and happiness. Including the official witnesses and the journalists were amazed. They said that they could not understand how anyone could sit in the electric chair and at the same time radiate happiness.” The news of Claude’s death was published in the press on the day of his execution.



Three months after Claude’s execution, on the 19th of May 1944, James Hughs, the white man for whom Claude had offered up his sacrifice, was to be executed. The Chaplain said: “This man is the filthiest and most immoral person I have ever known. His hatred for God and for everything spiritual defies description.” He did not allow any Priest even to enter his cell. Just before his execution, the county doctor requested him at least to kneel and pray the ‘Our Father’ before the sheriff came to fetch him. The prisoner spat in the doctor’s face. When they tied him to the electric chair, the sheriff told him: “If you have anything to say, say it now.” The condemned man began to blaspheme. But he suddenly stopped speaking, his eyes fixed on a corner of the room and his face showed absolute horror. Suddenly he gave a shout of terror, a horrifying cry which impressed all those present, and said: “Sheriff, get me a Priest!” The Chaplain flew at once to the condemned man. The room was left free of everyone else and the Priest heard the man’s confession. He confessed all his sins with deep repentance and intense fervour. While all came back into the room, the sheriff went up to the convict and asked him: “Son, what made you change your mind?” The prisoner replied: “Do you remember that negro, Claude, whom I hated so much? Well, he was standing there [and pointed], in that corner. And behind him, with a hand on each shoulder stood the Most Holy Virgin Mary. And Claude told me: ‘I offered up my death in union with Christ on the Cross for your salvation. She has obtained for you this gift of seeing your place in hell, if you do not repent.’ My place in hell was shown to me and that is why I cried out.” James Hughs was executed as foreseen, but the heavenly apparition of Our Most Holy Mother with Claude Newman and the subsequent vision of hell had instantly converted his soul at the last moments of his life. With the help of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Chaplain had taught Claude to unite to Jesus’ sufferings by offering Him his own sufferings, just as we can all do for others, and Claude’s sufferings helped to pay the price for the impressive last-minute conversion and repentance of James. Hence we should never underestimate the value of our suffering united to that of Jesus Christ, and also the power and loving intercession of Our Most Holy Mother in Heaven.

The first conversion by means of the Medal. The Archbishop of Quelen attributed to the Miraculous Medal the conversion on his deathbed of a publicly impenitent sinner, M de Pradt, Napoleon’s ex-chaplain and illegal archbishop of Mechlin (Malines), who had accepted his office from the hands of the emperor and was now defiant in his agony without having been reconciled with the Church. On several occasions the Archbishop of Paris had tried to see him but had been rejected. So he took a Miraculous Medal with him and was finally admitted to see the baron, who was so moved by grace that he repented and confessed his sins. The following day he received the Sacraments from the hands of the Archbishop and died in his arms in 1837. This was the first great triumph of the Miraculous Medal.

How the Miraculous Medal performs miracles. In 1949, a Jesuit Priest was sent to help



the Chaplain of a Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. Among the patients in hospital there was a child some nine years of age. He had been sledging downhill, lost control of the sledge and crashed head-on into a tree. His cranium was fractured and the x-rays showed severe brain damage; he had been in coma for ten days, without speaking, without voluntary bodily movements. Such was his condition that the only question was whether he would live. There was no question of recovery from

the brain damage diagnosed as permanent and inoperable. After blessing the boy and consoling his parents, the Priest was at the point of leaving the hospital room. But then a thought came to his mind of a certain Priest who had told him some time back: 'The Miraculous Medal works; the Most Holy Virgin works miracles by the Miraculous Medal'. This would be a trial of its supposed miraculous powers! The Jesuit obtained a Miraculous Medal, blessed it and placed it around the boy's neck with tape. As soon as he had finished the prayer of inscription of the boy in the Medal Confraternity, the boy opened his eyes for the first time in two weeks. He saw his mother and told her: "Mum, I want an ice-cream." Only intravenous alimentation had been given him. Then he went on to speak with his parents. After some minutes, they called a doctor who examined the boy and told his parents that they could give him something to eat. The following day they began a series of tests on the child's condition. The x-rays showed that the brain damage had disappeared. Then more tests. After three days, when every examination had showed that he had completely recovered his health, the child was discharged from hospital.

"*Sister, I want to confess.*" It is well that the Miraculous Medal, like all pious objects, be blest by a Priest. In this way the person, on wearing them, kissing them, etc., benefits from the Church's prayer, obtains the graces that each religious object, or sacramental, incorporates and gains indulgences; that is, he obtains greater satisfactory value, or remission of purgatory, than would be obtained by the work performed in God's Grace if they were not blest. There is no need to wear it around the neck, though this is preferable. The conversion or cure of a person often takes place when, besides the prayers for that intention, a Medal has been placed on him, even without the person knowing. Thus Father Aladel relates a case in his book. In the Invalid Hospital in Paris, on the 26th of November 1884, a soldier with tuberculosis was at the point of death. He had no wish for Confession or even to hear speak of it. The Sister made use of an oversight of his to place a Medal on him, and continued to pray for him. On awakening the following day he felt much better. "Sister, I want to confess." Afterwards he declared: "Ever since my first Communion, this has been the happiest day of my life." On the 1st of December he died a holy death.

Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe wrote: "Distribute the Miraculous Medal of Mary Immaculate whenever possible. On children, so that they always wear it around the neck, on the elderly, and in particular on young people, so that under its care they have sufficient strength to resist so many temptations and snares set for them in our times. And it is absolutely necessary for those who do not go to church, are afraid to confess, make fun of religious practices, laugh at the truths of Faith, are trapped in moral dung or keep away from church because of heresy, to offer them the Miraculous Medal and ask them to wear it, and meanwhile implore the Immaculate for their conversion. Many find their way, including when they have absolutely no wish to accept the Miraculous Medal. Simply stitch it secretly into their clothing and pray, and Mary Immaculate, sooner or later, will show what She is capable of doing. Thus the Miraculous Medal is a shot fired by the Knights of the Immaculate."

Progressive blindness cured. On the 14th of December 1946, when Humfrey Gallati went into Hospital at Santa Maria de la Scala, in Siena, he was sentenced by excellent specialists from Rome, Turin, Milan and Vercelli, to become completely blind in a short

while. However, he had come to Siena owing to his friend, Doctor Aurelio Rizzuri, aware of the expertise of the hospital ophthalmological Director. The eyes of his soul were failing as well. Hence he answered words of consolation roughly: "Let me be, Sister, leave me in peace. Your arguments don't convince me. You know by now that I am an atheist. Don't waste time. Let me be!" The Sister did not lose heart and answered with her continual selflessness. One evening, without knowing why, she told him: "I am sure that one day you will leave hospital with faith in your heart and light in your eyes." Days later he began to reflect that the doctor's cures and the Sister's goodness did not deserve such hostility on his part. Why did the Sister, after so much disdain, return to him serene and sweet? Why did he find her always ready to guide his hand when he wanted to write to his mother, who yet knew nothing of his misfortune? The Sister, meanwhile, commended his difficult conversion to the Virgin of the Miraculous. At last, on the 23rd of December, the patient capitulated in the face of Grace: he confessed and communed. And God in recompense, gave him such serenity that suffering seemed beautiful to him and he even loved his blindness. The interior miracle had happened! He was about to leave the Clinic, but the Sister asked him to stay another nine days. They would make a novena to the Most Holy Virgin through the intercession of Saint Catherine Labouré. – "I don't want to pray for my cure since I know I have deserved blindness, and because I fear that on recovering my sight, I may lose my faith, now that I know its worth. I will ask for one single grace these days: always to suffer more, so that my mother's sorrow when she finds out may not be so grievous." It was Sunday. At Mass they had just read the Gospel of the blind men of Jericho and, on ending Mass, all of a sudden the prodigy was repeated. When the patient headed for the Clinic's stairway, he at once saw the Sister. His emotion was so intense that he had to lean against the wall so as not to fall. – "I see! Sister, I see!" The doctors loyally acknowledged the reality, so much the more extraordinary for having been progressive blindness. A great bouquet of flowers reached the hospital sent by one of them, an unbeliever, but who surrendered to the facts: "I cannot deny that it is something extraordinary."

Conversion of a youth by the Miraculous Medal. A Parish Priest of Paris recounts: "A widowed lady from a French coastal city had a son aged 23, whom she had given a deeply religious upbringing. A few years' stay in Paris were sufficient for the youth to lose the principles in which he had been brought up. On returning to his mother's side, whom he loved very tenderly, he behaved towards her with the greatest respect and veneration. One single thing deeply wounded the good mother's heart, namely observing no religious practice in her son. She exhorted him, implored him, urged him, but all in vain. Meanwhile this lady came to Paris, lodged in the district of my Parish, attended divine worship, and learnt of the association whose object is to pray for the conversion of sinners. After registering in it, she opened her heart to me, and begged me to pray for her son. Shortly afterwards she returned to her land. As the account she had given me of her son had deeply interested me, it frequently came to mind, and I had recommended it several times to the prayers of the faithful. One Sunday morning a lady stranger approached me and said: 'Father, do you recognize me?' – Quite well, madame, you are the mother of a youth whom you asked me to recommend to the prayers of the Association.' – 'Quite so, Father, and I now come to Paris expressly to speak of this matter, and give thanks to the Most Holy Virgin for the grace obtained in my son's favour. He is now converted, and gives me as many consolations as in other times gave me griefs. He has not only become pious again, but has also been cured in an instant of an illness which had placed him in great danger. One day, she added (and comparing the dates we found that it was in the week following that in which we had prayed for him the last time) one day we were speaking at supper, my son facing me, unable to eat, nor I either, my eyes were two founts of tears, without daring to look at him. At last I could bear it no longer: 'My son – I told him – what a state you are in! You have not wanted to follow my advice, you have not wanted to return to God's grace, and now He chastises you. Oh! How cruel it



is for me to see you die a slow death! One thing I still have to ask you, and I ask you for myself and for my consolation.' At these words I removed the Miraculous Medal you gave me on enrolling me in the Association and told him: 'Take this Medal, put it around your neck when you go to bed, promise me to wear it all night, and when

putting it on, recite this short prayer engraved on it.' He promised me and retired. The following day in the morning I saw him later than usual. – 'Mama – he told me – how well I slept the night! This morning I feel better: I am wide awake and free of all those black thoughts that worried me.' His expression was in fact serene, and the contraction which had me so worried for weeks had disappeared, he had recovered his healthy colour and bright eyes. 'You see, my son? – I told him – you have taken no more than one step towards God and He already grants you His grace. Ah! If you were to make up your mind to purify your heart by means of a true confession, and return sincerely to the Lord's service, I am convinced that you would be cured.' He at once decided to do so. I went to fetch the Parish Priest, he made a general confession, and received Holy Communion. Some days later, he was present while I spoke of one of our acquaintances, a sixty-year old elder, grievously ill, who did not want to be reconciled with God: – 'How so!' said my son, 'will a soul redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ be allowed to be lost forever? And why not speak to him about confession?' – 'They have spoken to him, but he rejects everything said to him.' – 'Do you know why? Because they don't speak as they should. I'll go.' – 'If you go, he will dismiss you saying that you are too young to give him advice.' – 'He may say whatever he likes, but I will speak to him. Jesus Christ has saved my soul, He has drawn me out of the abyss. Now, as a sign of gratitude, I want to work to win over this poor sinner for Him.' The sick man, who was unaware of what had happened to the young man, was surprised at first and received him very badly. My son was not discouraged at this; he spoke to him with gentleness and firmness, and explained to him what had happened to him. The sick man showed signs of wanting to maintain his way of thinking; but half an hour later he called for a Priest, confessed and died as a Christian. My son is currently a faithful and fervent Christian. Judge, Father, how great my happiness must be; it was all I could wish for on earth. So, I have come to give thanks to the Most Blessed Virgin. Please hear my Confession. I wish to receive Communion at the altar of Mary's Sacred Heart, and tonight in thanksgiving attend the exercises for the conversion of sinners. Please, Father, thank the associates for their prayers that have brought me so much happiness, and tell them, with all its circumstances, about my son's conversion to excite them to give thanks to God and the Most Blessed Virgin for me and my son, and tell them that I am here among them." I fulfilled my commitment, and it would be difficult for me to explain the feelings of joy, devotion and holy emulation that those faithful felt in their hearts when they heard such an edifying account.

Our Lady of Lourdes. It was the 11th of February 1858. A girl of fourteen, Bernadette Soubirous, was gathering firewood at the banks of the Gave, accompanied by one of her sisters, Mary aged eleven, and another girl of thirteen, Jeanne Abadie. Bernadette had reached as far as the grotto called Massabielle when, amid the silence of nature, she heard a noise similar to that caused by a gust of wind in the trees. She looked at the right bank of the river, full of poplars and saw them quite still. Again she heard the same rustling and turned towards the grotto. Above the edge of the rock, in a kind of niche, beside a restless wild rose, she discerned a Lady, and saw by signs that she was calling her. Her countenance was radiant with beauty, the dress and veil were white and the sash blue; she held a rosary and had a rose on each foot. Bernadette was disturbed on seeing her and rubbed her eyes, thinking herself a victim of illusion, but saw her ever more clearly. She then instinctively fell to her knees,

took up her Rosary and prayed; when the girl had ended the prayer, the vision disappeared. Whether by secret inspiration, whether urged by her companions, to whom she had related all she had seen, Bernadette returned to the grotto on the following Sunday and Thursday, and both times the same phenomenon appeared before her eyes. On Sunday, so as to know if the mysterious Lady came on behalf of God, she sprinkled her thrice with holy water and received in exchange the sweetest look full of tenderness. On Thursday the Apparition spoke to Bernadette: she told her to come back every day for fifteen days. On the 25th of February, the Virgin told her to eat of the plants growing freely there and take water from the spring. Not seeing water in the grotto, the girl went over to the stream when the Apparition called her back and told her to go to the back of the grotto, to the place she pointed out with her finger. Bernadette obeyed, but found nothing but moist earth; she dug a little with her hands which filled with muddy water; she drank and washed and afterwards ate a kind of moss there was in that place. Hardly concluded this act of obedience, the Apparition again spoke to Bernadette; She charged her to tell the Priests that a Chapel should be built in the place where She had appeared, and the girl hurried to carry out this commission, going to the Parish Priest. Bernadette had been invited to return to the grotto for fifteen days. She did so exactly, and every day, excepting two, she contemplated the same spectacle, before a great crowd packed facing the grotto without seeing or hearing anything. In this fortnight, the Apparition often sent Bernadette to the place indicated; She recommended her to pray for sinners, and renewed the petition to raise up a Chapel. For her part the girl asked Her who She was; but in response she just receives a sweet smile. The fifteen days had ended, and two further Apparitions took place, on the 25th of March 1858, feast of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Virgin and the 5th of April. On the Annunciation Bernadette asked the Lady for Her name three times; She raised Her eyes to Heaven and exclaimed smiling: "I am the Immaculate Conception." The news of the Apparitions spread like lightning. Some of the sick tried the water of the grotto and soon the wonderful results were to be seen: many suddenly recovered their health, whose illnesses had resisted the most effective remedies... Far from diminishing, the enthusiasm of the peoples for Our Lady of Lourdes increases with time, as do the incalculable number of prodigies performed by the Immaculate Virgin.

An episode in the history of Lourdes. M. Henry Lasserre in his work entitled "Our Lady of Lourdes", which is one of the most precious monuments to Mary's glory, refers, among other admirable events, to the following: – I had, two years ago, the honour of visiting in his house, Rue du Chai des Farines No. 6, in Bordeaux, Mr. Roger Lacassagne, an employee of the customs of that city. His severe appearance and reserved manner immediately caught my attention. He asked me the purpose of my visit, with the somewhat brusque manner of men of his condition. 'I have learned, sir – I told him – of the story of your trip to the Grotto of Lourdes and, in the interest of the studies that I am doing at this moment, I have come to hear the story from your own lips.'

At the words Grotto of Lourdes, his severe countenance softened, and the strong emotion aroused by the memory suddenly mellowed his austere features. 'Sit down, he told me, and forgive me for receiving you in this messy room. My family leaves today for Arcachon, and you find us in the muddle of all our preparations.' 'No matter. Tell me the events of which I have been told and of which I have only a confused knowledge.' 'In my entire life, he said with a tender voice, I will not forget the least detail... Sir, he continued after a moment of silence, I have only two children. The youngest, who I am going to talk to you about, is called Julio. He will soon come and you will see how sweet, pure, and good he is.' Lacassagne did not tell me how great his affection for his youngest son was; but the accent of his voice, which became somewhat sweeter and more affectionate when speaking of him, revealed to me the intensity of his paternal love. 'His health, he continued, was excellent until the age of twelve. At that time, an illness occurred unexpectedly and without any known physical cause, the severity of which I did not understand at first. On January



25, 1865, as we sat down at the table, Julio complained of a numbness he felt in his throat that prevented him from swallowing any solid food. He had to limit himself to taking a little soup. Having continued the same the next day, I sent for one of the most distinguished doctors in Toulouse, Dr. Nogues. 'He is nervous', he said; and gave me hope of speedy recovery. In fact, a few days later the child was able to eat, and I already believed him to be completely healthy, when the illness returned again and continued with more or less regular intermittence until the end of April. From that time on, the disease was stationary, and the poor child was reduced to feeding exclusively on liquids, milk,

gravy, sauces and broth. The poor little boy was visibly weakened, reduced to such a poor diet. The doctors tried in vain to understand the disease clearly in order to apply the right remedy. One day, it was May 10th – I have suffered so much, sir, and have thought so much about this wretched illness, that I remember all the dates – one day I saw Julio running in the garden with unusual haste and as if by jumps. I feared, sir, the slightest agitation for him. 'Julio, stop!' I exclaimed, going up to him and taking him by the hand. He escaped me at once. 'Dad, he told me, it's impossible. I have to run and I can't resist.' I took him in my arms, and his legs shook convulsively. Shortly afterward the movements and contortions took over his face and head. The true character of the disease was finally declared. My unfortunate son was attacked by chorea, a convulsive disease. You undoubtedly know, sir, what the horrible crises of this extraordinary evil are. But if the doctor knew, he was powerless to overcome it. All kinds of remedies were successively and uselessly applied for two years. He was in the countryside and in the Baths of Luchón. These remedies only increased the illness. Our last experience was a season of sea bathing. My wife took the sick boy to Saint Jean de Luz. I don't need to tell you that, in view of his condition, we only attended to his physical care. Above all, we wanted him to live, and from the beginning we suspended his studies and forbade him to work; We treated him like a vegetable. Well and good, his intelligence is active, serious, and the absolute privation of intellectual exercise bothered him extremely. The poor boy was also ashamed of his illness; He saw other children robust and considered himself unfortunate, almost cursed: hence he isolated himself.' The father, moved by his memories, stopped for a moment to stifle a moan. 'He isolated himself – he repeated – and became sad. When he found a book, he read it to distract himself. In Saint Jean de Luz one day he saw, on the table at the home of a local lady, a short account of the Lourdes apparitions. He read it and, apparently, it made a great impression on him, for he told his mother that afternoon that the Holy Virgin could well cure him; but my wife considered it a childish idea and paid no attention. Back in Bordeaux – shortly before I had received my transfer and we were already living here – the boy continued in the same condition. It was the month of August last year. So many useless efforts, so many illustrious doctors consulted in vain, so much care, all pure loss, ended, as you can well understand, by plunging us into the deepest despondency. Disheartened by the futility of these various attempts, we suspended all kinds of remedies, letting nature work and resigning ourselves to the inevitable evil that the Creator had wanted to send us. So much suffering had in a way increased our love for that child, and poor Julio was cared for by his mother and by me with equal tenderness and concern at all times. Sorrows have aged her and me: as you see me, sir, I am only forty-six years old. The boy's strength – he continued – was visibly diminishing. His slenderness became terrible, his paleness extreme. He no longer had blood under his skin and would have been mistaken for a wax statue. Visibly, death was advancing in great strides. Not only was it true, but imminent. By my faith, sir, no matter how clearly I saw the impotence of medicine, I could not, in my pain, refrain from knocking at its door. I knew no other in this world. I turned to the most

eminent doctor in Bordeaux, Dr. Gintrac senior. Gintrac examined the child's throat, probed it and discovered, in addition to the extreme narrowing that almost completely obstructed the alimentary canal, roughness of the worst kind. He shook his head and gave me little hope. Then, seeing my terrible anxiety, he added: 'I'm not saying he can't heal, but he is very sick.' Those were his words. What could we still do? We had gone to the principal doctors in Toulouse and Bordeaux, and it was all useless. The fatal evidence was before my eyes: our poor son was condemned, and condemned without appeal. Such a cruel conviction enters, sir, with great difficulty into the heart of a father. I still tried to deceive myself and, after thinking about it with my wife, I decided to try hydrotherapy. We found ourselves in this desperate and despairing situation, when Julio said to his mother, with an accent of confidence and certainty that impressed her, the following words: 'Mama, you see well: neither Gintrac nor any doctor can do anything against my illness. The Blessed Virgin will heal me. Send me to the Grotto of Lourdes, and see if I don't heal. I am sure.' My wife repeated those words to me. 'We must not doubt – I exclaimed – 'We must take him to Lourdes, and as soon as possible.' It was not, sir, faith that moved me. I neither believed in miracles, nor considered possible such extraordinary interventions of the Divinity. But I was a father and no possibility, no matter how small, seemed unimportant to me. I hoped it would have at least a salutary moral effect on my son. We were in winter, at the beginning of February. The season was bad and for Julio I feared the danger of the elements. I resolved, therefore, to wait for a good day. Since my poor son had read eight months before, in Saint Jean de Luz, the short report on the apparitions, he had not abandoned the hope that he had just expressed to us. He was ignored when he first spoke, and fell silent; but he kept the idea and cherished it when he suffered, and you need to see his patience, sir, when he underwent the doctors' treatments. This faith, so firm, so lively, was all the more extraordinary because we had not raised our son in great devotion. My wife fulfilled her religious duties and nothing else; I had, as I just told you, quite different philosophical ideas. February 12th dawned with beautiful weather, and we took the train to Tarbes. On the way, the boy was happy and full of absolute faith in his healing, a faith... disconcerting. I, sir, nurtured, without sharing it, that great confidence, that confidence that I would describe as reckless if I were not afraid of disrespecting the God who inspired it. In Tarbes, at the Dupont inn, where we stopped, this poor child, so pale, so weak and yet so sweet and charming, caught people's attention. They loved him just by looking at him. I had stated the purpose of our trip, and in the wishes expressed by those good people a happy presentiment was to be felt. When we left, I knew our return would be eagerly awaited. In any event, despite my doubts, I took a packet of biscuits. Upon reaching the Crypt above the Grotto, the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated. Julio prayed with a faith that was evident in his features, with truly heavenly ardour. The little angel was transfigured!... The Priest noticed his fervour, and after Mass he left the sacristy almost immediately and came to us. At the sight of the child, an inspiration had come upon him, and after communicating it to me, turning to Julio, who stayed kneeling, he said: 'My son, do you want me to consecrate you to the Most Holy Virgin?' 'Oh! Yes', Julio answered. Then the Priest began that very simple ceremony and recited the holy prayers over my son. 'Now – exclaimed the child in a tone with such perfect confidence that amazed me – now, dad, I am going to get well.' We went down to the Grotto. Julio knelt before the statue of the Virgin and prayed. I looked at him and today I still see the expression on his face, his attitude and his hands joined. He rose and we approached the fountain. The moment was terrible. He washed his neck and chest; then he took a glass and drank a few gulps of the miraculous water. He was serene, happy, cheerful and glowing with confidence. I feared and trembled until turning pale at that supreme test; but I kept my feelings under control, though with difficulty, and I did not want my doubts to show. 'Now try eating,' I told him, handing him a biscuit. He took it. I turned my head, not feeling strong enough to look. The



life or death of my son was to be decided, and in that quandary, formidable for the heart of a father, I pinned my last hope, which if banished, my beloved Julio was dead. The trial was decisive and I could not face it. Julio's voice, his happy and sweet voice, soon brought me out of that cruel perplexity. 'Dad, I'm already drinking; I can eat now; I was sure, I had faith!' What a drama, sir! My son, already prey to the grave, was saved, and all of a sudden! And I, his father, was present at this prodigious resurrection. Well then! Sir, so as not to affect my son's faith, I had the strength to conceal my admiration. 'Yes, my Julio, it was certain and couldn't be otherwise,' I told him with a voice that all the energy of my soul could barely calm. I assure you, sir; I was shaken by a terrible storm. If my chest had been opened, they would have found it ablaze, as if it were full

of fire. We repeated the experiment. Again he ate some biscuits, not only without difficulty, but with increasing appetite. I had to moderate it. I needed to make known my happiness, give thanks to God. 'Wait for me – I said to Julio – and speak to the Most Holy Virgin. I'm going to the chapel.' And leaving him kneeling for a moment before the Grotto, I ran to announce the good news to the Priest. I felt almost delirious. In addition to my happiness, so unexpected and sudden, in addition to my heart in turmoil, I felt my soul, my intelligence, in unintelligible confusion. A true revolution was taking place in my thoughts, confused, agitated, tumultuous; all my philosophical ideas wavered or fell of themselves. The Priest descended at once, and saw Julio, eating his last biscuit. The Bishop of Tarbes was in the Grotto that day and wanted to see my son; I told him about the cruel illness that had just ended so miraculously. Everyone caressed the child and shared my joy. I did not forget his mother, and thought of the happiness that was to be hers. Before returning to the inn, I ran to the telegraph office; the message was a single word: 'Healthy!' Hardly had I sent it than I would have wanted to take it back. 'I may have been hasty; maybe there will be a relapse,' I thought. I did not dare to believe in my happiness, and when I believed, it seemed to me that it was going to end. But the child was happy, happy without any trace of anxiety; his face shone with joy and complete certainty. 'You see, Dad – he kept repeating to me – only the Most Blessed Virgin could cure me. I was quite sure when I told you.' He ate at the inn with excellent appetite. I did not tire of seeing him eat. He wanted to return to the grotto, and went on foot to give thanks to his Liberatrix. 'Will you be very grateful to the Most Blessed Virgin?' a Priest asked him. Showing him the image of Our Lady and then the sky, the boy exclaimed: 'Ah! I will never forget Her!' In Tarbes we returned to the inn where we had been the evening before; they were expecting us. They had (I think I said it) a kind of happy premonition, and there was extraordinary joy. They gathered around Julio to watch him eat with such pleasure whatever was served at table, when the day before he could barely swallow a few spoonfuls of liquid. Yesterday already seemed very distant to me. This illness had lasted two years and nineteen days, against which the science of the most skilled doctors was ineffective, and which had just been so miraculously cured. We very much wanted to see my wife, and we took the express train to Bordeaux. The boy was exhausted; but because of the trip, not because of the emotions, because he always kept up great serenity in the face of this sudden healing, which filled him with joy, without causing him surprise. Hardly had he arrived than he wanted to go to bed. He was very sleepy and took no supper. When she saw him so battered, worn-out and not wanting supper, his mother, who was dying of joy before our arrival, had terrible doubts. She was devastated. She told me that I had deceived her and I couldn't convince her otherwise. What was her happiness when the next day our Julio, sitting at table, had lunch with us and a better appetite than us! Only then did she feel calm and sure.' And then I asked him, 'has Julio had any relapse, any incident?' 'No, sir, absolutely none. I cannot say that the healing was

in steps or progressive; it was as complete as it was instantaneous. The transition from long-standing and intractable illness to such complete and perfect health took place without any increments and without any apparent upset. But general health improved visibly assisted by a healthy diet, with salutary effects which were very necessary for my poor son. Since then, he told me, he has an angelic piety. You shall see. The nobility of his feelings can be read on his face. He is wellborn, upright and noble by nature, incapable of telling a lie, of any baseness. Piety has developed these natural gifts to the highest degrees. The poor boy has quickly made up for lost time; He is very studious, he won first place in his class, and in the last prize distribution he won that of 'excellence'. But, above all, he is the best behaved and the most submissive. Teachers and classmates love him equally, and in him we find our joy and our consolation.' At that moment the door opened. Julio and his mother entered the room where we were. I drew him to me and hugged him tenderly. Health shines on his face: his spacious forehead is beautiful; his attitude breathes a modesty and sweet firmness, which instil secret respect; his large and lively eyes reflect singular intelligence, absolute purity, a beautiful soul. 'You are a happy father,' I said to Lacassagne. 'Yes, sir, very happy; but my poor wife and I have suffered a lot.' 'Don't complain – I replied, moving away from Julio a little – the path of suffering led you from darkness to light, from death to life, from yourself to God. The Holy Virgin showed herself twice in Lourdes as the Mother of the living: she gave your son temporal life, to give you true life, the life that must not end.' I departed from that family blest of God; and with my heart moved by what I had heard and seen, I wrote what you have just read."

A bomb exploded. In 1905, Alfonso XIII, King of Spain, visited the President of the Republic, Emilio Loubet, in Paris. Upon returning from "The Opera", a bomb exploded that riddled the carriage in which the two Heads of State were riding. Fortunately they came out unharmed. Upon arriving at his residence, his wife told M. Loubet: "It is the medal that has protected you." "What medal?" the President asked. – "The one I always sew into your jacket, when you leave me." It was a medal of the Virgin of Lourdes.

The Pope of the Immaculate. On April 12, 1855, immortal Pope Saint Pius IX, back from a visit to the catacombs of Saint Alexander on the Via Nomentana, stopped with his entire court at the Basilica of Saint Agnes. Having performed his devotions with his entire entourage and the College of Propaganda Fide, they went to a room in the adjacent monastery of the Lateran Canons. Due to the crowd of people and the perhaps poor conditions of the room, as soon as the Pontiff was seated, the floor suddenly collapsed and they fell among the ruins. At the time of the accident and confusion, the Pope implored the help of Mary Immaculate. Concerned for the Pontiff's health, the religious saw with admiration that he was standing safe and sound, without any injury. Then he worried about his entourage and whether any had perished. By the special grace of the Immaculate Conception, all were safe and sound, when, naturally, a good part, if not all, should have perished, or at least been injured. The Immaculate Conception, whom Pius IX had invoked with so much faith and trust, had saved them. The Blessed Virgin wanted to demonstrate her gratitude to the Pope who had solemnly proclaimed her Immaculate. We have confirmation of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in the multiple apparitions of the Virgin of Lourdes to Saint Bernadette. Since then, Mary Immaculate has shown her protection to countless sick people in body and soul who have visited that Marian Sanctuary, famous throughout the world.

Those who do not understand. Shortly after the Second World War, a mutilated man who had lost one of his legs in the war made a pilgrimage to Lourdes. He was praying fervently to the Virgin, when an unbeliever, with little insight and less delicacy, said to him: "Do you believe, deluded as you are, that the Virgin is going to give you back your leg?" – "I don't really expect to recover my leg," responded the mutilated man, "but I pray to the Virgin to help me live happily without that leg that I lost forever..."

Terrible punishment. In order to better see the esteem that God holds for the Most Blessed



Virgin and how much He wants us to esteem and love her as He does, we will give below an example of the way in which He punishes those who despise Her. There is near Ghent, in Flanders, Belgium, a sanctuary of the Holy Virgin, very similar to that of Our Lady of Lourdes, where the faithful go on pilgrimage, and where notable prodigies have often been performed. Here is one of exceptional character. Two impious and libertine students from a state school tried one day to mock what they called the “gullible simplicity” of the pilgrims. They brought a simpleton as villainous as themselves into the plot, who had to play the role of victim. They instructed him in this way: “We will blindfold you, you will pretend to be blind and we will lead you to the wellspring. There you will invoke the Virgin, you will rub your eyes with the water from the fountain and you will shout that you are cured, that you have recovered your sight.” The plot now in place, the three villainous men headed for the sanctuary. At a bend in the road they blindfolded their comrade and led the pretended blind man by the hand. Numerous faithful gathered, showing sympathy to this group of young people who caught their attention. The two students shed crocodile tears for their friend’s misfortune. He reached the fountain, was presented with water, takes off the bandage to rub his eyes, but no longer sees anything... He had become truly blind! He screams, cries, calls for his mother, and terror forces him to confess his crime before the packed multitude. The unfortunate man had to be placed in a nursing home.

Our Lady of the Pillar. *The bombs did not explode.* On August 3, 1936, the aviation ensign, Villa Caballos, who later died at the front, dropped several bombs on the Basilica of the Pillar, which did not explode, according to himself: “This is how things went. In Barcelona, where I was then providing my services, Colonel Sandino received the information that some companies of the Spanish Falange had gathered inside the Basilica of the Pillar during the night. Sandino is like my spiritual father and he had absolute confidence in my conditions as a pilot. He took me aside and said, ‘You have to go out tonight on special service. You are going to fly over Zaragoza and bomb the Temple of the Pillar...’ I prepared to carry out what was ordered. I prepared my plane and ordered that it be equipped with six bombs weighing fifty kilos each. I left the Prat de Llobregat airfield in magnificent weather. From our front in Aragon they had sent me data on atmospheric conditions. Everything invited you to rise, calm night, absolute visibility thanks to the full moon, clear horizon... I flew to Zaragoza without the slightest incident. I was sure that my arrival would be a big surprise and that no one was waiting for me. I was going quite high, but once I was above the city, I descended calmly and began to notice the silhouettes of La Seo, an Aragonese expression for cathedral, that of the Pillar. I could see the two Basilicas perfectly. So I had no problem placing myself on top of the second. Those who saw me must have believed from some signs on the plane that it was a friendly plane. The fact is that I descended to about fifty meters above the vaults of the church. I made a small turn in order to centre my targets well and, once I was certain of success, I launched four bombs in a row, one fell into the river, two entered the Temple, I saw it perfectly; the fourth fell in front of the door. I rose quickly to avoid the effects of the explosion and, when I had gained altitude, I realized that the explosion was not coming. My astonishment knew no limits. What was happening? I hovered around the Pillar for a couple of minutes and nothing. The bombs did not explode. I was perplexed. I was tempted to launch the two that I had left in the bomber, but my surprise was such that I preferred to head for Barcelona and find out the cause for what had happened. Didn’t it seem unlikely to Colonel Sandino that troops would spend the night in a church? Didn’t he even remember that he himself had been baptized in that Sanctuary?” The aviator acknowledges that due to some signs they must have believed in Zaragoza that it was a

friendly plane. Indeed, he had the lights on and the national flag deceptively painted. Later, the technical report from the Artillery Depot confirmed that the bombs had a detonator, nothing was lacking... no one could explain why they had not exploded, except Mary Queen, and the Angels, powerful executors of divine orders.

“From death she returns to life.” In the XV century, which was so distinguished for its devotion to Our Lady, among many other prodigies, the miraculous healing of the queen of Navarra, Doña Blanca I, (1385-1441) occurred, who, finding herself terminally ill and *in articulo mortis*, she had the good fortune to have the Holy Virgin appear to her on a marble column and say: “My servant, Doña Blanca, come close to this Pillar of mine and you will have health.” An old account of this event says that Doña Blanca *“from death she returns to life,”* and soon went on a pilgrimage to Zaragoza, in 1433, with a large entourage, to fulfil the vow she made to pray in the Holy Chapel, as the central nave of the Temple is called; occupying herself for many days in vigils, prayers and alms, and establishing, in Pamplona, the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Pillar, and later the Order of Chivalry of the same name.



Healing of Fernando de Hontoria. For a long time in past centuries, the faithful were allowed to stay awake all night in the Holy Chapel, the central nave of the temple of Our Lady of the Pilar. Quite a few pilgrims came for this purpose, and sometimes in such cases stupendous miracles were wrought. Fernando de Hontoria was cured on one such vigil, in 1494, after twenty-six months of serious illness. He had attended some weddings in Villamediana, Palencia, and went to sleep, after an abundant meal, in the shade of a walnut tree. When he woke up, he found himself completely crippled and unable to move on his own. He remained like this for more than two years, crawling more than walking, and suffering acute pain. He went on a pilgrimage, with great difficulties, to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Pillar, staying in the cloister. He made a novena to the Virgin, and, on the seventh night, heard Her say to him clearly twice over: “Son, arise”. Fernando immediately regained his health.

The blind organist of Belchite, Aragon. Domingo Saludes y Torres became blind a few days after being born. His parents tried by all means and at great expense to cure him, but it was impossible. At the age of six, in 1878, he was taken to the School for the Blind directed by Dr. Arellano, to learn music; which he did with great diligence and pleasure, remaining there for 15 years. Later his father, who was a civil guard, was assigned to Belchite, Aragón, where the family moved. Domingo took a job there as an organist in the parish church. He could only distinguish lumps and shadows, which is why his love of music encountered great problems when studying new works: to play a piece of music, it had to be dictated to him, he wrote it using the Braille system of raised dots, and then learnt it by heart. Our pious organist, having heard of the prodigies wrought through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin of the Pillar, asked Her to give him sight at least to read the stave written in ink. Let us now hear how he himself tells it, when on October 29th, 1907 he wrote to Dr. Arellano. “When I left for Zaragoza, I felt a joy that I could not explain, and while I was at Mass on the 16th of this month of October in the Holy Chapel, the inspiration came to me to confess on the 17th, and receive Holy Communion the following three days. So I did, and on the 17th, after Communion and giving thanks, when I knelt in the Holy Chapel, I noticed that I saw better. I went outside and could then see the shop signs. I was able to distinguish quite well all music written in ink, but, to act with prudence, until eight days had passed I said nothing to anyone. I returned home and here I am now receiving congratulations incessantly. I do not need to commission you expressly to spread this grace, because I trust that you will tell school colleagues to trust in God and the Most Blessed Virgin.” When he began to see the signs on the shop fronts, he still did not know what they meant, though able to decipher



some of them, since at school there was an alphabet in relief with the capital letters. All his desire was immediately to learn to read. The Priest wrote down the capital letters for him, which he identified, and below them the corresponding lowercase letters. After two months he was already reading quite well. It didn't turn out perfectly; he only saw the objects in front of his eyes. But the Virgin had granted him what he had asked of Her. This miracle, even without a canonical process, is one of the most documented and disseminated. Signed testimonies were collected from his parents, from the School for the Blind, from the chief personages of Belchite, where he had already been an organist for 14 years, until October 17th he was blind, and from that day on, without applying any medicine, his eyes were opened by simply invoking Most Holy Mary, Virgin of the Pillar.

A poor farmer recovers the leg that had been cut off two and a half years previously. Michael Pellicer, a resident of Calanda, had one leg dead and buried... Two years and five months, something certain and well attested by doctors and surgeons, that it had been cut off... He lay down in bed, and in the morning found his leg healthy as it was before... (Popular ballad). This Michael Pellicer, born in Calanda (Teruel), was a young man of nineteen years, son of Michael Pellicer, a poor farmer, and Maria Blasco, his wife. He worked in Castellón de la Plana, in the service of his uncle Jaime Blasco. One day he had the misfortune to fall in front of a cart loaded with wheat, whose wheels crushed his right leg. They took him to Valencia Hospital, where they were unable to restore it. He then begged to be taken to the Hospital of Our Lady of Grace, and so they did. Arriving at this city, the first thing he did was to turn to the Basilica of the Holy Virgin of the Pillar, confess and receive Communion, begging Our Lady to favour him in his tribulation. When he was admitted to the Hospital of Our Lady of Grace, he had a fever. It was in the first days of October 1637. They took him to the operating room, and began to examine his leg and try to restore it. The report says: "And though they applied various medications, they were of no use: because the leg was very bad, swollen and damaged and had turned black, and the surgeons decided that he would not get better if they did not cut it off; that otherwise he would die." The surgeons who cut his leg off, below the knee, were doctors Estanga and Millaruelo. This is what the very complete report made shortly afterwards says, signed under oath by numerous witnesses. And later adds: "They gave a drink to the said Michael Pellicer, and then they began to cut off the said right leg, four fingers below the knee, and cauterized it, while the patient constantly invoked Our Lady of the Pillar, imploring Her help in such a great trial. One of the practitioners took the said severed leg in his hands and showed it to various people and took it to the chapel, where corpses were deposited to bury them in the cemetery of the said hospital, where it was buried." Once the wound healed, Pellicer was so weak that he could not even use his wooden leg, and carried away by his devotion to Our Lady of the Pilar, he crawled as best he could on his knees to Her holy temple, and thanked Her... begging her to help him to be able to live from his work. Every day he entered the basilica, heard Mass, and entrusted himself to the Most Holy Virgin of the Pillar, begging Her to have mercy on him. He felt pain in his leg and "rubbed where it hurt with the oil from a lamp of the Virgin." Thus arrived the year 1640. Desiring to see his parents, after such a long absence, he went to Calanda, his hometown. He arrived after a very difficult journey. He was then twenty-two years old. His parents' joy at seeing him was joined to the pain of having an invalid son. Michael, riding a horse, went through the towns begging for alms to help his parents; "always bearing in mind in his work to ask the Virgin of the Pillar with devotion to protect him." On March 29th he worked on the threshing floor; and at night his bad leg hurt a lot from the exercise he had done. "He showed it bare to the neighbours of his parents' home and many others, and they touched the cut on his leg with their hands." Around ten o'clock, "he took off the wooden leg he was wearing" and lay down on an improvised bed at the foot of his

parents' bed, since soldiers who had come into town occupied his own bed. "He entrusted himself very truly to the Most Holy Virgin of the Pillar, and She then sent him a deep sleep. His parents, a quarter of an hour later, entered the room, and perceived a gentle fragrance and odour not usual there and, with the light of a lamp they bore, they recognized their son, and saw that he had two legs, because the bed was short, and the feet could be seen emerging from the bedclothes. Amazed and stunned at such a great novelty and wonder, they woke Michael up, crying out and telling him to see that he had two legs and to explain to them how that had come about. He woke up with great difficulty because he was in a deep sleep, and said that he did not know, that when they woke him up he was in a very deep sleep and he had dreamt that he was in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza, anointing his sick leg with the oil of a lamp... and that he saw himself with the leg... and that he was certain that the Virgin of the Pillar had brought it and put it on... They called the neighbours, and they were all amazed to see Michael with his right leg, having seen him without it a short while before, and they touched and saw the said leg." In the midst of joy and gratitude, the cured young man "in order to know if it was his leg that was restored, he told his parents and the said neighbours to see if there was a sign on the said right leg of the wound and breakage in the shin... and two other scars from rosemary scratches that he had received while walking through the mountains... And his parents touched and saw these signs... For which they were certain that it was the same leg that had been cut off in the Hospital..., and they all gave many thanks to God Our Lord and to the Most Holy Virgin of the Pillar for the mercy She had granted them." The next day, Friday, the Vicar of Calanda said a Mass of thanksgiving, Michael attended walking normally and confessed and received Communion, "everyone praising God Our Lord and the Most Blessed Virgin of the Pillar." Three days later, on April 2nd, the Parish Priest of the neighbouring town of Mazaleón, prudent and farsighted, upon learning of the event, wanted to check it out. For that he called the notary of Mazaleón itself, Don Michael Andreu, and with him appeared in Calanda. The notary drew up minutes in front of witnesses. The original is preserved, with the signs that prove the identity of the restored leg with the one that had previously been buried. The entire notarial protocol of Mazaleón of that year 1640 is also preserved. On June 5th 1640, the formal process began in the Ecclesiastical Court of Zaragoza, at the request of the Juries of the City, the Council and the University, and on April 27th 1641, Archbishop Apaolaza passed sentence, in the following terms: "With the opinion and advice of the underwritten illustrious Doctors... We say, Pronounce and Declare that M. J. Pellicer has had his right leg miraculously restored, which they had previously cut off." The literal copy of the hearing is preserved on 72 handwritten pages, which the Court's own notaries signed for the Zaragoza Council. This is the very famous "Miracle of Calanda", worked by Our Lady of the Pillar on behalf of a poor farmer who invoked Her with filial confidence in the midst of his misfortune. It is a miracle of the first order. Because restoring a leg, buried two and a half years previously, is greater than curing a consumptive or paralytic... It is the miracle of the resurrection of the flesh; and it is so well documented that to deny it would be to call the day night. King Philip IV himself made Pellicer go to Madrid, he listened with great interest to the story of the event and reverently kissed the leg restored by the Virgin of the Pillar. Therefore, trust Mary; serve Her, love Her, and you too, my reader and my brother, and you will say from your own experience: Oh Virgin of virgins! None of those who turn to your protection and implore your help are forsaken by You.

Our Lady of Guadalupe. *A Religious is miraculously freed from captivity.* Friar Jerónimo de Guzmán, Vicar of the Monastery of the Trinity in the city of Málaga, went on a pilgrimage with great devotion to the sanctuary of Santa María de Guadalupe to fulfil the vow he had made to Our Lady. He explained the reason for his vow like this: "When in Almería I was going to a Monastery of our Order, I was attacked by three moors, who came for me, tied me up and took me prisoner to Tetuán, a Moroccan city in Africa. I was there for a month

and a half and went through many tortures and afflictions. I then entrusted myself to this Blessed Lady saying: 'Oh, Lady, Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, Mother of God, Most Holy and unblemished. You who release your devotees and prisoners from their bonds, do not forget me among them all, calling upon You with an anguished heart and suffering great torment in my body. No one called upon You, Lady, without You hearing him; no one asked You for anything that You did not grant; so do not deny me, glorious Virgin, things that You grant to everyone. Let me not be more a stranger to Your Mercy than all Your other servants. And if Your goodness frees me from this harsh prison, I promise You, my Lady, and I vow to visit Your Holy Church of Guadalupe.' Well, this vow made, the Queen of Angels, who in the face of the greatest agonies comforts the disconsolate and the sorrowful, wrought with me the following miracle: Two days after I made this promise, in the afternoon, at the time of vespers, when I had already prayed all the prayers of the canonical hours, I then prayed the Salve. When I had finished, I heard the voice of Our Lady telling me three times: 'Come over here, come over here, come over here.' And when She had finished saying those words for the third time, I suddenly found myself in the same place where I had previously been captured on Christian soil, that is, in Almería, more than 150 kilometres away and across the sea." Having been freed from his captivity by means of such a wonderful miracle performed by Our Lady, Friar Jerónimo went with great devotion to visit Her Sanctuary of Guadalupe, to thank Her for such a notable benefit, which occurred in the year 511, in the month of January.

A Galician mayor was saved from a mortal arrow. Álvaro García, a councillor of Betanzos in Galicia, went to the monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Cáceres in April 1514. He recorded the reason for his pilgrimage, as follows: "In the month of November of the year 1513, when I was mayor in Villero, I heard a very loud commotion and great uproar, so I then went out to make peace, but an arrow struck me in the chest, on the right side, the tip of which pierced me to the back. And since I saw myself so badly wounded, I entrusted myself to Our Lady of Guadalupe, promising Her that if I escaped that wound, I would go on pilgrimage to Her sanctuary on foot. A surgeon then treated me and saw that the wound was mortal. He obtained all the Sacraments for me, saying that I could not survive. And I, seeing myself in so much danger and that my wound was going from bad to worse, entrusted myself with more devotion to Our Lady, ratifying the vow I had made, and so I remained for 15 days. As everyone told me that I was dying, I closed my eyes to die, entrusting myself with great zeal to Our Lady of Guadalupe. I was like that all night; and next day, when I opened my eyes and saw the clarity of day, I gave many thanks to Our Lady, and I was healthy, without knowing how." This man, recognizing that the benefit received was owing to Our Lady, went to fulfil his vow as he had promised.

Our Lady cures a man from Burgos of a mortal illness. When Juan de Salinas, a merchant, a native of Burgos, was in Flanders for his trade, he caught an illness so serious that there was no longer any human remedy, having spent more than three hundred doubloons, the Castilian currency of that time, on doctors, without showing any improvement. As a result, he started vomiting, so he went twelve days without eating or drinking, and without responding to outside stimuli. A doctor saw him in this state, and told him to prepare to die; when his servant heard this, he went to the port to tell the other merchants, his friends, what was happening. One of them, seeing the said Juan de Salinas in such a state that he seemed more dead than alive, shouted to him: "Juan, Juan de Salinas, entrust yourself to the Virgin of Guadalupe and offer yourself to Her." He heard it because his friend was shouting out loud and, accepting the advice, he promised in his heart to visit Her monastery and bring Her as an offering the figure of a man weighing half a pound of silver. Later he said that, when he was thinking of this, a very beautiful Lady appeared to him, who told him: "Son, do not be afraid, you will not die of this disease." Juan de Salinas turned to the merchants and told them: "Friends, God be with you, for I have just entrusted myself to

the Virgin of Guadalupe and She has told me that I will not die of this disease.” Having made this vow, that same day his vomiting and fever disappeared, and the next day he was able to get up. This, witnessed by those who had seen his illness, was considered a miracle of the Lord and the Virgin of Guadalupe. On September 9th of the year of our Lord 1499, Juan de Salinas, who had likewise recognized the great favour received from God through the mediation of the Virgin of Guadalupe, arrived at that ancient sanctuary, by then already transformed into a monastery, and offered the value in money of his offering and its fabrication.

In Villahermosa Our Lady saves the lives of two people. Gil Moreno, a native of Villahermosa, arrived at this sanctuary and, explaining the reason for his coming and why he had brought two shrouds, said that, as a brother-in-law of his had almost died due to a pain in his side that came upon him, and as he was in this state for two days, Gil’s wife, the sick man’s sister, shouted to him:

“Brother, would you have me commend you to the Virgin of Guadalupe?” The sick man gave no reply, for his eyes were as if dead. So his sister, seeing him so bad, prayed out loud: “Oh, Lady of Guadalupe, I promise to bring you the shroud with which this brother would be shrouded, if you preserve his life.” Wonderful thing! The sick man, opening his eyes, asked his sister to feed him; but she, thinking that he said it in a delirium of death, repeated the same request to the Holy Virgin. The sick man told her again: “Sister, I promise myself to the Virgin of Guadalupe, as you wish.” Strangely enough, as he said this he got out of bed and, in a few days, was completely healthy. Eleven days later, it happened that one of the couple’s sons fell ill with fever, and remained nine days without eating or drinking, and he was only known to be alive because he was breathing, but on the ninth day his breathing failed as well. The doctor who was called to examine him said that the young man was dead and, if he retained any warmth, it was the remnants of his natural warmth. His mother then told her husband: “Well, if the Virgin of Guadalupe gave health to my brother, I hope in Her that She will not abandon our son; let us vow to take the shroud of our son to Her sanctuary.” The husband replied: “Do so, and if he heals I will take it.” The woman, on her knees, began to pray: “Oh, Virgin of Guadalupe, do not look upon our sins, look at the misfortune we have if we lose our son, for he sustains us in our poverty; For this and by Your great mercy, help us, as when You helped my brother who was going to die, and I promise to take both shrouds to Your sanctuary.” Having finished saying this, the young man opened his eyes and said: “Mom, don’t cry over my death, because the Virgin of Guadalupe has given me back life; I saw Her very clearly here.” When those who were there heard this, they were greatly astonished. Giving thanks to God and the Virgin of Guadalupe, the young man suddenly regained his health, though with some weakness. And that is why the said Gil Moreno came to this sanctuary and handed the two shrouds over to the porters, in the year 1499 on September 9th, the day after the Nativity of Our Lady.

Our Lady restores speech to a sick person. In 1514 Antón Garcés, a resident of Porto, kingdom of Portugal, arrived at the Monastery of Our Lady, Saint Mary of Guadalupe, and giving the reason for his coming said: “I am a public notary and, while employed in my work by order of the king, I was spied on by some of my enemies and treacherously attacked. They stabbed me in the head, for which the doctors later gave up my case as hopeless. And since I had lost my speech, I was put in a very dark room where I could see neither sun nor moon, and there I stayed for eight months, speechless. As the doctors said that I would not leave there, and everyone thought I would die soon, I entrusted myself to Our Lady of Guadalupe, promising Her that if She freed me from that danger, I would come on pilgrimage to this monastery. And, while I was thus afflicted, the Lady of Guadalupe appeared to me



and said: 'Do not be afraid, son, you will not die from this illness.' I was then able to speak and feel better, and little by little I improved until I was completely recovered. And now I have come to fulfil what I promised to Our Lady, Holy Virgin Mary of Guadalupe." After fulfilling his promise, this devout man returned to his land, praising and blessing Our Lady.

In Talarrubias, Our Lady raises a child from the dead. Juan de Mansilla, a resident of Talarrubias, Badajoz, belonging to the Archbishopric of Toledo, came to visit the monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the month of September 1594, in fulfilment of a vow he had made to Our Lady and, recounting the case formally and with an oath, he said that two years previously, in 1592, in the month of August, a son of his, who was also called Juan, fell ill with fever, and after eight days his illness worsened so much that, in his opinion and that of other people who saw him, he had died, and remained like that for a quarter of an hour. His father was heartbroken, because he was the only son he had left alive, since the other five that God had given him had died. He took him in his arms and, shedding many tears and with great anguish, he exclaimed: "Oh, my Lady of Guadalupe, I promise to take him to Your sanctuary and offer You his weight in wheat, if it is the Will of God that, through Your intercession, God returns him to me." Something wonderful happened, since after this heartfelt prayer, the child came back to life: he groaned, opened his eyes, and became sound and healthy, without fever and without showing any sign of illness, to the great admiration of many neighbours, who had come at the cries of his mother. Together they gave many thanks to God and his Blessed Mother for so much mercy that They have shown us.

Mary Auxiliatrix. In Turin there is a venerable and eminently popular Church, consecrated to Mary Auxiliatrix. When in 1865, Don Bosco, founder of the Pious Society of Saint Francis de Sales, laid the foundations of that Church, he barely had forty cents in cash. When the work was completed in 1868, its value reached more than one million liras. And such an undertaking had been carried out without taking up a single collection. Who provided the resources? - Mary; Yes, because the faithful who incessantly came to Don Bosco with a pious offering told him at the same time that it was only the payment of a debt contracted with the Mother of God from whom they had obtained a significant favour. Each stone of that sanctuary, each of the countless votive offerings that shine on its walls, testify to a grace from Mary Auxiliatrix. Without it being possible to mention so many extraordinary facts, the following suffices: In Vinovo, a village near Turin, there lived a young woman named Maria Stardero who had the misfortune of completely losing her sight. Anxious to recover it, she conceived the idea of making a pilgrimage to the Church of Mary Auxiliatrix, and one Saturday of the month that is consecrated to her, accompanied by her aunt, she appeared at the sanctuary. After a brief prayer before the image of Our Lady, she was taken to the presence of Don Bosco, in the sacristy and there she had this conversation with him: - "How long have you been sick?" "It's been a long time, but I haven't seen anything for about a year." "Have you consulted the doctors? What do they say? Have they not given you medicine?" "We have used all kinds of remedies without any result, answered the aunt. The doctors don't give the slightest hope..." And she started to cry. "Do you distinguish large objects from small ones?" "No, sir; I don't distinguish anything at all." "Do you see the light from that window?" "No, sir; I see nothing." "Do you want to see?" "Sir, I am poor, I need sight to earn my living; shouldn't I want it back?" "Will you use your eyes for the good of your soul and not to offend God?" "I promise with all my heart." "Trust in the Holy Virgin; She will heal you." "I hope so, but in the meantime I am blind." "You will see." "See?, me! Then Don Bosco with a solemn tone and gesture exclaimed: "For the glory of God and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, say, what do I have in my hand?" The young woman opened her eyes, fixed them on the object that Don Bosco presented to her, and shouted: "I see... a medal... and of the Holy Virgin." "And on this other side of the medal - Don Bosco asked, showing it to her - what is there?" "An old man with a flowering staff: it is Saint Joseph." We give up describing what happened then; we will only add that when Maria held out her

hand to take the medal, it fell to the floor, ending up in a corner of the sacristy, and Maria herself, by order of Don Bosco, looked for it and found it, leaving all perfectly convinced of the reality of the cure, which was as complete as it was prodigious, because María Starderò has suffered no eye problems since then.

With Her, everything. Leafing through the biography of Saint John Bosco, one is convinced that Mary Auxiliatrix was the soul, the centre, the all-in-all of the gigantic work carried out and maintained by the humble shepherd boy of Becchi. He himself confessed it so with words that highlight his profound humility. “I don’t do anything. It is Mary Auxiliatrix who works so many wonders. Without Her, what would Don Bosco be? A poor village priest, lost in the last corner of the Alps.” This is how the Saints speak! Through Mary Auxiliatrix he gathered Turin’s children; he housed them in schools; founded the Salesian Congregation and later the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Auxiliatrix. He healed thousands of sick people, raised the dead, brought back straying souls to the right path, spread good publications, sent missionaries and educators throughout the world. Thousands of children, young people and adults have called him Father and apostle; and the Salesian Congregation, with zeal and enthusiasm for the holy cause of the Lord, has waged spiritual battles against the eternal enemies of souls. “Without Mary Auxiliatrix, nothing; with Her, everything,” said Don Bosco, and also: “Trust in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and in Mary Most Holy, and you will see what miracles are.”



A paralyzed woman regains movement while they celebrate Mass for her. In 1868, a lady from Milan was attacked by hemiplegia: one side of her body was completely paralyzed. Her family, seeing her threatened with new attacks, and no longer having hope in human remedies, began confidently to implore Divine Mercy, through the intercession of Mary Auxiliatrix, since they had heard of so many people in need who had experienced Her favours. They immediately commissioned the Salesians of Turin to pray for her the special prayers they pray there in serious cases, and to celebrate a Mass the next day in the Basilica of Mary Auxiliatrix. While at seven in the morning the Holy Sacrifice was being said for the sick woman in Turin, her relatives and friends, kneeling around her bed, united their prayers with those of the celebrant from afar. They asked that the poor paralytic be able, at least before dying, to come to her senses and receive Holy Viaticum. Their fervour reached Heaven. Around seven-thirty, precisely at the same time that the Mass in the sanctuary concluded, the patient regained consciousness and the use of speech, and was also able to move her paralyzed limbs little by little. Those attending, full of amazement, thought then that this effort was perhaps the last; but fear quickly turned into the most lively joy, because the sick woman sat up on her bed and clearly articulated these words: “I am well.” She asked for her clothes, and had herself taken, that same morning, to the church, to give thanks to the Mother of Mercy and receive Holy Communion. This same happy patient, miraculously cured, has written to us about this event, ending her letter with this: “I wish that this miracle be given the greatest possible publicity, so that, by spreading Mary Auxiliatrix’s favours, this Good Mother may be further invoked and honoured every day.”

“I no longer call him my son, but rather the son of the Holy Virgin.” On June 10, 1868, around noon, a long-distance coach arrived in Turin, which stopped before the door of the temple of Mary Auxiliatrix, and a distinguished-looking man stepped out. He immediately went to confession, and then approached Holy Communion with recollection. After giving thanks, he entered the sacristy, and presented an offering to the Parish Priest of the church, saying to him: “Pray for me and tell everyone the wonders that have been done to me, thanks to the intercession of the Holy Virgin.” As the Father asked him to explain himself, he said: “I come from Faenza, Emilia Romagna, to fulfil a vow. A four-year-old son of

mine, the object of all my hopes, fell seriously ill, and no longer showed signs of life; we were already crying for him as if he were dead, when a friend arrived and advised us to make a novena to Mary Auxiliatrix with the promise of making an offering to this temple. I promised everything and also to come in person to this place and receive Holy Communion here, if I obtained the grace, almost beyond hope, for my son to be healed. I was heard. On the fifth day of the novena my son was out of danger, and today he is perfectly recovered. Therefore I no longer call him my son, but son of the Holy Virgin. I have fulfilled my vow, and I return home consoled, blessing the Mother of all Mercy, Mary Auxiliatrix.”

An incredulous doctor. In 1869, a renowned doctor from Turin appeared at the Oratory of Saint Francis de Sales, asking to speak with Don Bosco. And after the dry greeting, he said: “I have been told that you cure all kinds of diseases, is that true?” – “By no means; nothing further from the truth.” – “They have assured me.” – “It is true that many people come here to implore some grace through the intercession of Mary Auxiliatrix. If after a triduum or a novena they obtain health, you will understand that it is not I who heals them.” – “Perfectly. Well, heal me too and I will believe in such miracles.” – “What illness do you suffer from?” The doctor told Don Bosco that, for suffering epileptic attacks so frequent and violent that they exposed him to ridicule, he could not leave his home without a companion; that he had found no relief from his terrible illness, and that in despair he came to him in search of a cure. – “If so, do what the others do: kneel with me, prepare to purify your soul in Holy Confession and strengthen it with Holy Communion.” – “Tell me to do something else, because that is precisely the one thing I cannot do.” – “Why not?” – “Because it would be hypocrisy on my part; I do not believe in God, nor in the Virgin, nor in prayer, nor in miracles...” The Saint was dismayed at such an attitude of disbelief; but, with the help of God, he found words so eloquent that the doctor knelt and made the sign of the cross. – “I am amazed that I know how to do this, because it has been more than forty years since I have blessed myself.” The fact is that he prayed and confessed, and immediately felt well. Never has the slightest symptom of that illness occurred again, and he has frequently gone to give thanks to Mary Auxiliatrix, through whose blessing he regained health in soul and body.

Healing of a cripple. On June 4, 1874, when opening the Church of Mary Auxiliatrix in Turin, Don Bosco found a sick man lying at the door, his body crippled and deformed, with unremitting rheumatism and a spinal condition, unable to move. A charitable person had brought him in his carriage and left him at the door. Human science had declared itself impotent. When he reached the sacristy, Don Bosco asked him: – “What do you want?” – “The blessing of Mary Auxiliatrix to heal.” Don Bosco gave him the blessing... and added: “If you put your trust in Mary, open your hand... start with the thumb, stand up without the crutch... and go to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament.” The sick man carried out everything Don Bosco ordered, and finally he exclaimed, radiant with joy: “My God! My God, I’m cured. Mary Auxiliatrix, pray for me! I promise to confess and receive Communion next Sunday.”

Our Lady of Fátima. *Very eloquent statements made by Saint John XXIII.* On August 22, 1959, addressing a large group of pilgrims in Castelgandolfo, he said: “I did not understand the importance of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary until I went to the Sanctuary of Fátima, where I celebrated the pontifical and gave a homily before about seven hundred thousand pilgrims, an important crowd such as I have never again seen in the course of my life. There is something mysterious and moving in the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin. This Heart is a vision of peace, an invitation and a guide not only to the well-intentioned, but also to the misguided...” Saint John XXIII died a holy death on June 3, 1963. His last words, according to statements by the confessor who attended him, were for the Virgin: “My mother...!” As though he were saying: ‘Heart of Mary, be my salvation’. Speaking of this, it is well also to remember these other words which, reported by Jean Guittou, Saint John XXIII pronounced on his deathbed: “Suspend the Council! Suspend the Council!” As by then he had realized that the Council had become an infernal

conciiliabulum owing to domination by the progressivist wing.

An unbelieving photographer. In 1948, when the Pilgrim Virgin of Fátima arrived in Madrid, a photographer, a true artist, but an unbeliever, said to himself: “What a good deal for me will this be! I will prepare my best plates. No other photographer will take anything like it.” The right moment arrived. The light was ideal. The view was perfect. The landscape, wonderful. The crowd served as a beautiful frame for the statue of the Virgin. He shot the camera. The doves and flowers came out beautiful; everything except the Virgin, who did not appear. – “It could be that the plate is not right. I will try a better one.” He took the photo with care... and everything turned out perfect, except for the statue of the Virgin, which could not be seen. In the third plate, in the fourth, in the fifth and sixth, the same prodigy. “And I, stunned and repentant,” says the photographer, “fell on my knees exclaiming: Most Holy Virgin of Fátima, forgive me: I now understand that I am not worthy of seeing the beauty of Your divine Countenance. Forgive me.” And the unbelieving photographer was truly converted. If the Virgin sometimes works wonders to save sinners who do not believe in Her maternal protection, what will She not do for those of us who strive to honour Her?



Our Crowned Mother of Palmar. *Wonderful effects of the Water from the Well of Palmar.* “Our daughter was six months old when she started having epileptic seizures, we took her to a hospital, but it was necessary to refer her to a special clinic for babies. As there were complications in attending this hospital, we informed our missionary Bishop, and we prayed intensely to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary for a prompt solution. Our daughter had up to nine seizures a day and the doctors told us that a seizure that lasts more than seven minutes can be very dangerous. We put Well Water on her tongue with every seizure and the seizure stopped instantly, so she never entered the dangerous time zone. Within a few days, the complications of the hospital transfer were resolved and our daughter received the treatment she needed. This is one of our family’s experiences of miracles when using the Water from the El Palmar Well and the wonderful results of prayers invoking the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.” From a Palmarian faithful.

A healthy baby is born, thanks to Our Mother of Palmar. “When I was pregnant, I asked His Holiness Pope Peter III, the Bishops and Nuns, to pray for the pregnancy as there were high risks of complications that could occur. I drank the Well Water every morning and night throughout my pregnancy and prayed to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary to protect my baby. Through Divine Providence I felt something was wrong around seven months into my pregnancy, so I went into hospital for a check-up; at first everything seemed fine but when the head doctor did a second check-up they noticed that the placenta was beginning to detach, they had to operate very quickly since the baby could now die in minutes; the baby was born and, thanks to the Most Blessed Virgin, born healthy. The doctor later said that it was a miracle that I was in the hospital at just the right time to save the baby.” A Palmarian faithful.

The names of the Most Holy Virgin. Caesar Alexander Louis Lenormand seemed like a typical small property renter, somewhat pretentious, someone who, after a sober, frugal, industrious and honest life, enjoy modest well-being in their old age. For thirty years he was a cashier in different cities, and, upon returning afterwards to his native town, he declared that he belonged to the party of religion, and even went so far as to say in a very solemn tone: “I protect religion.” For the rest, he was on very good relations with the Parish Priest and heard mass every Sunday, but did not comply with the Easter precept. A great objection prevented him from doing so. “During my youth,” he said, “there was only talk of a Blessed Virgin; but today I head to Honfleur and meet Our Lady of Grace; I pass through Rouen and meet Our Lady of Perpetual Succour; I arrive in Paris and meet Our Lady of Victories. And



later they even invented Our Lady of La Salette, Our Lady of Lourdes and I don't know how many others. They have done wrong by inventing so many! If the Virgin were only one, I would fulfil the Easter precept." – "My friend," the Parish Priest said to him one day, "do you promise to comply with the Easter precept if I show you that we only admit one Most Holy Virgin?" – "Without a doubt, dear Father: Caesar's word, but you will not prove it to me, because it is impossible." – "Well, listen to me. It's quite simple. Suppose that at this moment a letter from the notary of Honfleur announces that a merchant from that city bequeaths ten thousand francs to his former cashier Caesar Lenormand. Would you accept?" – "Of course I would! It's me." – "Tomorrow another letter announces that a merchant from Rouen bequeaths ten thousand francs to his former cashier Alexander Lenormand. Would you accept?" – "Without a doubt: that's me too." – "The day after tomorrow a third letter informs you that a Paris merchant bequeaths another ten thousand francs to his former cashier Louis Lenormand. Would you accept?" – "Why not? It's me myself." – "And why would you accept?" – "Goodness! Because the one favoured would always be me." – "That is to say," replied the Priest with a malicious smile, "that, though you have had the occurrence to call yourself by different names in different towns, Caesar in Honfleur, Alexander in Rouen and Louis in Paris, you have nevertheless always preserved your surname. Well, my friend, a similar thing happens with the Most Holy Virgin. As she is Treasuress and Dispensatrix of all Heaven's graces, according to their kinds, She is given different honorific titles according to each of her countless sanctuaries, but there is only one Most Holy Virgin. In other words: She has many names, but only one surname. Call, if you like, first names those we call invocations or glorious titles. The positive thing is that the Most Blessed Virgin is one. Therefore, you must comply with the Easter precept..." – "Dear Father, you are right. I pledged Caesar's word. Tomorrow I will confess." And so he did.

The Holy House of Loreto

One of the greatest miracles of History is the translation of the Virgin's Home from Nazareth to Loreto. The event is backed up by abundant physical and testimonial proofs, and is a permanent miracle. In the sanctuary of Loreto, in Italy, the Holy Home of the Virgin Mary in Nazareth is conserved. There She pronounced those blessed words: "Behold the Slave of the Lord: be it done in Me according to your word," in reply to the Annunciation by Archangel Gabriel that She was to be the Mother of God. The Holy Home arrived at its present site by way of a miraculous translation which took place in the XIII century, recognized by numerous Popes and which had its own liturgical feast.

The town of Nazareth, on the slopes of a beautiful hill, not far from Mount Tabor, twenty centuries ago, was one of the most important towns in Galilee. Its inhabitants lived frugally and simply, and the purity of their morals was a reflection of that of the ancient patriarchs, whose traditions were conserved with religious respect.

Commerce with the neighbouring regions flourished and numerous caravans from the fertile regions of Arabia frequently arrived with camels laden with varied products and exquisite essences which gave Nazareth great importance and wealth.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary had been born in Sephoris, some ten kilometres from Nazareth, so that this region was the homeland of the Virgin Mary. There She had Her modest home. This humble abode, then, was witness to the Incarnation of the Divine Word, while the nearby home of Saint Joseph was the scene of the virtues of the childhood and youth of Jesus, of the goodness and divine smiles which filled with joy the hearts of His Most Holy Parents, Joseph and Mary. The Virgin Mary's Home is sacred by virtue of the imponderable miracle of the Incarnation of the Messias.

The Holy House of the Virgin in Nazareth had two parts. One part was a small grotto and the second part was a small structure of bricks which extended outwards from the entry to the grotto. The brick structure had but three walls since one side coincided with the wall of the grotto.

Soon the Holy House became a meeting place for the celebration of Holy Mass for the first Christians. Consider the filial love and the deep veneration the Apostles and first Christians would have had for this incomparable sanctuary... Under the empire of the great Constantine, the Empress Helen, his mother, without a thought for the costly fatigue of such a remote pilgrimage, headed for the holy places of Palestine. She visited the Crib in Bethlehem, Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, in Jerusalem, and then reached Nazareth, the sacred enclosure where our Redemption began. The pious Empress found the home of the Most Holy Virgin, which still rose up among the heaps of shapeless ruins. Its extreme poverty and the humble furniture still there inspired her with lively sentiments of tenderness and respect for the Sovereign Queen of the Universe, who being so great had chosen such a cramped and modest dwelling.

Nonetheless she resolved not to make the least change. She ordered the restoration of just the Altar, on which the Apostles had offered the Holy Sacrifice, and gave categorical instructions to the imperial ministers to construct an august church around the Holy House. In the façade was read the following inscription, engraved in marble: "Here were laid the foundations of the Redemption of the human race."

When the magnificent building was concluded, an uninterrupted flow of pilgrims from the confines of Orient and Occident came to venerate the cradle of the Catholic Faith. Kings, princes, the most illustrious personages went reverently, sometimes unshod, to visit that Heaven on earth.

Lamentably, with the passing of the years, the saracens became lords of Palestine. Nazareth fell into their hands, the town where the Most Holy Virgin Mary was dwelling when Archangel Saint Gabriel came on God's behalf to announce to Her the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word. The barbarous muslims respected nothing, but this house was too august, too holy, for the infidels to destroy after having been inhabited by the Son of God and His Divine Mother, and one day, while the saracens were busy demolishing the majestic basilica, they saw the Holy House disappear before their very eyes.

Lord God Almighty, admirable and incomprehensible in His designs, performed the most unheard-of miracle, removing the House of His Divine Mother from its foundations to save it from barbarian savagery.

It was the 10th of May 1291. Some inhabitants on the Adriatic coast, in Dalmatia, today Croatia, former Yugoslavia, went out very early to their farm work. Not far from the sea, between Rijeka (or Fiume) and Tersate – today a district of Rijeka – astonished, they saw a solitary building standing where no house or hut had ever been seen. Overcome by inexplicable emotion, they ran in haste to announce what they had seen.

At the news of this prodigy, an immense multitude gathered from all sides, surrounding the mysterious house and examining it with meticulous curiosity. It measured scarcely ten metres long by some five wide and seven high.

All were surprised to see it standing without foundations and without support on uneven terrain. The peculiarity of its structure and its aspect of remote antiquity caused surprise. Made of stones similar to bricks, material not used locally, showed that it had evidently not been built in their country.

Their surprise increased when they went inside, by the only door on one side, finding it carefully adorned. The roof, painted blue and sowed with golden stars, was crowned by a little bell tower. The walls, close on a half-metre thick, made without rule and without level, are painted with semicircular lines and with vessels of different shapes. At the right hand of the door there is a small window. In front appears an altar of stone and upon it an



ancient cross of wood on which is painted the image of Our Lord Crucified.

To the right of the Altar there is a statue of the Most Holy Virgin, standing, with the Child Jesus in Her arms. The slightly silvery colour of their faces is seen to be a little darkened by time and by the smoke of the candles which must have burnt before these holy images. Mary's head is adorned with a crown of pearls and her hair floats around her neck. Her clothing, golden in colour, is bound by a belt, which in two long bands touch Her virginal feet. A sky blue mantle at the back falling from the shoulders, enhances Her figure.

The Child Jesus has a bearing full of majesty. His hair is parted in the Nazarene style. His dress is a long tunic encircled by a belt. He raises the first fingers of the right hand in the form of a blessing, and in the left holds a globe, symbol of His supreme power over the universe.

To the left of the Altar, a small cupboard set into the wall calls our attention – seemingly to keep the implements of a poor kitchen – and close by, a kind of ancient chimney, ending in a niche and held up by two columns.

Such is the disposition of the mysterious sanctuary.

Where had it come from? What does this unknown room mean? How did it get there? What hands sustain it, without any foundations? What invisible power transported it by night?

Such are the questions that everyone asks himself, and no one can give a satisfactory answer.

The surprise is general. Shortly Bishop Alexander was seen coming who, with firm and sure step and a joyful expression on his face, came forward towards them... A new object of admiration. Everyone knew that for three years, prostrated by dropsy, which the doctors declared incurable, he was unable to take a step, and from day to day they awaited his descent to the tomb full of merits and virtues. His grievous illness had led him to the point that no hope remained of saving his life. All arrangements had been made for the funeral, and all his assistants and faithful considered him as deceased. At that same time they observed that he had risen healthy and robust from bed as if he had never had any such illness. All were in suspense and amazed to see such a wonderful cure: all turned to him asking him the reason, and to make known to them the person who had performed such an extraordinary wonder. Then Bishop Alexander replied in these terms telling what had just happened to him: "Lying in my bed, by then moribund, they announced to me the apparition of this marvellous house. With fervour I invoked the Most Holy Virgin to obtain my health, so as to go and visit it and with you implore Her omnipotent succour... The Most Holy Virgin, taking pity on me and attending to my pious wish, appeared to me resplendent with glory and told me: 'Alexander, given that you have invoked Me, here I am to succour you. Know that the house which has just appeared in this country is the same in which I lived in Nazareth, where I received the visit of the Angel Gabriel, where the Word became incarnate in My womb. You should be for the whole people the indisputable proof of the truth of My words. Recover your health.' The Most Holy Virgin disappeared and I am well." The people, joyful, raised up to Heaven a hymn of thanksgiving, and the saintly Bishop, falling to his knees, made his voice resound in the august sanctuary, to bless his pious Benefactress.

Bishop Alexander's account caused no less admiration to those who heard him than the miracle of his sudden miraculous cure. The whole people of Tersate were witnesses to such a great boon from God. But what admiration and tenderness was theirs on contemplating the house, very ancient and small, in the form of a Chapel, which none of those inhabitants had ever seen in that place! What consolation, on entering, to find inside an altar facing the door with an image of Christ Crucified, and in a niche in the wall an effigy of Mary Most Holy with the Child in Her arms made of cedar, and in the same posture as the Bishop had

explained, to whom it was also revealed that they had been made by Saint Luke! Any Christian who feels in his heart the true sentiments of piety which our sacrosanct religion is capable of producing, is easily persuaded that those happy faithful would have prostrated themselves humbly, kissed that sacred ground a thousand times, and shed abundant tears of thanksgiving and tenderness. Their piety grew considerably when, observing the heavenly home with greater attention, where Mary had so often spent a long time in heavenly conversations with the Lord, they saw at the back a square window, by which they ingenuously supposed that the Angel would have entered to announce to Mary the Incarnation of the Divine Word. At one side of the door, in a corner to the left, they found as well a shelf where they came across a few plates, and some clay bowls in which She took her poor sustenance.

Unspeakable were the love, joy, admiration, compunction, surprise, tears and other like sentiments felt by that happy folk. They gave infinite thanks to God for such a benefit, and published the event throughout the neighbouring regions.

Meanwhile, the news of the prodigious event reached the ears of the governor of Dalmatia, who in turn visited the place, made the most detailed report, and to assure the truth of the event, for a materially undeniable proof, disposed that four commissioners leave immediately for Palestine, with plans and the exact dimensions of the house appearing in Tersate. He ordered them to examine everything themselves, for they should declare under oath: 1st: If the house of the Most Holy Virgin in Nazareth had disappeared and in what way? 2nd: If the foundations remain; 3rd: If its form and dimensions correspond to the house just appeared; 4th: If the materials of the building are the same; 5th: If its construction is identical, so that it be impossible to deny that the foundations remaining in Nazareth and the house they are examining be one single building in two parts.

The four delegates, equally distinguished both by their knowledge and uprightness, arrived in Palestine, headed for the Christians of Nazareth and asked them where the house of the Most Holy Virgin was located. They replied, with tears in their eyes that shortly before it had disappeared, that they could show them the foundations, but no more; that they were unable to understand whether it was by God's power or a sacrilegious crowd that had snatched away their most valued treasure.

Led to the site which the house occupied, they fulfilled their mission. They measured the length, width and thickness of the foundations; they studied the nature of the construction, they fixed the time from the disappearance of the house and its appearance in Dalmatia. They verified everything with complete exactness. They wrote down the results of their investigations, took it to the governor, confirmed them with a solemn oath, and repeated them a hundred times to the whole people.

The event is undeniable. Tersate was the mistress of a sacred reliquary; it had the happiness to possess the Holy House of Nazareth.

Later, three years and seven months had passed since the extraordinary event. The offerings of the faithful had skilfully embellished the wild peak and the perfume of fresh flowers arose with the aroma of fervent prayers up to the throne of the Mother of God. A numerous throng saluted Her repeating the greetings of the Angel, and She poured out copious graces, like a gentle dew, upon those kneeling there to honour Her.

What was the surprise of these pious people to see the Sanctuary of their singular predilection disappear before their very eyes? How to describe the different emotions of dolour and admiration those people felt?

It was the year 1294. On the 10th of December, at sunset, the villagers and farmers retired to their homes. The calm and silence of the first hours of the night were only interrupted by the breeze which rustled the treetops and by the murmur of the streams which ran down the verdant hill. The heavens were festooned with all splendour. Some lighted candles illuminated the religious sanctuary. The faithful, before closing their eyes to seek rest from the day's labours, invoked their good Mother and implored Her blessing.

Suddenly nature herself appeared to be shaken. A singular spectacle left all who witnessed it astonished. The Holy House, the cradle itself of the August Queen, suspended from the hands of the Angels, rose up into the air, and passing through space, crossed the Adriatic Sea and then reposed in Italy, amid a laurel wood, some ten kilometres from the city of Recanati, in Marcas.

There, as in Bethlehem, the first to be favoured by the Lord were shepherds. Accustomed to pasture their flocks in the shelter of the foliage which the robust trees offer, in the distance they saw an extraordinary light, brilliant, which they were unable to explain, and felt at the same time the most lively desire to go up and discover the cause. They were full of admiration to discover that the brilliance, like sunbeams, came from an old house they saw for the first time in that remote place, where no house had ever been built.

While farm workers from all parts came at the novelty of the prodigy and discussed it interchanging a thousand conjectures, one of them assured having seen this unknown haven from afar when, borne through the air, it advanced towards the seashore. They encouraged each other to go inside, since they imagined, with reason, that they would find something surprising there. And convinced of the prodigy, full of profound veneration, they spent the entire night in the sacred place.

As dawn broke they made their way to the town, impatient to give the extraordinary news to their employers. They, on hearing the simplicity of the account, and seeing the amazement the shepherds showed in their uniform affirmations, accompanied the villagers, unable to convince themselves of the truth of an event which seemed incredible. They entered the wood and, arriving at the spot indicated, examined it all closely.

The same admiration, the same amazement as had been shown by the inhabitants of Tersate. The attentive consideration of this singular building, the novelty of its apparition, its antiquity, its structure, its ornamentation, its stability on uneven ground, without support or foundation, the little altar, the wooden cross, the statue of the Most Holy Virgin, all surprised them so that gazing at each other, transported by joy, accompanied by fear, sighs and tears, exclaimed out loud: "The hand of God is here! This little habitation must have something great, supernatural, divine!"

It was not possible for them to understand in what manner and for what purpose it had been transported there.

The Most Holy Virgin did not delay long in manifesting it to them. In the same way She had deigned to instruct Bishop Alexander, She appeared to Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, one of the greatest saints of the Augustinian Order, and to Brother Paul, a solitary who lived in a rustic hermitage formed by nature between the slopes of a hill, and gave them to know that the house was the same as that of Nazareth brought by the ministry of the Angels.

The noise of the miracle spread with great rapidity. In all parts the laurel wood and the Holy House of Nazareth were spoken of. Day and night, at all hours, the roads were full of people. Fellow countrymen and foreigners of all ages, sexes and conditions, came to contemplate the prodigy and offer Mary their fervent homage of veneration and love.

Meanwhile the enemy of the human race, roaring with fury on seeing such immense good being wrought, made great efforts to destroy the devotion of the faithful.

The sanctuary was in the middle of the wood, about three kilometres from the sea. To reach it there were only tortuous, narrow and difficult tracks. Some impious and heartless men, aroused by greed for gain and seduced by the devil, hid in the area and laid constant traps for the pious pilgrims.

Fear of the bandits and criminals hindered the faithful from making their visits and daily the number of visitors to the sacred sanctuary diminished... But this sad circumstance seems to have been disposed by Heaven to work new prodigies. In effect, eight months after being found there, the Holy House disappeared from the wood and went to settle on a hill of Recanati, almost two kilometres from the place it had occupied.

Two brothers, owners of that hill, were those who most celebrated the event. But in a short time, seeing the altar and the walls of the sanctuary covered with costly presents and votive offerings which Christian piety ceaselessly deposited, a sacrilegious greed awoke in their hearts. In their criminal purpose, they came little short of staining the ground with fratricidal blood.

But God, who so detests robbery, sacrileges and fraternal clashes, as also the murders committed in the wood, transported the home of His Divine Mother away from that property and placed it on a more beautiful hill, a gunshot from the first, in Loreto, in the middle of a street, where it is found from 1296 up to the present, under the cupola of the church built there.



It seems that by the different translations, God wished to make available such proof of this event as to render it impossible to place in doubt. In effect, with public attention focused on such an unheard-of prodigy, new and meticulous investigations were begun. By papal disposition, a celebrated commission, composed of sixteen delegates, visited Dalmatia and Palestine to clarify the truth of events.

The result was the same as that of five years previously. The identity is perfect, the testimony sworn by the commission is unanimous.

To the demonstrations of science, Heaven added others more visible and palpable. Besides the perpetual prodigy of the apparition and translation of the sanctuary, besides the cure of Bishop Alexander and the revelation to Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and to the humble hermit, patent miracles, public and repeated, confirm the wonderful event. The spirit of God was visibly displayed, and the multitudes, in great processions, arrived there intoning canticles and unfurling numerous banners.

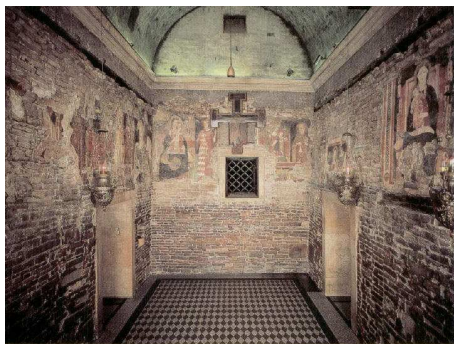
The faith of Christians grew immensely. All Europe was moved. Peoples and kings, emperors and pontiffs went to the Sanctuary of Mary Immaculate and deposited costly offerings. The uninterrupted flow of devout pilgrims, who from East and West headed for Nazareth, now changed course, and came to chant hymns of glory on the holy hill of Loreto.

In short, the Holy House was translated from Nazareth to Tersate, today a district of Rijeka in Croatia, on the 10th of May 1291; from Tersate to the Recanati wood, pertaining to Marcas, Italy, on the 10th of December 1294; from the wood to the Recanati hill 8 months later, and from there to this Loreto hill, very close by, in 1296. Each of these four translations counts with numerous eyewitnesses “rigorously controlled by the local Bishops of the time, who gave canonical pronouncements of veracity in official documents.” In proximate times, different churches authorized by their respective Bishops were constructed and consecrated to these events: Fiume, Ancona, Recanati, Macerata and Naples, among others.

Pontifical approvals followed at once: Saint Nicholas IV in 1292 and Saint Boniface VIII in 1294. And they have not ceased down to our days, firstly with the liturgical commemoration of the miracle, which was celebrated on the 10th of December.

There is even a confirmation in a revelation received by Saint Catherine of Bologna on the 25th of March 1440, which affirms that it was revealed to her by the Lord that the Holy House “was transported by a choir of Angels”, first to Dalmatia and then to Loreto.

Saint Clement VII in the XVI century, to assure the reality and conformity of events, sent three persons of all his confidence, as deeply learned as of recognized integrity, to Nazareth, who confirmed that the chamber translated by the Angels on four different occasions was only part of the house where the Most Holy Virgin dwelt and where she received the greeting of the Angel Gabriel. It was observed that the dimensions of the chamber were the same as those of the place where it had been before, and authorized mineralogists stated that the stones which composed the edifice of Our Lady of Loreto were exactly of the same kind as



those of the Nazareth house.

Particularly expressive is the Bull *Inter Omnia* of the 26th of August 1852, in which Pope Saint Pius IX states as proven that “in Loreto is venerated the House of Nazareth, so dear to God’s Heart, constructed in Galilee and later separated from its base and by the power of God transported far away, across the seas, first to Dalmatia (in present-day Croatia) and then to Italy.” As Saint Pius IX himself indicates, “that revered and most august House, consecrated by the divine Mysteries, brilliant from countless miracles,

honoured by the influx of people, has spread widely through the Universal Church the glory of its name and constitutes an object of worship for all nations and for all human races.” This consideration as an ‘object of worship’ confirms the Holy House’s condition as a relic.

Despite all these facts, and owing to satanic modernism, in the twentieth century, including in Catholic circles, hypotheses were diffused which questioned or mitigated the supernatural and miraculous character of the presence of the House of Nazareth in Loreto.

With respect to a human removal, which would imply the dismantling in Nazareth of the walls of the Holy House into individual stone blocks and subsequent assembly in four different locations on the Adriatic Coast, after covering more than 3000 kilometres over land and sea, are altogether impossible from the ‘temporal’ or natural point of view.

Added testimony is the coincidence of verified dates of the departure from Nazareth (9th of May 1291) and arrival at Tersate (10th of May 1291), as indicated in a plaque of the era. In one single night, by human means, there is no way of dismantling such a construction, transporting the house, or parts of it, covering almost 3000 kilometres from one place to the other and assembling it again.

It would also be impossible for an operation of disassembly and assembly realized in five different locations, in Nazareth, in Croatia and in Italy. In reality, the chemical analysis of the mortar, in the points where it actually joins the stones, presents special chemical characteristics, proper to the Nazareth area, and a uniformity of the material of the walls which excludes any possibility of this hypothetical disassembly and assembly of the stone walls. The mortar which joins the stones is uniform at every point and is constituted by hydrated calcium sulphate (‘plaster’) mixed with wood carbon dust, according to a technique of the era known in Palestine two thousand years ago, but never utilized in Italy.

Consequently the Holy House was never ‘taken apart’ in blocks, but arrived at Loreto, after other previously mysterious translations with the stones united by the same mortar utilized more than two thousand years ago in Nazareth, just as it appears today. The final location in a Loreto street, where it is still found, is also humanly impossible, as all the archaeologists and architects who over the centuries have examined the subsoil of the Holy House and the street in which it came to rest.

The architect Joseph Sacconi (1854-1905) declares, for example, that he had stated that, ‘the Holy House, on one side, is supported over the extremity of an ancient street and, on the other side it is suspended over an adjacent hole’. He stated, besides, that without entering into historical or religious questions, it must be acknowledged that the Holy House could not have been constructed, just as it is, in the place where it is to be found.

A relevant fact in this respect, and which shows that the three Holy Walls ‘rested’ on the street and were not reconstructed, is the peculiarity that a thorny shrub there was on the roadside at the moment of impact remained crushed in place.

Another eminent architect, Frederic Mannucci (1848-1935), whom the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XV entrusted to examine the foundations of the Holy House on the occasion of

the renovation of the floor following the 1921 fire, wrote peremptorily affirming in his 1923 report, that it is absurd even to think that it could be transported 'by mechanical means'; he added that it is, 'a surprising and extraordinary fact that the edifice of the Holy House, even without using any cement and being located on a terrain without consistency, loose and overloaded, though partially, by the weight of the vault constructed in place of a roof, remains unaltered, without yielding in the very least and without any cracks in the walls. Architect Mannucci drew the following conclusions: 1) The walls of the Holy House of Loreto are formed by stones from Palestine joined by the mortar utilized in that region. 2) It is absurd to consider transport by mechanical means. 3) The idea of the Holy House being constructed in the place where it is found opposes all the norms of construction and the laws of physics themselves.

Consequently, if the Holy House of Nazareth cannot have been 'transported' whole and entire by men, it can only have been transported by miraculous means thanks to the power of Divine Omnipotence, by way of angelic ministry, as tradition has always borne witness and transmitted, and as approved as veridical by all the Sovereign Pontiffs for seven centuries, from the first translation down to the present time. Reason allows us no room for doubt, then: without a single fact incompatible with the Translation, and with numerous facts in favour, a supernatural and miraculous event can be spoken of, completely lacking any credible purely human explanation; and of Loreto is an indispensable place of pilgrimage as long as the See of the Church was in Rome, with the security of contemplating the personal ambience of the Most Holy Virgin.

The Holy House is considered among the most sacred places in the world. Almost one century before the Holy House was translated there, Saint Francis of Assisi had prophesied that one day Loreto would be called the most sacred place in the world, and therefore they should open a house there.

Many Saints, Blessèd and Popes have visited this house. Among them: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, on her way to ask permission from the Pope to enter Carmel at the age of 15, visited the Holy House; Saint Alphonse Mary de Liguori had the consolation of spending three days there; Saint Ignatius of Loyola visited it with Saint Francis Xavier, who said that while he offered the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, the Most Holy Virgin Mary infused into him that marvellous zeal and strength he had to evangelize Orient.

Pope Saint Pius II and Saint Francis Borgia were cured of their illnesses on approaching the Holy House. Saint Charles Borromeo visited it with frequency, and covered eighty kilometres on foot, reciting the whole way so as to spend the night in prayer; next he celebrated Pontifical Mass and preached with great fervour on the Holy House. Saint Luis Gonzaga spent sweet hours in prayer there; the great preacher Saint Jacob de la Marca, seriously ill, had recourse to the Virgin, and while saying Mass in the Holy House, She appeared and told him to ask Her for some other favour, as She had just restored his health. Saint Stanislaus Kostka, while praying in the Holy House, felt inflamed with such ardent devotion that he later had to calm the intense heat of his heart with cold water. Saint Francis de Sales, after going on foot more than 250 kilometres from Rome to Loreto, was deeply moved, inundated with pious affects on entering the House of the Virgin and there making his vow of celibacy. Saint Benedict Joseph Labré visited it with such frequency that they called him the Saint of Loreto; he never had his fill of venerating it and kissing its walls; and thus blazed up ever more in love for the Holy Mother of God. Saint Louis Mary of Montfort arrived on foot, crossing the mountains from France, and he was piously comforted during his fifteen days' stay in Loreto, where he was hardly able to make up his mind to leave the Holy House of Nazareth. Saint Anthony Grassi, by then a Priest, was struck by lightning before the Holy House and, though his underclothing was scorched, the following day he felt in good health and unexpectedly cured of his bad digestion; this Saint used to stay up to six consecutive hours praying in the House up till the last year of his life.



Saint Peter Canisius wrote an erudite history with convincing proofs of the truth of the translation of the Holy House, victoriously refuting the blasphemous attacks of the Lutherans. Other Catholic authorities have also wisely proven this translation with convincing reasons, and have victoriously refuted the Protestants who have denied it, such as the Calvinists who have called this Holy House the 'idol of Loreto'. Other highly respectable authors refer to the miracle which was confirmed by many witnesses, and cited by Pope Saint Benedict XIV. He says: "Heretics themselves who enter the Holy Building are converted, and with all their might condemn the impiety of those who deny the miracle."

Each year many pilgrims went to visit the Holy House, to see the home where the Most Holy Virgin Mary lived, and to receive the graces which God gave them. It was a tradition to pray the

Holy Rosary kneeling around the House, imploring the powerful intercession of the Most Holy Virgin. In Loreto is seen and venerated with the greatest respect the wooden cup used by the Most Holy Virgin when She lived in Nazareth, a truly miraculous cup.

As for the devotees resident in Tersate, in Yugoslavia, they built a small church in the place where the House had stood, a replica of it, and wrote the following inscription: "The Holy House of the Virgin Mary came from Nazareth on the 10th of May 1291, and stayed until the 10th of December 1294." For centuries the faithful of Croatia continued venerating Our Lady in the replica of the Holy House and frequently went on pilgrimage to Loreto, imploring Mary Most Holy tearfully to return the House to them. Such was their devotion that Pope Saint Urban V sent an image of Our Lady to the people of Tersate in 1367; this image, it is believed, was sculptured by Saint Luke.

God has performed His wonder, time has respected it. A monumental Basilica, in the form of a Latin Cross, in its centre holds one of the most venerable sanctuaries in the world. Bas-reliefs in Carrara marble, sculptured by the most skilful artists, cover the outside walls and the slender cupola of the temple serves as a majestic coronation. Sadly, the ancient image of the Virgin venerated in the Holy House was destroyed in a fire in 1921, but was soon replaced by the actual image.

The Holy House of Mary Most Holy is mentioned several times in the Messages of Palmar: On Thursday the 25th of May 1978, by order of Padre Pio, the then Father Ferdinand arrived at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Loreto, Italy, at about 2.30 in the afternoon. At about 5 in the evening he celebrated the Tridentine Mass in the House of the Virgin, on the Altar before the image of Our Lady of Loreto. The Most Holy Virgin appeared to Bishop Father Ferdinand and gave him the following message: "My dear sons: welcome to this Home of Mine, which is yours as well. I want you always to keep in mind this Home of Mine, so that you feel protected. However, reflect! Where is My Home right now? My Home is that in which the Will of God is done. Bricks are not the important thing. The important thing is the mystery of saying 'Fiat', always and at every moment. The important thing is to comply with God's Will. Specific walls are not the important thing, if inside those walls this Mother's spirit does not live on. That is why I ask you: Which Home is My true one? I Myself will answer: My Home is that in which I can reign. I ask you: where do I reign? Only in El Palmar do I find My Reign. Therefore My Home is in El Palmar de Troya. You think, what joy! I have been in the Virgin's Home in Loreto, I have touched its walls! But you should think and say: what joy, I am in El Palmar, where the Queen of Heaven and earth often comes down as Mother and Mistress to teach us little infants! And I tell you: in this Home of Mine, in Loreto, Christ no longer reigns. How many offences He receives! How many unworthy Communions! How much adulteration and the like! So My true Home can only be that in which Christ reigns; for I always lived to do God's Will. How often you have a good and

natural desire to go to the Holy Land! But you forget that El Palmar de Troya is Holy Land: a Place where the Lord sets His blessed Feet with great frequency. How many people living far from El Palmar have a deep desire to visit the Place, and cannot! You have the happiness of having El Palmar de Troya within reach. The Great Cathedral of El Palmar de Troya must needs surpass all others. Where there's a will there's a way. Christ is the great Banker. It is evident that the Place great in Doctrine, in spirituality, in Worship, in penance, the Place which harbours the Religious Order dearest to the Lord, should have a majestic Cathedral, the admiration of the world. And I remind you of Christ's words: Ask and you shall receive! Knock, and it shall be opened to you! So, off then, ask and knock. The Heavenly Bank has no closing hours. And I, your Mother, am a good Secretary to the Divine Banker. Great days are approaching for Palmar. Palmar will be the sure refuge for all those who want to be faithful to Christ. I bless you." This confirms



the words of Saint Alphonsus Mary: "Oh! With what tender sentiments the pilgrims visit the holy Church of Loreto, places in the Holy Land, the stable of Bethlehem, Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre, where Christ was born, died and was buried!... Well how much greater should our love be on finding ourselves in Church in the presence of Jesus Christ Himself, in the Most Blessed Sacrament! Saint John of Ávila used to say that for him there was no sanctuary of greater devotion and consolation than a Church where Sacramented Jesus stayed."

In July 1980, Pope Saint Gregory XVII again went to Loreto, where in the great Basilica he visited the 'House of the Virgin', and there prayed before the Sacred Image of Our Lady of Loreto.

On Wednesday the 4th of July 1979, in his journey to Israel, Pope Saint Gregory XVII and those accompanying him reached the town of Nazareth, some 35 kilometres from Haifa. Providentially they arrived at the door of the Church of the Annunciation at 12 in the morning, when the clock was sounding the chimes for the Angelus. They visited the Church of the Annunciation, where is found the Cave in which the Virgin Mary received the announcement from the Angel and the Word became incarnate in Her Most Pure Womb. This Cave and some other additions form part of the House of the Virgin, of which the front part was translated by the Angels to Loreto, Italy. Some 200 metres towards the north of the Cave of the Annunciation, they visited the House of Nazareth or House of Saint Joseph or of the Nutrition, which is where the Holy Family lived after the Annunciation until the journey to Bethlehem for Jesus' Birth, save for the Visitation, and then after the return from Egypt, until the Lord was thirty years of age. There is found Saint Joseph's workshop. Inside the Cave of the Annunciation the Most Holy Virgin appeared to the Holy Father, smiling brightly. The basilica constructed by the Franciscans over these holy places is a sorry sight, modern, progressivist, without images and void of spirituality.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face describes her visit to Loreto in November 1887: "There were many interesting details I could give on every city and on the thousand incidents of our journey, but this would be never-ending, so I shall only mention the most important. I was delighted to set out for Loreto. I am not surprised that the Most Holy Virgin chose to transport Her blessed house to this place. There, peace, happiness and poverty reign absolutely as sovereigns. Everything is simple and primitive. The women have kept their colourful Italian dress, and have not adopted Paris fashions, as other cities have. In a word, Loreto enthralled me! And what can I say of the Holy House? It touched me deeply to find myself under the same roof as Mary Most Holy, to contemplate the walls between which the Incarnation of the Divine Word was wrought, where Mary said: 'Behold the Slave of the Lord, be it done in Me according to Your word', and conceived Jesus by the action and grace of the Holy Ghost, and bore Him in Her virginal womb. I visited the little

room where the Angel appeared to the Most Holy Virgin. I put my rosary in the Child Jesus' little bowl. What marvellous memories! But our greatest joy was to receive the same Jesus Himself in His house and become His living temple in the very place which He had honoured by His presence. It is the custom in Italy to reserve the Most Blessed Sacrament in the churches only on one altar, and only there can one receive Communion. This altar is situated in the same basilica where the Holy House is enclosed like a precious diamond in a white marble case. We didn't like this, for we wanted to receive Communion, not in the case, but in the diamond itself. Papa with his habitual assurance did like everyone else, but Celine and I went to look for a Priest who accompanied us everywhere and who at that precise moment was making ready to celebrate Holy Mass, by a special privilege, in the Holy House. He asked for two small hosts, which he consecrated. So you will understand, dear Mother, what a delight it was for us both to receive Holy Communion together in that Blessed House. It was complete celestial happiness which cannot be expressed in words. What will it be like, then, when we receive Communion in the celestial dwelling place of the King of the Heavens?, where there will be no end to our happiness, nor will there be the sadness of parting, nor in order to keep a souvenir will we need furtively to scrape the walls sanctified by the divine presence, for His house will be ours for all eternity. God doesn't want to give us His earthly home; He is happy to show it to us to make us love poverty and the hidden life. What He has reserved for us is His own palace of glory, where we will no longer see Him hidden under the appearance of a child or of a white host, but just as He is in the splendour of His infinite glory!"

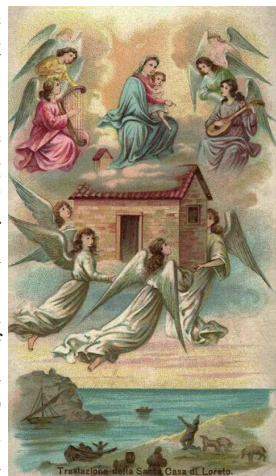
Anecdotes and privileges related to the Holy House of Loreto:

The time arrived when multitudes of pilgrims came to this sanctuary, and Pope Saint Clement VII, in the XVI century, ordered the original door to be closed and three doors to be made, as there had been only one door and people quarrelled to enter and leave. There was only one problem: no one had asked permission of the Virgin Mary for the alterations. When the architect raised his hammer to start, his hand withered and he began to tremble. He left Loreto at once and no one else wanted to do the work. Some time later a cleric called Ventura Barino accepted the job, but first of all he knelt and prayed to the Virgin, saying that it wasn't his fault, rather it was the Pope's order, that if She was upset She should act against the Pope and not against him. The cleric was able to finish the job. The people in Loreto also decided to protect the Holy House with a brick wall, but after they had finished the wall, it separated from the house. That is why there is a space between the Holy House and the wall they constructed.

Another account relates that a Bishop from Portugal visited the Holy House and wanted to take a stone away with him in order to construct a church in honour of the Virgin of Loreto. The Pope gave him permission and the bishop sent his secretary to take out a stone for him. The bishop fell ill all of a sudden and when his secretary arrived he was almost dead. The Bishop asked some Sisters to pray for him, and some days later received this message: "Our Lady says that if the bishop wishes to recover, he should give the Virgin back what he has taken away." The secretary and the bishop were astonished at this, since no one else knew about the stone from the Holy House. The secretary went back to Loreto with the stone immediately and when he returned, the bishop was quite well. For this reason, for centuries, the Popes have forbidden, under pain of excommunication, the removal of any part of the Holy House.

Trust in Mary is wholly justified. A convoy of ten or twelve ships sailing to Venice was sailing on the high seas on the eve of a feast of the Most Holy Virgin, and though they were many miles distant from the point where the church of Our Lady of Loreto is to be found, the whole crew displayed a lively desire to arrive the following day to hear Mass. The skipper was opposed fearing an attack by turkish corsairs, but a sailor called Anthony, full of confidence in the Most Holy Virgin, said that he, with the protection of the Virgin Mary,

pledged himself to guard the convoy. He inspired such confidence in the rest, including in the chief, that the latter consented, and at dawn the following day they all jumped ashore except for Anthony. A short while later he observed some ships with high gunwales heading close at top sail, and did not take long in recognizing the turks, who by moments were approaching with the aim of seizing the ships entrusted to his care. In that conflict, Anthony commended himself to the Most Holy Virgin with all the fervour he could and, reminding Her that his companions had abandoned everything for the holy purpose of honouring Her in Her sanctuary. He took up position on the most exposed ship, and taking up an axe he lay down behind the gunwale, which is the outside edge of the ship. Shortly afterwards he felt a movement of the ship, and seeing that it was a turk who had grasped the gunwale, he rose up and, kneeling, with an axe blow cut off the man's hand, which fell onto the deck. The turk gave a frightful scream which infused dread into all his companions. They said that it was a trap that had been set, that those ships were full of armed men hidden to take them by surprise, and at these words they fled in terror. Anthony then raised his head and, seeing himself free with his ships gave thanks to his powerful Liberatrix for such a notable favour. His companions, who were returning from Loreto, seeing the fleet sailing away did not doubt that Anthony and his ships had been captured by the turks; but what was their surprise on seeing Anthony who, blandishing his axe from which the turk's hand was dangling, told them of the event! All joined together in chanting the Litany of the Most Holy Virgin in thanksgiving for such a brilliant victory.



Let us have confidence in Mary. Bishop Louis-Gaston de Segur writes: In 1843 I had the happiness of striking up a friendship in Rome with a holy and admirable Priest named Don Biaggio. He had just succeeded Saint Gaspar of the Most Precious Blood as Superior of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Saint Gaspar, the venerable Founder, in the world Gaspar Melchor Balthassar del Búfalo (having been born on the feast of these three holy Kings), had died in 1837 following a life, not only apostolic and holy, but also brilliant for his miracles.

Among many other admirable prodigies which Don Biaggio related to me, of which he had been eyewitness and at times actor and fortunate instrument, he related to me the following one which will doubtless arouse the interest of pious readers. I leave Don Biaggio to speak and, without adding or taking away almost anything, transcribe his own words.

"I was aged twenty-three, it was in 1814. Pius VII had just returned from exile and had made his triumphal entry into Rome. From my childhood I had wanted to be a priest, but study and work had noticeably affected my health. Yet I was able to take the first steps towards the sanctuary; I was ordained Deacon. My chest, where my illness was rooted, finally affected me completely, fever no longer left me, and the doctors showed serious fears...

I had no illusions about the state of my health, ever poorer, and at the probability of a premature end, I asked and obtained the grace to be ordained Priest one year prior to the canonical age. The difficulties of the examination and the preparatory exercises for ordination exhausted the little strength I had left; I fell grievously ill; and the doctors, who were called in for consultation, declared, after attentive and thorough examination, that I had reached the third grade of pulmonary consumption or incurable tuberculosis, and that consequently I had to sort out my affairs of body and soul without delay.

I resolved to end my days in Loreto, within sight of the Most Holy Virgin, in the shadow of the Holy House. The journey was gruelling; but for a dying man it matters little to suffer a little more or a little less... On arriving at Loreto, I dragged myself as best I could to the Holy House, and prayed with fervour to Mary not to forsake me in this dreadful crisis.

I was there for a few days and my illness went on worsening. One morning, feeling stronger than usual, I went early to the blessed sanctuary of Mary Most Holy. As usual, I knelt for a moment leaning on a wall... A young Priest then came to kneel at my side, whom I did not know nor had ever seen in my life. We were alone, or almost alone. That Priest began to say, gazing at the miraculous Lady and as though designating me: 'It is well for this one to go on the mission.' I looked at him, it was evident that my neighbour was speaking of me. As I was still kneeling, I replied: 'I would do so willingly if I could... but I have not come here to preach, I am consumptive; I have come just to die.' 'Bah!' retorted the Priest with a sweet smile, 'let us have confidence in Mary!' and added: 'pray a Hail Mary with me.' I prayed the angelic greeting without understanding what it all meant... When we had concluded, Saint Gaspar (for it was him), rose up, made a sign for me to follow him, and together we left the Holy House. In silence we crossed the great Basilica, in which the Holy House of Nazareth is mounted centrally, like a relic; and having arrived at the entrance, Father del Búfalo turned to me with a grave expression and full of a kind of heavenly look... He told me that the Holy Father had just confided to him the mission of tirelessly preaching missions in Las Marcas, so as to erase the fatal traces left there by the revolution, voltairianism, and foreign occupation, and had wished to start at Loreto so that the Most Holy Virgin might take an interest in the task, but was alone and needed companions. 'You will come with me', he added with a peculiar tone of authority; 'tomorrow we will make a start on the mission; you will preach at such-and-such a time, and I at another,' and as he went along, organized the order of exercises. It seemed to me that I was dreaming. I had felt no bodily pain either during the Hail Mary or afterwards.

Captivated by an unknown force and with absolute confidence in Mary, who can obtain all from Her Divine Son, I made no objection, and the following day in the morning, by the help of God and of the Most Holy Virgin, together with that servant of Jesus Christ, I began a series of missions which lasted almost without interruption for twenty-three or twenty-four years, up till his happy death. From that day on I have never been ill, my chest has given me no more pain."

Don Biaggio in turn died a few years later, in 1845, in holiness. I heard from his own mouth the preceding account. Venerable Gaspar del Búfalo, said Don Biaggio, performed the greatest miracles with these simple words: "Let us have confidence in Mary."

Pilgrimage to Mary's Sanctuary in Loreto. Saint Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandía, Viceroy of Catalonia, intimate friend of Emperor Charles V, and then a humble Religious, for his virtues merited to be raised to the generalship of the Jesuits. This Saint was highly devoted to the Virgin of Loreto, and when General of the Company, then very ill in Rome, lovingly recalled that Sanctuary often. Rapt up in ecstasy, from the lips of the Most Holy Virgin he heard that he would be healed there, if he visited Her; and therefore could undertake the journey, though seeming madness to human prudence. Her humble servant obeyed Mary's proposal, and made ready to leave. All the Jesuits, the doctors and some Cardinals, his friends, unanimously opposed his leaving. He, not wishing to reveal the vision nor the heavenly order he had received, made a vow to go, and thus to those opposed replied that he was obliged to fulfil his promise though he were to die on the way, since he had offered that up. Brought down in the arms of the Jesuits, his sons, he was settled into a litter. At every moment on his way to the Sanctuary, he visibly worsened, and with reason a fatal outcome was feared at any moment on the journey. When he reached the hill from which the Sanctuary could be spied, the Saint leant his head out of the litter's opening with great difficulty and sent a loving greeting to his Mother and Mistress of Loreto. He at once felt better, and arriving at the Sanctuary, his biographer, Cardinal Cienfuegos, affirmed that his health was restored and with a vigour never before experienced.

Monarchs thrown out of their states return to occupy their thrones thanks to the powerful invocation of Mary's Name. In the year 1683, the turks, arrogant after the triumphs they had

won in the German empire, formed the project of extending their conquests to the other side of the Danube and the Rhine, thereby threatening the whole of Christendom. They came and set siege to Vienna with an army of two hundred thousand men. The alarm was so general that the inhabitants abandoned their homes and took flight in all directions, and emperor Leopold I, lacking sufficient strength to resist the Ottoman army, felt forced to leave Vienna hurriedly at the moment when the enemy formalized the siege on the opposing side. On the eve of the Assumption, the turks opened a trench, advancing with incredible speed. For greater misfortune fire broke out in the church of the Scots and spread to the arsenal, but by a special protection of the Most Holy Virgin, the fire was kept under control for the time necessary to remove the gunpowder and munitions. Such a notable favour from the Mother of God revived the courage of the besieged, and though the continuous volleys from the besiegers and the bombs they launched destroyed buildings and sowed death and desolation everywhere, not on this account did the inhabitants cease to attend the churches to implore divine succour day and night, nor did the preachers cease to exhort the faithful to place all their confidence in Her powerful intercession. On the 31st of August the turks were so far advanced in their siege works that the besieged and the besiegers often battled in the moats, using the posts from the palisades. Vienna, bastion of Christendom, had almost become ashes when on the feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin, the Christians having redoubled their prayers and their devotions, as by a miracle received a trustworthy report that they would soon be given the help they were awaiting and which they were already doubting. In effect, the following morning, second day of the octave of the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the whole Kalemberg mountain was covered by allied troops: it was the great Sobieski, king of Poland, at the head of an army, in truth few in number but strong by the help of God. This King arrived on the 12th at the Chapel of Saint Leopold with Prince Charles of Lorraine; there they heard Mass which the King himself chose to serve kneeling and with arms outstretched whenever he did not have to attend to the Priest. Afterwards he communed, and placed himself and his whole army under the protection of the Most Holy Virgin. After his whole army had received the blessing given in the name of the Holy Father, the pious King arose and said: "Let us march now under the protection of the Mother of God." When the small Christian army observed from the mountain heights the countless troops of the infidels, they understood that victory could only be granted to them from Heaven, and effectively so it happened. After a violent attack, the Khan of the tartars took to flight, into which the grand vizier was also drawn despite himself who, blind with rage, left behind all his baggage, munitions in stores and arms, artillery, which amounted to 180 pieces, 10,000 dead, and their great banner. John Sobieski entered Vienna with the emperor Leopold, himself intoning the Te Deum, and from then on ever bore an image of Our Lady of Loreto, miraculously found, and two angels sustaining a crown placed on the Virgin's head, having in their hands a parchment on which these words were to be read: "By this image of Mary I will overcome."



The Carmelite Scapular

In the Calling which We, in 2017, made for the July Pilgrimage, We explained the history of the gift of the Scapular by our Mother, the Virgin of Carmel, to Saint Simon Stock in 1251, telling him: "By this garment My children and My servants are to be known." Given its importance, We now repeat this:

Let us remember that this dear Feast of the 16th of July is the anniversary of the foundation of the Order of Mount Carmel by the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Her apparition to the

Prophet Saint Elias on the 16th of July in the year 4280 of Creation. The Order of Mount Carmel is the first Religious Order and Mother of all other Orders. It was founded by the direct intervention of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Her sublime apparition to the Prophet Saint Elias, who is Father Founder of the Carmelite Religious Order. The other Religious Orders there have been in the Church are therefore daughters of the Order of Mount Carmel, Mother and Model of them all.

The Carmelite Order was established to honour the Mother of God; founded in times of great impiety, to be a stronghold for faithful souls to love God sincerely, to conserve holy traditions and the true Faith. Notable is the Carmelite Order's implacable zeal in defence of God's rights, of doctrinal integrity and of observance of the Law, besides the Order's zeal for the salvation of souls. At that time the Prophet's burning zeal was aroused by the great apostasy rampant in those times; for men, turning their backs on God, obstinately trampled underfoot the Commandments of Divine Law, abandoning themselves to idolatry and other abominable vices, so that Saint Elias cried out: "I burn with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts, because the majority of those from the Kingdom of Samaria have abandoned You, and live with their backs turned to You; for they have destroyed Your altars, put to the sword many of Your prophets, and they even seek me to take my life." On that same day of the Foundation, Saint Elias alone, with divine help, stood up to the four hundred and fifty prophets of the idol Baal, demonstrated to them that the Lord is the true God, and executed them.

In these apocalyptic times, we Carmelites of the Holy Face are the disciples and successors of the Prophet Saint Elias, our Father Founder, and we should cry out together with him: "I burn with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts". In the sight of those who still see, it is evident that idolatry and every kind of corruption dominate imperiously over the whole face of the earth in a quite uncontrollable manner, as man's aberrations grow beyond measure, backed up besides by wicked laws. Only God can put an end to the reigning licentiousness and anarchy, and He will do so by letting the rigours of His Infinite Justice fall upon corrupt mankind.

In the pamphlet "Where is the True Church?", you have read about how a horde of camouflaged enemies infiltrated the Church and carried out their diabolical "masterplan", and how there were many who gave warnings about their schemes. Good Christians, however, failed to open their eyes in time, lacking as they did that zeal for the Lord God of Hosts. The first step in the plan consisted in depriving people of external things, saying that they were "of no importance", that they offended the sensibilities of their "separated brethren", the non-catholics. And they succeeded in having priests and nuns set aside their soutanes and habits. All these external things "of no importance" were testimony to lives constantly led close to God, lives revolving about Christ and the Virgin, and that was the first thing to be done away with, because those habits bore witness to lives given up to God. Every Nun's habit in the street was a living cry from a life given up for love of God, it was a silent but constant cry that God and His Church exist in our century, and that so many people were ready to sacrifice their one and only life for the love of Christ. The first step in the plan was to say that habits were outdated; that the habit was a barrier that separated protestant "brethren" from the Catholics. They had great success, for nuns and priests were no longer to be seen either on the streets or anywhere else. That was the first part of the plan; the final part was to have them cease to exist for good, in order that people might forget the figure of the Priest and of the Nun; by not seeing them, youth would be ignorant of their existence, and thus it wouldn't occur to anyone even to think of becoming a Priest or a Nun. The figures of the man and the woman who sacrifice their whole lives for Christ would cease to exist.

Besides the attack on habits, there was also a plan to have people cease to use Medals, Scapulars, Rosaries, and so forth. The plan considered all this as "highly important", because these things which appear unimportant were the things which breathed love for God, for Christ and for the Virgin, who had to be dethroned from society. As for the scapular and

medals, it was easy, the infiltrators said: insist that they are things for the sanctimonious, external things, which “had no importance”, but which offended the ideas of protestant “brethren”; so that it would be better to leave them aside, not to use them, and thus protestants would approach the Church more readily. More than thirty Popes have recommended the scapular of Carmel, have used it, and have propagated it with the most beautiful words that human vocabulary allows. Hundreds of thousands of Priests and Bishops have ardently recommended it for seven centuries, and millions of Catholics have used it. And, suddenly, no one spoke of it; one went to a church to get a scapular and there were none, nor did they trouble to make them. As though by magic there were no scapulars; as though they were worthless, as though they were only for sanctimonious people. It seems that the infiltrators were really successful as regards the scapular. And nonetheless, the scapular continues to be Our Mother’s basic weapon, the loving caress of the Virgin for Her children. “Its very nobility of origin”, said Pope Saint Leo XIII, “its venerable antiquity, its extraordinary propagation, as likewise the laudable effects of piety obtained through it, and remarkable miracles wrought by its virtue, all recommend it with the greatest earnestness.”



In contrast to the apostate roman church, Palmarian Holy Church stands out for ever having maintained the Church’s Holy Tradition and those many practices which lead to sanctity, among them the use of the Holy Scapular. Such practices are necessary, for the Christian should lead a life wholly in accord with his religious convictions and beliefs.

The Holy Scapular of the Holy Face is of great importance, since the Catechism teaches that “the Scapular of the Holy Face is a sure pledge of salvation”, that it “was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the apparitions at El Palmar de Troya”, and that “all Palmarian faithful should wear internally the Scapular of the Holy Face, as likewise externally at worship.”

We repeat the words of the Most Holy Virgin Mary when, in a Message in 1973, She made a calling for the Feastday of the 16th of July: “I call you all to come to this Sacred Place, all of you who can, on the glorious day of the Festivity of Carmel, sign of eternal predestination, given that it concerns the Holy Scapular, which frees souls from the enemy’s power”, because the anniversary of the Foundation of the Carmelites, the 16th of July, is also the anniversary of the institution of the Holy Carmelite Scapular. In the thirteenth century, there was a terrible muslim persecution on Mount Carmel, which forced the Superior General, Saint Alan of the Sword of God, the Breton, to translate the Order’s See to England. This move greatly favoured the expansion of the Order in the West. At the death of Saint Alan of the Sword of God, Saint Simon Stock was elected as the new Superior General of the Carmelites. He had been born in County Kent, England, where he had lived as a hermit until the Virgin Mary made known to him Her desire that he should enter the Order of Carmel, whose friars had just arrived from Mount Carmel. His surname Stock seems to come from having lived in a hollow tree trunk when a hermit. He had the heavenly gift of performing remarkable miracles. Saint Simon Stock considerably enriched the Order, founding priories and schools. Instead of the original eremitical life, the Order was transformed into a mendicant Order, and not solely contemplative but also apostolic. He obtained from Pope Saint Innocent IV confirmation of the Rules of Saint Albert of Jerusalem, adapted to the needs and requirements of life in the West.

Saint Simon, who has been called “the beloved of Mary”, in his life composed beautiful hymns to the Virgin Mother of God: the Marian hymns *Flos Carmeli* and *Ave Stella Matutina* are attributed to him. The most noteworthy event of his life is the bestowal of the Holy Scapular by the hands of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. The Divine Lady thereby responded to

Saint Simon Stock's plea for help in the face of fierce persecution raised up against the Carmelites. Every day Saint Simon implored the most glorious Mother of God to give some sign of Her protection for the Carmelite Order, which enjoyed the singular title of Brethren of the Most Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, beseeching with all the fervour of his soul that, as Flower of Carmel, She protect Her Sweetest Name and that of the Carmelites. The prodigy occurred in the early morning of the 16th of July in the year 1251, when Saint Simon Stock was in his cell; for there the Queen of Carmel, enveloped in a luminous cloud, surrounded by a host of Angels, appeared to him and bestowed upon him the Scapular as sign and testimony to Her powerful protection in every danger, saying to him these consoling words: "Beloved son: receive the Scapular of your Order, sign of My Confraternity to you and privilege for all Carmelites. By this garment My children and My servants are to be known. By it I bestow upon you a sign of predestination, of protection in danger, and as it were a statute of peace and of eternal alliance, as long as the innocence of life corresponds to the holiness of the habit. Whoever shall have the happiness of dying wearing this special emblem of My love will not suffer eternal fire, and by singular mercy of My dear Son will enjoy Blessedness." From then on, devotion to the Holy Scapular began to spread everywhere, and the common people rushed to take up this precious pledge which was enriched with many graces by the Popes, and by its means the Virgin Mary wrought many prodigies. Saint Simon Stock died on the 16th of May in the year 1265 at one hundred years of age.

One tradition related to the Holy Scapular of Carmel is that called the Sabbatine Privilege, granted by the Most Holy Virgin Mary in favour of the Carmelites, which says that Mary, Mother of Mercy, frees from Purgatory and takes to Heaven on the Saturday following their death all who wear Her Scapular, on condition that they have observed chastity according to their state in life and have practised certain devotions in Her honour, as manifested in vision to Saint John XXII the Great.

Father Croisset, in the second volume of 'Devotion to the Most Holy Virgin', presents an extract from the Bull issued by Pope Saint John XXII the Great in the year 1316, on the occasion of the Apparition of the Most Holy Virgin with which She favoured that Sovereign Pontiff, in which She addressed the most consoling words for the servants of the Great Queen, and which, though relative to the Confraternities of the Holy Scapular of Carmel, are applicable to all Her children, when they place their confidence in Her. This August Protectress and Liberatrix of the souls of Purgatory said: "I, who am the Mother of Mercy, after the deaths of My devotees, will descend the following Saturday, free them from Purgatory and take them with Me to the Holy Mount of eternal life." This same Bull was renewed by this Pope in 1321, and in one and the other refers in detail the object and the circumstances of the Apparition by which the Most Holy Virgin had deigned to honour him, telling him to publish Her glorious title of Liberatrix of the souls of those of Her servants who were detained in Purgatory. This Bull was published successively by nineteen other Popes, and in truth these nineteen Sovereign Pontiffs would not have confirmed the Bull of their predecessor Saint John XXII the Great (1314-1334) if they had not believed that the Apparition of the Most Holy Virgin, to which it refers, was irrefutable.

There have always been conditions for gaining these privileges. To merit the Promise of final perseverance they must have received the Scapular from the hands of a Priest and always worn it, especially at the hour of death. Devotion to Mary is required; imitating Her as far as possible; desiring to be good children of Hers. The Scapular is two patches of cloth symbolizing a garment, and whoever wears Mary's habit should live like Her, and have the custom of practising the Christian virtues. Those are the essentials of the Scapular and the Habit. Christ reproached the pharisees saying that they were children of the devil, and that they performed their father Satan's deeds. On the other hand, those who glory in being Most Holy Mary's children should imitate their Heavenly Mother's deeds. Wearing Her habit is to become like Mary and to stand out as Her children; it is to make known our intention to

imitate Mary and to be like Her. Let us place the greatest interest in doing this well, so that we become living images of Mary, who is Model of Holy Imitation. Wearing the Scapular is to dress in Most Holy Mary's habit, as "Rebecca clothed Jacob with the best of Esau's garments which she had in the house" so that his father might give him the blessing of the firstborn; that is to say, if we really become like unto the Most Holy Virgin, God will lavish His greatest blessings upon us.

The Palmarian Scapular is the habit of the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face which all her members, including Tertiaries, should always wear, as it is a reduced form of the Order's religious habit. The ancient adage "the habit doesn't make the monk" applies here, as it is vital that interiorly he correspond to his exterior, for though the habit does not make the monk, the habit helps him considerably to live in holiness.

The Scapular of the Holy Face is a Sacramental and, as the Catechism says, Sacramentals are multiple sensible and sacred signs instituted by the Church to honour God, sanctify souls, implore gifts and defend us from the three enemies of the soul. Sacramentals, by the special virtue conferred upon them by the authority of the Church, are far more effective than any other act of piety. Yet they are not the same as the Sacraments instituted by Christ, as the Sacramentals do not operate by their own virtue, but produce their effects according to the dispositions of whoever uses them; while the Sacraments produce their effects by their own virtue – so long as the subject places no obstacle to them. The Sacramentals obtain actual graces for us, while the Sacraments confer Sanctifying Grace, or increase it. The Sacramentals, worthily received, produce wholesome effects: actual graces to prepare better for the worthy reception of the Sacraments; actual graces to obtain greater contrition for sins, greater devotion and more perfect charity; forgiveness of all or part of the temporal pain owing to past sins, by virtue of the indulgences which usually accompany the use of Sacramentals; and temporal graces if they do not oppose our salvation.

In 1970 in Palmar, before Our Lord Jesus Christ established the Scapular of the Holy Face, the Most Holy Virgin Mary asked all to wear the traditional Scapular of Carmel: "My children: Scapulars are blessed pieces of My Holy Mantle. You are all beneath this Mantle and by it you shall be saved. It is a proof of My immense love. As your Mother that I am, I do not want any child of Mine to be damned; that is why I have come to this Sacred Place, to save you. My children, always wear the Holy Scapular, sign of Eternal Predestination." Later, on the 28th of May 1970, Our Lord Jesus Christ established the Scapular of the Holy Face and gave instructions to the then seer Clemente to make it: "Always wear this emblem of My Sacred Face. You will make it out of the same material as My Mother's Holy Scapular. You will thus have My Holy Mother's protection and Mine, and will put the words: 'Lord, show us Thy Face and we shall be saved'. You will always wear it around your necks. The Scapular will be composed: First, the front part, My Divine Face, the back part the two Hearts, Mine and My Most Holy Mother's. By this Scapular you will always bear in mind the Reparatory Communions of the three days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I promise to take those who die wearing it, by My Mother's Mediation, to eternal happiness at the very moment they depart from this world, and I promise to keep their families steadfast in the Faith. A day will come when you shall have to give testimony in the face of enemies with this Scapular, and some of you will suffer for displaying My insignia; but greater will be the graces you shall gain in Eternal Life. Do not delay in wearing this Scapular, since My Mother will be overjoyed, as She is happier with both of Us always together: Mother and Son." The Scapular of the Holy Face was joined to the Scapular of Carmel, forming one single Scapular. Years later Pope Saint Gregory XVII added the image of Saint Joseph to the Scapular.

In another Message, the Most Holy Virgin Mary clarified the phrase: "I promise to take those who die wearing it, by My Mother's Mediation, to eternal happiness at the very moment





they leave this world,” saying that “the conditions given in Divine Law and in the Commandments of the Church have to be satisfied. Precisely all those who wear this Scapular will always have perfect awareness for observing the Commandments, since by this means My Divine Son engraves on their hearts the image of His Face, so that the enemy is unable to resist the Light of the Most High, and decides to retreat; hence all those who wear this Scapular perfect themselves, and come to love the Eucharist more intensely, since the Holy Face is the Mirror of the Eucharist.”

Later, in 1971, the Lord added further promises to the Scapular: “Look, My children, we are in the Last Times, and you have to proceed with humility and submission. I solemnly promise you that to all those who come to this Sacred Place wearing the Holy Scapular of My Divine Face and of the Sacred Hearts externally on their breast, I will give the greatest graces,

mitigate the chastisements of Heaven for them and bring peace to their homes. Courage, My children! Press on with your faith! Always wear the Holy Scapular, giving testimony to Me and to your Mother. I will lavish superabundant graces on those who propagate the wearing of this Scapular, and their crown in the Kingdom of Heaven will be greater.”

In order to abolish the Scapular and other pious objects, the infiltrated enemies said that they were things “of no importance”. That is evidently a lie, as little things acquire great importance when done to please God or to offend Him. The Lord says the same: “I tell you that for even an idle word spoken by men, they shall have to render an account on the day of judgement”, and promises that whoever gives a drink of water to His disciples will not lack his reward. God often tries us in little things, because “Whoever is faithful in little things, is faithful as well in great; and whoever is unfaithful in little things, is unfaithful as well in great.”

The great general apostasy of these Last Times is the sure sign of the devastation brought about by Satan’s partisans. Up till now there have never been so many heresies, so much desecration, so much rejection of holy things. Materialism and spiritual emptiness reign all about us.

My dear faithful, our privileged condition as Palmarian faithful is so extraordinary that not even we ourselves realize. However, we have to stay very faithful to the Church, so that we may never become unworthy of this lofty grace. How much gratitude we owe to Our Lord and God and to His Most Holy Mother the Virgin Mary for this very singular gift of being children of the true Church: the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian! Thanks to the Blessed Apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in El Palmar de Troya, Holy Mother Church, though right now reduced to a tiny flock, continues intact and yet more vigorous in her saving mission to mankind.

When the Order was founded in December 1975, the Lord said in a Message: “This is the Order announced in ancient times: the Order vested in sackcloth. Your habits symbolize sackcloth. The Habit of the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face is sackcloth; an expression of penance. This is the Order announced from olden times. The Order prepared to reign with Me, preparing My Return.” And the Most Holy Virgin Mary on the day of the Translation of the Apostolic See to Palmar in 1978, said: “The time has come to make known the Sacrosanct Order of Sackcloth, the Order of Crossbearers, the Order of the Carmelites of the Holy Face, the blessed Company of Jesus, the Jesuits of the Last Times.” The Palmarian Creed teaches: “Prior to the Second Coming of Christ, penance will be preached by God’s two witnesses dressed in sackcloth, to move men to conversion. These two witnesses represent: One, the Prophets and Apostles of Earth, namely the last Pope of the Church, his Bishops, Priests and faithful; and the other, the Planetary Prophets and Apostles, namely Elias, Henoch, Moses,

John the Evangelist and the other inhabitants of Mary's Planet, who will come to Earth to carry out their labour under the authority of the last Pope."

"To dress in sackcloth" means to do penance, to win forgiveness from God, as happened in Nineveh, which was about to be destroyed by God in the times of Jonas. The citizens of Nineveh believed in the word of God through the Prophet Jonas, so that everyone, great and small, dressed in sackcloth, did penance and prayed to God. And God forgave them. We Palmarians have the mission of doing penance and thus to placate God's Wrath and win the salvation of sinners, and of praying intensely, not by just saying the words, but in our heart as well. Remember what the Lord said in El Palmar on the 17th of September 1974, when He established the Carmelite Habit: "Few warnings shall I give you now. Desolation is now coming. The Angels are now ready to exterminate a great part of mankind. That is why I have imposed the Habit in this Sacred Place, because the Angels, seeing you with the habit of Carmel, will pass by. But it should be worn with dignity and amendment of life by each of you. When the Angel Exterminators visit the earth with their plagues and see your habit of Carmel, they will pass by and will protect you themselves. I want you therefore to wear the habit of the Order which will not disappear, since the others will cease to exist. Do not forget it: the Order of Mount Carmel will endure up till the Last Times; it is announced in ancient prophecies. And all those who wear the habit of Carmel form part, in a certain way, of that glorious Order. And likewise, My dear children, there is something you should know: soon the prophets will arrive, first Elias. And as is natural, he will be with the Order of Carmel and with those who wear that habit. Bless the Father because He has chosen you to form part of that Order. Though sadly, in these times, the Order of Carmel has become very lax, tremendously lax; but new reformers will arise. Let the world prepare to imitate the followers of the habit of Carmel, for they will be the light of the world; but will also undergo persecution, suffering and torture and, above all, will be victims of the world's scorn. Bless the Father for these wonders you will suffer. My dear children: you should know that all authentic followers of this Sacred Place should wear the habit... It will be wonderful to gaze at this whole Sacred Place full of the brown habit!... O My dear children! What great joy to see the brown habit on My children! For it corresponds to Carmel, the most ancient Order, and the Order which will remain up till the last moment, until My Return, to reign with Me."

The Carmelite Escutcheon. On speaking of the Queen of Carmel, we should notice the Carmelite Escutcheon situated in the centre of the main nave of the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, as it is a truly beautiful symbol owing to its simplicity and celebrated for its antiquity and sacred significance.

It is composed of colours which represent the garments which the Most Holy Virgin wore in life and the Carmelite habit. Over the silhouette of Mount Carmel, the Cross was added by Saint John of the Cross.

In the centre of the Mount is seen a silvery star which represents the Most Holy Virgin Mary. The white background in the part above signifies that the Prophet Elias contemplated the Most Holy Virgin Mary in a little white cloud, and in the same background two golden stars appear which represent the two great Prophets Elias and Eliseus.

In the upper part of the Escutcheon, twelve stars are to be seen, which signify the Most Holy Virgin Mary's crown, in accord with the Apocalypse, and symbolize the great favours and graces granted to Her Order and, in a special way, the singular privileges and graces which the Lord showered upon Mary.

From the crown to be seen in the upper part of the Escutcheon appears Prophet Saint Elias' arm, brandishing his flaming sword, with which he dealt out death to Baal's false prophets beside the Cison Torrent in God's honour. Sailing out from the sword there is a Latin inscription which says: "*Zelo zelátus sum pro Dómino Deo Exercítuum*", Saint Elias's motto: "I am ablaze with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts".

This has to be the motto of all Palmarians as well. We have seen how the roman church



fell into apostasy precisely for its lack of zeal, for its indifference in the face of moral corruption, its apathy in the face of heresies. We should have ardent zeal for the glory of God and show this by our fidelity to prayer and in keeping the Commandments. This zeal also obliges us to work zealously for the salvation of souls.

Do not forget that you, as children of the Church, are tertiary members of the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face in Company of Jesus and Mary: the Order of the Last Times, the Order of Crossbearers, the one Religious Order to persevere by staying faithful to the true Church. This is where the true Order of Carmel, founded by the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Her apparition to the Prophet Saint Elias, yet continues, as the other religious orders have been wiped out by apostasy. Just as the primitive Order of Mount Carmel had the mission of preparing the First Coming of Christ as Messias, the Order of Carmelites

of the Holy Face has the mission of preparing the Second Coming of Christ as Judge.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave other Messages previously concerning the Scapular: "Am I not perhaps your Father, Myself? Why do you not give testimony to Me? Is it perhaps ridiculous to wear the Holy Scapular externally, giving testimony to your faith? Can Satan perhaps insist so often that you wear this Holy Scapular, when this scapular is precisely for casting out Satan? Look, My children: this Scapular is a terrible force which the enemy cannot resist. It is necessary that you all wear it externally. Look, the chastisements are also conditioned to this act of valour. I caution you: from today on, those who come regularly to this Place and do not wear this Holy Scapular externally will run the risk of being marked by Satan, to whom I will give freedom to do so. Look, whoever bears the sign of the Beast will suffer terribly. My children: innumerable souls are in Heaven because of the Holy Crusades. They all bore banners with My Sign and that of the Most Holy Virgin, and attacked their enemies without considering that they would lose their bodily lives. The moment has come for bravery and to be scoffed at if need be in My defence. Look, it has My Face, My Sacred Heart and that of My Most Holy Mother. In these three Reparations lies the Salvation of the World. All those who come here have proofs, more than sufficient, of the authenticity of these Messages in which you are told to wear this Holy Scapular externally. See how We have been asking for Scapulars from My other seers and have blessed them, not once but many times. Isn't that the proof you need? Why do you want more proofs? Different seers giving Scapulars for Heaven to bless. But there is a key condition: you have to become a child to understand the mysteries of God. To understand Me there is no need for study, only for humility, and the Grace of the Holy Ghost will come upon you. Woe to whoever takes scandal at this Scapular! Poor soul!"

And in August 1973, Our Lord said: "Consecrate the world to the Mother of Carmel, and raise and increase devotion to the Holy Scapular, pledge of eternal salvation." Message of Our Lord in 1974: "Satan... has been driven away by the Holy Scapular, which causes him horror and panic. There you see the confusion there is here in Palmar: those who do not wear the Holy Scapular, because it is to do away with the barrier, the shield against Satan. Blessed are you who wear these Holy Scapulars and blessed are you who make them up!"

On one occasion Clemente Domínguez saw Satan as a monster. From the Scapular of the Holy Face, which the seer wore on his breast, issued a most powerful ray of light towards Satan, whom it blinded and caused him to twist about furiously. Then the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus told him, referring to the Scapular of the Holy Face: "My children: now you have a Scapular worthy of heroes, for the day will come when you shall be persecuted, since many will not admit devotion to My Divine Countenance, nor to My

Most Sacred Heart, nor to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary, My Mother and yours; but you shall have to give testimony with this Scapular.”

The Most Holy Virgin Mary, under the title of Carmel, said in January 1971: “My children: always bear in mind that if you wish to be freed from Satan’s attacks, the best way to make him withdraw and desist is to wear in front, on your breasts, the Divine Countenance of My Son. Before Him the enemy cannot go on ahead, for the Light of My Son undoes him. When Satan comes in disguise pretending to be Jesus or Myself, your Mother, and you wear the Face of My Son externally, he disappears immediately, because he is proud and cannot bear the majesty of God. My children, I would like your minds to grasp the value of wearing this Holy Scapular externally in this Sacred Place.”

The following month, She said as well: “It is also My desire that you all wear the Holy Scapular of My Divine Son Jesus, with His Sacred Heart and My Immaculate Heart, always pendant on your breast. Whenever you are in this Sacred Place, wear it externally to give testimony to Jesus Christ and to Me, your Mother. Observe, My children: the enemy is always lying in wait for you; but with this Scapular you will drive him off, for he cannot resist Jesus’ gentleness, Jesus’ love, My Son’s Divinity. Observe the words I speak, all of them a cry to God, words which the enemy cannot pronounce. The enemy can never praise Jesus, your God. Multiply these Holy Scapulars. In your hands I place the postponement of many evils, or bringing them forward, according as you fulfil the Messages. Look, it is not caprice; it is My Jesus’ desire. Why do you not try to please Jesus, your Saviour? You cannot imagine the value of wearing the Holy Scapular on your persons without human consideration, giving testimony to God. Think: if you are not capable of pleasing Jesus in this little matter, how are you going to please Him the day you have to give your very lives? There are now more than sufficient proofs regarding this Holy Scapular... what more proofs do you want? By different seers I have blessed this Scapular. Only humility, love and commitment are needed, and you will understand that you have to wear this Scapular externally when you are in this Sacred Place... Look: Archangel Saint Michael had the Divine Countenance of Jesus impressed on his shield to combat the rebel angels. Imitate Saint Michael... Have humility and how well you will see everything that comes from God. I bless you.”

Days later, the Most Holy Virgin continues to recommend: “I assure you that all those who have humbly and promptly accepted wearing the Holy Scapular externally, will attain superabundant graces, and those graces will be poured out upon your relatives and upon your friends. You will transmit to others your peace, your light and your humility. My little children: Stay humble, faithful to My words. I cover you with My Holy Mantle. Alas for those who doubt so much, who react to this Holy Scapular with pride and insulting words! They are worthy of pity, poor people! Enough now of offending Jesus! I want you to be humble and little so that you may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. All those who have accepted this Scapular without demur, I also make responsible for spreading it to your brethren who arrive at this Sacred Place. Look, you all become responsible; for whoever believes something is obliged to give testimony to his faith. There is someone who says he does not wear the Scapular so as not to be conspicuous, but he will be all the more conspicuous among so many who do wear it.”

The Most Holy Virgin Mary had already said in May 1971: “Observe, My children: those of you who pray the Penitential Rosary are united, you pray before the Divine Face of My Son, and wear the Holy Scapular, the Holy Emblem of the Sacred Place of El Palmar de Troya. By that Scapular they will know that you are believers in these blessed Apparitions. Days will come when with this Holy Scapular you will give your lives as martyrs and be glorified with the palm of martyrdom in defence of the Truth. I ask you: if you feel ashamed to put this Holy Scapular on in times of peace, what will you feel in times of combat, in times of Antichrist, in which their emblem will be the hammer and sickle? O My children! How easy everything is when hearts are humble! But how difficult when pride, vanity and



illusions of grandeur corrode hearts! Look, My children: God reveals His sacred mysteries to the humble but not to the wise. Wisdom is a great gift of God, but if placed at His service and not at the Enemy's service... Look, My children: you are living in a time of great crisis; yet this time is appropriate for purifying yourselves, and you can gain much merit. It is in moments of combat when souls are most purified. Observe your Holy Mother the Church: in those places where she is persecuted and martyred, great Saints arise; great champions of the Faith arise, and they die confessing Christ. But in easy-going times there is danger of neglect and laxity."

The Holy Scapular of Carmel has always been a fount of blessings for Religious and as well for tertiary faithful. The privilege for Carmelites who wear the Sacred Scapular is contained in these words of Our Lady to Saint Simon Stock: "*Ecce signum salutis, salus in periculis*," it is a sign of eternal salvation and a perpetual safeguard from all kinds of dangers, whether by sea or by land, a protection and defence against fire, thunder and lightning. Many storms have been calmed by the Scapular, many fires have been put out; many kinds of diseases have been cured; grave contagions have been overcome, demons have been put to flight, and is the speediest and most effective remedy against all the satanic deceits and witchcraft that can be encountered. Saint Claude de La Colombière, a Jesuit Priest and Confessor to Saint Margaret Mary de Alacoque, observed: "No devotion has been confirmed by a greater number of authentic miracles than the Carmelite Scapular." All this can be shown with several examples of the notable miracles of the Scapular, of which we shall relate the following:

In the city of Avignon in France, in the year 1622, an honourable soldier called Alexander Dominic, native of Lyon, going to join the army, stayed there to do his devotions and celebrate, before leaving, the feast of the Scapular with the other members of the Confraternity. On the 11th of July, six days before the feast, he met up with a certain enemy of his, who greeted him with a pistol loaded with two bullets, and having shot him right in the chest, withdrew. The poor man, believing himself on the point of death, had recourse to the Patroness of the Confraternity, crying out: "O Most Holy Virgin of Mount Carmel, help me!" A strange thing! Hardly had he pronounced these words when he felt the two bullets fall from his clothing; and taken to his lodgings in the barracks, he saw that his cloak was burnt, and that the bullets had gone through his cardigan and shirt, and left their marks on the Holy Scapular, which had become stuck to his skin, but without causing any harm to his person.

In the year 1633, close to Cracow in Poland, a youth who shortly before had received the Holy Scapular in the Carmelite priory of the city, in battle received a musket shot in the chest, but the bullet had passed through his chest-piece and his clothing, stopped at his Scapular, and did no more damage, but left a small stain on the holy habit.

M De Cuge, bugler of a cavalry company, was wounded in the battle of Tesin, in the year 1636 by a bullet; which, passing through his left side, struck the heart itself, so that naturally he could not live for a moment. Nonetheless, being in mortal sin (as he later declared), Almighty God, by the intercession of the glorious Virgin Mary, gave him time to repent, and prolonged his life for three or four hours; during which he made his confession and with his own hands wrote out his last will and testament; once done, the surgeon came to investigate his wounds, and found that the bullet had nailed the Scapular in the heart. On drawing it out, he then expired, making many acts of profound gratitude to the Most Holy Virgin, who by miraculously prolonging his life, preserved him from eternal death.

In a battle between French and Spanish on the island of Santa Margarita, a youth from Toulon, in French Provence, called George Teissery, moved so close to the mouth of the canons that they burnt all his clothing, and the fire did away with the shirt from his body,

and the force of the blows hurled him far off to the sea where, though deprived of the use of his senses, he remained a long time on the surface of the water. On coming to himself and remembering that he wore the Scapular, he invoked the Immaculate Virgin Mary, by whose means he recovered the strength to save himself, reached shore, and found that the Scapular he wore was whole and entire, without having been harmed by either the fire or the water.

In the year of the Lord 1638, in the city of Toulon in France, a fire broke out in a street close to the home of M Jean Richard, parliamentary lawyer, whose wife, on seeing that neither the crowd of people there, nor the quantity of water they poured on the fire could put it out, in that extreme danger thought of throwing the Scapular of the Most Holy Virgin amid the flames, which no sooner done than the fire went out.

Several ancient books have many other examples of those who have been freed from devils, from fire, from water, from wild beasts, from sickness, from witchcraft, from dangers in childbirth, from pistol shots and many other evils, by means of the Scapular. How right it has been written: 'Blessed are those who wear the habit and mantle of the Most Holy Virgin.'

Chronicles of Miracles with the Carmelite Scapular

The Virgin gave Saint Simon Stock the Carmelite Scapular in 1251 and told him: "You and all Carmelites will have the privilege that whoever dies with it will not suffer eternal fire." That is, whoever dies wearing it, will be saved. And then, the Most Holy Virgin appeared to Pope Saint John XXII in the XIV century, and promised him that, for those who comply with the requirements of this devotion, "as Mother of Mercy, with My petitions, prayers, merits and special protection, I will help them so that, free as soon as can be of their pains, their souls be translated to blessedness." That same day on which the Virgin gave the Scapular to Saint Simon Stock, he was called with all speed by Peter of Linton: "Come quickly, Father, my brother is dying and in despair." Saint Simon Stock placed his large Scapular on the moribund who repented at once and died in God's friendship. That night, the deceased appeared to his brother: "You saved me by means of the powerful Queen and this man's habit as shield."

Saint Alphonsus tells us: "Modern heretics make fun of the ancient Scapular. They denounce it as one of so many stupidities. Yet we know that several Pontiffs have approved it." It is notable that only 25 years after the vision, Pope Saint Gregory X was buried wearing the Scapular. When his tomb was opened 600 years after his death, his Scapular was found intact. The Scapular was also found like new in the tombs of Saint John Bosco and Saint Alphonsus of Liguori, despite deterioration of everything else in their tombs. Saint Alphonsus said that if we were to do a little more than what the Virgin asks of us, we would not even go to Purgatory.

Right in the XX century, a Priest relates that one day in a township close to Chicago, he was called to the bedside of a man estranged from the Sacraments for many years. "He did not want to see me, or speak. So I then asked him if he wanted the small Scapular I offered him. 'Would you like to wear this if I put it on you?', was all I asked. He agreed to wear it. One hour later, he wanted to confess and make his peace with God. It does not surprise me, since for more than 700 years the Virgin has been working by way of the Scapular."

Each month a load of 1000 slaves reached Cartagena in South America. Saint Peter Claver, Apostle of Slaves, used the Scapular to assure the salvation of his converts. Peter Claver organized catechists to give them instruction, and before being sold, ensured that they were baptized. Many churchmen accused the Saint of indiscrete zeal, but Saint Peter answered that he had baptized and imposed the Scapular of the Virgin on them all. He was sure that Mary would care for each of them. Imagine! Saint Peter Claver was responsible for more than 300,000 converts.

In 1845, the English ship 'King of the Sea' was struck by a savage hurricane. The reverend Fisher, a protestant missionary, together with his wife and children and other passengers, were on deck to pray for mercy and forgiveness, since the end seemed close. Among the



crew there was a young Irishman, John McAuliffe. He opened his shirt, removed his Scapular, made the sign of the Cross over the raging sea and then launched the Scapular onto the ocean. At that very moment, the wind calmed down, and only one more wave washed over the deck, bringing with it the Scapular, which landed at the feet of the boy. The rev. Fisher and his family had observed what he had done. They asked the boy and he spoke to them of the Virgin and of the Scapular and its promise of protection in cases of danger. They were so impressed that they resolved to enter the Catholic Church and possess similar protection.

A French Priest on pilgrimage to Einsiedeln, Switzerland, was on his way to celebrate Holy Mass when he remembered that he had forgotten his Scapular. Though late, he went back for it. While saying his Mass, a youth approached the Altar, drew out

his revolver and shot him in the back... but the Priest went on saying Mass. In the sacristy the Abbot exclaimed: "I thought that the man had killed him!" But when they removed his vestments, the bullet was found stuck to his small brown Scapular.

In May 1957, a Carmelite Priest in Germany published the little-known story of how the Scapular preserved a home from fire. A whole line of houses had burnt down in Westboden, Germany. The pious inhabitants of a house with two families, on seeing the fire, at once fixed the Scapular to the main door of the house. Sparks flew over it, around it, but the house remained unharmed. In five hours twenty-two houses were reduced to ashes and ruins. This house remained untouched amid the destruction. Hundreds of people arrived to see the home Our Lady had saved.

In 1951, the ancient home of Saint Simon Stock in Aylesford, England, was dedicated and the relics of the Saint of the Scapular returned. From then on thousands of Scapular users have gone there on pilgrimage. In 1957 little Peter, who had leukaemia, went. His arms and legs were covered with wounds and he had but a few days to live. When he returned home that same night, the wounds had healed and his strength had returned. His family realized that he was cured. The doctors confirmed his complete cure.

In October 1952, an Air Force official in Texas wrote the following: "Six months ago, shortly after I began to use the Scapular, I experienced a notable change in my life. Almost at the same time I began to go to Mass every day. After a brief period I started to receive Communion daily. I kept Lent with a fervour I had never felt before. I was introduced to the practice of meditation and I found myself making feeble attempts along the way of perfection. I have been trying to live with God. I give the credit to Mary's Scapular."

The Scapular of Carmel gives protection at every moment of life, at death, and even beyond. "In life, I protect; at death I help; after death, I save," are its credentials for the innumerable prodigies it has wrought. On wearing the Scapular, and throughout life, it is very important that we know how to appreciate its deep and varied importance. Whoever wears the Scapular should try to keep the Most Holy Virgin in mind at all times and try to copy Her virtues, Her life and act as She, Mary, acted, according to Her words: "Behold the Slave of the Lord: be it done in Me according to Your word." Besides the great promise of preserving from Hell and of safeguarding from danger, the Scapular of Carmel brings to mind all of Mary's virtues. Thus did Pope Pius XII remind all on the 11th of February 1950: "Let them recognize in this memorial of the Virgin a mirror of humility and chastity. In the simple way it is made up, let them see a compendium of modesty and innocence. Signified in this emblem they wear day and night, with its eloquent symbolism, let them above all see the prayer with which to implore divine assistance. Finally, let them recognize in it their consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of the Immaculate Virgin."

Among the devotions dedicated by Christians to honour Mary, said Saint Pius XII,

“devotion to the Scapular of the Carmelites should take first place.” In these times in which all other Orders have apostatized, only that of the Carmelites of the Holy Face still remains. Hence while the scapulars and religious habits of the apostates have lost all spiritual value, the Holy Scapular of the Carmelites of the Holy Face has multiplied its value, and so is thus the most adequate sacramental for defending the children of Mary Most Holy in their struggle against Antichrist and his hordes, since together with the privileges and promises of the traditional scapular of Carmel are joined the protection of the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to which should be added the help of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and also that of Joseph Most Holy.

Whoever wears the Scapular of Carmel should excel for his profound, sincere and filial devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, ever striving to know, love, imitate and radiate Mary, since the Order of Carmel to which he belongs by wearing its habit, has as its purpose to live Her life and spread Her worship. The official title of the Carmelites was this: ‘Brethren of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel’.

All this is to encourage Christians to wear devoutly the Scapular of the Virgin Mary, which has wrought so many prodigies over the centuries and promises us special maternal help and protection from Mary. Let this be the ideal or motto by which at all costs I must live: “Let my Scapular ever accompany me. May I always see my Heavenly Mother in It. May I kiss It with a son’s love as a promise to love Her more and serve Her better. May the remembrance of Its presence on my breast hearten me to be more faithful to Her Divine Son and to Her. May I see impressed in It all the virtues of my Heavenly Mother and try to live them. May Its constant presence over my heart help me to avoid sin and practise virtue. May It remind me never to forget Her and so be sure that She will not abandon me.”

By the imposition of the Scapular we consecrate ourselves to the Virgin, and by this choose “the easy, short, perfect and sure way to arrive at union with Our Lord, in which Christian perfection consists.” Thus did the Saints practise and teach, particularly Saint Louis Mary Grignon of Montfort, and Mary Most Holy thus expresses Herself in Her apparitions. And the Church so reaffirms by the voice of her Shepherds.

There is a constant and discrete bond linking devotion to the Scapular – going back to the Middle Ages – with the impressive sequence of great Marian Apparitions beginning from the XIX century. In these Apparitions the Virgin Mary Herself, making a pressing call to ask the ever more sinful world for prayer and penance, insisted on the need for the Scapular for the present times.

Effectively, in Lourdes, the last Apparition to Saint Bernadette took place on the 16th of July 1858, the liturgical feast of Our Lady of Carmel and anniversary of the gift of the Scapular to Saint Simon Stock. And in Fátima, in the sixth Apparition, during which the miracle of the sun took place to prove its authenticity, the Virgin chose to appear to the three seers under the title of Carmel, with the Child Jesus in Her arms and the Scapular, for the Virgin wanted the Scapular to be taken as part of the Message, since the Scapular is the sign of consecration to Her Immaculate Heart. The Rosary and the Scapular are inseparable.

We conclude all that We have said on the advantages of devotion to the Scapular of Carmel with the words of an illustrious and pious Doctor, Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori: “I know, O Mary that those who wear Your Holy Scapular are looked upon by the Lord with a favourable and merciful gaze; and that regarding Your protection there is nothing that cannot be promised: especially the forgiveness of sins, perseverance in virtue, Your assistance at the hour of death, and finally exemption from the pains of Purgatory, or at least abbreviation of sufferings there.”

It is a practice in honour of Mary, used from its introduction by the most illustrious of men. From blessed Simon Stock, to whom the Most Holy Virgin gave the precious habit of the Scapular, down to our own days, there is scarcely a single true Christian of whatever class and condition it may be, who acknowledging the spiritual and temporal advantages of



devotion to the Holy Scapular, has not made it a duty to put it into practice, by wearing this badge of the true servants of Mary. Amongst the sovereign Pontiffs who have been devotees of the Holy Scapular, we shall cite only Saint Clement VIII, whose 'life' says that having being raised to the Pontificate, the assistant who removed his habit of Cardinal tried to remove the Scapular, reminding him that the robes of the Pontiffs contain in high degree the virtue of all other habits; however, the pious Pontiff forbade him saying: "Leave me Mary, lest Mary leave me." 'Desine Mariam, ne Maria me desinat.' Among the most illustrious Cardinals who have worn it with pride are Barberini, Albani, Adalbrandini, Bórghesi, Borbon, Carafa, Chisi, Colonna, Conti, Corsini, Goudagna, Adescalchi, Jauson, Médicis, Polignac, Sforzia, etc. If we go on from Cardinals to Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops who have worn the Scapular, there is no Catholic diocese which

has not seen many of its prelates vested with Mary's habit; among those most illustrious can be cited Saint Lawrence Justinian, Saint Charles Borromeo, Flechier, bishop of Nîmes, and Belsuncio, bishop of Marseilles. It is superfluous to speak of kings, emperors, princes and princesses who have worn this Scapular. There is no kingdom in Europe which does not count some of its sovereigns among the most zealous Confraternity members of this Holy Association. What has been said is sufficient to confound the pride of those Christians who, feeling shame at belonging to this Confraternity, deprive themselves of the infinite graces with which Mary enriches her dear children, both in this world as in the other.

Collective Spiritual and Corporal graces obtained from devotion to the Holy Scapular.

Numerous prodigies come to our mind, not among those which have only been referred by one or two persons, and whose veracity may be doubted, but justified by the testimony of countless witnesses and by whole peoples, who by no means could come to agree on deceiving the world.

The whole of Provence was prey to the terrible scourge of the plague, yet Marseilles, the one city to place its confidence in the Holy Scapular, found itself free from its ravages, and later raised up a monument worthy of the grandeur of Mary and of the piety of its inhabitants, in thanksgiving for such a singular benefit.

In Spain the heavens had closed as in the days of Elias, and sterility reigned as in the times of Joseph, but Spaniards turned to Mary, bearing the Holy Scapular in procession, and the heavens sent down abundant rain, and towns filled their granaries as in other times did those of Egypt.

In the siege of the Island of Malta, in 1565, and in the city of Güeldres in 1597, nations armed one against another were to be seen without any other purpose than blood and carnage, but Mary was invoked, the Scapular was borne in procession, and the vision of this new banner disarmed the people, the germ of discord was snuffed out and the sweetness of peace was reborn.

All nature, all the elements seem to respect the virtue of this holy habit. When certain illnesses, unknown until then, got the better of medical science, and left the towns and villages of Anjou province deserted, the Scapular was worn openly and mortality ceased.

A terrible hurricane unleashed was about to devastate the fields of Savoy and Sardinia, and by the virtue of this heavenly habit, the winds were enchained, the hail ceased and the storm was dispersed.

The sea exceeded the limits assigned by the finger of God, and the Scapular was the dike that held it back, against which the furious waves broke and the waters returned to their ordinary limits.

If we go from the miracles performed by virtue of the Holy Scapular in favour of cities,

provinces and entire kingdoms, to the prodigies worked in favour of individuals, there would be a need for all the tongues which Saint Jerome desired to possess in order to celebrate Mary's virtues worthily. Effectively the earth is nothing but a vast theatre where Heaven seems to take pleasure in making the virtue of the Mother of God's habit shine out. Wherever we turn to look, we see miracles upon miracles. How many fires extinguished! How many shipwrecks avoided! How many bullets smashed! How many swords blunted! How many of the blind recovered their sight! How many crippled recovered the use of their members! How many paralytics were cured! How many of the dead arose!



Who can refer the triumphs of the Holy Scapular over the prince of darkness! How often in the presence of this holy habit has the enemy of the human race been obliged to abandon the unfortunate souls who had become the playthings of his malice and the victims of his rage? How many pacts sealed by means of sorcery have been undone by virtue of this celestial garment?

And this same virtue, has it not crossed the seas thousands of times to continue in barbarous regions to succour captive brothers groaning under the yoke of the enemies of the Christian name? Has it not gone down to the dungeons to console them? Has it not shattered their chains a thousand times and restored them miraculously to their beloved country? Has it not fortified many others in the Faith at the moment when, overcome by the weight of their chains, they lost confidence and felt tempted to deny Jesus Christ and embrace Islam?

How many times the oppressed innocent have owed their salvation to this miraculous habit! How many times by its virtue have criminals sentenced to death seen the instruments of their death converted into instruments of their conversion, and the Scapular the key to their liberty and the foundation of their sanctification! How often has the traveller assaulted by thieves become free of them, their fortune and their life saved without any arms other than the Holy Scapular!

How many prodigies has the Scapular performed before our own eyes! Is there any illness for which it does not serve as remedy? Any poison against which it is not an antidote? Pain which it has not mitigated? Wound which it has not healed?

Has it not been found amid flames without burning, amid rotteness without perishing, in water without disintegrating? Has it not triumphed a thousand times against heretics? In a word, has it not been for those who wear it a fount of graces as precious as abundant?

Prodigies of the Queen of Carmel by way of Her Scapular.

1. *A prodigious case in Puente Genil, Córdoba.* In the year 1955, a very notable prodigy occurred in this locality which, by express desire of eyewitnesses present, we wish to state here, for the glory of Our Most Holy Mother and of Her Blessed Scapular. The master blacksmith and skilled mechanic, Manuel Cobacho, who from childhood had always worn the Scapular on his breast, was assembling a harvesting machine. Some workers among his helpers, noting that he wore the Scapular on his breast, began to make fun of him showing disrespect, drawing it out from under his clothing. But the pious Cobacho in no way consented to its removal, and taking a serious attitude continued his work, with the Holy Scapular over his clothing. All of a sudden, one of the saws of the machine he was assembling, with great danger, escaped violently and was caught up in the cords of the Scapular, without doing any harm. The workers themselves saw the danger, were terrified, and true conversions took place among them, and all fervently asked for the miraculous Scapular of Carmel to be imposed on them.

2. *A prodigious case in Albacete.* I flew from the train to the Parish of Saint John, having arrived late to preach the Novena of Our Lady of the Llanos, revered Patroness of Albacete.

The impressive cathedral church was already packed with faithful; but in the sacristy a young lady was tearfully awaiting the Father preacher to entreat a most urgent favour: her father, a state official, was dying of a stomach cancer, and had sent her without loss of time to fetch the Carmelite whom he knew by hearsay was to preach the Novena of the Most Holy Virgin, for him to go without delay to confess him and assist him. I could not get over my surprise, since without at that time knowing anyone in Albacete, scarcely had I arrived when an unknown gentleman requested my spiritual services in his last moments. After listening to this man, I understood everything. This gentleman who, at the beginning of his career, had served as a civil servant in Seville, enjoyed close friendship with Father Louis Mary Llop, who imposed the Holy Scapular of the Virgin on the young married couple. From then on, out of apathy or human respect, he had ceased to frequent further the Holy Sacraments; but he had never forgotten one single day to pray to the Virgin of Carmel, to obtain the grace of a holy death under Her merciful protection. And this our most loving Mother granted him in effect. I came down from the pulpit and, without divesting myself of the white cape out of tiredness, I went to the bedside of the patient accompanied by his youngest daughter, who be it said flew rather than ran, as she left me behind every two steps. I entered the sick man's bay, who received me with tears of joy and as one who trustingly awaits his salvation. I began by encouraging him to trust deeply in Divine Mercy and in the inexhaustible kindness of Our Mother and, on hearing from my lips the name of the Virgin of Carmel and asking him if he wore the Scapular, trembling and tearfully he babbled with the candour of an innocent babe: "Yes, Father of my soul, and to it and to this blessed Virgin, whom you see here, I owe this most singular grace that there has been time for you to arrive to reconcile me with God and die in His Grace and friendship. I do not want to have you wait, nor does my condition allow any delay, as it is most certainly known to me that I am to die this very night. I have been preparing for four or five days, without any thought other than of my eternal salvation." I made ready to hear him. His fervent confession lasted longer than three quarters of an hour, only interrupted from time to time by sighs, sobs and the sweetest tears which, without doubt the Virgin gathered up to weave his crown of justification. I took a taxi to bring him Holy Viaticum and the Holy Oils, and hardly had they been administered, when I was helping him to recite some brief invocations, he breathed out a deepest sigh, saying: "How good You are, Mother of mine of Carmel, and how beautiful Your blessed Scapular; how well you have fulfilled my desires that a servant of Yours administer the Last Sacraments to me!" He died like a saint.

3. *Mary Most Holy frees a woman from death in a difficult delivery.* Friar Leo of Saint John and Friar Paul of All Saints relate that, in the city of Prague, about the year 1637, a pious woman called Christine had such pain and anguish in a delivery that, in everyone's judgement mother and child would die without fail. Everything possible had been done in the judgement of the doctors of those times, but to no avail. Then at the greatest despair of being able to save them, Christine, most devout as she was of the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, invoked Her with living faith, imploring Her sovereign help and mercy in her affliction, offering Her that the child to be born would for seven years wear the habit of the Virgin of Carmel. Having made her offering with the greatest faith, humility and confidence in Her motherly goodness, she at once obtained the grace she yearned for, as she gave birth with all facility to a most beautiful boy on whom, as soon as he was baptized, she imposed the Holy Scapular of the Virgin. Two long years passed and the mother, forgetting the offering she had made that her son was to wear the habit of Our Lady outwardly, the unhappy woman saw how the child was deteriorating day by day and losing his health. Realizing at once her ingratitude towards the Most Holy Virgin, and repentant, she made the boy wear the habit she had offered to the Virgin our Mother, by which it was seen at once how the boy recovered his health, so broken days previously. The good mother, later again borne away by vanity, removed the habit he was wearing, replacing it by others which showed the good taste and

prosperity of her parents, but the same prodigy occurred a second time, since the child, angelical and innocent, suddenly took a turn for the worse with his health gradually failing. Now with such forewarnings, the pious mother, repentant but forgetful and unhappy, wept for her fault and dressed the boy in the habit she had offered up, with which he not only perfectly recovered his health but also conserved it wonderfully throughout his youth. This prodigy was published to open the eyes of those who forget to fulfil the promises they make to the Most Holy Virgin. Let us thus not show ourselves ungrateful for Her benefits but give Her constant thanksgiving for Her many kindnesses.

4. *Exemplary chastisement for an unbelieving soldier.* Father Moret relates to us that in the year 1900, in a certain cavalry regiment, an unbelieving and dissolute soldier found a Scapular of Carmel. The wretch took hold of it, rubbed it with scorn between his hands, and in a burlesque tone exclaimed out loud: “Whose are these rags, comrades?” The challenge of the villainous soldier, impious and unbelieving, was taken up by a strong and corpulent youth who, without the least human respect and with the greatest integrity and vigour, replied to the rogue, in a tone of a fervent believer: “That blessed Scapular is mine, and alas for the coward who dares to profane it.” The presence of the heroic soldier, his noble stance and assurance and the martial countenance with which his words were pronounced, made his companions, who seemed to be ready and prepared for banter and fun, all of a sudden change their attitude, and all together applauded the noble, worthy and Christian gesture of one who knew and did honour to his Faith and to his religious beliefs. The following day, the wretched soldier who had made fun of the Holy Scapular, died on the river bank, while bathing the horses. The body had the hands crossed, but tensed at the same time. Who knows if at the moment of death he truly repented of his sacrilegious mockery and with mortal anguish invoked Her who is Queen and Mother of mercy, and who is never invoked in vain? Procure by all means to infuse into the faithful the deepest horror of despising the graces of this Sweet Mother, so that all honour Her, venerate Her and love Her with all the vigour of their soul, to obtain the grace of final perseverance and see and praise Her eternally in Glory.

5. *Some amazing cords:* The Bishop of Málaga, Saint Manuel González y García, narrates one of his apostolic adventures, when Chaplain to an old people’s home run by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Seville: “Despite the smiles, the good reception they gave me and the frequency of the Sacraments of my elderly, not all were triumphs; I had to pass through the sorrow of seeing some, very few, refractory at all attempts to win them over to religion. One of the elderly in the home had a reserved character; dark of soul, sullen, troublesome and querulous with the Sister who tended him. One day I saw him throw in her face the liquid in which she had washed his cancerous ear sore. The Sister was content to smile. With me he never lost his temper. Without displaying the friendliness and expansiveness with which his companions used to greet me, he always showed respect and gratitude for my interest in his health, quite broken to be sure. But nothing of confession. To indirect remarks on this, which from time to time I made, he replied severely and indifferently, as though saying: ‘Don’t bring up that question.’ Feasts and solemnities arrived, and Holy Week itself when everyone confessed, and he, undaunted, let the opportunity pass. In all my apostolic dealings with him, I only succeeded in having him put on the Scapular of Carmel and wear it always. No other hope was left to me but this and the prayers of the good Sisters. I believe that his conduct no longer scandalized the other elderly, since with them too he was sullen and unpleasant, and with his irreligious and bad character had acquired the name of ‘the jew’. One fine day I received an urgent call from the Superioress to go to the Home, since an elderly man had thrown himself down the stairs. Thinking of ‘the jew’, and fearing too that



it might be him, I went flying to the foot of the stairs, where I dreaded to find the corpse of the suicide. Down below I found no one, and looking up above, on the top floor, there I saw a group of Sisters and elderly men pulling up a man tied at the waist and suspended over the central void. What had happened? Effectively, it was ‘the jew’ who, in a fit of despair, taking advantage of the absence of the Sister and the elderly, had climbed over the banister and thrown himself down from the highest point of the stairs; but, on freeing the hand with which he held on to the banister, his whole body in the air, the frailest cord of the Scapular came out and... as if it were a chain, was caught up between his fingers and the wrist and, forming a noose with the arm around one of the banister railings, left him dangling. To the cries which the violence of the position, and perhaps his repentance, drew from him, other elderly and the Sisters, full of dread, came in haste, then full of admiration and gratitude at the patent prodigy of the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel. Unnecessary to say that ‘the jew’ ceased to be one and, for the short time he yet lived, became a good Christian.”

6. *The lost girl*: In ‘Popular Reading’ of Orihuela, Alicante, issued on 15-02-1896, appeared the following story: A few days ago, in Rojales, a town of this province (Alicante), a singular event occurred of which we wish to tell our readers. A girl of three years and three months strayed in mid-afternoon on Saturday the 18th of January and, searched for everywhere, did not appear. Night came and her parents, distressed, turned to the authorities; everyone was alarmed, and the neighbourhood, en masse, moved by the most lively interest, set out to find the creature. It was all in vain; the night was spent in the deepest anxiety, since having covered the hill and neighbouring gardens inch by inch, nothing was achieved. On the following morning, hardly day, they continued the task; edicts were published in neighbouring villages; the number of those seeking the child increased by hundreds, and yet neither did they all succeed in finding her. A whole day was passing, more than twenty-four hours since the girl had eaten; the night had been one of the coldest of the year, and with bare head and light clothing it was impossible that she could have survived, she would be dead. Besides, the mount nearby was full of hollows and dreadful ravines which in the dark were very difficult to avoid. But lo and behold, at three in the afternoon, some of the child’s uncles, hunting about in those perilous places, saw the innocent creature lying in the shelter of a strange rocky outcrop, beside a drop of many metres, almost vertical. – “Here she is, they exclaimed; but alas! She is surely dead.” They then approached her and, oh surprise!, the child stood up, serene and calm, opened her arms and headed towards her uncles as though nothing had happened. – “My child, they cry out – pressing her to their hearts – what happened to you? How were you able to bear this cold night?” – “If I haven’t been cold,” said the girl in her childish language. – “How is that possible?” – “If a woman has been with me all night and covered me with her apron.” – “A woman?” – “Yes, a woman.” – “But this woman, did she do nothing for you? Didn’t you hear us going about here with lights and making a noise and shouting out for you?” – “Yes I heard; but the woman told me: ‘Don’t move, my daughter, they will come for you in time’.” The stupor of those who heard these words reached its peak: it was a miracle! With the child back in town, on the following day a solemn Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in the Parish Church for the finding of the girl. And now the wonder... On entering the church, the girl saw an image of the Virgin of Carmel, and called out with a cry as though just finding a dear person again: “Mother, that is the woman who covered me with her apron.” Imagine the surprise these words produced. Close to the image of the Virgin there was one of Saint John the Evangelist – “Was it him?”, they asked her to see if the girl had said that out of caprice. – “No, that one,” she insisted, pointing to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel. The enthusiasm of the crowd, which literally filled the church, turned into tears of fervour, everyone broke out in tears. They drew the girl out at the end of the worship, and took her from house to house. One of them was that of the town vicar. The girl entered the Priest’s office, in which there was a picture of the Virgin of Carmel. – “That is the woman who covered me with her apron,” the child repeated. She continued visiting

many homes, and entered another where the same picture was to be found. – “That is the woman who covered me with her apron,” she repeated for the third time. “Now there is no doubt – the whole town said together – this girl has been the object of a true miracle. A miracle of the Scapular the Virgin wears, and the girl called it an apron.”

7. *Prodigy of the Axe:* In Aranda de Duero (Burgos), a married couple lived: The husband, whom antireligious reading and libertine friends had produced incredulity and scepticism, continuously insulted his wife, a fervent Christian, for her religious practices. One day, his wife returned after attending Holy Mass, and in her hand, together with a devotionalary, brought a Holy Scapular of Carmel, with which she had gone up to receive Holy Communion. The husband, in a fit of rage, snatched it from her hands, placed it on the block he used for cutting up meat and, furious, tried to chop it into pieces; however... the axe repeatedly fell upon the Scapular without damaging it in the least. On one of the chops, the axe bounced back, striking the butcher on the forehead... This opened the eyes of faith at that repeated prodigy and, kneeling before the Holy Scapular, he asked forgiveness of the Most Holy Virgin for his sacrilege. Next he went to Church where, with many tears, he confessed and received Holy Communion, and also a Holy Scapular, which he wore with singular devotion for the rest of his life. From then on he bore himself as a model Christian husband.



8. *The gallant youth with the blue flames:* Here is a trustworthy account in which the Holy Curé of Ars plays a part, Saint John Baptist Vianney, and a damsel who later became a fervent Nun. Her previous and revered parish Priest is the one who gave this true account, which he set down in writing for us. Before entering the convent, this damsel went to see the Holy Curé of Ars in order to make a general confession with him. He, on confessing her, asked: – “You should remember well, my daughter, a particular dance which you attended a while ago. At this dance you met a youth unknown to all, but with distinguished manners, who was almost the hero of the event.” – “Yes, my Father, that is so.” – “And you would have had him invite you to dance, and were full of jealousy and spite seeing that he preferred other girls and never turned to you.” – “In reality that is so, Father.” – “Do you not remember that at the youth’s departure, you thought you saw two blue flames under his feet which you took to be an illusion of the eyes, tricked by the light and the darkness?” – “that is true, all true, Father.” – “Well then, my daughter, that youth was the devil, Lucifer himself in person. Those with whom he danced were living on the way to damnation. And do you know why you were not invited by him?... It was precisely due to the Holy Scapular of Carmel you were wearing and which out of devotion to Mary you kept as a defence against his assaults.” Daughters of the Virgin: no need to tell you the impression this revelation caused to the person we speak of, and you can easily deduce from this account that purity requires us to avoid all dangerous occasions, and how very useful it is for keeping pure to have the protection of Her who is Queen and Mother of Virgins.

9. *The power of an invocation:* John Guerrero, owner of a goods store in Villa de Leiva, Colombia, recounts: I was out driving a lorry and, before reaching Leiva bridge, noted that something was wrong; that the steering was faulty, as it had jammed, and as a consequence I ended up in a roadside ditch, until one in the morning when I managed to get out of the jam. I continued on, not without commending myself with all confidence to God and to the Virgin of Carmel. I did not realize that a spring had broken, and, on taking a curve, the steering did not respond, I saw myself lost, and the lorry unavoidably overturned in a spectacular way. I then invoked the Virgin of Carmel, at the top of my voice: “Virgin of Carmel, help me!” The shock overcome, I could see that the windscreen was shattered, the bodywork turned into scrap and from my ring finger my wedding ring had disappeared, in pieces. We were six passengers and all unharmed, despite my companion having been

sent flying through the rear from the violence of the backlash, with just a light scratch on his face. We were all convinced that the Virgin of Carmel had saved our lives on that terrible night when we were at a hair's breadth from losing them. From then on I promised to pay the costs of the feast of the Virgin of Carmel on the 16th of July in the Church of the Carmelite Mothers of Leiva. For three years I have kept up this act of gratitude.

10. She broke the heavy chains of a Confraternity member of Hers: Don Charles of Verona, from a family of the nobility, was captured by the moors, who put him into a dreadful and cramped prison. He found himself chained up hands and feet, ill-treated and so tortured as hardly able to move his arms. Seeing himself in such trouble and misery, so much so that his rescue was almost impossible owing to the fabulous price the moors demanded for the ransom of his person, he appealed to our Mother and Lady of Carmel, with fervent and trusting supplications, requesting Her with living faith not to forsake him at that critical moment and draw him out alive from the awful torture he was suffering. From childhood, with great devotion, he had worn Mary's Holy Scapular and with that same devotion the hope of his release from those torments grew ever more. It happened that one night, when he cried out most fervently from the darkness of the wretched dungeon to Her who is Beacon of Unfailing Mercy, he found that the shackles and chains had fallen at his feet into pieces. Mary Most Holy appeared to him and transformed that gloomy and foul dungeon into a heaven. Taking him by the hand, She took him out of there and led him on until leaving him in a safe place secure from all future danger from the guards. Back in Naples, Don Charles proclaimed and published to the four winds the prodigy which the 'Madonna del Carmine' had performed for him, so that all might accompany him in giving thanks to Mary Most Holy who had deigned to carry out that stupendous wonder for him.

11. She frees a girl from a piece of glass choking her: On the 7th of July in the year 1615, in Seville, it happened that an eight-year-old girl, daughter of Don Sebastian Flores and Doña Teresa his wife, natives of Seville and resident in Calle Redes number 8, playing with a piece of a broken glass jar and placing it in her mouth, she was almost throttled, so that all who saw her gave her up for dead in that peril. The poor mother, wholly heartbroken, with her daughter in her arms, rigid and purple, and with the grief and feelings to be expected, drew out her own Scapular of Our Mother of Carmel which she always wore, and placing it around her daughter's neck with great fervour and trust, invoked the Most Holy Virgin, to whom she was deeply devoted, and saw that the girl at once, without any effort, coughed up the broken glass choking her. All those present who saw, and they were many, drawn by the laments and bewailing of the mother, confessed this in unanimity to be a miracle performed by the most loving Mother of Carmel by way of Her blessed and miraculous Scapular, since just by its contact the motive for the deep affliction had disappeared. The good parents, thankful to the Queen of Carmel, ran hastily to the neighbouring priory of Carmel to render humble and devout thanks to their heavenly Benefactress; and after publishing this wonder in the presence of those good Friars, who did not cease to praise their ever-loving Mother for Her many kindnesses, spread the prodigy She had performed on their little daughter throughout the city of Betis and, to perpetuate its memory, they had a pious painting done to testify to the favour and remind coming generations of the goodness and mercy of Most Holy Mary of Carmel, a picture which as a votive offering, together with a silver throat, was conserved in Our Lady's *Camarín* until the French invasion, and served greatly to stimulate devotion and fervour to such a sweet and loving Mother.

12. She preserves a renowned teacher of Salamanca: Father Don Peter Cornejo, a professor in the Cathedra of Durando at Salamanca University, refers the following case: "Days before receiving my master's degree, while sleeping at night, I was awakened by some pitiful cries like those of someone badly injured in the throes of death. Hence with all the haste such an urgent case required, I left my cell half-dressed, running towards the place where I suspected the voices came from; but as I realized on going downstairs that I only wore my tunic and

had no Scapular, feeling interiorly deeply abandoned, I went back to my room to put it on. Having done so and kissed it with fervour, I went out again in search of the place where I thought the pitiful cries came from, being wide awake. But, very strangely, though after leaving my cell I went about a long time in search of those plaintive cries, walking up and down along the cloisters, I heard not the least echo of them and, given that the whole priory was asleep in the greatest silence, I decided to go back to bed. Going out the following day to the city and heading for the University to give my class, I met the Parish Priest of Saint Isidro who, surrounded by a great crowd of people, was exorcizing a possessed man. At the cries of the unhappy possessed and the Priest's exorcism and the commotion of the bystanders, I approached to see who the poor man was, tormented by the enemy. He, as soon as he spied me, bursting out with a shrill guffaw, said to me: - 'I couldn't take Father Cornejo in last night with my pitiful groans, but if he had gone ahead and left without the Scapular, the joke would have been really good and ruinous. Give thanks to the virtue the Most Holy Virgin placed in that Scapular and the inspiration She gave you to put it on.' The words of the possessed were a motive for me of greater confidence and the deepest devotion towards the blessed Scapular of the Virgin and to give infinite thanks to our Mother, since She had freed me from a great danger."



13. Moving account by the protagonist: The word is taken up by the one favoured by Our Lady: "I found myself travelling by train along the Valencian coast, attending to the requirements of my engineering profession. The first hours of the day slipped by, monotonous and placid: I had nothing of interest to note down in my diary. A few hours more, and the situation was to change completely, in a flash, brusquely, suddenly. A long whistle from the steam engine... signs of alarm, unrelentingly repeated in an unusual way, which warned the travellers of an imminent danger, of an inevitable and colossal catastrophe... But all in vain: the danger, the catastrophe, the chaos, the tragic deaths... we had them all coming... The collision of the train I was in, with another coming straight towards us at top speed and more, brakes gone, was unforgettable, horrifying. A fatal flash of lightning on a stormy night could give an idea of the speed with which the two convoys turned into a shapeless pile of pieces of iron, cadavers, mutilated members, pieces of human flesh. From there came piercing cries, heartbreaking groans, weeping voices pleading for help... To me, nothing happened. Something quite supernatural kept me on the margin of the great, of the indescribable catastrophe, and... I don't know how to say it, I felt as though immersed in a bath of roses... I unbuckled my chest, slipped in my hand, drew out my Scapular of Carmel, brought it to my lips and exclaimed: 'You have saved me!...' Years have gone by. I was required to direct the works of exploitation in a mine, and seeing my professional engineering labours crowned with happy success, I had the inscription 'Mines of the Virgin of Carmel' placed at the head of the mine. When the proprietor arrived, who was a protestant, he disposed that the sign with which I had baptized the mine be replaced by another which offended Our Lady and wounded my deep-seated religious sentiments... What could I do to make reparation for such an offence... I don't know if I acted rightly or wrongly, believing then that I was doing good. On receiving the news, I knelt down and made this prayer: 'Virgin of Carmel, let the mine go to ruin!' When I headed for the mine, without suspecting the way in which my prayer would be answered, I was crossed paths with the gang of workers who had just abandoned work, since suddenly, without explanation by anyone and as though by magic the metal they were mining in sizable quantities, had turned before their eyes and in their very hands... into dust... into common earth... With the years the desire to live consecrated to my Protectress the Virgin of Carmel grew in my soul. For long years I had been dedicating

the 16th of each month to Our Lady, and on that day confessed and communed in her honour. I also honoured Her by rising from bed every night on awakening from my first sleep, to make my prescribed visit of an hour before an image of Hers. And here was another prodigy. For a considerable time I was victim of acute rheumatism, which prevented me from kneeling; and yet, when I practised my nightly visit as I said, I spent the whole hour kneeling without pain or weariness. I would have said that the ailment paused in its course, suspending its effects. I felt fine, completely well... All that I have just summarily recounted, places on my lips a vow, a sacred oath, which is like a spark which springs from the blaze in which my loving and grateful heart is warmed: "I want to end my days... I want to die... with great love for my Virgin of Carmel!"

14. *She frees him from being stabbed to death:* Saint Michael de la Fuente relates that, in Palma de Majorca, when Confraternity member Michael Palau left his house one night, two men went out to meet him, who out of hatred or enmity, took him between them and dealt him multiple stabs; all of which he tried to avoid with his cape; but with all his ability and diligence he could by no means avoid being struck by several of them full in the chest. However, oh prodigy or miracle of Mary Most Holy!, though they passed through his clothing and the doublet, they always came up against unspeakable resistance in the Holy Scapular of the Most Holy Virgin, without receiving the slightest scratch. Palau recognized the prodigy, since by the cuts in the doublet and the rest, by no means could he hide it. Overflowing with joy and jubilation, he went running off to the Priory of Carmel and, before the Prior and the Friars, with fervour and enthusiasm he recounted the event, which they verified from the tears in his clothing, though the most authentic testimony to this prodigy was the regular and most devout life he afterwards led for the rest of his days.

15. *The astonishing miracle of the Virgin of Carmel in Mucientes, Valladolid, Spain.* After a father had separated the head from the body of his own son, the Virgin Mary of Carmel joined them together and gave him a new life. In the area of Mucientes, Valladolid, Spain, in the year 1661, lived a poor but well-born farm worker from a respectable family. On the 14th of August that year, while reaping in a field in company with his wife and small son, troubled by fatigue, the heat and thirst, told his son: "Take this little jar and go for water, I am dying of thirst." The boy replied: "Where do you want me to get it from?" His father said that he should go to a hermitage, not far away, belonging to Our Lady of Carmel, where the Most Holy Virgin had appeared in the past, and in memory of this the hermitage had been built. The child, taking the jar which was earthenware, went to the hermitage, which he entered, placed the jar on the altar and, without considering his father's need, stayed with his childlike curiosity gazing, and gazing again, at the paintings there. Finally, deciding to leave the hermitage, the jar unfortunately broke. Fearing to touch it, he did not dare to appear before his father, who, seeing his son's delay and hold-up, told his wife to go and look for him. She obeyed at once, and found her son in the street, carrying water in his hat. He, going up to where his father was, did not dare to approach him for fear of punishment. His father reprimanded him, sending him away, but fearful he refused to obey. Ferociously annoyed, he then ran behind his little son, and when he caught up with him cut his neck with a scythe separating head from body. Realizing at once the error he had committed, full of fear he fled and hid in the hermitage. The mother, who with her own eyes had seen this dreadful misfortune, took the body in her arms, and with her hand her son's head, she more dead than alive, and fell unconscious. Then she came back to herself, and from her chest took an image of Our Lady of Carmel [doubtless stitched on to the Holy Scapular], and with a torrent of tears pouring from her eyes said: "Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, most pious Mother and Advocate of Your devotees, protect me, help me, give back life to my poor son." As soon as she had supplicated this, turning her head, she saw that there was a Woman beside her, who asked about the accident, was briefly informed of it; and then the Virgin Mary (precisely the Woman) took the body of the child together with his head, and cleansed it of earth and of blood which had

become clay, brought the head up to the body and gave him new spirit and life, and said they should go to the hermitage, that there she would find her husband and his father, and all should publish the wonder, so that Christians might give thanks to Her Divine Son, and recite the Creed three times, as convenient, and to Her the Salve Regina; and this said, disappeared. They went full of joy and jubilation, mother and son, to the hermitage, and as the Glorious Consolatrix of the afflicted had told them, found there his father and her husband, and thanking their heavenly Benefactress, the Most Holy Virgin Mary of Carmel, published the great Miracle with the most lively expressions of their hearts.



16. *A girl falls down a well in Antequera.* In the town of Antequera, on the 13th of November 1924, the child Rosario, daughter of José Sánchez and Rosario Narbona, tripped up and fell head first down a well. What a frightful moment! Amid her great distress, Doña Rosario invoked the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel with all confidence, praying that She might not allow the child of her soul to drown. They advised the father at once who, as soon as he arrived, went down the well to save his beloved daughter. They all believed that the child had already died, as more than ten minutes had passed since falling into the well water. However, oh!, goodness and power of the Virgin of Carmel! They witnessed with amazement that she not only came out alive, but that she had not come to the least harm. Once calm, the husband said that on going down into the well, he saw the girl clinging to a tube which went down inside, the child assuring that a very lovely Lady had taken her hands and placed them on that tube with a caress and telling her not to be afraid. They believed with reason that She was the Virgin of Carmel who had saved their daughter, for having worn the Scapular of Carmel and because the mother had invoked Her so very fervently. The child's parents ordered this miracle to be published for the glory of Our Most Holy Mother of Carmel and for the increase of devotion to Her blessed and miraculous Scapular.

17. *She saved a family from a calamitous accident:* The protagonist, Don Francisco Fernández Galán, narrates this miraculous event: "I was going with my wife and children on a heavy transport lorry from Montánchez in Cáceres to Sanlúcar de Barrameda, with a load of over a ton of seasoned pork to be delivered in that locality. On reaching a certain point on the road, between El Ronquillo and Santa Olalla, owing to a steering error, the vehicle ended up in the roadside ditch, overturning spectacularly and launching myself and my family without knowing how between the horrible mount of sacks and meat boxes and the smashed bodywork, turned into scrap. How did we not all die, or perish by crushing in that disaster? I only remember that I invoked the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose blessed Scapular the whole family wore with great devotion, pressing it firmly against my chest. I firmly believe that it is owing to Her immense mercy and the wonder working power of the Holy Scapular of Carmel, that we did not all perish in that calamitous accident, which happened on the 10th of March 1928. In thanksgiving we offered a perpetual Mass to the Most Holy Virgin on that day and to wear Her holy habit for life, fasting on Saturdays in Her honour, making Her wonders eternally known, praising Her without cease and wishing that all praise Her."

18. *She saves a bricklayer under Her white Mantle:* It happened in Estepa (Seville), in 1932. A local master bricklayer, a fervent Holy Scapular Confraternity member, who never left the Scapular off for his work, was working on the lining of a well. A loosening of material more than six metres high fell on top of him leaving him buried in the depths of the well, without anyone believing that he would survive. They began the work of removing the rubble, which lasted more than three days, sure of finding him dead. However, what was the surprise and rejoicing of those present when, on the third day of unprecedented labour, they



were able to hear the bricklayer's voice from very far off, who, from the bottom, cried out to them not to hurry, since beside him, and protecting him under Her white Mantle, was the Virgin of Carmel, to whom he had felt such devotion from childhood and whose blessed Scapular he wore, who told him to have no fear, since She was there to protect him and draw him out wholly safe and sound. He published this account in "Correo de Andalucía" in a beautiful article, approved as a truly miraculous occurrence by Cardinal Ilundáin y Esteban, the Diocesan Prelate in Seville at the time.

19. *"I owe my life to the Most Holy Virgin"*: Abbé Moret refers in his 'Parish Ministry' that a few years ago, in 1842, a long train was returning to Paris from Versailles and there was a hellish derailling. Two medical students managed to save their lives from the dreadful catastrophe. But one of them lost half an arm in the accident, broke his leg in the tibia and fibula, and his whole body had become a sorry sight. The

other student accompanied his friend to hospital, caring for him with brotherly concern and deeply moved at the memory of the frightful danger from which his life had been saved. He attended to the first aid of his companion, and with trembling voice told the Sister of Charity who was assisting his friend: "Sister, I am not going to recommend to you to watch with care over the health of my good friend, as I know quite well that you do your utmost for all your patients and care for them with the concern of loving mothers, but I do ask of you with all fervour that, as soon as you may, you impose on him the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel. Look, dear Sister, I am just anyone, but from very young I have worn the Scapular and am firmly convinced that it has saved me from this accident. To the Most Holy Virgin I owe my life; because I have been the only person to come out unharmed from all those in the carriage; so that I have promised the Most Holy Virgin to spread and propagate all I possibly can the blessed Scapular, which is so miraculous and to which I owe so much."

20. *Virgin of Carmel, save me!*: In the town of la Colia, in Colombia, a soldier called Gallego, with another five companions, fell into the hands of bandits. They took them to the chief bandit's post. The court martial by those soulless men was quite elementary: "One of two things: either you join our party or you will be shot at once." Gallego thought that it was not acceptable under any circumstance to betray his uniform. The other five, sons of the people like him, soldiers like him, Colombians like him, Catholics like him, thought the same way: "We are not traitors for anything in this world." Their hands were tied behind their backs and they were placed in line facing the bandit squad. The head bandit, vexed, passed roll call; he cut their faces with his machete and spat on them. Gallego drew back his face and the blade went on to cut his upper lip. "Right there, fire!" – the criminal bandit ordered. Gallego threw himself to the ground... He vehemently invoked the Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular Father Agudelo, his Parish Priest, had imposed on him. And called upon Her: "Virgin of Carmel, save me!" And... no sooner said than he dragged himself with another through the high shrubbery and grass where they were. Tied up, they could scarcely move away. He heard the agonizing groans of those shot, the curses of the murderers, their footsteps, looking for them right there, in four metres square. To the other, who like him had hurled himself to the ground and like him had tried to flee, they found and finished off right there. And... Gallego, invoking the Virgin of Carmel, one metre from the murderers, lying in the herbage... When the soulless bandits had fled from the place fearful of the troops, who were already to be heard, Gallego continued to drag himself along, and at last became visible to the soldiers. Before them, the living, and the shot companions of the advance, he explained his miracle, and before them gave fervent thanks to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel for the miracle She had performed on him.

21. *Buried in a mine*: The weekly "TÚ", Catholic Action press, a workers' organ, dated 6th

of May 1950, relates this prodigious event, showing the protection dispensed by the Virgin of Carmel to all Her devotees: "On the 12th of April, around 2 in the afternoon, when I was to be found working in the mining group 'El Merujal' (Coto del Musel), as a watchman, and on duty beneath some coal keystones, I was surprised by a tremendous fall of coal which left me buried in a tiny redoubt, with no way out. The redoubt in which I was confined was inclined, approximately 1,40 metres long by 0,40 metres wide, in which I had to stay somewhat squeezed up. Once able to light the lamp, which had gone out, I realized that I found myself in a hopeless situation, and my only exclamation was this: 'May the blessed Virgin of Carmel protect me!' In that anguishing situation, the hours and days went by, which, thanks to the lamp light (rationing the light) I was able to check, until on Saturday the 15th, another movement reduced my cavity even further, leaving me one leg tightly held by the coal and the light gone. Now in complete darkness, I lost the notion of the hour and day, making superhuman efforts to see if I could save myself. From the first day I signalled with a stone upon some brickwork, but surely due to the distance could not be answered, until finally on Sunday, when the rescue work was more advanced, I was answered, which relieved me enormously in the moral depression I was suffering; in spite of this, I lost consciousness several times, doubtless owing to suffering and physical exhaustion. Thirst devoured me and was my greatest torment, and as the air was rarefied and very stale, my situation was becoming unbearable and impossible on every account; my spirits and strength were flagging ever more, and thanks to the Virgin of Carmel, whom I constantly invoked, on Tuesday the 18th, at twelve at night, they finally reached me, opening a small hole. A companion, full of good spirits and valour, exclaimed: 'Well, Quico, now you are mine. Either I save you or die with you!' But God willed that nothing happen to my saviour or to me at that highly dangerous moment... They drew me out of my redoubt with eyes blindfolded up to the gallery, and on a stretcher transferred me to the outside and the mine's emergency centre until, after first aid, they took me to the sanatorium 'Adaro', in Sama de Langreo." Some questions were put to him and the replies of the victim were the following: – "Was there any happening in the mine, any special circumstance, by which you have the conviction of being favoured by the Virgin of Carmel?" "In the six days and ten hours my confinement lasted my situation was highly critical, owing to the gravest danger in the reduced place where I was to be found; the atmosphere was pestilent and, to judge by the mine technicians and sanitary officers, was even more miraculous than I thought. All this led me to the conviction that something supernatural was protecting me, and I have no doubt that it was the Virgin of Carmel." – "How long have you been a devotee of the Virgin of Carmel?" – "All my life long. My grandparents and parents always practised fervent devotion to the blessed Virgin of Carmel, and this, doubtless, was surely more than sufficient for this heavenly devotion to take root in me as well from childhood." – "Were you wearing the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel when the mishap occurred?" – "Yes, I was wearing it, and will wear it always. I should also make known that my case was considered so exceptionally miraculous that, in the sanatorium 'Adaro', I was visited by engineers, doctors and personages, as also by a very considerable number of miners from the whole coalfield."

22. *Freed from a terrible wound:* Anthony Busto, from Jerez de la Frontera, wrote in July 1929: "I was to be found working at my butcher's trade, when the knife I held in my hand slipped and I must have grasped at it so violently that I stuck half the blade in my stomach. I invoked the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular I, though unworthy, wore, and She heard me in those dreadful moments. I am now quite well again from that tremendous wound, necessarily mortal, as the doctors assured; but as for God there is nothing impossible, and yet more so if it is His blessed and loving Mother who asks. She wanted to save my life, so that as long as I live I may not cease to praise Her infinite mercy and propagate Her devotion."

23. *Prodigious cure:* Michael Ramón Borrás, resident of Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia, gave this account, concerning his son. The child Michael Orlando Borrás Azuero, aged 13,



had a serious attack of nephritis, complicated by a cerebral edema, and became completely blind for three days, unconscious, paralyzed, in a word, almost dead, and as such was considered. No less than eleven doctors all examined the little patient at the Marly Clinic in Santa Fe de Bogotá, and all agreed in declaring him hopeless. The child's mother, my wife, at the heights of despair, but also with limitless trust, fervently requested the Virgin of Carmel, whose blessed Scapular hung around the little patient's neck, to grant a miraculous cure to the son of her womb. And thus it happened. On the third day of that apparent death, Michael Orlando, under the astonished gaze of all observing the occurrence, began to recover his health, and in certain fashion was born again, since the 17th of December, day on which the improvement began, was precisely his birthday. To give testimony to the Virgin of Carmel of our eternal gratitude, we have ordered a Solemn Mass

to be celebrated in Her honour, in the month of July, consecrated to Her by Christian piety.

24. *Thanks to Her, she can speak:* Carmel Luque de García, sister of a Carmelite Friar, relates: "I found myself in a state of despair and extreme anguish owing to an illness of the larynx and trachea, which, despite a double operation by four of our best surgeons, humanly offered no remedy at all. I had completely lost my voice, and I could only breathe by means of a silver cannula inserted externally in the lower throat, so that I myself saw that my life could not last much longer. The thought of having to leave my husband and my little children tormented me most of all, besides as you will understand, death is always terrible to someone young and from a happy home. In these conditions I turned, a relic without faith to be sincere, to my brother Julian to ask him to obtain from you a relic of a miracle working Saint. He, after a silence of some seconds, asked me: – 'Are you wearing the Scapular of Our Most Holy Mother?' To which I answered: – 'No, and I don't know why, despite being called Carmel.' He gave me one and told me: – 'What better relic than this? Have it imposed on you and promise me not to take it off, propagate it everywhere and make a daily visit to Our Most Holy Mother praying for me and for all the Carmelite Orders of the world.' We bade farewell without further comment, and I left my brother's priory with such great faith and in such peace that I began that same morning to do as he told me. That night I slept as I had not been able for many months, and what was my amazement and that of my husband when on awakening I began to speak with a more intelligible voice, without breathing difficulties and with great spirit. Three days later and seeing the ever greater progress in my cure without remedies of any kind, I went to the general practitioner, who fell silent from amazement. He removed the cannula without making any comment, and at the end told me: – 'It's a miracle! I congratulate you. Take some vitamins and lead a normal life'."

25. *Conversion of an atheist:* It happened on the afternoon of the 22nd of April 1925, eve of the Canonical Coronation of the Virgin of Carmel in Jerez de la Frontera. A young woman of seventeen requested of Father Louis Mary Llop to have compassion on her grief and come to the aid of her dear father, who was possessed by the devil and for all the attempts and efforts the unhappy man made, helped by his good wife and by his daughter, could not succeed in overcoming the obstacle preventing him from crossing the threshold of the Church. Her father was an unbeliever and atheist, but now felt a lively interest in entering the Church and kneeling before the Virgin. Seeing that he did not succeed, his daughter asked the Priest to impose the Holy Scapular right there, and see if the Mother of God might take pity on them and grant them their petition. This Father Llop did. Straight away the man, full of emotion, said: – "May you be blessed, my daughter, for as you are an angel the Virgin has heard you to draw us to Her Son and give me back my peace of heart! I want to see Her, I want to see Her and pray to Her to take pity on my soul." He

went into the church on his knees up to the sanctuary, then climbed up into the Virgin's *camarín* and there prayed with extraordinary fervour for the space of half-an-hour, following which he rose up as though moved by a spring and, addressing his beloved daughter, told her: – “You have asked the Most Holy Virgin to have me confess, and I want to, I feel the real need, so then go to the hotel and sup at your ease, for I want to stay in church all night long to attend the Nocturnal Adoration.” Mother and daughter, clinging to his neck and weeping from emotion and joy, told him between sobs: – “We have no appetite, nor do we wish any food other than that Bread of Angels which we want to receive together with you.” There they stayed beside the Tabernacle, kneeling almost all night long. He confessed with great repentance and the three communed in the first Mass.

26. *She saves a blacksmith*: In the city of Toro (Zamora), the following case occurred, around the year 1918: A blacksmith, valiant, libertine, blasphemous and perhaps as well a skilful thief, had a violent meeting with one of his kind, from which he came out covered with stab wounds. Taken to hospital, the doctors gave him few days to live. Learning of this, a Carmelite Father went to visit him at once. The patient, on seeing him, burst out in blasphemies against everything divine and human. The good Father, very courteously, gave him to understand that, as it was his mission in the hospital to visit all the sick, it was not right to leave him out, especially being a stranger. In the afternoon, the Father went on to celebrate Holy Mass, where he preached and, the sermon ended, prayed an Our Father for a poor moribund at the point of damning himself. The following day he again visited him. – “How goes from yesterday to today, good friend?” – “Father Friar, I told you yesterday that I don't want anything to do with churches or Priests. What I want is to cover with stab wounds the one who did the same to me.” – “Well, man, right now you can't. Wait till you get better and then we shall see what can be done.” He stayed but a few moments, not to become tiresome. Again in the church, the Father celebrated his Mass, and the sermon ended, he again prayed an Our Father for him. The following day, the Father noticed that he found him more calm than on previous days, and ventured to tell him: – “Look, my son, I have the obligation to do for you what I can. Little enough, but until the moment offers the chance for something more serious, I shall leave you this souvenir; put on this Scapular, though just as something of mine, from a good friend who wishes you health.” – “Well, as something of yours I will put it on; but you people always begin like this, to coax us on.” With excellent humour and Andalusian spice, the Father told him some jokes related to his case, and left to preach the daily sermon. But shortly after ending the sermon, they came to call the Father on behalf of the poor blacksmith, who was dying without remedy. The Father, on arriving, found him on his knees on the bed: – “Father – he said – what have you put around my neck that is scorching me? But I don't want to take it off; I don't know what is happening to me. I've stopped thinking of my enemy, unless to forgive him from the heart; teach me something of the Religion of Christ, I want to be as God wills and confess.” He confessed fervently, received Viaticum and the Unction of the sick, and the poor man died in holiness like another Saint Dismas.

27. *“Dear Lady, lay Your Holy Scapular on my son!”*: A healthy and good-looking boy, one bad day, awoke gravely ill. A purulent pleurisy of maximum malignity made an operation necessary, which was to take place on the 16th of July 1935. The father took the boy to the operating theatre while the mother ran to the Church of Carmel and, after confessing and communing, prayed to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel that, if She took her creature, to do so without martyring his poor little body. – “Let him die, dearest Virgin, let him die, if need be! But not suffer! Dear Lady, lay Your Holy Scapular on my son!”, she said over and over amid tears and sobs. And thus she went on, enveloped in the semi-darkness of the Church. All of a sudden she felt a hand weighing on her shoulder, that of her husband. – “Has he died? Has he died?”, the mother asked on seeing the father's pale face. – “¡No, no; he is alive and well and awaits you!” – “So the operation turned out well, then?” – “No, it was not



necessary; the doctors can't explain what happened. They took him to the table; Doctor Ramoneda re-examined him, and with surprise on his face called the other doctors who were with him. They did not speak, they said nothing, I understood from their faces that something serious had occurred, but did not dare ask; I believed that the boy was going to die... At last the silence broke: 'Yes, yes, there is no pus; the little cut made yesterday from the perforation has healed, no fever... Amazing, amazing. See for yourselves.' They examined him again, and addressing me, Doctor Ramoneda told me: – 'The boy is cured; it has doubtless been God, not me; take him with you...' I wrapped up my boy carefully and brought him home; I still can't explain what happened." – "I can, I can!", exclaimed the mother. – "It has been the Virgin of Carmel who, seeing my tears, contemplating my grief, has shown pity and has cured my son.

She has saved him! She has given him back to me! Thanks, Mother of mine, thanks!"

28. *After he removes his scapular, a lascivious man is torn to pieces by the devil.* The renowned master Friar John Pinto de Victoria, certifies that in a Portuguese city where he was superior, there was a chief personage (whose name, as that of the city, I omit, being high-born and his case quite scandalous). This gentleman wore Most Holy Mary's blessed Scapular, but only materially, content to have it around his neck but without attending in any way to the most elemental obligations of a Christian, and less still the particular ones of a Confraternity member of Most Holy Mary. This gentleman lived licentiously, committed to every kind of excess and vice, like an unbridled horse in the ruinous vice of lust which the Most Holy Virgin so detests in those who wear Her precious livery, in whom She would see the firmest resolve never to stain themselves with such an evil. The wretched gentleman, dominated by this fatal vice, solicited an elegant damsel with perverse intention, and after many days of lewd and affectionate flirting, seducing her with compliments, promises and gifts of precious stones, at last succeeded in what with multiplied offences against God he had solicited from her for a long time. The night assigned for achieving or satisfying his lasciviousness was the ruinous theatre where the pitiful tragedy of his tragic end was to be represented. He went out that night from home, jovial and cheerful, well-groomed and perfumed, making his way hastily to the place of his perdition. But though blinded by his twisted desires, his passion did not blind him to the point that he did not notice a little dog or black greyhound, which he observed with stupor gradually growing until becoming a terrible wolfhound in the measure that he drew closer to the house of his amorous appointment. The unhappy man could well have known that the enormous wolfhound neither was nor could be anything other than Lucifer himself, whose strength was increased by his wayward steps. He ignored that whole phenomenon owing to his obstinacy in evil, and having reached the house he gave the agreed sign for them to open the door, and entered that infernal den and after him that frightful hound. O wretch! If you had known that you were to enter that house alive and leave as a corpse! Oh! If you had known that this door was to be for you the gate to hell, you would rather die a thousand times than try to cross that threshold. Who could tell you! But without any doubt you would not have believed, when the presence of that ferocious and monstrous animal accompanying you did not detain you. At last he arrived at the room where he hoped to satisfy his twisted and depraved desires. The timid lady was surprised at the horrifying presence of that terrible wolfhound, but he calmed her saying that he was a greyhound which had become attached to him and had come in his company in case something might happen to him. After enjoying some loving and pleasing talk, the moment came in which he removed his Holy Scapular. That was the sign and the moment awaited by Lucifer to undo him, since to remove it and assault him that beast of Hell, disguised in the figure of

a wolfhound, was one moment. Oh! What horror to see those eyes glittering breathing fire from the mouth! Oh! What terror would take hold of the lady's spirits to see how, hurling him to the floor, he seized him by the throat and his breast, and drawing out his heart gobble it up! As though not satisfied, the animal looked around threateningly as though insinuating to her that her chastisement would be similar, since her offence had been similar. But it was just a threat or a warning to serve as a lesson for her, since disappearing he left the lifeless body on the floor, while his soul went to appear before the Judge without appeal. The lady, horrified at such a sad and dreadful case, as soon as it dawned, ran desolate and turned into a sea of tears to the Church of the Convent of Carmel and called her confessor, Father Pinto de Victoria, amid sincere and sorrowful tears of repentance related the happening. The Father, who enjoyed great prestige and influence in Portugal, disposed that the corpse be buried at once in the greatest secrecy, so as not to defame the two families; however, so that the memory of such an exemplary chastisement might not to be buried with him, some years later he had it printed, with the authorization of the lady and with the approbation of the Ordinary, so that if anyone were to imitate him in depravity of life, though he were to wear the Scapular, he might fear to incur such a disastrous death, and so that all of us who wear the sacred livery of Mary might know how important it is to wear it with purity, as the garment of so very sweet and immaculate Mother.

29. *She lights a stove to commit suicide:* A Little Sister of the Poor, who died in France as a Superioress, relates an occurrence in her own life: "My father having died, we went to live in Paris, my mother, by then elderly, and myself. At home we had enough money to open a modest workshop, and as I was able, thanks be to God, to earn a living by my work, I succeeded in saving up a small capital. But afterwards my poor mother fell mortally ill, though her illness was to be very long... I closed my workshop and my shop and, leaving all, I devoted myself solely to relieving my mother's sufferings (whom I loved with all my heart), and to prolong her life undermined by an incurable cancer. At the end of two years my dear patient died, and I was then alone in the world, and not only orphan but also ruined, since all my savings and earnings had been spent on the illness. That death, that loneliness, that ruin, were my perdition. Effectively, I lost hope in Our Lord and God, I despaired and, finally, to commit suicide, I did as you will read: One night in the month of July I entered the room I had rented for myself, I took a large stove, I filled it with coals and lit it and, having closed the door and the window, I lay down to die sweetly by asphyxia. It would be five in the morning when by chance, that is providentially, an old friend of mine came to visit me having just arrived in Paris at that hour. She called at my room; and as no one answered, asked the neighbours for me; and with all suspecting a calamity, they removed the lock from my door and were shocked to see me dead. Also by chance, that is providentially, at that moment the famous Doctor Recamier entered the house to visit a patient, and the neighbours asked him to go in to see me. The doctor examined me very slowly and declared to all those present that I was dead, quite dead. But casually, that is providentially, the doctor saw that I was wearing the Carmelite Scapular, and then exclaimed: 'No, gentlemen, this woman should not be dead; she is wearing the Holy Scapular; and no suicide succeeds in dying, however hard he tries, when wearing this sacramental talisman.' The doctor then took my scapular in his hands, put it back well, looked again, and again, sounded my stiff body and examined me more at length. Useless effort! He did not succeed in finding any sign of life. But not on this account did this most Christian doctor give up, whose face quite clearly displayed the sorrow, the pain, the surprise and the depth of his concern. Suddenly he said: 'Bring me, bring two wooden mallets, and we shall beat the whole body, particularly the stomach area. It cannot be that someone who wears the Scapular of Carmel should have died in despair.' They began softly to beat my cold body with the mallets; and every minute the wise and pious doctor carefully examined my stiff remains without perceiving or discerning the least sure sign of life. And thus one hour went by: they beating me with the mallets and the doctor



observing my cadaver with close attention and vigilance. But all of a sudden Doctor Recamier's face lit up; he, with tears in his eyes, began to cry out: 'Now, now life is returning to the body. I said well that Our Lady of Carmel could not let someone die like this wearing Her Holy Scapular.' Confused, amazed and alarmed were those present who, after that long struggle, almost funereal, had by then lost all hope. But afterwards they all outdid themselves in caring lovingly for this unhappy sinner. Finally I completely recovered my health; I wept my sin, I asked pardon from God and man and entered a convent. I will then owe my eternal salvation to the blessed Scapular of the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel."

30. *Double cure of a man given up by the doctors:* Bordeaux, 1952. Don Álvaro Vieira do Valo Vollvao, some thirty odd years old, native of Meimoa, Vieira, Baixa (Portugal), had a grave stomach illness in the Pellegrin Hospital. The doctors, who had just given him up, subjected him to an operation as a last resort,

with few hopes left. He emerged with life, but the operation did not have the desired effect, he was still a hopeless case. Father James Seijas, a Jesuit, who was working in the Spaniards' Home at Bordeaux, visited the patient and began to appreciate the magnificent qualities of that hopeless case. "Really," said Father Seijas, "he was an integral Christian, with a very notable personality, and with great influence on all who knew him in the pavilion. I imposed the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel upon him and told him: – 'You have to ask for a cure from the Most Holy Virgin, since you cannot die. You still have much good to do to your fellows.' The patient began to pray insistently to the Virgin for his cure, and in a short time was completely well." But a frightful rheumatism then attacked him. Father Seijas suggested he make a vow to pilgrim to Fátima, if the Virgin cured him. Not much time went by and the patient, wholly cured, turned again to Father Seijas, who had to refuse to accompany him on his thanksgiving pilgrimage to Fátima despite his insistent pleas.

31. *She cures a child:* Mary García de Vélez, Málaga, made known the miraculous cure of her son as follows: "One day last month, January, one of my children felt ill and, without us giving the least importance to the case, our local doctor was called to examine him. But what atrocious suffering did his words produce in our hearts! "The boy", he told us "what he has is pleurisy and I find him seriously ill." And so he was in effect. His fever, from that moment, was very high, so that the doctor decided to puncture his side, as a purulent liquid had formed which he necessarily had to drain at once. This the doctor did twice, one litre each time, and assured that he would have to repeat this two or three times until not a drop remained. But here came the protection of our sweetest Mother of Carmel: We prayed to Her with all our soul for the health of our beloved patient, if convenient, and not to have to puncture him again, since my little son suffered horribly during those dolorous episodes, and I, with him, in my mother's heart. All of us at home began a novena to our most loving Mother of Carmel, and on the ill side I placed the Scapular which the Virgin of our image has in Her hands, for he wears the Confraternity one on his breast with great fervour. Our prayers and tears were such that the Heart of the Heavenly Lady was surely moved since, in a few days and following several examinations, the doctor said: – "It seems incredible, but it is true, there is no further liquid at all, so that I shall no longer puncture him." And so it happened, and the fever disappeared completely."

32. *Oh!, prodigy! The gangrene disappears:* Alphonse Pradera writes from Badajoz, on the 6th of April 1926. "On March the 3rd last, on my way back from hunting, I had the misfortune that my horse jumped with fright, catching me unawares, as I was busy placing the musket on the saddle tree. At the animal's jump, I fell to the ground, breaking my right tibia. Twenty days later, a gangrenous stain appeared in the wound, which worried me and

greatly alarmed the whole family. Afterwards I learnt that the doctors were very concerned. I was fully aware of the extraordinary seriousness of the case, and I then promised the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose blessed and miraculous Scapular I wear with great fervour from childhood, that if they did not have to amputate the leg I would pray Her Little Office every day and give a silver leg to put in Her *camarín*. I began a novena to the Virgin in company with my wife and daughters, all very pious and loving towards the Queen of Carmel. I placed the blest Scapular on the damaged part and, oh prodigy!, the following day the little stain of gangrene began to disappear, after two days the flesh was quite sound. The doctors have been as surprised as us at this prodigy.”

33. *She cures a child of meningitis*: Rosario Suárez y Suárez writes on the 4th of December 1952, to the director of ‘El Santo Escapulario’:

“I fervently commended my son Antoñito, aged five, grievously ill with tubercular meningitis, to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, placing on him his Scapular, which I always wear since girlhood, and the Heavenly Lady heard, benevolent, my ardent plea. My little son healed rapidly, to the great surprise and admiration of the doctors attending him, of all my relatives and friends and of the whole town. His first words were: – ‘Mamma, take me to church to see the Virgin of Carmel.’ I took him to church and, prostrate at the feet of the sacred image of Our Lady, I gave Her thanks, weeping with joy, and I brought two candles which my own son told me to offer. From this day on I take my son every day to church for him to give thanks to the Most Holy Virgin for such a singular favour.”

34. *A little blind girl recovers her sight*: This prodigy happened in Jerez de la Frontera, in 1952: A girl had become blind, victim of tubercular meningitis, without the doctors giving the least hope to the innocent little girl of recovering the extinguished light of her pupils. “Only a miracle can give back her sight,” the fervent doctor had told the good mother. The heart of the pious mother had been preparing the heart of her beloved daughter with a faith, a humility and a perseverance which the Heart of the most clement and sweet Mother of God is unable ever to resist. And with that faith which breaks up stones and moves mountains, she whispers into the heart of her innocent daughter: “But if She does not perform the miracle, it will be because we do not merit it, or that blindness is more convenient for your salvation.” In these conditions, and with the sure conviction of being heard and attended, the hour came for kissing the hand of the Virgin. When the mother went up, fearful yet trusting, and suggested to her daughter to hope against all hope to be heard and attended by the goodness of our sweet Mother, the tender girl, giving a sigh of love and with all her soul pursed her lips to kiss the Holy Scapular, felt a shiver and a sudden shudder in her whole being, and all of a sudden: “Mother, I see the Virgin! How very beautiful She is!” All those around felt a shivering at the supernatural and sublime, and with a knot in the throat rendered a tribute bursting with love to our Crowned Mother.

35. *Sickness and cure*: Father Paul of the Saints tells us that in Prague there was a noble gentleman called John Baptist Castelo, whose wife Barbara was most devout to the Holy Scapular and very observant of everything prescribed for gaining the Sabbatine Indulgence, of all of which her unbelieving husband made fun, taking it all as a joke. The devout lady bore and supported this with great patience, but one day told him: “Don’t take the things of the Virgin Most Holy as a joke, in case you bring upon yourself the anger and fury of the Lord.” And in a few days he fell ill with an excruciating disease which worsened day by day, until he completely lost his sight. He stayed like this for six months, without the least hope of a remedy, though he called the most renowned doctors in the whole country. Finding himself in such a lamentable state, he began to ponder how quickly he had lost his health after his wife had pronounced that fateful sentence. But God Our Lord, who wanted



him healthy, but repentant, began to infuse light into his soul, so that aware of his errors, he might beg forgiveness of God, placing our sweet Mother Mary as intercessor. Absorbed in suchlike ideas, he fell into a deep sleep, obtaining the best recipe for his health, since in dreams he saw the Most Holy Virgin with the habit of Carmel telling him to have the Holy Scapular imposed, and with it, together with his sight he would receive perfect health of soul. Once himself again, he recounted to his wife what had happened. And she, full of joy and longing for him to receive the Scapular, at once called her confessor, who imposed it, and heard besides his most humble and fervent confession. At the moment of receiving Holy Communion, he suddenly recovered his sight, thus showing the miraculous effect which the recipe had, though in a dream: swift, efficacious and prodigious.

36. *Freed from a mortal accident:* Friar Saint Michael de la Fuente (deceased in 1625) says that in Palma de Mallorca, a noble and pious gentleman had a hemiplegia attack with paralysis of all one side of his whole body, when in a country house some distance from the city. As soon as the doctors and surgeons of that time arrived, they at once decided to bleed him, which they did without delay. Seeing, then, that medicines and science were powerless to save the patient's life, they turned to supernatural remedies. Despite this, the good man collapsed and his life was in grave danger, since the doctors judged that he would not survive. In such circumstances, Leonore Ortiz, a Carmelite Tertiary, who had commended him heartily to the Most Holy Virgin, took her Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel and placed it on the patient, telling him: "Hope in the protection and favour of the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, for She, as kind-hearted and merciful Mother is to heal you. Offer to dress for the rest of your life in Her holy habit and have the greatest confidence in Her." This he did and, receiving the Holy Scapular with fervent devotion, he kissed it with great respect and humble and trusting affection, and immediately to the admiration and astonishment of all those present, without any further medicines, was completely restored.

37. *Cure of a paralytic:* In the Home of the Little Sisters of the abandoned poor in Burgos, they had taken in the elderly Louis Beltrán, native of Covarrubias, Burgos province, seventy-five years of age, a complete invalid, with legs rigid and stooped body, unable to move except with two crutches. All the remedies the doctors had applied resulted ineffective, so that they had left him as incurable, and he was resigned to spend the time of life granted him by God in that lamentable state. During the novena to our Mother of Carmel, which was celebrated every year in that Home with great solemnity, in 1921, the Home Chaplain, Don Rosendo Álvarez, imposed on him the Scapular of Carmel. Both during the Novena, as in the Holy Mass and act of imposition, our patient commended himself fervently to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, asking for the grace to be able to fend for himself without other help, at least in ordinary things, so as to avoid troubling others. The kind-hearted Mother did not need to be asked twice. The fortunate old man recounts that hardly had the Holy Scapular been imposed than he noticed a strange trembling in his whole body, observing at the same time that his legs were losing their stiffness and that he could straighten his trunk. His first thought was to throw away his crutches and began to cry out: "Miracle, miracle!", but such was the impression this caused him that he could not convince himself of what he was feeling. Fearful of being a victim of hallucination, he continued to use the crutches for the rest of that day. At night time, and before the patient went as usual to bed, he tried to close the window without the help of the crutches, which caused him no difficulty. Full of joy he undressed and went to bed, to the great surprise of the male nurse when, on arriving to put him to bed, he found him already there with his face full of joy. The following day he dressed by himself and went to the Chapel like the rest, where he heard Holy Mass and communed kneeling, something he had been unable to do since having the paralysis.

38. *The girl born crippled:* In 1665 a girl who had been born crippled, daughter of Leonard Levens, natural of Sterrebeek, Belgium, was cured by intercession of the Virgin of Carmel. While the parents were grieving at the girl's misfortune, a lady devotee of Carmel told them:

“Why don’t you place the Holy Scapular on her and make a Novena to the Virgin?” – “Surely we don’t know any more which Saint to turn to! In Heaven they don’t hear us.” – “But what does it cost? Do one, for the Virgin of Carmel is very compassionate.” The conviction with which that woman spoke impressed the parents, and on the fifth day the child walked perfectly. The event was recorded by a commemorative inscription in that locality.

39. *Freed from a deep well:* Saint Michael de la Fuente, a Carmelite Priest, relates the following event in his ‘Historical Compendium of Our Lady of Carmel’: In a town not far from Naples, a boy aged ten called Dominic, who wore the Scapular of Our Most Holy Mother with devotion, offended with the simplicity of his few years and his candid innocence a heartless man who, enraged, struck him grievously and, giving him up for dead, threw him down a deep well in the neighbourhood. To hide his crime he then flung a great number of enormous stones to make it more difficult for his monstrous barbarity to be discovered by anyone. On noting his absence, his afflicted parents sought him everywhere wanting to find the son of their entrails, alive or dead, whom they believed had been devoured by some inhuman beast. Despairing of finding him alive, they made a vow to the Most Holy Virgin our Mother to consecrate him to Her in the Carmelite Order as soon as he should appear. Meanwhile a humble shepherd called Hannibal, who was keeping his livestock not far from that well where the boy devoted to the Virgin was buried, saw that one of his sheep, separating from the rest, was going up to the well, running the danger of falling inside, having no parapet. The little shepherd threw a stone to see if he could shoo her away from there, but with the noise he saw it approach closer, so that he decided to go himself and frighten it away. But, oh! Miracle of the Mother of mercies! As soon as he approached, he perceived a pitiful and weak voice calling his name from the bottom – ‘Hannibal! Hannibal!’ the shepherd heard calling him. Confused at this strange novelty and, making sure of what he heard, he ran hastily to the town to inform Justice of the happening. All ran alarmed towards the well and perceived the same voice announced by Hannibal. They tied a rope to a resolute youth and had him descend to the bottom. One by one he removed the stones covering the body of the frail child, more than enough to crush and kill him without fail if the Virgin had not watched over him; and, on recognizing that it was Dominic, for whom his parents wept inconsolably, began to cry out with unspeakable joy, communicating to all the fortunate news. He was brought up from the well alive, though very short of breath owing to the great weight lying upon the poor soul, but at once he recovered. Borne in arms to the town, on the following day, which was Saturday, they saw him completely well, cheerful and happy, remembering nothing of what had happened at the bottom of the well. On the following day, Sunday, they brought him in solemn procession to the city of Naples, surrounded by an immense multitude of faithful, and led him to our priory where, without delay, his devout parents gave him over to Mary Most Holy, clothing him in our holy habit.”

40. *The Virgin frees from death underground:* Recorded by Sebastian Marín Zapata, resident of Manizales, 65 years of age, concerning a prodigious favour from the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel towards the end of 1950, freeing him from death. While working in the Manizales township, digging out a trench for the town drainage system at a depth of six metres, there suddenly occurred a fall of earth and stones, burying him in the debris. Though there was a whole team of workers at the task, only three were in the trench, and he alone was caught by the fall. The breach was one and a half metres wide. The earth covered him completely, so that several tons had fallen upon him. Finding himself buried, he invoked the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular he wore, and tried to force his way out of the earth on top of him and escape the danger. In this struggle to free himself, which lasted but little, he lost



consciousness. Thus he stayed for fifteen minutes, buried by the caved-in rubble. As they told him, after exactly a quarter of an hour they uncovered his head. They then wanted to give him water, but his mouth and nostrils were full of earth. The firemen took him to the Presentation Clinic, where after an hour and thirty minutes he recovered consciousness. At this portentous favour, Sebastian Marín did not tire of giving thanks to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel and recommending all to be highly devout to the Heavenly Lady, sure of receiving Her motherly protection always and everywhere.

41. *She saves a woman from dying at childbirth*: Friar Gonzalo de los Mártires, Discalced Carmelite, relates that in Marbella, city of the Malaga diocese, a devout woman found herself in the throes of death giving birth with great difficulty. For four days the creature, believed dead and placed crosswise, put her in imminent danger of death. In such critical circumstances, the patient's parents called Fr. Gonzalo de los Mártires to confess and help her to die a good death. After having confessed her and before bringing her Holy Viaticum, the good woman requested the Father to leave her his Scapular for a while, as she trusted that the virtue the Most Holy Virgin had given to it would free her from her dangerous and anguishing trial. Father Gonzalo took his Scapular off and, handing it to the matrons attending the lady, withdrew to pray in another room some distance away. Hardly had he given the Scapular to the matrons when they placed it on the woman in labour, and at once the foetus moved within, and she gave birth happily to a robust boy, filling all her relatives with joy and happiness, who ran with haste to give thanks to the Most Holy Virgin in Her Church, and celebrated a solemn feast to give thanks for such a fortunate outcome.

42. *Prodigy for a woman giving birth*: Father John of the Angels, a Carmelite, refers as witness that while begging alms in a factory of Rui Díaz Pacheco in the locality of a sugar cane plantation belonging to Rodrigo Díaz Pacheco, in the province of Michoacán in Mexico, it happened that a poor woman was so encompassed by labour pains for the space of three days, unable to deliver the creature, positioned crosswise, that she was in evident danger of death. Devotion in the province and everywhere else in the Indies to the Holy Scapular of Carmel is so very deep, so cordial and fervent, that it moved them to ask the good Father for a Scapular to apply to the patient, so that she might be relieved in her trouble. The Father then gave them the small Scapular he used to wear to sleep. Those present applied it to the patient with very great faith and devotion. At once the labour pains ceased, and she gave birth to a lovely creature with the greatest ease and happiness, which moved the mother to give her the name Mary of Carmel, for the favour granted her by the Most Holy Virgin, to whom all gave the most devout thanks, celebrating Her goodness and heavenly virtue enshrined in Her most blessed Scapular.

43. *Struck by lightning*: On the 12th of October in the year 1656, a dreadful storm suddenly arose, preceded by a great display of thunder and lightning, which filled with consternation and panic the whole Segorbe district of Valencia. While out in the fields Santiago Caspe, an inhabitant of the neighbouring town of Castellfort, was struck by lightning which enveloped him wholly in fire, in one second reducing all his clothing to ashes, with his whole body burnt like charcoal. Solely the front part of the Scapular and what it covered remained intact. Thus was the first prodigy, followed by not having lost his life. He felt so tranquil and so calm and so far from all distress of soul, that he was able to cry out with all cognizance and all awareness to Most Holy Mary, our Mother, to come to his aid, and in a short while recovered his speech and with a faltering voice asked for confession. The Most Holy Virgin caused him to be heard in a hamlet not far away, where a Priest had taken refuge. They came running from there to the place and were left speechless and absorbed on contemplating the terrible spectacle. He confessed and, some days later, told those attending him: "Have patience, and for love of God forgive the trouble I cause you, for until Saturday, day of my Blessed Mother of Carmel, I am not to leave this life to go and enjoy Her." And so it happened.

44. *Freed from the effects of a viper's bite*: Filocalo Caputo, in his work "Il Monte Carmelo",

relates that Anthony Ferrato, while going his way, saw a viper high up on a wall, beside which he necessarily had to pass, and to avoid the danger of being bitten, he struck it to the ground with a stick. However, the snake, irritated, jumped up at his face and bit him under the eye, and in a short while his head swelled up, so that he appeared a monster, and became completely blind. The neighbours of the place, hearing his cries, resorted to all the home remedies they used to employ in such critical and desperate junctures, but all were late in coming or inefficacious, since none of them produced the desired effect on the unhappy farmer. His pious wife, most devout to Our Mother of Carmel, encouraged him to place his whole trust in Her, and seeing his health so precarious, swiftly went trustingly to the Chapel of the Most Holy Virgin, and in a vessel brought back a little oil from the lamp burning before Her miraculous Image of Carmel. She applied it to the head of her unfortunate and optimistic husband, and at once his atrocious pains began to lessen and the inflammation gradually to go down, so that in a very short time he could breathe without difficulty. He took a few hours to recover perfect health and, together with his pious wife, at once made his way to the Chapel of the Most Holy Virgin to give fervent thanks to this Mother of goodness and mercy.



45. *She saved her from two rabid wolfhounds:* Father Theophilus Raynaud, of the Company of Jesus, relates a case that took place in his time involving a Nun, Sister Mary Martina, Superioress of the Royal Convent of the Martyrs in Paris, and which he heard from her own lips. This Nun, on the 8th of December, feast of the Immaculate Conception, going down very early to a room below in the convent, quite close to the basement and the coal cellar, to collect some things quite indispensable, found herself unexpectedly assaulted by two wolfhounds, which they kept to guard the convent garden but which did not recognize her. The two animals, attacking her furiously and rabidly, threw her to the floor and snapping, stripped her of almost all her clothing. Grunting and pawing savagely they tried to remove her Scapular of Carmel, but did not succeed. She shouted out with desperate cries, without being heard by any of the Sisters, since Sister Mary Martina was in a spot far from the dormitories and the choir, where almost the whole community would have been by then. In her abandonment and the tribulation she invoked Our Mother, and Mary Most Holy did not disregard the cries Her maidservant addressed to Her, so that the dog, at the point of throttling her, suddenly freed his prey and the two wolfhounds, howling out wildly and fiercely, as if possessed by the devil, went and jumped into a channel where they perished by drowning. The Nun, somewhat recovered, left the cellar as best she could, and though she would have wished and tried to hide the prodigy from her daughters, she could not, and with tears of the most profound and sincere gratitude requested them to accompany her to the choir to intone a Magnificat to the Most Holy Virgin for the peerless benefit which this sweetest and loving Mother had just granted her.

46. *She frees him from a bear:* Daniel of the Virgin Mary (died 1678) relates that, in Naples, when the farmer Bartholomew Fayeta was out hunting, he discovered a hare among the shrubbery and, following the trail, absorbed and keen on catching up with it, the good man lost his way, and finally realized he could not get his bearings, with the field covered in snow. He thus wandered about aimlessly almost the whole afternoon without finding the means or any track by which to reach the road, and when he most anxiously sought the way so that night might not fall upon him, he found himself facing a bear who did, and throwing him onto the snow, it seized him by the throat to devour him. In his tribulation and distress, in the depths of his heart he commended himself to Mary our Mother of Carmel, whose Scapular he wore with devotion. At that moment, the bloodthirsty beast,

freeing its prey, set off running, leaving him with just the memory of the shock and the danger, confirmed by the signs of the seizure made in his throat but without causing him any damage or injury. The devout and fortunate Bartholomew, falling to his knees, gave heartfelt thanks to Mary Most Holy, his Saviour, and as a precaution, as dark night was falling, he climbed up into a tree, awaiting sunrise, so as to find his bearings and return home as soon as possible. Once it had dawned, he found the pathway without great difficulty and running fast made his way to Naples, publishing along the way at the top of his voice the prodigy dispensed to him the previous evening by Mary Most Holy.

47. *On taking the Scapular She saves him from death:* Around the year 1898, there was a certain young man of Le Havre, fifteen years old, named Joseph, son of the captain of a merchant ship. Our young man embarked on it, full of confidence. The youth, imprudently showing off his courage, was swept away by a giant wave from the bow of the ship into the abyss of the sea. Only one sailor heard him cry out faintly a few metres away from him, and knowing from the voice that the man overboard was the captain's son, in company with another sailor he jumped into the ship's launch in order to help the unfortunate young man, who did not know how to swim. Seeing that the sailors were speeding out to save him, the young man, remaining with remarkable prodigy above the waters and showing them the Holy Scapular with one hand, shouted that the Most Blessed Virgin had saved him. They finally managed to pick him up and, taken on the shoulders of one of the sailors to the ship, he fell into the arms of his father, who was sobbing with emotion, telling him in the presence of everyone that the Virgin of Carmel had saved him, because when he fell, while fighting with the rough waves, he heard a very sweet voice that told him: "Take the Scapular in your hands and you will not perish." He felt at the same moment that a hand grabbed him, and, holding him up gently, prevented him from sinking into the abyss. After calm was restored and spirits subsided, he had everyone, kneeling on the deck of the ship, pray a Hail Holy Queen to the Virgin.

48. *Saves a young woman on the beach:* From Iznalloz, Granada, on January 6, 1929, Señorita María Martín wrote to the magazine 'El Santo Escapulario': "Revered Father in Jesus Christ: I would like you to give publicity to these lines for the glory of our Blessed Mother of Carmel, whose Scapular I wear. While last summer in the seaside resort of Almería, one afternoon I let go of the thick rope that is set up for those of us who do not know how to swim, at which moment a giant wave came, which drew me a long way out and to great depths. I, who do not know how to swim, seeing myself in such a great predicament, invoked the shelter and protection of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular I was wearing, and immediately another wave, as if moved or propelled by the hand of the Most Blessed Virgin, took me to safety beside my family. As soon as I came out of the water, I knelt down to pay fervent thanksgiving to our Mother of Carmel."

49. *The Queen of the seas protects the missionary and his companion:* We were in the stormy days of September 1957, in which the fresh winds from the south turned the Gulf of Urabá, Colombia, in the Caribbean Sea, into a true corner of the devil, as the veteran sailors of the place call it. We were coming – the Father Missionary explained – from a long day on the small mission boat, when a bad storm came upon us. My Indian companion and I, with all our hearts, asked the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel to protect us in that fateful hour. It seems to me that I am still watching the poor little Indian, trembling with fear, with a broken voice, say these beautiful words that I will never forget: – "My Mother of Carmel, save us, deliver us, dear Mother!" On his brown chest the beautiful livery of salvation floated gracefully: the Holy Scapular. We fled, sailing backwards, leaving behind the monstrous sea, become an enemy. Those waves seemed like mountains! And we sailed placidly in calm waters as if by magic. I ask, who protected us in that terrible danger? There is no doubt that it was the Queen of the Seas, the Virgin of Carmel! This loving Mother covered us with Her mantle until we arrived at the little port of Titumate without

incident. Here we slept peacefully on board, and at dawn we began the return trip, enjoying a calm sea and a beautiful cloudless sky.

50. *He did not know how to swim and was saved:* The newspaper ABC, of April 22, 1928, reported the following: “Pontevedra. On the fishing steamer *Amancia*, owned by Luciano Soto, the boiler exploded when its crew were engaged in fishing in the Marín estuary, near the island of Sálvora. The steamer sank quickly, and the crew members, wounded and battered, had a very rude fight with the sea for two hours, with some of them managing to save themselves. The survivors were picked up by the fishing boat *Río Ebro*, which took them to Marín, where they were attended and cared for in the first aid quarters of the Naval Estate. One of the injured, Laureano Vilariño, told everyone present that he did not know how to swim and that fighting the waves for three quarters of an hour he was saved thanks to his invocations of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel and the miraculous lifebelt of his blessed Scapular, which He wore with great faith from very young. He never tired of praising Mary and urging everyone to adorn themselves with such a blessed livery and so ever merit Her protection and Her salvation at the hour of death.”



51. *A sailor's vow:* In *The Golden Ant* issue of July 16, 1887, the following event is related: “Thirty years ago Barcelona witnessed a moving spectacle. It was on July 16th, Feast of Our Lady of Carmel, and in the Ramblas and the Boquería flats a group could be seen growing larger by the minute. The men were full of admiration, and the women cried with emotion. What was happening? A very common act among early Christians and in the Middle Ages, but very rare in our unbelieving times. A middle-aged man, tanned by the sun of the tropics, dressed in a coarse habit, girded with a rope, and with a long chain tied around the neck which he dragged along the ground, on all fours, all the way from the maritime neighbourhood of Barceloneta, was heading for the temple of Our Lady of Bethlehem. The fatigue that this caused the penitent was indescribable. His knees had been skinned due to the distance, and the drops of blood that marked the cobblestones were the trail he left in his wake. The weight of the chain, the violence of his position, and the hot sun falling on his head, made him sweat profusely and caused him to gasp, moving others to compassion. His strength exhausted, and almost fainting, he climbed the stone steps of the temple, and continued crawling on to the chapel of the Virgin of Carmel, illuminated by a thousand lights. Arriving in front of the altar, he kissed the ground three times, rose up on his knees and, with his arms outstretched, as fatigue permitted, he exclaimed, sobbing: – ‘Thank you, my Mother! Thank you, Virgin of Carmel! Not in vain did I invoke your help in the storm. Our ship was going to sink into the ocean. We were going to die without remedy, and the memory of my poor children and my unfortunate wife made me weep. In the midst of my companions’ despair, I remembered the prayers of my mother and my wife. I took the Scapular that my wife had hung around my neck on the day of our farewell; I gave it a kiss of tenderness, and turning towards the sky covered by clouds and crisscrossed by lightning, between the tremendous boom of thunder and the roar of the waves that were going to swallow us up, on my knees I shouted: ‘Virgin of Carmel, save us!, we perish! Have mercy on our wives and our innocent children. I make a vow, if you save us from death, to visit you in your Carmel chapel, in the temple of Bethlehem, in Barcelona, dragging myself along the ground with a chain around my neck.’ The Virgin heard my vow; the storm calmed down at once, and the rainbow shone in the firmament. There I saw You, my Mother, as if on a throne of a thousand colours, with your white mantle and Your brown Carmel habit.’ This he said amid the commotion of all those present, and a solemn service began in honour of the Virgin of Carmel, with the vast temple completely filled with faithful.”

52. *She saves a young man from certain shipwreck:* Father Bartholomew of the Ascension

relates a prodigious case that the Virgin performed for a boy of about fourteen years old, which determined his vocation to Carmel. Sailing in a boat from the port of Acapulco to the Philippine Islands, the young man fell into the sea, the waves being so strong, the storm so imposing and the waves so fierce, that they could not help him. Trying to help him, moved more by compassion and pity than by any hope of really being able to save him, the crew members suddenly saw with admiration that the boy was walking in front of the ship as if he were walking firmly on the waves. As best they could they took him into the boat, and, seeing that he wore almost nothing but the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel, they asked him with curiosity how he had been underwater for so long without drowning, and he responded that the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose blessed Scapular he had worn since he was a child with great love, had saved him from certain death by holding him up with Her own hand and comforting him with Her words full of piety and sweetness. For this reason, he made a vow to wear the holy habit of Carmel and consecrate himself to Most Holy Mary to serve Her as a loving son all his life, which he did when he set foot on shore, and in the Order was a model of perfection.

53. *“The Virgin has saved me.”*: In 1940, a sailor, greying from the salts and algae of all the seas, narrated this fact: “On one occasion the raging sea drew us towards the coast of Africa, threatening to crash us up against a breakwater. A giant wave swept away a young sailor. My eldest son, strong, an expert swimmer, in an act of heroic charity, said to me, crossing himself: ‘Father, I’m going to get him.’ At the same time I shouted to him: ‘Are you wearing the Scapular?’ ‘Yes, dad,’ he answered, launching himself from the bow... Those moments were of unspeakable anguish. Kneeling on the deck, together with my youngest son, we contemplated, holding tightly on to the ropes of the ship, the titanic and desperate efforts that my poor son was making to reach the unfortunate cabin boy, who was about to drown. I put all my trust in our blessed Mother of Carmel and made her a promise: to buy an image of Her so that She could be venerated by these simple, good and believing people; and the first tuna caught each year was entirely to promote Her cult and devotion (in that region, they can weigh up to more than 200 kg). Everything happened in the blink of an eye. I saw a cloud open up and, in the opening, like glory, enraptured I contemplated Her, tending Her blessed Scapular towards my poor son. Now I feared nothing; I felt neither anguish nor anxiety, I was calm and sure that he would be saved. I did nothing but mechanically and routinely pray the Hail Holy Queen, but with a sweetness that seemed to moisten my lips with honey. One minute later my son brought with him the precious burden of the saved cabin boy and threw himself into my arms, telling me: ‘The Virgin saved me’!”

54. *Saint Louis IX of France*: The King of France Saint Louis IX, upon returning from the Palestine War, in the year 1254, came up against a fearsome storm while sailing in front of Mount Carmel. His ships were scattered. Discouragement and despair had taken hold of the crews of the entire fleet. The shipwreck of the armada seemed imminent. Only the magnanimous heart of the monarch was confident. In the middle of the darkness the gale brought him the distant ringing of a bell, he asked where it was ringing from, and learnt that it was the sign of Matins of the Monks of Carmel. He then turned his eyes in that direction, and, with fervent supplication, vowed to visit the Queen of Carmel, if She saved him and his men from death. This prayer was enough. The Queen of the Seas appeared to him surrounded by light, saying: – “Fear not, I myself will be your help; I come to free you and your men from the dangers of this sea.” After these words the sky calmed, the sea calmed, the ships were saved and the son of Queen Saint Blanche of Castile, accompanied by his warriors, went up to Carmel to render devoted thanks to his Celestial Saviour.

55. *Other prodigies at sea*: Don Jaime the Conqueror and his soldiers, by solely invoking the help of the “Mother of God of Carmel,” were able to reunite the scattered ships and arrive at the harbours of Palma de Mallorca. • The Virgin of Carmel saved the squadron that, by order of Saint Philip II, went out to protect the Knights of Malta, giving them victory. •

The Virgin of Carmel saved our Nautilus from the marine cyclones, arriving unharmed in Santander. • It is the Virgin of Carmel who saved the ship's officer D. José Rubiales from death in the naval disaster of Santiago, who fell into the water from the *Oquendo* seriously injured and pressing the Holy Scapular to his chest. • The Virgin of Carmel rescued from the sea a young woman who threw herself in to save her chastity. • The Virgin of Carmel, among the waves, preserved the lives of two nursing children thrown into the water by a furious madman. • The Virgin of Carmel at all times and on all Spanish beaches has a chapel or sanctuary to commemorate these miraculous events...

56. *She saved him in the sea of Mexico:* About the year 1610, sailing with a group of friends, Don Tristán de Arellano, a close relative of the Viceroy in Mexico, they were suddenly overtaken by a strong hurricane, which capsized the boat, catching everyone under it, so that all the crew members were drowned, leaving only Don Tristán de Arellano alive. Seeing that he was sinking, he immediately turned, with great faith, to our Most Holy Mother of Mount Carmel, whose Scapular he had worn with great devotion ever since childhood and by whom he hoped to be helped and saved. And, in fact, he stated that he had been in the water for more than half an hour, during which, full of affliction and anguish, he held the blessed Scapular of Mary to his heart, making innumerable promises to the Most Blessed Virgin if she were to bring him out safely from such a terrible situation. Finally, after a long wait battling with wind and water, which seemed like centuries to him, several canoes came to his aid, and he finally achieved his desired salvation. To their great admiration and that of his saviours, they observed that, though all of his clothes were soaked, the Holy Scapular remained dry. As soon as he arrived on land, he flew to the convent of the Carmelites and, prostrate before the altar of the Virgin, made a promise to abandon the world and consecrate himself to the Most Blessed Virgin as a lay Brother to render constant thanksgiving to the sweetest Mother throughout his life, who had freed him from a physical and spiritual death through her miraculous and blessed Scapular.

57. *The little castaway:* It happened in Villarreal, province of Castellón de la Plana, on August 29, 1928. A clear sky and the typical summer sun bathed the fertile countryside with light, scented with orange blossom. A lady, with her family, went to the countryside to spend a few hours of solace in a small country house belonging to her on the banks of the *Acequia Mayor*, which is an irrigation channel of the Mijares River. The lady told a nanny who was in her service to crack open almonds outside the house. Following the nanny went the housewife's little son, named Michael Cantavella Pitarch, who had turned three years of age a few days before. After a while of absolute silence, the lady neither heard the voice of her son nor that of the nanny, nor the noise that she would have made with the almonds. She was unaware that the young nanny had walked away from the house, leaving the child alone, at the edge of the fast-flowing channel. She went out to take a look, and searched with anguished gaze for her Miguelín... Where was the child? As she looked at the channel, she saw her little son floating on the surface, without sinking or being swept away by the current. Note that the ditch was approximately one metre deep and its width ranged from four to five metres. Due to the inclination of the channel, it was then almost impetuous. And yet, the three-year-old boy was on the surface, floating like a buoy. If the anguished mother had reflected, she would have been convinced that her son, who had not perished, was not going to perish either: she would have been able to see there a hidden hand, a patent prodigy. But the instinct to save her son did not allow her a second of reflection, and without losing time, jumped into the water with a baby girl that she was carrying in her arms. When the mother



had safely brought out her child, and recovered from her mortal distress, she tried to investigate the cause of a prodigy, as obvious as it was inexplicable to her. The little boy, with the simplicity and language typical of his age, but as if he had just bathed in rose water, said to his mother: – “The Virgin held me like this,” and while he said these words, which he later repeated many times, with his elbows at his waist he stretched out his forearms and hands in an attitude of holding up something, the child’s little body, in this case. The fortunate mother understood that the Virgin of Carmel had saved her son from inevitable death; She understood perfectly that the fact that her three-year-old child did not sink in the flow of water and was not carried away by the current was a miracle of the Most Blessed Virgin through the Scapular of Carmel, which two days before she had imposed on him and which Miguelín was wearing hanging from his neck at the time of the accident.

58. *A fish closes the break in the hull of a ship:* The brave Saint John of Spain, worthy of eternal memory for his immortal victory at Lepanto, sailed for the port of Naples with five galleys and a galleon. While underway and on the open sea, they were surprised by a furious storm, which relentlessly toyed with the fragile hulls of the boats. The storm grew. The dangers multiplied by the moment; the fragile galleys, with poorly caulked seams, leaked in a thousand places; the water entering would fatally end up sinking them. At the critical moment, Captain Peter de Luna, in the presence of the entire crew, took out the Holy Scapular from his chest, knelt, and while kissing it with fervour, promised to go as a pilgrim to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Carmel in Naples if the Divine Lady saved them from the imminent danger, by the virtue of her Holy Scapular. As in another time the waters of the Sea of Tiberias became calm at the command of Christ’s voice, so also water ceased to enter Saint John’s galley through the breach opened up in the side. The Virgin of Carmel performed the miracle; a large fish had entered the hole in the hull, saving the crew. A small silver boat and the Scapular of Captain Peter de Luna, hung as offerings in the temple of our Mother of Carmel in Naples, for several centuries kept alive the remembrance of the miracle performed by the Most Holy Virgin through her blessed Scapular.

59. *Prodigy with the ship “Soberano.”* The expert and valorous captain, D. Juan de Lazaga, after six days of a tremendous storm, watching less fortunate ships disappear around him, while he weathered the winds, defended himself as the heroes of the seas defend themselves, holding on until they lost their lives, clinging to the last splinter of the ship. But he still had one recourse left, to exhale a tender and deep sigh and with it the sweetest name of Mary: – “My Mother of Carmel, protect us!” With that sigh and that name he made a vow that reached Heaven. Mary welcomed it and in an instant inflamed the hearts of all his companions, of those men seasoned by the breezes of all the seas who, guessing the thought, all shouted together: – “Blessed Virgin of Carmel, save us, we perish!” This happened during the days of September 6 to 12, 1854. More than five hundred people suffered the horrific six-day storm and hurricane aboard a ship that had been sailing the seas for one hundred years. It took them thirty-one more days to arrive at port, almost flooded and in imminent risk of being swallowed at every moment by the waves. The ship was saved and all the men were saved, without a single one missing. – “It was the blessed Virgin of Carmel, our Queen of Sailors, who saved us in that imminent danger in which we were about to perish.” This is how the captain, crying like a child, proclaimed and all his sailors with him when, before the Bishop Saint Anthony Mary Claret, they went to render a fervent thanksgiving to their blessed Mother of Carmel, in the Metropolitan Church of Santiago de Cuba, on the 26th of October 1854, before a gathering ablaze with emotion, which did not cease to acclaim and bless the Virgin of Carmel.

60. *The struggle and the victory:* In his long apostolic career, Father Milleriot found himself with a faithful lady terribly embittered by the setbacks of life. Lacking spirit and courage, this unfortunate woman had reached the brink of despair. Seeing her without courage or consolation, Father Milleriot imposed the Holy Scapular on her. However, as the consolation

she expected did not soon arrive, she tried to commit suicide. The Father found out and went to visit her, and begged her to promise that she would not take off the Holy Scapular. And as she swore to him, the Father said, full of satisfaction: – “I have just caught you out. You can try to kill yourself; but you won’t die.” That’s how it was, because she threw herself twice into the Seine and, without knowing how to swim, on neither occasion sank. She was later converted, because it was her troubled life that had led her to despair, and in the end she died a Christian.

61. *Prodigy in the Bay of Cádiz:* A young sailor, a native of Salamanca, from the naval base of Cádiz, went on leave to enjoy Christmas 1948 near his parents. Before returning to Cádiz, he wanted to protect himself with the Holy Scapular of Most Holy Mary of Carmel, and to do so, before leaving he went in the afternoon with his girlfriend to the Church of Carmel de Abajo, in Salamanca, to request a Holy Scapular for them both, which the Father Superior of the said residence imposed on the two of them. When he saw them off, the Father insisted: “Always be very devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel. You already know that She is a special Patroness of sailors. If something were to happen to you, make sure to cling with all fervour to this anchor of salvation, which is the Scapular, and invoke with great fervour Our Mother of Carmel, and She will save you.” So it was. Five days later, our sailor was already in the waters of Cádiz and on board the ‘Artabro.’ The sea was rough with great waves. Furthermore it was night, and pitch dark. The young sailor had the misfortune of falling from the deck into the water, when the boat’s rocking was at its worst. He fought bravely against the raging waves. He tried to make himself seen or heard by the rest of his crew. All in vain. In the midst of his anguished and mortal danger, only one thing gave him confidence in his salvation: the Scapular that he had been wearing for some days. He insistently cried out to the Virgin and kissed with burning and hopeful faith his Scapular, which from time to time the waves and the wind brought to his lips. For ten hours he fought with the sea. Finally, after a more than titanic struggle against the elements, he managed to reach land, thrown ashore by a giant wave which, he said, was propelled directly by the right hand of the Most Blessed Virgin to save him. Deeply moved, he himself wrote this down for his elderly mother, who immediately went to the same Church of Carmel de Abajo to give fervent thanksgiving to the Most Blessed Virgin and to pray that the holy Scapular might also be imposed on her, like her dear son.

62. *She restrains the impetuous current of a river:* Daniel of the Virgin Mary, who died in 1678, tells us that in the place called ‘Roberto’, five km from Trento, the river Lenno rose so high due to the torrential rains that it overflowed and caused a lot of damage. The neighbours, seeing that all natural means were insufficient to avoid the impending danger and prevent the inevitable ruin of their town, turned to the Lord, raising up constant prayers, but not on this account did the waters decrease nor did the flow of the river cease to wreak ever more havoc, for not using the means by which God Our Lord sought to give them peace and consolation. But behold, as the Religious of the Carmelite convent of Roberto turned to prayer with repeated supplications, the Most Blessed Virgin deigned to inspire them. The Prior of the convent, Father Jerónimo de Dóminis, took a Scapular, solemnly blessed it in the church in the presence of all the people, and then marched in procession with the entire community to the banks of the river. There, followed by an immense crowd of faithful, he sent up a fervent prayer to God and His Blessed Mother, asking Her to deign to manifest Her invaluable protection in such imminent danger, since he had told his servant Saint Simon that Her “blessed Scapular was sign of health in danger,” and that by its virtue it would serve to detain the impetuous currents of the overflowing river. Having said this, with the most lively faith, he threw the blessed Scapular into the water. And, oh wonder! As soon as





Mary's heavenly garment touched the waters, it detained them, because everyone noticed with stupor and amazement that they were noticeably and gradually diminishing and narrowing until reduced to the normal and natural bed of the river.

63. Conversion of a destroyer's engineer: Father Vicente Vela, Military Vicar Colonel of the Spanish Navy, tells us in his highly documented and sublime conference on the effectiveness of the Holy Scapular of Carmel, the following prodigious fact of which he was an eyewitness: "It was 1943. Along with other ships of the Spanish Squadron, one of the 'Alsedo' type destroyers was anchored in El Ferrol. The commander of the destroyer learnt that the ship's non-commissioned engineer was in the Navy Hospital in a very serious condition and, without wasting time, he went to the hospital to visit and console him. The doctor on duty, who received the commander at the entrance to the hospital, informed him that for the patient there was no remedy, because both lungs

were already invaded and his death was imminent. The commander went to the sick room and asked the nun about the spiritual state of the sufferer: – 'Judging by the image of the Virgin of Charity that hangs on his breast – the Sister answered – he seems a believer, but... he refused outright to confess.' The commander, a deep believer and, in addition, had worn the Holy Scapular since his childhood, driven by exemplary Christian zeal, gave him the crucifix to kiss, which the sick man kissed more out of complaisance and respect for his chief than out of veneration and affection for Christ Crucified. He invited him to become reconciled with God, but the man flatly opposed. He insisted with paternal encouragement, but everything was useless. All hope vanished, and faced with the laboured breathing of the sick man, the commander, troubled, retired to pray for him, leaving the Holy Scapular of Carmel on his chest. Minutes later, the commander returned, fearing the fatal outcome, and when speaking to him for the last time, the unrepentant engineer asked for confession. The Holy Scapular gave him strength for his last words; after his Confession, with profound signs of sincere repentance, he died in peace, while the Father Chaplain prayed for his soul."

64. She saves a little girl from a river in flood: In September 1957 in Villa de Leiva (Colombia), where the Virgin of Carmel is lovingly venerated, the following great favour was written. To authenticate the story, it was signed by Rogelio Pulido and Mercedes Avendaño, parents of the favoured child. These simple peasants from Sotaquirá (Boyacá) were parents of two daughters: Otilia, eleven years old, and Adela, four. The two girls were going to the house of a relative, Gabriel Calderón, who lived on the other side of the Chicamocha River. When Adela tried to pass over a pole bridge, she slipped so badly that she fell into the river in spate. Instantly Otilia, terrified at what had happened, began to scream desperately, asking for help. Upon hearing the first news of the mishap, the girl's father said: – "With all my heart I asked the Virgin of Carmel to favour and preserve the life of the little girl. I immediately went down to the river, where many people had gathered on the banks, without anyone daring to jump into the water to try to save the innocent creature, since the river was in spate so that the fear of being swept away kept them petrified on the banks of the Chicamocha." The curious thing is that the girl, carried by the impetuous current for some 580 metres, was floating on the waters, apparently peacefully asleep, face up and with her little arms outstretched. In an impulse of heroism, Gabriel Calderón jumped into the water and managed to pull Adelita out. We all thought she was dead. But she soon moved her hands slightly, which showed that she was still alive, and then she began to come to her senses little by little. Today, thanks to God and the Virgin of Carmel, we have the girl safe and sound in our home. This prodigious event occurred on September 4, 1957.

65. Bulletproof: The galleys of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, whom Cervantes called "father

of soldiers and brave captain, undefeated,” left Naples for Africa. Encounters with pirates were frequent. In one of the combats, a turkish soldier fired his musket (an ancient firearm similar to a rifle, but with a larger calibre) at very close range against a soldier from the Marquis’ galleys, hitting him in the centre of the chest and knocking him down onto his back on the deck of the ship. His companions believed him dead. But after the heat of the battle, when they were preparing to throw him into the sea, they saw to their astonishment that the soldier was alive and that he had no injuries. They examined the spot where he was hit. His clothes were pierced by the musket projectile, but it had stopped when it collided with the Holy Scapular, as if against a strong shield. The fragile fabric with the image of the Virgin had been stronger than an iron bullet. The news of the miracle spread throughout the galleys. The Marquis claimed as a precious relic the miraculous Scapular, which was preserved by the Marchioness of Vélez, along with the written testimony of the Marquis of Santa Cruz to the soldier’s sound health. The chronicler of the manuscript adds: “Devotion to the Holy Scapular grew so much that two loads of scapulars arrived in Cartagena sent by the Carmelite Fathers of Caravaca, to impose them on all the personnel embarked in the galleys of the various squadrons.”

66. *It saves him from a deadly bullet:* On April 15, 1626, the noble Navarrese knight Antonio de Amaya was in the city of Barcelona, awaiting the arrival of some galleys to sail to Italy. On returning home somewhat late, he was attacked by some individuals who fired two shots at him from very close range, undoubtedly with the intention of robbing him, but without causing the slightest injury. This noble gentleman, who from a very young age had professed tender devotion to the Virgin of Carmel, and who wore Her blessed Scapular with great faith and love, attributed his escape from certain death to the virtue of this shield of protection. One of the bullets hit him precisely in the place on which the Scapular of the Virgin lay, and though it punctured his clothes, it stopped at the Scapular ribbon without piercing it or scorching it.

67. *The Virgin and the soldiers:* An army commander told the Jesuit Father John Crasset 1618-1692 that, after a battle, he found a soldier lying on the field who had a rosary and a scapular in his hand, and who was loudly asking for a confessor. A musket ball had passed through his head, entering through his forehead, in such a way that his brains were protruding from both wounds; naturally speaking, he could not live. However, he had the strength to get up and confess to the Chaplain with great repentance, and, once absolution had been received, he expired. Father Crasset adds that the same army commander told him that a bugler in his company had been shot. And when he went to examine the wound that had been caused in his chest, he found that the bullet had embedded itself in the scapular of the Virgin that he was wearing, without having caused any injury. The commander took the bullet and showed it to everyone present.

68. *Cuirass against bullets:* In Flanders, a court-martial sentenced a soldier to death for the crime of rebellion. The soldiers fired three volleys against the culprit, without any of them touching him, as the bullets all fell at his feet. Surprised at such a prodigy, the officers decided to examine the chest of the poor condemned man, to make sure that he was not wearing any cuirass protecting him, and found nothing on his chest other than the protective shield of the blessed and miraculous Scapular of the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, our sweet Mother, in whom the unhappy soldier had placed all trust for his salvation. They all agreed that this was a prodigy of the Queen of Heaven, who sought to show them the virtue granted to her blessed Scapular for safeguarding us in all dangers, so that they spared the life of the privileged soldier, who thus escaped certain death thanks to the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel.

69. *The bullet finds a parapet:* Father Gregory Nazianzene of Saint Basil says that Jaime Teixeira, who was fighting under the Spanish flags, while on the island of San Honorato, was hit so closely in the back by an artillery discharge that the gunpowder that fired it had



burnt his doublet and shirt on his back, throwing him a long way into the sea. He sank and remained underwater all the time it took him to come to and regain consciousness. Returning to his senses, he fervently began to invoke Most Holy Mary of Carmel, and immediately found himself above water, and, with extraordinary strength and courage, he swam to the shore. Those who saw him fall into the water admired a true prodigy, because the fire that had burnt his doublet and shirt and singed his back left the Holy Scapular of Most Holy Mary of Carmel unscathed. They were also able to admire another new prodigy, and that is that, having remained in the water for a long while, the Holy Scapular was completely dry.

70. *Shield against bullets:* Louis XIII, king of France, at the siege of Montpellier, had General De Beauregard at his side. This brave soldier was shot twice in the chest. He swayed, but did not fall, as any other soldier would have done to whom no miracle had occurred like the one that happened to him: He unbuttoned his uniform and took out the two bullets which he found crushed up against the Holy Scapular of Carmel, filling the king with great satisfaction.

71. *A soldier saved from eternal death:* This event happened in 1923 and the protagonist told it to Father Louis Mary Llop, a Carmelite. On going out to battle, he was vested with the Holy Scapular of Carmel in the Church of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers of Cadiz. Lamentably, both in Melilla and in the different places where he was posted, he led a libertine and licentious life, to the point of causing scandal to his comrades, hard to scandalize. When the moors attacked the fortress of Monte Arruit, where he was, all the soldiers were shot or put to the sword. José Luis received a bullet in the head, which knocked him to the ground; he then believed that he would be beheaded by the moors, as were hundreds of his companions who fell with him. However, he was the only one excepted in that bloody holocaust of Spanish lives cut short by the scimitar and the cutlass (the sabres used by the moors). “How did I escape that horrible massacre and not damn myself?” our man exclaimed excitedly. “I owe everything to the unparalleled mercy of this sweet Mother and to Her most blessed Scapular. If I had died in that situation, I would have appeared before the Supreme Judge with a conscience burdened with many sins and would easily have damned myself irremediably. But I bore the Holy Scapular of Mary on my chest, incompatible with final impenitence, so that the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel freed me from that horrible death, so that I would not die a reprobate and damn myself, but would always praise her clemency and mercy, and spread everywhere devotion to Her and to Her miraculous Scapular.”

72. *Several bullets adorn the Scapular:* The Jesuit Theophilus Raynaud, narrates the following case, which was told to him by the person so favoured by Most Holy Mary: He was a soldier named John Montaña, who in a battle was surrounded by many enemies, trying to take away his life with bullets; but She, who defended him, directed the bullets in such a way that all the ones that hit him hit the ribbons of the Scapular, remaining stuck in it and flattened or dented, as if those ribbons had been a bronze shield that resisted attack and violence. He was able to escape, and thinking that he was at least wounded, he undressed and saw his Holy Scapular all covered and decorated with bullets even on its ribbons, all with notable order and proportion and, on his body, the mark corresponding to each bullet, which without words told him that death would have entered there or at least would have put his life in danger, if the Holy Virgin had not defended and protected him. The soldier, moved, dedicated himself to the Virgin, praising Her for the rest of his life.

73. *She frees a battalion from gunshot:* A brave officer of the Spanish Army communicated to the Editor of the *Chief Work* during the Civil War in September 1937, the following prodigious event: “I communicate to you a miraculous grace of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel to the soldiers under my command, who all wear their Scapular: One day when my

battalion went to garrison the walls of the Pardo-Plantío, the reds fired with mortars and rifles. I was amazed and astounded that they were all directed to one place and that there were no casualties. Something totally prodigious! What would be my surprise when I looked up and saw on a wall a statue of the Virgin of Carmel? I ran like a madman; I went up for Her. What did the Reds' bullets matter to me if I saw my Mother exposed? When I held Her in my arms, I cried with emotion. This image of the Most Blessed Virgin presides over my tent and accompanies me everywhere. The soldiers of my battalion prostrate before Her and pray the Holy Rosary every day. If we fall in the struggle, She will undoubtedly lead us to Heaven as a reward for those who, full of faith and enthusiasm, give their lives for Christ and for the Holy Catholic Faith. I do not want any of my soldiers ever to enter battle without wearing the Holy Scapular and first entrusting themselves with fervour to the Most Blessed Virgin. When I myself was wounded, the first words that came from my lips were these: 'Long live Christ the King! Long live the Virgin of Carmel! *Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae, Spes nostra, Salve.*' This was my prayer until I was cured... I do not let a single day pass without my soldiers praying before the Virgin of Carmel, with the assurance that She will free them from all dangers and grant them a holy death."

74. *She saves them from the rifles of the militiamen:* During the Marxist domination in Mérida and on the occasion of one of the bombings by the National Forces, the young Carmela Hueso Escalante was in a shelter set up in the bar called "Medea", accompanied by her father, both deeply Catholic and very devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel. At that moment, quite suddenly, several militiamen pointed their rifles at them. They aimed their rifles at them with the determined intention to kill them, when the young woman fell to her knees and kissed, between fervent sighs and tears, the Holy Scapular, begging them by the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel to do no harm to her elderly father, though they might burn her alive. The militiamen, having abandoned their criminal attitude, cast a part mocking and part contemptuous glance on the young woman and, as if moved by some magic mechanism, turned around, muttering some unintelligible words. Those who were at the doors of the tavern heard them say: "No one can get the better of these sanctimonious fanatics for the Virgin."

75. *The bullets and the Scapular:* In 1652, after the royal amnesty had been granted by Louis XIV in Bordeaux, no one disturbed the public tranquillity of the city except Orme's partisans. On October 31st, a group of five hundred armed men rebelled, intending to make the amnesty granted by the king take effect; and to achieve their goals they threatened the death penalty everywhere. As the revolutionaries stalked the streets of the city, they met a counsellor to the king, saying that they were well aware that he was the one commissioned by parliament to discuss the matter with the monarch. They warned him that he would pay dearly if he misinformed him about the population. The counsellor disregarded their threats without flinching. Immediately the rioters drew their swords, and one of them shot a firearm three times at point-blank range at the king's counsellor, which was censured with indignation and protests on the part of the good citizens. But the three bullets, though fired at point-blank range, did not pass through the skin. A great miracle had just been wrought. The frantic acclamation of the people was unanimous, as they attributed the counsellor's salvation to a miracle of the Holy Scapular, which the victim was wearing at the time of the cowardly attack. In view of such a stupendous miracle, the city of Bordeaux saw a marvellous increase in attendance at the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel, founded by Saint Simon Stock. The one favoured by the Virgin, the protagonist of this story, was D'Andraut; he was a man of great piety, and throughout his life he did not let a day pass by without paying a tribute of gratitude to his Sovereign Benefactress, the Virgin of Carmel, who saved his life through the miraculous virtue of Her Holy Scapular.

76. *She frees them from a bombing:* It happened in 1936. A niece of Father José Hendara, an Augustinian, was celebrating her name day in the city of Ávila, and about twenty people



were gathered in a room of the house, when the communist planes flew over the city. Right then a very powerful bomb fell upon the ceiling of the room where they were gathered. A single exclamation came from all hearts: – “Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, save us!”, and a deathly silence followed the explosion... The ceiling had collapsed and the bomb had filled the room with shrapnel. The lady of the house, Carmel Hendara, believed that everyone had perished. Admirable thing! Everyone emerged from the rubble, dusty and alarmed, but healthy and unharmed. Only three of them had the occasional slight scratch, more than anything an effect of nerves. But what is to be admired above all else is that everyone who was there wore the Holy Scapular on their breast and all pressed it warmly to their hearts, with hope and trust in the maternal protection of the Most Blessed Virgin.

77. *A bullet in Montpellier:* When King Louis XIII, at the head of a numerous army, set siege to the city of Montpellier, a handful of the valiant from the royal forces threw themselves with reckless courage trying to force their way in, but only one of those heroes succeeded in entering the city, despite having received a shotgun bullet in the chest. At the sight of that brave soldier, who defended himself from countless enemies with admirable serenity and valour, the enthusiasm of the besieging army reached a peak, and rushing through the breach, managed to penetrate into the interior of the city. The battle in the streets was fierce and bloody until, at last, victory inclined in favour of the royal army, with the triumphal entry of Louis XIII into Montpellier. One of the first acts of the Monarch was to order that the heroic soldier who had managed to penetrate the fortress first be brought into his presence. – “You are a hero and I want to reward you,” said the king, putting his hand familiarly on his shoulder. – “Sir!, I appreciate the honour that Your Majesty grants me,” the soldier replied resolutely, “but not all the credit is due to me. If Your Majesty saw me enter the square first and now see me standing here unharmed despite having received a bullet in the chest, it is because you are unaware that an invulnerable shield covers my chest.” Saying this, he unbuttoned his jacket and showed his breast, upon which the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel hung. The bystanders were amazed as they contemplated the bullet that should have destroyed his heart, arrested and flattened as if out of respect for the holy image of the Virgin that was printed on the front side of the Scapular. Witness to that wonder, the king himself made a vow from then on to wear that blessed protective Shield forever, and recommend it to all of his subjects so that from then on it might protect them from all dangers.

78. *She defeats a powerful army of turks:* Father John Bonet reports that Hurruitiner, Grand Master of the Military Order of Saint John, while Governor of Calabria, Aragonese by birth, and a fervent devotee of the Virgin of Carmel, waking up one morning, found that in the port and beaches of this beautiful city the turkish navy under the command of General Zigala had landed seventy thousand men, intending to take over the stronghold by surprise, since the defenders were caught completely off guard. The Governor, a man of faith, courage and determination, like all Aragonese, encouraged his troops, who were far inferior in number, since he had only been able to gather, between infantry and cavalry, about twelve hundred men, all undecided whether to offer or refuse the combat, since the enemy had already taken possession of many supplies, as well as the main positions. Despite their being so many in number, this did not discourage the brave captain and he inflamed his battle hardened troops by convincing them that they would infallibly achieve victory. One of his captains, speaking on behalf of everyone, said to him: – “With what weapons and men should we resist the seventy thousand enemies that surround us?” The pious and courageous Hurruitiner, drawing out the Holy Scapular from his chest, showed it to them, raising it in his hands, and said to

them: "This is the true Hope of our certain victory." All launched out determinedly into combat with him at the head of his troops, and they all followed him without hesitation and with blind faith attacked that numerous army, which they not only decimated and overwhelmed by their powerful impetus, but also put to headlong and desperate flight.

79. *The Scapular puts out the fire:* In the imperial city of Toledo, on December 5th, 1699, when construction was mainly of wood, one whole side of the Plaza de Zocodover was set on fire and, as human efforts were insufficient to put it out, they resorted to divine intervention. And God was pleased to placate it through the intercession of his Most Holy Mother of Carmel, because some took Our Mother of Carmel to the plaza of Zocodover, when the danger was most imminent, and the devouring fire turned into smoke; and someone threw his blessed Scapular into the fire, and immediately the fire ceased, to the great joy of everyone. The Holy Scapular that was thrown into the flames was found intact among the coals of everything around it. All of Toledo was an eyewitness of the prodigy. This Scapular is today venerated in the convent of Carmel, placed in a magnificent silver reliquary paid for by the Fraternity of Silversmiths of the city.

80. *Miracle in Villalba del Alcor:* In the year 1633, on August 15th, in the house of the widow Ana Fernández, in Villalba del Alcor, Huelva, a fire broke out in some attics where a large amount of hay had been stored as forage for the horses. The bells sounded the alarm, as is usually done in such cases, and a large crowd of men came to put out or smother the fire. Among the many people who entered the house, one threw the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel that he was wearing around his neck into the attic, and the fire was suddenly extinguished without the need to add more water. Upon entering the attics, to see if there was any danger of the roofs collapsing and to remove the still smouldering ashes, they found, to everyone's great admiration, that the Holy Scapular was undamaged. The vast majority of the local residents, who were present when the event occurred, witnessed this wonder, and with such a prodigy the devotion of the faithful in that town to the Holy Scapular grew greatly.

81. *The fire melts several jewels and leaves the Scapular intact:* Daniel of the Virgin Mary, who died in 1678, published this account: one night the Mequilingia Governor's house caught fire. He and his wife were already asleep, and they woke up to the sound of a collapsing partition, which collapsed because the fire had penetrated it. They thought that the noise was perhaps due to thieves having entered their house, and they woke up with a start, but the smoke made them aware of the imminent danger they were in. Full of fear and confusion, they called out to the family until they finally managed to get to safety. Many neighbours came to put out the fire, and no matter how great their efforts, they could not prevent the fire from reaching their bedroom, attacking all the objects and destroying or reducing to ashes even a metal box where they kept their jewellery. After the fire was put out, they entered the room to examine the damage, finding that the lady had placed her jewellery and rings on a small table before going to sleep, and along with them some devotional books on which she left a Scapular of Our Mother of Carmel, which some Nuns had given her the previous afternoon; the little table was all burnt and the jewellery melted; but, oh wonder!, the Scapular had remained intact and without the slightest sign of soot or burn of any kind, though it was on top of everything burnt.

82. *The chest is burnt and the Scapular not:* When Father James Escumin was Bishop of Ávila, there was a fire in the episcopal palace, and it was impossible to save either the ecclesiastical or secular valuables. Everything was devoured by the raging fire, which in a few hours consumed and collapsed a large part of the building. A sister of the Prelate, a Discalced Carmelite nun, a few days previously had given him a small Scapular that she had embroidered with great care for her good brother and that he, with great esteem, kept among the gold and silver valuables. The next day, searching among the ruins of the fire, they found the chest that held the jewels, but reduced to ashes, and the gold and silver all melted



down; however, stirring up the ashes with a stick to collect the gold and silver that could be found, oh, wonder! The jewel they were not looking for – the Holy Scapular – was untouched, as though telling them eloquently: “Place all your esteem in Me and not in gold and silver, which perish, for now you must know what they are and what I am, by the singular grace and favour of Most Holy Mary. I am far superior to fire, and that is why it respects Me; gold and silver are vile dross of the earth and that is why fire, which is superior to them, consumes them without pity.” Thus did the bystanders understand this wise rebuke, and hence placed all their esteem in this precious treasure. Some kissed it devoutly, others pressed it to their eyes and placed it on their heart, and everyone wanted to touch it in case it was a mere illusion of their senses, and everyone, seeing that it was a prodigious reality, admired it as a portentous wonder of mercy by Mary Most Holy.

83. *Fire at home:* Father Francisco Boersio says that in Ada, town of the Bishopric of Milan, a fire broke out in the house of Alejandro Coto. Only he and his brother were there to put it out. After making desperate efforts, with great feeling and pain they saw that the whole building was prey to the flames. In such tribulation, it occurred to one of them to throw the Scapular of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel that was hanging around his neck onto the flames. At the same time, they earnestly begged Most Holy Mary to deign to remedy, through her blessed Scapular, that affliction. The Holy Virgin did not take long to help them, because the voracious flames immediately turned into dense smoke and they recognized the virtue of the Holy Scapular. The two brothers breathed in relief at such a wonder, and, kneeling, they did not cease to give thanks with indescribable joy to the Mother of God. When they rose from their prayer, Heaven wanted them to admire another greater miracle, because among live embers they found the Holy Scapular of Mary intact, without the fire damaging it in the least.

84. *The city of Jerez de la Frontera is favoured by the Most Blessed Virgin:* Our sweetest Mother of Carmel freed the centre of Jerez from one of the greatest catastrophes and imminent danger to the inhabitants and their homes, through Her blessed Scapular of Carmel. Reliable testimonies reported: It was the eve of Saint Lawrence, August 10th, 1635, when in the grocery and in the shops adjoining the Carmelite convent, a raging fire broke out that threatened to spread to the surrounding blocks and to almost the entire centre at that time of Jerez de la Frontera, Cadiz. A huge crowd came to put it out; but, warned that in two or three of these stores there was a large quantity of gunpowder and explosive material, the most terrified fled, all sensing the tragic end that threatened them and their families. In such a distressing situation, and when the circumstances were most critical and the danger most imminent, everyone turned to the intercession and patronage of Our Most Holy Mother of Carmel, invoking Her loudly in the middle of the street, for Her to protect them and free them from such a great catastrophe. The Friars came, with their superior at their head, some to the church to prostrate themselves at the feet of Our Mother and with fervent supplications implore Her help; others, in the middle of the street, where the raging fire devastated everything, causing everyone present, far from giving way to discouragement or senseless confusion, to fervently pray the Salve. And something unprecedented and highly miraculous happened when one of the Religious threw his Scapular into the flames: the voracious fire was suddenly extinguished, without there being humanly any explanation. And what is even more surprising is that the fire, besides reaching the place where the gunpowder was kept, had also burnt a board of one of the boxes in which it was stored. Everyone considered this event miraculous, and the following day went in thanksgiving to the temple of Our Most Holy Mother of Carmel, where a very devout Holy Mass was celebrated.

85. *In a farmhouse in Córdoba:* When Francis Argote's family was in the farmhouse called 'The Chancellor's' in Córdoba, due to the carelessness of one of the servants, a fire broke out, spreading to the thatched roof of one wing of the farmhouse. The fire took on such proportions that it became materially impossible to put it out or control it. In such critical and tragic circumstances, Señora Jacinta Carrillo, nanny to the children of the Argote family, a woman of proven faith and deep piety, invoked Our Blessed Mother of Carmel with all devotion and confidence, and taking the Scapular that she wore around her neck, with great faith, she placed it in one of the buckets of water and threw it all onto the fire. To throw the Holy Scapular and suddenly bring the fire under control at the place where it was thrown, then ceasing completely, was a matter of moments. Two days later, while the servant Louis de Pedrajas was cleaning the burnt area of debris and ruins, among the ashes he found the Scapular that Señora Carrillo had thrown in, intact and without the least sign of any burns. This prodigy was fully demonstrated, with four witnesses, and the Vicar General of the Bishopric signed their testimony. The miraculous Scapular was preserved until the exlaustration in a magnificent reliquary, which was exposed for public devotion for the faithful during the solemnities of Carmel, and which they kissed as a precious relic.

86. *A fire in Damprach:* On November 20th, 1857, in the middle of a dark winter's night and a very violent wind storm, a raging fire broke out in Damprach (or Dampfach, in German), in Bavaria, horrifying in extreme. At the sound of the alarm bells, the entire neighbourhood went to the scene of the incident, working with the greatest activity and zeal, trying to remedy such a misfortune, which affected very humble people. Unfortunately, it was all in vain; roofs were collapsing, flames were mounting ever higher, the adjacent buildings were just about to be consumed by the fire. The fear and anguish of those good people was general. Suddenly, a young woman named Ana Reynaud said: "We must throw a blessed Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel into the middle of the flames. Mary, Our Mother, will do the rest." Several times the young woman tried to put her happy thought into practice, but the force of the wind prevented her from doing so, so she had to attach the Scapular to a stone and thus she could throw it into the place where the fire was raging most. And it was one and the same thing for the Holy Scapular to fall into the flames and for the progress of the voracious fire suddenly to cease, and then, little by little, go out amidst the general admiration and astonishment of the spectators. But the prodigies did not end there. The next day, among the still smoking ashes of the fire, the Holy Scapular was found perfectly preserved, which, picked up by the Parish Priest, was shown and given to kiss to all the residents of the town, who, astonished, contemplated the greatness of that wonder to which they were witnesses, never ceasing to praise the Holy Virgin, our Mother, for the virtue She gave to Her glorious livery.

87. *She saves it from the fire:* In the city of Salerno, Italy, on June 5th, 1595, while John Sereno and Lily, his wife, were baking bread in the Murci Firsi bakery, fire suddenly spread to a large amount of firewood piled up on the oven, spreading from there to the neighbouring houses with great flames. Little by little the fire spread to the roof of the building, threatening to spread to all the adjacent buildings. A large number of neighbours gathered at the sound of the bells, but they all declared themselves powerless to suffocate or extinguish it, since the means were insufficient and the fire grew moment by moment, threatening an entire block. In such consternation, Lily, who was very devoted to the Virgin of Carmel and her miraculous Scapular, in which she always found a remedy for all her needs, removed the one she was wearing, and threw it onto the fire so that it might spread no further, begging the Virgin with faith to have mercy in such an adversity. It was one and the same thing for the Holy Scapular to touch the flames and for the fire to draw back, which in a few minutes was extinguished, without further ado. A few days later, when some bricklayers came to repair the damage caused and build a new floor in the burnt part of the building, and were removing rubble and ashes, they found the blessed Scapular that the pious Lily, due to the fire, had



thrown in, without the flames singeing or even touching it.

88. *Suspended in the air:* Filocalo Caputo, in his work *Il Monte Carmelo*, says that the carpenter Peter de Pablo was working on the coffered ceiling of the Church of Saint Anthony de Conforto, when a terrible hurricane suddenly arose and Peter, fearful of what might happen, left his work and came down from the scaffolding until the hurricane might die down. To make good use of the time, he began to pray the seven Our Fathers and Hail Marys in which they commonly commuted the abstinences of Wednesdays and Saturdays called for by the Holy Scapular, as necessary to gain the Sabbatine privilege. When the foreman in charge of the work found him on the ground, he reproached him for taking the hurricane as a pretext for stopping work. Peter, who took this with a deep and bad-tempered frown, decided to climb the scaffolding again, no matter what happened. He returned to his work, begging the

Most Holy Mary to appease such a terrible wind; when suddenly, a strong eddy threw him from the scaffolding where he was working to a distance of about ten steps from the wall where the unhappy man had been. In such a distressing situation, the good man appealed to the patronage of Mary, Our kind Mother of Carmel, at that moment seeing Her in the air next to him. It was the Immaculate Lady who, taking hold of his shoulder and also of the Holy Scapular he was wearing, gently lowered him, supporting him until without the slightest violence he could reach the ground. Everyone present thought that he would die, and as soon as he stepped onto the ground they went up to recognize him, seeing with admiration that he had not suffered the slightest injury, not a single scratch on his body.

89. *He falls from a height of fifty metres:* It happened in February 1952, in the Monachil hills, to the Granada resident and fervent Confraternity member of Our Mother of Carmel, Manuel Morales Fernández. He had gone hunting with some friends and fell into a ravine approximately fifty metres deep. This gave him no time other than to entrust himself to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular he wore around his neck, because he was a great devotee of Mary, and he said to Her with faith: – “Virgin of Carmel, save me!” He lost consciousness from the tremendous blow on reaching the bottom of the ravine, from which he recovered after long hours. When his companions came looking for him, they believed him to be in very bad state, and considered it impossible for him not to have been shattered after falling from such a height. But he only had some bruises; and he was able to go on his own feet to the place where they had the horses. At first they didn’t even dare to believe it, especially when they realized that the shotgun, which he had loaded, had not even gone off, after such a tremendous shock. A few days later he was completely recovered and optimistic, without feeling the slightest pain or discomfort, giving infinite thanks to Our Blessed Mother of Carmel for the prodigy She had performed for him, by Her Holy Scapular.

90. *In the fall, the Virgin saves her:* On July 16th, 1953, this event occurred in Alcobendas, Community of Madrid: The two-year-old girl María Jesús Calvo Muñoz, daughter of the town’s medical practitioner, was playing in a room on the second floor of her house, where her mother was also sewing. Due to the mother’s inattention, the girl approached a window that had no grille, with such ill fortune that she lost her balance and fell onto the street pavement, which was made of cement. The troubled mother, terrified to see her fall, without her being able to prevent it, could only burst into an exclamation of fervent and hopeful supplication: – “Virgin of Carmel, save her, by your Holy Scapular that she wears around her neck!” And what was her admiration, her gratitude and her joy, when, after having fallen from a height of seven metres and hitting the street pavement, made of cement and cobblestones, believing that she would doubtless have died, the mother found her without

the slightest injury and without any fracture, but only slightly shaken by the natural fright in such a small creature.

91. *Mercy, O Most Holy Mother of Carmel!* Father Francis Boersio tells us that, when four prisoners were executed in Mantua, one of them was wearing the Holy Scapular, and though he had led a vicious life that justly deserved the punishment, he was, nevertheless, devoted to the Holy Virgin, and strictly observed abstinence on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Arriving at the place of execution, this devotee of Most Holy Mary, having trusted until then in Her mercy, continued more fervently in his supplications, placing all his hopes in Mary and, as he climbed the steps, he devoutly prayed a Salve to her. With the rope already placed around his neck and holding a small image of Our Lady in his hands, he began to cry out with a loud voice: – “Mercy, O Most Holy and Merciful Mother of Carmel!” And calling the attention of those present, he continued in this way: – “Oh, you who are parents, take great care that your children never abandon devotion to Most Holy Mary!” Having said all this, he turned to a crucifix and fervently asked forgiveness for his enormous guilt. As it was time to execute justice, they tried to take away the holy image that he held against his chest, but he did not want to let it go. He thus went on to be hanged as the sentence required, but the rope broke and the prisoner fell to the ground, leaving the unhappy man on his knees, venerating the image of the Virgin, and fervently crying out: – “Such favours are received by the true devotees of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel.” Meanwhile, the executioner, exceeding his official duty, took a sword in his hand and, blind with fury, raised his arm to slit his throat. But this he could not do because his arm became paralyzed. With this second prodigy the portentous miracle could no longer be hidden. They removed the rope from his neck and found not the slightest sign of having been hanged on the gallows; or of having fallen to the ground. The judges considered the sentence fulfilled, and he was legally acquitted of his crimes. The following Saturday they took him to the Carmelite convent, where they sang a solemn Mass to Our Mother in thanksgiving for such a prodigy. He was later brought before the Duke of Mantua, to thank him for his acquittal. The Duke was very happy to see him, and smiling, raised him up from the ground where he was kneeling, and said: “Not to me, who wanted and tried to punish you, but to the Most Holy Virgin of Carmel, who has miraculously freed you, must you render fervent thanksgiving your whole life long.”

92. *“Virgin of Carmel of Leiva, don’t let me fall”*: Nicanor Pérez Rodríguez, a native of Cómbita, a small town near Tunja, Colombia, told his interesting story with a broken voice and with repressed emotion, to Father Eladius, a Carmelite from the convent of Leiva (Colombia), in 1957: “I was, Father, working in the Palace of Justice in the city of Tunja, working on a scaffolding on the third floor of the building. And, when I least thought about it, the scaffolding came apart and fell from a height of almost 20 metres, the wood crashing to the ground with a thunderous noise. I then, in order not to fall along with the scaffolding to the ground, desperately grabbed on to some wires as best I could and there, like an acrobat, I spent several minutes swinging and struggling to take hold tightly of a post, until I finally managed to do so. They were moments of intense anguish, the most terrible I have ever experienced in my life. Seeing myself on the verge of death like this, I only remember that I cried out at the top of my lungs: – ‘Virgin of Carmel, save me! Virgin of Carmel of Leiva, don’t let me fall!’ Furthermore, in the midst of that terrible danger in which I found myself, I inwardly made a promise to come to Leiva to confess, since I had not done so for several years, and to pay a visit of thanksgiving to the Virgin of Carmel, whose Scapular I have not abandoned ever since childhood. And... miraculously I came down, without doing myself the slightest harm.”



93. *A wonderful conversion:* The Bishop of Solsona, Catalonia, in a beautiful pastoral on the Holy Scapular, tells us of the following case, which happened to himself: "It was the month of June 1938. It had been barely two months since the National Forces had arrived at the Mediterranean, liberating the parish of Vinaroz, where we arrived seven days after the liberation and where we exercised parish ministry for more than five years. A letter received from the military authorities requested our cooperation to provide spiritual aid to ten condemned to death, who were to be executed at dawn. At eleven o'clock at night the prisoners were taken to a room, awaiting their execution, and from that moment on, the three Priests who were then in Vinaroz entered into conversation with them, offering them eternal life, since we could not save their temporary lives. Eight of them confessed immediately, with great and visible signs of repentance and fervour. One, who had been a political commissar in the Red Army, barely allowed us to get close to him. All our attempts were useless and we could not get him to confess. The other powerfully drew our attention. He was a man of about sixty years old, a native of La Galera, Tarragona; he wore the old costume of the Catalan peasants: white stockings and short breeches, but with fine and distinguished manners that contrasted with his clothing. One of the Priests began to engage him in conversation, while the rest of us attended to the others. When eight had already confessed and while I was talking to some of them, consoling them in that terrible ordeal and receiving their recommendations and orders to later transmit to their respective families, the curate approached me and said in my ear: 'Father, I haven't been able to achieve anything with that man, why don't you try?' I went there, he received me very attentively, I spoke with him for a long time and I immediately understood that he was a cultured man and that he also had an uncommon Christian formation. Those details encouraged me and I acquired the intimate conviction that it would not be difficult to get him to confess. But my disappointment was great when, after having spoken with him for more than half an hour, he told me these exact words: – 'Look, Father, I thank you very sincerely for what you are doing for me. I understand that you are having a bad night because of me, since you are not going to get me to confess. I am extremely grateful to you, but I beg you not to insist. From now on I can assure you that I am not going to confess. I was raised as a Christian, but I have lost my faith.' I was stunned for the moment, almost not knowing what to say. But, inspired, no doubt, by the Most Blessed Virgin, I dared to propose to him: – 'Would you do me a favour?' 'Whatever you want,' he replied, 'as long as you don't ask me to confess.' 'Would you allow me – I added – to impose the Holy Scapular on you?' 'I have no objection,' he told me; 'those things mean nothing to me, but if I can please you in this way, you can do so.' I immediately imposed the Holy Scapular of Carmel on him. He then went to sit in a corner, at the end of one of the benches in that room, and I retired to the adjoining room to pray for him to the Most Blessed Virgin. Not even five minutes had passed, when I heard a kind of roar and loud, broken sobs, which alarmed me. I entered the room again and saw that man, who grabbed me crying inconsolably and said in the midst of his tears: – 'I want to confess, I want to confess. I don't deserve this grace from God. The Virgin has saved me.' To the admiration and amazement of all those present, he confessed, without ceasing to shed tears for a single moment, with a truly extraordinary and touching contrition. And when, at the last minute, before taking them to the place of execution, I said goodbye to them, he hugged me and kissed me, while saying to me: – 'Thank you, Father, thank you for the immense good you have done for me. In Heaven I will pray for you. Thank you, and until Heaven...' I sincerely confess that I was moved by that scene and that my tears joined to his, while I thanked the Lord for that wonder and thanked the Most Blessed Virgin for allowing me to witness that splendid manifestation of Her maternal and merciful love."

94. *I want to confess!:* The Cardinal and journalist Ángel Herrera Oria, from his own experience, related this case to the Superior in Santander of the Discalced Carmelites, who tells us the story. "Lord Bishop Don Ángel called me on the phone and said: – 'At what time

could you receive me?’ But I, who was about to leave, told him that I would be happy to go and see him myself – ‘Come immediately,’ he answered. I went to his house and he told me: ‘How sorry I am that I’m not going to be in Santander on Carmel’s Day! I have a lot of devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel and to everything Carmelite, to Saint Teresa and to Saint John of the Cross, a lot of devotion. How wonderful the Holy Scapular of Carmel! Be kind and listen to me: Not yet fifteen days ago, they called me to a prison. I had to take care of a poor soul, without divine or human forgiveness; handcuffed; fierce eyes.... I said: ‘Son, do you believe in God?’ ‘Yes, and I hope He does me justice...’ ‘Do you believe there is a Heaven and a hell?’ ‘Am I not to believe that?’ ‘Confess, then, to take Communion.’ ‘Never, I don’t believe in priests...’ A few minutes passed, during which I walked around, attending to others. Again I returned to him: – ‘Son, do you believe in God?’ ‘I have already told you yes, that I believe in God as much as anyone else.’ ‘Do you believe in Jesus



Christ the Redeemer?’ ‘As well.’ ‘Confess to receive Communion.’ ‘I’m not interested; that’s a Priest’s thing; and forgive me if I seem rude.’ Another brief absence and I return to the fray: – ‘Do you believe in God?’ ‘Yes, Father, and I hope he does me justice...’ ‘Do you believe in Jesus Christ?’ ‘As well.’ ‘Do you believe in the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God?’ a look on high, a sigh... – ‘I believe in the Virgin too...’ ‘Confess, then, and receive Communion, my son.’ ‘No, leave me alone...’ For the third time I left him ruminating on his refusal; and I came back. The same interrogation... – ‘Do you believe in the Most Blessed Virgin Mary?’ ‘Just as I believe in my mother...’ ‘Will you accept from me a Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel?’ ‘Why not? Put it on me yourself.’ I put it in his pocket. His hands were tied and it was not appropriate to unbutton his chest or expose it... The poor man went to take out his handkerchief to wipe his moist eyes and his Scapular fell out. – ‘Don Ángel, I dropped it, do me a favour.’ I picked it up and gave it to him. – ‘Do you want to confess?’ ‘Yes, sir!’ It was the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel that performed the miracle.”

95. *She converts a “big fish”*: It happened in 1955 in the Apostolic Prefecture of Urabá (Colombia). The Prefect himself, Father Arteaga, lived this story. As everywhere where there are people of colour, there is no shortage of a few white people who, far from edifying them with their good examples, constitute the stone of scandal in the entire region. One of these undesirables was seriously ill at the time. A good person informed the Prefect of this, and he immediately went over to the dying man’s house, who received him with the coldest indifference. However, the Father admonished him with tender and loving words so that he might turn his eyes to the merciful God in his last moments; but the imprudent man despised the zealous missionary, who had to leave him, withdrawing in silence, with immense bitterness in his heart. On leaving the house he left a Scapular of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel in the hands of his wife so that she might secretly place it under the sick man’s pillow without him realizing it, and told them: – “I will see you later.” So it was. He went to bed quite late, as if giving time for a call from that house from the diabolic moribund and, after midnight, there was a knock on the door and a shout: – “Father, the sick man is calling you, run.” He immediately went out to the dying man’s house, and what was his surprise when, upon arriving at his bedside, the sick man spontaneously said to him: – “Father, I want to confess...” One more soul saved by just the priceless relic of the Holy Scapular. This sacramental moved his heart when already on the brink of the abyss. He confessed, received the anointing of the sick, and was deprived only of Holy Viaticum, because that poor locality lacked a church. Moments later those eyes closed forever, but his soul headed for eternal glory thanks to the kind Mother of Carmel.

96. *Saint Claude de la Colombière*. The renowned Father de la Colombière, of the illustrious Company of Jesus, with great reason is called the apostle of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But with much more reason should we call him the great apostle of the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel, since from his golden pen came the sweetest and most convincing words when speaking of devotion to the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel. The sublime orator said: "Great and sublime things have been said about the blessings that come to us from being devotees of Most Holy Mary. But I want to tell you now something greater in favour of those who wear the Holy Scapular of Carmel. It is not enough to say that this holy livery is a sign of predestination. It is something more, it is more than that: the Holy Scapular of Carmel is the great sign of predestination, it is the most certain sign of eternal blessedness among all the various signs of predestination that we know. What devotion, therefore, will we embrace with more affection, with more zeal and with greater perseverance than this one?" And to stubborn sinners he said: "If all the graces that the Holy Virgin pours out on you so generously do not succeed in converting you; if you are deaf to so many voices and blind to so much light; if you persist in dying unrepentant... doubt not: you will die as reprobates. Yes, my brothers, you will die in the clutches of final impenitence; but in this case it is impossible that you can die wearing the holy scapular! Because if the Most Holy Mary does not succeed, through your criminal obstinacy, in tearing you from the quagmire of your guilt, She will find some means to strip you of her holy livery. You yourselves, listen carefully! You yourselves, with your own hands, will tear off the Holy Scapular of Carmel so as not to die wearing it in the clutches of impenitence. This is what happened to that unfortunate suicidal woman who desperately threw herself into the water to drown. This young woman, seduced by the immoral reading of obscene books, contracted very light and dangerous friendships and relationships that led towards the loss of her soul. Seized by unspeakable remorse, she decided to end her life by throwing herself into a swiftly flowing river. She threw herself, at last, with desperate resolve, into the impetuous current of the river, and though the unfortunate woman was not a devotee of the Most Blessed Virgin, she nevertheless wore, habitually, her holy and blessed Scapular. At that time all the young woman's efforts to sink were useless, because, despite them, the unfortunate woman continued floating as if she were a feather, and it was impossible for her to sink, since the waters themselves kept her afloat against her will. A fisherman who happened to be near her and saw her, hurriedly ran to her aid to save her, but before the fisherman reached her, the unfortunate woman, amazed at that prodigy that shone so brightly in the midst of the black shadows of despair, she became convinced that the Holy Scapular was the divine talisman that closed the mouth of hell. Despite which the unfortunate woman closed her eyes to so much light and her ears to that eloquent voice, and tore the Holy Scapular from her body by diabolical inspiration, throwing it away. And then, for the fourth or fifth time, she made an effort to drown herself, and the same waters that had previously closed to keep her afloat, then opened to swallow her, and she immediately sank to the bottom of the waters. Therefore, the unfortunate woman died, sinning, committing a crime – said Saint Claude de la Colombière – but the truth is that she could not die until she had stripped herself of this pledge of eternal salvation, with which, – adds the same Saint – no one can expire without enjoying the privilege of being free from eternal fire, according to Mary's promise." No page can be conceived more sublime and heartfelt than one that came from the pen of gold or better, from the heart of fire, all purity and holiness, and impregnated with the most fervent love for Mary, which Saint Claude de la Colombière felt since he was a child, whom today we have the joy of venerating on the altars. So that nothing be lacking in his qualities or in the iridescence of holiness in this brilliant Ignatian, he distinguished himself, like all true children of the illustrious Ignatius of Loyola, by his delirious love for the Virgin of Carmel and by spreading everywhere with his apostolic zeal the most tender devotion to the blessed Scapular of Carmel.

97. *Three surprising cases from the 20th century relating to the Scapular.* Below are three extraordinary cases recorded in the 20th century and mentioned by Pliny Mary Solimeo in his work 'The great promise of salvation, the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.'

1. The scapular that saved a young woman when she fell from a plane. In November 1955, in Guatemala, a plane fell with 27 passengers, all of whom died, except for a young woman who, upon realizing that the plane was falling, grabbed her scapular and asked the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel for help. She suffered severe burns and her clothes were all burned, but the flames did not even touch the scapular. 2. The scapular that saved a Carmelite in the Holy Land. In 1944, a Carmelite missionary in the Holy Land was called to administer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The motorcyclist, who was Arab, ordered him to get off about six kilometres before reaching the place, because the road was too dangerous due to mud on the road. And as it really was, after walking about three kilometres, the missionary felt that his feet were sinking deeper and deeper into the mud, until he slipped into a mud pool and began to sink. He immediately remembered Our Lady and Her Scapular, kissed it and raised his gaze to Mount Carmel crying: "Our Lady of Carmel! Holy mother! Help me! Save me!" All he remembers is that he then found himself on dry ground. "I know that I was saved by the Most Blessed Virgin through her brown scapular. I lost my shoes in that mud. I was almost completely covered in mud, but I managed to walk the remaining three kilometres, always praising Our Lady." 3. The Scapular that saved the man hit by a train. At the beginning of the 20th century, in the North American town of Ashtabula, Ohio, a man was seriously run over by a train. Instead of dying at that moment, however, he remained conscious for an additional 45 minutes, the time needed for a priest to arrive and administer the last rites. No one understood how it could be possible that, with such open wounds, he had not died immediately. The only explanation found was that hanging around his neck: he wore the Scapular.



98. *The Carmelite Scapular of Saint John Bosco:* The newspaper *Il Correo d'Italia* of May 19th 1929 reported the exhumation of the body of Saint John Bosco, in these terms: "When all those invited were present, they went ahead with the pious ceremony of recognition of the remains of Saint John Bosco. Monsignor Salotti, assisted by the Salesian Superiors and surrounded by doctors and other officials, ordered that the coffin be uncovered. This appeared very soon; the box had a dull colour due to time and humidity, but with the silk seal perfectly preserved and fastened. Examined carefully, and seeing it intact, the lid was carefully lifted. The zinc box then appeared, somewhat affected by the action of time, especially in the weldings. All of it was surrounded by a dark greyish green that denounced the funereal nature of the contents. When the box was opened, the remains appeared. Everyone watched with anxiety, full of devotion. The hands, which were the first thing we saw, were deformed. The sacred corpse was mummified, but around his lips the smile that was always so typical of the servant of God played pleasantly. The clothes had deteriorated, and the eyes of all those present were fixed with surprise on the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel and on the crucifix, which remained clean and intact, as though recently placed on the Saint's chest. The gentlemen surrounding the sacred coffin opened into two wings so that the crowd waiting there could file past the Saint and contemplate the sacred Scapular, untouched by all corruption. It was a tribute of veneration to the corpse and of love to the Most Blessed Virgin, whose protection over the sacred remains was evident in the miraculous conservation of the Scapular."

99. "Who knows if I will die this very night?": The French Jesuit Father Leblanc was passing through the school dormitory to see if all the schoolboys had by then gone to bed. He saw one of them, ten years old, kneeling beside his bed. – "Why haven't you gone to

bed yet? – the Father asked him – because I have sent my Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel to the Brother porter to sew it for me, since the cords had come unstitched, and as he has not yet brought it to me, I dare not go to bed, because I could perhaps die without my Scapular and the very thought horrifies me.” – “Do not be afraid, my son. First thing tomorrow morning I will have your Scapular delivered to you. Lie down now and sleep without fear.” – “Father; I can’t go to bed; who knows if I will die this very night...!” And saying this, the child began to cry inconsolably. The good Father, taking pity, very edified by the pious trust that the fervent child had placed in the Holy Scapular, went down to the porter’s lodge, picked up the Scapular, went up to the bedroom and gave it to him. The child, fervently placing it around his neck and kissing it with devotion, fell asleep peacefully, tenderly invoking the sweet name of Mary. Upon inspection the next morning, he saw that the child, so loving towards the Most Blessed Virgin, was still in bed. He approached to wake him up, and what would be Father Leblanc’s surprise when he found that he was dead, and that in his stiff hands he still held the blessed Scapular of Carmel, without whose company he had not wanted to go to bed. The Most Blessed Virgin wanted to reward the filial trust of her angelic servant by not allowing him to die without the precious relic by which he hoped to be free from eternal punishments. Let us praise our most loving Mother and labour so that all children may feel the sweetest urge to wear their Holy Scapular day and night, and thus be freed from all danger.

100. A Singular Nurse: Terence Ross, 23 years of age, familiarly called Terry, was a sergeant in the famous Scottish mountaineers the Scaforth Highlanders. His first action was very difficult, landing in France, twelve miles north of Le Havre, to eliminate a radio station in Bruneval. As they stormed the station there was an explosion like lightning. When he regained consciousness, he was in hospital. He underwent operations; he spent long days there. Terry asked the surgeon to tell him the truth: – “Yes, you will not regain your sight.” For the first time since childhood he cried his eyes out, pressing the sheet to his mouth. Without knowing how, he touched something to which he held on tightly. It was his Scapular of the Virgin. In a low voice he murmured: – “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.” And then, in his desperation, he felt a hand squeeze his, and a woman’s voice asked him: – “Are you calling me, Terry?” The poor boy clung to the nurse’s hand: – “No, Sister; I wasn’t calling; but please keep me company for a while, I feel horribly alone.” – “Come on, man; that’s not how a brave soldier like you speaks. Lean your head back a little while I refresh your forehead. Can you not sleep? You are brooding too much perhaps.” Terry burst into a torrent of heartfelt admissions. The nurse’s sweet words then left him completely calm. He fell asleep. When he awoke, his blindfold had fallen off. He raised his hand to straighten it and stopped suddenly. – “Is that you, John?”, he asked anxiously. – “Yes sir,” the male nurse responded. “Forgive me if I woke you up, but I have a lot to do and I need to start early.” – “That doesn’t matter, John. Come here closer, closer.” Terry’s voice sounded excited. – “Tell me, John, do you have a broom in your left hand? And you’re tall and thin and... you wear glasses?” The old man let go of the broom and ran off. A few minutes later the doctor arrived and examined him thoroughly. – “It’s impossible to explain, Ross; but in a few hours you will have perfect vision.” Ross anxiously asked. – “Which of the women nurses was on duty last night?” – “None, Ross. Why do you ask?” – “It’s just that when the lights went out, I didn’t fall asleep until she came.” – “She, who is she? I tell you, Terry, there was no woman nurse here.” No, it hadn’t been a dream. He had experienced the anguish of mortal terror, and he had prayed: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us”... and he was healed.

101. Delivered from death: Father Simón Sixto, of the Order of Saint Augustine, tells that a lady, very devoted to our Mother of Carmel, fell mortally ill and, having received the Sacraments with fervour, died, according to all accounts and judging by natural signs, patent in the pale, rigid and disfigured appearance of her face. After eight hours, a lady, very fond of her and very devoted to the Scapular, placed her own on the lady’s chest, already cold and

stiff, and immediately she recovered her vital breath, to the astonishment of everyone. She lived afterwards for some years, being considered with admiration as truly risen again.

102. *If only I could believe!:* A young man seriously ill, whose vices had dragged him to the grave in his best years, was approached by a pious lady and asked to accept a Scapular she had brought him. The young man, giving a sigh that came from the depths of his soul, said: – “Ah, if only I could believe!” – “Sure enough,” – the devotee answered, – “accept the Scapular and you will believe.” – “But, woman, I can’t be taken in like a child any more; I know too much.” – “But you don’t know what the Scapular is. Take it.” A few days later the giver returned and, without her talking to him about religion, the patient said to her: – “Do you know that I am already doubting?” – “Oh!” exclaimed the lady, “you already believe; and soon you will fall to your knees at the feet of the Virgin of Carmel.” Just so. Within fifteen days he died a Christian death, after receiving the Holy Sacraments, requested by one who could not believe.



103. *She recovers her senses:* Around the year 1912, the following case happened in the Hospital of Alegrete, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil: “A Carmelite Father was called from the Hospital to assist a dying woman. He was the same who signs these lines, and when I arrived, the sick woman had lost consciousness. Suspecting that there would be no disposition in her for receiving the Sacraments administered in that state and producing fruit in her soul, I asked for a Scapular of Carmel and imposed it on her, at the same time very fervently begging the Virgin to take pity on the unhappy woman. Hardly had the sick woman received the Scapular than she perfectly recovered the use of reason and her senses. She was instructed in the truths of religion, since she was very ignorant, confessed and received Extreme Unction, and when I had finishing administering this Sacrament, she died. The fact that she recovered her reason and senses and received the Sacraments, those who had detailed information about the case, considered it an extraordinary favour from the Virgin of Carmel, through her Holy Scapular. Fr. Patrick, O.C.D.”

104. *They want to confess:* Father Daniel Estepa, Jesuit Priest, recounts: “I heard a Carmelite Father recount this in a rural mission given in Casariche, Seville. One night he was called to the prison to assist some men sentenced to death. Before entering a guard told him: – ‘Father, you’re wasting your time, and you’re also going to have to put up with their crudity.’ ‘No matter’ – the Priest answered – ‘Well, come in.’ His presence was greeted with visible signs of displeasure and even rudeness. The Father made an effort to control the situation and managed to speak. He told them that in a few hours they were going to die and that, therefore, they should think about God, Whom they would meet in a few moments. He then asked if anyone wanted to confess. They had heard enough, and he had to listen to blasphemies and mockery of everything most sacred. Suddenly, by inspiration from Heaven, the Father said: – ‘Is there anyone who wants to have the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel imposed?’ Two burly fishermen came forward. – ‘We don’t want Priests. But against the Virgin we have nothing.’ In effect, he imposed the Scapular on them. Again he asked: ‘Is there anyone who wants to confess?’ Immediately, and as if moved by a superior force, two men take a step forward. – ‘Me, Father.’ ‘Me too, Father.’ They were the same ones on whom the Scapular had been imposed a moment before.”

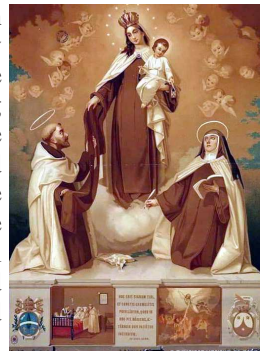
105. *She desires to receive the Sacraments:* A ‘Reino de Cristo’ subscriber wrote excitedly (RC July 1977): “I went with a sister of mine to see a friend who lives in a poor zone. After knocking on her door several times without receiving a reply, her neighbour told us: – ‘She’s not here; but come to my house.’ Even though we barely knew the family, we passed in and said hello and asked how everyone was. The woman told us that her mother

was dying. As we did not want to miss the opportunity for our final judgment: *'I was sick and you visited me,'* we asked permission to enter the sick woman's room. Immediately she showed us in. We found her very ill, unconscious. She had a small image of the Virgin of Carmel on a table. Her daughter told us: 'It seems miraculous; all her life she has been very devoted to the Virgin of Carmel, yet she never set foot in a church, nor heard Mass nor received the Sacraments. But feeling unwell, without seeming at all serious, she said: 'I feel very bad, I would like to receive the Sacraments, though I am afraid, because the Priest is going to scold me for never having gone to church.' We tried to convince her that as she wasn't so bad, that when she felt better, she herself could go to church, but she insisted that she was going to die. So we called a very good neighbour who, on seeing her, didn't find her bad either. However, since she wanted to receive the Sacraments so much, and they are never out of place, she notified the Parish Priest, who came quickly. He was very kind to her and administered the Sacraments to her including Extreme Unction. She received them fully conscious. Shortly after the Priest left, she lost consciousness and fell into the same lethargic state in which they found her. The doctor said that she would die very soon. We have found out that this was what happened!"

106. *Admirable conversion:* In *'La Semana Católica'* of Madrid, in its issue of September 22, 1889, this event was reported: "D. Francisco Javier Zaldúa, president of the Republic of Colombia and eminent jurist, was not outstanding for his Catholic feelings. He had taken a large part in the expulsion of the meritorious Fathers of the Society of Jesus and in other similar blunders. This man had a son who, having brilliantly completed his studies at the American College in Rome, was ordained a Priest and was very devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel. He did everything humanly possible to obtain the conversion of his father from this Celestial Lady, but could achieve nothing. Do not think that this good Priest and most loving son was discouraged at this, since his father had found out that the doctors had given up hope for him, and he was by then waiting from one moment to the next for the hour of death. His son approached the sick man and said these words to him: 'My dear father, since all human remedies, physical or medicinal, are exhausted, would you allow me to try, for your benefit, a spiritual one?' 'What is it, my son?' asked Zaldúa. – 'It is extremely simple: put on the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel.' To the great surprise and joy of the son, President Zaldúa bowed his head so that the Holy Scapular could be imposed on him. Once he had received it, he asked his son: - 'What obligations are contracted with this act?' – 'That of confessing,' the good son responded, moved, but in a commanding tone. – 'I'll think about it,' the sick man humbly replied. While the son gave him time to concentrate interiorly and reflect, the dying man added: 'I wish to confess, my son, call the Priest.' The latter, who had already been warned in advance by the son, charitably confessed señor Zaldúa who, not content with confessing his sins contritely and penitently, added in a loud voice that he died in the faith of the Holy Catholic Church and that he wished to repair all the evil that with his conduct or with his influence or example he had done to souls, expiring after receiving Viaticum, with signs of sincere repentance."

107. *He trusted in Mary's protection:* An eyewitness reported this event: On the third day of the battle of Lenef, having received orders to go over the field and visit the wounded, and having been commanded that with the necessary precautions they be taken to the nearest hospital, I observed that among them there was a soldier whose Holy Scapular hanging around his neck could be seen through his half-open jacket, who was eagerly asking for a Priest to confess. I approached him and saw with stupor and amazement that, among other serious wounds, he had a sabre cut to his head and that a bullet had passed through his forehead, so that his brains could be seen on both sides. Seeing him in such a deplorable state, I said to those who followed me: – "You can leave this man on the field." The unfortunate soldier, to whom my words had not gone unnoticed, earnestly begged to be placed in the cart of the wounded and allowed to confess with the first Priest they found along the way,

and then, if they wanted, be left in the field or anywhere else. Such a just and pious request was granted, and on the way they shortly met a Priest. He confessed the dying man who, with great presence of mind, showed signs of sincere pain and repentance. After having had the joy of receiving sacramental absolution, he raised his gaze heavenwards and exhaled his last breath, while his lips murmured the sweetest Name of Mary. Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible that this soldier could have survived after the terrible wound he received in the head, and all those present agreed that his survival until receiving absolution was undoubtedly due to the singular and miraculous protection that Mary gave him through Her blessed Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel, which he was wearing.



108. He dies in the Grace of God: The Jesuit Father Theophilus Raynaud reports that a soldier from Croatia, heartless and criminal, who with several other companions of his ilk dedicated himself to living off their plunder, treacherously taking the lives of travellers and sowing panic throughout the district, had decided to rob a certain powerful lord in the vicinity. With such depraved purposes they were on their way to Loringia when, as they passed through a certain village called Tincourt, Justice came out to meet them, having been warned in advance of their intentions, and was prepared to arrest them. They resisted valiantly to avoid falling into their hands but, in the end, as there were more representatives of authority, several of the gang were killed, and in the end only our man was left, unwilling in any way to give himself up. They wounded him with several bullets and a huge gash on the head, and, irritatedly trying to finish him off, since they had knocked him to the ground, they stabbed him repeatedly. However, with a faint accent he told them: – “In vain you multiply the blows to take my life.”; “You will not achieve your purposes because I was always devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin and, though unworthy, I wear Her blessed Scapular of Carmel, and my soul will not leave this mortal body until I confess my guilt.” At that moment an old Priest happened to pass nearby, who, feeling compassion for the unhappy man, confessed him, and he, with signs of true repentance, gave up his soul to God.

109. He asks for Confession: Father John Bonet tells that a certain man was a slave to gold and to usury and led a disastrous life. One day, his wife, a pious woman, realizing that his death was as close as his obstinacy was alive and persistent, said to him affectionately: – “Am I not to see you with the Holy Scapular of the Virgin, in which I have so much faith, so that the Most Blessed Virgin may grant you health?” To which the unhappy man responded in a bad mood: – “Anything that is not confession, you already know I will grant you.” His wife, who was very devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin, and who had worn her Holy Scapular with great fervour ever since she was a child, seeing a ray of hope in his condescension, immediately sent for a Carmelite Father to come and impose it on him and explain the privileges linked to it by the Most Blessed Virgin. At the moment when he received it and felt its loving caress on his chest, he kissed it with all tenderness and respect and immediately began to say humbly, confused and contrite: – “Confession, my Father, I wish you to absolve me.” He made a fervent confession and received the last Sacraments with great displays of piety, and the time that remained of his life was spent in fervent acts of love for God and in ordering the restoration or repayment of everything wrongly done or acquired during his lifetime as a businessman, setting an example, like Zachaeus, of generosity and greatness of soul.

110. The virtue of the Scapular of Carmel: A Parish Priest’s brother had abandoned faith and religious practices 25 years previously, and was now dying. The Priest was about to have the humiliation and pain of having his brother buried civilly, in addition to seeing him die impenitent. Another Priest friend of his, however, advised him to put the Scapular of Carmel under the patient’s pillow, without him noticing. He did so, taking advantage of his



sleep, though without much hope of success, believing that the first condition for the Virgin's promise to Saint Simon Stock to be fulfilled, that whoever wore the Holy Scapular would not die in mortal sin, was that this was with the knowledge and will of the interested party. But what was his astonishment when, upon waking up, the sick man spontaneously asked for a Confessor!... Shortly after confessing, he died with signs of true repentance, but not before having first arranged to be given a church burial.

111. Conversion of a student: Father Matthias of Saint John relates that in Padua, Italy, there was a young student whose disorders and excesses had led him to despair. In those days he conceived the diabolical project of committing suicide and, arming himself with a razor-sharp dagger, he gave himself three tremendous stabs; but each of these three terrible blows landed on the Holy Scapular of Carmel, which, fortunately for him,

the unhappy student was wearing on his chest. This was precisely the reason for his conversion and his eternal salvation; because the unfortunate youth was stupefied at such a prodigy. He reflected within himself and, full of confusion, remembering his disastrous life, decided from that very moment to change his life and enter the true path of good, being from that very day a true paragon of all virtue. He later entered a convent of observant Religious of the Seraphic Father Saint Francis, and was a truly apostolic man who led many souls to God by his fervent zeal and holy life. His conversion was, for all who knew his life as a young man, a reason for praising and blessing God and his Holy Mother.

112. A gallows, "throne of Mary": The following prodigy of our Mother of Carmel performed on the prisoner Juan José Trespalacios, sentenced to three death sentences in 1936, is a sublime page of the mercies and maternal goodness of our sweet Mother for the most miserable of Her children. It is reported by Father Bernardo María of Saint Joseph, a Discalced Carmelite, who was the one who imposed on him the Holy Scapular of Our Mother of Mount Carmel, in Colombia. In prison he became a fervent Christian and a great apostle. Father Bernardo writes: "The soul of Juan José was a generous soul; heartless in his crime, resigned in his prison, firm in the face of death. If he had regained his freedom, he would have kept his promise to erect a cross on top of a mountain and live beside it as a perpetual solitary. On his chest he wore the Scapular, which he kissed at every moment with fervour and delirious faith. How many did he not distribute among his companions in misfortune, or send, as the most precious gift, in his letters, beyond his prison bars! Three death sentences weighed upon him and the peace of his soul was not disturbed for a moment after having renounced his life for his victims and benefactors, and after the enormous sacrifices and penances made in prison! Upon giving him the news of his execution, on the eve of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, (June 11th 1953), he responded with this manly explosion of indescribable joy: – 'Thank God, my sweet Mother has heard me. I have always asked it to be on a Friday or Saturday.' He arrived at the place where the small instrument that was to free him from this world was prepared. When he had sat down in the chair, he said, smiling, these words: 'Now I am on my throne!' Then, once the instrument of death had been adjusted, he closed his eyes, bowed his head with sweet peace, and the executioner turned the tourniquet... The Virgin of Carmel, through her blessed Scapular, had brought light and peace to this soul, granting him days of sincere repentance and incredible penance, which served as edification to all the inmates, and received death full of peace and hope in the Lord."

113. She saves him in a coal mine: In the 1950s, in the Dour coal mines, in Belgium, a terrible explosion of firedamp brought mourning for the deaths of miners in many families. One of them, Camilo Leré, eighteen years old, recounted what happened to him that day at the bottom of the mine in the following way: "I was working in my gallery with several

colleagues when, suddenly, and towards the end of it, a dull roar was heard, which is a sinister and fateful omen of an oncoming explosion. The steam and mist of death, and a horrible death, overwhelmed all of us miners. I took refuge and shielded myself in my Holy Scapular and shook it tremblingly in my hands, shouting, with a faith proportionate to the anguish that oppressed my heart: – ‘Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, save me!’ At that very moment the whirlwind of the explosion, roaring and burning in the caverns of the mine, threw the unhappy miners into the air, who, also burning, fell to the ground dying or dead. The rails were uprooted, and they and the wagons, also shaken in turbulent and mad confusion, collided with each other and against the walls, finishing off the unhappy workers. I, who prayed on my knees, was also carried away by the whirlwind, and fell on the edge of the mouth of a chimney, which was like arriving at the haven of salvation. Given that the entire seam was filled with the deadly gas, which suffocated the unfortunate miners who had not yet died, only at the chimneys did a breath of pure and cooling air filter through. But, little by little, the air was becoming thinner, and I saw that very soon I too would be a victim of asphyxiation. In that agony I cried out with more lively and urgent requests to the blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, promising her a Mass in thanksgiving, and to confess and receive Communion in it, together with my pious mother. I then shouted out for help, and hearing this came the colleagues who worked in other seams who, somewhat recovered from the first stupor, finally snatched me from the clutches of death, taking me out into the pure, free air outside. Yes, to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel and to her blessed and miraculous Scapular I owe my salvation. She was the one who saved me in that tragic hour when all my companions perished; for this reason I will never cease to praise and bless Her.”

114. *He emerges unharmed from a fatal accident:* It was September 29th, 1930. The dome of the transept of the Carmelite Church of Ayala (Madrid) was being completed, due to the apostolic zeal of Father Juan Bautista Felú Yagüe. The aforementioned Father was exhorting the bricklayers at the top of the scaffolding, out of love for the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel, to put all their efforts into finishing his church as soon as possible, when he stepped badly on one of the scaffolding planks which were not well secured and, without giving him time to exclaim more than: – “My mother of Carmel, protect me!” He fell from one level to another of the scaffolding, without the slightest bruise or the slightest injury, and when everyone thought he was ruptured or dead, he came out smiling, and heading towards the Tabernacle, he shouted: “How good you are, my Jesus! How good you are, because you allow me to finish this house for my dear Mother!”

115. *She saves a child from a fatal accident:* Rafael Rodríguez Remesal, Parish Priest of Casariche, Seville, wrote in ‘*El Santo Escapulario*’: At the end of December last year 1925, Vidal Moriana, a fervent lover and propagator of the devotion of the Blessed Scapular of Carmel, accompanied by his son and two of his son’s little friends, decided one afternoon to go out to the country and take a ride in a truck. They were going at full speed, when one of the little ones removed the handle from one of the boards on which they were lying. The two friends fell from the truck onto the ground, remaining almost lifeless from the impact, while Vidal Moriana’s son, as if pushed by an invisible hand, fell into the truck, without the slightest injury. Taken quickly to their homes, they made the painful impression that is to be expected, upon seeing them bathed in blood; when behold, this exclamation came from the lips of Señora de Moriana: – “These children were not wearing the Holy Scapular.” And, in fact, the two little friends, when dressing for the outing, had forgotten the Scapular in their homes, which they always used to wear. Only Sr. Moriana’s son carried it with him and was saved by it, because by the laws of physics he had to fall, if the Holy Virgin had not freed him from that danger. The two friends’ wounds healed, but traces have remained in them both to perpetuate the memory of the miracle worked with their little friend. And Father Rodríguez ends by saying that this has given rise to more and more devotion to the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel throughout the town.

116. *She saves a chaste maiden:* Alfonso Meneses, Prefect of the Galleys of Naples, had a maiden in his service, named Lily, beautiful, intelligent and modest. She was very devoted to the Virgin of Carmel, and wore the Holy Scapular ever since her childhood. An unhappy young man who accompanied her on a boat fell blindly and passionately in love with her. The perverse young man tried to violate her, but she resisted him and defended herself so valiantly that he could achieve nothing. Blind with fury, the young man took her by the waist and threw her into the sea; which Lily did not resist, to get rid of him, because she trusted in the effective help of the Virgin of Carmel. She had not been in the waters for a quarter of an hour, and had been invoking the Most Blessed Virgin without interruption, when Divine Providence disposed that a ship pass quite close by and, inspired by the Queen of Heaven, she began to shout out saying: “Peter Andrés Cenemón, help me!” Peter’s first thought was to believe that someone he knew, from a nearby boat, was calling him; but on the entire horizon he could see no boat. He heard the same pitiful voice again, and saw a woman in the water. He quickly threw himself into the sea, freeing from that danger the one whom Most Holy Mary had wonderfully wanted to save. Once on the ship, and after Lily had recovered, she began to thank Mary, between sighs and tears, without the captain of the ship and the other companions overcoming their astonishment, since she had called the captain by his own name, without ever having seen him. When Peter asked her how she had been able to call him by his name, she replied: – “I will tell you, Peter, that when I fell into the sea, a very beautiful Lady dressed in the habit of Carmel picked me up in her mantle, and told me that, when your boat passed by, I should call you by that name, because you would take me out of the sea.” Peter Andrés, seeing himself favoured by the Mother of God in order to free Her devout daughter from such a danger, felt so joyful and grateful that, leaving the course he was on, he pointed the bow of his boat towards Naples, in order to leave his protected guest there. Arriving at port, Lily disembarked, and ran without stopping to the Carmelite convent, crying out loud through the streets making known the mercy shown to her by Most Holy Mary.

117. *By it his life was preserved:* Father Daniel of the Virgin Mary, who died in 1678, in his work ‘*Vinea Carmeli*’ refers to this miraculous event: In Flanders, Justice sentenced a Spanish soldier to be hanged in the year 1655, and after being hanged, his body was left suspended from the rope of the gallows for three consecutive days. Though the executioner had given him up for dead; the ropes had not taken his life by suffocation from the weight of his body; by which it is known that he was held up by the powerful and miraculous hand of Mary, Our Mother of Mount Carmel, whose Scapular the soldier wore with great fervour and whose favour he confidently implored. After three days, the Archduke of Austria Don Leopold, then Governor of Flanders, went out hunting that morning and, following a game animal, told the huntsmen to go look for it at the place where the hanged man was suspended from the gallows. The Spanish soldier then noticed that people were approaching, and like someone waking up from a deep sleep, began to force his voice, and, alarmed, the hunters recognized that he was still alive and well. They notified the Archduke, who as soon as he saw the prodigy, ordered the rope to be cut. Once the prince was informed of the details of the event through the mouth of the soldier himself, and of the great favour that such an excellent and divine Protectress had granted him, he also spared the life of this soldier, who, giving thanks to the Virgin of Carmel and to the prince, returned to Spain, and went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and San Pablo de los Perdones, in La Moraleja, where he was from.

118. *A child is born dead and She raises him to life:* Daniel of the Virgin Mary himself relates that, in a small town in Holland, a Confraternity of Carmel had been founded on the day of the Presentation of Our Lady. The next day, Michaela Poller, wife of Francis Boucher, gave birth to an infant with every sign of a stillbirth. Relatives, friends and acquaintances were all dismayed at this misfortune, and the father, his heart pierced by pain, not wanting

to afflict the heart of his wife with the news, resorted to a pious device, which suggested his deep faith and his confidence in the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin. As the town had gifted the Blessed Mother of Carmel with the foundation of Her devout Confraternity, he rightly thought that they could ask from Her maternal heart the grace of the child's life, and they took him to Her Feet with the Scapular on his chest. Their hopes were not misplaced, since the child, who for almost the entire day had shown no sign of life, as soon as they placed him at the feet of the Virgin of Carmel and laid the blessed Scapular on his little body, began to give signs of life. But when a solemn Mass was sung to Our Most Blessed Mother, on reaching those words of the Preface:

"We pray Thee that, together with the Angel voices, our voices too be admitted," Mary recognized as Her own the one who displayed the Holy Scapular on his chest, and the child began to give sure signs of life with his tears and movement. They called the Parish Priest and he administered the Sacrament of Baptism to him and, together with his grateful parents, all present expressed their most fervent gratitude to the Most Blessed Virgin, who had thus shown Her compassion for them.



119. Another similar prodigy: Daniel of the Virgin Mary tells that in Arluno, city of the Duchy of Luxembourg, Bishopric of Trier, Maria Brande, wife of James Firme, gave birth to a child, who showed no signs of life. The mother, concerned for the spiritual well-being of that innocent angel, went with him to the Church of Carmel, a few steps from the parents' house, to see if he could be baptized. She entered a chapel at the entrance to the church in order to make a plea to the Holy Virgin there, to grant life to the child; but was not successful, because Mary Most Holy wanted to test her faith, her humility and perseverance, and grant it to her through Her miraculous image of Carmel and through the contact of Her blessed Scapular. Indeed, without noticing the large number of people who were in the church, because a solemn function was being held, she stayed in the first chapel of the church, which was empty, she went to the altar of Our Mother of Carmel, and, placing the lifeless body of the newborn on the altar stone, she began to implore with pious tears the clemency of Most Holy Mary. She took the blessed Scapular from the image of the Divine Child, and placed it on the child's chest, redoubling more and more her fervour and her pious and most humble prayers. Her moans, emanating from the depths of her soul, moved the most pious Heart of the exalted Mother of God, and awakened the newborn from the deep sleep of death, who, opening his eyes, began to cry. That cry filled the heart of that devout woman with sublime joy, who immediately called a Priest to baptize him and, with her joy and jubilation, moved the hearts of the entire crowd, who did not cease to praise and bless the Most Holy Virgin for the countless wonders She works by virtue of Her Scapular.

120. Upon contact with the Scapular, a child is raised from the dead: Father Peter Moraga de Guevara, a Carmelite Religious from Murcia, reports that in that city, there lived a childless couple very devoted to Our Mother of Carmel, who had a poor woman at their service, a widow with several children whom they loved extraordinarily. It happened that, when the youngest of them, four years old, became seriously ill, completely given up by the doctors, he died precisely on the day of the Most Blessed Virgin. They then brought from the convent a habit of those usually used for acolytes, and with it they shrouded the little angel. When the lady of the house saw him shrouded, she was greatly distressed, and, with great lamentations and prayers to Our Mother of Carmel, between sobs and tears, she offered the child to Her, at the same time that she placed the Holy Scapular that she used to wear on his chest. The good lady continued to sob and cry, with the child in her lap, and soon everyone present noticed how the child began to come to his senses and then cry. Everyone was amazed and cried with emotion and joy at such a wonder, they hurried to the neighbouring



church, and, prostrate on their knees, gave thanks to God Our Lord, who, through the intercession of His Divine Mother and the contact of Her Scapular, had deigned to work such a miracle.

121. She saves a terminally ill patient: In 1950 and on one of the main streets of the aristocratic Madrid district of Salamanca, Father Joachim Guarch was required to administer the last Sacraments to a poor sick man, already in a comatose state. There was nothing that could be done there, since the patient was deprived of the use of his senses and helpless, as the renowned doctors who attended him assured. On the other hand, it seemed that there was no great interest on the part of the family that the sick man die in the grace of God, rather there was a desire in the air to let him die like a pagan. Father Guarch's apostolic zeal was not discouraged by this, and with the ease and joviality that were characteristic of him, he obtained from the relatives that the Holy Scapular be imposed on the sick person; in reality, more out of respect and deference to his person than to faith in the anchor of salvation of the Virgin of Carmel. Father Guarch was content with this, not doubting that the Most Blessed Virgin would do the rest. So it was, against all the predictions of the illustrious doctors who attended him. The sick man, upon

receiving – after three days – a new visit from the Father, momentarily regained the use of his senses, and gave sincere signs of repentance and received sacramental absolution.

122. She helps at the hour of death: In 1952, in Cuéllar, Segovia, the local doctor John de la Torre, 74 years old, was very ill, and his family feared that he would die without the Sacraments. Since calling the Parish Priest might cause a very worrying impression on the sick person, which could lead to death, they chose to call a Carmelite Father from Henar. For about an hour he worked on the sick man without success. But while the family members were waiting for him to leave the room with the confession over, they received the painful news: – “No, no and no. He says he has time to make a good one in the church and for now leave him alone.” And it was a fact that two hours previously a doctors' consultation had declared the absolute gravity of the patient. His children entered, his wife entered in a flood of tears, his loved ones entered. No one could convince him that he should prepare his soul for eternity without delay. – “Does he have the Carmelite Scapular?” the Carmelite Father asked those present. – “We think so,” they replied. He tried to make sure and directed the same question to his wife. He did not. On saying goodbye to the family, he earnestly recommended: “With those who accompany me, I will send you a Scapular; don't fail to put it on him at once.” And so they did; the patient accepted it willingly and immediately fell into a peaceful sleep. When he woke up three hours later, his first words were: – “I wish to confess and receive Communion.” Once the Priest was notified, he very soon came and left that soul ready for the journey to eternity and in possession of the best passport: the Holy Scapular, through which the Virgin of Carmel had shown, once again, Her power. Two days later, Don John died in the peace of the just. It was March 24, 1952.

123. She saves a man condemned to death: It was in the first months of the Holy Crusade of 1936, in Osuna, Seville. The nationalists sentenced some communists to death. To prepare them to die well, they called the Carmelite Fathers. They were Fathers Peter Benítez and Daniel Redondo. Father Benítez exhorted them with great unction and evangelical zeal to prepare for the trip to the heavenly homeland, while Father Redondo prepared to hear their confessions, to absolve them. They were all willing to leave this life to gain the eternal; but, among them all, one flatly refused to forgive his enemies. The Father kindly and charitably exhorted him to forgiveness in order to give him absolution. Everything was useless; it did not fit into that man's mind that the followers of the doctrine of Jesus Christ could be so

unjust and inhuman. The Holy Scapular had been imposed on everyone. And, oh wonder of the maternal tenderness and grace of Mary! They all came forward, contrite and fervent, to receive the Bread of the Angels, which was to serve as their Viaticum at that terrible moment. The prisoner who refused to forgive also wanted to approach the Eucharistic banquet, but could not. The hour of justice arrived. When he gave the poor prisoner the Scapular to kiss, to console and encourage him, he burst into a deep moan and a disconsolate cry, saying: – “Yes, I forgive, my Father, yes I forgive, so that Our Lord may forgive me all my wrongdoings!” Father Daniel could not help but hug him with effusion and cry with him for joy, testifying that he had died like a saint, by the virtue of the blessed Scapular of Carmel.

124. Whoever repudiates grace does not die with the Scapular: The Bishop of Solsona, Catalonia, tells us the following prodigy: “Sixteen prisoners had been sentenced to death in Vinaroz. After many efforts, we had managed to get fourteen to confess, the other two refusing even to listen to us. Mass could be said that day in the prison chapel, before the execution. Mass attended by everyone, and during it a Carmelite Father who, as a military chaplain, was then residing in Vinaroz, prepared them for Holy Communion, at the same time that he encouraged them with the hope of Heaven. Shortly after the Gospel, those two who had not confessed asked for confession, and the sixteen received Communion, and the Holy Scapular was imposed on them all. I left after the Mass and was not an eyewitness of the events that followed, but I was told the next day by all those who had attended the execution. When they handcuffed the prisoners and put them on the truck which was to take them to the place where they were to be executed, one of them began to blaspheme horribly. Neither the exhortations of his companions, nor the reflections given to him by the Carmelite Father and another Priest who accompanied them, served for anything other than to make him angrier and to increase his ever greater rage, cursing and blaspheming. Finally, the moment of execution arrived and the last words that the prisoner spoke were a blasphemy and horrible curse. He cursed God, the Church, the Priests, the military and even his wife and children. And with a curse on his lips and with the fiercest rage reflected on his face, he fell dead instantly from the volley of the picket. When the ensign who commanded the forces came forward, horrified by the event, with the doctor to recognize the executed, he saw an object on the ground that strongly caught his attention. He bent down to pick it up, and what was his astonishment, and even his horror, on seeing that it was a Scapular, when he later verified that it was precisely that of the one who had died with the blasphemy and the curse on his lips? I will never ever forget the face of that ensign when, the next day, he came to tell me of the event, showing me the Scapular, which he did not want to let go of, and repeating as if out of his mind: – ‘I have seen a miracle, Father, I have seen a miracle.’ The case was truly surprising and inexplicable. The Scapular was intact: it had not been blown off, torn by the shrapnel. The prisoner could not take it off, because his hands were handcuffed. It had not fallen, either, in the direction of the body, but in the opposite direction; that’s why the ensign found it when going from his command post to recognize the executed. The story of the lieutenant, the one told to me by the Carmelite Father and the other Priest, and also by a layman who was present at the execution, coincided perfectly in every detail. The Blessed Virgin, Our Mother, had not wanted the one who died blaspheming to die with the Holy Scapular on his chest.”

125. He tore off his Scapular: It happened in 1927, in Calle Bolsa, Seville. In a modest boarding house, a poor anarchist typographer was staying, who was dying, a victim of intestinal cancer. The owners of the hostel, fervent Carmelite tertiaries, summoned Father Ángelo Ramos, a Carmelite, to impose on him the Holy Scapular of Our Mother of Carmel, to see if that big fish might fall into the mystical net of the Divine Fisherwoman and Saviour of souls. Just to please them he allowed them to impose the Scapular on him. The good Father Ángelo visited him frequently. One day, among others, the sick man said: – “If you are going to play me the confession record and that I save my soul, you may as well leave,



because I am determined to give my soul to the devil; so excuse me from discussing such a matter, because it puts me in a very bad mood and aggravates my illness even further.” The days passed and the illness worsened by the hour, to such a point that nothing could calm the excruciating pain, which kept him rolling about doubled up in bed. One day, between those horrific convulsions and those insupportable pains, he said to Father Angelo: – “I should have already been dead a long time ago, but I don’t know what talisman, what superior force there is in me that prevents me from finishing once and for all, when I see that I am dying and I have just not died. This must be the effect of the Scapular that you put around my neck, and that keeps me clinging to this life, of which I have nothing left but a very tenuous thread.” And then he continued rolling about: – “But I must die and I want to die, and life is hateful to me.” The good Father lovingly urged him to confess, so that, since he could not achieve physical health, nor retain bodily life for long, he might obtain eternal salvation. The sick man, with fire of hatred and rancour gleaming from his eyes, took his leave of the zealous and virtuous Priest, saying: – “I receive you as a compassionate and good friend who kindly imposes on himself such sacrifices to console me and visit me, but as a Priest and as a Friar I hate and abhor you, and I now suspect the secret of not dying at once: namely the amulet or talisman that you hung around my neck.” Everything resulted useless with that obstinate heart hardened in evil. The charitable Father visited him for several days, and found him increasingly desperate and with fewer signs of turning to God, until one day, inspired perhaps by Lucifer, he tore off the blessed Scapular, threw it in anger into the chamber pot and died tearing his throat and chest with his nails.

126. Exemplary punishment: Father Peter de Arancibia, Augustinian, native of Abadiano, Vascongadas, and resident at that time in Puerto Rico, tells of this event that took place in the city of Añasco, Puerto Rico, on December 24, 1923 “The protestants,” says Father Arancibia, “were celebrating a soir  e, trying to ridicule our devotions and mock and satirize the Catholic clergy. In the soir  e that evening, with a theatrical performance, a young woman surnamed Dom  nguez took part, playing the role of princess. A young man, Pietri, played a Catholic priest. Pietri demanded money from the young Dom  nguez. When she refused, the pseudo-priest Pietri flew into a rage and violently insulted the princess, telling her: ‘You are going to be damned, you are a bad Catholic.’ The young Dom  nguez, to demonstrate her Catholicity, showed him a Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel hanging about her neck. The angry and frenzied pseudo-priest snatched it out of her hands, saying: – ‘This is utter nonsense, rubbish...,’ raising his arm and about to throw the blessed Scapular to the ground. But Jesus, who usually tolerates with greater patience the wrongs inflicted on His adorable Person, often makes His righteous arm fall upon those who dare to insult his Most Holy Mother. In the present case He did not want Mary’s honour to be profaned and the devotion most appreciated by Catholics to be made ridiculous. The arm that was raised to throw to the floor the Holy Scapular of Carmel, as if struck by lightning, remained immobile. Young Pietri became an imbecile. Neither was he able nor did he know what to answer those who, stupefied, asked him what the trouble was. He who had entered that evening full of health and joy, left on the shoulders of his friends, sick, paralytic, half-witted.”

127. He could not take the Scapular off: John Langa, Canon of the College of Naples, reports that he confessed a slave who, desperate at having lost a certain jewel of his master, offered himself to the devil, so that he might show him where he could find it. The demon appeared to him and told him that the next day he would give it to him in the sea, and that he should go to the coast. The slave effectively went out to the shore, and the demon showed him the jewel in the sea, ordering him to look for it. Our man undressed to enter the sea, but when he wanted to take off the Holy Scapular he was invisibly prevented from

doing so by other stronger hands, twice. He then wanted to jump into the sea with the Scapular on and realized that he was being held back by the Scapular itself and was not allowed to plunge in by any means. He turned to see who was stopping him, and he saw Most Holy Mary, Mother of Clemency and Mercy, who with one hand grabbed him by the Scapular and held it, and with the other showed him the jewel he had lost days before and, showing it to him, said: – “Son, what a terrible thing it is that you do by believing Lucifer. If you did not serve Me by devoutly dressing My Holy Scapular, you would have perished submerged in the waters. Never turn your back on Me, nor ever leave out devotion to My blessed Scapular. Take your master’s jewel, go in peace, and confess your fault with the sorrow which pertains to its gravity.” With that said, the Celestial Vision disappeared. This is what the faithful slave did, confessing to Father Langa, who asked him for permission to publish this miracle, in order to increase devotion to Most Holy Mary and to Her blessed Scapular. The slave granted him permission, as long as he did not reveal his name.

128. Dramatic case: he tears off his Scapular: A young man from Pacore, Robert Álvarez, had gone on a leisure trip to Valle (Colombia) about the year 1950. One day, a friend invited him to take a walk along the banks of the Cauca. Once they reached the banks of the Cauca, turbulent and torrential, proverbially insatiable of human lives, the friend said to Roberto: – “Man, I have brought you here, so that you can see how I take my life, because I find life very boring.” No sooner said than done, and before Robert, unable to overcome his astonishment and horror, could do anything to prevent such an atrocity, his friend threw himself into the murky and foaming waters of the Cauca. He disappeared for a few moments in the river, but the force of the waters threw him back safe and sound onto the bank. The unfortunate man was beside himself, seeing that his suicide attempt had been frustrated, and wanting to end as soon as possible, threw himself back into the sinister Cauca. But in vain, the whirlpool sent him up floating a second time. The unfortunate young man understood that this was not normal in the case of a river which had been the grave of countless victims who had succumbed despite a titanic struggle against the voracity of the whirlpool. Reflecting, he found the key to the enigma, and furious, with satanic rage, he exclaimed shrieking: – “I know what is happening: they put a rag on me at home and this is what prevents me from drowning.” From his chest with a desperate gesture he tore off the blessed Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel, and with diabolical impetus he rushed into the dizzying current, at the bottom of which he was buried forever, never showing signs of life again. That unfortunate man rejected the last lifeline that could free him securely from temporal and eternal shipwreck. Throwing away that Marian livery, a garment and sign of protection from the Mother of God, he fell prey to the demon of despair, and was thus able to carry out his sinister and fatal purpose of taking his own life.

129. For wearing Her Scapular worthily: Father Christopher of Jesus Mary, Prior of the Carmelite monastery of Campo de Criptana, relates this fact: In the city of Tembleque, Toledo, lived young Catalina García, a very devout member of Our Mother of Carmel’s Confraternity, who had always worn her Holy Scapular with the utmost fervour, abstaining from eating meat every Wednesday and Saturday in honour of the Holy Virgin, and keeping with utmost rigor all the statutes of the Confraternity. On the day of Our Lady of the Snows, in the year 1613, she was sick and in a mortal crisis that lasted two hours. When she recovered from this collapse, she was seen reaching for her Scapular, and when she could not find it, began to look for it with great anxiety, since the Sisters had taken it from her due to the extreme heat. When her grieving mother asked her what she was looking for, in the presence of several neighbours she replied that she was looking for her Scapular. They told her not to worry and leave it, because the weather was very hot and it could bother her, to which the patient replied that, even if she was roasted alive, she was going to wear it, because when she was in the crisis she had suffered, she said that she had been transported to Heaven, and when the Holy Virgin saw her, She had reprimanded her because



she was not wearing the Scapular, telling her that She would not recognize her as Her daughter if she did not wear it and, as Her good daughter, she was to return to earth, since she was not to die until Saturday when she would fly at once to glory, since she had been very fervent and faithful in complying with all of the Most Blessed Virgin's recommendations. Two Carmelite Friars were present at the time of her death, who were doing rounds begging for alms, and who certified that she had died with the serenity of an Angel, just as her fervent and pious life had been.

130. Value of prayer for those in Purgatory: Father Daniel of the Virgin Mary, who died in 1678, tells us that in the city of Barcelona, Catalina Bosser, a very devout and recollected young woman, died around the year 1620, and after four months appeared to a cousin of hers, called Magdalen Nicolás, and told her that she had been suffering in Purgatory for almost five months, due

to certain offers and promises that she had failed to fulfil in life, begging her for help with prayers and charities to be freed as soon as possible from that blazing fire. Magdalen immediately took it upon herself to fulfil for her beloved cousin everything that had been revealed to her in the vision, and what was her astonishment when, after six days, she appeared to her again to thank her for her charity and diligence in helping her. At the same time, she told her that a sister of hers, who had died a few days before in Cerballón, had flown to Heaven on the Saturday following her death by virtue of the Sabbatine privilege, which as a fervent Confraternity member she was able to merit. And she added later: – “You, take and wear the Holy Scapular with fervour, since I did not wear it and for this reason I found myself in such great tribulations and unspeakable torments. Blessed are those who wear it, for it is a great truth that through the prayers and intercession of Most Holy Mary, the souls of her Confraternity members fly to Heaven on the first Saturday after their death.” Magdalen was greatly consoled by this apparition, and so inflamed with holy ardour and zeal for the devotion and worship of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel and Her blessed and miraculous Scapular, that she became the greatest apostle of her time in this devotion. Magdalen then formally declared these apparitions to the Ordinary, who, after examining her pious life, seriousness and ardent charity, which made her statements credible, interposed his legal authority and allowed these events to be published in Barcelona for the glory and praise of our sweetest Mother of Carmel, who thus deigns to favour Her devotees.

131. She desires to die on a Saturday and succeeds: Father Alonso of the Mother of God tells us that a young girl of tender age, a native of Salamanca, who from childhood had worn the Holy Scapular of the Virgin with great fervour and devotion, unfailingly observing the abstinence on Wednesdays and Saturdays and leading an angelic life, fell seriously ill, without the doctors giving the least hope of her recovery. Her pain and fever increased day by day to the point that the Last Sacraments had to be administered to her. On one occasion those attending her noticed that she had turned towards the wall and was absorbed and lost in thought for a long while, like someone enthralled by the contemplation of something wonderful and delightful. Coming back to herself, as they curiously asked her for the cause of this transport, she replied: – “The Blessed Virgin of Carmel visited and caressed me and has promised to release me from this life on the coming Saturday, and take me directly to Heaven.” And truly, on that Saturday she died, everyone piously judging that she would obtain the blessed fruit that the Most Holy Virgin has reserved for those who keep faith with Her.

132. Ardent desires to receive the Scapular: Saint Michael de la Fuente, who died in 1625, related this episode of which he was an eyewitness: In Santa Cruz de la Zarza, Toledo, there lived a devout woman who from her earliest childhood had felt a vehement desire to wear the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel to gain the holy Saturday indulgence and leave Purgatory

as soon as possible. But she could not achieve her purpose because there was no confraternity of Our Lady of Carmel in the place, nor did Carmelite Friars frequent the region. She fell seriously ill and her prayers increased in fervour to this Sovereign Lady, so that She might grant her the joy of wearing Her Holy Scapular before she died. In those days, a Friar from the Carmelite priory of Valdemoro, Father Michael de la Fuente, arrived to mission in Santa Cruz, and as soon as he was told of the wishes of the devout woman, went to the patient's house, who had been agonizing for three days. Father de la Fuente imposed the Scapular on her and a few minutes later she expired, with enviable peace and sweetness, leading all her relatives and acquaintances to suppose that the Virgin of Carmel, to whom she had been deeply devoted, had granted her the grace to be borne off as soon as possible to Heaven. With this episode, such a desire was awakened in all the residents of the town to gain this holy indulgence that they founded a Confraternity of Carmel, in which almost all the men, women, youths and children of the town enrolled.



133. Saturday is the Virgin's day: Father Juan Bautista Beltrán, Priest of Alcora, Castellón, retired every night to his church, spending a large part of it in prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, praying for the Holy Souls and for the dying. It happened that on many Fridays, the young men of the place, who used to go out around the streets courting girls with serenades and songs, around midnight heard the bells in the church presbytery sounding for a long time. As they had heard them on repeated occasions, one night they finally decided to satisfy their curiosity and find out the reason for the bells. So they approached the doors of the church, and, observing that it was unlocked, decided to enter, but so as not to be noticed they pushed the door open gently, and very quietly and slowly slipped into the obscurity, and contemplated the venerable old man kneeling in prayer before the Tabernacle. Surprised and astonished, they saw that the presbytery bells were ringing by themselves, without any visible hand moving them. They then asked the venerable Parish Priest how the bells could sound if no one was ringing them. To which the saintly Priest replied: "My children, you must know that when Saturday begins, the gates of Purgatory open so that the souls of the Confraternity members whom the Most Blessed Virgin takes out of those mansions of pain and atonement on that day, may fly to Heaven. Therefore, the souls of those members who have died during this week celebrate their good fortune here with these displays of joy." The youths were edified by these words of their saintly Parish Priest, and all decided to join the holy Confraternity of the Scapular of Carmel.

134. Breastplate against the devil: Fr. Saint Michael de la Fuente says that in Medina del Campo there was a fervent tertiary who wore the blessed Scapular with great devotion. He bore many temptations from the devil, but in all of them the tempter was defeated, because the Most Holy Virgin defended Her tertiary through Her blessed Scapular. Finally, Lucifer used all his ploys and ruses to try to get this servant of God to remove the Holy Scapular, the enemy hoping that if he got him to remove it, he would easily achieve victory. The pious man resisted with indescribable strength and unprecedented perseverance in the terrible struggle against him from the infernal dragon for many days to achieve this. Finally irritated by his patient and heroic perseverance, one night the devil took on visible form and, in the shape of a monstrous cat, entered his room when the good man had already retired, his eyes flashing, his hair standing on end and horrifying him with the ferocity of his claws, he threw himself upon him, attacking him at his throat. The devotee of Most Holy Mary thought he would be strangled, but taking hold of his Scapular and showing it to the enemy, Lucifer immediately gave up and, as if he had been set on fire, took speedily to flight, while telling him rabidly: "Take off that habit of Hers, with which She constantly torments us."

135. *Saint John of the Cross dies on a Saturday:* Regarding the fact that the Mystical Doctor Saint John of the Cross died on a Saturday, Father Alonso of the Mother of God commented the following about his last hours: “From then on he closed his eyes and began to pray. Every now and then he asked what time it was, because I had told him that it was Friday and that night, before the start of Saturday, God would take him out of this life, so that Our Lady might later be his intercessor, and on the Saturday his soul would leave Purgatory. Then he asked if it was time to ring the bells for Matins, and added: – ‘I ask because, blessed be my God, I will go tonight to sing Matins in Heaven.’ And, when he heard the bell of the Nuns of the Mother of God ringing for Matins, he said: – ‘And I too, by the goodness of my God, have to go and pray with the Virgin Our Lady in Heaven.’ And he continued speaking to Her in this way: – ‘I give you infinite thanks, my Queen and Lady, for this favour that you do by wanting me to leave this life on your Saturday.’ He died on Saturday December 14th 1591.”

136. *She frees him from the devil:* In Gibrleón, a town in the province of Huelva, there lived a certain man named Peter Limón, a man of irascible and choleric character, who had contracted the bad habit of swearing, complaining and cursing at all hours. It happened that on December 29th 1611, when he was on his way back from the hills with his donkey loaded with firewood, night surprised him before he arrived at the town, and, as it was winter and the night rainy, the donkey slipped and, stumbling, ended up falling into a quagmire. Seeing himself alone in such a predicament and with the load fallen, he flew into a rage and began to swear and curse, offering the load to all the devils, while he unleashed a shower of sticks on the harmless donkey. All was in vain and without remedy, because the donkey was so sunk and stuck in the mud that no man’s strength could get him out onto the road. The poor man, blind with anger and out of his mind, finding himself powerless to get out of such a trance, in one of his curses, calling upon the devils, exclaimed: – “Will there not be some devil of all there are in hell that will come and help me raise up this bad beast?” As soon as he said this, he saw, next to him, a good-looking man, who said to him: – “Limón, what do you want from me?” When Limón heard himself named, between admiration and fear he asked: – “Who are you, good friend?” – “I am the one who, so many times, you have called to come to your aid; that is why I have come, and I will help you and do for you whatever you ask of me, by doing only one thing for me, and that is that you take off that Scapular of Carmel that you are wearing around your neck.” When Peter Limón heard what he asked, with great agitation, his hair standing on end and trembling with fear, he took hold of his Scapular and, showing it to the demon, whom he had by then recognized, he said: – “I will not take it off for all the gold in the world!” And turning to the Mother of God, full of terror and fear, he invoked Her with all his heart, calling Her to come to his aid, while he fervently kissed Her blessed Scapular and placed it before his eyes. The demon, finding himself unable to interrupt him in his prayers and supplications to the Most Holy Virgin, whom he did not cease to invoke, left him and suddenly disappeared. Then Peter, helping to lift the donkey out but leaving the load there, ran in terror towards the town and, before reaching his house, went to the priory of Carmel to tell the Carmelites about the miracle that had occurred. At that time, Father Luis Velázquez Godoy was Prior of the Carmel at Gibrleón and Father Gregory Delgado was secretary. The next day, the event spread throughout the town and district, for which reason, and also because of the change in Peter’s life, many indifferent people, both from the town and from the neighbouring towns, devoutly wore the Holy Scapular of the Virgin.

137. *The great virtue of the Holy Scapular:* Father Henry Jongen, a Franciscan, narrates that in the city of Naples there lived a young man of dissolute habits who, like the prodigal of the Gospel, not only squandered his property, but also the treasure, a thousand times more precious, of his honour and his virtues. When he had lost all his property, he suffered snubs from friends, coldness from his closest relatives, and disappointment from all those

who had previously flattered him and laughed at his humour when he had money. Little experienced in the labours and misfortunes of this life, as soon as he had to suffer them, they became unbearable to him; hence, after the continued scorn and mockery of the boldest, he fled from the dealings and company of men and sought communication with demons. He left his house one night and went into the countryside, where, in a rugged and lonely place, he began to invoke demons with desperate cries, asking them to bury him body and soul in hell. The wretched man, seeing that they did not come as quickly as in his despair he required, threw himself to the ground, and, tearing at his own body with his nails, incited Lucifer's hosts to be cruel to him, and thus satisfy his desperate and infernal desire. Lucifer's delay in fulfilling his evil designs was not laziness, but rather fear of the Holy Scapular that he wore around his neck, which is why, taking on a horrendous and abominable figure, he appeared to the desperate young man and said to him: "What do you want from me?" Obstinate in his error, he replied: "I am tired of living and would like to die as soon as possible." To which Lucifer responded: "I have been asking for the same thing for many days now with great eagerness, and were it in my power I would have done it, and I will do so immediately, as long as you take off that Scapular that you are wearing." Thus the young man learnt of the powerful virtue of the Holy Scapular and, passing from despair to a sincere and very lively repentance, he began to invoke the Most Holy Mary with fervent supplications, and repeatedly striking his breast he expressed the immense remorse of his repentant heart; but not for that did the fury of hell withdraw from his sight. The repentant young man then took the Holy Scapular in his hands and kissed it with displays of uncommon and delirious fervour. As soon as he took hold of this sovereign and heavenly shield, Lucifer gave up his prey for lost, and immediately disappeared, leaving our young man as hopeful and joyful as before he was anguished and desperate. Since then, after having been an occasion of ruin and scandal for many, he became a living example of fervour, piety and edifying life for the young folk of Naples.



138. *She frees a possessed woman*: In the month of May in the year 1593, a comedian, at that time very famous in his art, called Alcocer, arrived in Valladolid and stayed in one of the best guest houses in the city. A young Asturian woman served there who, while moving Alcocer's luggage from the hall to his room, was suddenly possessed by the devil, and began to do crazy things. The comedian, who had just arrived, upon hearing, came to her aid saying: "Wait, gentlemen, let us see whether her malady is the work of the devil." And to do so, taking off the Holy Scapular that he wore around his neck, he placed it on the girl, who at that same moment began to scream and blaspheme, becoming so changed that all those present were not enough to keep her still and not maltreat herself. The comedian, however, with a serene spirit, placing the Holy Scapular on her and invoking the Virgin of Carmel, said to her: "Infernal spirit, by the virtue of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of his Holy Mother, and by the grace She has bound to Her Holy Scapular, I conjure you to leave this unhappy girl at once." With similar words and others repeated with sovereign fervour, he managed, after a brief time of struggle, to force Lucifer, screaming and wanting to tear the young woman to pieces, to depart, leaving the bystanders confused and amazed at the resistance the devil put up in order not to leave her and abandon his prey. Then, Alcocer, taking the young woman to the convent of the Carmelite Fathers of Valladolid so that the Scapular could be imposed on her, told the Religious what had happened, and moved the young woman to thank the Most Holy Virgin for freeing her from the deceptions of the enemy, leaving as an offering the Scapular that he had used to free her.

139. *The devil confesses the value of the Scapular*: Saint Michael de la Fuente, a Carmelite

Priest who died in 1625, says that a devotee of Mary Most Holy was very persecuted by the devil, who frightened him with dreadful figures, but when he took the Holy Scapular in his hands, immediately vanished. On one occasion he took the form of a horrible crow, and, flapping his diabolical wings over the face of Mary's devotee, tormented him terribly. Once his first turbulence had passed, the devotee took up the blessed Scapular of the Virgin to defend himself, and the infernal enemy instantly fled. Afterwards he gave thanks to the Most Blessed Virgin and, as he joyfully contemplated and kissed the blessed Scapular, considering it a pledge of Her maternal and most delicate love in which She had deposited such excellent virtue for resisting the cunning enemy, he pressed it to his heart and placed it on his chest. The evil spirit, once again assuming another more horrible and frightening figure, then said to him: "Throw away that garment, you wretch. What use does it have if not for you to torment us with it?"

140. With an Indian witch doctor: The following event, in which the power of the Holy Scapular of Carmel against evil spirits is manifest, took place in Dabeiba, in the Apostolic Prefecture of Urabá, in Colombia, around the year 1920. The Indian Justiniano Domicó fell seriously ill in his hut in Jague. He was taken to the Dabeiba Mission house to be cared for by the Missionary Sisters, since he was a good Christian Indian and faithful to the Mission. One day an Indian from Pavarandocito, a town 55 km away, showed up to visit him. His name was Antonio, and was the witch doctor, or Indian quack. Antonio undertook to cure the sick man. Provided with remedies, he began the healing in the silence and darkness of the night, a time that these witch doctors prefer for healing. He laid the sick man on the ground and began to rub his body with some idols while singing his invocations to them. From time to time he dipped the idols into a concoction, prepared in advance by the Indian women, and gave the sick person a small amount to drink. Shortly after, heading towards the hill nearby, Antonio the quack gave a loud and prolonged whistle, which was the call to the spirit. Next, Antonio's behaviour was transformed; he seemed possessed by the devil. He began to rub the idols again on his patient, from his forearms to his chest; but when the idol came to touch the Scapular of Carmel he wore imposed, it remained immobile, despite the efforts of the healer, who repeated the same operation over and over again. He dipped the idol in the prepared potion and went back to the kneading and frictions; however, upon contact of the idol with the cords of the Scapular, its movement was paralyzed. Meanwhile, the witch Antonio said: "My spirit does not want to reach the heart." Between convulsions and with a gesture of fury, Antonio began to apply friction from the abdomen to the chest, and upon contact of the idol with the Scapular, again the same phenomenon of paralysis. Suddenly, the witch doctor remained engrossed for about five minutes, then he rubbed the idol on his own body and said, taking hold of the sick man's Scapular: "This has to be removed; my spirit says: this rag prevents healing." The Sister who was present answered: "If that cloth hinders, so does the shirt." To which the quack Antonio replied: "My spirit says this rag, (the Scapular), prevents passage, because it is like Christ." Naturally, the sick man did not want to part with his Scapular. The Sisters, on recognizing that the quack was not a doctor of natural medicine but a diabolical witch doctor, and on seeing so palpably the prodigious virtue of the Holy Scapular, did not cease to praise and bless the Most Holy Virgin and burst into shouts of joy: "Long live the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel!" Meanwhile the witch doctor Antonio leapt about like one possessed, as if moved by a hidden spring, threatening those present with his fist and saying: "If he won't be healed, I will ruin this house; I will show the great things my spirit can do." A Sister surreptitiously sprinkled holy water on the witch doctor and he quietened down. The sick man Justiniano Domicó was cured with means provided for him by the Mission.

141. The three things that the devil hates most: The venerable Francis de Yepes, brother of Saint John of the Cross and Carmelite tertiary, was very devoted to the Holy Scapular, and did everything he could to ensure that everyone might wear such a sacred livery, which he

constantly wore as a very powerful weapon against the assaults of the devil. The Blessed Virgin of Carmel showed him Her pleasure, responding to his devotion and apostolate of the Scapular with very extraordinary favours. At the death of his wife who, like him, belonged to the Third Order of Carmel, he was praying very sadly for her soul, when the Holy Virgin appeared to him, saying: – “The soul of your wife, after having suffered three nights and two days in Purgatory, today, Saturday, I have freed from those pains and she is now enjoying the delights of Heaven.” On one occasion, when the demons redoubled their attacks in vain to make the servant of God abandon the Scapular and cease to propagate it, they said to him, full of rage: – “What have we done to you that you torment us so cruelly? Why do you convince so many people to worship that habit and dress in it? You will fall into our power and you will pay for it dearly... Take off that Scapular, get rid of that garment which steals so many souls from hell. All who wear it have a pious death. Oh! Three things are truly unbearable for us and torment us more than anything: the Name of Jesus, the Name of Mary and the Scapular of Carmel, which is worn by everyone, everywhere.”



142. *A fraternal pact*: the same Saint Francis de Yepes himself enjoyed great friendship with the Carmelite tertiary Anthony de Santiago, a man noted for his virtues. Both residents of Medina del Campo, in life they had made a common pact, by which each bound himself, whoever died first, to appear as soon as possible to his friend, to show him the state of his soul in the afterlife, if God would grant them that grace. And, in fact, on the Saturday following the death of Anthony de Santiago, who had died at the age of thirty full of virtues and merits, he appeared to his friend. Saint Francis de Yepes was at dawn praying before the Tabernacle when he perceived a very suave aroma. Then he saw, very close to him, his friend Anthony, who said to him: “Dear and faithful friend Francis, may God reward you, both you and the other brethren, before God, for all you have done for me after I died! Oh, my brother! If you only knew what happens in Purgatory! You must know, brother, that after my soul left its body, I was taken to Purgatory, and in the one day and two nights that I spent there, I suffered great torments and the bitterest grief, and today, Saturday, at dawn, the Virgin of Carmel released me from my great pains, thanks to Her wonderful Sabbatine indulgence.” And with that he disappeared from the sight of his friend, to whom he then appeared repeatedly, radiant with glory, to encourage him to continue swiftly along the path to Heaven.

143. *The devil cannot defeat the Scapular*: Father Francis of the Mother of God, a Discalced Carmelite, tells that in the Villa de Salayas, in Mexico, there was a poor farmer with such depraved morals that he gave himself up to the devil’s service, so that he might be his slave forever. Once, taking advantage of this dominion, the demons suddenly seized him, and, carrying him through the air, threw him into a mezquite, a very thorny tree, similar to the acacia. There he was greatly tormented and unable to climb out by human means, since its top is very dense and the many thorns make it impenetrable. The poor man, seeing himself in such a miserable state, and that he could not free himself, began to implore the favour of the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel in his perilous situation, offering to impose on himself Her blessed Scapular and to wear it always for the rest of his life, and become a perpetual slave of the Most Holy Mary and abandon the wretched and ominous slavery to Lucifer that his sins had brought upon him. A poor cowherd happened to pass by there who, hearing the cries with which he implored help to get out of that dreadful ordeal, approached and heard from the lips of the unfortunate man what the demons had done to him. After listening to him and feeling sorry for him, the trapped man asked him if he was wearing the Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel and, answered in the affirmative, he asked him to give it to him, since



in it he had placed all his hope for salvation from such a terrible ordeal and with its help he hoped to free himself from the wiles of the cunning and infernal enemy. The cowherd then, taking off his own Scapular and putting it on the end of a stick he was carrying, gave it to him because he could not get it to him any other way, owing to the density of the mesquite thorns. The farmer received the Scapular, kissed it reverently and placed it on his chest with great devotion and trust, finding himself miraculously on the ground at the same moment, and without knowing how or by what virtue he found himself unharmed. Freed from the danger in which he had found himself, he gave thanks to the Lord and his blessed Mother and they went together in the direction of the Carmelite convent, in order to give an account of such a wonder to the Religious and so that they might impose on him the Scapular of the Virgin. Arriving at the town gates, the herdsman asked for his

Scapular, as he had to leave and they were already very close to the convent. He had barely taken off the Scapular and handed it to the cowherd, when he was snatched away again by the devil, who, carrying him through the air, left him in the same place as before; but the cowherd, who already knew the devil's ruses, again handed him his Scapular, with which he miraculously found himself free again. They returned again to the convent, without our man leaving off the Holy Scapular until he had his own imposed, and he referred the case to the Friars, who gave thanks to the Holy Virgin and admitted him into the bosom of their Order. From then on the man became the most fervent slave of Mary and the most fervent propagator in Mexico of devotion to the Holy Scapular.

144. *To an infantry captain:* The famous historian Daniel de la Virgen María, who died in 1678, tells us in his '*Speculum*' that, garrisoned in the city of Mechelen, in Flanders, Belgium, was a captain named Carlos Juples, a man of licentious life. A serious illness befell him which worsened day by day, and with it his rebellion and obstinacy, making it impossible to induce him to change his life and confess. The army Chaplain, pitying his misfortune, sought by every means his piety and zeal suggested to attract him to the fold of the Good Shepherd; but all his attempts were fruitless, as they came up against that dissolute and wayward heart. But it happened that Father Matías Emboli, the Chaplain, learnt from some comrades of the captain that the latter, a few days before he fell ill, had received the Holy Scapular of the Virgin of Carmel from the hands of a former companion of his. Little concerned and less solicitous for the health of his soul, our cheery and frivolous captain had worn it for scarcely two months; and later had taken it off unable to put up with the inconvenience owing to his military equipment. When the Chaplain found out about this, he breathed hopeful and consoled, promising himself that through the intercession of the Most Holy Mary, he would achieve the man's conversion. He approached the dying captain and said to him: "Charles, do you want to take back the Holy Scapular that you received a few months ago from your old childhood companion, Carmelite Father Friar Ambrose? Do not doubt, my son, that through the intercession of Most Holy Mary you will be able to leave Purgatory on the Saturday immediately after your death, as She promised to her devotees. I give you my word to celebrate a Mass for you on the following Saturday at the altar of the Virgin of Carmel." As soon as the captain heard the name of this Sweet and Loving Mother, he burst into copious tears, finding himself powerless to resist the loving and persuasive grace that the Most Blessed Virgin gave him with her Scapular. He put the Scapular on again, and received the Holy Sacraments with visible signs of sincere repentance, and expired with the peace of a saint, in the arms of the elderly Chaplain. The next day, while the Chaplain was commenting with several officers of his Company on the admirable and prodigious nature of the event and the captain's holy death, the venerable Priest felt an excruciating pain in the

palm of his left hand, as if he had a burning ember under his skin. The pain was so intense and so inexplicable that everyone thought it was a reminder that the deceased captain sent him from Purgatory so that he might not forget to celebrate Mass for his soul on the Saturday. In fact the pain continued throughout the week, without him finding the slightest relief from the various remedies that were applied. Come Saturday, all the captain's comrades and friends accompanied Father Emboli when he went to celebrate Holy Mass for the deceased. He celebrated the Holy Sacrifice at the altar of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as had been offered to him, and at the moment of raising the chalice, the pain suddenly ceased, but with a strange difference when making the memento for the deceased, namely hearing the captain's voice, very softly close to him, thanking him. At the same time, a sore opened up in the palm of his hand, from which abundant blood flowed, which closed after a few days, leaving a scar, which was a testimony to such a strange and singular event.

145. *The Scapular worn by Saint Alphonsus Mary of Liguori, incorrupt*: Father Berruti, in his work 'The Spirit of Saint Alphonsus Mary of Liguori', writes: "And as the servants of God also glory in being servants of His Mother, Alphonsus always wore on his breast the emblem of a devoted servant and lover of Most Holy Mary, namely the sacred Scapular of Carmel. Something admirable and prodigious was observed when his mortal remains were recognized 28 years after his death, shrunk and disintegrated were the surplice, the linen alb and all the pontifical vestments with which the Saint was vested when buried. But the Holy Scapular of Carmel was found untouched by any kind of corruption. It seems as if the Celestial Lady wanted to make known to the world how pleasing to Her was the devotion of Her beloved servant, as well to remind us that the blessed Scapular of Carmel is that beautiful insignia that She gave to her servant Saint Simon Stock, to work out our eternal salvation." Many years later another similar prodigy was found in the Scapular of Saint John Bosco.

146. *Their Scapulars were incorrupt*: Father Avertano Albers, Dutch Carmelite and Bishop of Malang, Indonesia, recounted this miraculous fact: "Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin of Carmel and Her Holy Scapular had grown deep roots in our growing mission. There were very few Catholics who did not wear the Holy Scapular with great confidence and integral devotion to our Mother. All adults, upon being received into the Church by holy Baptism, immediately asked to be placed under Mary's maternal protection by wearing her Holy Scapular, which they fervently wore until their death. It was the year 1945, in the months of October and November. The country's war of independence had aroused Indonesians' love of country to excess. At the missionary station of Toempang, near Malang, the people, in their ferocity, murdered all the Europeans. Among the victims was a Catholic couple, both fervent Carmelite tertiaries, devotees of the Holy Scapular, with which they lived and died piously. Their bodies were buried, along with others, in a common grave. Four years later, by express order of the government, the grave was opened, and the bodies were found in great putrefaction. Their clothing appeared decomposed almost entirely, or devoured by ants. However, the Scapulars of both consorts were totally incorrupt, without showing the least trace of destruction; whether by the terrain, extremely humid and abundantly watered in rainy weather, or by ants and worms. These Scapulars were given by the government to a surviving son of the venerable couple, who keeps them as precious relics."

147. *A good lesson of love for the Garment of the Mother of Heaven*: As a finishing touch to this series of wonders worked by Mary in favour of Her devotees who piously wear Her Scapular, we give this striking example showing a young man's love, simple but uncomplicated, without fear of what others will say: A nine or ten-year-old negro boy was on the way out of his rustic hut in India when he met an English captain, an acquaintance of his, with whom he struck up a conversation. In the mischievous smile on his face and in his sparkling little eyes could be seen the lively intelligence of that child who, for sure, was wearing the Scapular given him by the missionary Father at that time. "Hello, little rascal, – said the English captain – your rags are showing nicely. But of what use are they

to you? Don't you understand that they are all missionary nonsense?" The negro bit his lips, his face lit up when he heard these words and with burning eyes he looked at the Englishman in the face and said with great grace: – "My captain, and why do you have that ugly little ribbon on your lapel? Surely the white man who gave you that ridiculous thing has made fun of you." – "Do not offend me, lad; this decoration is a sign that I am a good servant of my queen and lady the queen of England, who is also your queen." – "Really?" replied the negro boy, "well this Scapular of mine, good English sir, is also a sign that I am a good servant of my Queen and Lady, the Virgin of Carmel."

We could multiply the miraculous occurrences performed with Mary's blessed sacramental. But we believe that those we present here suffice to lead us to feel grateful to the Lord for the wonders He performs by His Mother and increase in us our love for Her and move us to a more perfect imitation of Her virtues.

The marvellous history of the Holy Rosary:

It is very important, necessary and an obligatory duty for a Palmarian to know and to pray the Rosary, for the quantity of graces it brings down and the countless prodigies, miracles and favours which God grants to those souls who pray it with devotion. The Rosary, or Psalter of the Most Holy Virgin, is prayed for the purpose of honouring the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity; of honouring the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and the grandeurs and sorrows of Mary Most Holy, and of honouring the mysteries and graces of the Great Gift of the Eucharist; it is prayed for the purpose of imitating the Church Triumphant, of helping the Church Militant and of relieving the Church Suffering, of lavishing us with graces during life, of granting us peace at the hour of death and glory in eternity. But it is also convenient to know its history and the reason for the number of Hail Marys, or know why it is called the Rosary and how it became the Holy Penitential Rosary. In this brief history, we shall learn all these secrets of which many of the faithful are unaware.

The origin of the Holy Rosary:

This devotion of the Rosary of the Mother of God is the first and oldest devotion that the Christian Church has, and the most substantial. It contains the Our Father that Jesus Christ Our Lord taught his Apostles, after they had first begged him to teach them to pray, and the Hail Mary, with the praises that the Angel Saint Gabriel brought from Heaven on behalf of the Most Holy Trinity. After the Our Father, the first thing that was solemnized in the Christian Church was the Hail Mary, which is the beginning of all the mysteries of our salvation, and the first good news of our remedy. The Rosary is composed of these two heavenly and divine prayers, which are the best that the Church has (as Saint Thomas Aquinas says) and both are very suitable for coming to know God and his Most Holy Mother, because God made Man gave us the prayer with which we beg the Eternal Father to grant us all those things that are for our remedy, and deliver us from the evils that harm our souls; and with the other prayer we take his Most Holy Mother Mary as intercessor, representing her greatness and throwing ourselves at the feet of her Divine Mercy with the purpose of not rising from there until she deigns to help us in our misery. These two prayers are the two wings of a dove that David asked for, with which we fly to Heaven and open its doors, and confidently negotiate with God; they are the two wings that Saint John saw, with which we fly to the desert and free ourselves from the fury of the dragon that so eagerly seeks to devour us; they are the best weapons available in the tower of the Church, and in them alone are encoded all the weapons for those who want to defend themselves effectively against such powerful enemies. As the prayer of the Our Father contains in itself everything that men can claim from God, upon finishing it, we then help ourselves with the Hail Mary, which summarizes the greatness and virtue, the great mercy and the loving heart of the Virgin Mary, who, though of our nature, is the creature most exalted by grace above all mankind and the Angels of Heaven, She is the closest to God and the one who draws the most mercies down from

that most fecund and blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus. This is why we join these two prayers, so that together they may obtain for us what we seek; and from them, like two long posts, the rungs build up the mystical ladder that reaches Heaven.

As for the prayers, the Rosary encompasses two realities: mental prayer and vocal prayer. Mental prayer in the Holy Rosary is the meditation on the principal mysteries of the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and his Most Holy Mother. The vocal prayer consists of the recitation of five complete decades of Our Fathers; the vocal should be united with meditation and contemplation of the main virtues that Jesus and Mary practised, according to the mysteries of the Holy Rosary. And so that the tongue and thought are continually occupied in such sweet and savoury consideration, to increase in the soul the respect and reverence, love and fear that is owed to God for such ineffable benefits, that is why they are prayed so many times, and the same words are said, without their repetition tiring us or causing tedium, rather, they are prayed with much enjoyment and pleasure, like manna from heaven, which the more one eats, the better it tastes.



Since the times of the Apostles and disciples of Christ, these prayers have been in use century after century, down to our days. In olden times the repetition of these Our Fathers and Hail Marys they called “beads”, each according to their devotion, because they counted them to fulfil their task with small stones, as is the case of a monk named Paul, an eminent man in Egypt, who had five hundred monks under his charge. He was always working with his hands, but he spent the day in such a way, that he had obliged himself to say these prayers three hundred times a day, and so as not to err in the count he had three hundred small stones at his side, and when the stones, which he called beads, were finished, he knew he had finished his prayers. And what we say about this Saint we could say about many others. This ancient way of praying was called a Psalter, because it was made in imitation of David’s psalms, which the Church took for divine worship, which are one hundred and fifty psalms that sang to God the mercies he had used with that ancient people. But the mysteries of the Saviour’s life are much more powerful and attractive, and they captivate the Christian heart much more than any other created thing, for we see that hearts as hard as iron are drawn to divine reverence and His presence much more than a magnet, and even if they are harder than diamonds, they melt like wax before fire, sometimes with tears of love and other times with tears of pain full of sighs. This Psalter is not of lesser dignity than David’s, but greater, because though David made that Psalter illuminated by the Holy Ghost, he made it under figures and similarities hidden under that veil of the darkness that then reigned in the synagogues of the Jews. But this Psalter and its holy mysteries are of Christ Our Lord and Master, in the light, clarity and manifest truth in this militant Church, which is His Mystical Body. And that Psalter was a figure of this one; this is the one that gives fulfilment and true meaning to that one, to triumph completely over sin and death and evil. The Our Father was the prayer that Christ Our Lord commanded His Apostles to pray, teaching them to pray it in the world, and not David’s psalms or other ancient prayers of the Old Testament; not because they are not holy or good, but because in the prayer of the Our Father, composed by Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, is contained everything good and substantial that men in this world can petition. And the Hail Mary was God’s greeting to the Divine Maiden Most Holy Mary, a summary of Her most excellent praises, and the filial pleas of intercession of the militant Church.

The bases of the Holy Rosary:

Let no one consider this holy Devotion as new in the world, for from its beginning it has

been the only remedy for all evils. And those ancient holy Fathers preferred it. They evidently saved themselves through faith and belief in these mysteries and sacraments. So that the virtue of this devotion not only avails those who participate in the current law of grace, but it also availed all the Fathers of the ancient law, and thus we all enjoy its riches.

For better understanding it should be noted that in the Holy Rosary of the Mother of God there are two things, one *essential* and one *accidental*. The first and main thing is that the Holy Rosary leads us to consider the Son of God, His most holy Life and His dolorous Death, His glorious Resurrection and His surpassing Glory. Later this was to be enriched with the Mysteries of Creation and of the Eucharist, putting into practice and exercising the faith and remembrance we have of them, which is to truly believe and confess them from the heart; and with this present Faith, and by our confession of it, to awaken in and move us to all virtue and holiness; because the rest of this devotion, which is the way of praying it, taking the name of Rosary, Psalter or Crown, and the order of its mysteries, all this is secondary, and is the means ordained for the first purpose intended by this holy exercise.

This main and essential aspect of the Rosary, which is for men to exercise themselves with true faith in the mysteries of the Life and Death of Christ Our Lord, shows us how ancient this exercise is and how profitable it has been. Because after sin entered the world, and souls began to fall into damnation to the eternal pains, as Saint Thomas says, the main remedy that the children of Adam with the use of reason have had and have always had, to free themselves from sin and damnation, has been to believe with living and true faith in the Saviour that God was to send them in the manner that would be most pleasing to His Divine Majesty, which was understood to believe in Jesus Christ and in His Holy Incarnation and Birth, Life and Passion, and the other mysteries, which from the beginning of the world God revealed to some who were greater in holiness and office more clearly and distinctly, and to others He revealed them in a more general and common way, which is called implicitly.

This God revealed particularly to Adam, Abraham and David, and to the other Prophets of the Old Testament, and these had as remedy and consolation to consider with living faith the Incarnation, the Birth, and the whole course of the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Son of God. This is what they eagerly desired to see fulfilled and asked to be fulfilled; this is what the law represented with so many sacrifices and ceremonies, and from this with penance they obtained forgiveness of their sins, purity of life and the joy of their hopes. That is why Jesus Christ Our Lord said of Abraham: "Abraham, your father, earnestly desired to see this day of Mine, and therefore saw it anticipatively in vision, and rejoiced at it." He desired to see the times of Christ, and saw them with the eyes of faith and rejoiced. Moses considered Christ's humiliation greater riches than the treasures of the Egyptians. Isaias meditated on this when he said: "A Child has been born to us, and a Son of the Virgin has been given to us." And elsewhere: "He was wounded for our iniquities, and torn for our sins. The chastisement pertaining to us in order to attain peace with God, recoiled upon Him; and by His bruises we were healed."

Long after these mysteries were promised to the ancients, who saw and venerated them from afar, they were fulfilled in the Law of Grace and were seen present; and the faith that was in the ancients, covered up and veiled, was manifested and uncovered to the children of this Church. At long last it is clear and evident, that the main remedy for all the faithful is and has always been the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ Our Lord; that is why Saint Paul said, that the remedy by which the justification of souls is achieved is faith in Christ Our Lord, and this is the remedy that gives strength against all the temptations of the enemy. He said that one must arm oneself in all temptations with the shield of Faith to be able to repel the fiery darts of the Evil One, so that they lose all their force and we receive no harm from them. This was always the main exercise of all the Apostolic Men and Martyrs of Christ, of all the Holy Doctors, Confessors and Virgins, and of all the children of the Church.

And as the faith of all those Fathers of the ancient Law, and the faith of the new Law is

only One, differing in this, that those were saved in the Faith of Christ Our Lord who was to come to save us, and these in the faith of that same Lord already come to the world, and who put into execution all that He had promised, with His Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection, hence the mysteries are also the same, and there is no doubt that this Holy Rosary has all this antiquity, though we are the most benefited. Because, as Saint Augustine says, to transport that cluster that the explorers brought from the promised land between two men hanging from a stick, one man went ahead and another behind, and the cluster in the middle; and it is clear that the one who went behind was freer and more comfortable, both for having in front before his eyes that beautiful fruit, as well as for being able to eat from it and refresh his mouth whenever he wanted. Thus between that ancient people and this Christian people, we are the ones who have the best position, because we bear this blessed fruit Jesus before our eyes and can touch Him with our hands. That is, because we, the Christian people, can take from this cluster and pick from its sacraments and refresh our souls, whenever we want and need. The devotees of the Holy Rosary faithful to this holy devotion, considering each day these holy mysteries of the Life and Death of the Saviour, and believing them with living faith, as do the servants of God, do nothing but approach the conduit of the Life of Christ, source of infinite virtue, with the lips of the soul, and receive an abundant and copious flow of graces and divine consolations, with which the soul is refreshed and anointed, becomes fertile and produces fruits worthy of beatitude.



The Rosary in the Early Ages of the Christian Church:

What some authors say, that the Rosary is from the time of the Apostles until now, is clear and certain, but in its basis, its antiquity comes from even further back, as has been said. And what others say, that the Rosary was the first breviary and the first canonical office that the Christian Church used in this law of grace, and that the Apostles prayed it by order of Our Lady, and together with them all the faithful of the primitive Church, seems demonstrated by those words of the Acts of the Apostles that Saint Luke says that the faithful “persevered in the Faith, were observant of the apostolic instructions, and assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass,” and that they “persevered with one mind in prayer”, we understand that he speaks of praying the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers, since the Hail Mary came shortly after, and because the Church never had a better support to lean on than the mysteries and sacraments of the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour. And in that prayer they persevered, that doctrine they learnt and those mysteries were their means so that their prayer might be effective. Which is confirmed in these words of the Most Blessed Virgin to Saint Alan de la Rupe: “My son, you well know of my ancient devotion to the Rosary, divulged and renewed by your Father and servant of mine (Saint Dominic), and preached by the Friars of your Order, which is very pleasing to Me and very useful and profitable to all Christians, through the negligence of men is now almost extinct and forgotten”. This means that the devotion of the Holy Rosary is as old as the Church of Christ, and was newly “divulged and renewed” by Saint Dominic. Now to advise the faithful of our times of this holy devotion is to set them along the path by which those saints of the early Church pressed on towards blessedness, from whom the holy hermits of Egypt and Nitria took this holy devotion, which from there was received by Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome and Saint Ambrose, and other Fathers of that time; this being true and clear: firstly because the Our Father and the Hail Mary, from which this Holy Rosary is woven were, as we have said, the first prayers that the Church had in its beginnings, and secondly because the mysteries on which this holy devotion is based are the same ones that the Church then and now celebrates the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour and the Glories of His Most Holy Mother, as well as the contemplation of the

Divine Eucharist. It is deduced from serious authors and is highly credible that, in the early Church, when there were no choirs or chapels making use of several voices and praises as later, they were however very chosen souls given to contemplation, and were like embers burning in Divine Love, who contemplated yet more than they prayed, and acted more than they spoke.

This Rosary tradition in the early times of the Church is made evident by its fruits. Observe that Saint Dominic (12th-13th century), could not convert the Albigenian heretics by his preaching, until the Most Blessed Virgin taught him the secret, with great fruits: by praying the Holy Rosary. It is obvious then that Holy Mary, who in life had the mission of promoting the conversion of a completely corrupt and pagan world, could not but teach her children, the Apostles, the use of this powerful weapon against the deceits of the ancient serpent. Moreover, this reality is confirmed when we bear in mind the well-documented fact that in the first three centuries of the Church, that is, before the introduction of psalms in divine worship, more than eleven million holy martyrs suffered atrocious torments and gave their lives in defence of the Christian Faith, with a strength that the Queen of Martyrs only grants to the devotees of her Rosary. Just as the early Christians called the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass “the breaking of the Bread,” they called the Rosary “being united in prayer.” We can well deduce that the Rosary at the time of the Apostles was very similar to the Holy Penitential Rosary, with an Our Father on each bead, since the early Christians, very faithful to Christ’s teachings, had a great predilection for praying this prayer that He had taught them; and also, because we know from history that the Carthusians, who had their Rosary before the time of Saint Dominic, prayed hundreds of Our Fathers daily, probably inspired by the example of their predecessors who had inherited it from the early Christians. We know that Palmarian Holy Mass is very similar to the Mass as celebrated by Christ’s Apostles and the early Christians; and it becomes increasingly evident that the Holy Penitential Rosary is also similar to the Rosary they prayed in apostolic times.

The development of the Holy Rosary in divine worship:

As some were falling away from their first spirit and fervour, others were ordering things with which to entertain and preserve themselves. Saint Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and later Saint Damasus the Great, Pope in Rome from 366 to 384, included the psalms of David in the usage of the Church, for adornment and completion of the canonical office, and thus other authorities multiplied the details of that holy divine worship, for as we are imperfect, we have need of everything, and vocal prayer that arouses mental prayer. That nothing of this is to be found written down in history should not surprise us, for neither are many things of that time, as important as this, to be found.

In the 5th century, Saint Bridget of Ireland counted them using what was considered the first “Rosary” made of linked beads. But some years after this holy devotion had already been received and accepted by the faithful, their fervour began to cool. The holy and learned Benedictine monk Bede the Venerable (7th-8th centuries), with his preaching and exhortations, revived that primitive Rosary throughout the kingdoms of England, and the proof of this is (as Saint Alan de la Rupe of Brittany says, who should be given great credit in this history) that the English claimed to have received this devotion and praying method from their ancestors, according as they were persuaded by venerable Saint Bede. And Rosaries are also seen painted in ancient images and altarpieces, and others offered by some devout people, as is still customary among Christians, but this happened more than thirteen hundred years ago.

The historian Villegas also narrates that in the year 854, Pope Saint Leo IV the Great, as bold and valiant in spirit as he was holy, as good a captain and leader in war as discreet and unrivalled in peacemaking, had certain news that moors and barbarians were coming in great numbers with a powerful army to remove him from his See in Rome. Seeing that no Christian prince would help him in these straits, he gathered people, and he himself in person decided to lead them. And to emerge victorious in this exploit, he ordered them all

to confess and receive Communion, and to invoke the Virgin of the Rosary; and for this to be continuous, he ordered them to carry in one hand the lance with which they were to fight, and in the other hand a Rosary with which they would pray along the way. Leaving Rome in this manner, they headed towards the enemy army, which had disembarked in the port of Ostia. After a brief prayer there, Saint Leo IV gave them all his blessing, making the sign of the Cross over them, and began to fight with great fury against the enemy, with such spirit that though the moors were many and defended themselves valiantly, in the end God was pleased to give our own side a very notable victory, with such destruction and injury to the enemies that most of them were killed and the rest made to flee to their ships, so terrified and full of panic that without waiting for a moment they set sail and returned to their homes. Saint Leo IV himself boasts of this remarkable feat in a letter he wrote to Ludovicus, saying that all those who died on this occasion fighting against infidels in defence of their faith and republic deserved a very great reward from God and will attain it in Heaven. Another very similar exploit will be seen later when Saint Pius V was Pontiff, in the 16th century.



The Holy Rosary in Religious Orders:

Some say that this devotion was formerly found in the holy congregations of Saint Benedict (5th-6th centuries) and Saint Bernard (11th century); also for some time among the religious Fathers of the Carthusian order, according to Father Fray Juan de Madariaga, a monk of the same order, historian of the life and deeds of the blessed patriarch Saint Bruno (11th century), its founder. The Carthusian Fathers of that time were not content with being themselves most devoted to the Holy Rosary, but wanted the lay brothers of their order to be so as well, and to recite the Holy Rosary instead of the canonical hours of the psalms. Bishop Fray Juan López gives an account of that highly renowned Father, most devout of the Virgin, namely Eloim of the Carthusian monastery of Trier in Germany, in whose time the practice of the Holy Rosary was very neglected and was about to be completely lost. However, the Queen of Heaven restored it with a strange miracle, namely that on the borders of Germany there was such a terrible plague that men were falling dead without having time even to repent, and so many in number that the roads were more populated with the dead than the cities with the living. On this occasion, the aforementioned Father Eloim, as a man deeply pained by the disaster in that kingdom, intensely begged Our Lady to help remedy such a great calamity. While engaged in this prayer, the Virgin Our Lady appeared to him and ordered him to found a Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, gave him the rules they should keep, commanded the faithful to pray it every day, and offered Her holy intercession to all who prayed it well. This command was put into effect and immediately the plague ceased, and the faithful began to sail before the good wind of the Rosary. It is true that after the death of the saintly father Eloim, lacking the ship's pilot, devotion to the Rosary ran aground and thus remained forgotten by many for some years.

In the X century in the monasteries, those monks unable to read prayed 150 Our Fathers, instead of the 150 psalms of the Psalter of David recited in choir in Latin. Many faithful did the same. And in the XI century, Saint Peter Damian suggested reciting 150 Hail Marys as an alternative, though it would have been better and more complete to add the one to the other, as has finally been done in the Holy Penitential Rosary. Nonetheless, at the start of the XIII century, this prayer was reserved chiefly to the Religious, and only a few faithful, the most devout, practised it.

Later this holy devotion was called Rosary, by order of the Sovereign Virgin, not because the name of Psalter did not suit it, but because this Divine Lady greatly desired to bring all the faithful to the knowledge of the Gospel, so that the life of her Son, the greatest treasure

the Church has, be contemplated as in a mirror. And considering also that the Holy Gospel, though a summary of the Life of Christ, and written as such by the Evangelists, is still long and that not all minds can comprehend it or keep it in memory, containing many things, it seemed convenient to Our Lady to make a briefest summary of its holy mysteries, of the Birth and Life, Passion and Death, Resurrection and Glory of Christ our Lord. And so that these mysteries might be better engraved on the minds of the faithful, She gave them to Saint Dominic with a most beautiful adaptation, which made them very easy to remember.

The Miracle of Fanjeaux. In the city of Fanjeaux, the first recorded miracle of Saint Dominic de Guzman's apostolate in Languedoc took place. Public and formal disputes under the direction of an arbitrator were not an unusual experience for those defending the Faith in the land of heretics. Therefore, it did not take them by surprise when the Albigensians of Fanjeaux challenged them to a public debate. Among the papers prepared by the missionaries, Saint Dominic's was considered the best, and he was entrusted with the honour of defending the Faith against his adversaries. The dispute was held before a large audience and resulted in the complete defeat of the heretic champion. But the arbitrators did not issue the obvious verdict, fearing, no doubt, the enmity of the heretics among whom they lived. Instead, they called for a new trial, in which the decision would be made automatically: the trial by fire. A large fire would be lit into which the documents containing the respective arguments of Saint Dominic and his adversary would be thrown. The document that was not destroyed would be considered to contain the truth. The necessary preparations were made, and the heretic's documents, once thrown into the flames, were immediately consumed. Then Saint Dominic also threw his defence of Catholic doctrine into the fire. Not only did it remain unharmed, but to the astonishment of the entire assembly, it was immediately returned and landed on a wooden beam. A second and a third time the notebook was thrown into the flames, only to be expelled again in each case, thus attesting without a doubt to the divine character of the truth it contained. But just as the stiff-necked Jews refused to be convinced of Christ's divinity in the presence of the mighty miracles he performed, so too did most of the Albigensians remain firmly rooted in their errors even in the presence of this convincing portent. Something similar happened in the nearby village of Montreal, where a group of Albigensians read a writing of Saint Dominic. To test its veracity, they threw it into the fire, and although it was there for a long time and repeatedly, it remained perfectly intact. However, only one of those heretics converted upon witnessing this second miracle. Thus it became manifest that, to convert the heretics, a more effective remedy than preaching and more powerful than miracles was needed. The Holy Rosary was needed! When the Blessed Virgin Mary gave him this sacred remedy, Saint Dominic then converted a hundred thousand heretics.

Saint Dominic de Guzmán:

The fire of prayer was at that time almost extinguished and it was necessary for the Lord to send a Dominic de Guzmán to revive this fire anew. This was what the great Spanish Saint undertook by instituting the Rosary. From that moment the spirit of fervour was renewed and the founts of grace opened up. Such was the extraordinary service performed by Saint Dominic for religion, establishing the practice of the Rosary.

It happened that in the year 1204, Saint Dominic asked the Most Holy Virgin Mary to enlighten him on the most efficacious way for obtaining the conversion of heretics. Saint Dominic was rapt up in the loftiest ecstasy and saw Our Lady with the Child Jesus in Her arms. She, with Her right hand, showed him the Holy Rosary and indicated how to recite it. The Most Holy Virgin Mary told Saint Dominic: "Here you have a powerful arm against heresies. To your preaching and austerity of life join the recital of the Holy Rosary, for I promise that your apostolate will be very effective." In accord with the instruction of the Apparition, the Rosary's design was consolidated, divided into fifteen mysteries split into three groups of five decades each. The groups were designated as Joyful Mysteries, Sorrowful Mysteries and Glorious Mysteries.

Saint Dominic then worked for some years among heretics, and by means of his preaching, prayers and sacrifices, succeeded in converting a few. But those converted, very often, for fear of being ridiculed and opposed, gave up. Nonetheless, Saint Dominic did not publicly propagate the Holy Rosary or Psalter for converting heretics until four years later, in the year 1208. It happened in the following way, as told by Saint Alan de la Rupe (Alain de la Roche, 1428-1475) in his famous book titled 'De Dignitate Rosarii', 'On the Excellence of the Rosary':

Saint Dominic, seeing that the gravity of the people's sins impeded the conversion of the albigensians, whose heresies were a mass of depraved aberrations, entered a forest close to Toulouse where he stayed for three days and three nights dedicated to penance and continuous prayer, without ceasing to groan, weep and mortify his body by taking the discipline to appease divine wrath, until he collapsed half dead. The Most Holy Virgin appeared in the company of three heavenly personages or Angels, and told him that the best arm for converting hardened souls was not scourging himself but the prayer of Her Psalter: "Do you know, dear Dominic, the weapon which the Most Holy Trinity has employed to reform the world?" – "O Lady! You know better than I," he replied, "since after Jesus Christ, your Son, You were the principal instrument of our salvation!" Mary replied: "I want you to know that in this kind of war, the arm has always been the Angelic Psalter, which is the Corner-Stone of the New Testament and the start of the Redemption of the human race; and it should also be the start of the conversion of heretics and victory over infidels. My son, do not be surprised at your lack of success in preaching. For you labour on a soil which has not been irrigated by the rain. Remember that when God wanted to renew the world, He first sent the rain of the Angelic Salutation. So it was that the world was renewed. Exhort the people then in your sermons to pray the Rosary and you will obtain wonderful results from your labours, and continuous victories over heresy, and you will gather great fruits for souls. Hence if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them for God, preach My Psalter."

Saint Dominic had been preaching to the heretics by trying to convince them of their errors and to refute them one by one, but the result was negative; so that the Most Holy Virgin also told him: "My son, you have undue faith in the efficacy of reasoning for leading heretics to the right path. You can see that your efforts have been in vain! Explain as clearly as you can the fundamental truths, and from time to time interrupt your discourse so that the people can give themselves up to prayer with you. Speak to them of the means which God made use of to save man. Tell them of the Annunciation brought to Me by the Angel from Heaven; the Incarnation of the Son of God, His Birth, His Life, His Sufferings and His Death, and end with His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. Show them these mysteries with the greatest possible clarity, and then pray the Our Father and ten Hail Marys, to soften hardened hearts. You will harvest abundant fruits by doing this, given that the power of prayer is infinite..." In this way the Holy Rosary was born.

The Saint arose very consoled. Inflamed with zeal for the salvation of those peoples, he entered the Cathedral. At that moment the bells pealed for the people to gather, thanks to the intervention of the Angels. As Saint Dominic began his sermon, a terrible storm broke out, the earth trembled, the sun darkened, repeated thunder and lightning caused the audience to tremble and turn ashen. Their terror increased when they saw an image of the Most Holy Virgin, prominently placed, raise up Her arms three times to Heaven to ask God for vengeance against them if they did not convert and resort to the protection of the Holy Mother of God. By these prodigies, Heaven wished to promote this new devotion of the Holy Rosary and make it better known. Thanks to Saint Dominic's prayer, the storm



finally abated. He continued his preaching, explaining the excellence of the Holy Rosary with so much fervour and enthusiasm that almost all the inhabitants of Toulouse accepted it and renounced their errors. In a short time a great transformation was experienced in the lives and morals of the city. Saint Dominic, inspired by the Holy Ghost, preached the Holy Rosary by word and example for the rest of his life, touring town and country, before great and little, before the learned and the ignorant, before Catholics and heretics, suffering keenly from continuous attacks by the enemies of this singular devotion.

Saint Alan relates that Our Lord Jesus Christ told him: "Dominic, I am glad that you do not rely on your learning and that you work with humility in the salvation of souls without concern for satisfying human vanity. Many preachers want to thunder against the gravest sins from the beginning, forgetting that before giving a painful remedy the patient must be prepared to receive it and benefit from it. Hence they should first exhort the audience to love of prayer and, especially, to My angelic Psalter. Because, if all begin to pray it, there is no doubt that divine clemency will favour those who persevere. Preach, then, My Rosary."

On a certain occasion, Saint Dominic had to give a sermon in the Paris church of Notre Dame (Our Lady) for the feast of Saint John the Evangelist. Before so doing, he recited the Rosary. The Virgin appeared to him and told him that the sermon was good, but it would be better to change, and handed him a book with images, in which She explained to him how very pleasing the Rosary of Hail Marys was to God, as it reminded Him a hundred and fifty times of that moment in which mankind, represented by Mary, had accepted Her Son as Saviour. Saint Dominic changed his sermon and spoke of the Rosary devotion, and the people began to recite it with devotion, to live as Christians and to cast aside their bad habits.

When Saint Dominic preached the Rosary near Carcassonne, a heretic set out to ridicule the miracles occurring and the fifteen mysteries of the Holy Rosary. In this way he prevented the conversion of the heretics. To chastise his impiety God permitted legions of devils to take possession of his body. His parents then led him to the Saint asking him to free the man from the malignant spirits. Saint Dominic exorcized him in the presence of a great crowd, thought to have been more than twelve thousand. The devils who possessed the unhappy man were obliged to respond in spite of themselves to the Saint's questions, and they confessed that they were fifteen thousand who possessed the body of the wretch, since the heretic had attacked the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. The devils said that with the Rosary Saint Dominic preached, he caused terror and dread to all Hell, and that in the world he was the man most hated by them because of the souls he snatched away by the devotion of the Rosary, and revealed many other details besides.

Saint Dominic cast his Rosary over the neck of the possessed and asked the devils who among all the Saints in Heaven they feared most and whom should mortals love and honour most. At this question, the devils burst into such frightful shrieks that many hearing them fell to the ground overcome with fright. The malignant spirits, so as to avoid replying, began to weep and lament in such a pitiful and moving way that many of those present also began to weep, moved by natural compassion. And the spirits said with a pained voice by lips of the possessed: "Dominic! Dominic! Have pity on us! We promise to do you no harm! You who have so much compassion for miserable sinners, have pity on us! See all that we suffer! Why do you take pleasure in adding to our pains? Be content with those we already suffer! Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!"

The Saint, unmoved at those pained words of the spirits, replied that he would not cease to torment them until they had replied to his questions. The devils told him that they would reply, but in secret and in his ear, and not before everyone. The Saint insisted and ordered them to speak out loud. But his insistence was useless: the devils would not say a word. The Saint then knelt down and raised this prayer to the Virgin: "O Most Powerful Virgin Mary! By virtue of Your Psalter and Rosary, order these enemies of the human race to respond to my question!" This prayer done, a burning flame suddenly shot forth from

the ears, nose and mouth of the possessed. Those present trembled with fear, but suffered no harm. The devils then cried out: “Dominic, we request you by the Passion of Jesus Christ and the merits of His Most Holy Mother and of all the Saints, to permit us to leave this body without saying a word. The Angels, when you want, will reveal it to you. Why give us credit? Do not torment us further: Have pity on us!”

“Wretches, you are unworthy to be heard!”, Saint Dominic replied. And kneeling down again, he raised this supplication to the Most Holy Virgin: “O most worthy Mother of Wisdom, regarding Your Salutation, how it should be prayed, these people have already been instructed. For the health of the faithful here present I pray You to oblige these enemies of Yours openly to confess the truth here wholly and sincerely.”

Hardly had he ended this prayer, when he saw at his side the Most Holy Virgin, surrounded by a multitude of Angels, who with a golden baton in the hand, struck the possessed and told him: “Reply to My servant Dominic!” Note that no one saw or heard the Most Holy Virgin other than Dominic, but they did see the reactions of the possessed and heard the things said by the devils through his mouth.

The devils then began to cry out: “O Enemy of ours! O Ruin and Confusion of ours! Why did You come down from Heaven to torment us in so cruel a way? O Advocate of sinners whom You save from Hell! O Safe Path to Heaven!, will it be precisely by You that we be obliged to confess before all the cause of our confusion and ruin, despite ourselves? Woe to us! A curse on our princes of darkness! Hear then, Christians! This Mother of Christ is omnipotent and can prevent Her servants from falling into Hell. She, like a sun, dissipates the darkness of our astute machinations. She discovers our intrigues, tears up our nets and reduces all our temptations to nothing. We feel obliged to confess that no one who perseveres in Her service is damned with us. One single sigh that She presents to the Most Holy Trinity is worth more than all the prayers, vows and desires of all the Saints. We fear Her more than all the Blessed together and can do nothing against Her faithful servants.

“Let them also take into account that many Christians who invoke Her on dying, and should be damned according to ordinary laws, are saved, thanks to Her intercession. Ah! If this Marieta (calling Her thus in their fury) had not opposed our designs and endeavours, long ago we would have demolished and destroyed the Church and hurled into error and infidelity all her prelates! Obligated by the violence done to us, we have to add, for greater clarity and precision, that no one who perseveres in praying the Rosary will be damned; since for Her faithful devotees She obtains true contrition for their sins, so that they confess them and obtain forgiveness and indulgences for them.”

Then Saint Dominic made all those attending pray the Rosary, very slowly and devoutly. And at each Hail Mary recited – amazingly! – a multitude of demons issued from the body of the possessed in the form of burning coals. When all the devils had left and the heretic had been completely freed, the Most Holy Virgin gave Her Blessing, invisibly, to the people, who thereby felt great sensible joy. Once freed, the heretic renounced his errors, was converted and inscribed in the Confraternity of the Rosary, with many other coreligionists of his, moved by this punishment and the power of the Rosary. This great miracle was the cause of the conversion of many heretics, who were inscribed in the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary.

The Holy Rosary, powerful arm against the enemies of the Church:

But the Rosary was not only a new and beautiful practice of honouring the Virgin by repeating the Angelic Salutation. From the times of Saint Dominic, the Rosary appeared as an arm against the enemies of the Church.

An historical document shows Saint Dominic victorious in a famous battle against heretics



by employing this prayer. This was the first victory of the Rosary, won in Muret, near Toulouse, on the 12th of September 1213. Eight hundred Catholic cavalry, gathered together by Pope Saint Innocent III, faced approximately 34,000 enemy troops. Saint Dominic with the clergy and the people entered the Church of Muret, and he made them recite one Rosary after another. Simon de Montfort, the Commander of the Christian army and likewise friend of Saint Dominic, made him teach the troops to recite the Rosary. They prayed it with great devotion before the most important battle in Muret. De Montfort considered that his victory had been a true miracle and was the result of the Rosary. As a sign of gratitude, De Montfort constructed the first Chapel to Our Lady of the Rosary. Five months following the event, a notary of Languedoc, observing the humility of Dominic, who had no scruple in reciting the Rosary (a very humble prayer, a popular prayer); and for his outstanding tenacity in praying the Rosary of five mysteries, or crowns, praying them one after another, set these events down in writing. The victory of the Catholic cavalry, headed by Simon De Montfort, was brilliant and miraculous. The chronicles state that the enemies of religion fell down upon each other like trees in a forest under the saws of an army of woodsmen.

Who can count the victories won by Count Simon de Montfort over the albigensians thanks to the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary? They were so famous that never has the like ever been seen. With five hundred men he once vanquished an army of ten thousand heretics. On another occasion, with thirty he overcame three thousand. On another, with eight hundred cavalry and a thousand infantrymen he destroyed the army of king Aragon, composed of one hundred thousand men, and lost but one cavalryman and eight infantrymen.

From how many dangers did the Most Holy Virgin free Alan de Lanvallay, a Breton knight who combated in favour of the Faith against the albigensians! While he found himself one day surrounded by enemies on all sides, the Most Holy Virgin hurled a hundred and fifty stones against them and freed him from their hands. Another day on which his ship was foundering, and close to sinking, this kind-hearted Mother caused a hundred and fifty hills to emerge from the waters, by which he reached Brittany. He, as a memorial to the miracles wrought in his favour by the Most Holy Virgin in recompense for the Rosary he prayed every day, had a monastery built in Dinan, in French Brittany, for the Friars of the new Order of Saint Dominic. Afterwards he became a Friar and died a holy death in Orléans.

Likewise Otero, a Breton soldier from Vaucouleurs, often put whole companies of heretics and thieves to flight with his Rosary and sword in hand. His enemies, after the routs they had suffered, assured him that they had seen his sword resplendent and, sometimes, a shield on his arm on which the images of Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Virgin, and Saints were impressed, which made him invincible and gave him strength in battle. Once, with ten companies, he vanquished twenty thousand heretics, without losing a single one of his soldiers. This event so impressed the general of the enemy army, that he went in search of Otero, abjured heresy and declared that he had seen him covered with firearms during the combat.

But besides being a tribute to Mary and a providential arm in defence of Christendom, the Rosary was also a method of preaching. By recommendation of our Lady, Saint Dominic preached the mysteries of Faith, and at the same time had his audiences pray the Our Father and the Hail Marys. He acted in this manner since discourse by itself was not sufficient to convert, however brilliant. Only the grace of God can break the secret resistance of the soul, and this grace can only be won by prayer. It was the principal prayer of Saint Dominic, and he spent whole nights praying it. This method was especially suitable for the destruction of heresies. If the absence of Catholic preaching had favoured the introduction of heresies, the popular preaching of the Mysteries of the Rosary, joined to the prayer of the Our Father and the Hail Mary, was the key remedy for this scourge.

Though before Saint Dominic the Holy Rosary already existed and was entrusted to others, particularly to the Carthusian fathers, nevertheless, the Supreme Pontiffs say that the one who first founded and preached it was Saint Dominic, and this is understood in the order

and manner that we now have it and is confirmed by the Holy Apostolic See, because this glorious Saint, enlightened by the Holy Ghost and aided by the intercession of the sovereign Virgin, was the first to propagate it and to whom the Pontiffs entrusted this enterprise. Likewise, the Supreme Pontiffs call Saint Dominic himself the “first Inquisitor,” because he was the first to have the title of apostolic inquisitor, though 400 years earlier, in the time of Saint Charles I the Great, there were other inquisitors, who secretly inquired about Faith and customs, and severely punished blasphemers and apostates of faith. Thus in the same way we say that, though before him there were others who dealt with the Rosary and preached it, it is said that Saint Dominic was the first, because he put it and taught it in the points and in the order that was then confirmed by the Apostolic See, and therefore he was the author and the first to teach this holy devotion to the world, which was then readjusted by Pope Saint Pius V, and later modified again by Saint Gregory XVII; because in earlier times, some called it one way and others another, some with more mysteries, others with fewer. Though many miracles were performed in Saint Dominic’s time through the preaching of the Rosary, the greatest were these: that by dissipating the darkness of the minds of those men, which were heresies, they admitted this sovereign light of the mysteries of the Rosary, whose effect worked richly in them, coming to drink from the channels of this holy and catholic doctrine of the Church, preached by the holy man and his companions; and they conceived holy purposes of virtues, very contrary to those they had before, to serve God with new resolution and do penance, priding themselves on being very faithful children of the Church. In short, Saint Dominic was the total restorer of this holy devotion.



The Order of Preachers or Dominicans:

In 1215, Saint Dominic, with six followers, founded the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, in Toulouse, France, with the approval of the Pope. From the beginning, the first preachers proved very zealous in spreading the devotion of the Holy Rosary. The Dominicans, spread to the four corners of Christendom, had a decisive influence on the expansion of the Rosary and its establishment in all classes of society. The Order founded by Saint Dominic, from its beginnings, spread in an extraordinary way the devotion to the practice of the Hail Mary. They began to call this prayer the “Marian Psalter”, since they thought, and rightly, that all the divine secrets of the psalms are included in the Rosary in heavenly praise; above all because the psalms sang to the One to come, while this form of prayer is directed to Her who brought Him to us.

This holy devotion of the Rosary had many such changes until the illustrious Order of Preachers came into the world, which according to the divine plan, had as its main rule in its constitutions the preaching of the Holy Gospel and the health of the neighbour. The sovereign Virgin then came to entrust them also with her beloved devotion, so necessary to the world, so that they would preach it together with the Gospel, because as the Carthusian monasteries are usually in desert places, the Fathers of that holy order could not often recommend the Holy Rosary to the Christian people, to make them fond of this holy devotion, and so they were left only with the contemplation and offering to God of these mysteries in general for humanity, and the sovereign Virgin entrusted both to the Order of Preachers, as people whom God chose particularly for these ministries of contemplation and preaching of the Holy Rosary. Thus, the Holy Rosary was then their endeavour, and it was up to them to promote this holy exercise in the world and preach it by express command of the Virgin of Heaven, and by commission of the Holy Pontiffs. We should not be surprised that every day the religious of this Order promoted this holy devotion in their sermons and brought to light books to exhort the Christian people to the devotion of the Holy Rosary, as this was their proper office, which the Most Holy Virgin entrusted to them as an

inheritance from their Father Saint Dominic.

A growing number of men joined the apostolic labour of Saint Dominic and they preached and taught with great zeal; so that the fruits of conversions multiplied. In the measure that the Order grew, they spread to different countries as missionaries for the glory of God and of the Virgin. Saint Dominic spared no pains in anything as much as in praising the Most Holy Virgin, to preach Her grandeurs and encourage the whole world to honour Her with the Rosary. The powerful Queen of Heaven, in Her turn, did not cease to pour out Her blessings generously upon the Saint. She crowned his labours with a thousand prodigies and miracles, and he obtained from God all that he asked, by intercession of the Most Holy Virgin. To crown Her favours, She granted him victory over the albigensian heretics and made him Father and Patriarch of a great Order.

When Saint Dominic brought the devotion of the Rosary to Spain, a famous miracle occurred in the city of Zaragoza. To attempt to recount all the miracles that were offered to the blessed Father Saint Dominic in the preaching of the Holy Rosary would be endless, but we shall look at one that will greatly amaze readers, which happened to him upon coming into Spain after having been made the first General of his Order, in the early days of March 1219. Arriving then at the city of Zaragoza, he preached his customary devotion to the Rosary (among many other doctrines he preached), which was very well received by many, and penetrated well into the hearts of the listeners. And as the fame of the holy man grew, many came to hear him, and among others a principal and powerful nobleman in worldly matters, though a great servant and captive of Satan, due to his great sins, for when these take hold of the nobility, there is nothing that does so much damage. This nobleman was a distant relative of Saint Dominic, and had despaired in matters of his soul, for his troubles were so great and without remedy in his opinion. He heard that the Saint was preaching the wonders of the Rosary and that many were converting and changing their lives through this means, and he said to himself: "I had lost hope of saving myself. But I begin to regain confidence. I must go to listen to this man of God!" He wanted to see what was being said about that Saint, and so he went to hear a sermon, accompanied by many servants, like unto their lord, for they served him to their detriment. Entering the church, then, blessed Saint Dominic was preaching, and was saying those words that Christ our Lord said to the Jews: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin," and he deliberated on them. And he saw this nobleman, and recognized his wickedness, for he saw that as many demons brought him bound with chains as sins he had committed. And with the man listening to the sermon, the Saint in the pulpit began with much insistence to pray in his heart to God for him, and continuing his preaching, with great sighs he began to cry out, saying: "Oh children of God, redeemed with his most precious Blood, forged in those most loving entrails on the Cross, and brought to light by thirty-three years of tears, called and chosen to bear God in your hearts, and the holy faith of His Gospel, tell me, how come you are not ashamed and confounded to admit demons into them, and to bear their medals stamped on them?" These and other similar reasons came from that golden mouth, like arrows ablaze from that great fire of divine love which burned in the Saint's breast, and put fear into that obstinate heart, which the Saint's prayer had already softened somewhat towards God. After the sermon, the man left very fearful and alarmed. Though not converted, he felt a little fear for his state, and love for the preacher and his doctrine, for which he willingly returned another day to hear him. Saint Dominic, catching sight of him in the church, was again moved by the great charity that burnt in his breast. And continuing his sermon, he implored God for a remedy for that soul. And so that all who were there might see the strange vision that he had seen, and that with shame and confusion the wayward man might be healed, and to others be a warning and example, and the Lord's mercy so permitting (because the man's sins and disorders were public and notorious), what was invisibly happening was seen by the rest. Understanding that this hardened heart would not be converted except by a moving impression, he cried out in a loud voice: "Lord Jesus

Christ, let this whole congregation see the state of soul in which the person who has just entered Your temple finds himself!" The whole congregation then saw Don Pérez surrounded by a multitude of demons in the form of frightful beasts, who held him bound with iron chains. Filled with terror, they all fled in disorder, to the immense confusion of Don Pérez, terrified and ashamed to see himself turned into an object of horror for everyone. And such was the fear and commotion among the people that the miserable and abject man understood that he was the cause of the noise and bustle in the church, because those who saw him thus fled from him as from the devil, and one of his servants among others, who saw him as described, fled from him and was afraid. Seeing this, the gentleman Don Pedro (for that was his name) asked him why he was fleeing from him, and the servant replied that Pedro was not his master, but Satan with a legion of demons. And finally, his own wife, who at the time was in the church praying in a chapel of Our Lady with her maidens and accompanying women, seeing the great commotion in the church, all came out into the naves. And when she saw her husband, and they their lord, with the eyes with which the Saint saw him, they began to shout and cry out, and to flee from him as from a fire out of hell. The great disturbance lasted a long while, and at the end of it, the said Don Pedro, coming to his senses, said to himself very uneasily: "This is my great undoing, that my wife and servants flee from me, and all the people." The hour that our Lord had appointed for his remedy having arrived, the glorious Father Saint Dominic sent him a companion of his called Friar Bernard, with a Rosary of those that the Saint had in his hands when he preached, and with it a message, begging him greatly to pray that Rosary to remedy his misfortune, before God executed on him the rigorous punishments he used on Dathan and Abironne, when the earth opened up and hell swallowed them. He said to him: "Recognize, unhappy man, the deplorable state in which you find yourself and throw yourself at the feet of the Most Holy Virgin! Take this Rosary! Pray it with devotion and repentance for your sins and resolve to change your life!" Fear is very salutary on these occasions, and it is no small mercy of the Holy Ghost to cause and produce it. The sad Don Pedro, angered and heavy of heart, both because of what he saw, that everyone fled from him, and because of the words that Saint Dominic had sent him to tell him, received the said Rosary, and sighing replied: "My Father, tell the servant of God, Dominic, that I am deeply thankful for the Rosary he has sent me, and since he sees my ruin, he sees more than I do, and that he should not cease to pray to God for me;" and from there he went with the new Rosary before the image of Our Lady, and began to pray it, and when he had finished he went to the blessed Saint, who was waiting for him, praying to God for him; and as he said that he wanted to confess, the servant of God heard his confession, Don Pedro showing much pain and contrition for his sins. And the Saint, not knowing what penance to give him, for so many and such serious sins, went before the image of Our Lady and begged Her earnestly to enlighten him so that he could give a salutary penance to that lost sheep. And the sovereign Virgin, who never despised the prayer of Her Saint, replied to him: "Son, the Rosary you made him begin, have him say in penance for his sins every day with other salutary penances." The said Father then returned with great joy to Don Pedro, now converted with much anguish and sadness of his conscience, and finished hearing his confession of whatever he had remembered in the meantime, and gave him certain public and modest penances, which were appropriate as good example for the people, because they publicly knew he had committed great and manifest sins, and had fallen into many excommunications, and that he asked for absolution from none. The servant of God absolved him from all, and from the sins that were very great, and gave him as penance to pray the Rosary all his life, showing him how he should





pray it. And consoling him, he said: “You, sir, fell by your sins into the hands of God’s wrath and justice, and now you have obtained His divine mercy, and since you are not worthy to be heard, so that you may be heard through the prayers of others, enter this holy Confraternity of the Rosary.” Having heard these and other reasons willingly, Don Pedro enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity, and went home giving thanks to the blessed Saint. His wife and family, who had previously fled from him, returned, though with some fear at first, but afterwards as before. And all growing greatly in devotion to the Rosary, in the course of time they no longer saw him in chains and in the power of demons, but very righteous and bettered, often praying his Rosary and, in prayer, they saw crowns above his head. Thus divine providence wished to comfort that house so penitent and reformed,

and have them see such visions in this blessed state, since they had seen very contrary ones in his previous state. And Don Pedro often said to his wife and others in his house in holy conversation and talks that, every time he confessed a sin to blessed Father Saint Dominic, he felt in his body that they were untying and removing a large, very heavy chain. And so not only did he persevere from then on in this holy devotion, but he brought many people into it. And through the prayers of God’s servant, this gentleman’s house was seen to become His temple, which before had been a den of thieves and of Satan. And finally he grew so much in virtue with this holy devotion that he was granted to have the hour of his death revealed to him, and that our Lord and His Most Holy Mother come to visit him then, and keep him from his enemies. And so he gave his spirit up into the hands of the Lord very joyfully, to the great admiration and comfort of all who saw him die so holy and devoutly. This story, being such a serious matter, and reported by exceedingly important men, cannot be understood otherwise, because Father Master Fray Juan de Monte tells it in his *Marial*, who at one time was a companion of our Father Saint Dominic, and it is also found in what Peter of Blois wrote, and it is also referred to by Father Fray Tomás de Temple Español, who was also a companion of our Father Saint Dominic, and Father Master Fray Hernando del Castillo, historian of the Order of Preachers, and many others. But it is strange that no sign of this heroic deed remained in that city. Some say by tradition that a chapel that was attached to the convent of Preachers in Zaragoza, titled Our Lady of the Miracle, had its beginning and name from this deed, and that afterwards, the preaching friars coming from there shortly after to found a house in the same city, founded it during the life of the glorious Father Saint Dominic, next to this chapel of the said miracle, because the Sovereigns of Aragon wanted it so, to have them closer to their royal palace of the Aljafería, and the religious were glad to settle next to that chapel, which so freshly represented the deed of their good Father.

A doctor in sacred theology and in both law faculties becomes a great devotee of the Rosary. A Spanish countess, instructed by Saint Dominic in the devotion of the Rosary, recited it daily with wonderful progress in virtue. She wanted nothing more than to live a life of perfection. She asked a Bishop, a famous preacher, for some practices of perfection so as to acquire greater love for the Lord, which is the hunger and thirst of the good. The good doctor heard her and began to give her useful teachings, the ordinary ones, namely to love and serve her husband, to bring up her children in the love of the Lord, to avoid gossip and chatting and idle words, and so on. He told her that beforehand it was necessary to declare to him the state of her soul and her practices of piety. She answered that her chief practice was the Rosary, which she prayed every day, meditating on the Mysteries, Joyful, Dolorous and Glorious, to her great spiritual profit. And from her Rosary devotion, she began to say such wonderful considerations that the Bishop was amazed and, on hearing the marvellous teachings contained in the mysteries once explained, told her enthused: “For twenty years I have been a doctor in theology and in both law faculties and till now I have never known or

heard such marvellous things as you have told me, and rejoice in having known your life and dealings, and say that from today I would like rather to be your disciple and will take you as instructress. And since so much good began for you from the Rosary Devotion, I want to begin there. I have read about many excellent practices of devotion. But I have known none so fruitful nor so in accord with Christianity as this one. I want to imitate you. I will preach the Rosary!" So he did, for he began to pray the Rosary to his great profit, and preached it with such success that in a short while he observed a favourable moral transformation in his whole diocese: many conversions, restitutions and reconciliations. Dissipation, excesses and betting ceased, and in families peace, devotion and charity flourished again. A change all the more admirable in so far as this Bishop had laboured hard to reform his diocese but with very scant fruit. The better to inspire the devotion of the Holy Rosary, he always had a beautiful one with him and showed it to his listeners saying: "Know, brethren, that the Rosary of the Most Holy Virgin is so excellent that I, though your Bishop, doctor in theology and in both law faculties, glory at taking it with me always as the most glorious emblem of my episcopate and doctorate." With this he brought many people to this holy devotion of the Rosary, and began to live such a singular life that he was a saint, and a living example to all, and deserved that the Virgin appeared to him and told him the hour and day of his death in which She assisted. And with such an Intercessor he joyfully gave his soul to the Lord who created it. Let no one think otherwise but that these mysteries of the most holy Rosary are so powerful and attractive that not only this woman and this holy Doctor, but also all men in the world who attentively contemplate them, will be greatly raised up by them in the love of the Lord who worked them.

By these examples and many others of this kind, when this holy devotion and exercise began with fervour to be spread, the great care that the devil took so that it might not go forward can well be understood; as well as the care of the Virgin Mary that no one might forget it. Both show the importance it has, and the folly of considering it an old woman's devotion, or something of little value. And as God in all ages and according to the needs of each of them, has prepared the means that would help to reform morals, as can be well demonstrated by a long discourse beginning from the time when God created the world and continuing down to our times, in an age when, like today, humanity was immersed in vices, God prepared two such illustrious religious orders, namely that of Saint Francis and that of Saint Dominic, with whose help the world might defend itself from the punishment it was about to receive, as Pope Saint Innocent III the Great saw in Rome. In a revelation to this Pope, he saw that the Church of Saint John Lateran was falling down and that, putting their shoulders to it, these two illustrious Patriarchs kept it standing, from which the Supreme Pontiff understood that these two holy men were going to be of great benefit to the Church of God with their illustrious religious Orders they founded at that time. At this same time, to aid the same work and enterprise, the Queen of Heaven gave her Rosary. With all the persecutions it had at the beginning, not only did it not end, but it grew and developed.

Saint Dominic died in 1221, after a life dedicated to preaching and popularizing the devotion of the Rosary among people of every social class, in suffrage for the Holy Souls of Purgatory, for triumph over evil and for the prosperity of Holy Mother Church. Glorious Patriarch Saint Dominic is a glory of Spain and a mainstay of the Faith. His birth was full of divine prodigies, his life admirable, his teachings more of Heaven than of earth, by which, and with the examples of his heroic virtues and countless miracles which the Lord wrought for him, converted to the Catholic Faith innumerable heretics, reformed the wayward morals of the faithful, founded an Order of apostolic men to uphold the Church which was facing ruin and bear throughout the world the doctrine of the Gospel, resist the enemies of the Faith and be the sun and light of the world. These were the last words of Saint Dominic before expiring: "Thanks be to God, whose mercy has conserved me in perfect virginity to this day. If you desire to stay chaste, avoid all dangerous conversations and watch over your hearts."



The Rosary thus maintained its place as the perfect prayer. However all things, even the most sacred, are subject to change, especially when they depend on man's freewill. It is no surprise that the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary kept up its primitive fervour for only one century after its institution by Saint Dominic. Afterwards it became something buried and forgotten. Doubtless the devil's malice and envy were principally responsible for a great many people abandoning the Rosary, thus detaining the torrents of God's graces which it had brought upon the world.

The Most Holy Virgin, on giving the Rosary to Saint Dominic, ordered him to recite it and have it recited every day. The Saint, on his behalf, did not inscribe any one who lacked the firm resolve to pray it daily. Later only the weekly recitation of the Rosary was required in certain confraternities, consequence of the loss of fervour and of charity grown cold. What else can be expected of those who pray with no enthusiasm? "But at the beginning it was not so."

The devil could not bear all the good as that was being done and developed in the world both by Father Saint Dominic and by his spiritual children and successors with the devotion of the Holy Rosary, and so Satan took great care and diligence to introduce lukewarmness into this holy devotion. And it is alarming to see the diligence that the devil has always had and has in doing away with this holy exercise and discouraging men in something so important for the salvation of their souls. In this he makes use of our weak and sickly nature, for by causing it to be forgotten and abandoned, he puts an end to the Rosary and kills the soul. There are things that for their conservation need solicitude and care, not only at the beginning but daily, throughout life, attending to them with particular care, like a plant. So that the plant be lost, it is enough to plant and leave, and it will dry up; but for it to be of value, grow and bear fruit, we cannot be content with just planting it, but need to water it, watch over it, and nurture it, so that it may grow and its beauty and fruit be enjoyed. It was not enough for the Queen of Heaven to plant this devotion in the world through the Apostles and those ancient Fathers, and finally through Saint Dominic, nor for him and his spiritual sons to have preached it for so long, confirming it with many miracles that occurred in the life of the Saint and his companions through the intercession of the Queen of Heaven, in order that this devotion might ever remain firm, and be kept fresh in the memory of men and never be forgotten; because, unfortunately, in the end, a terrible lukewarmness did much damage, and with it the necessary fervour for this holy and divine exercise, so important for our salvation, was lost.

Saint Alan de la Rupe:

The 'black death', or bubonic plague, depopulated Catholic Europe, scourging cities especially. From about the year 1349, God chastised Europe with the most terrible plague ever known. Beginning in the East, it spread over all Italy, Germany, France, Poland and Hungary, bringing desolation wherever it broke out, since of every hundred men, in some places, scarcely twenty survived to tell the story. Many great cities, towns, villages and monasteries became completely deserted in the years the epidemic lasted. More than one hundred million died, including the majority of Europeans. This scourge of God was swiftly succeeded by others, of heresies and the tragic Western schism in 1378.

When by the mercy of God these calamities ceased, the Most Holy Virgin ordered Saint Alan de la Rupe, renowned doctor and famous preacher of the Order of Saint Dominic from the monastery of Dinan in French Brittany, to restore the former Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, so that this Confraternity, having been founded in this province, a religious of the same place might have the honour of re-establishing it. Saint Alan is counted among those who have spread the Holy Rosary most. His name, popularized in different European

languages, is Alano de la Roca, Alanus de Rupe, Alain de la Roche, Alanus van de Clip, Alano de la Rupe, Blessed Alan, which gives an idea of the extent of his apostolate. He was born in Brittany, France, about 1428. At twenty-two years of age, about 1450, he entered the Order of Preachers.

Saint Alan began this great work of re-establishing the Rosary in 1460 after a pointed warning by Our Lord. He received this urgent message in the following way: One day, while offering Mass, Our Lord, who desired to move him to preach the Holy Rosary, spoke to Him in the Sacred Host: "How can you crucify me anew again?" – "What are You saying, Lord?", asked Saint Alan, horrified. "You crucified Me once by your sins – answered Jesus – and I would be crucified willingly anew, if it were necessary, to make reparation to My Father for the sins you used to commit. You are crucifying Me again now because you have all the knowledge and intelligence needed to preach the Rosary of My Mother, and you are not doing so. If you would only do this, you would teach many souls the right path and keep them away from sin. But you are not doing so, so that you yourself are to blame for the sins they commit." This terrible reproach made Saint Alan solemnly resolve to preach the Rosary without cease.

To inspire him to preach ever more, Our Lady also told him one day: "You were a great sinner in your youth, but I obtained the grace of your conversion from My Son. If it had been possible, I would willingly have gone through all kinds of suffering to save you, since converted sinners are a glory for Me. And I would have done the same in order to make you worthy of preaching My Rosary everywhere." Saint Dominic as well appeared to Saint Alan and spoke to him of the great benefits obtained by means of the Rosary in his ministry; he had preached it without cease, his sermons had given great fruits and many had been converted during his missions.

Finally, in that same year 1460, the Sovereign Virgin Mary, wanting to give a greater impulse to this holy devotion and spiritual exercise, appeared full of splendour and clarity to Friar Alan de la Rupe of Brittany, a very spiritual son and most devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin; and looking at him with a joyful and loving countenance, she said to him: "My son, you well know my ancient devotion of the Rosary, spread and renewed by your Father and my servant (Saint Dominic), and preached by the Dominican Friars, very pleasing to Me, and very useful and beneficial to all Christians. However, through the negligence of men it is now almost extinct and forgotten. I desire, my son, the salvation of men, which is easily achieved through this way of praying very pleasing to My most beloved Son, so that for the good of souls I have renewed this devotion in the world over and over again, as I also want to renew it now. For this I have thought to use you, because of the great devotion you have to Me, so that you may spread and preach this My Rosary in My name, and exhort all the faithful to pray this prayer devoutly, convinced that it is very pleasing to Me and of great efficacy before My Son, for there is nothing that pleases Him more. And for this prepare yourself promptly to put my Will and command into practice; encourage and exhort the Friars of your Order to do the same, and I will help you with miracles, showing that I have sent you." And having said these words, the Most Blessed Virgin put on his finger a ring made of Her virginal hair, by which he was committed to this truth; and, giving him Her blessing from Heaven, She disappeared. The saintly man, with such great help, began his preaching with extraordinary fervour, worthy of the favours he had received, and encouraged the Friars of his Order to do the same. So great was the love and holy zeal that this blessed Father had for the Rosary of the Mother of God that he always carried it in his hands, passing it from one hand to the other, whether he was among friars or laymen, exhorting them all to this holy devotion, and would say to them: "My dearest brethren, receive in the spirit of joy the Rosary of the Virgin Mother of God, Patroness and Advocate of all sinners, for it is surely the sling with which David felled Goliath. And these five beads (pointing to the Our Fathers) are those five stones that the young David chose and went out against him,



Visione di Cristo Crocifisso al Beato Alano della Rupe.

and be certain that you will bring down your opponents and enemies, and triumph over them, through this holy devotion, which is likewise David's own harp, with whose music he drove away Saul's evil spirit, because with the music of this Psalter, or Rosary, and with the consideration of its holy mysteries, you will drive away all the evil thoughts that torment the servants of God. For these holy mysteries are the triumphs of Christ Our Lord, with which he triumphed over the world, hell, and sin; there is nothing that demons fear more or from which they flee faster than when they hear those mysteries named. Therefore, neither during life nor at the moment of death should we leave it, not for a moment."

The conversations, diligences, and preaching accompanied by miracles of this holy man were so effective, especially exhorting to perseverance in the Holy Rosary and not abandoning it for any reason, that it caused countless men and women to enrol in this holy Confraternity and become devoted to the Virgin. And in case they neglected it for a day or days, due to negligence or inability, Saint Alan told them not to let those days be many, but to quickly return to their dearest Mother and Queen of Heaven who had given them such light.

Saint Alan obtained his doctorate in theology in 1473 with his thesis "The importance of the Angel's greeting to Mary." He joined the monastery of the most strict observance. How very many graces and favours did Saint Alan, the restorer of this devotion, receive from the Most Pure Hands of the Virgin Mary! The Most Holy Virgin honoured him with Her visit several times to enlighten him on the means for attaining salvation, and in order to become a good Priest, a perfect Religious and imitator of Jesus Christ. During the temptations and dreadful persecutions by the devil that brought him to a state of extreme misery and almost to despair, She consoled him and dispelled all his confusion and darkness by Her sweet presence. He is known by his great popularity, above all as a fervent preacher of the Rosary and of Marian spirituality. To the members of the Confraternity he founded, he imposed the daily recital of the 150 Hail Marys. Friar Alan drew great audiences, of Religious, Priests and laypeople, so that he won fame as the greatest travelling preacher of the Rosary in Western Europe.

The Virgin also told him that immense volumes would be needed to register all the miracles obtained by means of the Rosary; and She repeated the promises given to Saint Dominic: "1. To all those who devoutly recite my Rosary, I promise My special protection and great graces. 2. Whoever perseveres in praying My Rosary will receive some special grace. 3. The Rosary will be a most powerful arm against Hell; it will destroy vice, free from sin, dissipate heresy. 4. The Rosary will make virtue and good works flourish and obtain the most abundant divine mercy for souls, and instead of love of the world in hearts, its place will be taken by the love of God, and they will be raised up to desires for heavenly and eternal goods. How many souls will be sanctified by this means! 5. Whoever trusts in Me, with the Rosary will not perish. 6. Whoever recites My Rosary devoutly, meditating on its mysteries, will not be plagued by misfortune. If a sinner, he will be converted; if righteous, he will grow in grace and will be recompensed with eternal life. 7. The true devotees of My Rosary will not die without the Sacraments. 8. Those who recite My Rosary, during life and at the hour of death will encounter the light of God, fullness of grace, and partake in the merits of the Blessed. 9. I will swiftly free the souls devoted to My Rosary from Purgatory. 10. The true children of My Rosary will enjoy great glory in Heaven. 11. Whatever you request by means of My Rosary you will obtain. 12. Those who propagate My Rosary will be succoured by Me in all their needs. 13. My Son has granted Me that all who commend themselves to Me on reciting the Rosary will have the whole Heavenly Court as intercessors in life and at the hour of death. 14. Those who faithfully recite My Rosary are all beloved children of Mine and

brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. 15. Devotion to the Rosary is a great sign of predestination.”

Ever since Alan de la Rupe restored this devotion, the voice of the faithful people, which is the voice of God, called it “Rosary”, that is, crown of roses, which means that as many times as we duly recite the Rosary, on the Heads of Jesus and Mary we gird a crown of fifty white roses and red roses from Paradise, which will never lose their beauty or splendour. The Most Holy Virgin approved and confirmed the name of Rosary, revealing to several people that they presented to Her as many pleasing roses as Hail Marys they recited in Her honour and as many crowns of roses as Rosaries.

Brother Saint Alphonse Rodríguez S.J. recited it with such fervour that he frequently saw a red rose issue from his mouth at each Our Father, and a white rose at each Hail Mary, both equal in beauty and fragrance and differing only in colour. And he reached the highest degree of virtue by reciting this prayer every time the clock chimed the hour.

The Chronicles of Saint Francis relate that a young Friar had the laudable custom of praying the crown of the Most Holy Virgin every day before lunch. One day, for some reason, he had not prayed it. When the bell rang for the meal, he asked the superior for permission to pray the crown before taking his seat at table. Permission obtained, he retired to his cell. But as he delayed long in returning, the superior sent a Friar to call him, who found him in his cell, illuminated by heavenly splendour. The Most Holy Virgin and two Angels were at his side. At each Hail Mary a most beautiful rose issued from the mouth of the Friar. The Angels gathered up the roses, one by one, and placed them on the head of the Most Holy Virgin who showed Herself evidently pleased at this. Other Friars, sent to find out the cause of their companions’ delay, saw the same prodigy. The Most Holy Virgin did not disappear until the recital of the crown ended. The Rosary then, is a great crown of heavenly roses placed on the Heads of Jesus and of Mary. The rose is the queen of flowers. The Rosary, in turn, is the rose and first of the devotions.

Saint Alan relates many apparitions by the Lord and the Most Holy Virgin to Saint Dominic to urge him and encourage him to preach the Holy Rosary ever more, in order to combat sin and convert sinners and heretics. Saint Dominic, describing the great fruits he had obtained among the people by this beautiful devotion which he had preached continually, said to Saint Alan: “Look at the fruits I gathered from the preaching of the Holy Rosary. Do the same yourself, and all who love the Most Holy Virgin, so as to draw all peoples to the true science of virtue by means of the holy exercise of the Rosary.” While preachers, following the example of Saint Dominic, taught the devotion of the Holy Rosary, piety and fervour flourished in the religious Orders that practised it and in the Christian world. But when people began to neglect this gift from Heaven, we see but sin and disorder all about.

The powerful meaning of the Holy Rosary beads was revealed in visions to Saint Alan de la Rupe. The beads of the Rosary are far more than just a way to help count the Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory Bes recited. Each of them enfolds a powerful meaning, the same whether made of wood or of other material. All of them, on slipping between the fingers of the devotees, passing the Our Fathers and Hail Marys one by one, they turn into something marvellous which Saint Alan refers to, as he tells us that these little beads are transformed into ‘precious stones’ excavated from the mount of contemplation, a beautiful image which leads us to understand how important it is for the soul to taste the mysteries of the Holy Rosary. He compares the beads of the Rosary as well to the hailstones which fall from heaven against the enemies of the Faith. We all know, says the Saint, that the prayer of the Rosary is an arm against Satan and against those who want to destroy our



Regina Sacratissimi Rosarii et Beatus Alanus de Rupe o.p.

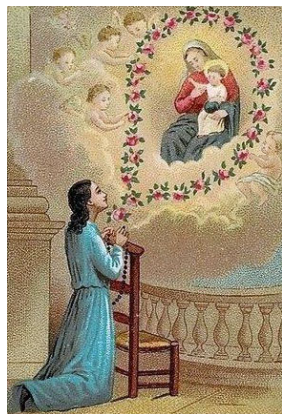
Faith by throwing doubts and confusion upon our Creed. They are ‘stones in battle’: Saint Alan refers as well to a text of Holy Scripture when David overthrew Goliath, since, on being recited, each bead which flows through our hands is a small but powerful stone which expels those philistines from the world, who are Satan and his minions. They are besides ‘steps on Jacob’s ladder’; since the Holy Bible says of Patriarch Jacob that, “in dreams, he saw a stairway which, poised on the earth, reached up to Heaven, and the Angels of God went up and down upon it.” Each bead of the Rosary that is recited, Saint Alan teaches, is a step up to Heaven. Each time we pray the Rosary we take fifty steps. At the end we find ourselves at the Gateway to Heaven, Mary Most Holy, who will take us on to the Blessed Kingdom of Her Son. By way of Mary we can enter Heaven because She is the Gateway, *Jánua Coeli*, as God Himself has established. By reciting the Holy Rosary every day, we shall have the certainty of easily obtaining eternal fruitfulness, because the Rosary will help us to convert, to love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves.

Up till his death in 1475, Saint Alan devoted himself very laudably to this holy exercise of preaching the Rosary. They were fifteen years of great benefit for souls, with so many miracles performed by the Virgin through his own preaching and that of his companions that they could not easily be detailed. Through the Holy Rosary, many dead were resurrected; and many who were obstinate and determined to continue in their sins were reduced to contrition, confession, and satisfaction for them; and those who to confess frequently were ashamed, in accord with worldly wisdom, began to take great care in frequenting the Sacraments; and those who were previously so worried about the things people said about them, subsequently cared not at all, rather enjoyed enduring humiliations. Many who had been defamed fully recovered their reputation. Others, persecuted by their enemies, were freed from them. Others afflicted in various ways were freed and filled with consolation. Others who had lost divine gifts and graces recovered them all through the Holy Rosary’s intercession. And after those fifteen years of labour and work, the Holy Confessor, having drawn more than a hundred thousand people to enrol in the Rosary confraternities, full of virtues and good works, gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator in the Dubonense convent of the congregation in Zwolle, Holland, in the year of the Lord 1475, on the Feastday of the Nativity of the Queen of Angels, as testimony that he was a very special son of Hers; according to master Father Michael of Liège, who was his disciple.

The Rosary Confraternities:

In 1470 in France, Saint Alan re-established the Confraternity of the Psalter of the Glorious Virgin Mary just as founded by Saint Dominic. Its main objectives were: to spread devotion to the Rosary, create an atmosphere of Marian spirituality among its members, and ask for the Virgin’s intercession. The same year that Saint Alan de la Rupe died, 1475, the Queen of Heaven again began to renew and encourage the same devotion and Confraternity in the priory of Cologne, through the prior and friars there, so that from this community it might spread throughout the world. The cause of its renewal was this: In the city of Cologne, there was a man very devoted to the Virgin of the Rosary, who prayed it every day. It happened that he had arguments and violent confrontations with another, and killed him. The deceased had a very strong and valiant brother, who after his brother’s death proposed to avenge it; he sought out the murderer, and followed him through various places, looking for the occasion. One day when the murderer was out in the streets, and his adversary following him accompanied by others, he entered (without thinking they were following him) the church of preachers in the city of Cologne, which was on his way, because he had devotion to the sovereign Virgin and remembered that he had not prayed his Rosary that day. And so, kneeling before the altar and image of the Mother of God of the Rosary, he prayed Her entire psalter. His adversaries, who were waiting for him at the door to kill him, thinking that he was taking too long, or that perhaps he had gone elsewhere, entered to look for him in the church, and found him kneeling before the altar and image of Our Lady of the Rosary. They

saw that in front of him was a most beautiful Lady, and that from his mouth she took white and red roses, and that from them she made a garland or crown, placing one red rose for every ten white ones, just as they came out of his mouth, and when he had finished praying his Rosary, the garland was finished, and the exalted Lady placed it on the head of her devotee, and disappeared. All of which was seen by his adversaries who, as we said, were waiting to kill him. Recognizing that this was some great mystery, the brother of the deceased, moved by devotion and compassion, threw down the weapons he carried, and with a benign face went up to the devotee of Our Lady of the Rosary, who, seeing him and thinking he was coming to kill him, was very troubled, looking for a way to escape; but the other embraced him with gentle words and spoke to him of peace: "My brother, have no fear, nor think that



I want to kill you; rather, from now on I generously forgive you for the death of my brother, and I beg you to forgive me for the uneasiness I have caused you. I implore you to tell me, who was that Lady who was in front of you, making a garland of white and red roses, which after finishing She placed on your head, as I clearly see that you still have." The devotee, astonished at what he heard, swore and affirmed not having seen any of those things spoken by the other; who, understanding that he was praying some special prayer, said to him: "Since you say you have not seen anything of all that I observed; tell me, what prayer were you praying to the Virgin Our Lady?" He replied that it was the Holy Rosary which consists of one hundred and fifty Hail Marys and fifteen Our Fathers, in honour and memory of the fifteen mysteries contained in that holy devotion. The other proposed and promised from then on to pray the Holy Rosary devoutly, thanking him greatly, as a good friend, for the wonderful desire he had received from his good example. All this quickly spread throughout the city of Cologne, and the following night the Virgin Queen of Heaven appeared to the prior of the community of preaching friars there, who was a very great servant of God, distinguished in virtue and most devoted to the Holy Rosary, and told him that as he was going to preach in the cathedral church of that city the following Sunday, he should publicly preach how much it pleased Her that from then on tall and short, poor and rich, young and old, and of all states, should devoutly pray the Holy Rosary in praise of Her and Her most beloved Son; because it was one of the greatest favours that could be done to Her in this life. And the holy Prior, considering himself unworthy and a very great sinner, refused the task, and did not dare to promise what he did not know if he could fulfil. Besides this, he thought that if he preached this to the people, and said that the Virgin had told him and ordered him to do so, perhaps they would mock him and consider him conceited, and then it would not be a cause of devotion for the people, but perhaps the devotion they had would be lost, and so he said very earnestly. But also, that if She still wanted him to preach, as Her faithful servant and devotee, She might deign to give him some sign with which to authorize his preaching, so that it would be for the edification of the people and Her glory. The Most Holy Virgin replied that She was pleased and that he should say in Her name what had happened the day before, with that devotee of Hers, which we have just told, giving the names of both the one who was praying the Rosary and the one who was spying on him, and She also added: "In testimony of this truth on the third day, after you have preached, you will die and receive the reward for your labours in the company of the Saints of Heaven."

This saintly man, the reverend Prior, was as content with this as one can imagine. And when Sunday came (which was the day of his sermon) he preached at great length, in the presence of Emperor Saint Frederick III and the magnates of his Court, and Alexander Boscono, Bishop of Forli, Legate *a latere* of Pope Saint Sixtus IV the Great, and solemnly announced the will of Our Lady, with testimony of what was going to happen, and just as he

preached, so did it happen. And then on the third day the holy man died and passed gloriously from this life to the eternal reward and prize that was prepared for him, as was shown by the manifest and evident signs that were seen at his death, because without fever or pain, with great joy on his face, always speaking and exalting the worship of the Most Holy Virgin, Our Lady, he ended this life and began the eternal one. All of which was widely publicized, and not only in Cologne, but throughout Germany there were great thanksgivings to God and public processions. Many sought to be very devoted to the Holy Rosary, and this matter was not taken lightly, as thousands of men went to enrol in the register of this holy Confraternity. The first was His Majesty Emperor Saint Frederick III, and after him many princes, dukes and great lords, courtiers, priors, abbots, bishops, doctors and many gentlemen, citizens and officials, and countless common people, and among women many princesses, duchesses, baronesses, nuns, abbesses, and from all states; and all those courtiers of that imperial court rejoiced in this holy devotion, and souls delighted each day in the praises of the Queen of Heaven, who had granted such mercy to that distinguished city. And as Bishop Alexander Boscono, Legate *a latere* of the Apostolic See, sent by Pope Saint Sixtus IV the Great, was there, this Legate, in addition to enrolling in this holy Confraternity, at the request of Emperor Frederick III, approved it, and ordered the rules and constitutions to be made for it; and using the full powers he had, granted indulgences to all who would pray the Holy Rosary, which was a great comfort to all the faithful.

But as the devil always places obstacles to everything that renders great service to God, and for this makes use of certain wretched agitators, on this occasion there was no lack of them, because soon murmurers arose against this holy work, saying that this way of praying was not lawful. And among others, two prominent preachers in Cologne were persuaded who, for their eloquence and grace, were very celebrated, but were more vain than spiritual, and because many of the people are fonder of hearing things that entertain them rather than benefit them, (paying more attention to the pleasure of the ears than to the benefit), they listened attentively to these preachers, who in all seriousness persuaded them that the invention of the Rosary was a laughing matter, a business invented by the preaching friars, without the Virgin ever having spoken of it, and that this was so certain, that they thought it convenient for the faithful to abandon this new Confraternity and seek others that would serve God and his Mother better. And besides that, one of them said many things that resulted in serious harm to the Confraternity and devotion to the Rosary, so that a good part of the city stopped praying it (for evil, a misguided preacher achieves a lot). This preacher saw that he had won the favour of the people, and to achieve his purpose, after having given a sermon highly applauded, he offered to demonstrate how little devotion to the Rosary was worth. He went to bed with this determination on Saturday night, and he had such a sudden and severe apoplexy that he soon died without there being any witness to his death, until he was called to preach and the unfortunate man was found dead. And his companion, who was also hindering the fruits of the Rosary, learnt nothing from the other one's punishment, but maintained that his death had been accidental and not miraculous. He wanted to continue the endeavours of the deceased, and invited people to put an end to the Confraternity of the Rosary, which in the thoughts of many was already finished. Climbing into the pulpit in the presence of the whole city, he suddenly fell to the ground from an attack of apoplexy, by which he lost his speech, though he retained his judgment. God, without his deserving it, thus wanted to leave the door for his remedy open to him, and by this to exalt the prayer of the Holy Rosary. The preacher quickly understood the cause of his harm, and how just was the punishment for his misguided boldness. He then asked for help from the Queen of Heaven, begging Her to give him speech and life to become a perpetual herald of devotion to the Holy Rosary, making as many praises of it as he had previously made censures. At the moment he made this promise, he fully regained his speech and health, so that he climbed back into the pulpit at once in the presence of so many, and it would have been impossible

to prevent him in his resolve. He preached that day on the excellences of the Holy Rosary, and continued to do so throughout his life, making the miracle even more public than it already was, as well as the mercies he continually received from the hand of the Virgin Mary. These two miracles were published by Bishop Father John López.

The first Rosary Confraternity was so successful among the faithful and civil and ecclesiastical authorities that Rosary Confraternities quickly began to be founded in other Dominican convents, becoming the responsibility of the General Curia of the Order of Preachers in 1485. Since then, the Dominicans have been the great promoters of the Rosary, though many other Priests, Religious, and laypeople have also so been.

The Holy Rosary eventually spread throughout all places where there is Christianity, and many practised this holy exercise, from the Pope to the sacristan, and from the king to the vassal. From this, it follows that this devotion is of great importance, both for having had much opposition at the beginning, and for having begun with the seal of things of great quality, overcoming all the difficulties that have existed because of this, which have been neither few nor light.

Briefly, that is the history of how Saint Dominic established the devotion of the Holy Rosary and the Confraternities, and how Saint Alan de la Rupe restored both.

Confirmation of this devotion by the Holy See and its spreading throughout the world:

From the 14th century, the Popes began to favour this devotion, and thus we find authentic apostolic letters from the Supreme Pontiffs Saint Urban IV (1261-1264) and Saint John XXII the Great (1314-1334) who granted indulgences for the recitation of the Hail Mary and the Rosary. Then, encouraged by the fervour of Saint Alan, the faithful and devotees of the Mother of God turned to the Supreme Pontiff Saint Sixtus IV (1471-1484), who approved and confirmed this holy exercise, exhorting the faithful to pray it, and granting them new indulgences, as stated in one of his Bulls, and later, at the request of the Dukes of Brittany, he confirmed it again and granted more new indulgences. Since then, practically all subsequent Popes dedicated apostolic letters, bulls, and *motus proprios* to the devotion of the Holy Rosary, approving and confirming it, and granting it graces, privileges, jubilees, and indulgences, with Saint Pius V the Great (1565-1572) and Saint Leo XIII the Great (1878-1903) outstanding among them.

And not only the Popes in Rome, but also their Bishops in various parts of the world, seeing so much devotion, holiness, and miracles which they touched with their hands and saw with their eyes, could not help but use the power they had in favour of this holy devotion; and the praying of the Holy Rosary spread so much that it was a great occasion to praise God; both for seeing the faith in His Holy Gospel so firm in its devotees and also the faith in His Most Blessed Mother, who grants us so much mercy by Her holy intercession and the gift of devotion to the Holy Rosary, which goes together with the Faith wherever it spreads, for it is its proclamation and fruit. It is true that the devil has always waged war against this holy devotion, so favoured by the Holy Pontiffs in many ways, and now he does so aided by the enemies of the Church, who are the heretics of our times. For if heretics go against the Gospel, they will also go against the mysteries of the Rosary and devotion to God's Most Holy Mother, so that when one is defended, the other is defended.

In addition to all that has been said, the Holy Rosary was also widely used in the 16th century as a way for praying the canonical hours by the Camaldolese hermits of Monte Corona (whose praises, holiness, austerity of life, and holy exercises were well known), and it is an inheritance from those First Fathers, with which God perfects His beloved



children in this world, since for them this holy devotion is never lost.

In Mexico, in the same 16th century, Father Thomas of Saint John, a man of many talents, faithful religious, and Spanish preacher, was a distinguished man who led a very singular life in Mexico, accompanied by much preaching and miracles, and special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, with great benefit. So much so that it seemed he was not happy if on any day he did not render a particular service to the Sovereign Virgin. The devil, envious of the great fruits obtained from this practice by this celebrated preacher of the Holy Rosary, by ill-treatment reduced him to a long and painful illness in which he was given up by the doctors. In all his suffering, he found relief in meditating on the Sovereign Virgin, and on the right side of his bed he had an image of the Blessed Mother of God, Our Lady, the sight of which encouraged him in his comforting meditations. This blessed Religious was losing strength, and they were keeping close watch over him so that all the Friars could attend his death. It happened that on the last night of his affliction, while he was awake, the demon appeared to him in a very horrible and frightening figure, approaching his bed. The devout patient raised eyes and heart to an image of the Most Holy Virgin close beside his bed and, grasping the veil that covered her, said: "My Lady, help me now! Be my Succour, Sweetest Mother of mine!" As soon as he had pronounced these words, the image of the Most Holy Virgin stretched out her virginal hands, so generous in granting us favours, and taking her servant's hand, said to him: "Fear not, Friar Thomas, for I am with you to help you; rise up and continue to preach My Rosary in this new region as you began to do. I will defend you against all your enemies!" At these words of the Most Holy Virgin the enemy of the human race fled, and the one given up for dead was miraculously restored to health. He rose up perfectly healed, gave many thanks to his kind Mother with plentiful tears, feeling truly joyful that he had been commanded to do something as important and beneficial as preaching the Holy Rosary, and then set about instituting confraternities and making other saintly and astonishing efforts, with abundant fruit and admiration from the Christian people. It seemed to the saintly Friar a benefit of great worth that the Most Holy Virgin had revealed this mine of treasures for the soul in a new land, where great care is taken to discover mines of earthly and worldly treasures. This saintly man was a venerable Friar, who performed many miracles in the twenty-six years he spent in that province. He did very rigorous penance, was always most devoted to the Holy Rosary, and above all preserved baptismal grace from his birth, as he told his Confessor. And for the greater glory of our Lord God, this devotion to the Holy Rosary was also introduced throughout that province of Santiago in Mexico and the West Indies, and through other miracles it also spread towards the East. We must give thanks to Our Lord, for such miracles are for men to understand the great importance of this heavenly and divine devotion, and to strengthen themselves greatly in it, because it is very powerful for increasing faith and for reforming morals, and leads men to the true knowledge of Will. And so, this Queen of Heaven, very solicitous of our salvation, never ceases to perform extraordinary miracles for Her devotees.

Importance of the Holy Rosary for the Catholic world:

In 1569, the Dominican Pope, Saint Pius V, established for the whole Church the form and structure of the Rosary, with specific meditations to illustrate the whole life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and charged his Congregation to propagate the Holy Rosary. After this definition by the Magisterium, the Rosary began to be recited uniformly and underwent great diffusion among Christian people.

At that time Europe, and with her all Christendom, was in grave danger of extinction, for humanly speaking there was no way out from the threat of islam. The muslims were determined to make Christianity disappear at the point of the sword. They had already taken the Holy Land, Constantinople, Greece, Albania, North Africa and Spain. In these vast regions, Christianity was persecuted, and many martyrs shed their blood, many dioceses disappeared completely. After almost 800 years of Reconquest, Spain and Portugal were

able to free themselves from muslim domination. This struggle began at the feet of the Virgin of Covadonga and was crowned by the conquest of Granada, when the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, were able to expel the moors definitively from the Peninsula in 1492. The importance of this victory is transcendent since in that same year occurred the discovery of America and the Faith began to be propagated in the new continent!



The Battle of Lepanto in 1571: History provides us with abundant examples of Mary's concern in coming to the help of Christians when they are in danger. We relate the victory won by the Christians against the turks thanks to Her protection.

The Pope of the Rosary, Saint Pius V, was the great driving force behind the Battle of Lepanto against the ottoman turks. This glorious Pope, by means of his representative and Generalissimo Saint John of Spain, brother to the Emperor of the Most Christian Spanish Empire Saint Philip II, at the head of the crusading armies, with the assistance of the Virgin Mary, Potent in Arms, overcame the crescent of the turkish or Ottoman empire, in the Battle of Lepanto.

One special concern of Pope Saint Pius V was the defence of Christendom against the turks, who at that time were highly emboldened by their victorious campaigns, led by Suleiman II the Magnificent. His son and successor Selim II made ready to conquer Cypress and to attack the Italian Peninsula, with the intention of reaching Rome. With Cypress taken, turkish progress on the Mediterranean coasts alarmed Christendom. Everything trembled at the din of their arms, everything breathed blood and butchery; blasphemies and imprecations against Jesus Christ were heard everywhere, and all Christendom considered itself prey to its enemies.

To be free of this danger, the saintly Pontiff Pius V made known his lively desire of carrying out a Holy Crusade against the muslims. He laboured to unite Christian Princes in a Holy League. He exhorted them to arm against the common enemy; but only the King of Spain and some Italian Princes listened to the voice of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Saint Pius V then, seeing the forces of the Christians so inferior to those of the infidels, so that the victory, humanly speaking, would have been impossible, placed all his confidence in Mary Most Holy: he turned to Her and implored Her not to allow the Spouse of Her Most Holy Son to fall into the hands of the infidels. He ordered public prayers throughout Christendom and, full of faith, awaited the succour of our Heavenly Mother. In May 1571, under the powerful impulse of glorious Pope Saint Pius V, the Holy League was formed with the Pontifical States, Spain and Venice, and succeeded in gathering a powerful fleet, placed under the command of Generalissimo Saint John of Spain (known as Don John of Austria), twenty-six years of age.

To impetrate Christian victory against islam, Pope Saint Pius V ordered processions to be held with the recital of the Holy Rosary on the first Sunday of each month, throughout the Catholic world. In order that men might recognize the great mercy shown to the devotees of the Holy Rosary in a battle so closely fought, and attribute it to the Princess of Heaven, God wished the battle to be fought in Lepanto and that victory be won at the precise hour when these processions were being held on the first Sunday of October 1571. By some battling with their arms and others with Rosaries in their hands and reciting, God willed that victory be concluded, and that Pope Saint Pius V might rejoice for the great faith he had placed in the Queen of Heaven, in Her who always performs the role of Mother towards those who are true faithful and devotees of Hers.

From the beginning of the expedition the Pope prescribed fasts and public rogations to placate divine justice. On the 17th of September 1569, placing all his confidence in the Holy



Mother of God, he asked for the Holy Rosary to be prayed, and fifteen times fifty (750) days later came the prodigious victory of Lepanto, in this way indicating as well with these numbers, proper to the Rosary, that success was owed to the recital of the Holy Rosary. All Europe was at prayer, and the faithful ran in throngs to Our Lady of Loreto to implore heavenly aid through the intercession of the Mother of God. The Holy Pontiff sent his blessing to General Don John, assuring him of victory in a positive way, and told him at the same time to dismiss all those soldiers who seemed moved solely by the prospect of spoils, as likewise all those persons whose morals were lax, fearing that their sins might draw down divine wrath upon the army. He recommended to all the generals of the Christian fleet to demand irreproachable conduct and a perfect devotion to Mary of all those who remained under their orders. The order of the Pontiff was religiously carried out. Without excepting a single man, they confessed and communed with lively faith; card games were forbidden and the pain of death against blasphemers was imposed. The Holy Father's Nuncio solemnly blessed the fleet, and those thousands of heroes, sure of Heaven's protection, set sail for Orient. Meanwhile the Sovereign Pontiff, like another Moses, did not cease to raise his hands Heavenwards and address fervent prayers to God to send down blessings upon the Christians' arms. Finally the two armies clashed, on the 7th of October 1571.

The destiny of Christian Europe was at stake. The Christian ships met up with the Turkish fleet in the Gulf of Corinth, close to the Greek city of Lepanto (today Nafaktos). At 7 in the morning, the lookout of the Christian fleet, formed by 200 ships and 75,000 men, perceived that the Turkish fleet was far larger than they supposed. It was formed by 260 ships and 85,000 men. At the sight of the enemy, with more galleys, some of those who captained the ships of the Holy League, felt great alarm. But Generalissimo Saint John, as commander-in-chief, harangued them all with martial ardour, telling them to fight with faith in the Holy Name of God, that they had come to conquer or to die, and that dead or victorious they would enjoy immortality: "We have come to die, and to overcome, if Heaven so disposes. Give no occasion for the enemy to ask you with impious arrogance: 'where is your God?' Fight in His Holy Name, that dead or victorious you will enjoy immortality!" Passing review of his troops, the Saintly Generalissimo returned to his galley, raised up the Holy Crucifix together with the League Standard and fell to his knees, as did all his soldiers, to receive the absolution and plenary indulgence which, in the name of Saint Pius V, the Jesuits and Franciscans were to give, to whom the Pope had commended this mission. Before the attack, the Christian troops prayed the Holy Rosary with great devotion. As the forces advanced, they were met by a change of winds which began to come from the west, which benefited the Catholic fleet. The Priests on the Christian galleys believed that this was due to divine intervention. With resolute boldness the Christian fleet faced the Turkish, and to the cry of "Viva María", they launched themselves against the infidels. The Turks attacked the Christian army with fury, and seemingly gained some advantage at the beginning. However, He who holds victory in His hands did not delay in declaring Himself in favour of the Christians. The infidels were completely routed, lost more than thirty thousand men and almost all their munitions, and the Christians gathered up an immense booty and placed at liberty fifteen thousand captives they found on the Muslim ships. After some five hours of fierce fighting, on the 7th of October 1571, the Turkish armada was completely vanquished. There were other signs and demonstrations that God Our Lord gave in this battle of Lepanto, so that we might understand that victory came from His divine hand, and that the Christian might know that whenever he acts in

defence of his Holy Faith, God will not fail him; and that He has the power to turn night into day and day into night, and to make the contrary wind favourable, as he did on that day; for at the time the fleets each came into sight, and long after, until the signal for battle was given, the Christian fleet had the wind against, and even with no little swell. But when they went into attack, the wind changed, and from being to bow it turned to stern, in such a way that the smoke from the artillery of both fleets all blew on them, blinding them in combat, which was of great help for victory, and the sea became as calm as milk.

There was another sign, in that the blest standard of the League, where the Crucifix was painted: no harquebus shot, arrow, or any other weapon ever reached Christ's figure, when the arrows were so many that the masts, poles, ropes and bows were full of them, so much so that they brushed up against each other, and all the other standards and flags were so shot through by arrows and gunfire that none remained intact, and when two arrows reached the royal standard, one on either side of the Crucifix, then a lad on his highness's royal galley ran and pulled them out and, biting on to them, threw them towards the stern and into the sea.

Similarly, it is believed that the turks must have fired some arquebuses and arrows at the Capuchin friars of Saint Francis, whom His Holiness ordered to go with the fleet, and though they stood and moved about in exposed places encouraging the soldiers, each holding a Crucifix in his hand, the turks could never hit them; and when any bullet reached their habits it stopped there, without spilling a drop of blood, and many experiences of this kind were seen, and a bullet that had been fired at one was pulled out of the cowl.

Muslim power had been definitively broken. All recognized that this prodigious victory was owing to the protection of Mary Most Holy. It was the vehement desire of Saint John of Spain to continue hostilities on to the conquest of Constantinople, Cypress, Rhodes and including the Holy Land, but could not count on the support of the Pontiff's general or on that of the Venetian general.

The Pope had a revelation of the victory at the very moment it was won. He was busy working with some secretaries when suddenly he left them, opened a window facing towards Orient, and after gazing heavenwards for some moments, told them: "Let us speak no more of business, for we should now only think of giving thanks to God for the victory He has just granted to the Christian army against the turks." And then went and knelt for some hours before the Most Blessed Sacrament. His words were written down at once, and communicated to Cardinals, but not published; and were confirmed two weeks later when a messenger arrived from Venice with the glorious news. This event, however extraordinary it may appear, was witnessed in the most authentic way, and is cited as indisputable in the canonization process of the Pope Saint. When Don John, on the way back to Spain, later went to kneel before the Pope, he was received with great honours in Rome. The Pope greeted him with the words he had pronounced on appointing him: 'There was a man sent by God whose name was John,' and conferred upon him a beautiful shield with a crucifix and the glorious adage: 'Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.' On the feast of All Saints, 1st of November, the news reached Madrid, where King Saint Philip II, who from his Chapel in the Citadel had prayed without cease for the campaign's success, received the triumph over the turks with immense joy, and gave thanks to God for his brother's heroic accomplishment. Saint John of Spain, from the start, had attributed it to the powerful intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, and in this fashion showed that the faithful do not turn to Mary in vain.

In 1572, Pope Saint Pius V, grateful to Our Mother, and to perpetuate the memory of an event so glorious for Mary and so advantageous for the Church of Jesus Christ, namely the victory of the Christians in the battle of Lepanto on Sunday the 7th of October 1571, obtained by the recital of the Rosary, established the Feast of 'Our Lady of the Victories', on the first Sunday of October.

The following year, Pope Saint Pius V's successor, Pope Saint Gregory XIII, seeing the measures taken by Saint Pius V in favour of devotion to the Holy Rosary and the great



confidence he had placed in this Queen of Heaven, and how favourable She is for the success of any good event, and that the battle was fought on the day and hour we have said, when the Confraternity members of the Holy Rosary all over the world were holding processions and prayers with Rosaries in their hands: it seemed to the Pope that all this was miraculous, and that it was evident that the prayers made to such a Lady were those that availed, and that it was very convenient to keep the Queen of Heaven, Mother of God and of the Rosary in perpetual remembrance, for which he instituted the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on the first Sunday of October each year.

Later the whole month was to be called 'of the Rosary'. From then on, the Popes, especially the most recent, have been great devotees of the Holy Rosary and of its propagation, and have placed great emphasis on the importance of the family Rosary. Pope Saint Pius V also inserted the title '*Auxilium Christianorum*' in the Litany

of Loreto. Pope Saint Leo XIII wrote twelve encyclicals with reference to the Rosary. He insisted on the family Rosary, consecrated the month of October to the Rosary and inserted the title '*Regina Sacratissimi Rosarii*' in the Litany of Loreto, today called 'Litany of the Most Holy Virgin Mary'. For all this he merits the title of "the Pope of the Rosary". All the Popes of the XX century have been most devout sons of the Holy Rosary. Here is how the different Popes have spoken: "The Rosary is a wonderful means to destroy sin and recover Grace." "The Rosary is the scourge of the Devil." "The Rosary was instituted by Saint Dominic to appease the wrath of God and implore the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary." "The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer. It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all blessings. There is no more excellent way to pray." "A powerful arm to send the devils flying... Give me an army that prays the Rosary and I will conquer the world."

The siege of Vienna. The turks continued to be powerful on earth, and in the following century invaded Europe from the East. After conquering vast territories, in July 1683 they laid siege to Vienna, capital of Austria. Once again, the enemy troops were far superior. If they conquered the city, the rest of Europe would fall abjectly. The Pope, Saint Innocent XI, placed his confidence in and implored protection from Our Lady of the Rosary, made a calling to all Christian Princes and placed the Polish King Saint John III Sobieski in command of the Christian forces. The Viennese population put up great resistance with the shedding of much blood; and then, when all seemed lost, on the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, 12th of September 1683, the King of Poland, Saint John III, a brilliant military Caudillo, with the help of the Virgin Mary, came to the rescue at the head of the Christian army, finally routing the turks.

Battle of Petrovaradin in Yugoslavia. The turks suffered another great defeat at the hands of Prince Eugene of Savoy, commander of the Christian forces, on the 5th of August 1716, feast of Our Lady of the Snows, and then another victory in Temesvar, in the Czech republic. Pope Clement XI attributed these victories to the devotion shown to Our Lady of the Rosary. In thanksgiving, he ordered that the feast of the Holy Rosary be celebrated in the Universal Church.

Pope Saint Leo XIII remarks on the dread caused to God's Holy Church towards the end of the XII century by the albigensians who, bearing everywhere their pernicious errors and the terror of their arms, spread their tyranny by extermination and death. "Against such terrible enemies, God in His mercy raised up the eminent Father and Founder of the Dominican Order. This hero, great for the integrity of his doctrine, the example of his virtues and his apostolic labours, fought with vigour against the enemies of the Catholic Church, not by force or the use of arms, but with the most unblemished faith in devotion

to the Holy Rosary, which he was the first to propagate, and which his sons have borne to the four corners of the earth. In effect, by divine inspiration, he foresaw that this devotion would put the enemies to flight, like a powerful war machine, and confound their boldness and insane impiety. This was justified by events. Thanks to this form of prayer, accepted, regulated and put into practice by the Order of Saint Dominic, piety, faith and harmony began to take root, and the projects and ruses of the heretics were destroyed; many of the wayward returned to the way of righteousness and the fury of the impious was curbed by Catholic arms taken up to resist it... In our times we have as much need of divine assistance as in the age in which the great Saint Dominic raised the standard of Mary's Rosary to heal the evils of his time. This great Saint, illuminated by heavenly light, clearly perceived that, to remedy his times, no means would be so efficacious in drawing men to Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, as moving them to turn to the Virgin, to whom the power of destroying all heresies is granted. Saint Dominic composed the formula of the Holy Rosary in such a way that, in their successive order, the mysteries of our salvation are recalled, and in this exercise of meditation is incorporated the mystical crown, woven from the angelic salutation, inserting the Dominical Prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. We, who seek a remedy for like evils, have the right to believe that, availing Ourselves of the same prayer which Saint Dominic employed to do so much good, we may likewise be able to see the calamities which afflict our era disappear. However much you procure to honour Mary and save the society of mankind, more still should you dedicate yourselves to directing the piety of the faithful towards the Most Holy Virgin, increasing their confidence in Her. We consider more than ever that the flourishing of worship given to the Most Holy Virgin in the immense majority of the Christian people is among the designs of providence for these times of trial for the Church."

Maria del Vallées always had an extraordinary devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, from whom she received the most ineffable favours. She honoured Her particularly with the Holy Rosary, for which she felt an irresistible attraction: "It is the prayer for all, the prayer for the poor and for the ignorant, but contains all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God, all that is holiest and most pleasing to God in Heaven and on earth. So then, if only half-an-hour of life was left to me and I could choose how best to use it, I would recite my Rosary again."

Though devotion to the Holy Rosary has been taught by Heaven, recommended by many miracles and has received the approval of the Church by way of Papal Bulls, today there is no lack of libertines, impious and arrogant people who dare to defame those who pray the Holy Rosary and seek to keep the faithful away from it. No one, in effect, can disapprove of devotion to the Holy Rosary without condemning at the same time all that is most pious in the Christian religion, namely: the Lord's prayer, the angelic salutation, the mysteries of the Life, Passion, Death and Glory of Jesus Christ and of His Most Holy Mother, and the Holy Eucharist.

What have the heretics Calvin, Bucerus and others, omitted in order to discredit the devotion of the Rosary! But the great fruit this most noble devotion has given on earth is notorious. How many by its means have been freed from sin! How many have gone on to lead holy lives! How many have obtained a good death and been saved! There are many books which speak of this. In the apparitions of Lourdes (1858) and Fátima (1917), the Virgin recommended the Rosary and recited it with the seers, and thereby this devotion acquired a great impulse in its diffusion.

Nevertheless, those who had received the mission of preaching the Rosary to overcome all heresy forgot the importance of the Holy Rosary; they limited themselves to praying only one part every day, and thus were caught up in modernism. On the 24th of November 1972, Clemente Domínguez received this Message from Saint Dominic de Guzmán: "You have the powerful arm against the reigning heresies and turmoil, namely the recital of the



Holy Rosary, ... Oh, oh, what has become of the Order I founded! What grief, those sons of mine called Dominicans! Where will they end up! They, who are called to defend the Faith by way of preaching; lamentably, many of them are preaching against the Faith! Do you know the reason? The little devotion they have to Her who is Mother of Dominicans, and the little love they have for praying the Holy Rosary.”

Already in the year 1688, Venerable Father Friar Peter de Santa María y Ulloa warned the Dominican Friars of this danger, recalling that Saint Alan de la Rupe (1428-1475) had received this warning from the Most Holy Virgin Mary: “The Order of Saint Dominic began to exist and make progress from its beginnings: since by the example and urging of Saint Dominic, all the Friars and Nuns of his Order infallibly, incessantly, with the greatest devotion, served Me and My Son in this Rosary of

the Most Blessed Trinity. And each of the least of the Friars, as if it were a daily duty, offered Me the complete Rosary of fifteen mysteries every day. In effect, in those first days of fervour in the Order, that was the common conviction of all: if anyone omitted the Rosary, he considered the day lost; and if anyone was seen at all negligent in anything, he heard: ‘Brother, either you do not pray the Psalter, or you are praying without devotion.’ ... And so, the longer My Psalter has lasted in this Holy Order, the more wisdom, observance, miracles, fame and glory before God and men; but, the more this Psalter has been neglected, the greater has been the failure of the Order of Preachers.” These words, as we piously believed, were revealed by the Most Holy Mother of God to Her spouse Saint Alan, and hence should be heard with the greatest piety and consideration. You will have heard how the Most Merciful Mother complains of the failure of this Order and how She laments its ruin. And how the Order flourished with the increase of the Holy Rosary and declined with its decrease. In later ages, the Dominicans, then lax, have said that the Holy Rosary prospered in their Order, because one part was recited daily in common and hence they did not lack the Rosary of the Glorious Virgin. But they speak thus against themselves, if as the Queen of the world says, when the Rosary is firm, the Order is firm; and when the Rosary fails, the Order fails: Look at their state, and you will know. Is perhaps a single part the complete Rosary? Do you not pay attention to the words of the Virgin? That when the Rosary flourished in the Order, each of the least brethren daily offered it up entire, as if it were his daily duty? Who in the present century has paid this amount every day? Oh that no one were to say not I! By having prayed it entire, the Order would have flourished as in the beginning. And if you say that the Most Holy Virgin Mary lamented because, at the moment She spoke with Saint Alan the Rosary had been completely forgotten, so that no part at all of the Rosary was prayed, let us hear Saint Alan himself narrate in his Apologia: “In truth, in truth, alas! Seventy years ago, by a very well-known man, this Divine Rosary was cut short and reduced to just fifty.” At that time, then, they prayed just one of the three parts, as now in these times of decadence. Our Queen lamented then of Her truncated Rosary. Why then did She not lament of its omission? And if you insist, finally, in that, while it is good and useful to recite the whole Rosary daily, above all when speaking of particular Friars, yet it would be an impediment to a greater good, that is, study, which is the principal ministry of Dominicans; hence, content with just one part, it seemed that they should do without the debt of the three parts daily. Oh! Please reply with sincerity: Does the Most Holy Virgin hinder study or does She help? Does She dull the mind or enlighten it? Do you seek the vain wisdom of the world or the knowledge of the Saints? Who enlightened Saint Albert the Great, Saint Thomas the Angelical, Saint Vincent Ferrer and the other almost countless Doctors of that Order, who filled the Church with their wisdom? Is it not the same Most Holy Virgin, of whose Rosary they were the most

devoted, as She Herself relates? Did you not hear Her say that in ancient times it was a common belief among the Dominicans that if anyone failed to pray the Rosary on any day, he thought the day misspent? Were there sages in the Order in those times? Did religion then flourish, with knowledge, wisdom, observance, fame and glory for miracles? You have heard well. Has it flourished in this century the same as then? Listen to the Most Holy Queen continue Her Message: "Let them now see," says Our Lady, "how the Order has become distanced from true Piety. Where is that previous frequency of miracles in her? Where the abundance of saintly men? Where the discipline, the vigour and the rigour in their lives? Where is the zeal for the salvation of souls? The Rosary has become half-hearted and tiresome for you; hence you are failing and fall further from perfection day by day. But beware, those who thus deprive Me and My Son of the honour of the Rosary. Procure, then, through Me, the Queen of Piety, of Mercy and of Preachers, to rise up, and go back all the sooner and with greater devotion to the previous Rosaries of the ancient Fathers and Sisters." So then, have a care, lest on trying to preach to others and serve them, you yourselves become reprobates; since of what use is it to gain all souls in the world if you reap eternal perdition for yourselves? Let us then return to prayer and penance. The Queen of the world does not want you to be limited to reciting only five mysteries of the old Rosary, which should be recited vocally, as is the custom, rather pay the whole debt by reciting the entire Rosary devoutly, vocally and mentally to Our Lady every day. They have gone far from this; therefore they fell, according to Sophonias: "All those who also ceased to serve Me, the Lord God, shall perish then." The children of the Church today should tell the Virgin with Saint Albert the Great: "Place me, Lady, at Your side and let every hand be against me." If we do so, the very Mother of Mercy will free the Shepherd and the sheep, me and you, and the whole Church, from the attacks of the wolves and the birds of prey, and will restore the Church to her ancient glory, splendour and grandeur, and us too, by serving Her in Her Rosary. Let us return to Mary with our lips, with our hearts and in our deeds: with our lips, praising Her in the Rosary; from the heart, contemplating Her most sacred mysteries; and in deed, devoutly and fervently preaching the Rosary, thus we shall enter into the lush meadows of the virtues where Christ shepherds His sheep; and when our spirits all athirst have been satisfied and our souls been strengthened, we shall set out on the road, as robust apostles capable of bearing the cross He sends us, and we shall thus in exchange obtain the salvation of souls. What does Christ command us and what does the Most Holy Virgin command us? Let us examine the Most Holy Rosary; let us ponder it, embrace it, spread it and preach it with all our might, let us pray the Rosary with the mind alert, and let us teach others to pray it, as that is the Will of Christ, and that is the Will of His Most Holy Mother. Listen, I pray you, for She is our Mother; listen to Her instructions, and be wise and do not reject Her. For She addressed Saint Dominic, says Blessed Alan, in these words: "The Most Holy Trinity, to overcome the evils of the world, has chosen as chief arm the Angelic Greeting, of which our Psalter is composed; foundation of the whole New Testament. For as much, if you want to obtain the fruit you desire from your preaching, preach My Psalter, and you will soon feel the help of the Trinity in a special way. Come now with Me, take this Psalter and preach it constantly, and wherever there be more people, praise, recommend and persuade them to My Psalter." Have you now heard the Most Holy Queen of Heaven, and how She commands that Her Most Holy Rosary be preached, and how She orders that the Rosary be preached everywhere, be praised and be commended? Listen then to Christ our Saviour, who not only commands, but also threatens terribly those who fail to preach it. When Blessed Alan, as he himself affirms, was celebrating the Sacrifice of Mass (for at that moment he was troubled by fear and the weariness of preaching), he heard Jesus Christ from the Sacred Host telling him: "Now you too crucify Me by omission. You have the knowledge, the licence and the duty to preach. You are to blame for the evils you could have avoided if you had preached Mine and My Mother's Psalter. You have become a dumb dog, incapable of barking when



the world is full of wolves. I swear by the Almighty Father that, if you do not amend, you will eat of the world's false fare." This said, He showed him an abyss of apparently immense depths with the different kinds of tremendous tortures and chastisements by which the damned are tormented in Hell; and concluded saying: "Behold your repose, if you cease to preach My Mother's Psalter." See how Christ and how Mary command the Holy Rosary to be preached. Because by preaching the Holy Rosary, the Gospel is preached, since the Rosary embraces everything contained in the Gospel. If, according to the Lord's mandate, the Gospel should be preached to every creature, then the Most Holy Rosary should also be preached to every creature, and especially by those who are obliged to preach, following the example of Saint Dominic, who spent the greater part of his

holiest life in that glorious preaching. Besides, considering the purpose of preaching, for the duty of preaching is the edification and salvation of the faithful, what can ever be proposed for this purpose better than the Holy Rosary? If by preaching is sought the enlightenment of souls, two great lights, Christ and Mary, are contained in the Holy Rosary. If by preaching you seek to move souls to virtue, in the Holy Rosary the most perfect examples are contained, namely the lives of Christ and Mary. If you seek to fortify souls in the Faith, all the Mysteries of Faith are contained in the Holy Rosary. If you seek to eradicate vices, to inflame minds against the devil, the world and the flesh, all the arms with which Christ and Mary armed themselves against them are contained in the Holy Rosary. If you seek to inflame the hearts of men and lead them up to God, then the fire of divine love to inflame hearts, to fly with two wings of great eagles, namely Christ and Mary, are all contained in the Most Holy Rosary. To keep sinners from evil, the most powerful succour, that is, the Virgin Mary, who protects and defends us, is found in the Most Holy Rosary. To honour Christ Our Lord and His Most Holy Mother, to laud, proclaim and preach Their great works, who doubts that all is contained in the Most Holy Rosary? If we seek the heights, grandeur, holiness, then what is there deeper, greater and holier than the Lives of Christ and Mary, contained in the Most Holy Rosary? If you seek to be novel, if to be learned, if to be prolific, then the New Testament, the Doctrine of Christ, His signs, virtues and miracles are all contained in the Most Holy Rosary. What more can be desired? Nothing more can be hoped for, but to get down to work. Preach, preach. The Most Holy Rosary must be preached, not by learned words of human wisdom, but with words of the Holy Ghost which move hearts, and with simple examples. They must enter into the luxuriant mysteries of the Holy Rosary, praising with the lips, contemplating from the heart and practising virtue with the deeds of a fruitful sermon. Consider more attentively and with constant meditation: to what place and to what purpose have you been called? Is it not to the family of the Most Holy Virgin? Honour Her. Is this not the task and office of true Christians and Apostles? Comply with this, and so comply with the Will of Him who called us to form part with the Saints.

Sadly these callings resulted fruitless in the XX century, since no one was then disposed to recite fifteen mysteries of the Holy Rosary daily, but only five. Later, the Most Holy Mother of God Herself established the Holy Penitential Rosary in El Palmar de Troya, as a new Holy Rosary was necessary in which one Mystery would be worth as much as three of the previous ones.

The Holy Penitential Rosary:

Pope Saint Peter II the Great in his Brief Report on the Holy Penitential Rosary, states that the recital of the Holy Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers was requested in El Palmar de Troya through all the seers, and accordingly is no human invention, but a petition from Heaven in the Sacred Place of Palmar. Given the penitential, reparatory and expiatory

character of this Rosary, Satan has tried by every ruse within his grasp to do away with it; though, thanks be to God, his intents have up till now been fruitless, since this Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers has from then on been prayed daily in El Palmar de Troya. Let us see the origins of this Holy Rosary, also called that of Padre Pio, as he prayed it in life and taught it thus in Palmar.

Heaven's Voice. In April 1968, a few weeks after the first apparition, Rosario Arenillas, one of the seers, at the start of her visions, received a notice from the Most Holy Virgin telling her that one day in Palmar, the Rosary of the Our Fathers would be prayed, without Rosario then understanding the meaning of those words; and in October 1968, the Most Holy Virgin Mary said to María Marín, another of the seers of Palmar: "Pray many Our Fathers, because I need them." But it was on the 1st of March 1969, when this seeress received the first instructions on the Rosary of the Our Fathers. The seeress accompanied a group of people chiefly from Seville, Utrera and Palmar, praying just outside the Apparitions property in El Palmar de Troya. The Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to her and requested through the seeress: "Pray many Rosaries of Our Fathers, so that those who do not believe in Me and in My Apparitions, may believe..." The vision over, those present began to deliberate on how the Rosary requested by the Most Holy Virgin should be prayed. Then Padre Pio of Pietrelcina appeared to the seeress fingering his Rosary and he led it. The seeress replied, and the faithful joined her. On each bead he recited: "Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be... Hail Mary Most Pure..."

However, the seer Clemente Domínguez y Gómez is the great Apostle of the Holy Penitential Rosary or that of the Our Fathers. Many are the Messages which this seer received on the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers.

When Clemente arrived at El Palmar de Troya, this Rosary of the Our Fathers had already been asked for by Heaven, as we mentioned; but it was not recited in Palmar, with very few exceptions. In December 1969, Saint Dominic de Guzmán appeared to Clemente and told him: "Pray always, pray always, pray always, for it is your salvation. You have to pray the Holy Rosary just as the Virgin Herself dictated in this Sacred Place. I know that it will cost you many sacrifices, but in this way the Holy Wrath of the Most High will be appeased. Pray it whenever you come... Let the recital of the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers be spread and made known as the Virgin has dictated in this Sacred Place..." Saint Dominic announced to the seer that he would see the Holy Face, and the Holy Face said to Clemente: "In your hands you have messages of salvation. Insist that these commands be fulfilled."

Clemente Domínguez began the hard task of putting the Message of the Most Holy Virgin on the Rosary of the Our Fathers into practice in El Palmar. Moments of utter anguish, suffering and incomprehension assailed Clemente and a small group of people helping him. Satan made use of calumnies, envy, disparagement. Clemente Domínguez was practically alone at this hard task, unable to count on the help of other seers, who had even received Messages on this Rosary of the Our Fathers as well, but who lacked steadfastness in imposing and defending the truth. But the efficacy of this Penitential Rosary gradually became evident. The group of faithful reciting it grew larger, and against wind and great storms the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers was at last recited daily in the Sacred Place of El Palmar de Troya. The heavenly messages explained the importance of the Rosary and encouraged the young seer to carry on the struggle.

On the 4th of January 1970, Saint Dominic de Guzmán said: "I love you all, my children, because you pray the Holy Rosary by which the world will be saved: the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers. This is the will of the Ever-Virgin Mary. My children, you have little to suffer. The Great Miracle is close, but you must pray. I bless you."

On the 3rd of February 1970, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Clemente Domínguez the following Message: "My children: why so many enemies of reciting the Rosary of the Our Fathers when it is My Will that it be recited! Many argue that the other is traditional. They



should bear in mind that the Traditional Rosary was perfect for past times; but now, in these difficult times, full of obscurity and darkness and confusion, together with man's villainy today, and taking into account that the Heavenly Father is greatly angered at mankind, atonement must be made to Him: What better way than by begging His forgiveness fifty times a day using the prayer which I recited for you! Consider the following parable: the Father of a household had eight children. He was conscious of his wife's uprightness; so that he entrusted the care of his children to her. With the passing of time, the father, seeing that his children abused their mother's great love, rose up in anger against his children. The mother then counselled the children to ask forgiveness of their father, as he was angered and ready to send them to a reformatory. That is the comparison, my children: There was a

time when by merely invoking Mary, My Mother, the world amended. But at these moments they pay no attention to their Mother's counsels, so that the Eternal Father is angered. Mary, then, resolves to counsel Her children to ask forgiveness of the Heavenly Father, since He is ready to do justice. My children, I do not want you to argue about the efficacy of the holy traditional Rosary, raised up now to heavenly perfection (as the Holy Penitential Rosary), since the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate are all invoked. I want this Message to be diffused integrally to everyone."

On the 11th of February 1970, the Most Holy Virgin Mary told Clemente: "My children: I am very pleased with you all, and more so at these moments when you are praying the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers, which is the one which pleases Me most and fills Me with joy and saves many souls. Each time you pray this Rosary the sufferings of your Vicar, the Holy Father, are allayed. He, who is made to suffer so much, since his children do not obey him, every time you pray this Rosary, the Holy Father accepts all his sufferings with resignation, united to My Divine Son, to save souls and convert so many sinners who offend the Heavenly Father." On the 4th of March 1970, people who were enemies of the Penitential Rosary were there and refused to pray it, and the Eternal Father said: "Why do you deny Me the prayer which My Divine Son taught you, which is addressed to Me, and as often as you pray it I lavish further graces upon you? My children: by this Rosary (of the Our Fathers) My Daughter Mary's mediation is not eliminated, rather the world has become worse, and it is necessary that you invoke Me constantly, as I am very angry with you. O ungrateful children, denying a prayer to your Father when I have created you and you owe everything to Me! How different the world would be if you prayed the Rosary of the Our Fathers! The world would be converted, because I, who am your Father, cannot turn a deaf ear to your petitions. In these times in which I am ready to send My Divine Son to purify the world, it is necessary that you always invoke Me. I bless you." The Most Holy Virgin Mary added: "That is what I like, children, that you pray the Rosary of the Our Fathers, which is the one that most pleases My Immaculate Heart." On the 16th of March 1970, Clemente had the following vision: the Eternal Father appeared in Heaven and began to descend to earth. The seer said to Him: "Father, why do you come down here?" The Eternal Father replied: "Because you are calling Me". And truly we were praying the Rosary of the Our Fathers.

Despite the furious attacks of Satan continuing against the Penitential Rosary, this Rosary began to impose itself day by day, and the group praying it in the Lentisco continually increased, with great fervour, in spite of lasting so long. By no means did Clemente permit any attempt whatsoever to prevent the recital of the Rosary of the Our Fathers, though his enemies frequently tried to do so, including seers who had also received confirmation of this Rosary but, induced by others, created confusion and misgivings. And the Penitential Rosary began to spread in Palmar and over Spain, since the pilgrims who visited the

Sacred Place prayed it at home and in their Prayer Groups.

On the 19th of April 1970, Clemente Domínguez received the following Message from the Most Holy Virgin Mary: “My son: I come as Jesus’ Mother and yours. Listen to the promises of the graces I will grant to all those who, with true devotion, pray the Holy Rosary of the 50 Our Fathers, 50 Hail Marys, 50 Glory bes and 50 Hail Mary Most Pure: 1) I will give them perfect knowledge of My great love and help for My children. 2) I will bring them to the Eucharist, where My Divine Son is found. 3) I will give them profound repentance for their sins. 4) I will give them the grace that all the sins of their past life be blotted out. 5) They will be able to obtain the conversion of their relatives in a rapid manner. 6) I will give them discernment to practise charity towards all their brethren. 7) Those who recite this Rosary daily will have, moreover, a good death; they will be saved from damnation, and on leaving this world, will pass on to the Life of Heaven. 8) I will grant superabundant graces to them and to all their relatives. 9) Those who die and go to Purgatory, I promise to release on the following day. 10) To all those who recite this Rosary, I promise to hasten the departure of their close relatives from Purgatory. 11) They will receive notice in sufficient time before death in order to be comforted by the Holy Sacraments. 12) Shortly before dying they will have a vision of My Divine Son and of Me, your Mother. 13) I will grant peace in the homes, in the nations, where this Rosary is recited daily, directed to the August Trinity and to Me, your dear Mother. 14) All those who recite this Rosary, I will cover all their lives with My Mantle, in which they will be secure. 15) To all those who recite and meditate on it with their hearts placed under My protection, I will give the grace to be preserved from the punishment. 16) If anyone who recites this Rosary receives the grace of dying on a Saturday, the salvation of one of his relatives is assured. I bless you all.” Years later, Saint Gregory XVII granted besides a plenary indulgence for each bead of the Penitential Rosary, whenever the fifty beads are recited on the same day and the Pope’s intentions are prayed for.

That same month, Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “My children: you cannot imagine the great joy I feel in My Heart when you pray this Rosary of Padre Pio, as it is very penitential. When you pray it, you are praying for those who do not pray, for those who blaspheme and offend My Sacred Heart, which imparts only mercy to you all. The more you pray, the more sinners will you convert and the more reparation will you make to My Divine Countenance and the more souls will come to Me in the Eucharist, where I give Myself to you for your salvation. My children: this Rosary is a sure sign of being always united to the August Trinity and to My Most Holy Mother, your Mother. The words of some of My children who say: ‘I am going to pray the Rosary of the Virgin’, meaning the traditional, do not please Me; they do not realize that the Virgin’s Rosary is in Padre Pio’s. So it is perfect. Whoever prays it should know that he invokes the Most Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary, your Mother, surrounded by the Angelic Choirs, which means that you invoke the whole Heavenly Court; therefore, the graces you receive are greater.” And Saint Pio of Pietrelcina himself, in July 1970, told him: “My son: the Rosary of the Our Fathers is not a caprice of mine. It is a necessity, to change the perversity of mankind.”

In the year 1971, the Eternal Father: “The day will soon come on which I will tell My Son to use justice on the world, and I will place His enemies as a footstool at His feet, and He will be proclaimed King. I want you to be crowning Him; not with thorns, however, but with glory. Accordingly, it is the hour of the Penitential Rosary, of calling for My clemency, of calling for My mercy; and whoever calls upon Me fifty times a day will not go unattended. Fifty times calling out to their Father! If you knew My joy when you say to Me: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name... Imagine what it is to say that fifty times, but from the heart. O My children! And when you offer Me those Ways of the Cross, I have the Blood of My Divine Son poured out upon you to purify you, so that one day you may rejoice in My presence. O My children, you are not too late! By your penance, your prayers, My arm will be held back.”



The Most Holy Virgin Mary, in May 1971, told Clemente: “My children: you are in difficult times. Only prayer and penance will free you from the enemy. Once again in this Sacred Place I tell you: that the Rosary which pleases Me most is the Penitential, because you are calling out to the Father, who is the One most angered; and because you are glorifying the Most Holy Trinity, and because fifty greetings to your Mother follow; and yet further: fifty times you hail My Purest Conception.” And She adds: “I want you to consider in your hearts, before the Tabernacle, that within the Penitential Rosary is the Rosary you call the Virgin’s. It is the same Rosary, adding the Our Fathers, the Glory bes and the greeting to your Mother.”

Clearly, the Penitential Rosary, as its name indicates, is a great penance. But we should not forget that the principal and universal Message in all the Apparitions of these times is a call to prayer and penance; and that in these times the penance has to be greater, for you have to be very blind or very easy-going not to be aware of that. Consequently, in El Palmar de Troya, much prayer and penance is done every day.

Among the many Messages addressed to the Cenacles, we can recall that of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Clemente on the 19th of October 1973: “Again I ask you to pray the Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers in the Cenacles.”

Saint Peter II wrote: “Satan has undertaken an intense struggle to prevent the Penitential Rosary from being recited in the Prayer Groups. How much self-love in some persons, and how human respect fills them with confusion! How much it costs some people to submit their will to God’s after having received so many proofs of God’s Will, together with many graces and blessings! But the seal of God’s Work is in obstacles and sufferings; and when Satan is so persistent in trying to prevent or destroy a Work, it is because that Work hurts the devil, makes him furious. The Rosary of the Our Fathers is a most powerful arm against Satan, therefore he attacks it. Pray the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers and you will experience its efficacy. Despite the attacks, it has spread to the Five Continents, where all the faithful daily finger the beads of this Rosary, also called that of Padre Pio. And this is an evident sign that it is the Work of Heaven, since despite the infernal attacks, this Rosary, like the keenest sword, goes on ahead through storms and setbacks, and continues spreading out to those souls who truly desire to do prayer and penance.”

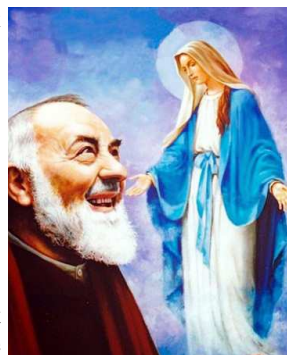
All the principal seers of Palmar received messages on the Holy Penitential Rosary, and prayed it many times, among them: Rosario Arenillas, María Luisa Vila, José Navarro (Cayetano), Arsenia Llanos, Antonio Romero, Manolo Fernández, Antonio Anillos and María Marín.

Other Messages of the Lord: “It is very necessary that during this year 1972 you pray the Penitential Rosary of 50 Our Fathers, 50 Hail Marys, 50 Glory bes and 50 Hail Mary Most Pure; as thus, in this way, you will placate Divine Wrath and there will be great fruits in the Church. You must needs meditate on this Penitential Rosary, that calls out fifty times to the Father, and placates His Wrath. The many groups spread throughout Spain praying this Penitential Rosary will draw down so much mercy from the Father of Mercy as to astonish. You will see the fruits.”

The Lord, also in 1972: “Why this whole crisis? Because in practice very few churchmen pray the Holy Rosary; that is one of the motives. Today the norm is action, action. But they don’t avail themselves of prayer. Action without prayer is work lost. Prayer, My children, prayer, not only mental, but vocal as well. Vocal prayer has many enemies, on the pretext that it is routine, prayer after prayer, without value. But they do not realize that I Myself taught the Our Father and said that you should pray that way. Therefore, it is true that I want vocal prayer. It is also true that if they say prayers without putting their heart

into them, then they are valueless. You should meditate on what you are doing and whom you are addressing, trying not to become distracted, and anticipatively enjoying Heaven through the graces received, and offering up sufferings and hardships. It does not suffice to say many prayers with the lips if the soul is not in them. It is difficult; consequently it is more meritorious. So there is no pretext for doing away with the Rosary. Furthermore, in these times it is more necessary than ever.”

The Most Holy Virgin Mary, this same year: “It is crucial to re-establish the recital of the Holy Rosary in all churches, by which souls will find the remedy for all the evils which afflict the Church today.” The Lord, towards the end of 1972: “If the



Rosary were to come back to churches, to convents, to homes and to everywhere, the Church would continue on amid great Light. But sadly it is turning its back on the Rosary.”

And Saint Dominic insisted: “You have the powerful arm against the reigning heresies and confusion, namely the recital of the Holy Rosary, for which I fought so dearly in order to teach and propagate everywhere. I suffered so much to propagate the Rosary! So many enemies attacked me...! Turn to the Rosary, and you will stifle and crush the present-day heresies and confusion reigning in the Church of Jesus Christ, Church which He founded by shedding His Blood.”

1973. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, in July: “Carry on firm in penitential prayer. Do not leave off praying the Holy Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers, which shall again be heavily combated, so as to abolish it in the Prayer Groups.”

Saint Joseph, in August 1973: “Increase your prayers and penances. Above all pray the Holy Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers with devotion... Look, look: Satan will now attack the Penitential Rosary; and observe that the Wrath of the Eternal Father has been abating, because so many times a day you recite: Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come... Whoever cries out to the Eternal Father so many times cannot fall into confusion and error. Why is there such confusion now in the Prayer Groups? Because they have been suppressing the Penitential Rosary. And by not praying it, they cannot avail themselves of the promises for those who do pray it; and one of them is to understand the mysteries. O my little children: keep away from novelties and continue with penitential prayer! I promise you solemnly, as Father of the Church and of you all, that in those homes where the Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers is prayed every day, they will feel my sensible presence on more than one occasion, and will be protected by me in a special way.”

The Most Holy Virgin Mary in October that year: “It is necessary to re-establish the Holy Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers in all the Cenacles; because, if not, the Light will not come, and you will live in darkness. It is vital that you pray the Holy Penitential Rosary, though only two persons stay. The most important thing is prayer, and not the number of people. Beloved little children. Take note of what I tell you on the eve of coming events. In your hands, the Cenacles, I leave this mission of coming events. It corresponds to you, the Cenacles, to teach and spread the Holy Penitential Rosary. That is what I specially entrust to you, so that it spread everywhere. The Holy Rosary of the Our Fathers prayed in the Cenacles has far more value than each individually, as it is teaching for everyone. My little children: the sifting will get worse! Re-establish the Holy Penitential Rosary! Observe that, for having suppressed it, great clouds have entered the Cenacles. I am telling you. Now it is your lookout. I, as Mother, advise you all. I assure you that all of you who have the Penitential Rosary in your Cenacle will obtain abundant graces. Take note: so that the promises I gave be fulfilled, it is necessary that this Rosary be prayed in the Cenacles. Do not forget that there were sixteen promises. Where are they now? Do you not now remember My promises to those who pray the Penitential Rosary of the Our

Fathers? O My little children! Beloved children: stay firm in the Penitential Rosary, even when human opinions oppose! Human opinions count for nothing. What counts is God's will... Dear little children: is this perhaps the time for conversations and chats and reading, and having no time for the Penitential Rosary?... Re-establish the Holy Penitential Rosary."

Days later, the Most Holy Virgin Mary: "Little children, be steadfast! You already know the conflicts there are. Above all, great steadfastness in the recital of the Holy Penitential Rosary. Do not forget. And that goes for the Cenacles. I will not insist much longer. But those who lose the Light will lose it by their own wish; because I exhort you to follow the upright way. Gladden the Heavenly Father with the Penitential Rosary. And you also gladden Me, because 50 Hail Marys follow, and what is more 50 Hail Mary Most Pure, conceived without sin. Dearest little children: the struggle ahead is tremendous. The enemy's ambushes will be ever fiercer. Beloved little children: Take care! Take care! Because Satan will launch a furious battle against the Penitential Rosary. Constancy in the Cenacles! The important thing is to please God, whether or not you please certain individuals."

In October 1973, the Most Holy Virgin insisted: "Again I ask you to pray the Penitential Rosary of the Our Fathers in the Cenacles. Note that I repeat this for you: it is necessary that you pray the Penitential Rosary. Don't let yourself be discouraged if you pray with fatigue; all the better, for greater will be the merit. Besides, many of you, individually, pray it every day. Now it is vital to pray it in the Cenacles. At first it will tire you; later you will find great joy and gladness. I do not impose it, but reflect: the greater the penance, the more reparation you make to the Most High. So pray the Penitential Rosary in the Cenacles... My little children: I will soon show Myself in the whole Church with My Marian Apostles beneath My staff. To achieve all this, a great spirit of prayer and sacrifice is necessary, especially the Penitential Rosary, so efficacious today for placating the Wrath of the Father."

In November 1973. The Lord: "My dear children: be on the alert! Keep up prayer and penance! Only those who keep up prayer and penance will receive light and protection. Woe to those whom I do not find on the watch amid the coming events! Poor souls! Above all, for all the Cenacles of Spain and abroad, I insist that the Holy Penitential Rosary be prayed if they wish to mitigate the effects of the approaching Great War. I leave it in your hands. Use your liberty wisely. And go over the Magnificat. Go over the Magnificat: where I humble the mighty and exalt the humble... Cenacles! Be on the alert! Cenacles! Be on the alert! If you keep up that attitude, I will confound many of your Cenacles. I want Cenacles of authentic penance, though there be solely two left in each. The important thing is not the number of persons, rather the quality of the persons, those who are truly people of prayer and sacrifice. Why have a Cenacle full of people if you do not keep up a great spirit of prayer and penance? I promise all the Cenacles, those which pray the Penitential Rosary, that you will be guided in a very special way in the days of darkness, and above all you will be protected in the coming schism that will occur in the Church. It's up to you! I give you the norms. It depends on you. Let it be quite clear that the Cenacles today are of great prayer and penance. You often have time for talking, amusements, criticizing, censuring, speaking badly of your brethren, but no time for the Penitential Rosary. Sham excuses!... Remember this 15th of November as the day when your Saviour came down to this Palmar de Troya, lamenting and bleeding in order that the Penitential Rosary be imposed in all the Cenacles. Look, I tell you: only those Cenacles which pray the Penitential Rosary will find the Light. To greater prayer, to greater penance, more Light, more humility... You are not yet too late. Mark, it is not a human fancy. It is the Will of Heaven. To the Cenacles I entrust the propagation of the Penitential Rosary, the Rosary of Padre Pio. It is the Cenacles' task to propagate this Holy Rosary, which is the sign of Light amid the darkness in which you all live. My dear children: soon the nations will be refined, purified. Soon you will hear the powerful bombs explode and destroy entire cities, and the smoke will suffocate great multitudes. Look, My children: in your hands I place those events. It depends on you to mitigate them and diminish them.

Above all, presently, Catholic Doctrine will be tremendously falsified, including by bishops and cardinals. And those who have prayed this Rosary of Padre Pio with devotion will have the spirit of discernment to know which Bishop speaks in God's Name and which Bishop does not speak in God's Name. My dear children: transmit this to your respective cities: either the Penitential Rosary is imposed in the Cenacles, or chaos will ensue, unavoidably, for everyone. Observe that in the Penitential Rosary reparation is made to the Most Holy Trinity and to the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Fifty times saying, 'Our Father who art in Heaven...' Do you know what that means? That your Heavenly Father, who is in Heaven, opens His arms, inclines His ears, and listens lovingly to everyone, because you call out to Him fifty times. See how tremendous this Rosary is! But sadly, the men of this age have no time to pray, no time for anything.



But do have time for the things of this world. Take time away from television and you will see that there is time to pray! Take time away from going to the cinema, from listening to the radio, from reading the newspaper, from discussing things with different people, from strolling around..., and you will have more than enough time! You can carry on with all these things, those not wrong, however, and still have time for prayer. If in the Cenacles and in all of you there were more prayer, there would not be so much criticism, or so much censuring of other brethren. You spend a long time speaking badly of others. And that goes for everyone. Let everyone examine himself. How much time lost in arguing! How much time lost in wanting to see this or that with clarity, when the Light is in prayer and penance! That is where the Light is received in the midst of darkness. My dear children: I give you this legacy: prayer and penance, prayer and penance, prayer and penance. Till the world says you are mad. So long as they do not call you mad, you are still not on the right path. I was the first madman for mankind. My followers have to be the same. I taught you to pray. How often I withdrew to pray, to practise sacrifice, in order to teach you! And remember, when the Apostles asked Me to teach them to pray, I taught them the prayer of the Our Father, the most excellent of all prayers. Look, there have been communities in the History of the Church which have prayed up to two hundred and three hundred Our Fathers every day. Among them the Carthusians. It is My desire that this message be diffused everywhere and in the greatest number of languages, since it concerns the whole Church and the world."

In November 1973 the Most Holy Virgin Mary said: "My children: onwards and constancy! Above all, pray the Penitential Rosary in all the Cenacles. I entrust this mission of the Holy Penitential Rosary to you, and by this prayer in Jesus Christ you will find mercy for Spain."

1974. In September the Eternal Father said: "Behold your Heavenly Father with arms outstretched, ready to gather up your prayers. Here is your tender Father, your Father of goodness. O My children! What joy to be surrounded by you all! O idiot world, unwilling to acknowledge that they have a Father in Heaven! O fatuous mankind: never meditating on the goodness and love of this Father, who gave up His own Son to Death on the Cross to save mankind! O My dear children: Ponder and meditate on the transcendent prayer of the *Pater Noster*! Look, beloved little children: when the Apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, Jesus taught them this prayer of the *Pater Noster*. And it is by this prayer that I listen to all My children. Hence I come down to you, almost touching you. O My dear children: how little you meditate on this prayer! Observe that the world is being pardoned for its many sins, thanks to the repetition of this sublime prayer. That is why, in these Last Times, I have founded the Penitential Rosary, so that you meditate, so that you cry out to this Father who listens to you. Every time you say: 'Our Father, who art in Heaven...', this

Father is ready to listen to His children. How much more so, if you call Me 'Father' in this Penitential Rosary fifty times! How can I fail to hear My children who continually say: Father! Father! Father! Father! What father does not listen to his children? How much more so this Father who created you! Oh! Dear children: meditate on this sublime prayer! Ponder and meditate on the Penitential Rosary. Hence the infernal enemy unleashes fierce attacks against this Rosary. For Satan cannot now cry out to this God and Lord, as you can, with that lovely phrase of 'Our Father'. Every time you recite the Our Father devoutly, Satan feels convulsed; and in the very depths of Hell, he lashes out proudly against his Creator. So then, My dear children, recite the Our Father constantly, and you will see that Satan keeps well away from you. Let the world meditate, let the nations meditate and observe events in the world. There has already been cause enough for the whole earth to be razed. However, as so many Rosaries of Penance have been recited, I, who am your Father, have practised mercy on mankind. O My dear children! Try meditating tenderly, slowly, on the Our Father, and you will see how delightful it is to the senses of the soul, soul which has been created by this Father of yours. O beloved little children! If the world knew what it is to be recumbent in the lap of their Heavenly Father...! But the world thinks only of progress, industrialization, politics, armaments; so it does not think or meditate on the Kingdom of Heaven. O dear children! Meditate on this Heaven, whose doors are open to all who want to enter in! Look, O beloved children! This Father does not want happiness for Himself alone, but out of goodness He wants to share it with His children. Can there be greater goodness than that, wanting to share His Happiness with the children He has created? How little mankind knows Me! Often they speak only of an avenging Father, of a Father of terror, chastisement and dread, and do not meditate on this Father of goodness, of mercy, of meekness, on this Father who calls you to His Kingdom. Therefore, My dear children, launch a great campaign in defence of the Penitential Rosary, of the Rosary called that of the Our Fathers, so that the world may know what it is to have a Heavenly Father; this world which is an orphan for having turned its back on its Lord and God. Materialistic and self-seeking world! Look, My dear children, I shall give few opportunities to mankind; My Angels have their swords now sharpened to exterminate evil people. Cry out for mercy and pardon! For the world will be severely punished owing to its perversity. O dear children! Relish the prayer of the Our Father. Relish it! And you will find delight in prayer. O doltish mankind, wanting to construct a world with back turned to the Creator! Infamous mankind! Where are you off to? The reply is obvious: to the precipice, to self-destruction. Hence, My dear children, cry out continually to this Father of yours! Look, My children: in these Last Times, when the Holy Sacrifice has been practically abolished by the confection of the new mass which is merely a banquet, I need many Our Fathers, many Our Fathers, so that there be reparation for the infinite offences I constantly receive. O beloved children! Call on Me often! Call on Me, above all, with that sweetest phrase: 'Our Father, who art in Heaven...' And be assured that this Father will be swift to listen to all His children. Accordingly, My dear children, from tomorrow, in this Sacred Place, another Penitential Rosary will be added, to counteract the great attacks against this Rosary. So then, now you know: more penance... This will mean greater sacrifice for yourselves; but if you, the beacon of this Sacred Place, do not perform this sacrifice, who will? Tell Me yourselves: who shall be able to defend this Penitential Rosary? Only yourselves, who are the living beacon of this Place; with your defects, your mistakes, your weaknesses, but the Beacon. And this beacon of El Palmar de Troya is the light of the world in these times of confusion, error and darkness. And I ask you, beloved little children, are you going to refuse another Penitential Rosary to your Father who has granted you this Place as Light and Cathedra for these Last Times? There you have the means of giving thanks to your Father. I ask no more of you. And you will see that, from this Penitential Rosary which you are going to add to the prayers of El Palmar de Troya, great blessings will come upon the Church and upon the world. And especially upon this Sacred

Place, the Mount of Christ the King, My Anointed, Jesus Christ... My dear children: do penance, much penance, as terrible happenings for the Church and for mankind are approaching! Redouble your prayers and sacrifices! I bless you."

Also in September that year, the Eternal Father said: "My dear children: Behold Me here again, given your insistence in the Penitential Rosary. Since you are calling Me, behold your Father. So, in this fashion, I will come down more frequently to this Sacred Place. I am going to be very close to you, always attentive to your supplications, your petitions. Here is your Father ready to grant Mercy. And now, as proof of fatherly love, I stretch out My arms over you. O My dear children! How much I enjoy hearing from your lips your calling Me Father!"

1975. The Lord towards the end of August: "O little children of My Heart! Spread the Holy Penitential Rosary through all the Nations, and in the end the world will be freed from marxism."



Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the 30th of September 1975: "Meditate on the Our Father prayer. What do you ask? His Will. And what do you often seem like? Parrots, parrots, prattlers, who recite, recite, but do not grasp the words you say. Meditate on the Our Father and you will see that you are all very far from doing God's Will. 'Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven', means that not your own will but God's Will be done. And you all coolly say: Thy Will be done! Thy Will be done! And when that Father of Goodness makes His Will known, that Divine Will is rejected. You are free, however; you can reject God's Will. Look to the consequences!"

June 1978. Our Lord Jesus Christ: "Does it cost so much to kneel down a single moment! You forget that I bore three hours of agony on Golgotha; far worse than kneeling on the floor, far, far worse! And being the Meek and Innocent Lamb who took your sins upon Himself. What a lack of the spirit of penance! What a lack of the spirit of penance! That is not the way to reach perfection; quite the contrary, that is the way to darkness. I bless you."

The Holy Rosary, fount of assurance. The Most Holy Virgin Mary has promised that by the Holy Penitential Rosary we can obtain the salvation of our relatives and family members. Let us have great confidence when we ask for these graces, and not be like a certain devotee who prayed much for the conversion of her husband and, when she saw him die without the Sacraments, said that the Lord did not keep His promises. Quite the contrary, let us imitate Saint Thérèse's confidence who felt devoured by thirst for souls, those of great sinners; she burnt with the desire to draw them out of eternal fire. She heard speak of the great criminal Pranzini, who was to die impenitent, and she wanted to avoid at all costs that he might fall into Hell: "At the bottom of my heart I had complete assurance that our desires would be heard. But to encourage myself to continue praying for sinners, I told God that I was completely certain that He would forgive the unhappy wretch, Pranzini, and that I would so believe even though he did not confess or give any sign of repentance, so great was the confidence I had in Jesus' infinite mercy; but that just for my consolation I asked Him for merely 'one sign' of repentance... Pranzini had not confessed, had climbed the scaffold, and was about to place his head in the gloomy opening, when all of a sudden, touched by a sudden inspiration, he turned around, took hold of the crucifix which the Priest presented to him and kissed the Sacred Wounds three times! Then his soul flew to receive the merciful sentence from Him who said that there would be more joy in Heaven for a single sinner who is converted than for ninety-nine just who need no conversion. I had obtained 'the sign' I had requested."

We have a marvellous example of the way Mary Most Holy fulfils Her promises, in the death of Mme Cohen, a Jewess and mother of Herman Cohen, a Jewish pianist who was

converted and became a Carmelite Priest, canonized under his name in religion, Saint Augustine Mary of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Apostle of the Eucharist, whose feast is on the 20th of January. Mme Cohen passed away on the 13th of December 1855, while Father Augustine Mary was preaching Advent in Lyon. He himself referred the news to a friend: "God has just let a terrible blow fall on my heart. My poor mother has died... And I am left in doubt! Yet I have prayed so much that we must hope that between her soul and God something will have occurred in those last moments that we do not know. I have received the order to go to Paris to console the family." It will be easy to imagine the grief of Father Augustine Mary on learning of his mother's death. He had prayed so hard, and done so much to gather prayers for her conversion...

"I too have a mother," he exclaimed one day, after speaking about Saint Monica conversing with her son Augustine on the eve of her death. "I have left her to follow Jesus Christ, and she no longer calls me her good son. Her hair is grey, her forehead now wrinkled, and I am afraid to see her die. Oh, no! I would not want her to die before loving Jesus Christ, and for many years I have been hoping what Monica hoped for her son Augustine. And who knows if God has not linked her conversion to the fruit you draw from my words?" Nonetheless, if his grief was very deep, his hope in the Infinite Goodness of God did not falter for one moment. On the night of the same day on which he received the painful news, he had to preach. After having prayed and wept at length, he climbed the pulpit and moved all with a sermon on death.

Some time later, he confided the concern he felt regarding his poor mother's death to the Holy Curé of Ars. The man of God replied: "Be hopeful and wait. One day, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, you will receive a letter which will bring you great consolation." These prophetic words were almost forgotten when on the 8th of December 1861, six years from his mother's death, a Father from the Company of Jesus handed Father Augustine Mary a letter. It was written by a Venerable Servant of God, who died later in the odour of sanctity and was known for her numerous writings on spirituality, especially for her 'Eucharist Meditated', which reached numerous editions. The letter said as follows: "On the 18th of October, after Holy Communion, I found myself in one of those moments of intimate union with Our Lord, in which He has me feel His presence in the Sacrament of His Love in such a pleasing way, that faith seems to me no longer necessary to believe in It. After a while, He had me hear His voice and deigned to give me some explanations regarding a conversation of the previous evening. I remembered then that, in that conversation, one of my friends had shown her surprise that Our Lord, who had promised to grant everything in prayer, should have remained deaf to those which Reverend Father Augustine Mary had addressed Him so often to obtain the conversion of his mother. Her surprise almost verged on discontent, and it cost me dearly to make her understand that we should adore the Justice of God and not try to penetrate its secrets. I dared to ask my Good Jesus how it was possible that, being Goodness itself, He could possibly have resisted the pleas of Father Augustine Mary and not granted the conversion of his mother. This was His reply: 'Why does Anne always want to sound out the secrets of My Justice and try to penetrate the mysteries she is unable to understand? Tell her that I owe grace to no one, that I give it to whom I please, and that by acting thus I do not cease to be just nor to be Justice itself. But she has to know as well that, before failing to fulfil the promises I have made on prayer, I will turn Heaven and earth upside down, and that every plea which seeks My glory and the salvation of souls, is always favourably heard, when accompanied by the necessary qualities. And to make this truth evident to you, I will tell you what happened at the death of Father Herman's mother.' My good Jesus then illuminated me with a ray of Divine Light and gave me to know, or better, made me see in Him what I shall now relate.

"In the last moments of Father Augustine Mary's mother, when she was about to breathe her last sigh and seemed to be unconscious, almost without life, Mary, our Good Mother,

appeared before Her Divine Son and, prostrate at His feet, told Him: 'Grace, pity, My Son, for this soul who is about to perish. One instant more and she will be lost, lost forever. Do for the mother of My servant Augustine Mary, I pray, what You would wish him to do for Yours, if She was in her place and You in his. The soul of his mother is his dearest good. He has consecrated her a thousand times to Me and has confided her to My love, to the care of My Heart. Can I let her perish? No, no; this soul belongs to me, I love her, I claim her as heirloom, as the price of Your Blood and of My Sorrows at the foot of Your Cross.' Hardly had the sublime Supplicant finished speaking, when a powerful grace issued forth from the fount of all graces, from the adorable Heart of Our Jesus, and went to enlighten the soul of the poor dying Jewess, at that very moment triumphing over her obstinacy and resistance. This soul turned at once with loving confidence



toward Him whose Mercy had pursued her to the arms of death, and told Him: 'O Jesus, God of the Christians, God whom my son adores! I believe, I hope in You, have pity on me!' In this cry, heard by God alone and which issued from the most intimate depths of the dying woman's heart, was enclosed sincere repentance for her obstinacy and her faults, the desire for Baptism, the express will to receive it and to live in accord with the rules and precepts of our holy religion, in the case of being able to return to life. This impulse of faith and of hope in Jesus was the last sentiment of her soul. At the instant in which she rose up to the throne of Divine Mercy, the frail bonds which retained her in her bodily wrapping broke, and she fell at the feet of Him who had been her Saviour before becoming her Judge. After having shown me all these things, Our Lord added: 'Tell all this to Father Augustine Mary, it is a consolation I will to grant to his prolonged grief, so that he bless and have others bless the goodness of My Mother's Heart and the power She exercises over Me'." This letter, truly surprising and unforeseeable, had been announced to Father Augustine Mary with all precision by the Holy Curé of Ars six years beforehand, and is something which should infuse great confidence into the hearts of all those who pray the Holy Penitential Rosary with true devotion.

The Holy Rosary is fount of consolation in trials. The human heart is often afflicted by problems and griefs, since this life is a time of trial. In the world, the majority of people enter the state of marriage to the tune of songs and dances, imagining that they have found the happiness possible on earth. Perhaps for some years things go well, but in the majority of cases crosses and trials are not lacking. Illnesses, financial setbacks, cares and worries afflict the soul and cloud the horizon of happiness. Young people are sometimes worried because they have no clear idea of their vocation and know not what path to take in life, nor how to take such an important decision. The Holy Rosary prayed with devotion and by leaving all in the most pure hands of Our Mother, is surely the wisest approach, for She is powerful, and only seeks our good and the greater glory of God.

The Most Holy Rosary Devotion should be practised daily in family. This is the surest means for drawing down the blessings of Heaven by intercession of Mary Most Holy, the Virgin Mother of God. The father should be the 'priest' in this family worship. The wife, the children and others of the household, should form a kind of parish of devotees of Our Lady around him. In this way, each home will become a sanctuary dedicated to Her, presided by Her blessed image, perfumed by their prayers and sheltered under Her protection.

Neither does religious life lack crosses and trials. There are also illnesses, dryness, temptations and other trials, but with his life consecrated to God's interests, with the greater frequency of Sacraments and life of obedience, the person consecrated has more means of sanctification within reach. Nevertheless, persevering and fervent prayer of the

Holy Rosary is for the religious soul absolutely necessary in order to advance on the path to sanctity, to which he has pledged himself under grave vows. Pope Saint Clement IX prayed the Rosary with great piety and zeal throughout his life. Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Joan Frémyot had a vow to pray it every day despite their many occupations. We should accustom ourselves to invoke Mary whenever we find ourselves in difficult situations, particularly those dangerous to the soul. This has been the practice of all Mary's true devotees, particularly that of Saint Augustine, Saint John Damascene, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Bernard and Saint Dominic.

The Holy Penitential Rosary, compendium of the Holy Gospel. The Holy Penitential Rosary, though distinguished by its Marian character, has Christ as its centre. In its simplicity it encloses the depths of the whole Gospel Message, of which it is like a compendium. It is formed by Joyful, Sorrowful, Eucharistic and Glorious Mysteries, and as method uses the repetition of the same prayers in each Mystery ten times.

Its recital requires a calm rhythm to be able to meditate the life of the Lord seen through the Heart of Mary, His Mother. In it we can include the pains and sorrows of daily life. By means of the Rosary abundant graces are obtained.

When we pray the Holy Penitential Rosary, it is most important that we pray with due dispositions, and not like those who honour God with their lips while their heart is far from Him. Many have fallen into this devil's snare, and thus gradually lost Light and Grace, or at least did not receive all the spiritual and temporal benefits that correspond to the Rosary recited worthily. In vocal prayer it should be noted that the heart should say four times what the voice says once, always with sovereign respect, in imitation of the Virgin Herself, and not carelessly, distractedly and immodestly; for this displeases God, and such irreverent prayer, far from obliging Him, rather disobligees.

Let us learn from the following account. To a holy Cistercian Monk, who was ill, appeared other monks, deceased, and one who spoke for all complained to him that owing to the irreverence with which they prayed for them in the monastery, they had not left Purgatory. Among other things he told him: "Though all gather for prayer, they do not receive spiritual nourishment, for when they sing and recite they have their hearts and thoughts centred on worldly vanities. Moreover, when they commune it seems that they detest the Heavenly Manna, for they receive it with so little devotion as though it were bad food and worthy of contempt. Besides they provoke God's anger, since when they sing the 'Glória Patri' in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, some are laughing and others have their thoughts elsewhere, and both one and other do not incline the head, and if some do, it is out of the habit they have of humbling themselves, not because they meditate on invoking and praising the Trinity of God, being as It is worthy of so much consideration. Hence go, and tell the Abbot on our behalf, to be sure to correct these negligences by his monks and understand that God has placed him as a watchtower, to observe what they do, and correct them." This said, the departed souls disappeared; and the Monk came to himself and rose up, went to the church and, as he began to pray with his customary devotion before an Altar, he was again rapt up, and by a window above him, saw some lights more brilliant than the rays of the sun, and that entering by the same window, a Woman of admirable beauty who, standing beside him, said: "Do you know who I am?" But the Monk did not know. The Lady answered: "I am Mary, Mother of Jesus, and I come to console you, to make your groans cease and mitigate your pains, because your tears and prayers were pleasing to Me." At the moment She said this, the monks who were in choir praying Matins reached the 'Glória Patri'; and the Most Holy Virgin, suspending her words to the Monk, crossed the fingers of one hand with those of the other; and made a deep inclination of Her whole self, and did not straighten up until they had said: '*et Spirítui Sancto*'; She then continued speaking to the Monk. I have related these accounts so that you see how little God and His Mother are satisfied by those who pray without spirit and without due reverence.

Dispositions for prayer:

To prepare, there must be purity of conscience, uprightness of intention, striving to reject passions and to acquire virtues, and imitate Jesus Christ. It is essential not to be distracted voluntarily thinking of other things, and to begin prayer with humility, confidence and love; to place oneself in God's presence, and to consider oneself unworthy to have prayer and to ask God for the grace necessary for this by intercession of the Most Holy Virgin.

Many Saints have written on this matter; for his clarity and depth we shall follow in part Saint Louis Mary Grignon of Montfort and Saint Louis de la Puente. They speak of the traditional Rosary, but their words are equally applicable bearing in mind the Holy Penitential Rosary. These Saints explain the disposition most pleasing to God and to the Most Holy Virgin, whom we wish to honour.

Purity of soul. The fervour of our prayer, not precisely its duration, pleases God and wins His Heart. One single Hail Mary well said is more meritorious than fifty prayed badly. Up to the start of the XX century, almost all Catholics prayed the traditional Rosary or at least a third part of it, or some decades of Hail Marys. Why then, did so few people amend their ways and truly make progress in virtue? Because they did not pray as they should! Let us, then, see how we should pray the Rosary so as to please God and become Saints.

Whoever prays the Rosary should be in the state of Grace or at least resolved to give up sin. Effectively, theology teaches us that good works and prayers performed in mortal sin are dead works unable to please God or merit eternal life at that time. Nonetheless they will attain supernatural value at particular judgement if the Divine Mary's discourse is accepted; since at that moment, the soul, by deciding her own salvation, in her desire supernaturally renews every good deed done in life. Neither praise nor the angelic salutation nor the prayer of Jesus Christ Himself can please God when they come from the lips of an impenitent sinner. "This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain, therefore, do they honour Me." These people – says Jesus Christ – who recite the Rosary or part of it, but without any contrition for their sins, though they honour Me with their lips, their heart is far from Me. Sinners have a great need to pray the Holy Rosary, as it will be very useful to them for obtaining the grace to leave sin behind and win Divine Grace and eternal salvation.

Note that if he prays the Rosary or part of it or another prayer with a will to remain in sin or without the intention to leave off sinning, he would be one more false devotee of the Most Holy Virgin and one of the presumptuous and impenitent devotees who, under the mantle of Mary, with Scapular on his breast and Rosary in his hand, go about shouting: 'Holy and Benevolent Virgin, I salute Thee O Mary!' and meanwhile crucify and lacerate Jesus Christ by their sins and sadly fall into the fires of Hell.

Vision which a Prior of the Carthusian Order in Triers had on the Holy Rosary and its explanation. Saint Louis Blossius, Abbot in the Order of Saint Benedict, and John Lanspergius, and many others, relate that a Prior of the Triers Charterhouse was very devoted to the Holy Rosary. This saintly Friar was once rapt up in spirit (which often happened to him) and with the eyes of the soul saw that the Blessed in Heaven blest and praised with ineffable joy and devotion Jesus Christ Our Lord and His Most Holy Mother, going through all the mysteries of the Rosary, which the Lord himself with His clemency and love had lived for the remedy of all men. He saw that they made particular reverence to the Names of Jesus and Mary, kneeling at the name of Jesus and bowing their heads at the name of Mary. And together they prayed to God and asked for graces and favours for those devoted to Her Holy Rosary, and who used this holy exercise in harmony with those in Heaven, praising and giving thanks to God for these holy mysteries. He also saw how in Heaven most beautiful and





resplendent crowns of glory were prepared for the devotees of the Holy Rosary. He also saw how for each of these Rosaries they obtained forgiveness for their sins, and some particular grace and blessing in this life, through the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who prayed to God for them. And he understood by divine revelation that in the Holy Rosary and in its holy exercise were enclosed so many graces and so many treasures of spiritual goods communicated through it, that no mortal could understand it. The holy man who saw this died in the year 1431, and left the vision written as Lanspergius told it. This miracle is referred to by many authors, very serious ones, and for learned men it is clear how this revelation is to be understood, but as this is written for everyone, it is well to explain it. To obtain with each Rosary forgiveness of sins, and a crown of glory in Heaven, presupposes that the one who prays it has contrition for his sins, or that he has confessed them with the right dispositions, as is also understood for all indulgences and jubilees, that for the temporal pain of the

sins to be forgiven, it is understood that there must be contrition, or the sacrament of penance be received as necessary for the pardon of faults. It also presupposes that the Rosary be said with devotion, because the graces, blessings and promises obtained will be according to the quality or fervour, so much the more excellent the greater the devotion, and it can piously be believed from the bounty of Our Lord God, that whoever performs a work so acceptable to His Divine Majesty, as is the consideration and thanksgiving for the holy mysteries of the Rosary, which are those of His Most Holy Life, Passion and glorious Resurrection, and who takes the Sovereign Virgin as advocate, with such holy and pious prayers as are those of the Rosary, that he will obtain such benefits. It is true that if someone, without having had contrition for his sins or having had them forgiven by the Sacrament of penance, says the Rosary, even if he says it without as much devotion and feeling as is appropriate, but at least with some good desire to make progress and with certain attention, we piously believe that he will not fail to receive particular favours and benefits from God's goodness, especially if he perseveres in praying it, because just as one who touches something very fragrant always retains some good odour, and he who puts his hand in flour always has some stuck to him, so one who through the Holy Rosary approaches Christ Our Redeemer, infinite source of everything good, who is supremely communicative of Himself, will receive new gifts and mercies from his divine Hand. If he is in Grace, he will receive some increase of it, and if he is in sin, and approaches as said with the desire to leave it, he will receive some favours and helps from God, which will dispose him, with penance, to abandon sin, and will obtain the said promises of celestial goods given to those who devoutly practise the Rosary.

We counsel the Holy Rosary to the whole world: to the righteous so that they persevere and grow in the Grace of God; and to sinners so that they abandon sinning. But it does not please nor can it please God for anyone to exhort a sinner to turn the protective Mantle of the Most Holy Virgin into a mantle of damnation by hiding their crimes and turning the Rosary – which is the remedy for all evils – into mortal, fatal venom. The corruption of the best is the worst!

Purity and innocence of life has to accompany devotions and prayers, since without them the rest will please little. A man leading a somewhat disorderly life, whenever able, praised the Virgin Our Lady. It happened then, that this man went off on a certain occasion to the solitude of a wide spreading moor, and felt very hungry. There the Mother of God appeared to him accompanied by many beautiful maidens, and brought him a delectable sweetmeat in some dirty and badly washed bowls, and told him: "Eat." The man replied: "The sweetmeat is delicious but I cannot eat it because of the dirtiness and stench of the

bowls.” Our Lady then rejoined: “It happens to Me like that, for the praises you give Me are good and beautiful, but your heart is dirty; and hence they neither please Me nor do I delight in your tributes.” After he had heard this, he repented of his sins and purified himself with true penance.

Our Lady complained as well to Saint Bridget of a man who praised Her highly thinking that he was truly Her devotee, but did not sort out his life. The Virgin said of him that he spoke with his back turned to Her, like a soldier who shouldered his arms upside down, like one who entered into battle with scabbard empty, having previously thrown away his sword.

Recite attentively. To recite well it is not enough to express our petition with the loveliest of prayers, namely the Rosary. It is essential as well to do so with great attention. For God hears prayers from the heart better than that from the lips. To pray to God with voluntary distractions would be an irreverence capable of making our Rosaries fruitless and loading us with sins. How do we expect God to hear us, when we do not hear ourselves? If while we petition so August a Majesty, we are voluntarily distracted running after a butterfly? This means distancing the Lord’s blessing and risking the divine malediction proper to those who perform God’s work with negligence, performing carelessly the work commended to them by the Lord.

It is true that it will not be possible to recite the Holy Rosary without undergoing a few involuntary distractions. It is even difficult to recite a Hail Mary without the imagination, ever restless, robbing part of our attention. But it is possible to pray without voluntary distractions. To reduce them and fix our attention, all kinds of means should be used. To do so, place yourself in God’s presence, thinking that He and His Most Holy Mother are looking at you, that your Guardian Angel is at your right gathering up your Our Fathers and Hail Marys well said, like so many other roses to weave them into a crown for Jesus and Mary; and that on the contrary the devil stands at your left prowling about and devouring your Our Fathers and Hail Marys said without attention, devotion or modesty and noting them down in his book of death. Above all, do not omit to offer up each decade in honour of the mysteries. In your imagination represent the Lord and His Most Holy Mother in the mystery you are contemplating.

Combat distractions with vigour. Just as there is no prayer more meritorious for the soul or more glorious for Jesus and Mary than the Rosary well said, neither is there anything more difficult than reciting it well and with persevering attention. This happens owing to the distractions which arise naturally from the continuous repetition of the same prayers.

When the miscellaneous prayers are recited, the Holy Way of the Cross, or prayers other than the Rosary, the change, the variety of expressions, check the imagination and recreate the spirit. Thus it is easier to pray them well. But in the Rosary, always with the same Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory bes, threaded in the same way, it is easy to tire, drowse off and abandon it to go after prayers more enjoyable and less trying. Hence you need more devotion to persevere in the recital of the Holy Rosary than in any other prayer.

The imagination, always restless and never still for a single moment, increases the difficulty. The devil’s malice will do the same, tireless in his labour of distracting us and preventing prayer. What will the evil one not do to oppose us, seeing us dedicated to praying the Rosary against him? Before beginning our prayer, he increases our natural laziness and negligence. During prayer, he increases our indifference, distractions and discouragement. And when we have finished praying, amid a thousand difficulties and distractions, he depresses us in different ways and mocks us saying: ‘You have not done anything worthwhile. Your Rosary is worthless. You are wasting your time reciting so many vocal prayers without attention. Half-an-hour of meditation or good reading will do you much more good. Tomorrow, when not so drowsy, you will be able to pray with greater attention. Leave the rest of your Rosary then for tomorrow!’ In this way, the devil with his ruses succeeds in having you abandon the Rosary, all or in part, change it for other prayers or put it off.



Don't give him credit, dear devotee of the Rosary! Don't lose heart! For though during the whole Rosary your imagination has been full of distractions and extravagant ideas, whenever you have tried to reject them as well as you can and as soon as you realize, your Rosary will be far better. Because it is more difficult. And it is so much the more meritorious the more difficult it is, the less agreeable it is naturally to find yourself bothered by a host of annoying mosquitoes and ants, but to your annoyance, scurrying about from one part to another of the imagination without allowing the spirit calmly to savour what it says or to rest.

If it behoves you to spend the whole Rosary combating distractions, then strive valiantly with arms in hand. That is, keep reciting, though without sensible relish or consolation. It will be a terrible struggle, but very beneficial for the faithful soul. But if you lay down your arms, that is, if you give up your Rosary, you are beaten, and from then on the devil, victorious over your willpower, will leave you in peace, but on the day of judgement will reproach your faintheartedness and infidelity. "Whoever is faithful in little things, is faithful as well in great; and whoever is unfaithful in little things, is unfaithful as well in great... Here Jesus teaches that the practice of virtue is to include even the seemingly slightest obligations; since whoever does not value little things will end up not valuing great things." Whoever shows himself worthy of confidence in things of no importance will be worthy of confidence in things of importance as well. Whoever is faithful in rejecting little distractions during a brief prayer will likewise be faithful in great undertakings. Nothing more certain: they are words of the Holy Ghost!

Take heart then, good and faithful servant of Jesus Christ and of the Most Holy Virgin, you have made the resolution of praying the Rosary faithfully every day! May the swarm of flies – the distractions which pester at prayer – never ever succeed in having us cowardly abandon the company of Jesus and Mary which we enjoy when reciting the Rosary.

Recite the Rosary in community. Among so many methods there are for reciting the Rosary, the most glorious for God, useful for souls and terrible for the devil is to recite it like the psalms, by praying publicly in two choirs. God delights in assemblies. All the Angels and Saints congregated in Heaven praise Him unceasingly. The just of the earth gathered in different communities implore Him in community day and night. The Lord expressly counselled this practice to His Apostles and disciples and promised them that as often as two or three are gathered in His name, He would be in their midst, to implore in their name and pray the same prayer. What joy to have Jesus in our company! And to think that to possess Him it is sufficient to gather and pray the Rosary! This is the reason that the first Christians gathered so often to pray together, despite the persecutions by the emperors who forbade gatherings. They preferred to expose themselves to death rather than miss out on their assemblies, in which they had the assurance that Jesus kept them company.

Hence the Rosary in family is something wonderful; it is a practical way of strengthening the unity of family life. The importance of the Rosary as an efficacious means for the faithful has been confirmed not only by the Popes, but by Our own Mother, the Virgin Mary. It is the prayer of the simple and of the great, within reach of all, at every time and place. The Rosary honours God and the Most Holy Virgin in a special way. In Her apparitions the Virgin holds a Rosary in Her hand and has propagated it in countless messages.

Prayer in common is the most beneficial for the soul: 1. Because ordinarily the mind is more attentive during public prayer than private prayer; 2. Because when praying in community, the prayer of each person turns into the prayer of the whole assembly and all together form but a single prayer. So that if anyone prays less well, another who prays better will make up for him. The strong will sustain the weak, and the fervent inflame the

tepid, the rich will enrich the poor and the villain will join the good. How to sell a kilo of cockle? By mixing it with four or five kilos of good wheat! And it all sells! 3. Because one person reciting the Rosary alone has the merit of one single Rosary, but if he prays it with thirty people, he acquires the merit of thirty Rosaries. Those are the laws of public prayer. What takings! What gains! 4. Saint Urban VIII, very satisfied by the devotion of the Holy Rosary recited in two choirs in many places, especially in convents, granted an indulgence for as often as they prayed in two choirs, each time. So that every time the Rosary is recited in community additional indulgences are won. 5. Because public prayer is more effective than individual for appeasing the Holy Wrath of God and for obtaining His Mercy.

Lastly, the Rosary prayed in community is far more terrible against the devil, since it is a whole army gathering to attack him. On occasions the devil triumphs easily over individual prayer. But if joined to that of the rest, only with difficulty will he obtain his goal. It is easy to break a single cane. But if you gather other canes to form a bundle, this you cannot break: union makes strength. Soldiers join together in battle to rout the enemy. Villains frequently join up for their orgies and dances. The devils themselves join up to outwit us. Why should Christians not join up together to enjoy the company of Jesus Christ, appease Divine Wrath, obtain Grace and Mercy from the Lord and overcome and humiliate the devils more effectively?

Humility. Besides, our prayer must be made with humility, as the publican did, with both knees on the ground and not with one knee up or on a bench like the proud. The publican stayed at the door, without daring to go down to the sanctuary as did the pharisee. His eyes were fixed on the floor, without daring to raise them up to Heaven, without lifting his head up or looking about him like the pharisee. Striking his breast, he acknowledged himself a sinner and implored forgiveness: "My God, be merciful to me, who am a sinner." And not like the pharisee who boasted of his good works and despised others. Avoid the arrogant prayer of the pharisee who went back home more hardened and accursed. Imitate rather the humility of the publican at prayer which obtained his sins' forgiveness.

Avoid running off in search of the extraordinary and asking or even desiring special lights, visions, revelations and extraordinary graces which God sometimes grants to certain saints during the recital of the Rosary.

Never omit the least part of the Rosary because of dryness, depression and interior dejection. It would be a sign of pride and infidelity. As valiant champions of Jesus and Mary, recite the Our Father and Hail Mary amid dryness, though without seeing, feeling or savouring, doing all you can to contemplate the mysteries.

Do not sigh for the bonbons and titbits given to children so that they eat their bread every day. To imitate Jesus agonizing more perfectly, prolong the recital of the Rosary, precisely when it costs you most to pray, since amid His great suffering, Jesus prayed more intensely: "entering into agony, He prayed with greater earnestness." Thus you can apply to your own case what has been said of Jesus Christ.

Confidence. Likewise pray with complete confidence. With a confidence founded on the Infinite Goodness and Generosity of God and on the promises of Jesus Christ. God is Fount of living waters which run unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray. Jesus is the Word of God, "full of grace and truth". Well and good, the greatest desire of the Father regarding us is to grant us the saving waters of His grace and mercy. And He invites all those who have thirst to come and drink of that water in prayer. And if you do not pray, He complains that by thus abandoning Him you do Him wrong, "by abandoning Me, I who am the Fount of living waters."

To ask for graces from Jesus Christ is to give Him pleasure, a pleasure greater than that of natural mothers on feeding their infants with the nectar of their breasts. Prayer is the channel of graces from God, and like the maternal breast of Jesus Christ. If you do not turn to Him with your petition, as all God's children should do, Jesus Christ complains lovingly: "For until now you have asked for nothing... Ask and you shall receive so that your joy may be



complete.” “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” Yet further, to encourage us to ask with great confidence, He finally gave His word that the Eternal Father will grant us whatever we ask in His Name.

Example. On a gentleman whose wife was freed from death by virtue of the Holy Rosary. The fourth part of the ‘Treasury of the Rosary’ speaks of a gentleman highly devoted to the Mother of God, who had ordered a small oratory to be constructed in his palace in which he used to spend his free time praying before a beautiful image of the Virgin, not only by day but by night as well, interrupting his rest to pay a visit to his beloved Lady. His wife, very pious in the rest, observing that her husband rose from bed without the least noise, left their room and did not return for a long time, unhappily began to doubt his fidelity. One day, to free herself from the thorn which tormented her, she was bold enough to ask

her husband if he loved another more than her. The gentleman, with a smile, replied: “Yes, for sure, I love the most amiable Lady in the world. To Her I have surrendered my whole heart; I would rather die than cease to love Her. If you knew Her, you yourself would tell me to love Her even more than I do.” He was referring to the Most Holy Virgin, whom he loved tenderly. But his wife, tortured by suspicions, to assure herself better asked him if he rose at night and left their room to be with the Lady. And the gentleman, who did not suspect his wife’s great agitation, answered that he did. The lady, considering her suspicions as certain, blinded by passion, one night when her husband as usual left the room, in desperation, took a knife and gave herself a mortal cut in the neck. The gentleman, having finished his devotions, returned to the bedroom, and getting into bed felt it all wet. He called his wife and she made no reply. He shook her and she did not move. He lit a lamp and saw the bed full of blood and his wife dead. At last he realized that she had killed herself out of jealousy. What to do then? He hastened back to the Chapel, prostrated before the image of the Virgin and weeping devoutly prayed thus: “My Mother, you see my affliction. If You do not console me, to whom shall I turn? See that for coming to honour You the misfortune of finding my wife dead has come to pass. You, who can do all, remedy this.” And who among those who petition this Mother of Mercy with confidence does not obtain his wish? After this prayer he heard a maid calling him and saying: “Sir, go to the dormitory, your lady is calling you.” He could not believe it for joy. “Go – he told the maid – make sure that it is she who is calling me.” The servant returning, said: “Go quickly, sir, the lady is waiting.” He went, opened the door and saw his wife alive, fall at his feet and plead that he forgive her, saying: “My husband, the Mother of God, through your prayers, has freed me from going to Hell.” And both weeping for joy went to thank the Most Holy Virgin in the oratory. The following day he ordered a banquet to be prepared for all his relatives, to whom his own wife recounted all that had happened. And she showed them the scar left in her neck. By this all were inflamed with love for the Virgin Mary.

Perseverance. To confidence you should moreover join perseverance in prayer. Only one who perseveres in asking, seeking and knocking shall receive, find and enter. Even having asked a grace from God for one month, one year, or ten or twenty, you should still not tire, but ask up till death and be resolved to obtain what you ask for your salvation, or die. Yet further, it is necessary to join death to perseverance in prayer and confidence in God, and repeat with Saint Thérèse: “Even if God should kill me, I would still trust in Him.” It does not matter if He should take my life, I will still hope in Him and from Him for all that I request.

Example. Happy results from persevering prayer to Mary. Saint Alan de la Rupe tells, and with him the Bishop of Cotron, that a poor woman kept up a legal action against a

wealthy and powerful person who had bribed the judges using money and favours. The lawsuit became everlasting with the object of tiring the unhappy woman and using up all her means to pay for the legal costs. At last the judge decided to condemn her despite his firm conviction that right was on her side. She lamented her misfortune, and finding no one who showed interest in making justice triumph, turned to the Most Holy Virgin Mary to implore Her protection. She enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity and promised to pray it every day. The judge, who was then about to pronounce sentence against his conscience in favour of her adversary, became mixed up and sentenced in favour of the woman. He wanted to retract afterwards and protest that it had been a mistake, but he found it impossible to pronounce anything other than what he had said before, despite trying three times. Thus the good woman found all her goods restored, and from the poverty in which she had lived before due to man's injustice, she found herself wealthy. From then on she did not cease to implore the succour of the Most Holy Virgin, and she consecrated herself to Her service, and by her example led many others to honour Her and invoke Her in all their needs.

The generosity of the rich and great of this world is shown in anticipating favours to the needy, without awaiting their petition for help. God, on the contrary, displays His magnificence in making us ask for and seek the graces He wants to grant us for a long time. Yet further, however more precious the graces He wills to bestow, the longer He delays in granting it: 1) So as to be able to increase it; 2) So that whoever receives it appreciates it more; 3) So that whoever receives it takes care not to lose it. Since what is obtained in a moment with little effort is not much appreciated.

The obligations which the practice of the Rosary impose are few indeed and quite easy to fulfil; there is no fasting, no abstinence, no obligation to give alms or take vows, or go on pilgrimage. It is enough to know the Our Father and the Hail Mary to have the happiness of a practice highly pleasing to the Most Holy Virgin. And can a single Christian be found ignorant of the Our Father and the Hail Mary?... As for mental prayer, neither is it difficult in praying the Rosary: it is enough to meditate on the Mysteries which the Church proposes for our faith in the different Feasts she celebrates, as we explained above.

Neither is it necessary to be free in order to pray the Rosary, nor pray it at a fixed hour. The Rosary, or at least one mystery, can be prayed at any time, in any place, by day or by night, at home, out of doors, standing, kneeling, seated, in bed, out walking, travelling, working, in a word, in whatever way possible or most convenient to each, provided it be accompanied by sentiments of interior piety, outward recollection and the good dispositions of which we spoke above. Just this is sufficient to be sure of pleasing the Most Holy Virgin and will produce the most notable graces and benefits.

It is counselled to divide the Rosary into several parts and recite it at different times in the day, when this is preferable to praying it all at once. If the time available is not sufficient for reciting it all at once, then recite one decade here and another elsewhere. Thus you will have recited your whole Rosary before going to bed, despite your obligations and tasks. In this imitate the fidelity of Saint Francis de Sales. One night, feeling very tired owing to the visits he had to make during the day, and being almost twelve at night, he remembered that he still had several decades to pray. He fell to his knees at once and prayed them before going to bed, despite the recommendations of his chaplain who, seeing him so tired, wanted him to leave the part he still had to pray for the following day.

Example. *Of a woman who killed her husband and died repentant, through the Holy Rosary.* A woman prepared a very well-made sword to kill her husband, because he was leaving her for another, and ruined the inheritance of their children. Much time passed in which every night she was going to kill him, but she took the Rosary in her hand to pray, and her heart softened and mellowed, so that when she finished praying the Rosary, she was determined that God who had raised him should kill him, because she did not want to kill him, but to have patience and in that sad state merit blessedness. But one night it happened that, having



left out the Rosary, her anger was so great that while he was lying peacefully in bed she struck him with the sword and killed him. The devil could overcome her that night having been unable all the time she had prayed it. She later died in the hands of justice, but the Queen of Heaven did not abandon her, and she died with such great signs of salvation that it surprised the confessor, who was not just ordinary but a master of theology and a graduate of Salamanca. She could have freed herself from prison and was given many opportunities to do so, but she wanted to pay with her life and make the sacrifice of herself in the hands of justice as an example to others, and so that other women might learn to bear with such faults from their husbands, and to beseech God and His Most Holy Mother to provide the remedy, a better one than that which she sought.

We could say many things on this matter, so as not to abandon the holy devotions that protect us in this world and fail in the service and love of the Lord. The day on which we leave them out we can only expect disasters, for on those days the devils will have more power. Thus, great harm has

been seen on such occasions, because it is not enough to make a good start, rather we must persevere. Judas Iscariot made a good beginning and today burns in hell. Many flowers bloom beautifully, but the frost later freezes them. And many seeds begin to grow well and the sun's rays dry them up, as the Lord says in the Gospel. And from that little constancy you have in prayer, what can you expect but that a frost will take it all away? What do you want God to do with you, if your resolutions are like a little cloud that appears in the morning and when the wind blows, disappears and vanishes? If all your holy resolutions are like the dew that covers the ground and the plants and dries up when the sun comes out, and nothing remains; if all your devotions are like that, expect nothing but that the demons will get you to fall. God wants perseverance in virtues, and much more in prayer. No one can abandon Christian militancy, and much less prayer, and if you do not receive favours soon, have patience and persevere, for you will not be left without your reward.

Persevere, then, dear Rosary devotee, in requesting God, by means of the Holy Rosary, for all the spiritual and corporal graces you need, especially Divine Wisdom, which is an infinite treasure. Sooner or later you will infallibly obtain it, provided you do not abandon the Rosary or lose heart halfway. "You have a long way still to go." Yes, you still have far to go, many hardships to bear, many difficulties to overcome, many enemies to defeat. You need many Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glory Bes to gain Paradise and win the beautiful crown awaiting every faithful devotee of the Holy Rosary.

Let no one snatch away your reward. Take great care that another more faithful than you in daily praying the Rosary well may not snatch away your crown, which constitutes your reward. God has prepared it for you and you have almost won it by your Rosaries well said. You have begun the race well; but for having lingered on the charming way by which you were going in such haste, another took the lead; yes, another more diligent and faithful, by his Rosaries and good works, acquired and won what you needed to buy that crown. Who, then, blocked your way to the conquest of your crown? Ah! The enemies of the Holy Rosary who are many!

Beware! Only the valorous who snatch it off by force will obtain that crown. Such crowns are not for cowards, who fear the world's mockery and threats. Nor for the lazy and the layabouts, who pray the Rosary carelessly, hurriedly, out of routine or at intervals and offhandedly. Nor for the weak who lose heart and lay down their arms as soon as they see all Hell let loose against their Rosary.

Beloved Rosary devotee, if you would enrol in the service of Jesus and Mary by praying the Rosary every day, prepare for temptation: “Son, when you enter God’s service, persevere firm in virtue and in holy fear, and prepare your soul to face temptation.” Have no illusions! Heretics, libertines, ‘good people’ according to the world, the slack devotees and false prophets, in tune with your corrupt nature and the powers of Hell, will make war on you without quarter to force you to abandon this practice.

Regarding perseverance, we shall just say what occurred to Saint Thomas Hemerken, of Kempis. When a student, he had the custom of spending an hour or more praying certain devotions to the Most Holy Mother of God, whom he loved with heart ablaze. However, as a youth’s devotion is at times unstable and fickle, the devotee Thomas began to grow cold in this holy exercise, so that he began by leaving out his devotions one day, later two, and gradually ceased to pray them, losing merit and such praiseworthy devotion. Being then in this state, one night he had an admirable vision, and it seemed to him that he was in the patio with the other students, and thereupon the Queen and Mistress of Heaven, came down from Heaven from among the clouds, with the most beautiful face and radiant dress and, arriving at the patio, went up to those who were reading; and on reaching them, embraced and gave them thanks, since by their lessons they were preparing to help men to know sound doctrine and live a just and honest life, so that the Blood of Her Sweetest Son might not be fruitless in those who heard their teaching. Thomas, seeing the great love and joy She showed in dealing with the others, thought that he would also share a like favour, and fixing his eyes upon Her, waited for Her to come to his side. But it did not happen as he thought; for after the Most Holy Virgin had embraced one and all, She went up to where Thomas was, and with Her eyes showing indignation, She told him: “In vain would you have an embrace of holy love, cruel enemy; for abandoning My friendship out of sheer negligence, you do not pay Me the tribute you used to give me with your fervent prayers. Tell Me, where are your customary prayers? Where have your customary entreaties gone? Where are your pious suffrages to be found, mingled with so many sighs? Have you not noticed how your charity has gone cold? And love has dulled? And how the devotion you previously showed Me is faltering? And this being so, as bold as can be, as though you had committed no fault, do you expect Me to embrace you?” And turning Her face away from him, indignant, told him. “Be off, be off, away from Me, and understand that you are unworthy of My embraces, for so thoughtlessly did you cease to pray to Me as you used to do.” And this said, She ascended into Heaven. The youth Thomas awoke, and examining his conscience, he found himself to blame and proposed to amend; and thus, from then on, was most devout to the Virgin Mother of God.

The objections. To warn you against attacks, not so much from declared heretics and libertines, but from those called ‘good people’ according to the world, and even from pious people who dislike this practice, with simplicity we shall set out something of what they think and say every day.

“What is this trickster spreading around?” (Acts) – Let’s go and persecute the just man who troubles us and opposes our way of life! What does this prayer merchant want to say? What will he be ruminating all the time? – What idleness! He does nothing but thread rosaries. He would do much better working and not losing himself in suchlike sanctimony!

– Quite so! It’s enough to pray the Rosary and the skylarks will fall roasted down from heaven! The Rosary will serve us our food!

– God has said: Help yourself and I will help you! Why complicate life with so many prayers? The short prayer penetrates Heaven! One Our Father and one Hail Mary well said are sufficient! God has not imposed the Rosary on us. That it is good and even optimum when there is time. But for having failed to pray it, we shall not lack the chance to be saved! How many Saints did not recite it!

– There are people who judge the whole world by their own measure. Indiscreet people



who always go to extremes! Scrupulous who see sin where there is none and say that those who do not pray the Rosary will be damned!

– Pray the Rosary? That is fine for ignorant women who cannot even read! Pray the Rosary! Would it not be better to pray the Office of Our Lady or the seven penitential psalms? Is there anything more beautiful than these psalms dictated by the Holy Ghost Himself?

– So you propose to pray the Rosary every day? Bah! Straw smoke does not last! Would it not be better to take on less and be more faithful to that?

– Come, friend, believe me! Recite your prayers in the morning and at night, and work for God during the day! What more does God ask of you? If you did not have to earn your living, you could well dedicate yourself to praying the Rosary, but... Recite it then, on Sundays and feastdays when you have nothing to do, but not on working days! We must work!

– What? Have such a big Rosary like women? I have seen a single decade as good as five!

– What? Wear a rosary on your belt! What nonsense! I advise you to wear it round your neck like the great Rosary reciters! Hold a big one in the hand! But in the other a dagger to attack from behind!

– Leave off these external devotions! True devotion is in the heart!, etc.

Non-catholics understand little of things in the True Church. The Rosary, especially, is ever a stone of scandal for them. They cannot understand how intelligent human beings can practise such a “tedious” prayer!

When Queen Mary of Bavaria considered joining the Catholic Church, a protestant minister offered her a rosary and said in an ironic tone: “Well, if Your Royal Highness becomes a Catholic, you too will have to pray the Rosary.” Great was his surprise and annoyance when the Queen replied: “Be off with you, I already pray the Rosary every day!”

Many people of talent and great doctors – arrogant, self-satisfied men – will almost never counsel you the Rosary. They will rather invite you to recite the seven psalms or other prayers, but the Rosary, no.

Are we going to believe those bold so-called-learned who say that the Rosary is an antiquated, monotonous devotion, or are we to believe the Most Holy Virgin who inspired Saint Dominic and who, both at Lourdes, as at Fátima and at other Apparitions has not ceased to recommend it? “Anthony – said the Most Holy Virgin in one of Her apparitions to Saint Anthony Mary Claret – keep on preaching My Rosary without cease, since the salvation of your country is dependant upon it...”

However strange it may seem, not only protestants, but so-called Catholics as well have prejudices. For example, they say that the Rosary, by its constant repetitions becomes tiring and somniferous. Surely the Rosary can sometimes seem tedious; the fault however is not the Rosary’s, but of the one praying, by praying with tedium, unthinkingly, coldly, distractedly.

And even if you finally consult certain persons of prayer, of those there are in the world, given that they are unaware of the excellence of the Rosary by personal experience, will not only not counsel it to anyone, but will put others off, inviting them to dedicate themselves to contemplation, as though the Rosary and contemplation were incompatible and as if so many Saints who have been devotees of the Rosary, had not arrived at the most sublime contemplation precisely by the Rosary.

Others think that the Rosary is only good for children, the aged and simpletons, but that educated and intelligence people will surely find no satisfaction in it. This opinion too is mistaken. The Rosary is certainly the prayer for the humble and little ones, but it is also the prayer of the great and learned. It is so simple that event the littlest can pray and understand; for the great and learned it is so sublime that no one, not even the most

intelligent, can fathom its mysteries.

On the other hand, domestic enemies will attack you with greater cruelty the closer you are to them. These enemies are the powers of the soul and the senses of the body, distractions of the mind, weariness of will, dryness of heart, bodily miseries and illnesses... All together, by common agreement with the evil spirits who make common cause with them, will cry out to you: 'Give up your Rosary! That's why you have a headache! Give up your Rosary! You have no obligation to recite it so many times! Be content with reciting a single part. Your ailments are a sign that God does not want you to recite it. You will pray it tomorrow when you feel better', and so on.

Lastly, the daily Rosary has so many enemies that it is one of the most notable favours from God to be able to persevere in the practice of this devotion up till death.

Example. *Recamier's Rosary*. Count Malet, former soldier under Napoleon I, who had afterwards received the Priesthood, fell ill and Doctor Massé had gone to see him with his father, an intimate friend of the Priest. The young Doctor Massé was hoping to meet Doctor Recamier, whose fame at the time filled all France and, as he hoped, had gone to see his sick friend. In fact, while they were speaking of trifles, a servant announced the distinguished Recamier. After a courteous greeting to the visitors, he approached the sick man and asked for his health, prescribed new remedies and was about to withdraw when an episode took place related to us by the young Doctor Massé: "Recamier arose to take his leave, but remembering something he had forgotten, put his hat back on the table, left his stick on one side and hand in a trouser pocket, exclaimed: – 'My memory! I was about to forget something very serious.' – 'What is it?' Asked the Priest. – 'A misfortune has happened to me, Father! – Let us see! It is a fracture which I hope you will be able to remedy perfectly, a little operation I request you to perform.' And while the illustrious professor was thus speaking, he took his hand out of the pocket and triumphantly showed ... a damaged rosary! I confessed that my surprise was enormous. The wise Recamier, the illustrious Professor, charged with teaching not only in the School of Medicine but also in the French College, doctor to the great, to the lords, to princes and even to kings, whose reputation was known throughout Europe, recited the Rosary like a First Communion child, like a seminarian, like a woman! And in that worthy personage there was no shadow of ostentation: devoutly and piously he practised the recital of the Rosary and, if he spoke of it he did so with charming frankness and delicate simplicity. – 'Surely I pray the Rosary', he said, turning to us smiling... 'When a patient worries me, when my recourses are used up, when I find medicine powerless and therapy inefficacious, I turn to the One who can cure everything. And I use diplomacy with Him; not having time because of my duties to intercede much, I take the Most Holy Virgin as intermediary and on the way to the homes of my patients I say one or more decades of the Rosary. Nothing easier, for sure? I go peacefully seated in my carriage, put my hand in my pocket and... I enter into conversation. The Rosary is my interpreter and, as I pray it often, it has broken: therefore I request Father to examine it and cure it for me, in a word, for charity's sake, mend it for me.' My father gave his approval in two or three words, I with just a nod; Father de Malet took the rosary, promised to repair it quite soon, and Doctor Recamier withdrew. At night, on retiring, I thought only of this visit and could not but remember the foolish scorn of so many, who judge the Rosary only fit for devotees and believe that they lower themselves if they recite the Hail Mary many times over. – 'My friend', Recamier later told me in his imaginative and picturesque language, 'the Rosary is a 'little bell' and each 'Hail Mary' is a calling or, if you prefer, a well recommended petition. A multitude of the solicitous can be seen arriving in Paris every day on their way to speak



with the authorities, to implore the powerful and the rich, and to be admitted into the Tuileries they need protection, ask for audiences, have powerful friends... To speak with the Most Holy Virgin, it is quite easy: you pull the bell, that is, take up the Rosary; and at once the door opens, the petition is presented and the Most Holy Virgin is so good that, if there are no special reasons, She immediately grants whatever is requested’.”

Persevere and you will obtain the admirable crown prepared in Heaven for your fidelity: “Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of eternal life.” (Apocalypse)

The structure of the Rosary. The Traditional Rosary which Saint Dominic preached around the year 1200, received its uniform structure for the whole Church from Saint Pius V, Dominican, in 1569.

The Most Holy Virgin taught Saint Dominic this excellent method of prayer. And She ordered him to preach it in order to awaken the piety of Christians and so revive the love of Jesus Christ in their hearts. She taught it as well to Saint Alan de la Rupe. “The recital of the Rosary – the Virgin Mary told him – is a very useful prayer, a gift which pleases greatly. And it is yet more and will do far greater good to those who meditate the Life, Passion and Glory of Jesus Christ, since this meditation is the soul of such prayers.” In effect, the Rosary without meditation on the sacred mysteries of our salvation would be like a body without a soul, excellent matter without its form, which is the meditation, which distinguishes the Rosary from other prayers. The Mysteries are the fragrant flowers of the mystical rosebush on which pious souls alight, like diligent bees, to gather the marvellous nectar and produce the honey of a solid devotion.

For centuries, the Rosary consisted of fifteen mysteries: five joyful, five sorrowful and five glorious. But during the first Holy Palmarian Council, when the Palmarian Creed was published, Pope Saint Gregory XVII saw the need to apply the important saying from Christian tradition: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, which means: “What you pray is what you believe,” which means that prayer and belief are an integral part of one another and that the liturgy is intertwined with theology; indicating the relation between worship and belief. Those fifteen mysteries of the Rosary provided as material for meditation only fifteen episodes from the Work of Reparation and Redemption. So the Pope added the mysteries referring to the Divine Souls of Christ and Mary and the Immaculate Conception, reminding us of their divine benefits during the Old Testament. He added ten more sorrowful mysteries, which reflect especially the betrayals and humiliations Jesus suffered for us in His Holy Face, His Most Divine Soul and His Sacred Heart, and accentuate the Divine Mary’s mission as Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix. He also composed the Eucharistic Mysteries, centred on the real and true Presence of Jesus and Mary on our Altars where the Work of Reparation and Redemption is perpetuated, and on the immense love which led Him to give Himself to us in this August Sacrament. From then on, the Rosary consists of thirty-five mysteries, five for each day of the week.

Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great, who was the great propagator of the Holy Penitential Rosary, distributed the lives of Jesus Christ and of the Most Holy Virgin in thirty-five mysteries, which represent their virtues and principal labours. They are thirty-five pictures, showing scenes which should serve us as norms and examples for guiding our lives. Thirty-five beacons to guide us on our way through this world. Thirty-five luminous mirrors to allow us to know Jesus and Mary, know ourselves and enkindle Their fire of love in our hearts. Thirty-five conflagrations in whose flames we can set ourselves wholly ablaze

That Latin dictum is sometimes lengthened to *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*, “What you pray is what you believe, and what you live as well.” Which means that both our prayers and our way of life have to be in accord with our Holy Faith, and that we have to conform our lives to the most holy lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, imitating Their virtues and submitting in everything to God’s Law.

In reality, the Eucharistic Mysteries are not entirely new, for they were recommended by

Saint Dominic de Guzmán himself, as Saint John Eusebius Nieremberg explains: “As for ways to pray the Rosary, though they are many and excellent, I will give one in particular for being highly agreeable to the Virgin, since Saint Dominic recommended it as the Virgin had taught him, as She declared to Her most devout son Saint Alan, a Friar Preacher. This way is to pray, in the first part, in honour of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the second in honour of His Passion, the third in honour of the Most Blessed Sacrament and institution of that tremendous Mystery and of the other Sacraments. The first is to obtain the grace to live well, the second to have a good death, the third to honour the Body of Christ, receive the Sacraments well and not lack Them at life’s end. The Virgin Mary also recounted to Saint Alan that by this devotion many wonders befell a Spanish Cardinal, known to Saint Dominic, for having taken his counsel; and said that She Herself had advised that Cardinal a few days before his death so that he might prepare for it, as he did. Come the time of his last illness he had the circumstance that he was unable to open his mouth to receive Viaticum; and with everyone despairing of being able to give It to him, the Virgin came down from Heaven, and with Her virginal hand opened his mouth, restored his senses and speech, with which he received the Body of Christ; which communicated such grace to that happy Cardinal that he dissolved in sighs and tears, with such abundance that his eyes seemed two streams. The Virgin added that his heart, from pure sorrow for his sins and love of God, gave such beats in his chest that they were heard in the room, and his devotion increased so far that his heart broke, as though struck by a knife, blood running from his mouth, thus happily ending his devout life. Here can be seen the esteem shown by the Virgin for the Most Holy Sacrament, and how much She wishes us to dispose ourselves for It; for in the devotion of Her Rosary which She taught to Saint Dominic, She wanted us to celebrate the memory of this Mystery and dispose ourselves to reverence It and receive It with fruit.”



Devotion should be accompanied by acts of virtue. Devotion to the Virgin does not only mean praying the Rosary and Way of the Cross and other prayers to Her but in practising the virtues of humility, patience and mercy for Her sake; and this effect is the principal one of devotion, and that which gives life and efficacy to everything else. To do good is the most important effect, and prayers should be directed to this end.

To increase our fondness and cordial love for this pious Mother, it is well sometimes to ponder Her grandeur and virtue. Mary had certain devotees who spent an hour every day considering Her examples, benefits and prerogatives. Thus did pious Father Gonzalo da Silveira and other Jesuits; and thus did and recommended Saint John Tauler of the Order of Saint Dominic. Clearly, we cannot let days specially dedicated to the Virgin Mary pass without doing Her some extraordinary service. On Her Feasts and their Novenas we have to reform ourselves and awaken greater fervour in us, examine our negligences, renew our good desires, renew our holy resolutions, confirm ourselves in them, progressing further, importuning Our Mother always to assist us with Her favour.

Any human task is performed better when the one who does it has studied his profession and tries to perform it well. Hence if we want to make good use of the time we dedicate to praying the Holy Penitential Rosary and draw abundant fruits, it is right that we find out how to do so most effectively, since we have at stake our eternal salvation, our perseverance in the Faith, our sanctification, the triumph of Holy Church, and the salvation of our families and of other countless souls.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina was a firm believer in combining meditation with the Rosary and said: “Love the Virgin and pray the Rosary, because Her Rosary is the arm against the world’s evils today... The person who meditates and raises his mind to God, Who is the

mirror of his soul, seeks to know his faults, tries to correct them, moderates his impulses and puts his conscience in order.” Pope Pius XII underlines the benefits of meditating the Rosary in his encyclicals and writes: “And in truth, by the frequent meditation of the mysteries, the spirit, little by little and without difficulty, absorbs and assimilates the virtues enclosed in them, is encouraged in an admirable way to hope for the everlasting goods and feels inclined, gently and powerfully, to follow the footsteps of Christ Himself and of His Mother.”

On the 13th of August 1917, in Her fourth apparition in Fátima, the Virgin told the seers: “Continue to pray the Rosary every day... Pray, pray much and make sacrifices, since many souls go to Hell for not having anyone to make sacrifices and pray for them.” Will someone be other than criminal who can easily save his brother from death, but does nothing for him? By our prayers and sacrifices we can free from eternal death so many souls on the way to Hell. Whoever does not love his neighbour does not love God. And someone who ignores his neighbour’s eternal happiness, does not love Him. God has created us so that by using our liberty well, we may be eternally happy in Heaven.

The Most Holy Virgin is pledged to save all Her children. But many pledge themselves to be eternally unhappy in Hell. Here is an extract from the Fátima Message: “I have come to exhort sinners to amend their lives and not offend Our Lord any further, already far too much offended. Pray, pray much for sinners. Men must needs amend, ask forgiveness. God wants devotion to My Heart and the practice of the first Saturdays of the month to be established in the whole world. If all this I ask for is done, there will be peace...”

The principal work of virtue is to work for the salvation of our neighbour’s soul, so that the apostolate of the Holy Rosary is a work of virtue highly pleasing to God. Faithful devotees of the Most Holy Virgin should not be content with the daily pious recital of the Rosary, but they should as well strive to propagate this saving devotion among all those on whom they have any influence. By this they can be sure that they will earn the appreciation of the Mother of God, and will draw down upon themselves Her favours and Her blessings; and as it is notorious that the practice of the Holy Rosary influences the acquisition of sound morals, let Mary’s devotee be assured that he will have influenced the salvation of as many souls as the persons whom he drew to this devotion; and will be the object of that promise in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: “Those who make Me known will obtain everlasting life.”

Hear these precious words of Pope Saint Leo XIII: “Let Christians continue taking ever more to heart the habit of praying the Rosary, which our forebears regarded as a sure help in all their troubles and as a noble watchword of Christian piety.” And again: “We have shown that this admirable crown, formed by the angelic greeting and the Lord’s prayer and joined to the practice of meditation, is a kind of wonderful supplication to obtain in high degree, above all, immortal life; as it offers, besides the excellent fruits of the entreaties, an ideal buttress for the faith and an eminent model of virtue by means of the mysteries proposed for our consideration.”

Meditation. Prayer and meditation, says Saint Bernard, are so closely joined to each other that prayer comes to be like the beacon, from which meditation receives light and heat. This is to be found in the Rosary, and led blessed Alan de la Rupe to say that, “the Rosary is, so to say, the Queen of all prayers, ‘*Regina omnium orationum*’, for the reason that it is the most beautiful of every devotional practice.” Many Christians of today have forgotten how to pray and, more especially, how to meditate. The spirit of the world with all its pomps and seductions, its love of pleasure and good cheer, captivates the hearts of many. The spirit of this world and the Rosary Devotion are not compatible. The world versus the Cross, sensual pleasure versus piety, they are always in opposition. When the spirit of the world reigns in a soul, the Rosary appears tedious and soporific.

On taking certain foods, we discover that at first we do not like them, then we begin to like them and finally we find them delicious. What is the reason? At the start our palate was not used to them. In the same way, many Christians at the beginning do not enjoy the Rosary;

but if they continue to pray it, they will like it, it will become their favourite, and once they have gone deep into its meaning, will never abandon it. The Rosary is one of the most popular devotions because it is one of the most beautiful and worthwhile.

Saint Angela of Foligno one day asked the Lord to let her know by what practice she could honour Him most. He appeared to Her on the Cross and told her: "My daughter, contemplate My wounds!" She thus learnt from the most loving Saviour that nothing is so agreeable to Him as meditation on His sufferings. Later Jesus showed her His Head wounds, and several details of His torments, and told her: "I have suffered all this for your salvation, what can you do to equal the love I have for you?"

The Holy Sacrifice of Mass gives infinite honour to the Most Holy Trinity, as it represents and perpetuates the Passion of Jesus Christ. By it we offer up the merits of His Obedience, Suffering and Blood. The whole heavenly court receives accidental glory from Holy Mass. Several doctors, among them Saint Thomas, tell us that likewise Holy Communion received by the faithful gives joy to Heaven, since the Most Blessed Sacrament is a memorial of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ and by its means men share its fruits and advance along the way of salvation. Besides, according to each person's greater or lesser disposition, the whole Church will benefit more or less.

Well then, the Holy Rosary recited with meditation on the sacred mysteries is a sacrifice of praise to God for the benefit of our redemption, and a devout remembrance of the Life, Passion, Death and Glory of Jesus Christ. Hence it is true that the Rosary gives accidental glory and joy to Jesus Christ, to the Most Holy Virgin and to the other Blessed, since for our eternal happiness they desire for us nothing so important as to see us occupied in an exercise so glorious to the Lord and salutary for us.

Generally very little emphasis is placed on the importance of meditation, when in reality it constitutes the life and soul itself of the Rosary. The true nature of devotion to the Holy Rosary is contained in thinking seriously on the Mysteries and on the pious sentiments to which our thoughts give rise in our hearts. This devotion does not consist, nor was ever intended to consist, in a mere vocal repetition of the Our Father and the Hail Mary, together with the mechanical fingering of the beads. The Rosary has two parts, so to say, a body and a soul. The Our Fathers, the Hail Marys and the beads form what can simply be called the body of the Rosary; while the meditation is its very life and soul, since it is by meditation that sparks of love are drawn from the heart, and in the heart's sentiments is where the true value of the Rosary lies.

What glory will it not be for Jesus Christ Himself to see us meditating devoutly and lovingly in this world on His humiliations, torments and cruel and shameful death? Will there be anything more effective to move us and lead us to sincere penance?

The Christian who does not meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary shows great ingratitude towards Jesus Christ and the little esteem he has for all that the Divine Saviour suffered to redeem mankind. His conduct seems to say that he is unaware of the life of Jesus Christ and is little concerned to know what Jesus has done and suffered to save us. He can well fear that, for not having known Jesus Christ or having forgotten Him, he be rejected on the day of judgement with this reproach: "Truly, I tell you, I do not know you!" Let us then meditate on the life and sufferings of the Saviour by means of the Holy Rosary. Let us learn to know Him well and acknowledge His benefits, so that He acknowledge us as His children and friends on the day of judgement.

The Most Holy Mother of the Saviour dedicated Her whole life to meditating on the virtues and sufferings of Her Son. When She heard the Angels singing hymns of praise at



His birth, when She saw the shepherds adoring Him in the stable, She was filled with admiration and meditated on these wonders. She compared the grandeur of the Incarnate Word with His profound humiliation; the straw and the crib with His throne and the Bosom of the Father, the power of a God with the weakness of a child; His wisdom with His simplicity. The Gospel says so: "The Divine Mary kept all these things in Her heart."

One day the Most Holy Virgin told Saint Bridget: "When I contemplated the beauty, modesty and wisdom of My Son, I felt transported with joy. When I considered that His hands and His feet were to be pierced by nails, I shed torrents of tears and My heart broke with sorrow and sadness."

After the Ascension, the Most Holy Virgin dedicated the rest of Her life to visit in spirit the places sanctified by the Divine Saviour with His presence and torments. There She meditated on the outpouring of His charity and the rigours of His Passion.

All true Christians have one single faith, adore one single God, hope in one single happiness in Heaven, acknowledge one single Mediator, Jesus Christ... All should imitate this Divine Model and to do so consider the Mysteries of His Life, His Virtues and His Glory.

It is a mistake to imagine that meditation on the truths of Faith and of the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ is just for Priests, Religious and those who have retired from the bustle of the world. If Religious and Churchmen are obliged to meditate on the great truths of our sacrosanct religion in order to respond worthily to their vocation, lay people are likewise, owing to the dangers in which they find themselves every day. Hence they should arm themselves with the frequent remembrance of the Life, Virtues and Sufferings of the Saviour, which the Mysteries of the Rosary present to us.

In case there is anyone who knows little of meditation in prayer, let us deal with this important matter. The earth is full of iniquity because there is no one who meditates. Meditation is like the eye of man, if he neither sees nor looks where he steps, he will inevitably fall; in the same way, the man who does not meditate neither sees his needs nor knows them, and so does not ask for the remedy or does not pray. The soul without prayer cannot live, so that Saint John Chrysostom said: "Just as the body separated from the soul is dead, so too the soul separated from prayer is dead. Prayer does for the soul what water does for plants; if plants are not watered, they cease to grow, and die. The same happens to souls without the exercise of prayer, which supplies the waters of grace; hence Jesus Christ, who well knew the need we have for prayer, in the Holy Gospel with so much insistence charges us to pray: 'Ask and you shall receive... It is necessary ever to pray and never to lose heart.' 'Pray ceaselessly so as not to fall in temptation'."

This meditation and prayer will be with the exercise of the three powers of the soul, that is, using our memory, our understanding and our will directed to that end, and with the application in imagination of our bodily senses.

We should imagine the place as though we were present ourselves in the same spot in which the events of the mystery are taking place. On praying, with the memory we recall the episode to meditate, and direct our senses to the persons intervening in the mystery involved, the words they say and the actions they perform. With the understanding we will ponder and ask ourselves: 'Who is suffering? What is he suffering? Who is he suffering for? Why is he suffering?'

With the will we shall practise producing sentiments: of admiration... love... thanksgiving... joy, grief or compassion. Renunciation of the goods, honours and delights of this world in imitation of Jesus Christ. Sorrow and grief for the past, for letting ourselves be drawn into evil and offending the Lord. Confusion for the present, seeing our coldness of heart. The desire to seek perfection, and resolving to do so at that moment.

The will is also used to make resolutions to uproot vices and plant virtues; and to ask for helps to overcome some particular vice, or acquire some particular virtue, and to supplicate graces for our neighbours' needs.

We must give thanks to God for having heard us and offer Him the good thoughts, affections, desires and resolutions of our prayer. Ask Him to bless our resolutions and trust in obtaining our requests by the merits of Jesus Christ and by the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin. We should offer up to God all that grieves us, thinking on the sufferings of God made Man, according to the mysteries of the Rosary.

It is well to read about the different mysteries of the Rosary; all there is about them in the Holy Bible and in the Treatise on the Holy Mass. Spiritual reading is for the soul what food is for the body.

Perhaps someone shall say: I don't know how to meditate or think about anything. Answer: you know how to think about meals, clothing and temporal things, and you don't know how to think about spiritual and eternal things? It's because you don't want to.

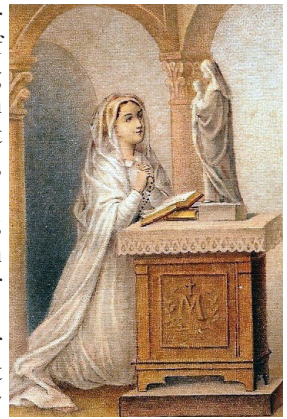
Another will say: I have no time. Answer: you have time to eat, sleep, stroll, play, sin and go to Hell, and have you no time to save your soul, which is the only business we truly have? Our occupations never make us forget to eat. Well, the soul needs prayer no less than the body needs nourishment. Woe to us if for occupations or other causes we abandon and do no prayer, for we are lost forever! Let us then do prayer, always and without breaks, as Jesus Christ says.

If we have no wish to be ruined by a worldly spirit, this malign spirit should be banished from our hearts. Praying the Rosary will greatly contribute to achieving this. The spirit of the world, the snares of Satan and the evil inclinations of our fallen nature are the three enemies which have power over our minds, hearts and bodies. They are like a three-headed serpent which strangles many Christians and ruins them. What arm is capable of slaying this gigantic serpent? Behold, it is the Rosary, which acts as a triple antidote against the enemies of the soul and besides is spiritual nourishment that infuses greater fervour for the Sacred Eucharist. With invincible power the Rosary expels this dreaded serpent from our hearts.

In its joyful Mysteries, full of grace, the Rosary is directed to reminding us of God's generous, creative and provident action, that having no need of us for anything, yet grants us existence in order to communicate His love to us. Hence these mysteries oppose our pride of life, our conceit, our rejection of God's Commandments. The Rosary shows us the Son of God in His inexpressible humility and humiliation, it shows us the true Incarnate God, the Almighty, as a weak and defenceless Child; the Most High stripped in humility to an astonishing degree. Whoever is able to pray the joyful Mysteries appropriately, in each Mystery can hear this exhortation: "Learn from Me, who am meek and humble of heart."

In its Sorrowful Mysteries the Rosary is directed against the concupiscence of the flesh, against the sinful desires that degrade man from his sublime likeness to God and place him on the level of beasts. Because it shows us the unspeakable sufferings our Saviour bore from His earliest childhood and throughout His earthly life, especially in His agony, in Judas' betrayal, in His disciples' abandonment, in countless injuries and affronts, in Peter's denials, in His scourging, in the crowning with thorns, on the way up to Calvary and on the Cross. How terrible Jesus' martyrdom in His Most Sacred Body, in His Immaculate Flesh, for the sins of mankind's sensuality! How terrible the sufferings of the Divine Mary as Coreparatrix and Coredemptrix! Once aware of these sufferings, how can anyone still commit sins of the flesh and thereby contaminate his soul, purchased by the Most Precious Blood of Christ?

In its Glorious Mysteries, the Rosary is directed against the insatiable craving for possessions and riches, the concupiscence of the eyes. It shows us Our Saviour in His victory over death, in His triumphant entry into Heaven, in the abundance of His heavenly riches which He dispenses by way of the Holy Ghost. The Rosary in its glorious mysteries



shows us the eternal possessions, infinitely sublime, which await us in our beautiful celestial home. If we follow the Way of the Cross with Jesus and Mary, we shall also be crowned by Jesus in union with Mary. Whoever shall contemplate the beauties of Heaven will be filled with contempt for the passing goods of this earth and with longing for the inconceivable treasures of eternity.

Besides being an efficient antidote against the threefold worldly spirit, the Holy Rosary is spiritual nourishment, for in its Eucharistic Mysteries it shows us the infinite Love for mankind of Our Redeemer, desiring to remain among us eucharistically, it teaches us the mysteries wrought by God in this Most August Sacrament. He reminds of the mission and importance of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and of her Real and True Presence in the Eucharist. In a word, it prepares and strengthens us with holy thoughts to receive the Sacred Eucharist with love and devotion, hub of every Christian's spiritual life.

This devout meditation of the Mysteries gives the Rosary all its value. The whole marvellous life of Our Saviour and of the Most Holy Virgin, from the beginning, from the creation of Their Divine Souls, passing through the moment of the Incarnation of Our Lord up till the great day on which He crowned His Virgin Mother in Heaven, should appear before the eyes of the soul as a single harmonious picture comprehensible to all.

Example. *Mary instructs Her servants in prayer and the interior life.* As one of the principal means that we can employ to sustain us and progress in holiness is prayer, it is no surprise that the Mother of God should inspire Her faithful children in this question, and even at times take care to instruct them in certain practices. Blessed Elzear, count of Ariam, according to his biographer, received the grace to be instructed in matters of prayer by the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of all Goodness, thanks to the entreaties of his nursemaid. She was a highly virtuous woman, and fearing for him, with great frequency commended him to God. One day when redoubling her fervent prayers for the boy while hearing Mass, she heard a voice saying: "The Queen of Heaven has taken charge of his instruction"; but the pious woman, fearing that this might be an illusion, requested the Lord to let her know if that reply came from Him, which was confirmed to her before leaving church; but as it is very proper to humble souls always to doubt themselves, she went to tell her Confessor. The wise and prudent Friar, so as not to fall into error, decided to speak for a while with the child Elzear and find out for himself how he performed his acts of piety, in particular prayer, the way he had learnt to pray. The noble child, unaware of the reason the Friar put his questions to him, answered innocently that from the start of the meditation he commended himself to the Virgin, and prayed that She might enlighten him on the graces he should ask for and engrave deeply in his heart the sentiments with which the Holy Ghost might inspire him; next he said the Angelic Salutation, and after he had offered this little homage to his Good Mother, he employed the time of prayer in holy and fervent affections without ever having experienced the least upset. The Friar was convinced that the Most Holy Virgin, who loved the boy, had taken charge of instructing him and that She had granted him the gift of prayer.

Have a tender devotion to Mary, invoke Her frequently, and better still before beginning any task, however slight it may be. The true devotees of Mary always invoke Her whenever the clock chimes, and there are even those who pray to Her whenever they can and whenever they wake up at night.

Practical way for praying the Rosary:

In practice, and after all we have just said, what is it we have to do? In what way should the faithful in general and particularly young women proud to be Daughters of Mary, practise the devotion of the Holy Rosary?

The Preparation. In the first place, it is necessary that among all devotions to the Most Holy Virgin, the Rosary be their favourite and choice devotion. Every Christian who gives importance to the interests of his soul, will not let any day pass without reciting the Holy Rosary. This practice, as simple as it is pleasing to the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God

and Our Mother, has come to be the mark of good Christians. Happy are those who persevere in the recital of the Most Holy Rosary and fulfil this duty attentively! A thousand times happy the families accustomed to pray the Holy Rosary daily! In many homes the Rosary is prayed in common, with the family divided into two choirs imitating the chant of the Religious, or rather that of the Angels, who in Heaven alternate the praises of the Lord in their chants. Blessed are these homes and their dwellers, who by this practice win the powerful protection of the Most Holy Virgin and draw Heaven's blessings down upon them.

Prayer has to be holding the Rosary. If the Rosary is blessed, there are more indulgences, but in any case to gain them requires us not to be busy with things which hinder attention to prayer during recitation, without one or other involuntary distraction being an obstacle; and that in each decade the corresponding mystery be meditated. Those unable to meditate, however, should put into practice the advice given above and little by little will learn to like and draw spiritual benefits from their meditations, and meanwhile they gain the indulgences by praying devoutly.

The Creed which is sung in the Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar every day before reciting the Holy Rosary is a prayer of great merit, as it is a sacred compendium and summary of Christian truths. Faith is effectively the base, the foundation and beginning of all Christian virtues, of all the eternal truths and of all petitions pleasing to God. Whoever approaches God must begin by believing. Truly, whoever approaches God in prayer should begin with an act of faith, and the greater the faith, the more effective and meritorious for him and the more glorious for God will his prayer be.

We shall not delay in explaining the words of the Creed. But we cannot do less than explain the first words: 'I believe in one God'. They enclose acts of the three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity. They have a wonderful efficacy for sanctifying us and routing the devil. Many Saints overcame temptations with the words: 'I believe in God' – especially those against faith, hope and charity – during life and at the hour of death. They were the last words which Saint Peter of Verona, known as Saint Peter Martyr, wrote as best he could in the sand with his finger moistened in his own blood when, grievously wounded by a heretic, he was about to expire.

Faith is the one key which allows us to enter into all the mysteries of Jesus and Mary contained in the Holy Rosary. Therefore the need to precede the Rosary by reciting the Creed with great attention and devotion. And the more lively and resolute our faith may be, the more meritorious will our Rosary be. Charity must needs enliven and hearten it, meaning that to recite the Holy Rosary well, you should be in the Grace of God or seeking It. It is necessary besides that faith should be robust and constant, namely, that in the recital of the Holy Rosary we should not seek only sensible pleasure and spiritual consolation. In other words, we should not abandon it when involuntary distractions assault the mind, with incomprehensible tedium in the soul, dreariness or almost continuous sluggishness in the body. To recite the Rosary well there is no need for pleasure, or consolation, or sighs, or fervour and tears, or prolonged exercise of the imagination. Pure faith and upright intention are enough.

Before beginning the Rosary, the heart should be raised up to God who is present, make Him a profound reverence and petition Him for His grace to pray this Rosary in a way that pleases Him, offering Him all the words, thoughts, affections and desires one may have, directing them all to His glory and that of the Virgin Our Lady, in thanksgiving for the mercies received, and in satisfaction for sins and negligence in His service and so that He grant the virtues and all else needed to serve Him to perfection. And if the Rosary is to be





offered up for the needs of the Church, or for someone in particular living or dead, now is the moment to make this offering, highlighting the four ends to which I can direct my prayer, namely the glorification and praise of God for being who He is, thanksgiving for His benefits, satisfaction for my sins, impetration of virtues. When I offer the Rosary for another, I give God the satisfaction I can and, without prejudicing the person, I may offer it as well for myself for those four ends.

Why the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and Hail Mary Most Pure.

After this offering we recite the ten Our Fathers, the ten Hail Marys, the ten Glory bes, the ten Hail Mary Most Pure, unhurriedly and attentively, thinking about the meaning of the words, or about the person referred to, namely Our Lord God, or the Virgin Our Lady. She, though in Heaven, sees and hears us,

and understands our prayer, and with Her I can speak as if She were close by me on earth.

Regarding the Holy Penitential Rosary, Father Felix Sardá y Salvany: Let no one think that repeatedly praying Our Fathers, Hail Marys, Glory bes, is mere routine. It is no simple routine to do the same things in the same way when there is a reason for doing so. Hence, when something is repeated identically for centuries and centuries, when reasons can be given for this, it is no gross routine but praiseworthy perseverance. The Catholic Religion we profess is no routine, or anything similar, for though it always recommends the same practices, for each one of them, even the least, she has the loftiest reasons known to those who have the goodwill to enquire after them.

Let us see some explanations of the deep theological reason for which the ‘Hail Mary’ always comes after the ‘Our Father’, the ‘Glory be’ after these two, and the ‘Hail Mary Most Pure’ as the finale.

These four prayers contain nothing less than the most essential part of Catholicism, after the Sacrifice of Mass and the Sacraments, namely prayer, and are its most complete and perfect formula. All the wisdom of the most eminent theologians has not succeeded in prescribing a simpler and more complete means of prayer than joining together the Our Father and the Hail Mary and, after the two, the Glory be.

Do you know what the Our Father is? It is the petition dictated by Jesus Christ Himself in person, who left it as a precious original to His disciples so that we might all copy it as often as we have to address the Eternal Father to entreat something. The first difficulty to affect any citizen when presenting a petition to a lofty authority is how to express it. Hence custom has led to the use of certain formulas which with slight changes can be used for every case. Consequently they tell someone in those straits: “Fill up an application form.” And if owing to his simplicity he does not know how to begin, a charitable official will not be lacking there to take the pen from his hand, write, and after a moment tell him: “Ea, sign here below now and the business is done.” The example is run-of-the-mill, but quite exact. Before God we are far less than simple locals before the governor of a province, and in spite of all, feeling our needs deeply, we do not hit on the remedy we should ask for, and even if we did, we would perhaps not know how to ask for it. Christ, as envoy of God the Father to instruct us, saw this need, and one day told us how we should ask: “When you pray, say: ‘Our Father who art in Heaven...’” And He dictated the Our Father. And the petition whose original Christ placed in our hands lacks neither comma nor full stop. It embraces all needs, beginning with those of the soul, followed by those of the body, and ending with that so expressive: ‘Deliver us from evil’, which says everything. And it is very short, as every petition should be, and which after ‘Most Excellent Sir’ down to ‘A grace I await, etc.’, should contain but the essence of the supplication. The heading is formed by the words: ‘Our Father who art in

Heaven', and the conclusion is constituted by the 'Amen' we add, and which means 'So be it', and is no more than 'a Grace I await from the good heart, etc.' This comparison fits perfectly. The petition dictated by Christ is complete and needs no appendices, so that the Hail Mary does not form part of the petition. The Hail Mary is, let us say, the letter of recommendation, since in Heaven the intercessors can also influence, since righteous souls have more power before God than all the pretty faces there have been and will be before a man in authority. In Heaven letters of recommendation also help, since Catholic dogma admits them under the name of intercession, though protestants may complain. And Catholic teaching tells us that close to God's throne there is a Woman, whom the Angels on God's behalf, already in this world addressed as 'Full of Grace', and whom we recognize as full of glory, of power and of majesty. She is Mother of the King, and by this all is said. She is besides of incomparable beauty, in Soul even more than in Body. And this being so, can do much, ever so much, and one little word of Hers, let us say one single gesture, a movement of the heart, all suffice to obtain from God's Throne the mercy we ask for. Therefore we catch hold of Her Mantle, and after having signed the usual petition, we join to it another little petition to the Mother of the King, to back up the first, and if convenient, present it Herself in person. Hence, after addressing Her some greetings we tell Her: 'Pray for us sinners': pray, that is, recommend, support, and may your concern avail us. In a word, the above is a true and precious letter of recommendation.

Then comes the 'Glory be'. The Our Father is the petition, the Hail Mary is the recommendation. The 'Glory be' comes to be the address or destination. And this is something obvious and quite natural. What is the end purpose of every prayer and every good work for a Catholic? Not precisely acquiring the grace requested, rather the glory of God by way of acquiring that grace. The Glory of God is the supreme end of all, both in the natural order as in the supernatural. The Heavens, the earth, Angels, men, bodies and souls were all created for this end. Whatever does not have this end is essentially defective. Whoever were to desire the greatest and most lofty crown of heroic virtue, if he has not implicitly or explicitly focused this desire on the glory of God, would not be a saint, but a satanic egoist. Even the desire to save our souls should be subordinated to this sole and supreme purpose, that it be for the glory of God. Hence that blessed motto of a great Saint, and of a great religious Society: "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*", that is: "For the greater glory of God", is more eloquent and says more than a hundred books. If the glory of God, then, has to be the purpose of all, with greater reason should it be the purpose of every prayer. It is good then to state this after the prayer, as though we were to say: add onto the envelope of the petition that we send to God accompanied by Mary's recommendation, this address: "All that I have just asked is for the glory of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." 'Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost'. Everyone knows the meaning of this, though certain young people may no longer know. And each bead is completed by a 'Hail Mary Most Pure, conceived without sin'; by which we give thanks to God and place in Most Holy Mary's hands the graces received through Her intercession, trusting that She, as Good Mother, will know how to administer them for the glory of God and to our greater profit.

Saint Louis de la Puente, an eminent doctor on mental prayer, explains how to join the devout recital of the Our Fathers to meditation on the mysteries of Our Lady's Rosary; and how the efficacy of vocal prayer increases greatly when joined to mental prayer, and he sets out three of the most profitable methods of joining them, so that each may choose the one most helpful to his devotion, taking one at one time and another at another time, to overcome tedium by this holy variety.

The first way of praying the Rosary is to meditate on the words of the Our Father and the Hail Mary. The Our Father is like a precious pearl to which the Hail Mary is united. Human lips cannot formulate a prayer which draws the attention of our Heavenly Father more powerfully than the prayer taught by Our Divine Lord Himself. He who gave us the

life of grace teaches us to pray as well, to preserve this life. Meditation can be done for example by meditating on each set of ten beads one of the seven petitions of the Our Father prayer. To be convinced of its efficacy, it is well first of all to know the excellence of the Rosary, shown by the prayers which compose it.

The Our Father is brief, so that all can learn it, is instructive and intelligible for ordinary people and is full of mysteries for the learned, it includes all our duties to God and to our neighbour. It has been appropriately called 'a summary of the whole Gospel' and also sums up the psalms. Saint Chrysostom says that whoever does not pray as the Divine Master did and taught is no disciple of His. Also that God the Father takes no pleasure in prayer made up in a human spirit, but that which His Son taught us.

We should recite the Lord's prayer with the certainty that the Eternal Father will hear us, being His Son's prayer, whom He always hears, and whose members we are. Could such a good Father perhaps reject a petition so well founded, based as it is on the merits and intercession of such a worthy Son? Saint Augustine already assured as the Palmarian Catechism teaches us, that the Our Father and Hail Mary well prayed blot out venial sins. The just man falls seven times a day, but with the seven petitions of the Our Father he can remedy his falls and fortify himself against his enemies. It is a short and easy prayer, so that frail as we are and subject as we are to so many miseries, by praying it with greater frequency and devotion we may receive swifter help.

Happy the man who recites the prayer taught by the Lord and meditates on each word attentively! In it he finds all that he needs and can wish for! When we pray this admirable entreaty, from the first moment we captivate God's Heart by invoking Him with the sweet name of Father.

Hence we prefer the Our Father to all other prayers. Saint Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, prayed the Our Father frequently during the day, without omitting it during illness. On one occasion when he had repeated it often during a night on which he had suffered considerably; his attendant commented that the effort was too much for him and it would doubtless exhaust him. "Oh, no – replied the saintly Bishop, – the repetition of this beautiful prayer consoles and fortifies me."

The Our Father honours God. The Son of God ever glorifies the Father by his deeds, and came into this world to teach men to glorify Him. He has taught them the way to honour Him by this prayer He deigned to dictate to them. We should, then, recite it frequently and attentively and in the same spirit in which He composed it.

On reciting each word of the Lord's prayer, we honour the divine perfections. We honour his fruitfulness calling Him Father: O Father, You who from eternity beget a Son equal to Yourself, eternal and consubstantial, one same Essence, one same power, one same goodness, one same wisdom, together with You; Father and Son who, by loving each other, give procession to the Holy Ghost, who is God like Both of You. Three adorable persons who are one single God! When we devoutly pray this divine orison, we realize as many acts of the most noble Christian virtues as words we pronounce.

On saying '*Our Father who art in Heaven*', we make acts of faith, adoration and humility. 'Our Father', the most tender of fathers, omnipotent in creation, admirable in the conservation of creatures, supremely lovable in His providence and infinitely good in the Work of Redemption. God is our Father! Hence we are all brethren and Heaven is our fatherland and our inheritance. Does this not suffice to inspire us at the same time with love for God and love for neighbour, and detachment from all the things of this earth?

'*Our Father*', that is, Father of mankind, by creation, conservation and redemption, merciful Father to sinners, Father and friend to the just, magnificent Father to the Blessed. What reverence, what trust, what love should these words instil into our hearts! God, our Father, and Christ Himself desire that we call Him by that name! How pleasant to the ears of the Heavenly Father our Creator must these words be when spoken by the lips of his

children! How wonderfully the fraternal love we should bear for one another is thus expressed!

'Who art'. By these words we admire the immensity, the grandeur and fullness of the Divine Essence, who is in truth called "He who is", that is, the one who exists essentially, necessarily and eternally, who is the Being of beings, the Cause of all being; Who contains in Himself in eminent degree the perfections of all beings. Who is in them all with His essence, presence and power, without being encompassed by any being except by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Temple and Tabernacle of the Most Holy Trinity. We honour His sublimity, glory and majesty in the words 'who art in Heaven', that is, as seated on His throne to exercise justice over all men; and at the same time, 'who art in Heaven', our future home, where we will live forever in company with the Saints.



On desiring *'hallowed be Thy Name'*, we show our ardent zeal for His glory and adore His sanctity; we desire that He be praised in Heaven by the Angels and Saints who constantly chant 'Holy, Holy, Holy'; and on earth, by all mankind, so that the Name of God be known and loved everywhere, and that by Him we too may obtain sanctity.

When we say *'Thy Kingdom come'*, we recognize His sovereignty and the justice of His Laws, yearning for His Kingdom to arrive, and we ask God to reign in us by means of His grace and love here on earth, as He reigns in His Glory in Heaven. May Christ's Reign spread to every part of the world! At the same time it is an act of hope.

On saying *'Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'*, we show the spirit of perfect obedience, our longing for all men to obey Him on earth as the Angels do in Heaven. Let us dwell in thought on doing the Will of God on earth as the Angels and Saints do in Heaven. This petition embraces all perfection. Let us submit our will absolutely to God's Will, let us place no obstacle to God's Will working in us, so that it be done in us and by us with complete conformity.

Asking Him *'Give us this day our daily bread,'* we believe in His Providence, and practise poverty according to the spirit, and detachment from the goods of this earth. But we also request and hope for our daily Bread from Heaven for our souls, especially Holy Communion and the grace of God.

On imploring Him, *'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'*, on the one hand, by making an act of contrition, we ask Him to forgive us our sins, since for how many are we guilty each day! Oh! May God forgive them. Willingly shall we confess them, forgive our neighbour and make atonement; and, on the other hand, by forgiving those who have offended us, we practise mercy to perfection in its highest degree.

On praying to Him *'and let us not fall in temptation, but deliver us from evil'*, we recognize His power, hoping to be freed by Him from evil, we trust ourselves to His goodness and make acts of humility, prudence and fortitude. Since we must live in a world which has become a permanent occasion of sin, may God fortify our will to resist temptations and do away with the occasions of sin. On hoping that He free us from evil, we also practise patience. And we are also asking Him to free us from sin, the one evil on earth; and in life to come, free us from eternal death.

Amen. I believe that You, O God, will hear my prayer, when I ask 'so be it', since prayer full of faith is heard.

Finally, on asking for all this, not only for ourselves but as well for our neighbours and for all the members of the Church, we behave like true children of God, we imitate Him with a charity which embraces all men and we fulfil the commandment to love our neighbour.

In the Our Father we reject all sin and practise the Commandments of God's Law. On reciting this prayer we detest all sins and practise God's Commandments when our heart agrees with our tongue and we harbour no intention contrary to the divine words; given that



when we reflect that God is in Heaven – that is, infinitely above us by the grandeur of His Majesty – we are plunged into the deepest respect in His presence. Overcome by dread, we fly from arrogance and call to mind our nothingness. On pronouncing the name ‘Father’, we remember that we have received existence from God by way of our parents and instruction by way of our teachers, who all represent God to us, whose living image they are. In their presence we feel obliged to honour them, or better said, to honour God in their persons and keep far from despising and afflicting them. When we desire that the Holy Name of God be glorified, we are far indeed from profaning It. When we consider the kingdom of God as our birthright, we renounce all inordinate attachment to the goods of this world. When we sincerely ask for our neighbour the same goods as we desire for ourselves, we renounce hatred, discord and envy.

On asking God for our daily bread, we detest gluttony and sensuality, which breed on abundance. On praying to God sincerely to forgive us as we forgive those who have offended us, we repress anger and vengeance, return good for evil and love our enemies. On asking God not to let us fall into sin at the moment of temptation, we show that we flee from idleness and seek the means to combat vice and save ourselves. On praying to God to free us from evil, we fear His justice and we rejoice because “The fear of God is the beginning of Divine Wisdom.” The fear of God leads man to avoid sin.

By being unfaithful to Thy grace, ‘let us not fall in temptation’ from the world and the flesh; ‘but deliver us from evil’, which is sin, from the evil of the temporal and eternal pains we have deserved. ‘Amen!’ – a very consoling expression, like a seal which God places at the end of our supplication to assure us that He has heard us. It is as though He were to respond to us: “Amen! Yes, let it be done as they have asked; it has been granted to them...” since this is the meaning of the term ‘Amen’.

To sum up, all God’s attributes are expressed in the Our Father. It contains the practice of all the virtues and the remedies against sin. The more often it is recited, the more is obtained from it, and the more the soul is refreshed and fortified in this crystalline fount of salvation which sprang from God’s own Heart.

The Angelic Greeting. The other chief Rosary prayer is the Hail Mary, repeated fifty times. The Hail Marys multiplied are roses intertwined one after another in the crown of Mary’s Psalter. The Angelic Greeting or Hail Mary is the message of joy brought by Archangel Gabriel to our fallen world, so in need of Redemption, continued by Saint Elizabeth and concluded by Holy Church with the supreme tribute of ‘Mother of God’.

Just as in the Our Father meditation, in this first method of praying the Rosary, the Hail Mary can be divided into five principal phrases, and in every ten beads take one phrase as matter for meditation.

For example, in the first decade I will meditate the words: ‘*Hail Mary, full of grace*’, pondering the grandeur enclosed in that sweetest name of Mary and the immensity of graces and virtues of which this Lady is full. In the second decade I will meditate the words, ‘*The Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou amongst women*’, meditating on the grandeur enclosed in the election of the Most Holy Virgin for so lofty a dignity and in the privileges granted Her for it. In the third decade I will meditate on the words ‘*and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus*’, pondering the excellence of the sweetest name of Jesus and the heavenly blessings come to us by His means. In the fourth decade I will contemplate the words ‘*Holy Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother*’ that is, ponder what it means to have a true Mother in Heaven who will never forsake us. In the fifth decade the remaining words, ‘*pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death*’, that is, I will meditate on the meaning enclosed in

these last words, pondering the efficacy of the prayers of the Virgin Mary, the need I have of them, especially at the hour of death, thinking of the sentiments with which I shall say these words when I find myself at that critical moment, and try to say them now with those same sentiments.

Are you struggling in the misery of sin? Invoke the wonderful Mary and tell Her: *Hail Mary!* Which means: I greet Thee with profound respect, Thou who art free from sin, free from calamity! She will free you from the calamity of your sins, and will turn you into Mary's true child.

Are you enveloped in the darkness of ignorance or error? Turn to Mary and tell Her: *Hail Mary!* That is, enlightened by rays from the Sun of Justice, She will communicate Her lights to you. Have you strayed from the path to Heaven? Invoke Mary, which means Star of the Sea and North Star, She who is our guide on our pilgrimage through this world. She will lead you to the haven of salvation.

Are you afflicted? Turn to Mary, which means Sea of Graces, for if She was full of bitterness in this world, now in Heaven She has become an ocean of the purest tenderness and graces beyond words. She will turn your grief into joy and your afflictions into consolation.

Are you burdened with the cross? Call Mary, which means Mother, and She, Mother of God and our Mother, will accompany you as Cyrenian, so that you can persevere, bearing your cross with love, fidelity and constancy in Christ's footsteps, for your salvation and that of many other souls.

Have you lost Grace? Honour the abundance of graces with which God filled the Most Holy Virgin, and tell Her 'Thou art *full of grace*' and of all the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. She will communicate Her graces to you.

Do you feel alone and forsaken by God? Turn to Mary and tell Her: *the Lord is with Thee*, in a more intimate and nobler form than in the Just and in the Saints, as You are one with Him, since He being Your Son, His flesh is Your flesh; and given that You are His Mother, You are with the Lord in perfect likeness and mutual charity. Tell Her finally: the entire Most Holy Trinity is with You, as You are His precious Temple. She will place you under the protection and safekeeping of the Lord.

Have you become the object of a divine curse? Tell Her: *blessed art Thou amongst all women*; all nations acclaim You for Your purity and fruitfulness; You who turned divine curses into blessings. She will bless you.

Are you hungry for the bread of grace and the bread of life? Turn to Her who brought the living Bread down from Heaven. Tell Her: *blessed is the fruit of Thy womb*, He whom You conceived without detriment to Your virginity, Whom You bore without difficulty and to Whom You gave birth without pain: namely Blessed Jesus, who rescued the enslaved world, cured the sick world, raised up dead mankind, brought back banished mankind, made criminal mankind righteous and saved condemned mankind. Thus your soul will surely be sated with the bread of grace in this life and of eternal life in the other. Amen.

Conclude your petition with the Church and say: *Holy Mary*, holy in body and soul, holy by Your unique, eternal self-sacrifice in serving God, holy in Your role as Mother of the God who gave You eminent sanctity according to Your infinite dignity.

Mother of God and also *our Mother*, our Advocate and Mediatrix, Treasures and Dispensatrix of God's graces: Obtain for us forgiveness for our sins and reconciliation with the Divine Majesty.

Pray for us sinners: For You show such compassion for those in misery that You neither despise nor reject sinners, without whom You would not be Mother of the Saviour. Pray for us *now*, during our short, frail and miserable lifetime; *now*, for only the present moment is ours; *now*, while attacked and surrounded by powerful and cruel enemies night and day.





At the hour of our death, so terrible and dangerous, when our strength fails, when our body and spirit are laid low by pain and alarm. At the hour of our death, when Satan redoubles his efforts to ruin us forever. At that hour in which our fate will be decided for all an eternity, happy or unhappy. Come to the aid of Your poor children, compassionate Mother, Advocate and Refuge of sinners. At the hour of death, keep from us the devils, our enemies and accusers, whose horrifying aspect alarms us. Come and enlighten us in the darkness of our death. Guide us and accompany us before the tribunal of our Judge, who is Your Son. Intercede for us so that He forgive us and receive us into the number of the elect in the mansion of eternal glory. Amen! So be it!

Father Crasset tells how Saint Mary of Oignies saw the Most Holy Virgin at the bedside of a devout widow of Willebroek who had a burning fever. The Most Holy Virgin consoled her and mitigated the burning fever.

Example. *A Hail Mary to Mary.* M Lucas, a deputy in the French Congress, arriving in Berlin on the 15th of May 1868, wrote to the Augsburg Post Office: "Allow me to tell you of an event which deeply impressed me... Yesterday at about ten in the morning, in a soap shop of this Capital, as a consequence of an escape of gas, a dreadful explosion occurred. Three people died at once and seventeen were injured. Throughout the city nothing else was spoken of, just this sad happening... Finding ourselves in the month of May, the Catholics of Berlin cease not to celebrate devotion to the Month of Mary with all its sparkle. In the afternoon I was attending this charming feast when I saw a tender girl enter the church, a poor maid, holding a precious bouquet of flowers, go up to Mary's Altar and place it at the feet of the image, unable to hold back her tears. I wanted to know the reason, and the girl herself gave me this reply: 'Yesterday morning, my mistress sent me on an errand to a soap shop which had just been turned into a heap of ruins. On passing by a church, I remembered that in the evening I would not be able to attend the Month of Mary, and the thought came to me to pray a Hail Mary there. I entered, and once I had said the Hail Mary, I went on my way to the soap shop. I had already reached the doors of the house when I felt a tremendous explosion. If I had not prayed that Hail Mary, I would have arrived moments before and been a victim of the explosion. I would now be in the cemetery.' And saying this the poor girl sobbing and laughing added: 'Ah! What would my mother have said if I had died?' This is the sweetest and most pious consolation I have received since I left France."

Is there perhaps any prayer more pleasing to God and to the Most Holy Virgin, and easier, sweeter and better for men? Let us harbour it continuously in the heart and on our lips to honour the Most Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ Our Saviour and His Most Holy Mother.

Will there be anyone who does not recognize the excellence of the Holy Rosary composed of such excellent parts as the Lord's prayer and the Angelic greeting?

Together with this brief meditation I have to join several aspirations, some to our Lord God and others to the Virgin. For Her, lost as I am in admiration at the grandeur and virtue She possesses, to rejoice that She has them; and to glorify and praise God for having given them to Her; to awaken in me the desire to imitate Her in them, and ever to congratulate Her for them all, with this word which is to be repeated with each of the others with great feeling, saying interiorly: God hails Thee, Mary Most Blessed; God hails Thee, full of grace, full of charity, full of humility; God hails Thee, He who is ever with Thee, Thou His Mother and He Thy Son, etc.

Finally, I am to conclude with petitions for the virtues I have considered in the Virgin, or for the things I need, addressing them sometimes to Christ Our Lord by the merits of His Mother, at others to the Mother Herself so that She intercede and obtain them from Her

Son for me, at others to the other Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

Saint John Eusebius Nieremberg says that praying the Rosary and saying the Hail Mary prayer with great affection and tenderness, in imitation of the Angel, is a devotion of the greatest sweetness, and the most confirmed by miracles that we can practise, provided we recite it with love and devotion. To confirm how much this prayer of Hers pleases the Virgin, let us see what passed between Saint Matilda and this Glorious Lady, since by doing so we shall see the sense of the Hail Mary as declared by the lips of the Mother of God Herself.

One Saturday, Saint Matilda said to the Virgin Mary: “O Queen of Heaven! If I could address You with a greeting such as no human heart were able to imagine any better, I would do so very willingly.” The glorious Virgin later appeared wearing on Her breast written in letters of gold, the Hail Mary, and told her: “No man ever born can present Me with a better greeting than this; and no one can greet Me more sweetly than with these words: *God hails Thee*, by which He raised Me to the dignity of Mother of God and gave Me to know that God in His omnipotence had preserved Me from all stain of sin and from the calamities to which our race has been subject ever since the fall of the first man. The Son, who is God’s Wisdom, also filled Me with such light that I am a radiant beacon by which Heaven and earth are enlightened. This is understood by the name of *Mary*, which means Star of the Sea. Likewise the Holy Ghost with all His Divine Sweetness, by infusing His Grace into Me in the creation of My Divine Soul, overwhelmed Me with such graces that I can communicate them in abundance, and whoever seeks grace through Me will find it; this is meant by the words ‘*full of grace*’. And on saying: ‘*the Lord is with Thee*’, I feel anew the ineffable joy I experienced when the Most Holy Trinity performed that Action and Union, joining in one Person the substance of My flesh with the Most Divine Soul of Christ already united to the Divine Nature as from Creation, in such fashion that God became Man and Man God, and the Eternal Word became flesh in My womb. No man has understood well, nor could experience the joy and sweetness I felt at that hour. By those words: ‘*blessed art Thou amongst all women*’, I tribute praise to the Mercy of God that deigned to raise Me to such a degree of happiness, and all creatures, heavenly as well as earthly, in greater admiration, know and confess Me as blessed and exalted above them all. By saying: ‘*blessed is the fruit of Thy womb*’, all Heaven rejoices with Me on seeing Jesus, My Son, adored and glorified for having saved man, and on earth the most excellent and beneficent Fruit of My womb is blest and exalted, having vivified man, His creature, and sanctified and blessed him for ever.”

The angelical greeting is so sublime and elevated that Saint Alan de la Rupe believed that no creature can understand it, and that Jesus Christ alone, Son of Mary, can explain. The Hail Mary, in a synthesis utterly concise, sums up the whole of Christian theology on the Most Holy Virgin. In the Hail Mary we find a praise and an invocation. The praise contains everything that constitutes the true grandeur of Mary. The invocation contains all that we should request of Her and all that we can obtain from Her goodness.

The Most Holy Trinity revealed the first part. Saint Elizabeth, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, added the second, and the Church, in the First Council of Ephesus, year 431, proposed the conclusion, after condemning Nestorius’ error and defining that the Most Holy Virgin is truly Mother of God. This Council ordained that the Most Holy Virgin be invoked under the glorious title of ‘Mother of God’ with these words: ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.’ The Doctor of the Church Saint Peter Canisius, Jesuit, added this sentence to the Hail Mary, eleven years later ratified by the Church in 1566 by including it in the Catechism of the Council of Trent.



The phrase “and Our Mother” was not added to the Hail Mary until it was asked for in the Apparitions, and was introduced into Palmar at Pentecost in May 1970 when Our Lord said: “I will tell you this marvellous prayer: In the Hail Mary, what most pleases My Mother is that you say: ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.’ That is what pleases Her;” and the Most Holy Virgin Mary added: “My children: I am your Mother. That is how I want you to pray, since thus you will always recall that besides Mother of God I am also your Mother, and never forsake you ever. My children: If you knew the great joy you give me when you say to me ‘Mother of God and our Mother...’! Since at those moments I spread out My Mantle and cover you all as children that you are of My Immaculate Heart.” In another message the Lord said: “Everything for Mary. She is your Mother; not for any earthly interests, which are fleeting, but for being your Mother, the Immaculate, your Coredemptrix. She will cradle you like little children; you have to do no more than slip into Her motherly arms, trusting in Her and saying to Her: ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us’. Be sure that She will pray for you and not let any go astray. But you are also bound to follow the way She marks out as a good Mother. O My children, what tremendous happiness! You have a Mother who pampers you. I bestowed Her upon you at the solemn moment when I was nailed to the Cross.”

The Most Holy Virgin Mary received this divine salutation of the Hail Mary so that She might successfully realize the most sublime and important event in the world, that is, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, the Reconciliation between God and men, and the Redemption of the human race. The Ambassador of this good news was the Archangel Saint Gabriel, one of the chief princes of the heavenly court, who was the first to pronounce it.

The angelic salutation contains the faith and hope of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets and of the Apostles. It is the constancy and fortitude of the martyrs, the learning of the doctors, the perseverance of confessors and the life of Religious. It is the new canticle of the Law of Grace, the joy of Angels and of men, and the terror and confusion of devils. It is so full of Heaven’s teachings that the great Saint Thomas Aquinas preached in Rome for forty successive days solely on the Hail Mary.

By the angelic salutation, God became Flesh, a Virgin became the Mother of God, the souls of the just were freed from Limbo, Heaven in ruins was restored, sin was pardoned, grace was given back to us, the banished were recalled, the Most Holy Trinity was placated and men obtained eternal life. Finally, the angelic salutation is the rainbow, the sign of clemency and of grace given to the world by God, as Saint Alan says.

The Hail Mary – its beauty. Though there is nothing so sublime as God’s Majesty nor anything so abject as man (considered as a sinner), the August Majesty does not disdain our homage and feels honoured when we sing His praises. Now then, the angelic salutation is one of the most beautiful canticles we can intone to the glory of the Most High: “Sing to the Lord a new song.” The angelic salutation is precisely the new song which David foretold was to be sung at the advent of the Messiah.

There is an old song and a new song. The old one is that which the Israelites sang in thanksgiving for creation, conservation, liberation from slavery, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna and all the other heavenly favours.

The ‘new song’ is the one intoned by Christians in thanksgiving for the Incarnation and Redemption. Given that these prodigies were performed consequent on the greeting of the Angel, we repeat this salutation to thank the Most Holy Trinity for such inestimable benefits. We praise God the Father for having so loved the world that He gave His Onlybegotten Son to save it. We bless God the Son for having come down from Heaven to earth, for becoming incarnate and for having saved us. We glorify the Holy Ghost for having formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary that most pure Body, who became Victim for our sins. With these sentiments of gratitude, we should pray the angelic salutation, accompanied by acts of faith, hope, charity and thanksgiving for the benefit of our salvation.

Though this new song is addressed directly to the Mother of God and contains Her praises, yet it is very glorious for the Most Holy Trinity, since all the honour we attribute to the Most Holy Virgin redounds to God's honour, cause of all Her perfections and virtues. By it we glorify God the Father since we honour Him in the most perfect of His pure creatures. We glorify the Son, since we praise His Most Pure Mother. We glorify the Holy Ghost, since we admire the graces which He lavished upon His Spouse.

In the same way that the Most Holy Virgin directed to God the praises and blessings given Her by Saint Elizabeth due to Her eminent dignity of Mother of the Lord with Her lovely canticle the Magnificat, She likewise directs at once to God the praises and blessings we offer Her by way of the angelic greeting.

If the angelic salutation glorifies the Most Holy Trinity, it also constitutes the most perfect praise we can give to Mary.

The Hail Mary; its marvellous fruits. Among the admirable revelations of the Most Holy Virgin to Saint Alan de la Rupe – and we know that this great devotee of Mary confirmed his revelations under oath – there are three of greater importance:

The first, that negligence, tedium and aversion to the angelic salutation – which restored the world – are probable and immediate signs of being on the way to eternal reprobation; the second, that whoever has devotion to this divine salutation possesses a great sign of being one of the elect; the third, that whoever has received the grace to love the Most Holy Virgin and serve Her out of love should take pains with the greatest determination to continue loving Her and serving Her until She, by way of Her Son, settles them in Heaven in the degree of glory proper to their merits.

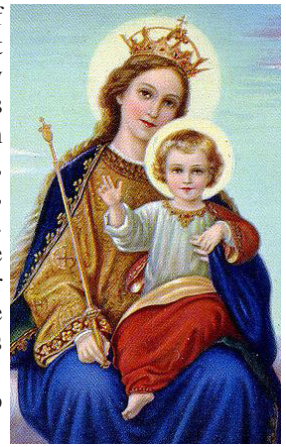
All heretics – who are sons of Satan and bear evident signs of heading along the way to reprobation – feel horror for the Hail Mary. Perhaps they learn the Our Father, but not the Hail Mary. They prefer to have a snake with them rather than a rosary, says Saint Louis Mary Grignion of Montfort.

“Among Catholics, those who bear signs of worldliness scarcely show interest in the Rosary, are negligent in praying it or recite it coldly and hurriedly. Though I do not accept with pious faith the revelation by Saint Alan, personal experience suffices to convince me of this terrible and yet consoling truth. I do not know or see clearly how a devotion so brief can be a sure sign of probable eternal salvation, or on the contrary a sure sign of being on the way to reprobation. Yet nothing is more sure. We see, in effect, that those who in our days profess novel doctrines condemned by the Church, despite their apparent piety, are too careless of devotion to the Rosary and frequently snatch it from the hearts of those about them, under the most beautiful pretexts in the world. They carefully avoid openly condemning the Rosary and the Scapular, as likewise the calvinists, but their proceedings are so much more pernicious the more subtle they are.”

Saint Louis Mary Grignion of Montfort adds: “My Hail Mary or my Rosary are my preferred prayer and my sure touchstone for distinguishing those who are led by the Spirit of God from those who are under the illusions of the evil spirit. I have known souls who appear to fly like eagles up to the clouds, by the sublimity of their contemplation. Yet they are miserably deceived by the devil. I only came to discover their illusions on seeing that they rejected the Hail Mary and the Rosary as unworthy of their esteem.”

The Hail Mary is heavenly, divine dew, which on falling upon the soul of an elect communicates a wonderful fruitfulness for producing every kind of virtue. However more a soul is watered by this prayer, the more illuminated his spirit, the more his heart is ablaze and the more strengthened against his enemies.

The Hail Mary is a fiery and penetrating arrow which a preacher joins up to the divine



word he announces, and gives him strength to transpierce and convert the most hardened hearts, though the orator may have no natural, extraordinary talent for preaching.

Saint Alphonsus called the Hail Mary the Saints' 'word of delight'. He never experienced a pleasure equal to that he felt on saying this prayer; and on reciting it at the beginning of Office, often shed sweet tears of joy, and in his sermons constantly spoke to his audience of Her power. The wise Jesuit Saint Francis Suárez (15-01-1548 to 25-09-1617), most devoted to Mary, came to say that he would give all his learning (which was immense) for the merit of a Hail Mary. In his last moments he repeated: "I never thought it would be so sweet to die."

To add 'Glory be to the Father' is in imitation of the prayer of the psalms, where it is repeated after each psalm as symbol of the eternal *Gloria* and *Sanctus*. The Evangelist Saint John presents to us God's Throne in Heaven surrounded by Angels and Saints, praising and exalting the Lord. When we pray this sublime act of praise, we join our voices to those of the blessed dwelling in Heaven.

All our actions should be performed for the greater honour and glory of God. It is a pious custom to bow the head whenever the 'Glory be to the Father' is said, indicating the sentiments of great reverence and deep humility which should fill us. The humble recognition of our own unworthiness, of our misery and of our nothingness is the best disposition for prayer, and is an important fount of meditation at prayer.

The second mode for praying the Rosary is by meditating the mysteries:

'Mystery' means sacred reality hard to understand. The works of Jesus Christ are all sacred and divine, since He is at once God and Man. Those of the Virgin Mary are most holy, She being the most perfect of all pure creatures. The name 'mystery' is rightly given to the actions of Jesus Christ and of His Most Holy Mother. In effect they are filled with marvels, perfections and profound and sublime instructions, which the Holy Ghost reveals to the humble and simple of heart who honour Them. The deeds of Jesus and of Mary can well be called admirable flowers, flowers whose perfume and beauty are known only to those who approach them, scent their perfume and open their blossom by way of an attentive and serious meditation. The meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary makes us like unto Jesus Christ.

The mysteries of the Holy Penitential Rosary. The second mode proposed for praying the Rosary is to take as matter for meditation the thirty-five principal mysteries of Christ our Lord and of His Mother, meditating one mystery on each decade, which are divided into four classes.

The first class is that of the joyful mysteries, events of great joy for the Virgin and are, first, the Creation of the Most Divine Soul of Christ before all things, the Creation of the Divine Soul of Mary, the Espousal of the Souls of Christ and Mary, the Immaculate Conception of the Divine Mary, the Birth of the Divine Mary; and then, the Annunciation to the Most Holy Virgin Mary and the Incarnation of the Divine Word, the Visitation of Our Lady to Her cousin Saint Elizabeth, the Birth of the Son of God, the Purification of Our Lady and the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the Child Jesus is found in the Temple, on which meditations have been made; and because each mystery embraces many points and it could be bothersome to think always of the same thing, on one day take one point to meditate and the next time another point.

The second class of mysteries are called sorrowful, as they were very grievous for Christ our Lord and for His Mother when they were living them, or when they considered them. They are: 1) The Most Precious Redeeming Blood of Jesus shed in the Circumcision; the Prayer and Agony of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives; the Holy Face of Jesus vilely outraged by the traitorous kiss of Judas Iscariot; the bitter and sad desolation of Jesus when forsaken by His disciples, the Holy Face of Jesus sacrilegiously defiled by the blow received before Annas. 2) The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus sublimely saddened by the three

denials of Peter, Prince of the Apostles; the Holy Face of Jesus sacrilegiously insulted when spat upon by the chief priests; Jesus, in the depths of His Most Divine Soul, bitterly feels the insults and mockery of Herod; the scourging which the Son of God received tied to the pillar; the Most Sacred Head of Jesus crowned with thorns. 3) Jesus carries the Cross along the Way of Sorrows up to Calvary; the Crucifixion, three hours of Agony and majestic Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ; the right Side of Jesus pierced by the lance of Longinus; the spiritual Death of Mary at the foot of the Cross on Calvary; the Church born of the Most Sacred and pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary.



The third class is that of the Eucharistic Mysteries, in which Jesus proves His love by instituting the Eucharist at the Last Supper; the real, true and physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity; the real and true spiritual presence of Mary in the Eucharist, in Body, Blood and Soul; the Eucharistic Hearts of Jesus and Mary making reparation to the Eternal Father and redeeming mankind; the perpetuation of the sublime Immolation of Jesus and Mary in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The fourth class is that of the Glorious Mysteries, in which the glory of Christ Our Lord and of His Most Holy Mother shines out, as follows: The Triumphant Resurrection of the Son of God; the Admirable Ascension of the Son of God into Heaven; the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostolic College in the presence of the Most Holy Virgin Mary; the Immortality, Dormition and glorious Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary into Heaven in Body and Soul; the Coronation of Our Most Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, as Queen and Mistress of all Creation.

In each decade of complete Our Fathers, three points should be considered: The first is from memory, to go over the mystery or some point of the same, briefly meditating and pondering the grandeur and excellence of Christ Our Lord and of His Mother; what They do or suffer there; the joy, the grief or glory They receive, the heroic virtues They practise; and the great good resulting for all men, and in particular for oneself, considering the special reasons for which to rejoice, grieve or glory in whatever is represented in these mysteries, and moving the will to the practice of the virtues shown us.

In this meditation one can linger more or less, in accord with devotion or the station, always making sure to pass on to the second point, which is more important; that is, to move the will to the exercise of the joyous or sorrowful sentiments which the mystery provokes, enjoying loving dialogues with Christ Our Lord, or with His Most Holy Mother or with the Most Blessed Trinity. If the mystery is joyous, like that of the Incarnation, I can practise all these acts unhurriedly and with interior sentiments. I give You thanks, Eternal Father, for having willed that Your Son become incarnate for us. I rejoice at the infinite goodness, charity and mercy You showed us in this. Oh! If the whole world were to praise and glorify You for this! O Divine Word, I give You thanks for having chosen the Most Holy Virgin as Your Mother, and for Your Will to become a Child in Her womb! O Most Holy Virgin, I rejoice that You should have been chosen as Mother to God Himself, and of the great joy You had at the news given You by His glorious Archangel! I rejoice also at the prudence, chastity, humility and conformity with the Divine Will which You showed in this embassy. Oh that I might share in Your joys and imitate Your virtues! Mother of mine, obtain for me as I desire, to serve You more fervently.

And if the mystery is sorrowful, I should exercise sentiments of grief in proportion to them; seeing the mystery of the Garden of Olives I can say: I give You thanks, Eternal Father, for having willed that Your Onlybegotten Son should suffer such agony as remedy for my faults. O my Saviour, it grieves me to see You so sad and afflicted for my sins,

sweating Blood to cleanse me of them! Alas for my sins that so afflict my God! Oh, who has never sinned nor been the cause for such cruel torments! It grieves me, my God, to have offended You; would that my grief be like Yours, and so shed abundant tears for my faults, since You shed blood for them. O Most Holy Virgin, how grievous Your sorrow when You underwent all that Your Son suffered in that Garden! Oh what sentiments pained You at our faults, considering all that Your Son suffered for them! Ask Him to give me a share in those sorrows, for the fault being mine it is right that I suffer the pain.

Thus we can have dialogues and sentiments in the other mysteries, joining them to the third point, which is to represent to Christ Our Lord and His Mother the needs and miseries I suffer, asking Him to place a remedy for them, claiming as title the joy or sorrow They underwent there, proposing most effectively to imitate some of the virtues of the Virgin, as later we shall say.

If anyone for lack of time or some other reason, wishes not to linger in meditating on the mystery, it is enough at least to remember which decade and make a brief dialogue and petition to Our Lady, telling Her: I rejoice, sovereign Virgin, at the joy You experienced in this mystery, by which I implore You to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins and the grace to imitate Your virtues. And in the sorrowful and glorious mysteries I will say proportionately: I grieve, Sovereign Virgin, at the dolour You suffered in this moment, or I rejoice at the glory and happiness You received in this mystery, for which I implore You, and so forth.

This brief mental prayer ended, as said, regarding a mystery, the vocal must follow, praying another ten complete Our Fathers; and if the heart were to follow after the previous emotions and sentiments, then let it follow, since such sentiments are not contrary to the attention that has to be given to vocal prayer, rather they greatly perfect it.

Finally, though there are only thirty-five Mysteries of the Rosary, in their place we can sometimes take up other similar ones which go together with them. With the joyful we can occasionally join the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, the Imposition on the Child Jesus of His Name, the Adoration of the kings, the Flight into Egypt, the Return from Egypt. With the Sorrowful can be meditated Jesus in prison, the sufferings He underwent on the night of His Passion in the house of Caiphas, or seeing Barrabas preferred to Him. Besides, occasionally, each of the seven words pronounced by Christ Our Lord on the Cross can be taken as matter for meditation, one for each ten Our Fathers, pondering the sentiments of the Virgin Mary when She heard them.

In the Messages of El Palmar de Troya, the Lord repeatedly exhorts us to meditate on the Mysteries of the Sacred Passion:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1970: "Don't you realize that I gave the last drop of My Blood for you? The more you meditate on My Sorrowful Passion, the more the Heavenly Father's Just Wrath shall be appeased... Meditate more on the Love of a God who became Man, who died on the Cross, and gave everything for the salvation of man. Read the great Saints, and you will see that they all spent long hours meditating on My Passion. What would become of the world without My Dolorous Passion? It would be at enmity with the Heavenly Father... I come to warn you of the great catastrophe approaching mankind, and in your hands I place the remedy: to defer and mitigate it by means of prayer and sacrifice... This is a terrible moment for mankind, and only by means of prayer and sacrifice can there be a remedy. You should know that after Holy Mass comes the Sacrifice of the Way of the Cross together with the Holy Rosary. Many were those who, full of penance and even anguish, if need be, attained sanctity by praying and meditating the Way of the Cross... Look, My children, the warnings given in this Sacred Place are very serious. You cannot lose time. Pray, ever pray. I promise you that those who truly pray untiringly will see God's Mercy."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1972: "O My children! Go over and meditate on My Passion, and you will see the Love of God Himself who becomes Man! And what a horrible Passion, to the point of dying on the Cross, to free you from the tyranny of Satan! Can there be

greater love than that? Well that is what I want of you, to be ready to give your lives for one another, for each one of you. When you reach that, you can call it love. But when will you reach that! By meditating on My Passion, meditating on My Passion, you will see all of a God undergoing shame, being made a mockery of, thrown to the ground like some wretched vermin, He who is Son of the Most High. And why all of this? To teach you, one and all; by showing you the Love of God Himself, His desire to save you.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1973: “From today on... there will be meditation on and reparation for the dolours I suffered in the Crowning with Thorns, the suffering I underwent in the Garden of Gethsemani, the hours of agony when I was nailed to the Cross and which few people atone for... It is very meritorious to atone for the thorns which caused such pain to My Sacred Head. Look, with sticks they pressed down and the thorns pierced deeply till giving Me great pain. Contemplate that agony in the Garden of Gethsemani as well: the vision I had of all the souls who, in spite of everything, would damn themselves eternally. Go over that! And that agony on the Cross, mocked and derided by the people!”

The Eternal Father, 1971: “O My children, if you were able to meditate on the love your Father bears for you, you would be sure not to sin, and would be sure to love one another! O My children, how selfish is man, how materialistic! Be not concerned about the materialistic world; be converted to love in Christ, your Saviour and Redeemer. Cast yourselves into the arms of your Heavenly Mother, the Virgin Mary. And sate your appetites with spiritual nourishment, chiefly the Sacred Eucharist. Also with sacred reading. Read continually invoking the Holy Ghost, that He may enlighten your senses... Be converted to penance, forget earthly pastimes, broaden your hearts with the fire of love, and penetrate into the way of righteousness. Lose no time in fleeting, fading things, do not worry about human things, seek the way to Heaven, and I, who am your Father, will lavish graces upon you... What a fool man is, who tries to live without his God; whoever lives that way goes down to the abyss... But man ought only to think and ought only to know that he knows nothing. I ask you, men: what do you know? And I also ask you: who is the one who knows? And for all the calculations you make, you will reach the conclusion that it is God alone who knows... Become little, become humble, and when you leave the earth and come one day into My presence, there you will understand the sacred mysteries. My children: see, time is ending; do not fritter it away uselessly. Be converted to prayer and penance and spread the reign of Jesus Christ, and one day you will be crowned in the Heavenly Homeland, the only Eternal Homeland, for you are on earth for a little time, nothing at all.”

The benefits of meditation on the mysteries of the Holy Rosary should encourage us to embrace this devotion proper to great souls, since according to Saint Louis Mary Grignon of Montfort, the Holy Rosary thus prayed raises us gradually to the perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ, purifies our souls from sin; allows us to overcome our enemies, makes the practice of the virtues easy, enlivens our love for Jesus Christ; enriches us with graces and merits, supplies us with the means to pay our dues to God and to men and obtains from God all kinds of graces. And he explains each one of these benefits.

The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the means for Christians to obtain salvation. It surpasses all human studies in value and excellence: 1) Owing to the dignity of its object, namely the Man-God, in whose presence the whole universe is no more than a dewdrop or a sand grain; 2) owing to its utility, since human studies solely fill us with vanity and the smoke of pride; 3) owing to its need, since we cannot save ourselves if we do not know Jesus Christ. Blessed be the Rosary which gives us the study and knowledge of Jesus Christ, by allowing us to meditate on His Life, Passion, Death and Glory! The queen of Sheba, full of admiration at



Solomon's wisdom, exclaimed: "Fortunate are your people, and happy are your servants who are always about you and listen to your wisdom!" But happier are the faithful who meditate attentively on the Life, Virtues, Sufferings and Glory of the Saviour, since, thanks to this means, they acquire that perfect understanding proper to eternal life.

It purifies our souls from sin. The Most Holy Virgin revealed to Saint Alan that as soon as Saint Dominic began to preach the Rosary, hardened sinners were converted and wept bitterly over their crimes. Even children performed incredible penances. Wherever he preached the Rosary, such was the fervour that sinners changed their lives and edified the world by their penances and amendment of life.

If you feel your conscience burdened by sin, take the Rosary and meditate one part in honour of some mysteries of the Life, Passion or Glory of Jesus Christ. And be convinced that while you meditate and honour these mysteries, He in Heaven will show His sacrosanct Wounds to the Father, and will intercede and obtain for you contrition and forgiveness for your sins.

One day the Lord said to Saint Alan: "If those miserable sinners frequently prayed My Rosary, they would participate in the mysteries of My Passion, and I, as their advocate, would placate Divine Justice."

The Rosary empowers us to overcome our enemies. Our life is one of warfare and continual temptations. Our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood but against the very powers of Hell. What better arms can we take up to combat them than the Lord's prayer taught by our own Redeemer and the Angelic Salutation, which drove away the evils, destroyed sin and renewed the world?

Will there be better reflections than meditation on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ – thoughts which we should continually bear in mind – to defend us from the same enemies He overcame and who attack us every day?

The curious legend of a little parrot who had learnt to say "Hail Mary": Persecuted by a sparrowhawk and at the point of being devoured, the parrot said: 'Hail Mary', and the sparrowhawk fell dead in the act and the parrot was left free. It may be a tale, but it is quite certain that if we invoke the Virgin in temptations, the diabolical sparrowhawk can do nothing against us. It is impossible for the true devotee of the Virgin to damn himself.

The practice of the virtues becomes easier and the devil is sent flying. "Ever since the devil – says Cardinal Hugh – was overcome by Jesus Christ's humility and Passion, he hardly dares attack anyone who meditates on these mysteries or, if he attacks, is shamefully overcome: 'Clothe yourselves in divine armour to be able to resist the snares of the devil'." (Ephesians).

Take up God's arm which is the Holy Rosary! By it you will crush the devil's head and be able to resist all temptations. Hence even the material rosary is so terrible to the devil, and the Saints have made use of it to enchain him and drive him out of the bodies of the possessed, as so many accounts testify.

Saint Alan refers that a certain man had tried all manner of devotions to free himself from the evil spirit which had taken possession of him. He resolved to put a rosary around his neck. And he was thus relieved. But when he removed it, the devil returned to torment him cruelly. He decided then to wear it round his neck day and night. He thus succeeded in driving the devil out for good, unable to bear so terrible a chain. Saint Alan testifies that he freed many possessed by putting the rosary around their necks.

Reverend Father John Amat, a Dominican, was preaching Lent in a district of the kingdom of Aragon. One day they presented a possessed girl to him. He tried several times to exorcize her, but unsuccessfully. On placing the rosary around her neck, she began to cry out and howl dreadfully, saying: 'Take them off me! Take off these grains which torment me!' Out of compassion for the poor girl, the Priest took the rosary off her neck. The following night, while the Father was resting in his bed, the same demons who had possessed the girl threw themselves furiously upon him to possess his person. But, with the rosary he had in his hand – despite the efforts they made to snatch it away – he lashed and drove out

the devils, saying: “Holy Mary! Virgin of the Rosary, help me!” The following morning, when the Priest was heading for the church, he found the poor girl still possessed. One of the devils began to cry out mocking him: “Brother, if you had not held your rosary, we would already have put an end to you!” The Father hung the rosary on the girl’s neck again saying: “By the most sacred names of Jesus and Mary, His Most Holy Mother, and by virtue of the Most Holy Rosary, I conjure you, evil spirits, to leave this body at once!” The devils had to obey and the girl was freed. These events place in relief the power of the Holy Rosary to overcome all kinds of diabolical temptations and all kinds of sins, since the blest beads of the rosary put them to flight.

Salutary effects produced by meditating the Passion: Saint Augustine affirms that there is no exercise as fruitful and useful for salvation than frequently dwelling on the Lord’s sufferings.

Saint Albert the Great, Saint Thomas’ preceptor, knew by revelation that the simple remembrance or meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ is more meritorious for the Christian than fasting for a whole year on bread and water every Friday, or taking a bloody discipline each week, or praying the psalms every day. What then will be the merits of the Rosary, which commemorates the whole Life and Passion of the Lord?

The Most Holy Virgin revealed one day to Saint Alan de la Rupe, that after the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, which is the first and most vivid remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ, there is no more excellent or meritorious prayer than the Rosary, which is the second remembrance and representation of the Life and Passion of the Lord.

The Reverend Father Dorland refers that one day the Most Holy Virgin told Venerable Dominic, a Carthusian, a devotee of the Holy Rosary, resident in Trier, in the year 1481: “However many times the faithful pray the Rosary in the state of grace, meditating on the mysteries of the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ, they obtain full and complete remission of their sins.” The Most Holy Virgin also told Saint Alan: “Be assured that though many indulgences have been granted to My Rosary, I will add many more for each five mysteries, for those who pray it in the state of grace, kneeling devoutly. And those who persevere in this devotion, in such conditions and meditations, in recompense for this service, at the end of their lives I will obtain for them the complete remission of the pain and the guilt for all their sins. And so that this may not seem impossible: it is easy for Me as I am the Mother of the King of Heaven, who calls Me ‘Full of Grace’. And as such I will also pour out a generous effusion of grace on My dear children.”

The Virgin Mary promised Saint Gertrude as many helps at the hour of death as Hail Marys she had prayed. Blessed Alan affirms that on praying the Hail Mary, just as all Heaven rejoices, so does the devil tremble and flee. Saint Thomas of Kempis’ own experience confirms this, that by saying Hail Mary the devil who had appeared to him was sent off flying. He was a fervent servant of the Most Holy Virgin, and greeted Her by repeating the Hail Mary whenever he entered or left his room.

Saint Dominic was so convinced of the efficacy and merits of the Holy Rosary that he almost never imposed any penance other than the Rosary on those who confessed to him.

“Surely – says Abbot Blossius – the Rosary, joined to meditation on the life and Passion of the Lord, becomes most pleasing to Jesus Christ and to the Most Holy Virgin, and very efficacious for obtaining all you desire. We can pray it for ourselves, for those who have commended themselves to us and for the Church. Let us then resort to devotion to the Holy Rosary in all our needs and we will infallibly obtain all we ask from God for our salvation.”

The third method for praying the Rosary is to meditate on the virtues of Our Lady:

We have to show our devotion to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady, chiefly by imitating Her



heroic virtues, for which it will help greatly to meditate on them when reciting the Rosary: on each decade, a virtue. In one decade, humility; in another, purity; in another obedience or patience or charity; and so on for the rest, fixing your attention on three aspects:

Firstly, for the heroic acts by which the Virgin practised that virtue, I will admire Her sanctity, delight in it, glorify God for having given that virtue to Her and rejoice in the reward He gave Her for it.

Secondly, I will fix my eyes on the lack I have of that virtue, and on the contrary faults and defects into which I fall, feel sorrow for them to my great confusion and humiliation, imploring this Sovereign Virgin to obtain my forgiveness for the past and the grace to amend in the future.

Thirdly, I will propose, as firmly as I can, to imitate the Most Holy Virgin in those acts of virtue, making sure to practise some particular virtue, trusting in this pious Mother that I shall be able to do so.

For this method of meditation it will help to know the special virtues of this Lady, and place Her like the white petals of the lily with the golden stems of the interior sentiments which shone out in Her, which we can meditate by praying Her Rosary.

The learned Cardinal Hugh affirms: "There is a need to be angels of purity to approach the Most Holy Virgin and pray the Angelic Salutation." In contrast, the Virgin Mary one day showed beautiful fruits on a tray full of filth, to a shameless man who constantly recited the Rosary every day. He was horrified. The Virgin explained to him: "This is the way you serve Me! You present Me beautiful roses in a dirty and contaminated vessel! Judge for yourself if they will please Me!"

In this same way, on other occasions the ten verses of the 'Magnificat' canticle can be taken as matter for meditation, in each decade one or two of them, with the various sentiments and affections that were used in the corresponding meditation.

After praying the Rosary I will examine briefly how I have prayed it, and grieve at my distractions and dryness, and at the other faults I may have incurred, and give thanks to God for whatever holy sentiments I may have received, with the desire to pray with greater fervour and devotion the next time.

Let us consider the treasures of sanctification contained in the prayers and meditations of the Rosary:

No one shall ever be able to understand the treasure of sanctification enclosed in the prayers and mysteries of the Holy Rosary! The meditation on the mysteries of the Life and Death of the Lord constitutes, for whoever so practises, a fount of the most wonderful fruits. Today things which make an impact are wanted, which move and produce deep impressions on the soul. Well and good, will there be anything in the world more moving than the wonderful History of the Redeemer unfolded in pictures which recall to us the great scenes of the Life, Death and Glory of the Saviour of the world? Are there more excellent and sublime prayers than the Lord's prayer and the Angelic Salutation? They enclose all we desire and can need!

Meditation on the mysteries and prayers of the Rosary is the easiest of all prayers, since the diversity of the virtues and states of Jesus Christ, on which we reflect, wonderfully recreate and strengthen the spirit and prevent distractions. In these formulas, wise souls encounter the most profound doctrine, and the ignorant, the most simple instruction. As on a battlefield we must needs exercise ourselves in the acquisition of all the virtues, of which the mysteries of the Rosary are perfect models. Since by this means alone can we acquire intimate union with God.

Father Dominic, a Carthusian, very devout to the Rosary, one day saw Heaven open and the whole Heavenly Court in admirable order. He heard the Rosary sung with entrancing melody, in each decade honouring a mystery of the Life, Passion or Glory of Jesus Christ and of the Most Holy Virgin. And he noticed that when the Blessed pronounced the holy

name of Mary, they made an inclination of the head, and at the name of Jesus a genuflection, and gave thanks to God for the great benefits granted to Heaven and earth by means of the Holy Rosary. He likewise saw the Most Holy Virgin and the Saints, who presented to God the Rosaries which the faithful recited on earth, and prayed for whoever practised this devotion. He also saw countless garlands of the most beautiful and fragrant flowers prepared for those who devoutly pray the Rosary, and as often as they pray it make a garland with which they will be adorned in Heaven. The vision of this Carthusian is in harmony with the vision of the beloved Disciple, when he saw a countless multitude of Angels and Saints who praised and blessed Jesus Christ for all He did and suffered in the world to save us. Now, is this not what Rosary devotees do?



Believe it, dear devotee of the Rosary! Do you want to arrive at high degrees of contemplation without detriment to prayer and without falling into the illusions of the devil, so frequent in persons of prayer? Recite, if you can, every day, the Holy Rosary or, if you can recite several, so much the better. You may have reached these degrees already, by the grace of God. If you want to maintain yourself in them and grow in humility, persevere in fidelity to the practice of the Holy Rosary.

Excellence of the Holy Rosary:

We know the excellence of the Holy Rosary manifested in the wonders which God has performed in its favour. The devils – as we have already seen – fear the Rosary beyond measure. Saint Bernard says that the Angelic Salutation drives them out and makes all Hell tremble. Saint Alan assures having seen several people who had surrendered themselves to the devil body and soul, had renounced baptism and Jesus Christ and, having embraced devotion to the Holy Rosary, were freed from their slavery to Satan.

The Holy Rosary is also of the greatest efficacy for relieving the pains of the souls of Purgatory. If we desire, says Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, to succour those poor souls who suffer so much in that place of expiation, let us procure by ceaseless prayer to interest the Most Holy Virgin in their favour, above all by praying the Holy Rosary in their suffrage.

What more than anything else demonstrates the value and excellence of the Holy Rosary is the great appreciation shown by the most holy and illustrious personages. Queen Saint Blanche of Castile, mother of Saint Louis IX of France, had scruples about failing to recite the Rosary one single day; King Saint Louis IX of France added the Rosary around his neck to the royal emblems; General Montmorency prayed the Rosary marching at the head of his troops. Saint Pius V, Saint Charles Borromeo, Saint Francis de Sales, in a word all the Saints subsequent to Saint Dominic, were accustomed to recite the Holy Rosary every day, finding such sweet consolation in their souls from this holy practice that they felt they were enjoying the delights of Heaven in anticipation. Saint Stanislaus de Kostka and Saint John Berchmans of the Company of Jesus, youths of 19 and 22 years respectively, wished to die with the Rosary in their hands, having recited it all their lives with the greatest devotion; and Saint Peter Claver, also of the Company of Jesus, Apostle of Slaves, distributed from eight to nine thousand rosaries every year among poor slaves, to whom he consecrated all the fatigues of his exhausting apostolate. And if they appreciated the traditional Rosary, how they would have pondered and valued the Holy Penitential Rosary, which is the traditional one raised to perfection?

The Rosary is a sublime prayer: Who more elevated in prayer than Saint Mary Magdalen, transported to Heaven seven times every day by the Angels and who had been schooled by Jesus Christ and His Most Holy Mother! Nonetheless, when she asked God for efficacious means to progress in His love and reach the highest perfection, Archangel Saint Michael



came to tell her on God's behalf that he knew of no means other than to consider the sorrowful mysteries she had contemplated with her own eyes, before a cross he placed at the entrance to her cave.

Let the example of Saint Francis de Sales – that great director of virtuous souls of his time – move you to embrace a devotion as holy as that of the Rosary! For in spite of being a Saint, he made a vow to recite the complete Rosary all the days of his life. Saint Charles Borromeo likewise recited it every day and with insistence recommended it to his Priests, his seminarians and to the whole people. Saint Pius V, one of the most eminent Popes of the Church, prayed the Rosary every day. Saint Thomas de Villanueva, archbishop of Valencia, Saint Ignatius, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Francis Borgia, Saint Teresa, Saint Philip Neri and many other great men I do not mention stood out for this devotion. Follow their example!

Confessors, if they want to follow the example of Saint Dominic de Guzmán, should impose the recital of the Rosary with the meditation on the sacred mysteries on their penitents, instead of other penances of lesser merit and less agreeable to God, nor so efficacious for progressing in the path of virtue and preventing a fall into sin. Besides, by praying the Rosary many indulgences are gained not granted to other devotions.

The Rosary: Instrument of salvation: Nothing more divine, says Saint Denis, nothing nobler or more pleasing to God than to co-operate in the salvation of souls and to demolish the plans the devil employs to have them choose damnation. Hence the Son of God came down to earth; who by the foundation of the Church destroyed Satan's dominion. But the tyrant remade his forces and enslaved the peoples with cruel violence by means of the albigensian heresy, and of the hatred, dissension and abominable vices he caused to reign in the world during the XI century.

What remedy could there be for such grievous ills? How to crush Satan's forces? The Most Holy Virgin, Protectress of the Church, offered the Rosary devotion as the most efficacious means to appease the wrath of Her Son, stamp out heresies and reform Christian morals. Events verified this: charity revived, the frequency of the Sacraments returned as in the first centuries or golden era in the Church, and the morals of Christians were reformed. The Confraternity of the Rosary was founded to honour God and the Most Holy Virgin and as a bulwark to hold back the disasters which were about to befall the Church. Saint Gregory XIII says that the Rosary was offered by Heaven as a means to placate Divine Wrath and implore the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin. Saint Julius III affirms that the Rosary was inspired to open Heaven more easily to us, thanks to the intervention of the Most Holy Virgin. Saint Paul III and Saint Pius V declared that the Rosary was established and given to believers so that they might obtain peace and spiritual succour. Who then can neglect to take up a practice established for such noble purposes?

You already know the fatal consequences of worldly advice: there is no need to pray so much or recite so many Rosaries if you want to keep up with fashion and be condemned with the fashion, that is, from time to time falling into mortal sin so as later to confess, avoiding grievous and scandalous sins, and saving appearances. A short prayer in the morning and evening, one or other Rosary out of obligation, racing through some mysteries when you feel like it... It will be enough to appear a good Christian in the eyes of the world. If you do less, you become licentious and if you do more, you become odd and sanctimonious.

Nonetheless, if you think seriously on the mandate Jesus Christ gave us to pray at all times, and reflect on His example, on the urgent need we have for prayer owing to our darkness, ignorance and weakness, and the multitude of enemies who persecute us, you

will not be content with just praying the Rosary distractedly, rather you will recite it punctually every day, as God wills, as though you had no obligation other than to save yourself. Jesus proposed an example on the need to pray always, without losing heart. The words of Jesus Christ are eternal, which must be believed and practised, if you would not be damned. Explain them as you will. But not in the fashionable way, lest you live in the fashionable way. Jesus Christ gave us the true explanation by His example: "For I have given you example, so that as I have done with you, you do likewise... frequently spending many nights in prayer." As though the day did not suffice Him, He spent the night as well in prayer. He often repeated these words to His Apostles: "Watch, then, and pray," so that they might keep wide awake in prayer. The human being is weak. Temptation is close and continuous, and if you do not pray at all times you will fall. The Apostles believed that the Lord only gave them a counsel, they interpreted His words wrongly, and fell in temptation and into sin despite Jesus' company.

But it is necessary to pray at all times, as Jesus Christ taught, if as a true Christian you truly want to save yourself and follow in the footsteps of the Saints, avoiding all falls into mortal sin, breaking all chains and extinguishing all the fiery darts of Satan. You should, then, at least pray the Rosary and other necessary prayers daily. We say 'at least', since with the daily Rosary well recited, you will obtain everything necessary to avoid mortal sin, overcome all temptation, amid the torrents of iniquity in the world which frequently draw away those who think themselves safest, in the midst of evil spirits now more skilful than ever and who, knowing they have little time left to tempt, do so with greater cunning and success.

Is the Holy Rosary out of fashion? No, it has not gone out of fashion. It is now more necessary than ever. If with the arm of the Holy Rosary, at the start of the XIII century, Saint Dominic de Guzmán was able to crush the albigensian heresy and the invasion of immorality in southern France, why then at the present moment, so difficult for the Church owing to the multiple heresies appearing and moral disintegration, do people not turn to Mary by reciting the Holy Rosary, by spreading and propagating its value and efficacy? Let us be devotees of Mary. God wants all His graces to come to us from Mary's hands. She is the aqueduct of Divine Grace.

Holophernes, in order to take the city of Bethulia, ordered the water channels to run dry, and cut the aqueduct which supplied the city with water. Thus Satan too, when he wants to win over a soul, strives to dry up the channel of devotion to Mary. Once the channel runs dry, he easily takes command of the castle of the heart. Let us then, honour our Queen, always having recourse to Her protection ever more trustingly. All graces of hope and salvation come to us from Mary's hands.

Mary is the Queen of Peace. Let us ask Her, by means of the Holy Rosary, for true peace to rule among lunatic mankind. Let us all preach by our example and by praying the Rosary, the saving teachings of Christ. Mary is the bridge spanning the two shores an infinite distance apart: the Jesus' Divinity and our human misery. She is the prodigious charm to defend us from two terrible forces: the powers of darkness and the wrath of God. The shortest and easiest route for returning to the Father's home is Mary. God's enemies try to separate us from devotion to Mary. Let us go to Mary as our recourse in this crisis, so grave for the Church and for Humanity.

What a wonderful grace is the Holy Rosary! To be able to escape the world, the devil and the flesh, and save yourself for Heaven! What consolation and tenderness Our Heavenly Mother receives when we greet Her from the heart and praise Her as God Himself greeted and praised Her! How beautiful a homage we pay to God when we remind Him of the moment when mankind, represented by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, accepted Jesus as Mediator! To be a child of Mary, the glorious Mother of God, mighty as an army set in battle array!

The power of the Hail Mary and of the Holy Rosary by examples.



It would be interminable to try and list the favours of every kind obtained by means of the Rosary: the conversion of sinners, the return of many to the practice of the virtues, and an eminent sanctity, are the principal and most common fruits obtained by consecration to this holy exercise with true piety, whose efficacy goes as far as remedying bodily ills and acquiring temporal goods. The Rosary brings countless blessings down upon the homes of Christians who piously practise this useful and holy devotion. Union, peace, piety and sanctity would reign in families, husbands would be pious, well-mannered, reserved, withdrawn from the world and consecrated to the fulfilment of their duties; women would be respectable, modest and virtuous; children would be industrious and obedient, workers laborious and upright; and in short, on every side would be savoured in anticipation the sweetness of Heaven, of which families devoted

to the Rosary would be a reflection. The practice of the Rosary, as we were saying, endows its devotees with spiritual and temporal goods. The objects consecrated to this devotion, like rosaries, images, medals and so forth, furnish with extraordinary graces those who bear them on their person or make any other use of them serving to propagate their devotion. These precious objects have restored health to the sick and have wrought surprising marvels.

Hail Mary. Hail Bernard. There is no sound sweeter to Mary's ears than the voice of Her children addressing Her the Angelic Greeting. This greeting moves Her heart to beat with joy, as on the day of the Annunciation. She deigned to testify to this one day with a celebrated miracle for one of Her most eminent devotees, the great Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux. About the middle of the XII century, in the woods separating Flanders and Brabant, there was an abbey of Benedictine monks which became well-known, the Abbey of Affligem. Saint Bernard, who was then touring France and Germany preaching the Second Crusade, came to stay for a few days in that notable monastery. At one end of the cloister, upon a pedestal there was a lovely image in wood of the Most Holy Virgin. With the Divine Child in Her arms, Mary seemed ceaselessly to bless and gaze with love upon the monks who often passed before Her every day. Whenever Bernard passed, he addressed Her a greeting: "Hail Mary", pronounced with his lips as his eyes gazed tenderly at the blessed image. One day, kneeling before Her, he repeated his favourite greeting warmly; scarcely had he finished saying Hail Mary!, when he heard the statue come to life and answer: "Hail, Bernard!", which is like saying 'God keep you, Bernard'. What an impression these words must have made in Bernard's soul! Doubtless he would have been filled with joy like Saint Elizabeth, when on the day of the Visitation Mary's greeting sounded in Her ears and could do no less than exclaim: "Whence to me such happiness, that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me?" Surely Bernard's soul, on hearing the voice of his Mother, would have melted with love, like the Bride of the Canticle: "The echo of His voice is so gentle." It is easy to imagine how Saint Bernard, on departing from the pious abbey of Affligem, would have felt it deeply. In gratitude, he left his abbot's staff there. The miraculous statue was conserved on its pedestal in the cloister until the year 1580, when protestant iconoclasts broke it up. The pieces were retrieved, and with them they made two new small images, but similar to the primitive one. One of them was venerated afterwards in the church of the Benedictines of Termonde.

The Rosary points out the way to Heaven. A woman living a good life would not pray the Rosary, despite Saint Dominic's counsel to her, and instead dissuaded others from praying it. So that one day at prayer, she was rapt up to Heaven, where she saw a great multitude of men and women who were praying the Rosary and shone out with great splendour. And she

noted that when they said 'Amen', a brilliant star with great clarity came from their lips. She also saw a book, in which all these Rosary devotees were written in letters of gold. Then the Virgin Mary showed her the sins she had committed by not praying the Rosary and punished her with an illness lasting many days, as penance for her sins and her little devotion; as a result of which she made amends and became a preacher in praise of the Rosary.

Mary, help me! A youth who had fallen many times into grave mortal sin confessed to a pious Priest. The good Priest was taken aback to learn that he had fallen so many times. But to encourage him he said: "My son, I will show you an easy way to overcome the temptations to which you have yielded so many times; if you do as I say, never again will you fall." "Oh, Father – he replied – tell me how, because with all my heart I want to overcome these bad habits." "Place yourself entirely under the protection of the Most Holy Virgin," the Priest said, "pray a Hail Mary every morning and every evening in honour of Her immaculate purity, and each time you feel tempted to do wrong, tell Her at once: 'O Mary, help me, for I am Yours'." The youth followed this counsel, and shortly was completely free of his bad habits.

A valiant soldier. The soldiers of Don John of Spain were praying the Rosary when the sign for combat sounded, namely the Lepanto triumph. A sick soldier, consumed by fever, by force of his pleas, was given the post of greatest danger. Shortly he was shot in the chest and left hand. "Retire", his Captain said. – "My Captain, whoever prays the Rosary with faith, fears not death", the valiant replied. This war-seasoned soldier was later the amazement of Spanish literature: he was Don Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, the author of "Don Quixote."

Two libertine youths whose destinies differed. The following example shows well how very worthwhile is devotion to the Virgin. In the year 1714, two dissolute youths were studying in Flanders. They had spent the whole day in amusements, drunkenness and dissolution. On one of so many nights, after having sinned at the house of a woman of ill fame, one of them, called Richard, went home, the other stayed on. When Richard reached home, while undressing for bed, he remembered that he had not yet prayed the Hail Mary to the Virgin as he usually did. He was dog tired, so that it cost him to pray it, but making an effort he prayed, though without devotion and half asleep. He then went to bed and, as he was so tired, fell asleep at once. But not long afterwards he heard loud knocking on the door of his bedroom; he awoke, and without the door opening, saw before him his unhappy companion, horrifyingly disfigured. Full of terror and shocked that he could have entered with the door closed, cried out saying: "Who are you?" And the wretch answered: "Do you not recognize me? Woe to me! I am damned! On leaving that house of ill fame a devil strangled me. My body is in the middle of the street and my soul in hell. And you should know that the same chastisement was prepared for you, but the Virgin, for this little honour of the Hail Mary, freed you. Happy are you if you are able to profit from this warning sent to you by the Mother of God by my means!" And as proof of this truth, he uncovered his breast, full of flames and horrible snakes consuming him. He ceased to speak and disappeared. Richard, dissolving into tears, jumped out of bed and prostrated on the floor to give thanks to Mary, his Deliverer. And while he considered how best to amend his life, he heard the Saint Francis' priory bell chime for Matins, and not doubting it to be the voice of God calling him, ran without delay, threw himself at the feet of the Fathers and requested the holy habit with the greatest insistence, recounting the whole happening. At the start they gave him no credit. They first made sure that it was true, so that some went out to the street he had named, where they found the corpse of the hapless companion, completely disfigured with signs of having been strangled and black as coal. They then admitted him and Richard began a new and penitential life in the priory, demonstrating deep gratitude to the Most Pious Virgin Mary for the rest of his life, by whose intercession he had received that remarkable grace. From then on he led an exemplary life. He went to



India to preach the Gospel; from there he went on to Japan, and had the grace to die a martyr for Jesus Christ, burnt alive.

Another conversion by the Rosary. On the 10th of March 1615, a Priest called Saint John Ogilvy, climbed up the gallows in Glasgow. He was to pay by hanging the price for the crime of preaching the Gospel. In that supreme hour, standing on the platform from where he looked out over several thousand spectators, wanting to give them in remembrance of himself some pledge of that Faith for which he was happy to die, he took out the last object remaining to him, the Rosary, and threw it out with force into that immense crowd. It happened to land on the breast of a young Hungarian called John of Heckersdorf, who was on a recreative journey and was there by chance. His emotions were strong. The remembrance of that Rosary followed him everywhere, until one day, at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff in

Rome, he abjured his heresy. He used to repeat that he owed his conversion to that Rosary.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was above all most devoted to Mary Most Holy and began this so early that it can be assured that he was born with this devotion. One day the nurse who was suckling him saw that he had a note in his hand and she tried to remove it. But the blessed boy, bursting out in tears, resisted so much that the nurse had to let him be. His mother, called Theodora, was present and, moved by curiosity, wanted to know the contents of the note, and snatched it from his tender hand. She opened it and saw these words written: "Hail, Mary." Meanwhile the child cried bitterly and, to quieten him, his mother returned it. Little Thomas then put it into his mouth and swallowed it. All those present or later knew of this commented that Thomas was to become very devoted to Mary Most Holy, and they were surely not mistaken. As true devotion to Mary consists in abstaining from all sin and in imitating Her in the virtues, Thomas abstained from all sin, particularly those of impurity, despite finding himself faced with the greatest temptation by which a youth can be tried. He imitated Her in all the virtues and very especially in Her humility, obedience, chastity, meekness and charity. He was very diligent in study and so pious that he never wrote or studied without beginning and concluding with a pious prayer. In his doubts and difficulties he always turned to Mary Most Holy, and this Good Mother, Dispenser of all Graces and Mercies, granted him such learning as can be seen in the countless and profoundest written works he left to us.

An idea of Saint John XXIII on the Rosary. A commentary by this Pope regarding those who excuse themselves from practising this Marian devotion *par excellence*, the Holy Rosary, by saying that it can easily become monotonous: "The worst Rosary is the one that is not recited!" And an interesting explanation: "But in the Rosary... we always say the same!" – "Always the same? And those who love each other, don't they always say the same? Is there perhaps monotony in your Rosary because instead of pronouncing words meaningfully, like a man, you emit sounds like an animal, with your thoughts far from God?"

A legionary comes to a good end. Spain, at the time of the House of Spain. There was a legionary called James, aged about thirty-five, in one of the '*banderas*', as they called the infantry companies or units, namely the regiment of that time. His story is told by the Jesuit Priest assigned to this unit. "James was very refined and educated. His courage, which at first surprised us all, gave us to understand that he had not come to the regiment to fight, but to die... His religious conduct was the most disconcerting, he spoke with me, his chaplain, with frequency, his ways were austere; his companions saw him pray briefly every night, but never saw him confess even in the most desperate moments. Besides, in his conversations he showed himself to be a convinced atheist, though coldly respectful. When someone was bold enough to ask him the reason for his prayers without faith, he replied very seriously: 'I

gave my word, and I always keep my word!’ One morning the *bandera* went into action and a bullet felled our legionary to the ground. His heart was torn apart... he had died in the act! On resting after that day of action I wanted to unveil before the legionaries around me the mystery which shrouded James’ life. He had been born into a family distinguished for its wealth and virtues. Still young, he had entered a religious Order at the same time as his brother. There he shone out for his talent, virtue and perfection... and so the years went by... But James was not prudent in his reading, he lost his faith and ended up leaving the religious congregation. Shortly afterwards his mother was dying... And hardly able to speak, she told him: ‘James, James, come to my bedside. I want to ask something of you. Always pray, daily, three Hail Marys.’ – ‘Mother, I promise you... I promise you...’ And his mother died... Days and nights went by; restlessness and emptiness reigned in James’ heart. Life for him was a martyrdom. At that time the army was recruiting. James felt relieved; he had found a noble means to end his worries, and he enlisted in the Legion, in search of death. In my chats with him, I urged him as a Priest to confess. His reply was always the same: ‘Father, I would like to believe..., but I can’t...’ When I heard the promise he had given to his mother, I was reassured. I was convinced that the Heavenly Mother would not allow him to be lost. And effectively, so it was. Yesterday, very late at night, a legionary came to my tent. It was James. He was impressed. He limited himself to saying: ‘Father, I feel that death is very close. I come to confess...’ The three Hail Marys saved him!”

Our Lady of the Rosary in Flocco. In the small town of Flocco, Nola diocese, in Italy, an extraordinary event occurred. Our Lady of the Rosary, Patroness of that area, also presided the poor little church of Flocco, and on the 10th of May 1875 her very aged wooden image was exposed for the veneration of the faithful for the occasion of the Month of Mary. Mass was celebrated and, when the Priest reached the consecration, all those present saw that the image was trembling. Holy fear took hold of the gathering, fear which went on increasing in the measure that the prodigy continued. The Mass concluded, they ran to tell the Parish Priest so that he witness the strange event... At the sight of the prodigy he was surprised, but not disturbed. He ordered that the doors be closed to prevent the wind from influencing the inexplicable movement of the image, and then told the people to move back from the marble sanctuary rail in case the throng of people had caused the phenomenon. All that the Parish Priest had ordained was done, and the image continued to tremble and move, while the image of Saint Francis, right beside, stayed motionless. The Parish Priest, dominated by the sentiment which moved the other onlookers, intoned the Litany of Loreto and the people accompanied him with inexpressible fervour. A new and more stupendous prodigy: from the head and countenance of Our Lady of the Rosary, an abundant sweat began to run down. The church was now full of people, who had come up hurriedly at the news of the event, and together all broke out in exclamations of religious enthusiasm; and from every heart arose ardent sentiments of gratitude to God, who permitted them to witness the effects of His Omnipotence. As the sweat was appearing in ever greater abundance, the Parish Priest, taking one of the cloths laid on the Altar, approached with deep and loving fear to cleanse the image’s countenance. But, another prodigy! The cloth stayed completely dry, it didn’t absorb the least humidity. – “It must be an illusion”, said the Parish Priest in admiration turning to the people. But no one doubted for a moment, with so much more reason given that, while the Parish Priest said this, the image’s sweat increased to the point of bathing not only the head and countenance but also the breast. At this, all answered together: – “Miracle!” Soon the Parish Priest thought the same and, to see if others were more successful, he called up different persons, one by one, so that they might make the trial that had given him such a strange result. But all their efforts were likewise useless: the cloth remained dry and the countenance covered in sweat. Among those attending was a girl of fourteen and a half years, Bridget Giuliani, daughter of poor farmers, very well known for her great devotion to the Holy Rosary. When it came to her turn, she went up like the others to cleanse the



countenance of the Virgin, and hardly had she touched it with the cloth than it absorbed the miraculous sweat, amid general surprise. Following this, it happened that everyone wanted to try again. The Parish Priest and the rest made another trial; but once again their hopes were dashed: the sweat did not transfer to the cloth. Evidently only Bridget was honoured by the Virgin with that favour. All then turned to her and each person handed his handkerchief or cloth to her. The girl wiped the countenance of Our Lady of the Rosary time and again, and handed back to each witness their cloth damped in the prodigious sweat, and the faithful bore them off to their homes as a precious relic and souvenir of that remarkable miracle. On the following day, the news of the event, which had spread swiftly to the neighbouring districts,

brought countless people to the church at Flocco. Every social class was represented, and all anxiously awaited the grace of witnessing the prodigy. As the title of the miraculous image was the Holy Rosary, and since Heaven had shown special consideration to the girl who stood out most for her devotion to this blessed practice, those attending began to recite the Rosary in honour of Mary. Their pious instinct did not deceive them. The mysterious sweat reappeared. As on the eve, only Bridget had the privilege of cleansing the image, and to satisfy the desires of the faithful she spent a long time at this task. As on the second day, so was the third, before a gathering ever greater and more fervent and pious. At night on the third day, Bridget believed she had received another favour from Our Lady of the Rosary. She said that the Most Holy Virgin had appeared to her in dreams and made known that the abundant sweat from Her image meant the efforts She was making to detain the course of Divine Justice, enraged at the impiety and wickedness of men, and concluded with a lively recommendation to pray the Rosary as the most efficacious means of appeasing God. What guarantee was there of this apparition? It would be quite simple; since, as Bridget said, the Virgin Mary had assured that the prodigious sweat of the image would last the whole of the month of May and only that month. At the extraordinary influx of people occurring in the town and in neighbouring places owing to the stupendous prodigies in the Flocco Parish, the civil authorities could not lose the opportunity to make their heavy hand felt. In effect, it was very soon known that the delegate of the Castellamare governor and several police officers had gone to the Parish Priest to take charge of verifying whether some superstition was involved in the prodigies which people were talking about everywhere. Was not the Bishop the one in charge of watching over the purity of the Faith and of condemning whatever might be harmful to the people's piety? Did the government perchance fear some danger to public peace by the gathering of faithful in the Flocco church? Surely not. It would have been absurd to fear a riot by that multitude which, full of the deepest piety, moved solely by religious sentiments, went to the church to intone canticles of love and gratitude to Our Lady of the Rosary. The civil authorities, setting themselves up as guardians of religion, proposed to teach the people what they should believe regarding the famous miracle and, therefore, decide whether or not to permit the continued exposition of the image of the Most Holy Virgin. They were entering fully into the exclusive domain of the ecclesiastical authority. Such is the logic of government persecutors of the Church. Every protest faced with force was in vain, and the poor Parish Priest of Flocco had no means of any kind to make his rights respected. Trusting in Our Lady of the Rosary, who had shown such special love to the Parish, he allowed events to follow their course. Catholics know that God is used to make a mockery of impiety's plans by using its own arms in order to demonstrate to men with yet greater clarity the prodigies wrought by Infinite Wisdom. And so it happened. No longer were fervent Catholics to examine the reality of the prodigy, but men full of concerns and ideas contrary to religion... Events were patent and clear, and the police could not find

any pretext for supposing a fraudulent scheme or deception. And the more the chemist sent by the governor of Castellamare examined the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, the more shameful did the rout of the enemies of the supernatural appear. There was no remedy. The chemist and the police found themselves obliged to confess that there was no fraud. And fearing popular indignation, they did not dare to prevent the image's continued exposition for veneration. Examination of the prodigies of Flocco pertained to the ecclesiastical authority, the one most interested in preventing any fraud misleading the faith of the people confided to its paternal care. Hardly had the Bishop of Nola learnt of the events from the communication immediately sent to him by the Flocco Parish Priest, than he sent his own Vicar General to this town, who arrived there on the 19th of May, charged with opening the most meticulous investigation; for belief in false miracles was a grievous and fatal superstition that could only result in discredit to religion. The Vicar began by collecting information on the happenings. He heard no less than one hundred eyewitnesses, after they had taken an oath to tell the truth, and he sealed their declarations regarding the movement and sweat of the image of Our Lady of the Rosary. They were all unanimous. He went on at once to a demonstration. He began to pray the Rosary with the people and then, with unspeakable emotion, saw that the prodigy was renewed. He tried as had the others to wipe the sweat from the image's face, and like the others, in vain. He then called Bridget, convinced himself that she had nothing humid on her hands, gave her a cloth and made her dry the sweat from the statue... The people, deeply anxious, awaited the result of the demonstration. From all lips a fervent thanksgiving rose up to Mary when Bridget returned the cloth steeped in the wonderful sweat. The Vicar, deeply moved, rose to the pulpit and addressed those present with a tender and most fervent exhortation. The Bishop of Nola, before deciding, and after hearing his Vicar and his Diocesan Lawyer, named a special commission to study the affair. The commission summoned Bridget, her father and others to Nola and did not present a report until it had made a thorough and careful examination. Meanwhile, Heaven took charge of proving the truth of Bridget's words by making the prodigy last the whole month of May. The 1st of June began with a gathering of the people, perhaps the most numerous in the Parish. As on preceding days, the Rosary was prayed together with other prayers addressed to the Virgin: every miraculous sign had disappeared. The prodigy had lasted the month of May and no longer, just as the Most Holy Virgin had announced to Bridget in her mysterious dream!

I confessed a dumb man. "This is no novelty. We frequently confess the dumb. But this time... it went beyond the normal. I was missioning in a town... A man there had gone dumb. On the last day of the mission, a son of his requested me to go and confess a sick man who had been dumb for three months and was very ill from a brain haemorrhage. I went to the house indicated and entered the room where the patient was. The son went out and I stayed alone with the dumb man. I told him: 'Be calm and I will ask the questions, and you, with signs of the head, will reply yes or no.' The son had informed me of the religious ambience in which his father had led his life. The man then suddenly began to speak out loud. And with a clear and intelligible voice, confessed. I could not overcome my surprise!... As I could not hide this, as it showed in my expression, he told me with emotion: 'Father, you will understand at once why I am speaking at these moments. From the age of ten I have had the custom of praying morning and evening, the three Hail Marys which some Missionary Fathers counselled us all. From the age of fourteen I lost every religious practice, save the three Hail Marys. Never, not even one single day have I left them out, imploring the Virgin Mary for the grace not to die without making a good confession; since, as you have heard, I needed to confess well ever since my First Communion, when aged eight...' The confession ended, he became dumb again. At twelve at night he died, with his soul cleansed by penance."

Saint Alan de la Rupe, refers the following event which shows the great value of the practice of the Rosary: "A Parish Priest of Dacia, in present-day Romania, called Christian, explained it in these terms: 'I have exercised the pastoral ministry for the space of many



years. I have preached on every instructive matter in the loftiest style I have been able; I have tried not to omit anything I have been able to explain, interest and convert; but recognized that my work bore no fruit, so I decided not to take studied discourses to the Holy Ghost's chair. I wanted to see if I could obtain better results by simply preaching devotion to the Rosary, which until then I had left out, despite the inspirations with which God had favoured me, fearing that its simplicity might produce hilarity in the majority of my listeners, who would look upon it as too trivial and unworthy of the pulpit. Yet I began to demonstrate the excellence and advantages of the Rosary: I insisted on this exercise for the space of a year, and can assure that in this time I have won more conversions and made more progress than those I had obtained from thirty years of sermons.' It is desirable that all Parish Priests, Curates and Confessors employ this means to make religion flourish and heal the wounds that impiety has been making from some time back."

Count Radetzky. This famous Austrian General, who died in 1858, frequently prayed the Rosary. A few moments before the battle of Novara in Piamonte, with one foot in his horse's stirrup, he realized that he had lost his rosary, and looked for it persistently on the ground. A soldier who helped him at this task, found it. Redetzky took the precious object, rode off and shortly gave the sign to attack. That day he gained the brilliant victory of Novara (1849). In Milan this great soldier owned a beautiful park where he allowed people to stroll as though it were public. One day, while seated on a bench, he saw some soldiers heading for his own bench. He rose up and went elsewhere. The soldiers settled down on the bench... Presently Radetzky arrived in search of his rosary. And he found it in the hands of those rough men, for whom the find was an occasion for bantering and vulgar rejoicing. The valiant general reproached them: "What are you doing with that rosary? Give it back to me because it is mine!" And at once the merriment ceased.

The criminal and the Hail Mary. A man condemned to death in Germany refused to hear speak of confession. A Jesuit Father employed every manner of means to convert him: prayers, tears, penances, exhortations..., but without result. Finally he told him: "Let us pray the Hail Mary together." The prisoner, to get rid of his visitor, consented, and hardly had he done so than tears began to stream from his eyes, he made his confession, full of contrition and humility, and his sole desire was to die with an image of Our Lady in his hands.

The Rosary of a King. Joseph I Mataafa, king of the Samoan Islands, was asked to pose for a photograph in order to send his portrait out to foreign consulates. Joseph I consented; but when the photographer arrived, he found the king with a rosary in his hands, reciting it. And in this way he posed. They called his attention to the surprise a photo like that would cause, and that it was therefore preferable to let himself be photographed without any religious emblem, as his predecessors had done. "That is quite true", replied Mataafa, "but they were not Catholics, and I am." This charming anecdote reminds us that towards the end of the XVI century, Pantoja de la Cruz painted a portrait of the Spanish king Saint Philip II. And the Spanish monarch, with the Rosary entwined in his fingers, seems as though he is interrupting his prayer to observe those gazing at him, in the magnificent painting conserved in the Museo del Prado in Madrid.

Dreadful assault. A girl aged seven attended the School run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Jerusalem. Her mother, according to the custom of the people there, had dressed her up with several adornments composed of coins that came to the value of about one hundred francs. This money excited the greed of a muslim woman who, by offering her

sweets and bracelets succeeded in having the girl follow her outside the city walls. When she found herself alone with the girl she tied her hands and feet and pressed hard on her throat to choke her. When she thought her dead, she took possession of the coveted money and threw the girl into a cistern beside the Bethlehem road. But the girl was only stunned, and the little water which flowed from the fount helped her to recover her senses. Making great efforts she managed to untie her feet, and trembling with terror sat on a stone. She did not cease to repeat the Hail Mary and the Salve Regina...She spent three days and three nights in that horrible situation, crying and shouting out for help without making herself heard. Finally some coalmen passing by heard the shouts, went up to the cistern, and with a rope succeeded in saving the girl from that grave. Still to be noted were the contusions marking her neck when she was being strangled. Led at once to the presence of the Patriarch, Monseigneur Vincent Bracco and then to the civil authorities, she explained all that had happened. The muslim woman was found and imprisoned. The doctors who examined the child declared that she had survived by an unquestionable and extraordinary miraculous grace.



Christopher Glück, 1714-1787, the immortal musician who amazed the world with his lyrical compositions, used to pray the Holy Rosary with all devotion. As a boy, a certain Religious called Friar Anselm had regaled him one, with the promise that if he prayed it daily, it would open his way to fame. From then on the Rosary was his recourse and his hope. He called it the musician's breviary. In its different mysteries he found the inspiration to compose the variegated musical scores which were the amazement and delight of all. With heavenly calm, which indicated the presence of the Virgin in his last moments, the great artist expired without letting go of the Rosary.

A worldly woman's conversion. The history of the Archconfraternity of Mary's Most Holy Heart shows us eloquently that there is no pain, suffering or grief that cannot be remedied by turning humbly and constantly to that Sweetest Heart of Mary. Here is an example. In Paris towards 1836 there lived a Christian and courteous gentleman, but who was grievously afflicted as consequence of the entirely worldly and incredulous life his consort was leading, who, unconcerned with every religious idea and practice, was solely interested in dances, spectacles and pleasures. If he spoke to her of God, of the soul, of eternity, she answered dryly: "I don't believe in any of that." Finding no remedy for such a deplorable situation, the husband turned to the Archconfraternity of Mary's Compassionate Heart, but neither there did he succeed, until it occurred to him to note the name of his wife in the list of the associates of this Confraternity and to pray every day a Hail Mary for the conversion of the unhappy sinner. This was done. The name of the impenitent woman was noted in the Association's records and prayers were said for her. The following day, at eight in the morning, portent of divine grace!, the unhappy sinner left her room dissolved into tears, went up to her husband, threw herself at his feet, begged his forgiveness for her scandals, and declared that the previous night God had given her to know the deplorable state of her soul, from which she wanted to escape as soon as she could by a sincere and contrite confession of all her faults. This she did in effect. The husband was consoled and the repentant sinner changed her ways, in such fashion that she became an object of edification for all who knew and had dealings with her.

The Rosary transforms a monastery. A gentleman had many children, and had placed one of his daughters in a completely lax convent where the nuns breathed only vanity and frivolity. The Confessor, fervent and devoted to the Holy Rosary, wishing to direct this young Nun along the pathway to sanctity, ordained that she pray the Rosary every day in honour of the

Most Holy Virgin, meditating on the Life, Passion and Glory of Jesus Christ. This devotion pleased her greatly, and she gradually came to detest the laxity of her Sisters. She began to delight in silence and prayer, despite the scorn and mockery of the nuns, who interpreted her fervour as sanctimony. In those days a holy Abbot arrived at the convent on a visitation and, while he prayed, had a strange vision. It seemed to him that he saw a Nun praying in her cell before a Lady of extraordinary beauty escorted by numerous Angels, who with fiery arrows kept away the multitude of devils trying to enter the cell. In the form of unclean animals the evil spirits ran to take refuge in the cells of the other nuns, exciting them to sin, into which many of them fell. By this vision the Abbot understood the evil spirit of that convent and thought he would die of grief. He called the young Nun and exhorted her to persevere. Reflecting then on the excellence of the Rosary, he decided to reform the convent using this devotion. To do so he acquired some beautiful rosaries and distributed them among the Nuns, counselling them to recite the Rosary every day and promising them that if they accepted his counsel, he would not oblige them to accept the reform. They were pleased to have the rosaries and each promised to recite it under that condition. And, something admirable! Little by little they set their vanities aside, dedicated themselves to silence and recollection, and in less than a year requested the reform themselves. In their hearts the Rosary had wrought more than the Abbot could have done by his exhortations and authority.

Two prodigious cures. Countless are the cases of portentous cures owing to the powerful intercession of Mary's Compassionate Heart. Here we will recall only the two first ones mentioned in the Annals of the Archconfraternity. Three months after its foundation, on the 16th of March 1837, some individuals appeared before Abbot Desgenettes, asking him to request prayers for the health of a sick person in the Archconfraternity of Mary's Compassionate Heart. The Priest refused, saying that the Association had been established to impetrate the conversion of sinners, but at the repeated requests of those good souls he finally consented, and the sick person was instantly cured. By this Mary's Sweetest Heart clearly showed that She wanted to be invoked as Health of the Sick. Some days later occurred a cure as related by the same venerable Desgenettes: "In the prayers of the Archconfraternity I was asked to recommend a young lady belonging to one of the most respectable families of lower Normandy, some 14 or 15 years of age; those who so requested were the girl's mother and instructresses. For some time she had borne a muscular contraction of one leg and the curving of a rib, which made her suffer cruelly, and kept her for months nailed to her bed; her leg too far bent prevented her from standing. They asked for a Novena of prayers to Mary's Most Holy Heart in her favour. In the first days of the Novena the sick girl suffered more; but on the ninth, in the morning, she found herself suddenly and radically cured."

Marshall de Lattre. In his last photograph, the eminent General de Lattre de Tassigny, distinguished member of the French Resistance, haloed in the severe majesty of death, appeared dressed in his uniform and with the Rosary in his hands. Thus had he ordered prior to death. His fingers held on lovingly to a diminutive rosary, from which hung a medal with the beautiful figure of the Virgin. Posthumously he was declared Marshall of France. What an instructive example in a man of arms, in a genial soldier and great defender of his country! How often do insensate mentalities think that devotion is for women or for weak minds!

Mary's protection for a devotee of Hers. Father Charles Bovio recounts that in Dormans, France, there lived a married man who kept up impure relations with another woman. His wife, unable to bear this, did nothing but beg God to chastise them. On one special day in church, before the Most Holy Virgin's altar, she knelt down to implore punishment for the woman who had robbed her husband. It was precisely before this image that the other sinful woman came every day to pray a Hail Mary. One night, in dreams, the Mother of God appeared to the wife who, on seeing Her began to repeat as always: "Justice, Mother of God, justice." The Virgin replied: "Justice? You ask justice from Me? Find someone else for that, I cannot. You should know that every day this sinner addresses a prayer so agreeable to Me

that I cannot consent that anyone who so prays be chastised for their sins." Come morning, the wife went to Holy Mass at that Church of the Virgin, and on leaving she met her husband's mistress, whom she began to insult, saying among other things that she was a witch, who by her spells had enchanted the Most Holy Virgin. "Silence! What are you saying?" the people told her. "How can I keep silence," she replied, "when I have said the pure truth. The Divine Lady appeared to me and, when I asked Her to do me justice, She answered that She could not owing to a special greeting which the wretch recites to Her every day." They asked her what greeting she recited every day to the Mother of God. She replied that it was the Hail Mary. But realizing that for this little devotion the Virgin showed such mercy, she went at once to prostrate at the feet of that holy Image, and right there, asking pardon of all, made a vow of perpetual chastity. Moreover she made herself a nun's habit and settled into a tiny room close to the Church, where she lived as a recluse and persevered in continuous penance up till her death.



Charles Francis Gounod (1818-1893), a Dominican Tertiary, famous composer and organist, never omitted the holy devotion of the Rosary, and is known for his masterful 'Ave María', based on the music of the first prelude of the 'Well-tempered Clavier' by Johann Sebastian Bach.

The Hail Mary prayer transforms a youth. Well known is the case related by Father Segneri in his book "The Christian instructed". In Rome Father Nicholas Zuchi heard the confession of a youth burdened with sins against purity and bad habits. The Confessor received him charitably, and compassionating his lamentable state, told him that devotion to Our Lady could free him from that fatal vice, and imposed on him as penance that, until his next confession, every morning and night, on rising and on retiring he should pray a Hail Mary to the Virgin Mary, offering up to Her his eyes, his hands and his whole body, asking Her to keep him as Her own, and that he kiss the floor three times. The youth practised the penance, at the start with little amendment. But the Father continued to hearten him not to give up this pious habit, and to confide in the protection of the Virgin. In the course of time, the young penitent went with other companions to see the world for several years. Back in Rome, he went in search of his Confessor who, with great joy and surprise, found him thoroughly changed and free of previous stains. "But son, how did you obtain from God this wonderful transformation?" "Father", the youth said, "Our Lady obtained that grace for me owing to the devotion you taught me." And the prodigies did not end there. The same Confessor narrated the event from the pulpit. This was heard by a captain who for many years had been living in sin with a woman. He too resolved to practise the same devotion to free himself from those terrible shackles which kept him enslaved to the devil. The sinner's intention to free himself from sin is necessary for the Virgin to be able to help him. But, what happened? Half a year later the captain, presuming on his own strength, went in search of the woman to see if she too had changed her life. But on reaching the door of her house, with the evident danger of falling again into sin, he felt rejected by an invisible force and found himself more than a hundred metres away, and at the door of his own home. He clearly understood that Mary had freed him from perdition. This makes evident the concern of our Good Mother, not only to draw us out of sin, if with good intention we commend ourselves to Her, but also to free us from the danger of fresh falls.

The Rosary of Saint John XXIII. Cardinal Anthony Bacci (1885-1971), traditionalist, highly critical of the heretical liturgical reforms imposed in those times so turbulent for the Church, co-author with Saint Alfred Ottaviani of the 'Brief critical analysis of the

Novus Ordo Missæ’, and well-known anti-communist, published a book on the lives of the last four Popes in Rome: Saint Pius XI, Saint Pius XII, Saint John XXIII and Saint Paul VI. Among other intimate conversations, he cites this one with Saint John XXIII: - “I always rise at about four in the morning,” His Holiness told him one day, “that is my hour”. - “But, Holy Father”, objected the Cardinal timidly, “that is very early. Your Holiness needs rest...” - “Yes, I need rest; but I also need to work and, besides that... it is a very good time to pray when everything is in silence. And I have the custom to pray three Rosaries every day... If I don’t pray them in the morning, I find no time for them.” - “Holy Father, I pray just one”, replied the Cardinal smiling. - “Yes, obviously; but I am the Pope, and a Pope needs more help than a Cardinal.”

Father Henry Lacordaire, a Dominican, 1802-1861, a great artist of the word, as virtuous and penitent as he was a sublime orator, of whom it could have been said that God does not grant two such men in a single century, just as he does not make two suns shine on the same day; when he had finished astounding his audience by his persuasive and enrapturing words, humbly prayed his Rosary, asking the Lord to save him from vanity and that souls might profit from his oratory.

A means of sanctification. Saint Louis of Granada recounts the following episode: “There was a man highly devoted to Our Lady, to whom he recited his Holy Rosary, and by this means, effective for every favour and blessing, God granted him so many favours and gifts, so that for the space of some years he enjoyed continuous prayer almost always. Finding himself then so advanced in mental prayer, he asked a companion of his, called Gregory, whether it would be right to leave out the Rosary to spend more time at mental prayer. The reply was no, so that he persevered for a year in devotion to the Rosary and, as he saw that he received in his soul the same favours from Heaven as before, as a very spiritual man, he resolved to give up the Rosary without informing Gregory. A few days after giving it up, he began to experience many difficulties and dryness, and almost had no prayer; since whoever tries to sail on happily in the spiritual life without the Star of the Sea, Mary, exposes himself to such risks. He gave an account of this to Gregory without telling him the cause, that he had left aside the Rosary; to which Gregory smiled and told him: ‘Go back to praying the Rosary.’ He did so, and things went so well with him that shortly he had the same spirit and devotion as before. This Gregory counselled those who sought progress in the spiritual life to pray devoutly the Rosary. Today he is Venerable and it is hoped that the Church may include him among the Saints.”

Persevering devotion to Mary. At midnight the telephone woke me up. - “Father, come at once. There has been a train accident and a lad is dying. Please come quickly to the hospital.” I arose immediately and took my case for the sick which I always keep handy. Within ten minutes I was there. “Quickly, Father,” the nurse told me, “he is agonizing.” But hardly had I begun the prayers in the ritual when the young man recovered his senses. He confessed amid sobs. I prepared him to receive Extreme Unction when I realized that on closing the door to my house, I had left my case on the threshold. “It’s no use going back for it,” the nurses told me, “in two minutes he will be dead.” Yet I went back, and while hurrying along implored God and Mary Most Holy to keep my patient alive until my return. In seventeen minutes I found myself again at the side of my moribund who, to the general surprise, had remained quite conscious and, amid sweet peace, seemed to have forgotten his sufferings. I leant over him and he told me: “Father, Holy Communion. I would like to receive Holy Communion.” Providentially I had brought Sacred Forms with me, despite my little hope of finding him still with life. After a few pious words of consolation and encouragement with which the Lord inspires His Priests in such cases, I asked him if he had any preferred practices of piety. “Yes, Father,” he answered, “before leaving my own, I promised my mother that I would never give myself up to sleep without having prayed three Hail Marys to implore the grace of a good death and my salvation. And though I am far from having been a good

Christian, I have not failed to keep my promise one single day; just today I had already prayed my three Hail Marys before being run over by the train.” He received Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction with the signs of the most lively repentance. He often repeated: “Jesus and Mary, I love You with all my heart.” At the end of the sacred rites, he looked at me as though calling me and, stretching out the one hand left to him by the train, told me: “Father, you will let my mother know of this.” He then closed his eyes, in the great recollection which usually precedes holy deaths; but I could hear this invocation which his dying lips strained to pronounce: “My Jesus, thank you.”

García Moreno, President of Ecuador. The great President of Ecuador, Saint Gabriel García Moreno, was a devout Christian faithful. A group of Irish visited him one day, whom he had summoned from the United States to install a mechanical sawmill. Speaking familiarly with them, he asked them about their religious practices and the canticles they knew in honour of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. A sweet and lovely canticle burst from the lips of those good Irish, to which García Moreno, moved, listened. And he asked: “Do you love the Most Holy Virgin Mary dearly?” – “Very dearly, with all our heart.” – “Then we can kneel and pray the Rosary together.” And all on their knees, around the President, with great fervour prayed the Rosary to Mary.



The Heavenly Mother rewards virtue. A curious case comes to mind: A young lady aged twenty-one was engaged to a youth of twenty-three. One day she told me, very troubled, that the youth no longer came to see her, so that she felt very sad. I asked her the motive for the young man’s behaviour, and she then declared the following: “It was because he had begun to annoy me, seeking my consent to certain liberties I do not like; and I told him that I had spoken to him because I believed him to be a formal and respectful man, and such excessive liberties between us upset me, as I had always aspired to marriage with a man able to respect his fiancée up till that day. That I should have said this annoyed him and he went; and time passes and he does not return. And this saddens and troubles me, since truly I like him, given that I believe that he is good at heart. I don’t know what to do, Father! Advise me...” I gave her a holy picture of the three Hail Marys, telling her to commend her problem to the Most Holy Virgin, and not to retire any day without having recited the three Hail Marys. Some time passed, and the girl persevered with the prayer and with confidence in the Mother of God; and one day, while she was thinking precisely about the youth of whom she was enamoured, he appeared at her home, begging forgiveness for his previous bad behaviour and promising that from then on he would act as a one who knew how to respect his fiancée, and showed his wish and purpose to marry as soon as possible. She, as contented as can be, visited me, saying: “Father: this practice of the three Hail Marys has been a prodigy. The Virgin has heard me!... I have told him what happened, and now the two of us pray the three Hail Marys daily, and at the same time, naturally with pleasure and expectation, we prepare our wedding celebration for the month of August this year.”... Here you see another “little wonder” of the Most Holy Virgin, performed for the benefit of one who invoked her with faith and confidence, praying the three Hail Marys day after day!...

Miraculously cured by the Rosary. Saint Eunice Udowelle née Umerah, a Palmarian of exemplary life, had to support the great cross of a long and painful illness from the birth of her first son in 1929 until the year 1969. She also had a haemorrhage which did not respond to any medical treatment. Then, tired of hospitals, she went back home to resign herself to death. One day, however, in the year 1969, when Eunice took up her Rosary and began to pray, the Most Holy Virgin Mary cured her miraculously in a moment. She lived on for

many years still, until 1986, when she died aged 81 years.

The three sisters. Saint Alan de la Rupe and other authors, among them Saint Robert Bellarmine, refer that a good Priest counselled three sisters, penitents of his, to recite the Rosary daily and devoutly for a year, without failing one single day, to weave a beautiful dress for the Most Holy Virgin. He told them that it was a secret received from Heaven. The three sisters did this. The following year, on the feast of the Purification, 2nd of February, in the evening and after having retired, the Most Holy Virgin entered their apartment. She came accompanied by Saint Catherine and Saint Agnes, and adorned with a dress resplendent with light, upon which could be read all over in letters of gold: “Ave María, grátia plena!” The Queen of Heaven approached the bed of the eldest sister and told her: “I greet you, My daughter! You have greeted Me often and very well! I come to give you thanks for the lovely dress you made Me!” The two holy virgins who accompanied Her also gave her thanks. Afterwards the three disappeared. One hour later, the Most Holy Virgin returned to the room with Her two companions wearing a dress without gold or radiance. She approached the bed of the second sister and gave her thanks for the dress she had confected by reciting the Rosary. As she had seen the Most Holy Virgin appear to her elder sister far more resplendent, she asked the reason for the difference. “Your sister weaved Me better dresses,” Mary replied, “by praying the Rosary to Me better than you!” About one hour later, the Most Holy Virgin appeared for the third time to the youngest sister. She came dressed in rags and tatters all dirty and told her: “My daughter, this is how you have dressed Me! Thanks!” The young lady, full of confusion, exclaimed: “Ah, my Lady! Forgive me for having dressed You so badly. Give me time enough to make You a beautiful dress, by praying the Rosary better!” When the vision disappeared, the grieved young lady told the Confessor all that had occurred. He encouraged her and her sisters to pray the Rosary throughout the following year with greater perfection than ever. They did so. And, at the end of the year, again on the feast of the Purification, in the evening, the Most Holy Virgin appeared to them wearing the most beautiful dress and accompanied by Saint Catherine and Saint Agnes, who bore crowns, and told them: “My daughters, be sure of the Kingdom of Heaven! Tomorrow you will enter there with great joy!” To which they replied: “Our hearts are ready, beloved Lady, our hearts are ready!” And the vision disappeared. That same night, they felt ill, called the Confessor, received the Sacraments of the sick and gave thanks to their Director for the holy practice he had taught them. After Compline, the Most Holy Virgin appeared to them once more, accompanied by a great number of virgins. She made the three sisters dress in white tunics, and they died while the Angels sang: “Come, spouses of Christ. Receive the crowns prepared for you from all eternity!” This history teaches several truths: it is important to seek out a good director to inspire holy practices of piety and especially the Holy Rosary. It is important to pray the Holy Rosary with attention and devotion; the benevolence and compassion of the Virgin Mary towards those who repent of their past lives and propose to amend; and Her generosity in recompensing during life, at the hour of death and in eternity the little services we faithfully offer Her.

The Virgin always attends persevering prayer. At the time when the ruinous changes introduced into the Catholic Church were becoming evident, many Priests had set aside the soutane to wear civil dress. In those circumstances Mary Most Holy’s motherly help towards Her faithful children shone out all the more. “I remember an event which made a lively impression on me and occurred in the year 1967, in which I took part in the great Mission in Lima, Peru. The mission had ended and, so as to see something of this country, some Friars took me on a visit to a town in the Andes Cordillera, at an amazing height. We were returning from the excursion, and close to a small village almost lost in the immensity of those mountains, a car breakdown held us up. While the mechanic was repairing the vehicle, we commented on the views and customs, at the same time as we grieved at the lack of spiritual assistance in those localities deprived of a Priest. Thinking of this and speaking of it, a

middle-aged man reached the group of expeditionaries we formed. He, addressing me, the only one wearing a soutane, said: 'Father, I pray that you come with me to my home where I have my elderly mother very ill. She asks for a Priest, and the nearest is 300 kilometres from here, and there is no time to reach him as she says she feels very ill and is dying...' I did not let him repeat his request, and told the good man: 'Let's go. Is it far?' – 'Very close', the man replied. We walked a good way and found ourselves in the elderly woman's home. On entering her room, the first thing to surprise me was to see beside her bed on a little table, the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. I encouraged the patient as far as I could, and then confessed her... The peace of her soul was reflected on her face, and in a weak voice, taking my hand to kiss it, said: 'This is what I have always asked the Virgin: not to die without confession... and I have ever prayed three Hail Marys to Her'... I left that house deeply moved... The Mother of God had heard the prayer of the simple woman... Wonders with which the Most Holy Virgin recreates us!"...



The Holy Rosary. Saint Louis Mary Grignon of Montfort said: "As for me, who am writing this, I have learnt the efficacy of this prayer for converting the most hardened hearts by personal experience. I have found persons unmoved by preaching the most tremendous truths given during a mission. By my counsel they formed the habit of praying the Holy Rosary daily, and were thereby converted and consecrated themselves wholly to God. I have been able, besides, to observe an enormous difference of morality among the towns where I have given missions: Some, for having abandoned the Rosary, had fallen back into living badly; others, thanks to having persevered in praying it, have lived in God's grace and grown in virtue from day to day."

He left this world to go to Heaven. A Redemptorist missionary writes: "In the year 1959 I sent a letter out to ten thousand sick, with the holy picture of the three Hail Marys. Shortly afterwards one of them called me. He was an illustrious man in the world of literature and jurisprudence. I had known him for eight years. On greeting me he said: 'I have called you so that you be a witness to the miracle of the conversion of a sinner, which should be attributed to the devotion of the three Hail Marys.' 'Where is this sinner?' I asked him. And he, seriously, exclaimed: 'Myself, Father, I want to make my confession. And have patience, it will take a good while. On receiving your letter,' he went on, 'I took the holy picture and began to pray the three Hail Marys morning and night, with the printed invocation: 'Mary my Mother, free me from falling into mortal sin.' I later corrected it to say: 'Mary my Mother, free me from dying in mortal sin' ... And this morning I felt an impulse to do what I should have done more than fifty years ago.' I confessed him... Exactly one month later he suddenly died. Two days beforehand I had confessed him again, and he had told me: 'Father, I am going to die. My heart is failing as from one month back, since that day you heard me in confession. My joy and my gratitude to the Most Holy Virgin is too great for me to live any longer in this conniving world!'"

Helen, converted by the Rosary. Father Bovio writes of a prostitute called Helen. She entered a church and casually heard a sermon on the Rosary; and on leaving bought one, but wore it hidden so as not to be seen. She began to recite it and, though she prayed without devotion, the Most Holy Virgin granted her such consolations and sweetness in her recitations that she did not want to leave off reciting it. By this she conceived such great horror for her wicked life that she could find no rest, so that she felt impelled to look for a Confessor. She confessed with such contrition that he was amazed. The confession over, she went at once to the Altar of the Most Holy Virgin to give thanks to her Advocate. There she prayed the Rosary, and the Mother of God spoke to her thus: "Helen, enough of offending God and Me;

from today on change your life, I promise to shower you with graces.” The poor sinner, all confused, replied: “Most Holy Virgin, it is true that up till now I have been wicked, but You, who can do all, help me, so that if I consecrate myself to you, I want to employ the rest of my life in doing penance for my sins.” With the help of Mary, Helen distributed her wealth among the poor and gave herself up to rigorous penances. She found herself combated by terrible temptations, but did nothing other than commend herself to the Mother of God, and thus always came out victorious. In time she obtained extraordinary graces, revelations and prophecies. At last, before her death, advised by the Most Holy Mary of its proximity, the same Virgin Mary came with Her Son to visit her. And on dying, the soul of this convert was seen to fly to Heaven in the form of the loveliest dove.

A mother who had no wish to die. A young mother was dying... Married to a Doctor, neither he nor his more specialized companions found in their science any means to be able to cure her. The husband, resigned, attended to the sick woman’s request: “Let a Priest come!” And the Priest came, and beside the patient’s bed found the husband and the marriage’s two children. The elder was aged three and the younger a little over one year. The doctor withdrew with his two sons, for the Father to confess the sick woman... When the Priest asked her if she accepted death, the young mother, gathering strength, answered: “Father, I have no wish to die...!” And she broke out in tears saying: “Not for me but for my children and my husband.” Later calm, she exclaimed: “Let God’s Will be done! But..., may God will to free me from death. I ask Him with all my heart!” The Confessor then said: “As intercessor ask the Most Holy Virgin, She is Mother and will be able to understand you like nobody... And She can do all before God!” And taking out of his prayer book a holy picture of the three Hail Marys and a novena, he gave them to the sick woman adding: “Here you have a very effective devotion. Begin this very day to pray the three Hail Marys, and together, with your husband and children, invoke Mary, Suppliant Omnipotence, Mother of Infinite Wisdom and Our Mother of Mercy. Let us place everything in Her hands!” Three days later the husband arrived at the church asking for the Priest who had confessed his wife. He, on seeing him, hastened to ask him: “What news, doctor! How is the sick wife?” And the doctor, with irrepressible emotion, answered: “Father, a miracle of the Virgin Mary! My wife, inexplicably, is out of danger and improving.” And, calming down, added: “As soon as you left my house the other day, we put your counsel into practice, and we made a start on the recital of the three Hail Marys, with myself and my elder son kneeling, and the little one standing by his mother’s bedstead... And with what fervour did we pray them, Father! We did the same the second day and today in the morning... and this afternoon I noticed with surprise that the fever had almost completely gone... And at the arrival of my colleagues for their daily visit, they too were surprised at the change, which has no scientific explanation... She is cured! Father, tomorrow offer Holy Mass in thanksgiving to God and to Our Lady of the three Hail Marys.”

The Rosary girls. Listen now and keep this charming story in remembrance. Two little girls, sisters, were at the door of their home devoutly reciting the Rosary. A beautiful Lady appeared to them and, approaching the youngest, aged only six, took her by the hand and led her away. The elder sister, full of anxiety, followed and looked for her and, unable to find her, went back home crying and saying that they had taken her sister away. The father and the mother searched for her in vain for three days. After this time, they found her at home with a cheerful face full of joy. They asked her where she had come from. She replied that the Lady to whom she prayed the Rosary had taken her to a beautiful place and had given her very nice things to eat and had laid a very lovely boy in her arms whom she had covered with kisses. The father and the mother, recently converted to the Faith, called the Jesuit Father who had instructed them in the Faith and in devotion to the Rosary, and explained what had happened. He himself recounted this. It happened in Paraguay. May our dear children imitate these fervent girls. Let them recite the five mysteries of the Rosary every

day and they will merit seeing Jesus and Mary, if not in this life, then after death for all eternity. Amen.

A wayward soul who returned to God. A Missionary, Parish Priest of Cuzco (Peru), writes: “In my widespread Parish, and with the collaboration of a group of catechists, I was running a campaign to spread the prayer of the three Hail Marys. Success has been great, since God pours out His graces by means of His Most Holy Mother... In June 1969, I passed by a ranch or property very distant from any hamlets and villages. The owner of the property was by then advanced in years; had been a seminarian, and then, without entering into marriage by the Church, had joined up with a woman by whom he had several children. I made use of my visit to leave him a holy picture with the devotion of the three Hail Marys, recommending him not to leave off reciting them every day, and whenever he felt worried by some problem. Towards the end of the month of October they came to look for me on behalf of the owner of that property to ask me insistently to go to his house, despite the distance, since the owner was very ill and wanted to receive the Sacraments. I went there accompanied by two catechists, and the sick man, on seeing us, weeping bitterly and with faltering voice, asked to confess. Next he declared that he had been praying the three Hail Marys since I had counselled them to him, and that shortly after beginning them he felt moved to regularize his life and return to God’s grace. The Most Holy Virgin had helped his spiritual transformation to such a point that he even began to recite the Holy Rosary during his illness. As his grievous state required, without loss of time he contracted marriage, received Communion together with his wife and legitimized children, and had Extreme Unction administered to him. Exactly half-an-hour after this he rested in the peace of the Lord.” The Mother of God had once more demonstrated Her special patronage with respect to those who invoke Her with the three Hail Marys.



A woman of Antwerp freed from the chains of the devil. In the year 1578, a woman of Antwerp consecrated herself to the devil, and signed the consecration with her own blood. Some time later she repented and, desiring to make reparation for the evil she had done, sought out a prudent and charitable Confessor to find the means to free herself from the power of Satan. She found a wise and virtuous Priest who counselled her to go to Father Henry, a Friar from the priory of Saint Dominic and director of the Confraternity of the Rosary, confess to him and ask to be inscribed in the Confraternity. She went to look for him but, instead of the Priest, she found the devil under the form of a friar who reprehended her severely and told her that she could not hope for any grace from God, nor were there any means for revoking what she had signed. This afflicted her deeply, but she did not thereby lose all hope in God’s Mercy and looked for the Priest again. Once more she found the devil, who rejected her as on the previous occasion. However, repeating the attempt for a third time, the Lord permitted that she find the Father Henry for whom she was looking. He received her with charity and exhorted her to trust in Divine Mercy and make a good confession. He received her into the Confraternity and ordained that she frequently recite the Holy Rosary. One day, during the Mass which Father Henry celebrated for the intentions of the aforesaid woman, the Most Holy Virgin obliged the devil to return the consecration she had signed. And thus she was freed by Mary’s authority and her own devotion to the Holy Rosary.

Rosary to Mary. Joseph Rivella was a restaurant waiter who died in 1942 in Rome. He had the reputation of being a saint, and was called “Our Lady’s waiter” by the people. He was very devoted to Mary, but for a waiter it is not so easy to pray the Rosary amid the clients’ hubbub and with hands continually busy in removing and laying utensils. Yet the good waiter nevertheless found a way of doing so, very original for sure. Avoiding



involvement in his clients' conversations, he recollected himself in the intimacy of his soul and counted the Hail Marys by the heads of the diners. For each ten clients, one decade, one mystery of the Rosary... Vatican Radio, on giving the news of his death, began with these words: "A saintly man has died!" For whoever is devoted to the Rosary will die in holiness.

A good example which made a conversion. A clinic, an operating theatre and, stretched out on the operating table, a girl of few years. The operation to be performed was frankly delicate, difficult, three doctors in surgery were present and two anaesthetist doctors. "Let's see, child," one of them said, "close your eyes, you are going to sleep." The girl replies, "But it's day! I never sleep during the day." – "That doesn't matter. You are going to sleep now. Close your eyes..." The doctor did not want the girl to see the needle

with which he had to inject the anaesthetic. And she repeated: "But I do not sleep by day..." – "Nonetheless, today you have to; you have to sleep to become cured... Come now, be good and close those eyes..." – "Alright", the little one said to conform, as she understood very well that sooner or later those doctors would get their way. But she added: "Before going to sleep, I always recite three Hail Marys. Will you let me pray them?" – "Yes, you can recite your three Hail Marys..." And with all simplicity, the girl sat up, knelt, joined her little hands together and began her nightly prayers: "Hail Mary... Pray for us sinners..." Then, the three Hail Marys ended, she stretched out on the table and, without waiting for any other recommendation, closed her innocent eyes... At that enchanting scene, one of the surgeons felt deep tenderness, though he dissimulated, and apparently remained unperturbed. But as soon as he was able to leave the surgery, he did so, telling his companions that they could finish the operation, as he was not needed. He then retired to his office, shut himself in, knelt down and began to weep. He had been away from church for many years, without receiving the Sacraments and without prayer... And he left there decided to make a good confession and live from then on according to God's Law, since that child who would not sleep without first reciting her three Hail Marys had transformed him completely, leading him to remember the innocence and fervour of his childhood.

Sanctification of a Parish by means of the Rosary. The Parish Priest of a Danish church frequently recounted for the greater glory of God and to the joy of his soul, that he had obtained amazing results in his Parish. "I had preached on all the most attractive and useful subjects, without any fruit," he said. "On not seeing any change in my Parish, I resolved to preach the Rosary, explaining its excellence and practice. And I can assure that after having brought my people to like this devotion, I noticed an evident change in only six months. In truth, this divine prayer has special efficacy to move hearts, inspire horror for sin and love for virtue."

A window facing north. We all have a window facing north and sometimes, a gallery. We go to close it when we feel the hurricane of anything that offends God. We are all exposed to temptations, some more, others less, but have to struggle against them all without exception for love of God. It happened in a town of Castile. A girl brought up as a Christian and very gracious, had to go to serve in the nearest capital. There she was hunted down by a wealthy Gypsy who turned her into a zealous propagandist of the "Jehova's witnesses" sect. Back in her town, she believed herself capable of capturing youth and her own parents and draw them to her new religion. "What's this of going to Mass and praying the Rosary?" Things didn't work out as she wanted. One day her parents sent her to water some vegetables a fair distance away, where she found no one. Suddenly a big storm broke, with a downpour which hardly gave her time to shelter in the hollow trunk of a chestnut. The storm got worse and she began to tremble from head to foot, and she remembered those calm nights on

which her parents made her lead the Holy Rosary before supper in the poor and clean kitchen, and began to recite it on her fingers. Deafening thunder made her exclaim: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, come to my aid!", at the moment when a lightning flash split the chestnut from top to bottom, leaving the unfortunate girl stretched out on the ground unconscious. The lightning did not touch her, but wounded to death her new beliefs. Afterwards she became a model wife and indefatigable propagator of the Holy Rosary.

General Raphael del Riego (1784 to 1823), a liberal, conspirator and freemason, sentenced to death following the restoration of the monarchy which put an end to the triennium of the liberals in Spain (1820-1823), asked for a Confessor. And he confessed his faults with all sincerity and remorse, so that the Confessor, surprised and thankful to God, asked him: "Tell me, son, what have you done to merit this favour from God?" – "Father, my life has been a tissue of wickedness; if there is any deed of mine to which I can attribute God's compassion to me at this hour, I only remember this one: when a child, my mother made me recite the Rosary with her and, from then on, I have never failed to pray it." – The Rosary to Mary!

Saint Edmund and the Hail Mary. Saint Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been brought up to profess great devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. On sending him to Paris to study, his mother recommended him not to let one day pass without recurring to his Divine Protectress. That virtuous mother frequently wrote to him to avoid bad company, and frequent the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist; she often sent him instruments of penance in order to repress, she said, the inclinations to evil which might harm his virtue. The saintly youth, submissive to his mother's counsels, always demonstrated great zeal for the Glories of Mary. Several times every day he went to prostrate himself before one of Her images; and in order to record his commitment to the service of the Queen of the Angels, on one of Her images he placed a ring on which he had ordered the whole Angelic Greeting to be engraved. You will see just how agreeable to the Most Holy Virgin that sincere and persevering devotion was. After the death of that blessed Bishop Edmund, it was observed that the same prayer was engraved on his episcopal ring, to which this prayer imparted such efficacious and miraculous virtue that it later served to work a great number of cures. If we do not engrave the words of the Hail Mary on a ring, let us engrave them on our heart, and that will be even better.

Devotion to Mary is a sign of predestination. "I remember", said Monseigneur Dupanloup, "recognizing the efficacy of the Hail Mary in circumstances I shall never forget. It was then that I had a revelation of the immense power of the Hail Mary. This happened beside the deathbed when present at and blessing the last breath of a young woman, very dear to me, whom as a girl I had prepared for her First Communion. I have the custom never to allow a First Communion without recommending at least fidelity to this simple and powerful prayer, the Hail Mary. This young lady was scarcely aged twenty and it was only one year since I had blessed her marriage. From her First Communion she had been faithful to my counsels and – this was another of my counsels – recited a few decades of the Rosary every day, and for four years had prayed the five decades. Daughter of a former marshal of the empire and one of the most renowned, she was very beloved of her father, of her mother and of her husband, and rich, young, brilliant, happy for having given birth to a son; well then, amid all that present happiness and the dreams for the future, suddenly, at the age of twenty, she must die! Hardly had she become mother when she was attacked by one of those illnesses which do not pardon... she must die! And I was the one chosen to give her this news... I entered. Her mother was desolate, her husband desperate, her elderly father even more downcast than her mother, which is not so rare. – More than once I have noted that Christian mothers, in great sorrows, despite their deep sensibility, bear up in grief with greater fortitude than the most valiant warriors. – I passed then among all these griefs, and did not know what to say to the patient. On approaching, I was surprised to see a smile on her lips. Yes, this young



woman who was about to be snatched away suddenly from the most brilliant hopes, the most legitimate joys, the tenderest, liveliest and purest affections, was smiling at me! Death was approaching swiftly, she felt it, her forehead bore a glow which announced its arrival, and the young mother smiled at me with a certain sweet sorrow. Joy superabounded. I could not contain myself: 'Oh, my daughter, what a blow!', I exclaimed. And she with unspeakable accent which I still remember with emotion, said: – 'Do you not perhaps believe that I will go to Heaven?' – 'Daughter – I replied – I have great hopes.' – 'And I certainty,' she replied. 'And what is it that gives you this certainty?' – 'It is a counsel you gave me in times past' – 'What counsel was that?' – 'When I made my First Communion, you charged me to pray the Hail Mary every day and to pray it

well. I have done so, and besides, as from four years back I have not missed one single day of praying the whole Rosary, and for that I am sure of going to Heaven.' – 'And how?', I asked. – 'I cannot believe,' she added seriously, 'and it is a thought that I cannot forget one moment since the illness surprised me, I cannot believe that having prayed to the Most Holy Virgin 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a sinner now and at the hour of my death', for four years, fifty times a day, that at the moment I am to die She will not be at my side. Yes, She will be there; I am sure, She intercedes for me and will take me to Heaven.' The young woman told me this, and I then saw a spectacle that is beyond description: a truly heavenly death. I saw this tender and weak creature snatched away in the flower of her age from all the delights here below, everything which makes life precious, and leave father, mother, husband who loved her and whom she loved, a poor tender babe, fruit so desired and so dear; leaving all this, not without tears, but with radiant serenity, consoling her elderly parents, blessing her little son, encouraging her poor husband, amid all those bonds which were to break, those arms stretched out in vain to hold her back, her gaze fixed on Heaven, speaking of nothing but Heaven, her last breath being a smile to grace and to eternal glory."

"With Mary everything is possible." The Rosary is the train on the way to Heaven, the train to eternity, the express train with access for all. Whoever takes it for the unavoidable journey from time to eternity will be sure of reaching their destiny, without risk. Mother of ours! Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death! Remember this precious phrase from a famous Navigator, John Sebastian Elcano, spoken at his return from navigating around the world for the first time. Since many congratulated him for the triumph of his hazardous undertaking, he replied: "With Mary, everything is possible. Without Mary, everything falls through."

A converted Priest. A very honourable clergyman, a graduate in theology, a preacher with a good benefice, arrived at the convent of Saint Peter Martyr in Calatayud, and said to Father Sagastizábal: "Father, I understand that you are writing a book on the Mother of God of the Rosary... Are you including miracles?" He replied that he couldn't help but recount some. "Well Father, I want you to know a very great one, and if you think it's worth writing, you can, because that's why I've come here. In my past years, my Father, in the vice of the flesh, I was the blindest of men that there was in the whole world, and this is no exaggeration, but is well known; that no sinner came to offend God as much as I did in this vice and in many ways." And as he was a theologian he said that, seeing himself so lost and in such a filthy vice, he often argued with God alone and said: "You Lord, are you not omnipotent and can do everything? Well, I now give you my will as depraved as You know it is, so that you may direct it in your service, and turn me away from this great blindness." But once leaving this, he said, it seemed to him that they were pulling him with ropes to return to his old sins and, to comply with the world, he confessed and received Communion so unworthily that

God spare every Christian from falling so deeply. He continued telling him: "By God's mercy I went to confess to a Religious, who upon hearing my confession began to shed tears, like another Saint Ambrose when he heard confessions; and I, confessing my sins, and he, weeping over them, finished my confession. And I cannot deny that his tears were the cause of mine. Dealing with penance, after a long exhortation to live well, he told me among other things, that I should pray the entire Rosary of the Virgin every day for the space of a year, in such a way that I could not leave it out for even a single day, and that if I did, I had to start again to pray it for a whole year. I took my penance courageously, and immediately began to pray it. At first, though I had some difficulty, I achieved my intent, and I prayed it all year without missing a day, and just as I confess this to you, I also confess to you, that from the moment of accepting my penance, and rising from the feet of my confessor, and beginning to pray my Rosary, neither by deed, nor word, nor thought, nor in any other way, have I offended God ever again in this sin; rather favoured by divine grace, it seems to me that I would prefer to receive martyrdom than fall into such a vice. I had lived six years in that wicked life, and now for more than nine years I have been free from this filthy vice. This great mercy and this sovereign miracle, which is greater than the creation of Heaven and earth, God has performed in me, through the intercession of His Most Holy Mother, and of Her Holy Rosary, whose devotion I so resolutely took up, and has brought me to this point as I have said. And if thousands of these miracles have happened in the world: let the confessors say with fervour where this holy devotion leads, and then see what happens." From which is inferred how much the Virgin of the Rosary favours and helps Her devotees in this miserable life, through this holy devotion of the Rosary.

The Queen of France obtained a notable miracle. Saint Blanche, Princess of Castile, wife of King Louis VIII of France, asked Saint Dominic with much insistence to beseech Our Lord to give them heirs and a successor for that kingdom. The Father advised her, in order for God to turn her holy desires into reality, to pray the Virgin's Rosary with much devotion and to order a great sum and many rosaries to be distributed throughout her kingdoms, states, and dominions, "and with so many intercessors I believe, my lady, and trust that you will obtain through the sovereign Virgin what you ask for and desire so much," Saint Dominic told her. The saintly queen did so, and God gave her as a son, the blessed Saint Louis, worthy fruit of the Rosary; who, historians say, was also the most gallant prince and the best horseman of his time. This saintly queen was widowed with her twelve-year-old son and, by the testament of the king her husband, governor of the kingdom, faced many troubles, since the nobles of France opposed her, saying that it was not convenient for a foreign woman to govern that kingdom, but she was so prudent that she knew well how to calm everything and bring peace with the great devotion of the Rosary, in which she had so much confidence, and in the end she left a son so well brought up, both in virtue and letters as in arms, that he came to be a saint among kings and as such canonized by Pope Saint Boniface VIII; the Church celebrates his feast on August 25.

Through the Holy Rosary, a Breton knight receives help and takes the habit. It was not new for the glorious Saint Dominic to see celestial miracles and wonders every day through the preaching and devotion of the Holy Rosary, for already in the Toulouse wars against the Albigensians he had much experience of all that could be obtained from God and His Glorious Mother with this prayer. In the estate of Count Don Simon there was a Breton knight, named Alain de Barcoloara, near Dircamio, who by his advice prayed it every day on his knees, and in addition to the ordinary graces that God granted him in that war, he found himself one day with very few men, surrounded by infinite heretics, unable to defend himself from them, if miraculously the Most Holy Virgin had not appeared to him, attacking his enemies and throwing stones at them, by which She wreaked great slaughter among them, so that they were defeated and shamefully routed in that battle, and Alain with his troops were victorious. For this grace and for another, when the same Virgin Mary



delivered him from a very great storm at sea, in his land he founded a monastery of the Order of Saint Dominic, and during the Saint's lifetime took the habit, and turned out to be a great preacher of Our Lady; he is buried before Her altar in Orleans.

A heretic is rapt off to hell and is converted. In the war with the character of a crusade against the Albigensians or Cathars, it happened that when the heretics were enclosed in a house, to burn the articles that Saint Dominic had written on spoken Confessions, they saw that when placed in the fire they came out unharmed, and the papers of the heretics that were there were burnt. One of those heretics, a nobleman of high lineage and prominent in heresy, who had not confessed for fifteen years, seeing the miracle of the papers and thinking about it for a long time, was suddenly seized by a legion of demons and taken to hell, where he was shown the punishment suffered by those who rebel against this Sacrament so necessary. And it seemed to him in that rapture that those wretches each had a

terrible and monstrous dragon attached to their sides, which quickly and rabidly ate those sad hearts that had been so resistant to confessing. They gave great shrieks of pain and roared like beasts. Flames of fire came out of their eyes instead of tears, and from their own mouths they spewed a thousand different disgusting filths, and in their place entered a great multitude of vermin, snakes, serpents, and vipers. And with this vision, the man was so confused that he thought himself already damned and suffering the same penalties, and so he felt them and wept, not knowing how to free himself from such intolerable torments, until the Most Blessed Virgin gave him Her hand. When he found himself free from that predicament, he went to seek Saint Dominic and told him what had happened to him. He confessed to him integrally, and Saint Dominic charged and ordered him to become thenceforth a devotee of Our Lady and of the Holy Rosary with great zeal and diligence, which he did so earnestly that upon becoming a captain of the Catholics against the same heretics, on his banners he bore the Rosary as his main firearm and emblem, and all his life persevered in praises to Our Lady, who had shown him such great favours, and through whose mercy he later achieved many notable victories against his enemies in that conquest.

A married couple converted by a vision of hell and the Holy Rosary. At the time when heresies were raging in France, another marvellous case occurred of a Catholic gentleman, but very far from virtue given his adventures with other women, having a virtuous wife of royal French blood, whom God had given him, in whom was found all the good that could be desired in such a companion, but her virtues were poorly paid and reciprocated (as often happens) with the indifference and disloyalty of her husband which the devil wanted to take advantage of to ruin her soul as well, as he already had his; and he tempted her so much to jealousy (which is love turned into hatred), that she determined to seek someone who would love her, to take revenge on her husband; and though this thought was madness and so contrary to the honesty of her person, she was blinded on seeing another woman preferred to herself. With this wild thought, sometimes hating herself for having it, and other times despairing because she did not execute it, God wanted that while she slept one night, she be snatched away in spirit and shown the punishments of those who fell into sensual and vile sins. These damned had furnaces for beds burning in live flames, dragons embraced them strongly and coiled around their entire body, tying them up, without being able to defend themselves or move. Flames of fire so foul and dirty came out of their eyes, noses, and mouths that they seemed like burning sulphur mines, mixed with many disgusting poisons and venom, and this ran from head to toe, like the filthiest caustic bath, which penetrated and broke up the entrails, and burnt like a forge. The dragons spewed from themselves a

thousand vomits like molten metal mixed with such poison that, breaking the most sensitive and painful parts of the tormented, caused such screams and sobs that all hell resounded, and with all this torment, they neither died nor could die, this being their only desire and what they most despaired of. Among the ovens this woman was able to see, there was one empty, without people and full of fire, and she understood that it was for her husband, for whom she felt such great compassion, and without recalling how he had so offended her, she began to moan and cry so bitterly that she woke up terrified, and the vision disappeared. She was left giving thanks to Our Lord for having prevented her dishonest purpose with such a frightening and terrible vision, whose memory made such a strong impression on her that even awake and getting about, it seemed to her that she was seeing it. Therefore, as quickly as she could, she went to blessed Saint Dominic to confess her sins and tell him everything that had happened to her. The glorious Father, after having consoled her and explained the madness of her thought, encouraged her to patience and suffering, advised her to meditate with devotion on the mysteries of our Faith, to trust in Our Lady, and to pray the Rosary with great fervour. Along with this he gave her the Rosary that he used, for her to put at the head between her husband's pillows, and that she pray to Our Lord for light and grace, so that his soul might not be lost. The noble woman left quite consoled and immediately began to pray the Rosary, continuing it for fifteen days, as the holy Confessor had ordered, and the first night that her husband put his head on the rosary, he was so frightened that he spent it crying and trembling, as if horrified by his sins, and begging his wife to help him with her prayers. The following night, though he slept, and deeply, he dreamt that he was before God's judgment, as if it were reality, and waking up terrified, unable to fall asleep again, he spent the rest of the night moaning and asking forgiveness from his wife, with firm decision to be different, and to amend his life. The following night, which was the third with the Rosary between the pillows, he was carried away in spirit, and taken like his wife to hell, where he saw the pains and torments of those condemned for that vice, and the place that was reserved for him. At this, when he came to himself, he became so frightened and trembling, that fear alone seemed to be ending his life, and with many demonstrations of humility and tears he asked forgiveness from his wife again, promising to keep with purity and loyalty what he had promised in marriage. The next day he went in search of the glorious Father Saint Dominic, with whom he and his entire household confessed and, taking up great devotion to the Rosary, he never abandoned this holy devotion either in war or in peace, inviting all those he could to do so. He ended his life in great holiness, with much peace and conformity with his wife, and they both died on one same day and hour, and in one grave were placed together in the main Paris Church.

A famous miracle that happened to a courtesan woman in Rome during the time of Saint Dominic. With the many proofs that the holy Confessor had of the favours that Our Lady did to those who invoked and called upon Her, especially by the prayer of Her Holy Rosary, that he continually preached Her praises, inviting everyone to this holy exercise, and in a few days he obtained so much fruit in that city of Rome that the Cardinals, Bishops and Prelates, and all that Roman court, took this devotion as principal, and felt great benefit in their souls and a notable change in morals. There was then a woman of the courtesans in Rome, of dissolute life, called Catherine, very beautiful and very gifted with the sympathy, sagacity, and looseness that men love in other people's houses, and abhor in their own. This woman attracted so many people to herself with her beauty, that she was the destruction of that entire city. But being such and of such a disordered life, she attended Saint Dominic's sermons, and received from his own hand a rosary of those he sometimes distributed. She began to have this blessed rosary as a precious relic, and prayed with it every day, but did not leave the disorder of her life, destroying many souls, nor was there any amendment in her other than that. He who died for her love had mercy on her, and encountered her in a street in the form of a miraculously handsome and beautiful Man, and after some words



they agreed that he would come to dine with her at her house, and so he did. The woman began to feel an affection and respect for whom she believed was a man, but not as a man but for what he truly was, and not because she imagined that she really owed such new shyness and so much reverence to his Person, but she dared not look at his face without turning her eyes back to the ground, and with this she felt a contentment and joy in her heart that she had never felt before. Seated at the table, the Guest began to give some signs of Himself, because everything he touched with His hands seemed to be left as if stained with blood. And the woman, thinking He had cut himself with the knife, wanted to see and remedy it. But He said to her: "I have not wounded myself, no, but it would not be right for a Christian to eat a morsel that was not dipped in the Blood of his God." As these were such unusual words in her house, she raised her eyes to see Him, and

the beauty of His face grew so much that she lowered them in shame as if confused, and so as not to show how she felt, she said: "I don't know sir, tell me, you seem to me more than I can judge, I would not dare to speak to You until you reveal to me who You are." "You will know that very soon," He said, "when we are more alone." The table was cleared immediately, though the desire to know, and with the feelings she felt within herself, made each moment of waiting seem like a year. Now being alone, the Guest changed into the figure of the most beautiful Child, that neither nature, nor art, nor thought could form. He had on his head a crown of thorns, and on his shoulders a cross; His hands, feet and side with recent wounds from His Passion, and His whole body sprinkled with living blood. The woman would have died suddenly from fright, if in such great fear and dread Most Holy Jesus had not kept her alive, who to give her a better life rather seemed to take it away; but said to her with a pitiful and tender voice: "Enough now sister, enough now; let your madness and sin cease; see what you cost Me; for though I began when I was a Child, I never left it until death," and saying this He suddenly took the form He had at the time of dying, with the cruelty of His torments and His mortal and changed face; and then at once He changed into the most beautiful and enlightened form that could be desired in a display of his glory, far brighter than the sun, and with greater beauty in the wounds than the heavens have. And He said to her again: "Let your follies end now, oh woman. Let your perdition come to an end; look at yourself well and look at Me; come to your senses, for you are astray and blind; never ever forget what you have seen, for this is the path to your remedy." The Lord then disappeared, and the woman was left so changed, so out of herself, and in herself everything seemed little for what her sins deserved; and rejecting and abominating them, she determined to put her life into the hands of Saint Dominic, whom they held in Rome to be an Angel come from Heaven. She confessed to him with very great repentance, and received the penance he gave her, and he settled her anew in devotion to Our Lady, and in meditation on the Life and Death of her Son, which are the mysteries of Her Rosary. In this prayer and meditation she occupied herself so earnestly, like a new Saint Catherine, that she obtained from God many and very great revelations, so much so that it caused the blessed Saint admiration to see in a soul (shortly before so soiled) such purity and holiness. She persevered with the grace of God, and increasing in it all her life, and giving her wealth to the poor, she wanted to live in seclusion to do penance for her sins, as she did. She was later visited by Our Lady at the hour of her death after very many days, and her body was buried in the Church of Saint John Lateran.

A Bishop understood through divine revelation the value of the devotion of the Rosary. Saint Dominic preached and gave to the Christian people God's commandment transmitted by His Most Holy Mother with great fervour, for it seemed to him that if what he said was

not moistened with the Blood of Christ Our Lord, and supported by His holy merits, he was not fulfilling what is taught in the Rosary. His thoughts were occupied with this, to lead all people to think very frequently about our holy Redemption. The devil made use of many means to hinder so much good, and one of them was through a Bishop, considered in the world as possessing great gifts. He was a great scholar who spoke ironically of the sermons of the Saint (as men of great understanding are often weak of will to serve God). This Bishop criticized that Saint Dominic had ceased to preach the learned and curious things proper to the pulpit and the Gospel (as if the life of Christ Our Lord was not the main part) and that he preached examples of happenings and old wives' tales. It was necessary for the Sovereign Virgin of Heaven to intervene in this, and with a vision make him change his mind; and so he had a revelation in which he saw that arriving with many people at a large, dangerous river that was very swollen, everyone was in danger of drowning. On the other side of the river he saw glorious Father Saint Dominic who made a very firm bridge, by which the Bishop and his company passed over, which had one hundred and fifty beautiful battlements, and fifteen very strong towers where those who escaped from the fury and impetus of the water took refuge. One of those whom Saint Dominic rescued from such danger was that Bishop, whom he took him by the hand to a very fresh and graceful garden, full of such a variety of roses and flowers that it seemed like an earthly paradise, especially because the Queen of Angels, Our Lady, was in it, placed in that pleasant coolness with the Child Jesus in Her arms. With Her virginal hand, She gave each of those who had crossed the river a beautiful garland composed of fragrant flowers and roses. The Bishop arrived in the hope of receiving the same favour, but instead received a good reprimand in which he was recommended the devotion of the Holy Rosary, commanding him henceforth to appreciate better the sermons of the holy man, and the doctrine he preached of the Rosary, so useful and profitable to reform the world, whose evils had overflowed the riverbed and drowned those who did not want to avail themselves of this firm tower of the Rosary. The Bishop, as a man whose eyes had been opened, immediately began to pray and preach the Rosary; but it was not very heartfelt, for in a few days he neglected and forgot it, until the Queen of Heaven made him see, for the second time, that he was sinking into terrible swamps. So that he might not drown, Our Lady and the glorious Saint Dominic threw him a chain with one hundred and fifty silver links, and fifteen large gold rings, to which the Bishop clung, and climbed up a mountain where he found himself safe and free from the great danger in which he had been shortly before. From then on, as a man now completely undeceived, he devoted his life to praying and preaching the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, as a singular and marvellous remedy given by the hands of the Virgin, to free us from the dangerous events that occur in life.

A Spanish lady, captive in Moorish land, whom the Queen of Heaven freed and returned to her land of Santiago de Galicia. At the time when Saint Dominic was in Spain, there was a lady called Doña Lucia who, taught by the glorious Saint, was very devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary, and prayed it every day with much profit. It happened that the Moors of the kingdom of Granada killed her husband and took her captive, and for greater suffering, it was her lot to fall to a cruel master. He made her a slave to the other slaves he had, occupying her every day in the vilest tasks he had in his house, and there was not a single moment for that principal lady (though she was pregnant) to rest, as could be expected from a Moor of fierce condition and hater of the Christian name. But in the midst of such a cruel life and so much mistreatment, she did not stop praying the Holy Rosary every day, taking it as her only rest. In the midst of such hardship and discomfort, she was about to give birth on Christmas Eve at midnight, and labour pains came upon her in a stable, being alone among the beasts that were there; the pains were strange, partly because she was very delicate and young, and also because it was her first childbirth. The holy lady, so accustomed to suffering, had no other remedy but to take refuge in a safe haven, and she began to pray her Rosary



with many tears, commending herself to Our Lady, and the more anguish she had, the more deeply she prayed. With so many pleas, the Virgin of Heaven descended there full of splendour and majesty, and took away the pains from Her servant, who gave birth in Her presence to a blessed son, for being an image of the Lord, born on the same night as Him, in a stable like Him, among beasts like Him, and in the company of the Virgin. With that, she was consoled those days, until the day of the Purification, when the Virgin visited her for the second time, and said to her: “Daughter, persevere in what you have begun, and do not faint in such a good purpose, for I will always be with you, I will take you to your land, and I will put an end to your hardships so that the rest of your life may be according to your merits.” And so it was, that being in the pagan’s stable on

the eve of the Purification, on the day of the feast at ten o’clock she found herself with her son Mariano in the church of the Apostle Santiago in Galicia, where she was from, and where she ended her life with much virtue, persevering in the devotion of the Holy Rosary, in which she also educated her son, who lived many years of holy and wonderful life in a desert. You see, Christian reader, how in the stable where there was little occasion for anything, there was indeed occasion for this lady to receive such great mercies through the Holy Rosary, which is a common exercise within everyone’s reach. We cannot sufficiently thank God for making things so easy for us without which we cannot be saved: to absolve you of your sins, it is enough for a Priest to say: “I absolve you,” and you are freed from the terrible damage caused in your soul by sin. For the Communion of the Body of Christ Our Lord, a little wheat bread, which when consecrated by the Priest is the good of your soul. For Baptism a little water, with such easy and brief words as: “I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” spoken by a Christian, man or woman, ecclesiastic or secular. These are benefits that only God knows how to weigh, for He knows what He gives us in eternal salvation and in mercies, and no one will ever know how to appreciate them or correspond to them as is just. And therefore there is much to be thankful for, that in things so easy such as saying the prayers of the Our Father and the Hail Mary, which are commonly known to all, the Virgin has placed the devotion of the Rosary, and in means so simple has placed such great fruit, and in an exercise so short, such great goods. It is an inestimable mercy, worthy of Her generous hand, and is exactly what men need at this time.

A Roman lady despised the Rosary, and through a revelation from the Virgin Mary appreciated it very much. When Saint Dominic preached this holy devotion of the Rosary in Rome, it was very well received by the Pope, and Cardinals, Prelates and all the Roman nobility. Withal there was a Roman lady, somewhat stubborn and hard to convince, who though very devoted to Our Lady, to whom she prayed many prayers every day, this one of the Rosary did not enter her head, and she gave some reasons, as the stubborn do and, what is more, the glorious Saint confessed her, and could not make her understand. She said that other things were more acceptable to God Our Lord, such as fasts, alms, wearing a woollen shirt on the flesh, and girding oneself with rough ropes, taking some disciplines, and hairshirts, or walking the stations of Rome, etc.; with which she closed the door to the exhortation and advice of the glorious Saint. Saint Dominic went away very disconsolate before an image of the Mother of God, and with heartfelt pain and anguish began to complain and say: “Now, Lady, men hold your Most Holy Rosary in low esteem, the fault is mine for not having the virtue, sensibility, or art to convince them of its value; I don’t know how to fulfil your holy commandment.” With this anguish of the Saint, another greater one awakened in that lady, which compelled her to return to Saint Dominic, and entering the convent of Minerva, which belonged to the Order that Saint Dominic had just founded, she saw that the Saint

was preaching about the greatness of the Rosary. After the sermon, he went to say Mass as he often did, which this woman heard, and in it she was rapt up and taken to judgment before God, where she was harshly reprimanded and punished by the hand of demons, to whom the Lord delivered her to correct her, until at her insistence and pleas, the sovereign Virgin came and showed her the value of this holy exercise of the Rosary, and among many other things told her: "I tell you that you erred greatly in despising My Confraternity, and so that you decide to join it, I want to show you the glory of my Confraternity members." For this purpose, she was taken to a very high place, where there was a beautiful and strong city, whose walls shone like crystal, in the middle of which were the confreres of the Rosary distributed in a cross, like a squadron, singing the Rosary with sweet voices. "What do you think of this?" Our Lady said to her, "well, know that just as my glory is greater than that of the other Saints, so the glory of my confreres is far greater than that of the other saved, for through the Holy Rosary my members engage in more fervent praise of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Most Sacred Humanity of Christ my Son and in praise of Me." With these words from the Virgin, the devout lady came to herself and communicated to Saint Dominic the revelation she had just received. Moved by the vision, she enrolled herself and her entire household in the Confraternity and became a great preacher of this devotion among people of her condition, and was a marvel. From then on, she prayed her Rosary with great fervour, having fixed hours for it, the importance of which she had understood through the testimony of such a Teacher as the Queen of Heaven.



Of another lady who held the devotion of the Rosary in low esteem, and through divine revelation came to hold it in high regard. Another case similar to this one we have mentioned was that of a certain woman of good life who was also very reluctant to believe what was said about this holy devotion, so much so that she dissuaded others from praying it, and said that she neither wanted to enrol as a confrere nor pray that devotion, but rather say other devotions that she had. Being one night in prayer, she was enraptured in spirit and saw in Heaven a great company of people, both men and women who were praying the Rosary and shone with intense brightness. And with this, each time they finished saying the Hail Mary, a star-like light of extraordinary brightness came out of their mouths. She also saw a book in which all that noble company of devotees of the Rosary had their names written in golden letters, and through her ears heard the Sovereign Virgin saying to her: "You are not written in this book, you have lost so much good, nor have you gained anything but my indignation; and so, for having dissuaded many from enrolling in it, you will be given a salutary penance, and you will suffer from a serious illness." It happened exactly like that, because when the lady came to herself, she felt seriously ill in her person, with very acute pains for many days. And with that, she came to know that it was a scourge from the hand of God to endure with patience and gain new merit. And the Mother of God wanted her to become very devoted to the Holy Rosary, and that by a shortcut catch up with many others who had an advantage over her in this holy devotion. She became a saintly woman who did nothing but exhort everyone to devotion to the Rosary, carrying it in her hands, which was a complete medicine for the body and for her soul's benefit. She persevered in this until death, and before dying merited that the Mother of God appear to her and assure her of the path to Heaven and that she would go to enjoy the glory of Her Son.

A famous thief was buried for two years and did not die until confessing his sins, because of the Holy Rosary. In the time of Saint Dominic, there was a notorious thief who caused great harm by robbing and killing on the roads. Saint Dominic wished to convert him and bring him to the path of salvation, and very frequently prayed for him. By God's Providence,

Saint Dominic encountered him one day and tried to preach to him and give him good advice; sometimes with promises, other times with threats, he advised him to leave that life and set out on the path to Heaven. All the Saint did to help him achieved little, for there was so much foolishness in his head that he made fun of everything. As Saint Dominic could do no more with him, he advised him of devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, which is such an easy thing, and since his whole life was empty and full of frivolity, he recommended that among his actions, at least in part of them, he engage in this holy devotion; the thief willingly promised this, and though he stole and robbed, he prayed his Rosary every day. After a few years, this thief died in a desert, and his companions buried him so that dogs might not eat him, with a few bells and responses, in a field somewhat distant from the road. Almost two years after this sad funeral, Saint Dominic was passing along that road with his companions and other laypeople who accompanied the Saint out of devotion; and as they approached the grave, it began to shout loudly saying: "Father Friar Dominic, servant of God, have pity on me!" These words were repeated many times, but no one saw who was saying them, and as they approached the grave, they were heard more, and they noticed that those loud and pitiful cries came from there; they opened it and out came the thief, well and healthy, who, prostrating himself at the Saint's feet, asked for confession. All marvelled at such a rare thing, and they asked him who had put him there; he replied that he was that thief who years ago had done so much harm in that land, and that one day he had a fainting spell, and his companions thought he was dead, they made that grave for him, and threw him inside. And that while about to be condemned to the pains of hell for his evil deeds, the Sovereign Virgin pleaded for him, and obtained from God that though he was buried he would not die, but that his soul remain inside his body, and there have great pain and suffering until he confessed his sins and did penance for them; that those two years he had been there had served as a most rigorous purgatory, and that all this grace and privilege had come to him for having prayed the Rosary of the Mother of God on the advice of the glorious Saint Dominic who was present there; to whom with great tears he asked to hear his confession. Having confessed, received absolution, and fulfilled his penance, his soul left his body and went to enjoy God. There have been other examples like this, and other sinners have also been resurrected through this holy devotion, to whom God with His absolute power, dispensed such a great grace, as He dispensed to certain idolaters who were resurrected in the time of the Apostles and other apostolic men, who once resurrected did penance and were saved. And just as those miracles were then convenient to establish the faith of Christ Our Lord in the hearts of men throughout the world, so afterwards it seemed convenient to perform these miracles, so that we all embrace this holy and celestial devotion of the Rosary, for the good of our souls.

Of an abbot who was freed from the devil by virtue of the Holy Rosary. In a German Monastery there was an abbot who lived profanely, not in accordance with his vows, and one day, hearing of the greatness and excellences of this holy devotion, he decided to enrol in the Confraternity and pray the Rosary daily. It happened that by God's permission, the devil entered the body of a man in that same city where he was (the devil entered the body because Our Lord God never gives permission for them to enter the soul; it is men who give it and not God, and I said by permission, because without it the devil cannot enter any man, because as the Gospel says, when the Lord commanded those demons to come out of those two men, the demons asked permission to enter some pigs, because without the Lord's permission they could not, how much more reason do they need to enter the bodies of men); this devil in question was very talkative, made many jokes and spoke in all languages; for this reason many came to hear him, and the abbot also, out of curiosity, went to see him. When the devil saw him, he laughed and said to him: "You come here too, Lord Abbot, I am very glad to see you, for you are one of our vassals." And he began to tell, in front of everyone, many and grave sins of the abbot, and because of these the devil said: "Lord Abbot, you are already ours, and if it were not for that Confraternity in which you are

enrolled, and the prayers of the good people who are in it, who have defended you, and some other things, thank those little grains you carry with you (referring to the rosary), that I already had permission to lay hands on you, take you to our lodging in hell, but because of what you pray and carry with you, I have not been able to act against you.” Hearing this, the said abbot, on the one hand ashamed of his sins that the devil had uncovered, and on the other, fearful of the threats he had made, and knowing the great virtue of the Holy Rosary, amended his life, and if he had been devoted to the Holy Rosary and prayed it, from then on he prayed it far more assiduously and with greater devotion, giving infinite thanks to the Lord for the mercy He had shown him, and neither by day nor by night did he leave it, and thus ended in holiness.

A woman had a son through the prayers of the Rosary, and after he died, he was resurrected. Saint Alan de la Rupe writes the following in his History of the Rosary. In Ireland there was a barren woman, who had a great desire to have children, and for this she used many appropriate medicines. Since nothing helped her, she also performed many devotions and promises. And as at that time the devotion and Confraternity of the Holy Rosary had been renewed, she was advised to have herself enrolled in it, and to pray the Holy Rosary devoutly, trusting that the Virgin Our Lady would procure for her the fruit of blessing according to her desire. She had herself enrolled, prayed the Rosary of Our Lady devoutly, was heard, and after a time became the mother of a son. However, when the child was two or three years old he died of an illness common to children. The mother, who by virtue of the Holy Rosary had given birth to him, resorted to Our Lady of the Rosary, bringing the deceased son before the altar, as if offering him to the One who had given him to her. She insisted so much, and persevered in asking Our Lady, since She had given her the child, that She should restore him to life, for She had the same power for one as for the other. And finally, as she had merited the son before, aided by the Virgin, she now merited that within a few hours the child be resurrected, safe and sound, for having been the son of such a devout mother.

Of a young man whom Our Lady guarded in life and strengthened in death through the Rosary. According to Father William of Brabant, in the year 1250, there was a young man in Germany, son of honourable and wealthy parents, who, after his father and mother died, without anyone to advise him well, spent all his fortune on games with board and dice, and on feasts and banquets, going to taverns and inns with others like him; but though he went about this way, he never lost his chastity and purity, which he always tried to preserve. When he had nothing left to spend, and wandering lost, he encountered his father’s brother who, seeing him in that state, was moved to pity, and gave him a reprimand, saying that being the son of such parents he could be a valiant and esteemed man in that city, and that he had neglected both. Seeing that the nephew paid little attention to his words, the uncle earnestly begged him to pray daily in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary a third part of it, which are fifty Hail Marys and five Our Fathers; and so, as if in jest, he began to pray it, and prayed it for a whole year. At the end of the year, his uncle meeting him, asked him about what he had entrusted him with, and the nephew told him that he would not want to stop praying it for anything in the world; because though he had begun this devotion in jest, as he continued it, he became fond of it and it set his devotion afire, and he was becoming aware of things. The uncle, happy about this, begged him greatly that in the following year he should pray two parts of the Rosary, which are one hundred Hail Marys and ten Our Fathers. The nephew promised he would do it, and after a year, already improved in his life and habits, he went in search of his uncle, telling him that he had maintained his devotion and advice, and that he was disillusioned with the things of the world. The uncle, moved with



pleasure upon hearing this, said to him: “Blessed be the Mother of Mercy who has granted you so many graces! Now, nephew, all that remains is that this third year you pray the complete Rosary every day, and if you persevere in this, praying one hundred and fifty Hail Marys and fifteen Our Fathers daily, and offer these mysteries, I offer myself and remain obligated to give you a young woman as a bride and wife who is most suitable for your state.” The young man fulfilled this, and the uncle also in marrying him to a beautiful and virtuous maiden. On the wedding day, with the preparation of the feast and dinner for family and guests from both sides, and with the great joy that day had brought, the good young man had not remembered to pray the Rosary, and as it seemed to him that, if he didn’t pray it then, after dinner he wouldn’t be able to pray it, he rose from the table, as they were about to dine, and spoke in his uncle’s ear, begging him to delay the dishes and guests, because he had a certain need that he could not go without. The uncle did so, and the good young man retired to a secluded room and began to pray the Rosary to Our Lady, with such love and devotion for he knew how obligated he was for the graces he had received from the Sovereign Virgin Mary. When he had finished praying the last Hail Mary of the entire psalter, the Virgin Our Lady appeared to him, more resplendent than the sun, and showed the young man three very gallant robes, on which were embroidered the words of the Hail Mary, and the Most Holy Virgin said to him: “Look here, my son, the garments you made for me in these three years, and see the Hail Marys you prayed to me written and embroidered with golden letters. And because, though you have been vain in the things of the world, you have kept your virginity, I do not want you to lose it, but to die a virgin, as my spouse; and so, soon a slight fever will take you, because of which you will not be able to reach your bride, the fever will last three days, and at the end of them, on the third day, you will come to Me.” And having said this, the Virgin Mary disappeared, and the young man went out to the feast with much joy, saying and begging everyone to dine and enjoy themselves, that he was not feeling entirely well and for that reason did not want to dine; and so they all sat down at the table and dined with joy. The young man went to his bed and after the banquet, he called his uncle, his wife, and some friends to his room, told them everything the Most Blessed Virgin had said to him, and how on the third day he would go with Her to rest. He began to have a slight fever that lasted for three days, and on the third day, according to the word of the Virgin Our Lady, he expired with great joy, from which it could be conjectured that he enjoyed the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Seeing this, everyone became very devoted to the Rosary, and the wife, having lost such a good husband, no longer wanted to marry another, but persevering in her virginity, ended her days in the service of the Virgin Mary Our Lady.

Of a Priest who, through the Holy Rosary of the Virgin, was freed from a frightful precipice into which he fell. Father Pedro Ribadeneira, historian of the life and deeds of Saint Francis Borgia, who was Duke of Gandía and later a religious and third General of the Society of Jesus, recounts that while Father Francis Borgia, already a Jesuit religious, was travelling along a rustic road, he and his companion, Father Bustamante, a venerable old man, arrived at a very rough and craggy mountain range, called the Seven Pallares, which is south of the Mondego River, and not far from the city of Coimbra. Riding through this mountain range, Father Francis went ahead and Father Bustamante, his companion, followed him praying the Rosary of Our Lady that he held in his hands, and when passing through a very narrow and dangerous passage, Bustamante’s mount slipped, and began to roll down some cliffs, and down such a frightful precipice that just looking at it was terrifying. The elderly Father Bustamante began to invoke in loud voices those two sweetest names of Jesus and Mary, which he was praying. Upon hearing the voices of his companion, and those of some men who, seeing him fall, gave loud shouts, Father Francis turned his eyes, saw good Father Bustamante rolling down that slope, now on top now under his mule, and with his eyes fixed on Heaven, said: “May Jesus help you!” At the same time as he said this, the mount

stopped in a place so rocky, slippery, and difficult to stop there, that it caused no little admiration to those who saw it. They found Father Bustamante with his Rosary in his hands, and he and the mount were without any injury. Some men, with ropes, pulled Father Bustamante out of that depth where he was, all praising the Lord, for having freed him from such clear danger. He later attributed this mercy of God to the most holy intercession of his most blessed Mother of the Rosary, on whom he called for help, and whose Rosary he was praying, and never let out of his hands throughout the ordeal.



Through the Holy Rosary, God freed a religious from the Moors. Very venerable Fathers of the Society of Jesus recount that in the early years of the foundation of the college of Valencia, they received into the Society a Brother named Diego de Sarabia, a man of great rectitude, a great religious, of much trust, and as such they held him all his life. This religious, coming from Gandía to Valencia along the coast, was praying the Rosary of Our Lady, which he carried in his hand, and suddenly six or eight Moors came out to take him captive as they used to do sometimes in those regions, and seeing himself in this predicament and anguish, the good religious raised his hand with the Rosary towards Heaven and his heart together, saying: "Oh Queen of the Rosary, in this anguish I have no one to help me but You, I beg you to free me from this danger!" Miraculous thing: at once all the Moors who wanted to take him captive became blind, and as they did not see him, they asked one another what had become of that man, and some to one side and others to another, they went confused. The good religious, observing this, quickly moved away freeing himself from them, giving thanks to the Sovereign Virgin of Heaven who had done him such great mercy.

Miracle in the city of Vitoria with some Rosary candles. It occurred in the year 1513, in the capital of Álava, Vitoria, in the monastery of Santo Domingo. There, the brotherhood of the Holy Rosary operated and was then very adorned and protected by the authority of a miraculous image of Our Lady of the Rosary that was there. It was the eve of the Purification of Our Lady, and there were many devotees asking to be enrolled in the brotherhood, as was done. But the brothers were a little afflicted and distressed for being poor in candles. Then they bought eight pounds of white wax and had it worked that night, ordering that thirty-two candles of a quarter or fourth part of a pound be made; they made them and had wax left over to make many more, so that in total they obtained seventy candles, and each one by itself weighed a quarter, and all together only eight pounds (and not 17½ as would correspond). To investigate this miraculous event, all the candles were collected, which were easily recognized among all for being handmade, and the others from bathing and in mould, and were kept in a chest, so that the ordinary judge and vicar of the city could make a formal process, and in his presence they weighed them. Though they had burned for three days, and a third of them seemed to be spent in everyone's opinion, they weighed nine pounds and a quarter. Moreover, having kept fifty-eight candles in the chest, sixty-one were found when the count was made in the presence of the judge, which was done with great fidelity and diligence, as evidenced by the original, and a signed and authorized copy that is in the convent of Santo Domingo, which is kept with part of the candles in an archive that the brothers made next to the main altar on the Gospel side.

How Our Lady of the Rosary freed a man sentenced by justice, and gave him life. Shortly before what we have just said happened, the Bishop of Cotron tells that being governor and captain general of that city Don Fadrique de Toledo Duke of Alba, and his confessor Father Fray Martín de Santis of the Order of Preachers, a man of great zeal and a distinguished preacher, by whose advice the duke had established a very Christian regulation much needed for those times, by which the death penalty was given to any blasphemous man. Two men

were accused of this crime and condemned to be hanged, without any pleas availing to stop the execution of justice, which seemed so rigorous to many. Father Fray Martín de Santis, who to help and encourage them in the passage of death, which so much needs help, left his convent and began to persuade them of the devotion of the Holy Rosary, and the benefits that could be expected through this means, and what the Most Holy Virgin of the Rosary could do for them at that moment by praying this holy devotion, which the Queen of Heaven rewards so much at the time of dying. While one persevered in his obstinacy and hardness, the other accepted the advice, and began to pray the Holy Rosary with much feeling and tears for his sins, imploring with heavenly fervour the favour of the Most Holy Virgin, whose Rosary he held in his hands, and with this his heart in Heaven, and in his holy exercise of which in such a short time he had become such a great master. It happened then that going on his donkey (in Castile style), on their way to the gallows, the animal came out from among the people with such great impetus and so speedily as if it were a runaway horse, that neither justice, men or soldiers were able to stop it and, as if it had understanding, did not stop until reaching the convent of Saint Dominic, which it entered by the doors, and halted before the Rosary Chapel. Justice and many people came to try to remove him from the church, but the authority of Father Master Fray Juan de Vitoria and Father Fray Martín de Santis (who for Vespers had stayed in the chapel praying) was enough so that no one laid hands on the offender, whom the Virgin of Heaven had freed. The convict acknowledged this great mercy, in such a way that he never abandoned the convent, but remained there for many years in the habit of a lay brother, maintaining his devotion to the Holy Rosary.

Conquest of the kingdom of Navarre and its annexation to the Spanish State, thanks to the Holy Rosary. Upon learning of some miracles that had occurred, the Duchess of Alba was moved with particular fervour to devotion to the Rosary of the Mother of God. At that time, her husband, Don Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo, second Duke of Alba, was sent at the head of an army to prevent Navarre, with the consent of the sovereigns of Navarre, from becoming a French province. The duchess bought many thousands of rosaries, which she had distributed among the garrison and soldiers that Saint Ferdinand V the Catholic, regent of Castile, had there for the defence of the kingdom of Navarre (a very important diligence for every success). The devotion to the Holy Rosary grew among the soldiers in such a way that with this aid they were certain of victory against the French, who were already in Logroño. And so it was: they won victory against the French and conquered the kingdom of Navarre for the Spanish crown. Among the Navarros, after having lost much honour in the clash, as the Castilians and Alaveses surpassed them for bravery and, more importantly, for being Christians, devotion to the Holy Rosary greatly increased, which Father Martín de Santis helped considerably with his preaching and the great favours that Pope Saint Adrian VI later granted to the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary.

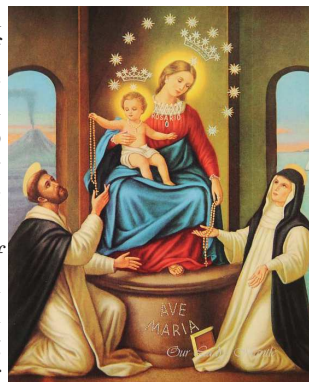
A clergyman who had given himself to the devil was freed from him by virtue of the Holy Rosary. There was in Germany a worldly and profane clergyman, who, in addition to the guilt for what he did against God, Whom he had the duty to serve, lacking temporal goods for his wicked doings, gave himself up by his own will to the devil. He thought that by doing this the devil would give him temporal goods, but as it is sometimes the devil's custom to afflict more those who give themselves to him, instead of having temporal goods, the poor clergyman came to greater poverty. Not knowing which path to take, and his conscience accusing him of what he had done so wrongly, he thought of changing course and amending his life, if by chance God would forgive his sins, especially that great sin of having given himself to the devil. As he heard that through the Holy Rosary the Most Blessed Virgin worked so many wonders, he decided to enrol in the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and pray it every day. He did so and persevered in it for some years, always begging the Virgin Mary to obtain forgiveness from her Son for that great sin of having given himself to the devil. He did much penance for it, confessed, and did not lack the help of the Most Blessed

Virgin, Our Mother and Lady, because it was revealed to him that by virtue of the Holy Rosary, and through the prayers of the Confraternity members, God had forgiven him that grave sin and all the others, and had accepted his penance. For which he, very happy, persevered for the rest of his life in devotion to the Holy Rosary of the Most Blessed Virgin, and induced many to become Confraternity members and devotees of it, telling of the wonders that the Virgin Our Lady had worked in him.

A blind man had despaired of God's mercy, and by virtue of the Rosary he obtained hope and ended in peace. Saint Alan de la Rupe recounts this miracle as an eyewitness. "A man

who became blind, gave himself up to great despair, distrusting that he could obtain forgiveness for his sins. Neither I nor others who dealt with him could cure him of this despair, though we told him of the fall of David, of Saint Mary Magdalen, Saint Mary of Egypt, and other penitent saints; we spoke to him of the glory that the desperate lose, with eternal punishments, yet he maintained his ideas. Seeking how this soul might not be lost through despair, with firm hope that the Virgin Mary would favour him if he could be made to pray the Holy Rosary, I said to him: 'My brother, you don't want to look after yourself, nor listen to all of us who advise you for your benefit, which pains us greatly; I beg you, at least to serve the Mother of God, to have yourself inscribed in the Rosary book, and accept praying it, to praise God and the Virgin Mary, since you have offended them; for I promise you rest for your conscience, and consolation for us.' The man accepted the advice I gave him, had himself inscribed in the brotherhood of the Holy Rosary, and prepared to pray it with some devotion, according to what was possible for him, and it was so valuable to him that not many months passed and I saw him so changed, and so full of hope, as much as he had previously lacked it, with which (and with the many good works he did, as a servant of God and Our Lady) he ended his days in virtue, and comfort for his soul."

A woman was freed from her husband's jealousy, and from death, by the Holy Rosary. In the year 1547, in the city of Barcelona, there were Fathers of the Order of Preachers, whose responsibility it is to preach and exhort the faithful to the holy devotion of the Rosary, as heirs of their Father, Saint Dominic, by the will of the Queen of Heaven. Seeing that this holy exercise was somewhat forgotten, they tried to revive it, and it was with such commitment that through their preaching and exhortation to the Christian people, many enrolled in this holy brotherhood, and then some miracles occurred, with which the sovereign Virgin wanted to favour her devotees. Among other people who registered in this holy brotherhood, and who with very particular devotion prayed the Holy Rosary, there was a good woman whose husband, tormented by jealousy (which is furious madness and love turned into hatred), gave her very bad times and ill-treatment; and this continued without reasons or pleas being of any use. One night he decided to kill her, desperate from his jealousy: he knocked her to the ground and, grabbing a dagger, raised his arm to deliver the mortal blow. Seeing herself so close to death, the poor woman said in brief words, as the case demanded: "Oh Virgin Mary of the Rosary protect me; You know I am innocent!" The husband's frenzied fury barely gave her time to finish such a brief plea and he struck with great force a blow with which he thought to end the life of the one who raised in him so many suspicions. And it was miraculous, that the dagger bent, as if it were soft wax and not steel, and in such a way that not even a mark was left on her clothes, but there was on the heart of the cruel husband, and at once it changed him in such a way that he earnestly asked his wife for forgiveness. He recognized that this was the work of the Virgin of the Rosary, done in defence of this servant of Hers, and devotee of Her Holy Rosary, who was without fault. He begged her that the following morning they might go to the convent of the preaching friars where the chapel



and brotherhood of the Rosary was, because he wanted to enrol in the brotherhood and pray the Holy Rosary for all the life that remained to him. So they did; they gave notice of the miracle and, as testimony and for perpetual memory of it, they hung the dagger up in the chapel; and were faithful servants of the Virgin Mary and devoted to Her Holy Rosary. This miracle happened in the month of June of the year 1550, of which Father Jerome Taix was a witness, who in the year 1556 wrote and printed it in a book he made of this holy devotion.

God freed a woman from the torments of justice, through the Holy Rosary. In the city of Balaguer in the principality of Catalonia, in the year 1552, there was a woman very devoted to the Holy Rosary, who was arrested by justice for a false accusation that was made against her. If the crime had been true, it was serious, and of those for which there are rigorous punishments in all courts, for they accused her of being a sorceress and witch, at the very least. Locked up in jail being innocent, when they took her statement, she denied it. To clarify the evidence, or confess the crime, she was condemned to torture to find out the truth. She began to grieve, seeing herself on one hand without guilt, and on the other fearing that in a weak woman the force of torments could perhaps do what often happens to very brave men, which is to confess what is not true, to escape such a painful death. She prostrated herself in this affliction at the feet of the Queen of Heaven, and finally the time came when they tied her to put her on the rack, and tied a large stone to her toes. There was a little niece of hers there to whom she said: "Run home, daughter, and bring me the Rosary, for the confusion they caused me when arresting me made me forget it." She brought her the Rosary and, taking it in her hands, she began to pray it with great devotion and deep sorrow, entrusting her cause and innocence in that process against her to the Mother of God. Three times they raised her to the torture tied with a rope, while she continued invoking the favour of the Virgin, without letting go of the Rosary from her hands, which was the weapon with which she fought and presented herself to the fury of the torments, and it was so powerful for this purpose that, to the astonishment of those present, the rope broke into pieces all three times. The judges and bailiffs, seeing such a clear miracle, immediately declared her free from the false accusation. The good and devout woman did not forget the mercy received, but recognizing that with the same miracle the Virgin of Heaven had freed her from torment and restored her fame and honour and even her life, before going home she went with two scribes to the convent of the preaching friars of the city, and they, as witnesses, published the miracle.

A desperate woman attained contrition and confession through the Holy Rosary. In the city of Dordrecht in Holland, there was a great sinner, who had fallen into despair. For twenty-four years she had not confessed, because she did not believe or hope to obtain forgiveness for her sins, which were so serious and enormous. And though a Friar of the Order of Preachers exhorted and admonished her to confess, telling her that God's Mercy is so great that it is not only enough to forgive as many sins as are committed in this world, but all the sins of infinite worlds, however grave they may be, if with a contrite heart one turns to Him. She, on the contrary, responded only by continuing in her despair. The Religious then, seeing that he achieved nothing in this way, trusting in the Goodness and Mercy of God and His Most Pure Mother, said to the woman: "I believe that even if you have this despair, at least as a Christian you will have devotion to the Queen of Angels, the Virgin Mary." And as she responded that it was so, the Religious man said to her: "Pray then in honour of Our Lady, Advocate of sinners, her Holy Rosary, and be certain that by virtue of the Holy Rosary you will obtain the grace and mercy of God, and be able to confess properly and obtain forgiveness for your sins." The woman accepted the Friar's advice and began to pray the Rosary. After three days of this devotion of praying the Rosary, and feeling no contrition or pain in herself to confess, she returned to the Religious complaining that for three days she had prayed the Rosary and found or felt no consolation, nor in herself more devotion than before. The religious man strengthened and encouraged her to persevere, telling her not to tire in her

devotion, and assured her that he was certain that, without fail, she would have the consolation of receiving what she asked for. So the woman returned with this hope to her home, and persevered in praying the Rosary for three weeks. Once completed, God gave her, through the intercession of His Most Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, and by virtue of the Holy Rosary, so much contrition and devotion and so much desire to confess, that she felt her heart about to burst with sorrow. Thus without any delay she went to the Religious and, kneeling at his feet, confessed her sins entirely with the firm purpose never again to offend God. And then, persevering in the devotion of the Rosary, she lived all the time of her life chastely and holily to the honour and glory of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Advocate and Protectress of sinners.

Of a usurer who, thanks to his devotion to the Rosary, restored his ill-gotten gains. There was in Italy a certain usurer named Jacob, who from little came to have much, with great diligence and little conscience. This man had something good among so much evil he did in life, and that is that at the persuasion of the blessed Saint Dominic (who was then preaching) he prayed the Rosary to Our Lady, carrying it with him. One day, when this man was praying the Rosary before the image of Our Lady, he heard a voice that said to him several times, “Jacob, give my Son and Me as strict an account as you demand of your debtors.” As he heard this repeatedly, it was an occasion for him to amend his life and he restored his ill-gotten gains. Finally, when he came to the point of death, he saw how the blessed Saint Michael put his good works on a scales, and on the other side the demons put the bad ones as a counterweight, with the bad ones weighing much more than the good works, which made him very sad, until he saw Our Lady put a rosary on the scale of good works, with which She balanced out his bad works and the scales tipped in his favour. Showing great joy, he ended and passed from this life to the one that has no end.

Through the Holy Rosary and the prayers of the Confraternity members, a sinner confessed his sins well, was cured of an illness, and amended his life. In Spain there was a great lord, a man of bad life, who misused the favours and honours that God had granted him; though it is also true that with a residue of devotion he had himself inscribed in the book of the Rosary of Our Lady, praying it regularly. He fell ill with a very dangerous blood flow, though he did not stop cursing God and His Blessed Mother, with irreverent oaths. This was reason for some good people to beg him to calm down, and even to confess because of the danger he was in, so that he might not die in such a state. It happened that two virtuous men passed through the street of the sick man’s house and in that house saw a great number of devils flying in and out of the sick man’s room. They entered the house and heard him curse and blaspheme frightfully, because of his great fear of death, which was near, and because of the fatigue that the demons gave him, though the sick man did not see them. The good men being astonished at what they saw, heard a voice from Heaven saying, “Confraternity members, help this sick man, your fellow member.” Hearing the heavenly command, they resorted to prayer, which was the Holy Rosary, and approaching the sick man’s bed, they spoke to him of his salvation, exhorting him to confess his sins, and to recognize the danger; and as he was a member of Our Lady’s Rosary, to invoke Her in such distress, so that She might grant him the grace to confess well. The words of these two good Confraternity members were so powerful with the sick man, that not only was he granted the grace to confess well, but to recover his health, and for all the time that remained of his life to do penance for his sins, being thenceforth a very faithful servant of the Virgin Our Lady.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary revealed to a Nun that the most pleasing part of the Rosary





to Her were the words '*Dominus tecum*'. A Nun, very devoted to Our Lady and Her Holy Rosary, prayed every day this whole psalter, which has one hundred and fifty Hail Marys and fifteen Our Fathers; but in order to pray the whole psalter at one go, she hurried in praying it, and did not stop to contemplate it. One night the Virgin Mary appeared to her, and said to her: "Daughter, are you sleeping?" The Nun, seeing the Virgin Our Lady, got up and answered her: "I am not sleeping, Lady, but what is the reason that You come to this servant?" The Virgin replied: "Do not fear, my daughter, for I am Mother; I come to tell you that your devotion to the Rosary is very pleasing to me, for I receive great joy in hearing the angelic salutation of the Hail Mary, and especially when you say '*Dominus tecum*' (the Lord is with you), because hearing those words it seems to me that I bear my precious Son in

my womb; but I admonish you not to say them as hastily as you have said them up till now," and She disappeared. The Nun, remembering that the Virgin Mary had commanded her to linger more on pronouncing '*Dominus tecum*,' thereafter recited only fifty Hail Marys each day, always pausing to say '*Dominus tecum*,' but with such contemplation on those words that it took her more time to say one part of the Rosary than it previously took for all three; and thus she ended her life in holiness, and in service to the Virgin Mary.

A Carthusian, through the Holy Rosary, received favours from Heaven and some thieves were converted. There was a young Religious of the Carthusian Order, very well disposed who, before taking the habit, had the custom of plaiting a garland of roses or fragrant flowers and herbs he found each day, according to the season, and decking the head of the image of the Virgin Mary in his village church, never failing in what he believed so pleasing to the Queen of Heaven. With these and other good inclinations, the saintly youth did not stay long in the world, where the opportunities to realize his holy intentions were not as many as he would have liked. As in religious life he would have many opportunities for all that was suitable to serve God and His Mother, he took the habit in a Carthusian monastery. Thinking that the way he had of serving the Virgin was correct, and being in accordance with his inclination and custom, he set about looking for flowers and roses and herbs to make a crown for the Virgin every day, an exercise which, though good, was not in keeping with the retirement and great recollection observed in that Order. This was the reason that the Prelate ordered him to stop, as inappropriate for the purpose they had there. With this, the youth began to become restless, so much so that he resolved to leave the habit and the religious state he had begun, thinking only that he could not serve the Virgin as he wished; a thing quite typical of novices, who are more fond of governing themselves by their own thoughts than by those of others, though in this consists the prudence of the friar, since in one's own thoughts there are many dangers, even if they seem sensible to us. The religious' unease did not go unnoticed, so the Prior asked him the reason for his distress. He told him that it was not being able to do that service to Our Lady, whose indignation he feared if he stopped; and though the labours of the monastery seemed easy to him, this made him renounce the state he had taken. In order to spiritualize further the holy desires of the youth, the Prior said to him: "Son, I will teach you to make a much better crown than the one you have made until now, and one that will please the Virgin more: Pray a part of the Holy Rosary every day, and you will soon see how much more to Her liking this service is than the one you have done up till now." He gladly accepted the advice as his only desire in life was to do right, and it resulted so beneficial to him that, with his youthful enthusiasm, he improved in every virtue, and this was so well known to all that in a short time by common agreement he was made Prior of his monastery. It happened on a business trip for the monastery that he had to pass through a dense forest where there was an abundance of highwaymen, who, seeing the Prior

and his companion, decided to wait for them in a safe place in order to take what they were carrying. Suddenly, going on his way, the saintly Prior remembered that he had not prayed the Rosary that day, and as this was his greatest concern, he immediately dismounted from his horse and moved a little away from his companion to pray the Holy Rosary, this being his regular practice, which he would not overlook for any reason. And to do this well, he made an oratory of the mountain, and images of the oaks, and kneeling began his Rosary. The thieves were watching with great care and evil desires in order that the prey offered by the occasion might not be lost. And observing the Prior with great attention, they saw a beautiful Maiden, who picked a white rose that came from the Friar's lips after each Hail Mary he prayed, and a red one when he said the Our Father; and at the end of the Rosary, the Virgin Mary Our Lady and Queen of Heaven wove a beautiful crown and placed it on Her celestial head, and thus crowned She disappeared. The case was such that in an instant it changed the infamous hearts of the highwaymen, and confessing their error they went to the Prior, begging him to tell them who that Lady was who had been in his presence. He replied that he did not know, nor had he seen anything he could tell them of. They told him what they had seen and begged him to tell them what he was praying. And upon hearing that he was praying the Rosary, they were convinced that the one they had seen was undoubtedly the Queen of Heaven, by which they were so changed that from that hour they abandoned the bad life they had been leading, and made profession of the devotion of the Rosary, which was the cause which brought them to a good end after the bad life they had led. And with this miracle the Prior was strengthened even more in his customary and holy exercise.

Through the Holy Rosary, a nobleman received burial in Saint John Lateran, to the admiration of the Pope and Cardinals. In Rome there was a nobleman very devoted to the Virgin, and as such prayed Her Rosary every day, and was a member of this holy Confraternity. In certain arguments he had with another, he drew his sword and, defending himself, killed the other. His enemy was richer and more powerful than he, and left two sons and a nephew already men, who took revenge with such determination, that in the end he was forced to leave the city, and always to be careful. He could not be so careful (though he was careful to do penance for his anger) for with the diligence and spies that his opponents had, he was not safe anywhere. He decided to go into a forest that was just over thirty kilometres from Rome, where he was so poorly hidden that after a few days the sons of the deceased arrived there, with much hunting equipment to be more certain. But as they approached where he was, they found him kneeling and with the Rosary in his hands praying, and in the disposition he was in, he began to argue with reasons giving his excuse, begging them for the love of the Virgin to spare his life, since it had been in self-defence that he had killed their father. The reasons did not convince men so blinded by their desire for revenge, for nothing could change their determination; and they killed him there just as he was, on his knees and with his Rosary, and left. The following night, the Virgin Mary appeared to the Priest of Saint John Lateran in Rome and said to him: "You will go in the morning, and give notice on My behalf to the Pope and the Cardinals, that in the forest of Bacan they will find a devout chaplain of Mine, and that they should then order him to be buried immediately in the cemetery of this church. They will see that this is true, because while the whole forest is full of snow, where that servant of Mine is, there is none." The cleric was very confused by the commission, and began to make excuses. It seemed to him that he did not know how to speak and that he had little authority, both to know how to deal with the matter before such illustrious people, and to convince them of the truth of something that seemed so foolish. Excuses were of no use, but the Queen of Heaven ordered him to go immediately, and so that they would give him credit, she said that he should show them his chest, and that as they would see that he was not carrying anything, he himself should take out with his hand what he found. With this he was forced to give the notice. They received it in the way he suspected, as a laughing matter and nonsense, and they thought it madness to believe that the Most



Blessed Virgin had appeared to him, and the same seemed to them about the snow, and that for such an uncertain thing, and probably a joke, it was foolish for the Supreme Pontiff and the cardinals to go there. The clergyman felt ashamed, but remembering the second sign, after having shown his chest where there was nothing, he put his hand in and pulled out a handful of white and red roses, as fresh as if they had just been cut, and the same happened a second and third time. The Pope and Cardinals were amazed to see such a great miracle, which undoubtedly it was, since they had seen before that he carried nothing in his chest, and because it was December, when it was impossible to find such lush and fresh roses. Four cardinals took charge of searching for the body, and went with great diligence, seeing that the Virgin favoured him and, guided by the cleric they found him kneeling, with the Rosary in his hand as if he were alive (a miracle very similar to that of Saint Paul the Hermit, as told by Saint Jerome). They took him and buried him where the Queen of Heaven had ordered. And the miracle was so celebrated that the Pope and Cardinals and many others from that moment on became very devoted to the Holy Rosary, understanding the favours that the Virgin bestows in life and death to those who are truly devoted to it. It is noteworthy that, if the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was so solicitous for the temporal honour of one of her devotees and that his mortal body be buried with dignity, how much more will she care for the eternal salvation of the immortal souls of her loving devotees!

Through his devotion to the Holy Rosary, the Virgin restores a pact of submission to the devil, which an unfortunate man had signed with his blood. An unfortunate man who lost his fortune and came to great misery and poverty (something that is rarely endured with Christian patience), by inspiration of the devil, who promised him a remedy for such great need if he renounced God Our Lord and the Holy Baptism he had received, made an oath of submission to be always his and signed this folly with his own hand, written in his blood. He set his eyes, not on the abyss of such evil, but on what the devil offered him at that moment. And with this, the unfortunate man reached the worst of evils, with such subjection and such terrible obedience. Until one day, in the company of a gentleman whom he could not refuse, he had to go to a priory of Dominican Friars to hear Mass and a sermon. In this sermon, the tyranny in which the devil held those who served him was dealt with, and the opportunities that the Lord gives to these unfortunates to leave their wretched life behind, and how devotion to Our Lady and invoking her, and praying the Holy Rosary, was beneficial for this. With this holy doctrine, the miserable man awakened, and immediately felt in himself a great security and confidence in the Virgin's mercy through the Rosary. He had himself enrolled as a member of the Confraternity, took a Rosary in his hands and prayed it often, hoping that the Queen of Heaven would favour one who had such great need of help, and not a little. He persevered in his holy intent for some months, after which he was aided by the Virgin Our Lady. Meanwhile, the devil mocked his devotion, for it seemed to him that, with the signature he had, that soul was so his that he could not claim it back nor escape from his clutches. With the anguish the man had, bathed in tears he went to a convent of Dominican friars, and entered the Rosary chapel, knelt before the image of the Virgin Mary, to whom he gave among many reasons: "Hear me, Lady, in such great misfortune, and may I feel your favour by virtue of the Holy Rosary, with which and through which your preachers say you grant great mercies to your Confraternity members. With such confidence I came into your presence, and in it I will remain perpetually until I see restored to my possession the note that the devil has written with my blood. And this is the sign I will have that your help is certain, Lady: to see it erased." As the man persevered in his prayer, and looking many times at the image of the Virgin Our Lady, he saw that from her virginal hand she let fall the note that he had

previously written and given to the devil. Which he received with great comfort and recognized it as the same certificate. Seeing the pact of servitude erased, he was left in great peace for the mercy that Our Lord had done to him through His Mother and, having told this to his confessor, he took very much to heart the devotion of the Holy Rosary through which he had escaped from such a grave and known danger. Reported by the Bishop of Cotron.

Of a Moorish slave who was cured and converted by the Holy Rosary. In the city of Naples, there was a Spanish merchant who had a slave servant from the kingdom of Granada, named Eledat, a man of very good understanding. And though a Moor, he liked to deal with virtuous and learned men in our law, and among many he had friendship with a Religious, learned and holy, who often persuaded him to leave the bestial sect of the false prophet Mohammad, and become a Christian, since he saw how conforming to reason was the law that Christians professed, and how many were the things which made the foolishness of his own evident. The Moor responded with general reasons to his master and the Friar, putting the matter off and saying that when it was God's Will to guide him to what was best, he was ready to follow it, but that until then he was determined to do nothing. Meanwhile, he being doubtful, the Religious made him learn the prayer of the Our Father and the Hail Mary. With things in such a state, the slave was struck with a serious illness, by a pain that greatly engulfed him, such that it did not let him rest for a moment, neither by day nor night. God kept him in this distress for some days, without finding relief or remedy for his illness. The Friar learned of his suffering and visited him, and took occasion from his illness to convince him of what he had told him so many times, and among many reasons he told him that if he died now from that illness, his perdition was very probable and his salvation nearly impossible, and that God had him so fatigued as a work of His grace, in order to convert him, taking the illness he had as an instrument for the remedy of his soul: "If you act rightly in this that also afflicts you, you will be healed of everything: the soul through Holy Baptism, and the body of the ailments that torment you. Make a firm resolve to do as I tell you, and commend yourself to the Virgin of Heaven, whom in your sect you greatly esteem, and do Her a very important service, which among us is very common and much celebrated, which is to pray the Holy Rosary to Her, in the way that I will teach you. With which, I assure you that before three days have elapsed you will recover your health." He was pressed on the one hand by the pain, and on the other by devotion to the Virgin moving him to ask for a Rosary and be taught how to pray it, and that if on the third day he found himself without pain, he would recognize that the remedy had come from the hand of the Sovereign Virgin, and he would be baptized. Eledat began with this determination to pray the Rosary. He prayed it three times that day and, as he prayed, the pain and distress eased, in such fashion that before the third day he found himself completely healed. He sent for the Religious and told him with many tears the mercy that the Virgin Mary had done to him by virtue of the Holy Rosary, and that he immediately wanted to become a Christian without delaying Baptism any longer, such a serious and important matter. He was baptized and called Paul, and for as long as he lived he was truly a servant of God and most devoted to the Virgin Mary of the Rosary, from whose hand had come such a great mercy, beyond all consideration, and all the greater as it was less deserved for being a pagan without knowledge of God.

A Christian gentleman was freed from captivity by the Moors through the Holy Rosary. In the city of Camora in Castile, there was a noble young man given much to letters and studious of Sacred Scripture; who, hearing the friars of Saint Dominic speak of the excellences and virtues of the Holy Rosary, had himself enrolled in the Confraternity, took this devotion very seriously and prayed the Rosary every day, not out of compliance but with much spirit. It happened that in the year 1530, having embarked to go to Italy, he fell into the hands of corsairs, who took him captive to Algiers. The governor there, called Barbarossa, liked the slave, for being a strong and well-disposed young man, and ordered that he be taken to



serve him along with many others he had in his palace. He spent three years in this laborious life, but never forgot the Rosary, nor did he pray it less as a slave than when he was at home rested and free, being certain that by this means he could improve his life, since his father was unable to pay the great ransom his master demanded for him. And when all human means failed, he threw himself at the feet of the Virgin, begging her to favour him, fearing more the danger of renouncing the Faith, moved by threats or promises, than life among barbarians, which though intolerable, was less so than the anxiety with which he lived of losing his soul. He greatly desired to find himself in Christian lands, where there were greater opportunities to serve the Son and the Mother. His reflections did not deceive him, nor was his desire in vain, which he communicated to another captive, a great friend of his, making this endeavour seem more feasible and less dangerous than it actually was. With this determination, they broke their shackles and chains one night

and fled towards Bugia without taking anything to eat. Always avoiding roads, they travelled by night, and when day came they stopped and hid; their food was herbs and water. The governor made great efforts to have them captured, but never got any news of them. Entrusting themselves to the Most Holy Virgin Mary and with rosaries around their necks, the two Christians swam across two mighty rivers along the way. With such good help they reached Bugia, a coastal city that at that time belonged to Christians, where they recounted that, by the grace of Our Lady and through the Rosary, they had been able to escape captivity. This Christian gentleman composed a work in praise of the Virgin, which along with the account of everything that has been told, he later related at the College of Saint Thomas in Seville of the Order of Preachers in the year 1534, when Father Jerome Taix was living in that house, who wrote down this miracle, which he heard from the lips of said gentleman. Later, Emperor Charles V gave him a position in the fleet that was going to Rio de la Plata, where he died there with others. Father Taix inquired about him in detail from the companions who returned, and they told him that he had died like a saint, having great devotion to the Virgin of the Rosary, and with very great confidence that She was Protectress of his salvation.

A poor widow with two daughters, whom the Queen of Heaven protected, by virtue of the Holy Rosary. An honourable woman was widowed with two grown daughters, and though they were noble they were very poor, and their work, which they did not interrupt, was very necessary to sustain themselves, but the earnings were so little, though enough to eat, that they could not afford to dress themselves decently, which was the reason for spending their lives at home, never leaving it. There in their oratory the mother prayed the Rosary with great devotion every day. The mother was not so much fatigued by need, but by seeing her daughters now women and beautiful, which made her fear some inconvenience of those in which women with poverty often find themselves. The good woman found no other remedy but to give her daughters a Mother, namely the one who is of Mercy, and with this determination she went to the chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary and, kneeling down, mother and daughters, the mother took the lead and said: "Lady of Heaven, remedy for those in need, I see no possibility of marrying off my daughters, and I greatly desire to see them married and out of the danger in which their beauty and poverty place them; I put them entirely into Your hands today, so that you may take care of them as Your daughters, and they may recognize You as Mother, and serve and obey You as such." And saying this, she ordered the daughters to kiss the hands of the Image in recognition of this grace. They went back home and prayed the Rosary every day. Persevering in this devotion, the Queen of Heaven, as their Mother, began to provide for their needs with such a generous hand that the

mother could dress them according to their nobility. They left their confinement to attend Mass and divine services, and soon their reputation began to be in great danger, as many in that city said that such a sudden change of attire in people who yesterday did not leave their home for lack of clothing could not be due to anything good, and nothing else could be assumed but that a bad life had rescued them from the poverty they were in, and nothing else could be thought of young women of good appearance who, without anyone knowing of wealth or inheritance, suddenly appeared well-dressed. The murmurs were not so secret, nor so few those who spoke of such blameless maidens that it did not reach their ears and, more afflicted by these rumours that touched their honour than by the poverty in which they had previously lived, they sought to avail themselves of the Virgin's favour to remedy their honour as She had done with their need, since the fame of the daughters was in danger, which She should provide for as a mother. Being in this predicament, they went to a great feast of the Virgin better dressed than ever, and with this the murmurs grew, and with them the distress of the holy maidens whose fame was so unreasonably ruined by evil tongues, always the most numerous. With this feeling, they knelt before the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, begging her through this holy devotion to look after their honour. With the church full of people, two bunches of roses descended through the air (though it was not the season for them); one settled in the lap of one maiden and the other in the skirts of the other, by which the people understood that the Most Blessed Virgin wanted with that evident miracle to make known the holiness of these servants of Hers, and that it was not their bad life but their virtue that had brought them out of past poverty, and that same virtue showed how mistaken the judgment of the people was. All were convinced that they had received that aid through the Holy Rosary, which is why many became fond of this holy devotion. Persevering the maidens in prayer, two noble and rich men married them, and they continued for the rest of their lives devoutly praying the Holy Rosary, and with it persevered in all virtue, until they ended their lives in holiness. We should not be surprised at this, since the same happened to Theophilus, a philosopher and gentile, who mocking the faith and martyrdom of Saint Dorothy and the garden she said Jesus Christ her Spouse had (when she was sentenced to be beheaded) asked her mockingly to send him fruit and flowers from her Spouse's garden, which she promised. She accepted the judge's sentence, and soon an angel from Heaven came in the form of a young man with a basket of roses and fruit to Theophilus, with a message that said: "This is the fruit that Dorothy sends you from her Spouse Christ's garden," at which he, greatly amazed to see such a beautiful thing though it was January 6th, in the middle of winter, understood well that it was a message from Heaven, and so he believed in Christ, and for his holy Faith received martyrdom. Theophilus had not deserved it like those devout maidens, who not in jest but from the heart and with great faith in Her aid had commended themselves to the Sovereign Virgin, and were thus distinguished with the roses, as the Virgin distinguishes her devotees.

Through the Holy Rosary, a woman was freed from her husband's unjustified jealousy. In a city in Catalonia, there lived a very beautiful lady, a fervent Christian and devoted to Our Lady and her Holy Rosary. The devil, trying terrible means to disturb her soul, in whose thoughts only God reigned, put terrible jealousy and suspicions against the woman in her husband's mind. These took hold of him to the point that no reason could convince him, nor were the many proofs that the saintly woman alleged sufficient for him to abandon his false and foolish imaginings. Because of these, he locked her up in a room and, not content with this, suspicions put him so out of his mind that, giving the saintly lady a thousand frights, he would walk around at night with an unsheathed sword threatening her near the bed like a madman, shouting: "Now he entered, I saw him, there is your lover!" And seeing nothing, he would depart again, leaving the woman, being noble, discreet and saintly, with the frights and anguish that she reasonably had. She found no remedy for such evil, and none produced the desired effect; she remembered to turn to the Virgin of the Rosary, to whom she had been



very devoted since childhood; she began to pray the Rosary with great diligence, begging the Queen of Heaven to protect her in such a desperate case for which she found no remedy that would assure her husband of her innocence. She spent four months in these frights and distresses with which every day, having already lost credit so unreasonably, finally she feared losing her life as well, and with it her reputation, in the presence of her husband. Being in this turmoil, she spoke one night to her husband and said: "My husband, I have tried many and various means to rid you of this false suspicion you have, and not one has been of use to you; let us put this matter in God's hands, who will be pleased to show what is true; take this Rosary and pray it, and I will do the same, and let us beseech the Queen of Heaven to make the truth public, and if I am found guilty, here I am, kill

me or do with me as you please; and if I am without fault (as I am) then put an end to these suspicions and the ill-treatment you give me because of them." The agreement seemed good to him and they both prayed it, but the woman with many tears and devotion, placing herself in the hands of the Most Holy Virgin, and begging Her that, as She knew her innocence, to make her husband understand it so that he be cured of his guilt, and she of her distress. With this they went to bed, each in their own bed, and that night by revelation of the Virgin the husband understood the virtue of his wife, and the folly of his thoughts; he got up from the bed full of tears and sorrow, seeing the distress he had given his wife so unreasonably. From then on they always lived in great harmony, with much devotion to Our Lady and Her Holy Rosary, which they prayed every day, he with continuous gratitude for being freed from so many dangers and because the Lord had deigned to declare the truth to him by this means.

A man was saved from drowning in the mighty Segre River by the Holy Rosary. Some men were transporting timber from the mountains, down the Segre River to the city of Lérida in Catalonia, and were riding on them. One of them, who couldn't swim, fell into the river under the same logs, in such a way that he could not save himself by any means. Seeing himself in such great danger, his only remedy was to commend himself to Our Lady, begging Her that through Her Holy Rosary She might save him from death, promising Her that if She did so he would pray it entirely every day of his life. Having made this vow, he found himself free and on the bank of the river which was then more swollen than on other days. This grateful man then went to the convent of the Order of Preachers in Lérida, and kneeling before the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary, thanked Her for the mercy he had received from Her, and published in the presence of the Friars and those who were there, what had happened, and how Our Lady had saved him from death through Her Holy Rosary.

Our Lady freed a devotee of the Rosary from shipwreck and dangers at sea. In the year 1572, on September 14th, there was a very great storm along the entire coast of Portugal, which caused great damage on sea and land, and many vessels and ships were lost. Among those lost was one going from Setúbal loaded with sardines for Seville. Among other people who were on board, there was a young man from Setúbal named Pedro Méndez. Seeing the fierce storm and the great danger he was in, he took the Rosary he carried with him and put it around his neck, commending himself wholeheartedly to Our Lady, so that she might help him at that moment. This ship was lost with everything in it, and everyone drowned, except only this young man who, without knowing how, found himself on the beach safe and sound, with his Rosary around his neck. On the third day he arrived in Setúbal at his father's house, and told everything that had happened to him, in front of trustworthy people, to a Friar of the Dominican order, a very learned man and devoted to Our Lady, who asked him in detail about everything that had occurred. And this miracle was approved with great diligence by the diocesan Bishop of that land, where devotion to the Holy Rosary is deeply rooted.

A woman saved from the gallows by devotion to the Holy Rosary of Our Lady. In the year 1550, in the month of May, in the town of Puigcerdá, county of Catalonia, there was a woman in prison, who was condemned to the gallows because, in a fight with her husband, she threw a mortar pestle at him and killed him. Before they took her out to be hanged, she confessed to a Religious from the Dominican convent in the town, who advised her to pray the Holy Rosary and commend herself to Our Lady, asking for Her help in that need; and she did so with great confidence. Afterwards, when the executioner pushed her off the ladder, she said aloud, so that all those present heard: "Virgin of the Rosary, help me!" She had not finished speaking when the rope broke into pieces, and she fell to the ground. The clerics and friars, and many people who were there demanded her freedom saying: "Miracle, miracle!", and without anyone hindering, they took her to the church next to the square. As she spoke with some difficulty, they opened her mouth, and found eight or ten beads, which neither she nor they knew who had given them to her, and thus they confirmed that the Virgin Mary had freed her through the Holy Rosary. Justice, having executed the sentence and already done its duty, knowing through certain information that she had escaped miraculously, set her free, and from then on devotion to the Rosary grew in that town.

A woman cured many sick people by placing the Holy Rosary on them. There was a woman very devoted to the Holy Rosary of the Virgin Mother of God, who obtained the grace that all the sick people on whom she placed her Rosary were healed, saying these words to them: "As testimony that Christ Our Lord taught the Our Father, and by His command the Hail Mary was composed, and out of reverence for the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ, and by the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary, may you be healed of this illness." Hearing this, a hermit came from his hermitage to see this woman because of the great fame she already had. And he asked her how she cured, and she answered by explaining how she did it; but the hermit did not want to believe her, rather he despised her and mocked her. She replied: "Father, since you don't give me credit, go and do the same by praying the Rosary, and you will experience the truth of everything I have told you." The hermit did so, and he also cured all the sick people he touched with the Rosary he had, and then knew the great virtue of the Rosary. He begged forgiveness from the woman, and from then on was very devoted to the Holy Rosary.

A Rosary book in the midst of fire was not consumed. In the year 1580, there was an outbreak of plague in the city of Coimbra in Portugal. Some of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus helped in this need to serve the sick; among them was a Brother who had worked with great fervour, and the Lord wanted to comfort him with a very great wonder that he saw. This was that when burning a cabin in which some plague patients had been, he saw in the midst of the flames that a book remained intact; amazed by this, he pulled it out of the fire and opened it, and found that it contained the mysteries of the Holy Rosary of the Queen of Angels. Father Pedro del Villar, Provincial of the Society of Jesus of the province of Aragon, gave this miracle written by his own hand, saying that the Fathers of the Society of Jesus of the province of Portugal had written it thus.

In Cologne, a house burned down, but the rosary that its owner had at the head of the bed did not burn. Iodoco and Enseldo write that in the city of Cologne there was a man very devoted to the Virgin Our Lady and her Holy Rosary. He had become a member of the Confraternity and prayed Her Rosary. For greater devotion, he wore it around his neck, and when he went to sleep, hung it at the headboard on a shelf there for the bed curtains. It happened that one night through carelessness a fire broke out in the house and, as it caught them unawares, when they realized, they could no longer prevent the whole house from burning down; only the good man escaped with the people who were in the house. After the fire, they went in to where the bed had been and, with everything else burnt, they found the shelf where the rosary was hanging intact, though somewhat scorched, and on it the Rosary of the Virgin Mother of God hanging, because the fire had not touched it. It was clear to



everyone that the Virgin Our Lady, to further increase the devotion of Her devotees, had preserved the Rosary from the fire.

Of a gentleman whom Saint Dominic confessed, and with the Rosary taught him to confess well. This glorious Saint had the special grace for reading consciences, as if he saw them in a mirror. When the blessed Saint Dominic was preaching in Italy with great fervour and zeal for the salvation of souls, a gentleman present at his sermon and moved to penance asked the saintly man to hear his confession, and as he confessed his ordinary sins, the servant of God said to him: "Sir, among the many sins that you forgot in this confession, you left out some very serious ones, and you confessed things of less importance, but you did not declare the root of the evil that is in the deepest part, and far worse. This then

you should confess; you have to look at who you are, how you sinned and how many times you have sinned, and mainly you should confess four serious sins, namely, those of your family, persons poorly corrected; of the presumption you have in your heart and of the vain pomp and pride that you have shown publicly; of the inordinate love you have had for your body, and of the little patience and endurance you have had with the poor, and of the little good you have done for them. Look at how much you have spent on eating, on hunting, dogs and horses, and the poor of Jesus Christ go hungry and naked." To which the gentleman said: "Certainly, Father, my confessors never told me to accuse myself of these things, and who, my Father, will teach me to confess profitably if you leave me?" To which the blessed Father replied: "I will leave you a teacher who will never abandon you: the Rosary of the Most Pure Mother of God, with certain very profitable considerations." The gentleman took the Rosary, and meditating much on its sacred mysteries, and on the considerations that the Saint told him, in a short time came to despise the world and all its doings, greatly abhorred sin and employed himself very earnestly in the love of Jesus Christ Our Lord and of His Most Holy Mother. He ever maintained great reverence for the blessed Saint Dominic. Finally, after a year of perseverance in the devotion of the Rosary, he had a divine revelation from Heaven, by order of the Queen of Angels: He saw that, when he was praying the Holy Rosary, every time he prayed the Hail Mary, a very beautiful Angel took the Rosary bead and gave it to Our Lady, who was on a high mountain, and all the Hail Marys that the Angel raised up to the virginal hands of Our Lady turned into beautiful roses, from which She made a great palace, marvellously beautiful, which he saw built from the beads he had prayed, understanding from this that, through the Holy Rosary, a dwelling in Heaven was being prepared for him and the other devout members. And so he happily ended his days in the service of God and His Most Holy Mother.

Of a young woman devoted to the Rosary who, disembowelled by a wolf, could not die until she confessed. In the year 1459, in a French city called Balbacense, there was a young woman very devoted to praying the Rosary every day. It happened that one holiday she went with a companion to visit some friends. On the way there was a very thick forest, where some carnivorous wolves lived, and going along the road without a care, two very fierce ones came out and, attacking them, tore them apart. The devotee of the Rosary, when she found herself in such great danger, entrusted herself to Our Lady, begging Her by Her Holy Rosary and for the sake of the mysteries enclosed in it, to ask Her Son not to let her die without receiving the Sacraments, and Our Lady heard her. One wolf killed the other young woman, and though the other wolf ate the hands of the Rosary devotee, opened her belly and ate her guts and more, some men soon arrived who drove away the wolves. They took this girl, who was miraculously alive, to a house, where she lived for three more days, during which, having received all the Sacraments, she earnestly entrusted herself to Our Lady. And the Sovereign Virgin visited her on the third day, came for her soul and

took her with Her, in the company of many other virgins, to the Blessedness which they are now enjoying.

Of a young man devoted to the Holy Rosary, who was resurrected to confess. Guy of Fulcodius of Narbona writes in the book he titled *De proprietatibus apuuum*, that he knew in Brabant a young man who, though he was very worldly and involved in vanities, was devoted to Our Lady and prayed her entire Rosary every day. He died as a result of an illness. But after many hours that they had him dead in his house, he suddenly resurrected and said these words to a nun sister who was there: "My sister, here you see me, I have returned to this life again, have a Priest called for me quickly." All amazed at this, they called the Priest, and in front of everyone with great joy, though with heartfelt repentance he confessed, saying that he was to be taken before the tribunal of Christ, Just Judge, and of three things the demons accused him, and that the sentence



was to be pronounced against him; but the pious Mother of God helped him, praying that his soul return to his body again so that he might do penance. "As soon as She prayed for it, She obtained it; one of the sins for which I was to be condemned was because I had taken from the Priests something of the tithes that I should have given them from my goods. The second because with some companions, from some Friars I stole some fish that they had. The third because while hunting I destroyed the bread of the poor with the horses and dogs I had with me." As he was speaking all these things in front of everyone, one of the farmers who was there said: "And why for this last sin did you have to be condemned, if we had forgiven you wholeheartedly all the damages you did to us?" "Your forgiveness did not help me," he replied, "because I was more ready to do you harm than you were willing to forgive me," and immediately he took great care to restore everything he owed, without anything missing. Having ordered all his affairs very well, and his soul very well disposed, he delivered it up to God who created it, with a marvellous peace and joy of his spirit; he obtained all these goods and mercies for having been devoted to the Virgin Mary and her Holy Rosary.

Of a Father of the Order of Preachers, who with the Rosary cast out demons from a young possessed woman. Father Jerome Taix recounts that he and many Religious of the Order of Preachers of his time in the province of Aragon knew a venerable Father named Friar Juan Amat, who was not content with just praying the entire Rosary of the Mother of God each day and wearing it around his neck, but in confessions, sermons and private conversations strove greatly to have all the faithful enrol in this holy Confraternity and pray the Holy Rosary. It happened that one year he had to preach Lent in the town of Borjas Blancas, which is about twenty-five kilometres from Lérida. While the said Father was preaching in this town, the devil entered a young woman and ill-treated her greatly. They took her to the church, and the clerics exorcised her, but the demon not only did not leave, but even mocked them all. The said Father Amat arrived and began to perform an exorcism and mortify the demon to make him leave the young woman. Especially, by virtue of the Holy Rosary, by placing the Rosary he wore which was blest around the neck of the possessed woman. In this way, he made the demon inside the body of the possessed woman give great shouts, complaining that those beads burned and tormented him greatly, but to avoid fatiguing the young woman further, the Father stopped exorcising him and the demon did not then leave. When night came, while the said reverend was in his room, the demons tormenting the maiden left her for the time being and came to the Father and began to maltreat him, some on one side, others trying to remove the blest Rosary from his neck, but as he, after God, had all his trust in the Virgin Our Lady and in the devotion of the Rosary, grasping the Rosary with both hands, he said out loud nothing else but: "Jesus

and Mary, Virgin of the Rosary, help me!” which all in the house and even further away could hear. And this many times. This struggle lasted a long time, the demons finally seeing that they could not remove the Rosary from his neck, and hearing often those two holy names that they so fear, which are Jesus and Mary, they stopped troubling the Religious, and returned to the body of the young woman. The next morning the Father went to the church and found the possessed woman there. The demon said to him through her mouth: “Last night were you afraid of us? But if it wasn’t for those beads you wear hanging around your neck, you would have seen how you would have paid us for the torment you gave us yesterday.” “Well, by virtue of these beads,” the Religious said to them: “In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ and His Most Holy Mother, the blessed Virgin Mary, you will leave the body of the Christian,” and taking the Rosary from his neck he threw it over the possessed woman in such a way that, to testify to the virtue of the Holy Rosary, within a few hours the demon left, giving a sign of not returning to that body again. This was seen by the people of the town, who became more encouraged and inflamed in the holy devotion of the Rosary. In testimony of what happened, they soon built a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, so large and so sumptuous that it is the delight of that place.

A possessed woman who, while wearing the Rosary around her neck, was left alone by the demons. A woman was possessed and the demon tormented her greatly in various ways. Her relatives and friends, feeling sorry for her pain and having much devotion to the Virgin Mary and her Holy Rosary, had her enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity, and brought her a blest Rosary to wear around her neck or in her hands to pray it. A marvellous thing that when she took and wore this Holy Rosary, the demon left her, and as soon as she removed it, he returned to torment her. So this woman made the decision never to take it off, neither by day nor by night, and also to pray the Holy Rosary, until the demon, due to the woman’s perseverance and the prayers of the Confraternity members, completely ceased to trouble her.

A woman was buried alive for her wickedness, and Our Lady preserved her life until she confessed her sins. In the kingdom of Bohemia, in a city called Egra, there was a young woman who, falling into carnal weakness with a man, became pregnant. She was in great fear of being discovered and losing her honour if it became known. While in this anguish, she went to hear a preacher who, praising the devotion of the Rosary and its Confraternity, said that those who enrolled in it and prayed it with devotion would be free from any infamy and dishonour. Seeing herself in need of this, she enrolled in the Confraternity and persevered in praying the Rosary. When the time of childbirth came, she gave birth to a son without anyone seeing or noticing. Thinking she was now free from the child of her womb, instigated by the devil, she decided to kill the creature to avoid being discovered. This unfortunate woman did so quickly and buried it under her bed. God, however, who saw this villainy, did not want it to remain hidden, but to be manifested in such a way that it came to the ears of justice by word of mouth. They arrested her and she, confessing everything, was sentenced to be buried alive, and the sentence was carried out. They dug a large, deep hole, put her in alive, covered her with earth, and tamped down the earth with rams, and so left her, believing she was already dead. After many hours, she shouted out loudly, saying, “Get me out of here, for I am alive!” and repeated this many times. The bystanders, amazed to hear these voices, went to call the city Priest. And when he arrived, a large crowd of people had already gathered to see such a rare and unheard-of thing. They removed the earth from above and found her healthy and without any injury. Everyone asked her how she was alive, and she swore that it was because she had been devoted to the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, and had prayed her Holy Rosary. She also revealed that she had not confessed well, and that because of this she would have been damned to the pains of hell if Our Lady had not preserved her life because of her devotion to the Holy Rosary. “And I tell you more,” she said, “that if I showed you the great pains that the Virgin showed me I would have suffered if I had not

prayed the Holy Rosary and not been her devotee, you would be troubled and filled with fright.” This woman, after being saved, lived for a long time, enjoying good health, serving Our Lady and praying her Holy Rosary every day; and she ended in holiness.

By the Holy Rosary, a fierce bull was tamed. In October of the year 1574, they were building a hermitage dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary in Villafranca de Lampaces, in Braganza, in the bishopric of Miranda in Portugal. The villagers, who had a lot of cut stone for the hermitage in the Sierra de Peñamoris, eight kilometres from said town, asked the parishioners of Rebordainhos to bring a cart of stone for the said hermitage as a service to Our Lady. Juan Pérez, from Pereiros, of the same parish, offered to go there with his cart. The next day he went out in the morning and did not find his oxen because his wife had lent them, and he was very upset because he could not fulfil his duty to the Virgin Mary. He then decided to take a fierce four-year-old bull he had and yoke it up to the cart with a tame ox; he called some neighbours to help him and they all laughed at him. But he, trusting in the Virgin Our Lady, said that She had still greater power. He then put the tame ox in the yoke, and the fierce bull, from the other end of the farmyard, came straight to the cart and put its neck in the yoke, as if it were tamed and accustomed to it, and took the cart to the mountain; and from there brought it loaded with stone to Our Lady’s hermitage. With twenty-two carts going, he went in front and arrived first of all. From then on the bull remained tame. This was made known throughout that land, and everyone was amazed and gave many thanks to Our Lord and his blessed Mother for it, and devotion to Her Holy Rosary grew greatly. This miracle was approved by the ordinary of Miranda.

Of a rich man, cruel to the poor, who through devotion to the Holy Rosary became compassionate and shared his estate with them. In the region of Brittany, there was a nobleman of ancient lineage, so hostile to the poor that not only did he do them no good, but was aggressive towards them, and enjoyed robbing them and taking away valuable things from their small farms through ill-treatment, so that he seemed to fulfil the words of the Holy Ghost in Ecclesiasticus: “The wild ass is prey to the lion in the wild; so also are the poor often fodder for the rich,” because he confounded them with intrigues in such a way that, if they had anything good, he would take it from them, and he acted like this for many years. It happened that in a sermon he heard the praises of Our Lady of the Rosary and how much God did through this holy devotion. He had himself enrolled as a Confraternity member, and began to pray it. A thorough change then occurred in him towards the poor, and as he persevered in this devotion, he grew in generosity and charity, so that he began to distribute his estate among the same poor; and having before tried to rob them, now was to be found busy attending to them and giving them gifts, and sharing his cloak with them, as it is popularly said, in such a way that no one equalled him in his entire region. Thus was fulfilled what Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” These miracles of men mending their ways, and changing souls from bad to good according to the Holy Gospel, are the greatest to be asked for and admired.

A terminally ill patient, through the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, expelled a snake from his body and was healed. In the city of Lisbon in the year 1575, Pedro González, a butcher who lived in Parras Street, in the parish of Saint Sebastian next to Saint Dominic’s, was very ill with great pains in his stomach. Already given up by the doctors, he entrusted himself greatly to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary, and on April 16th he drank from the water of the roses that were blessed every year in the Rosary chapel of the convent of Santo Domingo in Lisbon, and ate some of their leaves, and half an hour later, more or less, he expelled from below a snake two meters long and as thick as a finger, and then



became very healthy, and went to the monastery of Saint Dominic to thank Our Lady of the Rosary for the benefit She had done him. This miracle was very public, and as such preached in the Church of Saint Dominic and in the main church before the archbishop and all the clergy and many other people.

Our Lady takes charge of the affairs of those who pray her Holy Rosary. In Lisbon there was a woman, a member of the Rosary Confraternity, who devoutly prayed it every day, who had to resolve a very important matter, for which she was very busy and deeply concerned. She fervently begged Our Lady before an image she had in her house, to favour and protect her in that case. Wonderful thing, the good woman was praying the Rosary of Our Lady while asking for the help she desired, and the Image before which she was asking responded: "Daughter, do not worry about that for I will take charge of your business, since you pray My Rosary to Me." The woman was greatly consoled and her business turned out very well, as she had asked, because the best Procuratrix had taken charge of it. This miracle was publicly preached by Saint Louis of Granada shortly after the death of said woman, and the Image that spoke to her was taken to the convent of Santo Domingo in Lisbon; it was an Image of great majesty that inspired devotion; it remained on an altar, in the transept of the church mentioned.

Our Lady cures a Friar of a serious throat illness through the Rosary. A Religious, devoted to the Rosary, had a serious illness in his throat that did not even let him eat, so much so that the other Religious already considered him as dead. He, however, though he could not speak, in his heart called upon Our Lady, begging Her that by virtue of Her Holy Rosary, She cure him of such a disease. Our Lady heard him and, appearing to him visibly, said: "Son, I am the Queen of Heaven whom you have so often greeted with the devotion of my Holy Rosary, and I come to cure you because it is not fitting that a throat that has been used in such prayer should suffer such torment." She then poured a certain liquor into his throat, and immediately he was completely cured. He arose thanking Our Lady for the mercy She had shown him, and reprimanded the other Friars who were in his room for not having paid reverence to the Mother of God when She was present. And when they told him they had not seen Her, he told them how She was the one who had cured him. They all praised Our Lady and were more encouraged in the devotion of the Holy Rosary.

How the Holy Rosary is very effective against the disease of the plague. Saint Alan de la Rupe affirms that the devotion of the Rosary is a great remedy against the plague, both to avoid being infected by it and to cure those already stricken. And so he says that he saw many who obtained remedy against this evil from this devotion. In testimony to this, in the city of Lisbon in the year 1494, which was severely attacked by the plague, many were healed by entrusting themselves to Our Lady of the Rosary, particularly a woman who was already dying and was entrusted to Our Lady of the Rosary. She fell asleep embracing Her image, and when she awoke was cured of her illness. This happened on August 24th of that year 1494. In that same week, another woman was dying, and her husband entrusted her to Our Lady of the Rosary and anointed the wound with the oil from her lamp, and she was cured immediately without any other remedy at all.

With roses blessed in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, many diseases are miraculously cured. In the time when there are roses, many are customarily blessed in this Confraternity in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary. Once blessed they are kept, some putting them in water, others filtering them, and others keeping them as they were in leaves. And with them it has been seen that many diseases are often miraculously cured, of which we only relate two cases, though there be many. The first is that of June 15th 1573. In Lisbon, a young man was sick with pain in his side and very high fever. The person who was treating him put some leaves of the blest roses in a glass of water and gave it to him to drink, and immediately the fever and pain went away, and he was healthy and well. Also in the same city of Lisbon in the following year, 1574, there was a pregnant woman who felt very ill in her abdomen,

and without any remedy for her cure. Trusting in Our Lady, she devoutly drank the water in which a few leaves of the blest roses had been placed. Marvellous thing: as soon as she drank it, a lot of blood came out of her and she gave birth to two children, one dead and the other alive and healthy. These two miracles were approved as such by the Ordinary of the same city of Lisbon.

About a woman who was hanged and did not die, for having entrusted herself to Our Lady of the Rosary. In the year 1494 in Lisbon, a woman named Agatha Pérez, a native of the town Lañas de Senhorim, was in prison, accused of adultery by her husband, and according to some who knew her, he had testified falsely against her. This woman was very devoted to Our Lady, and she prayed the Rosary to Her every day. Given the sentence according to what was alleged and proven, they took her to be hanged on Friday May 9th. She, carrying with her the Rosary of Our Lady,



was very confident that the Virgin Mary, to whom she prayed the Rosary every day, would favour her in that need. Just as they were hanging her, she asked for this help and aid, and she did not go without receiving favour. Because they hanged her, and she was hanging on the gallows for many hours, until with the permission of justice they lowered her down to bury; nevertheless, Our Lady had preserved her life. Some men had lowered her down from the gallows so brusquely that this alone would have been enough to kill her, even without an executioner, as testified by trustworthy men who were present. They took her to be buried in a church or hermitage of Our Lady of the Angels, her face already covered as was customary. When they were about to put her into the grave, she gave signs of life, calling upon Our Lady of the Rosary. Many of those prepared to bury her were greatly frightened, and some went to the nearby Dominican convent, and gave the Friars an account of all that had happened, and begged them to go for her and bring her before the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, as she so desperately requested. These servants of God did so, and brought her into their church. When the multitude of people, far more than could fit inside, entered the church, all at once and with fear and trembling, dissolved in tears, and raised their voices crying for God's mercy and the Virgin's help. They took her straight to the Rosary chapel, and placing her before the image, uncovered the woman's face, which until then she had covered. She opened her eyes, and fixed them intently on the image of Our Lady; and as so many people crowded around to see her that she could not defend herself, they took her from there to the sacristy where, placing around her neck the Rosary she had with her when hanged, she stayed that day, and Saturday, until Sunday, the day on which that year the Friars celebrated the principal Feast of the Rosary. She was thus publicly present at the Mass and the sermon, and afterwards told all the Fathers how, when they were hanging her, Our Lady had appeared to her, comforting and accompanying her, and because she had always been very devoted to Her Rosary, She had saved her from death. This woman lived for many years afterwards, always serving in the adornment and cleaning of the said Rosary chapel of Our Lady. This miracle was twice approved by the ordinary of the city of Lisbon in Portugal, once as soon as it happened, and again many years later because a book containing this and other approved miracles had been burned, and there were still people living who had witnessed this marvel.

A drowned child was resurrected by Our Lady for the devotion of the Holy Rosary. In Holland there was a married couple, both members of the Confraternity, devoted to Our Lady's Rosary, which they recited every day with great devotion. They had a small son whom they loved very much, who went with other boys to the bank of a river, fell in and drowned. When his parents learnt of it they were very saddened by this unfortunate event, and went at once to search for their son's body with many tears. When they found it, they returned home with it, with as much weeping and bitterness as one can imagine, having lost

their only son. They remembered the many marvels that God Our Lord works through the Rosary of His Blessed Mother, and they took refuge in Her, promising that if She resurrected that child they would make him a member of Her Holy Rosary Confraternity, and that they would do everything to ensure he would recite it all his life. They had not yet finished making the promise when the child rose up alive and well, saying that by the virtue of the Holy Rosary and the intercession of Our Lady he had risen, and he asked to be immediately enrolled as a member of the Rosary Confraternity. All the people who saw this were greatly amazed, and became attached to this holy devotion. Once the child was enrolled in the Confraternity, he was very devoted to the Rosary all his life and, giving testimony to this great mercy, he dedicated himself life-long to the service of the Virgin, and ended well.

Of an Abbot who was very devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary and showed it at the hour of death. An Abbot of a monastery was very devoted to the Rosary of the Mother of God and, in addition to his Masses and canonical hours, he engaged himself integrally and wholeheartedly in this holy devotion. This Abbot often used to be rapt up and almost beside himself, or with his arms outstretched embracing Our Lady as it seemed to him. He persevered in this devotion for many years, and at the end of his days, when on the point of death, he entered a great rapture, as if he were already dead, and coming to himself began to weep. The Religious who were with him begged and pleaded with him for God and His Most Holy Mother to tell them what he had seen. He replied: "Let this be enough for you to know, that whoever wants to be saved should greet Our Lady Virgin many times with the devotion of the Rosary." And after saying these words, amid very great joy by which he showed the presence of Our Lady and of the Angels who had come with Her, he gave up his soul into the hands of the Lord.

The devotion of the Rosary strengthens in the Faith and gives courage to receive martyrdom for the Faith of Jesus Christ. Father Francis Messia recounts in his book on the Rosary, and it is also cited in the Chronicle of the Dominican Friars in the book titled "De Viris Illustribus", that Friar Anthony de Ripoli, son of habit of the blessed Saint Antonine, Archbishop of Florence, was captured by the Moors on a journey he was making out of obedience. Arriving in Tunis, this Friar Anthony de Ripoli, who was very devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary, prayed it every day with great devotion, as his anguish demanded. He fell into the hands of a very cruel Moor who ill-treated him in many ways, trusting that he would renounce his Faith due to the ill-treatment he was giving him; at the same time, he proposed so many gifts and offers if he did so, that the inconstant friar, yielding, renounced the Faith, and married a niece of the same king of Tunis, receiving in dowry large rents and profits. Now a Moor, he was well instructed in that bad sect, and saw that there was much evil in it, that it was bestial, in such a way that, with great repentance for what he had done, he thought to himself how he could better confess in public the faith of Jesus Christ, to edify the captives and Christians he had scandalized. At that time some Florentine merchants with a safe conduct arrived in Tunis, whom he curiously asked for news from Italy. They told him that the Archbishop of Florence Saint Antonine of the Order of Saint Dominic, who had given him the habit, had died, and that God had shown great miracles at his death. The death of this holy archbishop as they told him, was on May 2, 1459. When the renegade heard this, touched by the Holy Ghost, he said with living tears: "Oh my Father Saint Antonine! What account will you give to God for this miserable soul?" And he added to himself: "Alas, Friar Anthony, how vain you have been, falling so easily, and deserving hell. But it shall not be so, since we have God in Heaven, who does not want the death of the sinner, but that he be converted; and we have a good advocate before Him, and it is His Most Blessed Mother, who does not forsake the devotees of her Holy Rosary, as I, though unworthy, have been and am, and while I live I will be. Return, return, Friar Anthony, lost sheep, to the fold of the Holy Catholic Church, and let all see your penance and faith, since all saw your fault and blasphemy; and if you have been the occasion for others to do the same, be you also now the cause for others to be

encouraged to die with your firm confession.” With this determination he dealt with certain Italian merchants to make him a habit of his religious order, and when it was made, he wore it one day when the king was entering Tunis from a trip he had made. And among the acts in his reception, the repentant renegade came out dressed in his own habit, and laid down the crown before the king. The truth is that he first armed himself well with the prayer of the Holy Rosary, entrusting that heroic deed he was undertaking to the Queen of Heaven, with whose favour he dared to undertake such an arduous undertaking as martyrdom. Seeing him dressed in that attire, the king thought that to please him he had dressed in that outfit mocking Christians; but realizing that by his great faith and constancy he was Christian, and that he wanted to die thus, renouncing Mohammed and his evil law, he wanted to know if he was displeased with his wife or family, and, finding nothing, had him taken away to be stoned at the riverbank. When they arrived at the place where his execution was to be, he had time to honour Mary with the entire Rosary, with as much devotion as the case demanded, begging her to obtain from her Son the forgiveness of his sins. He rose from prayer and distributed his clothes among those who were going to stone him, keeping only the habit, the scapular of the friars of Saint Dominic, and his Rosary around his neck; and thus with great patience he suffered death by stones like Saint Stephen, in atonement for his sins, and in testimony of the Holy Catholic Faith. That Our Lord accepted that death as a pleasing sacrifice was made manifest by two rather evident signs, of which the first was this: After the holy martyr was stoned, the Moors wanted to burn the body for greater ignominy of our Faith, for which they provided much firewood. But, so that it would not harm him, God took away its power from the fire, which had no effect on him, and as if it did not touch him. And the second sign occurred after being buried by the Christians with the king’s permission in the church that Christians had there (from the time the King of France conquered Tunis), at the foot of the Crucifix where he had ordered his burial. On the beach at that time there was a ship of Christians, who were loading pebbles as ballast, for the purpose of sailing on to Naples; and among other pebbles they picked up four or five stained with the blood of the said martyr, because they were collecting ballast in that place where he was stoned or around it. After the ship left port amid great calm and with a prosperous wind, and being somewhat far from Tunis, a storm so great suddenly arose that they considered themselves completely lost; and seeing that this turn of fortune came without any sign of wind, and finding no natural cause, the navigators thought that it came from the hand of God; one of those travelling on the ship advised them saying: “I think, my brothers, that God sends us this storm for the disrespect we have shown for the martyr Friar Anthony, who was stoned in defence of our Holy Catholic Faith; because among the stones that we put as ballast in the ship there are some bloody with the blood of the martyr; and if this is so, as I believe, let us make a vow that, if Our Lord allows us to return safely to port, we will unload the stones that are in it, to find those that are bathed in blood, and once found, that we will set them in silver reliquaries in honour of God and testimony of our Holy Catholic Faith.” Everyone agreed to make that vow, approving what was said, and swearing it with the solemnity that fear gives, and at that very moment the storm ceased and they sailed with a good wind to enter port. As promised, they unloaded the ship and, searching with great diligence for the blood-stained stones, which were four or five, they had them set in silver in memory of the miracle, and hung them over the grave of the said martyr, before the image of the Crucifix, as already said.



How the Virgin Our Lady grants favours to those who pray the Rosary. A devout man served Our Lady for many years with the Rosary, praying it every day, and thus persevered with peace of conscience until, as time went by, he was tempted by lukewarmness. Such

distaste came to his mind that it disturbed him, and made him lose patience, and withdrew him from his custom. "What is this I am doing? What benefit or mercy have I received from Our Lady for the diligence I have always had in praying Her Rosary? It would be better to occupy myself with other spiritual exercises from which I may draw greater fruit, and perhaps God and his Blessed Mother receive better worship," he said to himself. Being in this confusion, undecided whether to leave or continue with the devotion of the Rosary, one night he heard a voice calling him by his name saying: "Do not climb so high, for the fall will be greater if you fall. But, what are you complaining about?" He replied: "That having served the Virgin Our Lady for so long with the devotion of the Rosary, I have received no mercy or joy at all." He heard the voice that spoke to him say: "Tell me, where are your brothers? Have they not died, while you remain alive and healthy? Did your neighbours' houses not burn down while yours remained standing? Have your neighbours not died of the plague, and you are free from all evil? Well, this being true, how can you say that you have not received any grace or mercy for praying the Holy Rosary to the Most Holy Virgin? But so that you may see how the Virgin Queen of Heaven and Earth rewards Her devotees of the Rosary, raise your eyes and look." He raised his eyes to Heaven, now convinced of his error, and saw a very resplendent expanse in which there were fifteen castles, and each of the castles had ten beautiful and marvellously splendid towers. Marvelling at such a vision, he heard the voice: "Look here at the place that you have built by praying the Rosary, because the fifteen castles signify the fifteen Our Fathers, and the hundred and fifty towers represent the hundred and fifty Hail Marys of the Rosary. Persevere then in devotion and do not turn back, for you will lose such a beautiful place!" Having seen the fruit and having understood the absurdity of the temptation, he gave thanks to God and to his Most Holy Mother, and continued with the devotion of the Holy Rosary, ending gloriously.

How God restored the kingdom to a king through the Holy Rosary. A king being old, infidels had occupied most of his kingdom, taken the government away from him and kept him so oppressed that he was unable to defend the little that remained to him. The queen was a very devout and prudent person, called Benedicta, a member of the Rosary Confraternity, and complied with praying the Rosary as devoutly as she could. Seeing then the valiant lady the destruction of the kingdom and the anguish of her husband the king, she said to him one day: "You, sir, are old, and are tired from many wars, so age excuses you from taking up arms; rest in your palace, and give me only a thousand men, that with the help of Our Lord and his Blessed Mother I will recover your lost kingdom." The king gave her the thousand men that the queen asked for, all of whom the queen ordered to be enrolled as members in the Confraternity of the Rosary of Our Lady, and to pray it devoutly every day, in the hope that they would achieve their purpose well. The warriors, obeying, accepted the devotion; and forming up in order they made a battalion, far more devout than armed. These few presented themselves before their enemies, who were brave, valiant and very numerous, the few giving the signal for battle to the many. Their opponents, however, did not expect this, but turned their backs in haste terrified at the infinity of troops (as they said) that they seemed to see, though they were only a thousand men; and this because none other than the Angels were helping them, the aid from the Empress of Heaven. The infidels, having lost the victory, abandoned the field and the riches with all that they had gained and usurped, and returned to their lands. And the king recovered his realm, with all its lands, through the devout queen and loyal knights. Saint Alan says that these monarchs were not ungrateful for the benefits received, and persevered in holy and pious works, counselling the devotion of the Holy Rosary to their subjects by their great fervour and devotion.

Through the devotion of the Holy Rosary, he was delivered from death and from the devil. A clergyman was very busy with secular affairs, but still prayed the Holy Rosary to the Virgin Our Lady every day. This clergyman fell ill and came to the point of death. As he was about to expire, he saw a great multitude of demons waiting for his soul to take it to hell.

Seeing himself in such great danger, he invoked and called upon the Virgin Mary to help him; she appeared there immediately, and with Her an Angel, who brought a book, all written in golden letters, which greatly frightened the demons. But one of them said, “Christ is a just judge, and will not take this man from us, who is ours, and has no part in Heaven, and if the angel brings his book of good works, we also have a book of his bad works; let both books be weighed, and we will see that the book we have of his bad works weighs far more than the one you have of his good works.” And as the demons wanted to take the soul with great fury, the Virgin Our Lady said: “Wait, for there are works of his that are not listed here.” And so she took a rosary of those he had prayed in his life, and put it on the scales, and made the book of good works weigh far more than that of the bad ones; for which the demons were greatly confused. And the said clergyman, through the intercession of the Virgin Our Lady, came to himself, regaining his health. He amended his life as best he could, and was very devoted to the Virgin Our Lady and her Holy Rosary.



By virtue of the Holy Rosary, true peace and friendship is made between enemies. In France, there were two great lords, one a prince and the other a count, with the greatest enmity between them, so great that there was no one who could restore peace or have them reach any agreement (though many had tried many times), so that the vassals of one did as much harm as they could to the property and persons of the vassals of the other. Seeing this, a Religious devoted to Our Lady's Rosary thought that, as there was no human way to appease their enmity, with the favour of the Virgin and her Holy Rosary they could be reconciled. He went to the prince and the count, without one knowing about the other, and induced them to pray the Rosary. They accepted, and it was a great wonder of God that not many months passed after they had begun to pray the Rosary that, without knowing how, they were reconciled, regaining peace. And not only this, but afterwards they became close friends.

A public sinner from the region of Picardy was converted to penance by the Rosary. Saint Alan de la Rupe tells that in Picardy there was a woman who was known for her bad life as a public sinner. Advised by people dedicated to the holy devotion of the Rosary, she had herself enrolled in the Confraternity and began to pray the Holy Rosary every day. Marvellous thing, that one who was completely cut off from God and had only the name of Christian, a few months after beginning to pray the Rosary, she was converted to become another Saint Mary Magdalen. Having dressed in very delicate blouses and the finest linens, afterwards she wore haircloth and a tight penitential chain; and having been unable to sleep except on very soft mattresses of fine wool and feathers, afterwards she slept on the hard ground. And having before sought to satisfy her appetite with savoury and delicate dishes, afterwards for all the days of her life she ate nothing but bread and water, performing many days of very harsh penance, until by her great penance and multitude of good works, and by virtue of the Holy Rosary, she attained the gift of prophecy. Finally, helped and favoured by the Most Blessed Virgin Our Lady, whom she served, she ended her life in holiness and departed for everlasting glory. These miracles of the conversion of sinners are the most edifying, and by these, God wants us to take His Most Holy Mother Mary as Mediatrix, a great Mistress of this.

Through the Holy Rosary, a young man from Holland succeeded in confessing perfectly. Father Alberto of Venice recounts that in a Dutch city called Leiden, there was a young man of sixteen years or more who had confessed many times but never sincerely; rather, he had often received Holy Communion of the Most Precious Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ in mortal sin, and thus remained in that sacrilege. The reason was that he had committed an enormous sin against nature, and because it was such an ugly thing, he was ashamed to



confess it. Upon hearing a sermon by a venerable Father of the Order of Preachers, called Friar Conrad, in which he preached the virtue and efficacy of the Rosary of the Virgin Our Lady, especially regarding the grace of being able to confess well and have contrition for sins, he had himself enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity. It was a marvellous thing that, after this young man had enrolled in the Confraternity and prayed the Holy Rosary for a few days, God gave him, through the intercession of His Most Glorious Mother, such contrition and such a great will and desire to confess, that he could not rest or sleep until he had sincerely confessed all his sins with tears and much devotion. From then on, as a good servant of God and His Most Holy Mother, he persevered in righteousness all his life.

Of a young demoniac girl freed from the demon because they made her pray the Rosary and always wear it around her neck. Father Jerónimo Taix recounts, and also Iodoso and Enseldo, that in Germany there was a young girl who was tormented by the demon. The Priests, with their exorcisms, would cast it out of her, but then, after a few days, it would return and torment her cruelly. And as this had happened four or five times, her parents and relatives, not knowing what to do to free her, were advised to have her enrolled in the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and to make her pray at least a third of the Rosary every day, and to put a blest rosary around her neck, never to remove it. They did so, and with the girl's diligence in praying the Holy Rosary, the demon was so frightened and terrified that it never dared to torment her again. And thus, by the virtue of the Holy Rosary, she was freed from the demon, and afterwards was very devoted to the Virgin Mary and Her Holy Rosary all her life.

A woman was dying impenitent and was converted by virtue of the Rosary. In the city of Freiburg in Germany, there was a very devout woman who in her youth had committed a serious sin and, out of shame, had never confessed it; rather, thinking that Our Lord God would forgive her without confessing, by doing penance, she performed many penances and austerities of life, but nothing helped her. Hearing how great marvels the Virgin Our Lady performed by virtue of the Rosary, this woman decided to enrol in the Confraternity, and took up the devotion of praying the entire Rosary every day, but always remained obstinate in not confessing her sin. She fell gravely ill, and though the illness progressed each day, she still did not remember to confess that sin, even though she prayed to God and His Most Holy Mother to receive her into their Kingdom. Our Lord heard the prayers of some devout Confraternity members who prayed for all members who might be in mortal sin, as they continually pray, and through the intercession of His Most Merciful Mother, not wanting the soul of this wretched woman to be lost, the day before she died, Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to her crucified on the Cross and said to her: "Look, woman, at the wounds I received in my hands and feet for you and for all the world; look at the blood I shed for the Redemption of the whole world, and among them to save you; and you, by your fault, do not want to enjoy it, and are obstinate in not wanting to confess your sin for so many years now. According to My justice, you would already be damned to eternal punishment, but through the intercession of My Mother, whose Rosary you have prayed though in sin, and through the prayers of the members of the Holy Rosary, I have had mercy on you, and I do not want you to be damned. Instead, I command you to confess your sins presently, because tomorrow at sunrise you must come to give an account to Me. And so that everyone may see that from now on I want you to undergo your purgatory, you will feel great burning within you; and when they see your body after your death, they will see on it the signs of the fire you will have endured." And having said this, Our Lord Jesus Christ disappeared. The woman immediately felt such a great burning that it seemed to her she was burning in live flames,

but without forgetting the command she had received, she called her family members and begged them to call the confessor. When he was before her, in front of everyone she recounted her past life and told everything that Our Lord Jesus Christ had said to her, and how she already felt purgatory; also that she was going to die the next morning, and the way they would find her body afterwards. And so with much contrition she confessed all her sins, especially the one she had not wanted to confess, and having received the Sacraments, she died at the time she had said. After her death they looked at the body, and found it as if it had been burning in fire. And accepting as true what the woman had said, they became very devoted to the Rosary, enrolling in its Confraternity.

A Priest mortally wounded could not die without Confession, by virtue of the Holy Rosary. There was a Priest in the duchy of Brabant, who was very devoted to the Virgin Our Lady and became a member of the Rosary Confraternity. He fell seriously ill, and had great pain, and so much so that, falling into despair, he took a knife to kill himself, and gave himself a mortal wound, but with the pain of the wound he forgot the pain of the illness; and reconsidering what he had done and knowing the danger of eternal death he was in, he resorted to seek refuge from the Virgin Our Lady and her Holy Rosary, begging her not to allow him to die before confessing his sins. It was a marvellous thing that though, according to the wound, he should have died soon, he could not die until he had confessed his sins with much contrition and received all the Sacraments.

A woman who had her throat cut could not die without Confession, because of the Holy Rosary. In the city of Lodi, in the duchy of Milan, there was a woman who, due to her great devotion to the Virgin Our Lady, had herself enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity, and prayed it every day. She had a husband who was somewhat harsh in nature and quarrelsome, who made her suffer a lot. One day, finding herself ill-treated by her husband, she took a very sharp knife and cut her throat with it. With the pain of the wound, and with the much blood she was shedding, reflecting and knowing the wrong she had done, she feared losing her soul, for there was no remedy for her body, and she began to invoke the Virgin Our Lady. She begged Her that by the virtue of the Holy Rosary, and by the prayers of the righteous who were in the Confraternity, she would grant her the grace that, since she could not escape bodily death, she might escape spiritual death, and that she might not die until she had confessed her sins with sorrow. The pious hand of the Virgin Our Lady aided her in such a way that, against all course of nature, she lived until she had confessed her sins and received the Holy Sacraments. Afterwards, with much contrition and always invoking the Virgin Our Lady of the Rosary, she died.

In Mexico, a young man to whom the devil appeared in the figure of a woman was freed by virtue of the Holy Rosary. In the city of Mexico, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus relate that, in the year 1593, the devil appeared in the figure of a beautiful woman to a young man, inciting him to offend God. And the youth, consenting to his weakness, the woman led him through various parts of the said city, and arriving at midnight in a very secluded place, she told him to remove a secret Rosary he was carrying under his clothes. Astonished that she knew about the Rosary without having seen it, the young man suspected she was the evil one and told her he would not remove it for anything in the world. Then the demon changed from the figure of a woman into a very fierce beast, with claws and horns, and threatened him, saying he should be grateful for his devotion to the Mother of God of the Rosary, and for what he had prayed to her; that if it were not so, he would not have come out of the affair so well. The young man was terrified. Afterwards, the devil often appeared to him at different times and in different forms, always inciting him to evil, so much so that he became very distressed, and decided to go to confession with a Father of the Society of Jesus who lived in that city. This Priest, examining his conscience well, came to understand what was happening and guided him to change his life, confirmed him in the devotion of the Holy Rosary, and in the frequency of the Sacraments. And thus, by the mercy of God, he came to



be free from those attacks in a short time.

A woman was saved from water and millstones by the Holy Rosary. The following event occurred on the eve of Saint Mary Magdalen in the year 1582, in a town in Aragon called Villafeliche, belonging to the Marquis of Camarasa, and in the archbishopric of Zaragoza. A woman very devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary named Isabel Mochales, married to Andrés de Miedes, who managed the production of gunpowder in the mill located on the millrace of the flour mill. This millrace normally carries water to move three millstones. The good woman most days went to the mill taking materials for gunpowder, and she had the habit of holding her Rosary when leaving her house and praying it on the way, so that when she arrived, she had finished her Rosary, kissed and venerated it, and put it on her person.

Seeing one day that a mill wheel had stopped, she approached and, trying to make it move, the force of the wheel caught her and threw her into the millrace, which carried a lot of water, and with great force passed her under four wheels of other gunpowder mills there were in that millrace, she always saying “Jesus”. Upon reaching the pond where the water is divided off for the channels of the flour mill, a pond which is three and a half meters deep and where there was more danger than ever, she found herself out of the water without knowing how or in what way; and opening her eyes she said: “Our Lady of the Rosary has rescued me, because it was impossible for me to get out.” She went home, changed clothes, and gave fervent thanks to God and his Most Holy Mother for such a great mercy. The distance this woman travelled in the water, and between the wheels of those mills has been measured, and it is more than one hundred meters; the woman is very thin and not given to deception. Father Diego Juárez, who was later Abbot of San Juan de la Peña, was then the Priest of that town and preaching one day in the pulpit of that church about the Holy Rosary, published this case as it was a miracle well-known to him. On a visit to the Abbot, they asked him to say what he knew about this case, and he referred to it as stated, and said that in his conscience he considered it a miracle, as he was very sure of it. A few years later another woman fell into that millrace, and a wheel killed her, and partly tore her apart.

Of a boy who did not fall off a cliff, protected by the Queen of Heaven, thanks to the Holy Rosary. There was a very poor woman, though rich in devotion to the Rosary of Our Lady, who had a son of twelve or thirteen years old, whom she sent to watch over a flock of sheep, because she could no longer do so; but every night when he returned home, the good mother instructed him in devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, and among other things she had charged him that, whenever he found himself in any need, he should turn to the Mother of God with his Rosary, and She would favour him. It so happened that one day while in the field with his sheep, at sunset, a fierce storm came with fierce hail and lightning, wind and rain, which scattered his flock, and as he could not gather them as he wished and no longer had strength, he gave up; he remembered his mother’s good advice and took up his Rosary, and knelt down to pray it under a tree, and after the storm had passed it was already night, and he, responsible for his flock, went back to look for it. Walking a long way, he headed straight for a cliff that was just a few steps ahead, by which he would have been dashed to pieces. Just then a Shepherdess appeared to him with a certain radiance that was more than human, and asked him: “Where are you going, brother?” He replied: “I’m looking for my flock which, as the storm has been great, I fear may have fallen into some ravine.” The Shepherdess said to him: “Walk this way, for you are tired; God will guard it, and in the morning you will seek it.” The young man believed Her and did so. Showing him a hut, She said: “Here you can take shelter tonight and I will stay in that other hut.” So it was done, and the young man slept, as he was very tired, all night. Upon waking he went to look for his

flock, and after a few steps he found it all well and together, without a single sheep missing. He wanted to return happily to rejoice with the Shepherdess, and thank Her, but he could never find the hut where She had gone, and not only did he not find that one, but neither his own where he had rested, nor any other could ever be found in that entire area either before or after this case, whereby the young man soon understood that this grace had come to him from the Queen of Heaven, as had that warning She had given him, whereby all his life he intensified his devotion to the Holy Rosary of the Queen of Heaven. Father Pedro Cerbuna, Bishop of Tarazona, who reviewed this writing, recounted this miracle, and begged so much, that it was ordered to be included among many miracles in this writing for the consolation of all, and among them he told me that I could put this one as most certain, which he had preached, and of which he was well informed. And since God Our Lord wanted to take him to his glory before this writing came to light, what he privately told can now be published, rejoicing in the great good that this holy devotion does in the world. Speaking of himself, he said that since the age of twelve, when his parents sent him to study in Valencia and he learned this holy devotion of the Rosary there in the convent of Preachers (where he made his confessions), he had never abandoned it all his life. With this foundation it is no wonder that God raised him to such high virtue, for a book could be made of his excellent life, his reformed house, how much he preached before and after becoming Bishop, the great alms he gave, and finally the University of the city of Zaragoza he founded, from where so much light goes out to many parts.

Of the unease that sin causes in true devotees of Our Lady of the Rosary. At a very inopportune hour, already late at night, a devotee of the Holy Rosary came to a priory of the Order of Preachers and asked them to call his Confessor, as he wanted to confess. The latter sent him a message, saying that he was busy and that it was already late, that he should return early the next day, that he would receive him. The man replied that he could not leave without confessing. The confessor came and told him that it was an inopportune hour, that it prevented closing the doors, and the quiet for the friars who had to rise for matins, that he should go in good time, and that the next day he would hear his confession. The man would not agree, but insisted so much that he had to hear his confession. After he had confessed, he asked forgiveness from the Father confessor and all the others who had been waiting, and told the Confessor that he truly could not do otherwise, because after he had enrolled as a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary and prayed Her holy devotion, he would not have peace in his bed if he had scruples about having fallen into mortal sin. And this was so true that he would spend the whole night without batting an eyelid, and with such sighs that his wife noticed, and thus, to avoid suspicions that women usually have about such things, he had been unable to avoid the inconvenience of being heard in confession, because once done he felt calm and was at peace.

The city of Cologne was saved from many armies due to the devotion of the Rosary. In the city of Cologne, with its people oppressed and very fatigued by grievous wars and armies, the authorities decided, in such great anguish and conflict, to earnestly invoke the Virgin Mother of God of the Rosary with very frequent processions and to call for particular prayers to be made in Her chapel before Her sacred image in the Church of the Preaching Friars. And Divine Goodness wanted to free them from all those sufferings through the intercession of the Mother of God and Her Holy Rosary. This miracle was cited by the Pope, and was a very sonorous bell that brought a great number of people and individuals to this holy devotion.

How the Queen of Heaven makes her devotees remember their sins, to confess them. The Fathers of the Society of Jesus of the Manachiense college of the province of Upper Germany, in the year 1588, tell what happened to a devotee of the Virgin. Having one day set himself to think very sincerely about the matters of his soul to make a very complete confession, he was thinking very carefully about everything he had thought, said, done, and failed to do through negligence to offend the Lord. And being in this agony, without which confessions



are rarely or never well done, he invoked the Virgin of Heaven for her help, so that in this confession in particular he might make it without forgetting any sin, but rather confess them all to his Confessor and come out well from them for the glory of the Lord. While in this, behold, a very white note descended from above before his eyes, with very small letters though very well penned and formed, in which was written a sin that he had not remembered, so that he might confess it and pray a Rosary for it in honour and praise of the Virgin, and that he would come out well from it, and so it was. But the miracle did not end there because, showing the said note to other friends of his, brothers, and parents and superiors, they could never read it or

understand what he had read and what to his eyes was so clear and evident.

Of a miraculous vision that was seen to occur in Mexico with a saintly Friar devoted to the Rosary. Father Augustine de Ávila Padilla, in the first book he wrote of the History of the Province of Mexico, tells of Father Matías de Paz, who lived in the province of San Vicente de Guatemala, and in his forty years there was never seen to have shown anger or impatience with any person, because he was very quiet, recollected and charitable, and particularly long-suffering and meek. He was several times superior of the province of Guatemala, where a strange thing happened to him for the consolation of devotees of the Holy Rosary, of which this Father was a great one, and prayed it at the end of matins, as was customary in the order of Preachers. A man who had committed a crime that needed more defence than that of the Church had taken refuge in that church. The Fathers had given him a hiding place prepared in the platform of the choir, so that he could stay there in secret when impossible for him to take refuge in the immunity of the temple. The poor man had slept little and, after matins ended, he came out from where he was hiding thinking that, since the Friars had left, no one would remain in the choir and he could go out and enjoy the fresh air. The devout Father Matías de Paz was at his devotions praying the Rosary of the Virgin Mary. The fugitive noticed a light in a corner of the choir, and it seemed to him that a very bright star descended a short distance, and then disappeared. He looked more closely and saw the blessed Father who was praying, and each Hail Mary he prayed seemed like a star, from when it came from his lips until it joined the number of those prayed. In this way God showed how He assists with the light of His blessed grace those who serve His Most Holy Mother, and acknowledges the life of those who serve Him. God so favoured this Father that Christ Our Redeemer and Lord visited him in the form of a sick man. He used to go through the Indian villages with great charity, visiting and teaching. And one day while in his church, an Indian went up to him very distressed, complaining of a severe pain he had. The Father went out to receive him very compassionately and, pitying his sufferings, asked him what he wanted, and what hurt him; he replied that he was full of pain, that he wanted nothing more than to be taken to his home to rest on his poor cot. There was no one else there at that moment to whom the Father could entrust that work of charity, nor did he seek anyone if he himself could help. He himself put the sick man on his back, carrying him with great willingness to where the man guided him. Some Indians were coming from afar and saw the friar embracing a large image of a Crucifix, to whom they gave due reverence, and even more so as they drew nearer; and when the blessed Father passed them by, as he saw them kneeling with hands joined, he asked them: "What is this, what are you doing?" They replied: "Father, we are venerating the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ that you carry on that Cross." Then the Saint understood that the Onlybegotten Son of the Father had tested him in his charity and love for his neighbour and, without feeling the burden of the sick man anymore, he returned to the convent, while others continued to see the figure of the holy Crucifix. This great love for one's neighbour is one of the marvellous fruits produced by the

devotion of the Holy Rosary, as was seen in this venerable Father.

Of the miraculous change of heart of a judge in Mexico through the Holy Rosary. Father Augustine de Ávila Padilla recounts in the second book of his History of the Province of Mexico, that while Father Dominic of the Annunciation was in Florida, among the many wonders that God worked through him, there was a miraculous change of heart in a judge thanks to the Holy Rosary. As that life was so arduous, the poor soldiers tried to avoid it, and two of them, in agreement, absented themselves against the order given by the general. They were caught precisely when they were leaving and were condemned to death. The Religious interceded for the general to pardon them, but achieved nothing but greater indignation from the judge. He ordered them to confess in the evening and prepare themselves that night to meet God the next day. The Religious attended to their task advising the condemned to seek a good death, since there was no longer any way to defend their lives. One of them was very indignant with the general, thinking that some acts of friendship he had done for him should have prevented such a sentence. From this, the devil took the opportunity to inflame him with anger and make him neglect the death that awaited him very soon. The other listened attentively to the blessed Friar Father Dominic of the Annunciation who advised him to offer up his life to God, asking Him to accept his death in atonement for his sins. He advised him to seek protection from the Queen of Angels by praying Her Rosary, of whose wonders the world is full. The love of life was strong in this man, and he said: "Father, isn't there some remedy so that I won't die?" The servant of God replied: "My son, God is powerful, and the intercession of His Most Holy Mother is of great value, but we should only ask for that which gives greater glory to God. We should no longer seek your life from the governor; let's entrust it to the Queen of Angels; pray Her Rosary tonight, I will also pray it for you, and may God's Will be done in everything." The man was very comforted and began to pray Her Rosary with the sentiment that one can imagine. The blessed Religious also prayed the Rosary, flying through those divine mysteries that always occupied his thoughts, and with the fire of love blazing up for the neighbour for whom he prayed. The Queen of Angels was not deaf to the prayer of Her Holy Rosary, but asked Her Divine Son, as King of kings, in whose hand are the hearts of princes and judges, to change that of the judge in favour of the aggrieved who sought protection from the Holy Rosary. And just as the Virgin delays not in helping Her children and devotees, neither does Her Most Holy Son in hearing His Virgin Mother. It was a marvellous thing that before dawn the governor rose with great concern, ordering them not to execute that man, because he wanted to spare his life, and that only the other who had shown himself rebellious and aggrieved should die, and so it was done. When Father Dominic saw his spiritual son free, he said to him: "Indeed, son, it is a very good thing for a man to entrust himself to the Queen of Angels; all your life you are obligated to serve Her as your Lady, for through Her God moved the judge's heart to grant you pardon." The man himself became a herald of the miracle, and devotion to the Holy Rosary grew among those people.

For wearing the Rosary around their necks, three Indians were saved from a lightning strike. Father Augustine de Ávila recounts in the second book of his History of Mexico that when Father Dominic of the Annunciation was Vicar of Tepoztlán, as he preached with great fervour to this town the devotion of the Holy Rosary, the effectiveness of the preacher and his doctrine so won the will of the Indians that almost none failed to wear their Rosary around the neck. He reminded them of the abundant indulgences that the Supreme Pontiffs had granted to the Confraternity members who wear it visibly, because the Queen of Heaven wants Her devotees to take pride in so being. Just as men of the holy habit do not hide it but show it to their honour, so too should Her servants show the insignia of the Rosary; both to give good example and to free themselves by its virtue from misfortunes and adversities, as happened on this journey that we now relate. Five Indians from the said town of Tepoztlán were coming from the hills one day, with a load of firewood on their backs, and were caught



on the road by a stormy downpour with extraordinary fury of lightning and thunder. The poor men took refuge in the hollow formed by a rock with enough space for them to defend themselves from the rain. The five sat down almost in a circle, as the small space allowed them, waiting for the force of the storm to subside so that they could continue their journey. Of the five, only three wore a Rosary around their neck and looked at them in that predicament, wishing that the intercession of the Empress of Heaven might help them. God wanted to root the devotion of his Holy Rosary in the hearts of those newly converted people, and allowed a lightning bolt to fall among the five Indians, and those who wore the Rosaries came out alive, and those who did not wear them were struck dead there. The greatness of the miracle is increased by the account given of this case, saying that the two who died were intermingled with the three who remained alive, and the indomitable force of the lightning bolt had respect for those who were marked

with the Holy Rosary, and singled out those who were not. Afterwards, those who had been saved went to the servant of God and told him the case, which the saintly man preached several times afterwards with great sentiment and with an increase in this holy devotion.

Of the resurrection of an Indian in Mexico, to confess his sins, through the Holy Rosary. The most miraculous case recounted by the historian Father Augustine de Ávila in the second book of his History of Mexico is the following. In the year 1541, when the servant of God Friar Dominic of the Annunciation was living in Tepetlaoztoc, an Indian in that town fell ill while the good Father was not in the place and at the sick man's bedside there was no Religious who knew his language. The sick man insistently asked for Father Dominic to be called to confess; but they told him he was absent, and he said: "That's right, because yesterday he was in such a place and today he is in such a place visiting; go quickly to call him, so that I do not die without confession." The Indian was correct about the places he indicated, and they called the Father who without delay set out for Tepetlaoztoc where the sick man was. As he came on foot, he could not walk as fast as death could, which took hold of the Indian, who died five or six hours before the Religious arrived at the town. When he heard the case, the Father was greatly saddened, fearing that somehow it had been his fault that the Indian had died without confession. With this concern, he went to the house of the deceased, and there he began to pray, asking Our Lord for comfort in his sorrow. He considered the risk of a soul that leaves this life without the holy Sacrament of penance, and he had strong desires for that Indian to revive so that he might confess. He thought that if he had hastened his pace more, he would have found him alive, though he soon got out of this doubt, because he had not delayed his departure from the moment the notice reached him. Invoking the Queen of Angels, he turned to Her and, praying Her Holy Rosary he begged Her that through Her intercession She might grant in that case an answer to God's greater honour. The good Father was in this when suddenly the deceased rose, causing such astonishment to those in his house that neither friends nor relatives expected, and they all fled immediately. Men fear death so much that they don't even want to see those who have been in its power. The resurrected deceased called them, and tried to calm them down, but it was not enough, until the good Father called them, as one who had such powerful prayer as to bring him back from death to life. They all calmed down, and the Indian began to speak words as profound as one says and feels who escapes the dangers of Hell. "Be attentive," he said, "so that you may see God's justice and also know His mercy. When I fell ill, I tried to confess with Father Dominic, and the sorrow of his absence aggravated my illness, and in the end I finished my life without the required sorrow I should have had for my sins. When the soul left the

accidental body, it was received by demons, who with abominable figures and fearsome howls were waiting for it; the sad soul passed through frightful darkness in the midst of which an Angel appeared with great clarity and splendour who, illuminating the path, showed its difficulty and dangers. He commanded the demons with authority to leave the soul; but they replied that they could not leave it, as it was theirs for having died without confession; the Angel replied that it was God's Will that it should return to the body and confess, and expelling the demons with his light, said: 'Stand aside, traitors, and let it return to the body, for they are praying for it.' In this way, God has wanted you to see me resurrected, but as soon as I confess I will sleep the sleep of death until the last day." The Father was hearing these things with tearful eyes and attentive ears. He heard the confession of the fortunate Indian who made it with great signs of contrition and love of God. Immediately after the absolution, he lay down on the ground again and died. When the Father later recounted this case, he made little account of his own prayer and attributed the entire event to God's infinite Mercy and the devotion that the Indian had always had to the Holy Rosary, through which he not only returned from death to life, but it can be believed that he also exchanged the pains of eternal death for the joys of eternal bliss.

Devotion to the Holy Rosary greatly benefits the deceased. Blessed Alan de la Rupe was in his time one of the most devout to Our Lady and her Holy Rosary, and the most famous for this holy devotion. God gifted him with seeing many miracles of the Rosary so that they would be like fruits of his holy works and desires. Thus he recounts in the book he wrote about the Rosary that many people devoted to Our Lady and Confraternity members of the Holy Rosary, who not only prayed it every day with singular devotion for the living but also for the dead, confessed to him and told him that while praying the Rosary, deceased had appeared to them with the sign of the cross on their foreheads and with other signs that certified to them that such visions were true. These deceased told them by all means to pray the Rosary for the deceased in purgatory because, after Holy Mass, the Holy Rosary was indeed one of the main suffrages that can be offered for the deceased. And that they had been freed from the pains of purgatory and were going to enjoy God with His Saints in glory because certain people had prayed the Holy Rosary. And we should not marvel at this, because as the Rosary of the Mother of God is united to the Infinite Sacrifice of the Cross at Holy Mass by the Priest Celebrant, it thus acquires infinite value, and is offered up with all the merits of Christ Our Lord and of His Most Holy Mother, these being the chief treasures of the Church, so that it is well-founded that these produce such effects on the deceased, alleviating their pains and freeing them from Purgatory; and all the more since the Sovereign Pontiffs have most generously communicated to these suffrages the treasures of the Church's indulgences, and consider them very well applied.

How prisoners are freed through the Holy Rosary. Saint Alan de la Rupe also recounts that in a city in the kingdom of France, there were many prisoners in jail, some for debts they could not pay, others for various crimes committed, for which some deserved lashes, others exile, others mutilation of limbs, others hanging. A Father of a Religious Order preached to them, advising them of the devotion to the Holy Rosary and the patience needed by those in prison. Many of them took it well and became greatly fond of this holy devotion, and had themselves enrolled as Confraternity members; others were foolish and remained obstinate in not accepting anything said. And so it was that the devotees of the Mother of God and her Holy Rosary were soon all freed from their penalties, while those who rejected the Rosary paid a very high price for all they owed for their crimes, each according to the amount deserved. Saint Alan de la Rupe tells the same of another man who had been condemned to death in France, and heard of the excellences of the holy devotion of the Rosary; he became so fond of it that he began to pray it with great fervour and vowed that, if God allowed him to be freed from prison, he would pray it for life. And it happened that in a short time he broke all his chains and irons to escape, as a man could have done only after many days.



Finally he was saved, and was very content with the obligation of the Holy Rosary that he had imposed on himself for life.

A woman was saved from drowning in the Tiber, through devotion to the Holy Rosary. A group of people went out to pass the time in a boat on the River Tiber in Rome, and as some were somewhat restless in the boat, it capsized, and all who were in it fell into the deepest part of the river; and the boat sank without being able to help them. Only one woman who was with them was a member of the Rosary Confraternity and was inscribed in the book. She, remembering at that moment her holy devotion and how much the Rosary could succour in dangers, reached for it, because she wore it around her neck, and entrusted herself to the Queen of the Angels

Who, protecting her, took her by the hand, and brought her ashore safe and sound, without any injury. When asked how she had escaped, she said it was with the favour and protection of Our Lady of the Rosary, to whom she was devoted, and to whom every day she prayed the Rosary, which she always carried with her, and that the Virgin Mary on that occasion had taken her by the hand and placed her in safety.

Of a drowned maiden who was resurrected by her mother's vow. In the city of Egra in Bohemia, there was a rather delicate young girl, who was enrolled in the holy Confraternity of the Rosary, and prayed her Rosary every day as she had been taught. This young girl went out with others, and while walking and playing near a river, she fell in and drowned. The mother, who found out, went there desolate and full of anguish. They recovered the daughter from the water, dead, and the mother went with the body to the Chapel and to the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary, remembering how devoted her daughter had been and her holy devotion. What she begged the Mother of God there regarding her dead daughter, any Christian can imagine: to resurrect her and give her back alive, for the consolation of her desolate mother, and that she saw herself unworthy of so great a mercy, but that through the merits of Her Son She could obtain it from Him. After this, she said that she was not yet inscribed in the book of the Rosary Confraternity like her daughter, but that she vowed to enrol immediately, and to pray the Rosary all her life. Marvellous thing, the moment she finished these words, the daughter arose alive, and gladdened her mother, and from then on mother and daughter were most devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary and heralds of this miracle, which Father Albert of Venice writes in his book.

Four hundred Christian captives capture two galleys of Aazan Baxa, the Sultan of Turkey's admiral and captain general of the seas, through the devotion of the Rosary. The holy devotion of the Rosary is a garden or vineyard so favoured by God, that its branches spread not only through Orient and Occident, but also to lands of barbarians and infidels, as a consolation to those who were captive there, so that they might enjoy its protection, and see miracles there, persevere in the faith, and care for their souls. There was much need for this among the captives, because they led a life of forced labour and were treated with such cruelty that they well needed this help from above, and for the Queen of Heaven to protect and shelter them on many occasions. God's Providence is so great, that for this He also allowed there to be Priests and Religious among the captives, who would attend to and help their brothers not only by confessing them, but in encouraging them in this holy devotion. That is why there was a Confraternity of the Holy Rosary in Algiers and in Constantinople and other parts where there was an elevated number of captives. Among them many miracles were seen, so that they might not despair of their freedom, as is this one we will now tell. It happened that on June 11th 1590, ten royal galleys left Constantinople, and arrived with favourable wind at Tripoli of Barbary, in Libya, where two of them remained; the other eight went on to Bizerte in Tunisia, and two of them, namely the "Capitana" and the "Patrona" went on to Algiers

carrying for his affairs Aazan Baxa, a Venetian renegade, admiral and captain general of the seas to the so-called “great turk” or sultan of the Ottoman empire, but the moors wanted to go back to Bizerte soon to reunite with the six galleys that had remained there and return together to Constantinople, before winter overtook them and prevented the journey. The Christian captives of the said two galleys, the Capitana and the Patrona, seeing that they carried many riches, wanted to try an uprising on them, but never had a good opportunity.



In Algiers, seeing that passengers were going on alone and would not be many, they decided to try, and agreed to do so or die. Hence they secretly provided themselves with some weapons, namely ten or twelve sabres for each galley, which cost them a lot of money, because they bought them from Turks, saying they wanted to present them to some knights from their lands. They also provided themselves with falsified shackles to be able to unchain themselves when it was necessary to free themselves, but not all of them, only the leaders of this operation, who were ten or twelve for each galley. They falsified irons with split pins that fitted perfectly, and it seemed there was no falsehood there, in such a way that even though a Turk checked the chains of the captives every night, he never noticed the deception. After having prepared themselves in this way, the leaders gathered, and among themselves made a vow promising Our Lady of the Rosary that if She gave them freedom and victory in this journey, on the first mainland they reached and disembarked they would give the Patrona galley with all its cargo to Her chapel, except the artillery. Among these captives were many who were enrolled in Algiers in the Confraternity of the Rosary, there were also others who were members of the one founded in the convent of Saint Peter Martyr in Galata, the Greek Christians' Parish in Constantinople. The Christian captives of the two galleys agreed and prepared themselves; they renewed the vow in the form mentioned, and all unanimous and in agreement departed from Algiers back to Bizerte on September 26th of the same year. The next day, at three o'clock in the morning, when the morning star was rising, they were 50 miles, about 80 kilometres east from Algiers, and five or six miles from the coast, due to the waves there were then. Seeing then that the time had come to carry out their plan, the Christians of the Capitana made their signal as they had arranged, which was to hang a shirt on the railing of the galley on the outside to be seen by the Patrona, which immediately responded with another signal, indicating that they were already prepared, and seeing the Christians of the Capitana the response of those of the Patrona, they began the second signal which was to pass from hand to hand among the captives from stern to bow a plate of honey saying that it should be given to so-and-so. Seeing the second signal, those who were rowing at the beginning of the oar, each of them warned and encouraged their companions, because not all knew but only the first on each oar, and then went on revealing it to the others; thus, even if someone wanted to be a traitor, he couldn't, because he was rowing with everyone; in the Patrona the second signal was made which was half an onion, with a verse that said: “Every man row happily and strongly, and drink brandy”, which is a saying of the poor captives due to the lack of wine there, and such was the joy and happiness of the poor Christian captives that the Turk who watched over them suspected, and said to a crew member of the Patrona: “What's wrong with these Christians, being so happy and rowing with so much enthusiasm?” He replied: “Because the galleys were moving well, and to encourage each other to row, because they were already fainting from exhaustion.” The suspicious Turk was not satisfied with this answer and went to the stern and told the captain to order the Christians to be handcuffed as is customary when a galley goes alone and carries little crew, to which the captain replied: “Oh chicken, and what are you afraid of, seeing how the galleys are so well

provided with guards?" The captain had just said this when the Christian captives from both galleys began to battle with great courage, invoking Our Lady of the Rosary, which was a marvellous thing. Those who had false shackles quickly freed themselves from their chains, and taking their sabres, went to the stern where the most important people were. In the first encounters, it went badly for them, but they fought manfully, each defending their side, some with knives, others with the wooden bowls they ate from, others with tools from the workplace, others with nails, and some even with the needles they used to sew biscuit sacks. In the battle, they removed the planks from the central walkway, so the turks couldn't walk through the middle of the galley but had to go from bench to bench; and the Christians fought with such intelligence and skill that in a quarter of an hour they achieved victory in the Flagship and took the galley, because all the turks threw themselves into the sea, except for the captain and two or three of his helpers who wanted to die fighting. The ruse and shrewdness of a renegade was of no little help in this victory, who at night took the Turks' sabres and tangled the straps of their sheaths so they couldn't use them well or unsheathe them, and he wet the fuse in such a way that the fire couldn't catch on it; also a French Christian captive, who was unchained, went to the chamber where the gunpowder was, filled his beret with it and sewed it up, except for a small hole he left to light it, went up, lit it and threw it to the stern where the Turks had fortified themselves and burned the long beards that some wore, and God confounded them. The Christians saw that in the pantry there were two or three bundles of new unassembled sabres, which they were carrying to sell to a merchant; they quickly cut the ropes with which they were tied, and all who could provided themselves with them. Seeing then the fire, and the gleaming of sabres in the hands of the Christians, the turks feared becoming their captives, and began to say: "Woe to me, I'm lost!" and crossing their arms, they surrendered as slaves to those who shortly before had been theirs, but the Christians were like lions to them, sparing no one, and so they threw themselves into the sea from where none could escape, being as we said five or six miles from the coast, and with good fortune. In this way, with the favour of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Christian captives of those two galleys became victors and masters of the riches they carried, leaving four hundred turks dead and drowned. Some of these climbed up the oars to the galley, begging the Christians to take them as slaves, and offering them many gold coins they carried with them, but as it was not then time to take prisoners, nor admit enemies into the group, they wouldn't receive any. And miraculously, at that moment fair weather came to them, and with a favourable wind and singing Hail Marys to the Queen of Heaven, they sailed with the wind, which was so propitious that the following day they arrived at the port of Alcudia, on the island of Majorca, where they took on some food, gave orders to cure and attend to the wounded, and made flags with Christian insignia, which is the Holy Cross, and elected captains from among themselves. And then they departed from Alcudia heading for the peninsula, wherever Our Lady of the Rosary might take them, Who landed them in Barcelona on a Friday afternoon, the 5th of October of that year 1590, where they were very well received, and on Saturday, the eve of the first Sunday of October, on which the victory of the naval battle achieved nineteen years earlier by Don John of Spain at Lepanto is celebrated, some of those captains went ashore and had a most solemn Mass sung to Our Lady of the Rosary, in thanksgiving for the happy outcome and victory. They had the miracle painted on a board and placed it in their chapel, which is in the monastery of Saint Catherine Martyr of the Order of Preachers, along with some arrows, chains, and irons from their shackles. After regaining their strength there, they gradually sold what they had brought in the galleys, converted it all into money, and had Masses said for the deceased in all the churches of Barcelona, and took their own share. On November 4th, which was the first Sunday of the month, after hearing Mass in the chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, they left Barcelona to kiss the hands of King Saint Philip II, before whom they presented themselves in formation, with their sabres and muskets. Father Miguel Llot had this miracle

published, with the ordinary's permission, so that it might be known to all.

The Queen of Heaven reprimands a Nun for praying the Rosary too quickly. In a convent of nuns, there was a Religious very devoted to the Queen of Heaven and Her Holy Rosary, and she prayed it very calmly. She was entrusted with a task under obedience, but the devil, who is an enemy of this holy devotion, took advantage of it to distract her, as indeed happened. Thus, to fulfil her obligation, she prayed this holy devotion very quickly, and not with the calmness and attention as before. The Queen of Heaven appeared to her while she was praying the Rosary before Her image and said to her: "Daughter, think about what you say, for your heart is no longer as it was before. Know that if you want to sing my psalter sweetly before Me, you must turn your heart away from the things



that separate you from Me, and if you cannot pray the entire Rosary, pray half or a third, or if not, what you can, but putting your heart into what you pray, and with this My Son will be content, and I too." This Nun's task, being such an important thing, did not excuse her for saying the Rosary with little attention, because not being attentive when she prayed was more due to her weakness than her task. When obedience commands work, it does not take away devotion; if in quantity it makes them less, for not having as much time for them, in that little time that still remains, however little it may be, prayers are more acceptable before God. What shall we say of how much those people lose who, by thinking about vanities and things of little profit, pray the Rosary of the Mother of God so distractedly that it seems more a pastime than a prayer? Well, they profit little or nothing, and the distraction can be so great that not only do they merit nothing, but may sin as well.

A deceased person, for having been devoted to the Holy Rosary, gave notice to fulfil certain commissions. In Tortosa, on January 15, 1571, Mr. Traveset, ill with urinary retention, died suddenly. He had confessed in the afternoon and expected that the next morning his confessor would come to reconcile him, say Mass, and give him the Blessed Sacrament; he got up to use the bathroom and died without being able to receive any other Sacrament. After his burial and the funeral rites, they felt in his house, where a son of his lived, now married and heir, that pieces of bricks were thrown at them many times, though they did no harm more than if they were hit with a tuft of tow. This novelty caused them so much fear for having continued so many days that the son with his wife thought of leaving that house. They consulted the case with Bishop Martín de Córdoba of the Order of Saint Dominic, and with the lecturer of the cathedral there, who was then Father John Izquierdo, and both thought it was a spirit. Passing one night in front of the door, the cleric Loberia, who later died a Canon of that holy church, heard a groan and a sigh; as in the deceased's voice, and recognized that it was Traveset, and he told those in the house and throughout the city that it was the deceased Mr. Traveset whom he had known very well by his voice. While the household members were in doubt about this, they decided that a maid named Isabel, who was most often hit by the brick pieces, should go up to the attic one night accompanied by some household members and other neighbours or acquaintances who remained at the door, where the spiral staircase was, so that in case the girl got scared, they could help her since she would be alone in the attic, and they stayed at the door with a lit candle; then they saw that it began first by throwing pieces of bricks at them and then mortar and plaster from the wall at one and all; and the maid Isabel who was going up already instructed, gathering courage, said to him: "I command you in the name of God to tell me who you are and what you want." A voice answered, because nothing was ever seen, they only heard the voice from among some beams in the attic and saw the stones being thrown: "Oh Isabel, for so many days you've made me wander around here throwing stones and you never wanted to speak to me." The maid, recognizing the voice of her deceased master, began to say softened and

dissolved into tears: “Oh, sir, I didn’t know it was you...! Woe to me for being so distrustful! What does sir command?” The voice replied: “Look Isabel, I can’t tell you now; come back tomorrow at prayer time to this same place, and I’ll tell you.” The maid went down all bathed in tears, and those who were at the end of the staircase, who heard everything that had happened, certified that it was the voice of the deceased Mr. Traveset. They informed the Bishop of what had happened to them. His lordship arranged for his provisor and vicar general, who at that time was Father Gaspar Punter, to go to the house to see what it was and examine the case well, but due to his occupations he was delayed about half an hour and could not arrive at the exact stroke of prayer time. When he arrived at the house with one of his servants, who later heard the voice and said it was Mr. Traveset’s own, everyone was waiting for him, and he stayed downstairs with the deceased’s son and daughter-in-law, while the maid went up to the attic with other people who remained at the door as the day before. As soon as she entered, she heard the voice say to Isabel: “Why have you taken so long? I was about to throw stones.” The maid replied: “The vicar general didn’t come till now.” “Isabel, tell my son that my sister left me in charge in her will to have certain anniversaries celebrated in the convent of Saint Francis, and I haven’t fulfilled it; have him fulfil it and have them celebrated. And also tell him that Vicente’s father left me ten escudos to have Masses said for his soul, and I haven’t had them celebrated; have him arrange to get them said soon. And you should know, daughter Isabel, that because I had devotion to the Holy Rosary and prayed it every day and also had the devotion of saying the name of Jesus 300 times each day, and having persevered in these two devotions every day of my life, God has granted me the grace to allow me to return to fulfil this discharge, which I could not do because I died so suddenly.” The maid replied, induced by those outside: “Sir, would it please you if the Bishop says a Mass in honour of the Name of Jesus for you?” The voice replied: “That would be a great mercy and charity for me, and tell him on my behalf that I beg him for the love of the Lord to say a Mass for me tomorrow,” and with this the maid went down and gave an account of what had happened to the Vicar General and those who were waiting, and to further examine the facts, they ordered the maid to go up twice more; the second time she asked if he would be pleased if his son came up, as he would better understand what he was asking for, and the voice replied: “No, Isabel, because he would be frightened.” Later the Bishop of Tortosa, who was then that Father Gaspar Punter, who was an eyewitness and according to whose account this miracle is written, says that the maid had already lost her fear so much and spoke to him with such familiarity, that if they had ordered her to go up seventy times she would have done so. The third time she went up she said to him: “Sir, everyone understands what your mercy asks, but if you don’t give us some sign of being the soul of Mr. Traveset, they won’t do anything, because they think it’s some demon trying to deceive us.” And the voice replied: “What has been said is enough, and if they don’t want to do it, I’ll start throwing stones again.” The girl responded: “Oh sir, for the love of God, don’t throw more stones, it frightens your daughter-in-law and she wants to leave the house!” And with this, she went down and reported everything to the Vicar General, and he to Bishop Martín de Córdoba, who was deeply sorry for not having been present during this event. The next day, he himself celebrated Mass in honour of the Name of Jesus as the soul had requested, and ordered that everything else be fulfilled. With this, the noise ceased, and nothing has ever been felt in that house until today; so that the graces that God grants to the living and the dead through the intercession of the Mother of God of the Rosary may be understood. Father Diego de Ojea published this miracle in his book, but not with as much detail as is published here.

In Ireland, a tree appeared full of Rosaries. A miracle referred to in the book written by Peter Babistao Claudio y Theserante on prodigious stories, and also related by Father Jerónimo Román, Augustinian and chronicler of his Order, in the first part of his book “Republics,” which he published, reviewed by the Holy Office. In the fifth book, it is read

that in the year 1575, during Lent, a few days before Easter Sunday, on the island of Ireland and on the lands of a certain Catholic nobleman, a tree of a man's height sprang up in an open field, very different from all known trees, from whose branches, instead of leaves, hung a great number of Rosaries, in the form and manner that we use, strung with subtle but strong threads that could only be broken with difficulty. The count, as a Catholic, greatly praised the miracle and took some of those Rosaries and distributed them to many parts as testimony that Heaven approves of Rosaries and condemns the wickedness of heretics who abhor them, and so that the whole world might understand that the Holy Rosary is a tree of life, and that it not only sustains Catholics in the holy Faith and in Morals, but will even save from death all heretics who wish to take advantage of its holy mysteries.



Of certain faithful, few in number, who fought against more than twenty thousand, and confronted them by virtue of the Rosary. Licentiate Peter Cornejo, historian of the wars of Flanders, recounts that after the death of Saint John of Spain, who died on October 1st 1578, and with him the defence of the holy Catholic Faith in those parts, the heretics, continuing their evil intent to ruin and persecute Christians, some on one side and others on another, and in particular those of Ghent, destroyed churches, robbed their silver, decorations and vestments, and took the bells from the towers, greatly persecuting Monasteries and Religious, whom they wished to eat and drink their blood with fiery rage and canine hunger. But Count Philip of Egmont and the Lord of Montañi, and the one of Capres, seeing such manifest disorder that could not be covered up by any means, gathered their three regiments that did not even reach seven thousand men and some cavalry, with which the province of Artois assisted them, and formed an encampment against the protestants of Ghent who were more than twenty thousand. The Christians carried banners and standards with Crucifixes and Images of the glorious Virgin Mary, the soldiers also wore Rosaries as insignia from shoulder to shoulder, for which their army was called the army of the Paternoster. They reached the gates of a small place called Meñi where the heretics had set up their encampment, and immediately engaged them in a fierce skirmish that would have ended in a cruel battle if night had not separated them. Seeing this, the Ghent men, being base and of little valour, having lost more than four thousand men in the fray, abandoned the aforementioned place of Meñi, and that night fled. The Paternoster forces pursued them by way of skirmishes and acts of war, until they managed to drive them out of Nue de Gorga and all the other towns they had won in Artois, and pushed them back into their county of Flanders. It is not unusual for devotees of the Holy Rosary to succeed in such endeavours through this holy devotion, and though there are some examples in this book, many more could be added but for the sake of brevity. Count Philip of Egmont, in the service of King Philip II of Spain since 1579, recovered several Protestant cities in Flanders until he died fighting against heretics in the Battle of Ivry in 1590.

A bad monk, by divine permission, was whipped and then, through the Holy Rosary, freed from hell. There was a monk in name only, because he lived very carelessly, but despite this was devoted to the Virgin Mary and her Holy Rosary. He fell ill and was cared for in the infirmary. When the eve of Saint John the Baptist arrived, all the monks went to matins at early night, and the sick man was left alone in the infirmary. A great multitude of demons came to him, seized him, and took him to a great palace where Christ Our Lord and His Most Holy Mother were presiding. Christ Our Lord and God asked the demons: "What do you want to do with this monk?" The demons replied: "We await his soul, which alive or dead must be ours." And the Most Holy Mother of God replied that it should not be so, but

since he was Her chaplain and prayed the entire Rosary every day, his evil should have a remedy. The demons said there was none, so they asked to weigh his works on the scale and the Rosaries he had said, and the bad deeds weighed more. Then the Mother of God said to her Son: "The devotion of the Holy Rosary, Lord and Son of Mine, is supported by your precious Blood; apply a drop of It, Lord, so that he may not be lost, for he has been my chaplain." The Son granted what the Mother asked, and immediately the weight rose as lightly as if there were nothing on the other side. Then the confused demons said: "At least, he should not go unpunished for the evil deeds he has done, because being a sacristan, he has not confessed certain things, so that the Prior and the Abbot might not take that office from him," which was granted to them, and so they whipped him well, left him very sore, and returned him to the bed from which they had taken him. When matins were over, the Friars came to see him and found him so sore and tearful that he could not speak, and no friar knew anything. The Abbot decided to call all the monks to chapter so that, if they knew anything, they might reveal it under oath, and no one knew anything. The Abbot returned to the sick man, wanting to extract from him some information that would explain what had happened to him. When able to control his tears, he told what had happened to the abbot and the monks together, confessed with great contrition and received the Sacraments with much devotion. Urging everyone to be devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary, he expired with great joy, seeing himself free from the pains of hell. With this, all the monks were confirmed in their devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary and became very devoted to Her. Father Jerome Taix relates this miracle and says that he took it from a very ancient handwritten book entitled *The Garden of the Most Blessed Lady the Virgin Mary*.

About a boy who learned a lot, and then went to glory through devotion to the Rosary. An honourable, rich widow was left with one only son who was her treasure; she made him study to keep him well occupied, and to learn letters, which is a great good that parents can leave to their children; and the boy, who was of good intelligence, studied much and became a good grammarian. He wanted to learn how to compose verses, but couldn't advance like others of his age and, seeing that his companions surpassed him, began to feel such sorrow for being unable to catch up with them, that he started to waste away and grow thin; so much so that it caused his mother great concern, and she consulted about it with the church deacon, who was learned and very devoted to Our Lady. He told her to induce her son to pray a third part of the Rosary on his knees before an image of Our Lady every day before going to school. The good mother did so, and the son was so well-disposed that it was unnecessary to convince him much. In a short time, he improved greatly in the art of composing verses, caught up with those in his class, and went a step further than all. But so great was the love he developed for the Queen of Heaven, and he took such pleasure in saying Hail Marys to Her, that he no longer only prayed a third of the Rosary to Her each day, but the entire Rosary, which is one hundred and fifty Hail Marys and fifteen Our Fathers with their sacred mysteries well thought out and offered, persevering with much pleasure in this holy devotion for some months. He fell ill with such a serious illness that they ordered him to stay in a dark room, so that the light might not affect him. Seeing that the illness was worsening greatly, the mother asked him if he wanted to confess, he responded that yes, certainly, with great willingness, to bring him a confessor. When the Father arrived, the mother ordered a maid to go ahead and enter the dark room with a lit candle, and the sick boy asked: "Mama, why is she bringing that candle?" The mother responded: "Son, so that the Father can see you, and it will stay lit here while you confess." Then the angelic youth said, almost marvelling: "Jesus Lord! Don't you see here the Most Holy Mother of God to whom you made me devoted, to whom I have prayed so many Rosaries, and who is here accompanying me, illuminating with five candles on the fingers of her hand?" But neither the mother nor the confessor saw anything, though they well understood the mystery there. The angelic boy confessed venial sins, for he had no mortal ones, and having finished his confession with

much joy on his face, he gave up his soul into the hands of the Virgin and Mother of God, who took him with Her Saints to glory. This miracle is from the book, “Garden of the Most Blessed Lady the Virgin Mary.”

A man miraculously cured of a serious illness due to his devotion to the Holy Rosary. In the wildest parts of Europe there was a man most devoted to the Virgin, who prayed the Rosary to Her every day with much devotion and led such an exemplary life that he was a lamp placed on the lampstand as an example for all the people, and for that reason was much loved by the Bishop. This man fell ill with a very serious illness, so much so that his lips swelled and rotted in such a way that, due to the stench that came from them, very few went to see him. In this way, the sick man with much patience continued persevering in his holy devotions. One night an Angel came and, as it seemed to the sick man, took him by the hand and said: “Come see the resting place that is prepared for you for your sufferings,” and took him to very fresh and delightful gardens full of many vegetables and flowers, and especially many roses; in particular, he saw a large rosebush with 150 white roses and 15 red ones, most beautiful, that represented the Rosary he prayed every day amidst his hardships, with as much devotion as he could. And from there, the Angel took him to a very rich mansion made of very shining precious stones, and there he saw the Most Holy Queen of Angels seated on Her royal throne among the choirs of Angels more radiant than sun and moon; She called him and embraced him as Her beloved son, and said to him: “It is not right that lips that greet me so much, with that angelic salutation so pleasing to me, should be so ugly and sick for so long, and smell so bad. From today on, my son, you will be healthy and with a good odour from your mouth, according to the liquor that comes from it which is My praise,” and at that moment he was healed, with his lips turned deep red, wonderfully beautiful, and the smell of his mouth so sweet that it was marvellous. This miracle could not be concealed due to the many circumstances it entailed, and it spread widely. The Bishop went to visit him, and the man told him everything that had happened, and encouraged everyone in the devotion of the Holy Rosary, through which he had improved so much, and then he gave up his spirit to God.

An unjust clergyman who was killed by his enemies, by revelation received ecclesiastical burial, as he had been very devoted to the Virgin. A clergyman, who was very devoted to the Rosary of Our Lady, became careless, and little by little became involved in worldly obligations, coming to favour an evil faction, which is very improper for Christian people, let alone for ecclesiastics; and so it happened that one day his enemies found him and took his life. His body was not buried in a Christian cemetery, presuming that he had died in a bad state as can be suspected of one who acts in such a way. But this was not the case with this clergyman; because he repented greatly and died with such contrition, that it was enough for him to die in God’s grace, and so the Most Holy Virgin appeared to a clergyman devoted to Her and told him that they had wronged Her chaplain by burying him outside the Christian cemetery, because he had prayed Her Rosary every day, and after this he had died with the contrition we have mentioned; that they should take him out of there and bury him in a decent place. The clergyman, to whom this was revealed, spoke with the relatives of the deceased, and when they exhumed his body to comply with the Virgin’s command, they found that the deceased had a beautiful rose in his mouth, as testimony of the great devotion he had shown to the Virgin Mary, and they also found his tongue so healthy, fresh and whole, as if prepared to speak and praise the Sovereign Virgin and her Divine Son, for which they gave great praise to God and to His Most Blessed Mother, and were very devoted to the Holy Rosary. But the most important thing in this miracle is to



meditate that if the Mother of God was so solicitous in honouring the body of her devoted chaplain, how solicitous would she be for his soul? Truly great is the obligation we all have to honour this Queen and Lady.

Of a young man whom the Queen of Heaven protected from thieves, through a vision of the Holy Rosary. In the book of Father Jerome Taix, it is found that a very devout lady taught her son the devotion of the Rosary of the Mother of God, and that as a tribute every day he should pray a third part of the Rosary, which is fifty Hail Marys and five Our Fathers, the boy accepted this like good plants that take advantage of the favour and care given to them, and as his age was appropriate, he received this devotion as the first liquor in a new vessel. He continued his devotion as he grew, and one day he mounted a horse, as he wanted to go alone to his castle. When he was passing by a church that was deserted, he saw that it was a house of prayer and remembered that he had not fulfilled his own prayer, that of the Holy Rosary. He decided to dismount from his horse and secured it with its reins at the entrance to pray his Rosary in the church, which he did on his knees and with great devotion. Some thieves who were around there saw the horse alone, untied it, and prepared to wait for its owner to rob or kill him. While waiting for him to come out, they peeked inside the church and saw the young man kneeling before a most beautiful Lady, who took a very beautiful rose from the mouth of the young man at each Hail Mary he said, and gave it to Her most precious Son who was at Her side, and He made a most beautiful garland with them for his Most Holy Mother; and when the Hail Marys were finished, the garland was complete. The Virgin Our Lady bowed her head and the Son placed the crown of roses He had made on Her, and then the Virgin and Her Divine Son disappeared. When the young man rose from his prayer, he found the thieves at the church door, who begged forgiveness for what they had done by taking his horse, and also for what they wanted to do. They told him everything they had seen; and from then on amended their lives, becoming very devoted to the Mother of God, and ended well. And the saintly young man was greatly confirmed in his devotion to the Rosary with such a great grace as this.

Of a man sentenced to death who promised to be a member of the Virgin's Confraternity, and was freed. This miracle has been taken from Saint Alan de la Rupe. In a city in France where they had sentenced a man to the gallows as punishment for his crimes, they were taking him very well tied up to execute the sentence. The convict had been advised by his confessor to trust in the Virgin Our Lady, and to promise Her that, if She freed him from that danger, he would not only amend his life but, for all the time he had left, he would also be a member of the holy Confraternity of the Rosary, and would pray it with great devotion, something he promised. Miraculously, he was loosed from all the ropes tying him up and, freed from the hands of justice, passed through the midst of all the magistrates who were there and all the guards without anyone noticing his absence, and entered a church where he took refuge in the sanctuary, and considered himself saved. Astonished himself by such a great miracle, he immediately began what he had offered, and ended well.

Of a woman who was kept from sinning by virtue of the Holy Rosary. In Paris there was an inspector employed by the university who had a wife very beautiful in the eyes of people, but she was even more beautiful in soul: she was most devoted to the Rosary of the Mother of God, and prayed it every day. And as in this inspector's house, due to his office, some students would come and go, some of them, captivated by the beauty of his wife, began to pursue her by all means they could, but made little or no progress with her, because she was so modest that she did not raise her eyes. Seeing themselves lost and that no means were successful, the students decided to seek a magician through whose means they sought to subject this woman to their will. They found one as they wanted, who called upon demons through his conjurations, and ordered them to make that woman consent to the desires of said students. The demons went many times but achieved nothing, and the reason they gave to the magician was that she unfailingly prayed the Rosary every night, and that this prayer

had such virtue that it did not allow them to influence her. Then the magician said to them: “Well, don’t you know how to prevent this woman from praying the Rosary when she goes to sleep?” As can be seen, there are men who, for evil, are worse than demons. The demons went with this warning, and when it was time to go to sleep, before the woman took up her Rosary to pray it, as was her custom, the demons made a lot of noise to frighten her and indeed it was so: she was frightened and quickly went to bed beside her husband, and as she lay there without sleeping and very disturbed, the demons came to tempt her so strongly with love for the students that, overcome by temptation, she rose from her husband’s side and, dressing herself, left her own home and began to walk to the students’ residence in the dead of night. The magician who with his conjuring had made her go, was up on the lookout watching the effect of his spells, so that he could very well see her if she passed through the street to the students’ house. Suddenly he saw her coming so frightened and determined that it moved him to great pity to see a woman, until then so appreciated and honoured



by all, who in a moment was to lose all that her name had gained in many years, and who was going to lose soul, and body, and honour and credit. He began to shout at the woman: “Raise your right hand and make the sign of the cross on your forehead, mouth and breast and go back home to your husband, and from now on do not stop praying the Holy Rosary as you are accustomed to, as you have left it tonight; rather in the greatest fears and needs you must make better use of it!” The woman did so and, crossing herself, freed herself from the evil thoughts that were leading her to perdition, and was left as confused and ashamed as can be believed of her fault against chastity, and returned home without her husband having noticed anything. Recognizing the grace she had received from the hand of the Sovereign Virgin, she began anew from then on to serve the Mother of God with the holy devotion of the Rosary. She persevered heartily until the end of her life with much comfort and recollection, giving thanks to God every day for having preserved her in His divine observance in such an ugly case. Because those who fall into it once are little able to defend themselves, but her end was as blessed as could be expected from a life so vigilant in not offending God.

A conversion through the Holy Penitential Rosary. The years of the 1980s were passing, the one writing this account was then in his twenties. “I was wrapped in the most nauseating worldliness, to the point of considering myself an atheist and, to top it off, on some adverse occasions even blasphemed against God and the Virgin. This was the condition then of this poor sinner. Now we will see how my conversion came about and my knowledge of the Holy Penitential Rosary. I was working in my father’s business, along with my brothers, as was usual at that time. One day a man came to our business who fortunately spoke with one of my brothers, and I thought he was the panel beater who was fixing this brother’s car. When he left I ran after him, as if something was pushing me and catching up with him already in the street, I asked him if he was my brother’s panel beater. He told me no, that he was his client; then I said: ‘Sorry I was mistaken,’ but he asked me what problem I had, then I replied that I had a problem with my car; he told me to take it to his house, that he understood about that and had tools to fix it. But the devil already sensed my conversion and I couldn’t find his house, though he lived near mine. A few days passed, and this man returned to our business; I saw him surrounded by some young lads who worked with us, and talking about God, about the Palmarian Church, about the true Pope, about hell, and that we had to pray the holy Penitential Rosary. All of that didn’t interest me much, what interested me most was hearing that souls were condemned to hell; it must have been because of the state of my soul at that time. He realized that I was the one paying the most attention to his talk, so he



addressed me more directly, and ending his conversation he invited me to his home where he had a chapel and prayed the Holy Penitential Rosary with his family. I told him I would go one day, but I didn't know when. This man left, I forgot about the subject and continued my worldly life. A few days passed, and one Saturday night I went to find a girl to go out with, but it couldn't be. Then I said to myself that going to sleep on a Saturday night was a grave slip-up, and thinking about what to do, I remembered this man and the Rosary, etc. I made my way to his house, as I already knew his address, I rang the doorbell and he received me astonished but happy. He immediately gathered his family, as he had several small but prayerful children. He invited me to enter the chapel to pray the Rosary; it seemed strange to me,

seeing so many pictures on the walls and images upon the altar. He told me they prayed in Latin; then I told them I barely knew how to pray, much less in Latin. He answered that I shouldn't worry and to repeat what they said. Well, that Rosary lasted more than two hours, and I couldn't take it anymore because of the knee pain, because until then I had only knelt when I had lost something on the floor. At the end of that Rosary, and when I thought it was over, they told me that the litanies were missing. Then anxiously I asked them: 'What is that?' They answered that it was a praise to the Virgin Mary; then I asked if it was long; they told me it wasn't. Finally it all ended, and everyone got up as if nothing had happened, and I remained as if nailed to that wood of the kneeler unable to get up. Immediately two of them took me, one by each arm and sat me in a chair. While this was happening the devil was telling me: 'These people are crazy; now you're going to be left an invalid.' But the opposite happened. The pain disappeared, I stood up, and a peace difficult to explain entered my soul. I seemed to float in the air. I accepted the Holy Palmarian Church, as if it had been my Church all my life and Pope Gregory XVII, without any doubt, as the true Pope along with his doctrine. I have to recognize that the grace I received that day, without deserving it, was providential and miraculous, for that super-penitential Rosary was what made a pagan and sinner convert to the Holy Church of Christ and besides eventually become a bishop."

The practice of meditation on the Holy Rosary:

Given the great importance of meditation on the mysteries, let us explore its benefits and the way to practise it to your greatest profit, since meditation is the cause of the enormous difference there is between half-hearted souls and souls ablaze with Divine Love. We know that Antichrist's persecution against the Church, now approaching, will be so intense that only true lovers of Jesus and Mary will be able to persevere; and this makes patent the urgent need to practise the blessed meditations of the Holy Penitential Rosary, since it is one of the principal enterprises of our lives. We shall sum up the teachings of Saint Louis de la Puente.

Meditation on the mysteries is the remedy for those who suffer temptation and for the afflicted; it is health for the sick; it gives comfort to beginners in virtue; strength to those who profit from it; and it will be repose for the perfect, since there are meditations and prayer methods for every state in life.

1) *What is meditation.* Mental prayer is the exercise of the three powers of the soul – memory, understanding and will – in considering the mysteries and truths taught by our Holy Catholic Faith. It is to speak intimately with God Our Lord, to deal with Him familiarly, to ask Him for His gifts and all we need for our salvation and perfection. Hence mental prayer consists in:

1. With the *memory* to recall Our Lord and God, and His Most Holy Mother, with whom we wish to speak, and remember the truths of the mystery we desire to meditate.

2. With the *understanding* to consider that mystery, with all its causes, effects and circumstances, so that we come to understand the way we should imitate the virtues of

Jesus and Mary in each mystery, how much we should thank Them, and how we should embrace those truths we have meditated, propose them to the will, and move it to act.

3. With the *will* move ourselves to sentiments or acts of virtue in accord with the meditation, such as: sorrow for sin, confusion at our own misery, love for God, trust in His mercy, praise for God, thanksgiving for the benefits received, desires to acquire virtues, resolutions to perform good works and to change and improve our lives, resignation to the Divine Will by offering to do and suffer as God disposes, desires to know and fulfil God's Will. From all these are born peace and spiritual joy in the soul, as fruits of these acts of virtue, which are the principal aim of meditation.

4. Lastly, we must needs make petitions to Our Lord and God and to His Most Holy Mother. We should speak to Them to ask for what the will has desired and the understanding has understood, and everything else we need; this is what is called prayer, which is a humble, trusting and fervent petition for whatever is suitable for us and we desire to obtain from Our Lord. These petitions have to be addressed sometimes to the Eternal Father, at others to His Onlybegotten Jesus Christ, at others to the Holy Ghost and at others to the Most Holy Trinity or to Mary Most Holy, giving reasons to move them to grant our requests; for example, when asking for something from Their Goodness, by the Love they bear for us, by the desire They have for our good, by Their Mercy, by Their Omnipotence, and so forth.

In the same way, we can ask Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, by the sorrows, shame and torments of His Passion and Death. Or speaking with the Eternal Father, we can implore Him to hear us by the Love He bears for His Son, who suffered for love of Him, at other times speaking to the Son of God Himself, pleading by the Love He bears for us and His role as Redeemer and Advocate, and by all that we have cost Him; and yet at others speaking with the Holy Ghost, asking Him the same by the Love He bears for Our Lord Jesus Christ and by Jesus' merits.

We can also mention before Our Lord the cause for our needs and misery, namely that we have been conceived in sin, that we suffer dreadful passions, powerful enemies, grievous occasions and dangers, and that we can do nothing without Him. That we are creatures of His, made to His image and likeness; and that for this reason the devil persecutes us to our ruin, and it is for Him to protect us. We can draw up a catalogue of our sins and miseries to list them before God, with sorrow of heart; for the more we insist on them, so much the more do we impel God's Mercy to remedy them. And it is always with *fervent thanksgiving* for the mercies we have previously received from God and His Most Holy Mother, that we should ask, to dispose us to receive those we now request.

These and other like reasons are to be included in our prayer, the more to move our hearts to ask with fervour, devotion and confidence, than to move God to hear us, since Our Lord desires far more to hear us and give us the graces we ask of Him, than we to receive them. For, as Saint Augustine says, God would not tell us to ask if He did not wish and desire to give us what we ask for.

Saint Augustine said that meditation engenders knowledge of oneself and of God. We ought to approach God lovingly, trustingly and humbly, to request our needs of Him in our prayers, with sorrow for our sins and miseries, and thanking God for His Mercies. Prayer with humble trust pleases God and, in some way, obliges Him to grant us what we ask, since, by trusting in Him, we are recognizing His infinite grandeur and majesty, and our complete dependence on His graces.

Example. Let us pay attention to what we are doing. A venerable Priest, while he recited the Holy Rosary in his Parish, full of parishioners, had a vision in which the Angel of the parish told him: "Do you want to see how many here are truly praying and speaking with God?" "Yes", he answered, "show me, Angel of God." The murmur of all those who were there fell silent and only the voice of a humble old lady was heard. "How so?", exclaimed the Priest, unable to contain himself, "only her? What do the rest do then?" "Now you



shall see”, the Angel told him. And a great clamour arose in which it seemed that everyone spoke at once: some of football, others of dancing or dress fashions, others of business, of money; each of whatever he was thinking. The clamour caused him to come out of the vision and he again heard the murmur of the people continuing to answer the Rosary. Next we shall see how to avoid falling into this terrible defect.

2. *How to speak with God in meditation.* Mental prayer or meditation is to speak with God Our Lord from the heart, in the first place to praise and bless Him, for being ‘He Who Is’, and give Him thanks for the benefits He grants us. For this first objective our meditation should fulfil several conditions so that it be pleasing to God. These are: 1. Make acts of love for God with the efficacious desire and resolve to serve Him and obey

Him, offering ourselves up to keep His Commandments and counsels perfectly; and, above all, fulfil His Divine Will. We should have the fervent desire to practise the virtues of obedience, humility and patience, and the rest. 2. Foment sentiments of praise to God, thinking of His excellence and perfections, and of the works He has performed, for which He is worthy of all the praise and glory His creatures can give Him: He is Holy, Good, Merciful, Just, Wise and Powerful; worthy of all honour, glory and praise, for ages without end. 3. Feel joy and spiritual gladness, rejoicing in God being He Who Is, and in the infinite goods He possesses in Himself, and in the glory given Him by the Saints in Heaven, and in the services the just perform for Him on earth, feel gladdened by the hope of eternal goods, and at their possession by the Blessed. 4. To give thanks for the benefits which we have received from Our Lord and from His Most Holy Mother, recounting them all and praising Them for each one of them. And not only give Them thanks for our own benefits, but as well for those They grant to the Angels in Heaven and to all men on earth; and for those They granted to the damned, who refused to respond to those graces and will not give Them thanks.

With these sentiments of love, praise, spiritual joy and thanksgiving, we should speak to Our Lord in prayer, to give Him glory and honour.

In the second place, we should speak with Our Lord God to ask Him for new heavenly graces and gifts for our own salvation and perfection, for His greater glory, given that this is the second object of meditation.

Sometimes we should speak with Him as a son speaks with his father, asking Him for everything which a good son can and should ask of a good father, in a spirit of love and trust. Most of all we should ask Him that His Will be accomplished in us, for He desires only good for his children. In this way we speak with God in the prayer of the Our Father, in which Christ Our Lord teaches us all that is to be asked of Him. Or we can speak with God as a poor wretch would with a rich and compassionate man, requesting alms. At other times we shall speak with God as a sick man with his doctor, explaining his illness, and asking for a remedy; or as a culprit speaking to the judge, when asking for a favourable sentence, or forgiveness for his crime; and in this case with sentiments of humility, grief for sin, purpose of restitution and amendment.

We can also speak with God as a disciple to his master, beseeching Him for light and teaching on things of which we are ignorant: or as one friend speaks with another, when reasoning with him on some important matter, asking for his counsel, direction and help. And if confidence and love give us holy boldness, our soul can speak with God as a wife with her husband.

In all these ways we can speak with Our Lord in prayer, for God is our Father, our Physician, our Judge, our Friend and the Spouse of our souls.

In prayer we can speak as well with the Virgin Mary, Our Lady, with the Angels and

Saints, to praise them for the sanctity and virtues they possess, and for the benefits they obtain for us, or to ask them for their help and favour in the business of our salvation. To the Most Holy Virgin it may be said that She is our Mother and Advocate of sinners, and that Her Son charged Her with this office for our remedy, reminding Her as well of the love She bears for Jesus, and Her desire that all love and serve Him: entreating Her that She take on the offices of Mother and Advocate for us, and show us Her love and desire by obtaining for us what we ask, the better to serve the One She so loves. Let us have great confidence in the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God and of mankind, as Suppliant Omnipotence, and let us invoke Her with great fervour, since She is the Channel to Jesus and constantly crushes the proud head of Satan.

Example. *Of Glory.* Saint Matilda was considering the depths of God's immense mercy and of the goodness of His Most Holy Mother, and the Lord Himself told her: "Come, observe the very least of the Blessed in Heaven, because you can see My Mercy in him." She began looking attentively, wishing to know who it would be, of whom the Lord spoke. On his way to meet her came a man with royal aspect and dignity, in the flower of his age, his appearance very handsome and resplendent, and in everything sovereignly lovable. The Saint asked him: "Who are you, and how did you acquire such joy and such glory?" He answered her: "In the world I was a scoundrel and a thief, but as the wrongs I committed were due more to ignorance and bad habits inherited from my parents than to malice, by penance I obtained mercy. But I spent a hundred years in Purgatory suffering great torments until completely purified, and now God's Mercy alone has brought me to this rest."

3. *Of the virtues which accompany mental prayer.* Acts of the principal virtues of the Christian life are practised in meditation. Some virtues go on ahead, predisposing the soul to recite well, such as faith, humility, reverence and purity of intention. Charity, religion and piety also accompany our prayer.

Other countless virtues follow meditation, such as fervent desires and resolutions for all that is good; in matters of obedience and patience, of temperance, modesty, chastity and the rest, given that humility combines with confidence and with charity; charity with gratitude; religion with obedience and resignation, together forming a heavenly harmony. Hence prayer makes men like unto the Angels, since it communicates an angelical life, full of purity and holiness. By prayer men share in the ardent love of the Angels, in their knowledge, peace, mastery over themselves, in their power against devils, in their fortitude in arduous trials, and in their obedience in everything; and besides, in the wisdom, chastity and purity of the heavenly spirits. For there is nothing, says Saint John Chrysostom, that can be wiser, fairer, holier, than speaking with God, Author and Giver of all good, proper to a creature who has received such an abundance of gifts and graces from Him; since in this true wisdom consists, and perfect justice and sanctity. Our Lord inspires us to pray, speaks with us when we speak to Him, and converses familiarly with those who enter within their hearts and seek to converse with Him.

Hence in prayer we should speak with God in such a way that we centre our attention on listening and hearing what He says to us via His inspirations, so as to obey them, and dispose ourselves to receive the gifts which He seeks to communicate to us thereby. From the above is revealed the excellence and need for mental prayer, which is closely united to all the virtues, since they can neither be obtained nor perfectly conserved without prayer, nor can prayer be perfect without practising the virtues. And we should pray asking for graces by way of Mary, since it pleases God to grant them to us by way of Her who is His Predilect Daughter, His Most Loving Mother and His Most Pure Spouse and, besides, She disposes us to receive them better.

Example. *He received Grace by way of a sermon.* A provincial doctor, about fifty-five years of age, had gone to Paris on different matters. The poor man, though Catholic, for thirty years had lived entirely forgetful of religion and its practices, and plunged into the



most shameful vices. One afternoon when passing in front of the Church of Our Lady of the Victories, on seeing it open, entered out of simple curiosity. At that moment a pious function in honour of Mary's Heart was being celebrated, and a sacred orator was telling the story of Saint Augustine's conversion to the gathering. On hearing this, the poor doctor at once felt touched by God's grace. "Here was a man – he said to himself – as much a sinner as myself, who never found happiness in worldly pleasures, as neither have I, and who when converted became so great before God and men." Moved by this thought he resolved at last to leave the chains of his vices, made a fervent confession and from then on undertook to lead a fervent Christian and pious life.

4. *On matter for meditation.* Matter for mental prayer is all that God has revealed in Holy Scripture, especially the principal mysteries of our Faith, which are precisely the mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

These mysteries can be adjusted to the various states of those who meditate, some being sinners who desire to give up sinning, others desiring to mortify the vices and passions of their past lives, aiming to purify their souls of those vices and to obtain clean hearts.

Others are further ahead, are advancing in virtue, and their objective is to enlighten their souls with the splendour of many truths and virtues, and obtain a great increase in them. Yet others are more practised, and desire to unite their spirits and wills to God in a union of perfect love. Each one of all these has matter for meditation in keeping with his state and purpose, and from this matter can easily draw out sentiments and resolutions convenient to his needs.

This matter can be reduced to the three states mentioned: Sinners who seek to be truly converted to God and change their lives should take as matter for meditation their own sins, and everything that helps them know their number and gravity, and causes revulsion and grief at having committed them. Everything that awakens holy fear is matter for meditation adjusted to them, such as the four last things of man – death, particular and universal judgement, Heaven, hell and other like things; also making an examination of conscience in order to confess well and commune well, and acquire perfect justice. It is well to know that these matters can be found in each of the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, if we look at the different aspects of them all. For example, in the mysteries of the creation and espousal of the Divine Souls, we remember how the devils refused to honour Them, and thus ended up in Hell, which is the final destiny for sinners who refuse to serve and adore God. On meditating the Death and Resurrection of Christ, we recognize that we too are to die and go to our eternal destiny; the meditation on the Passion reveals to us how terrible our sins are, since Our Lord Jesus Christ had to suffer so intensely to make reparation for them.

Those who are already justified and desire to increase their virtues and grow in them, have preferably to take as matter for their meditation the mysteries of Christ Our Lord's humanity while He lived in this mortal life; since in His Life and Doctrine, His Passion and Death, He was a perfect model of every virtue for every kind of the righteous, though in different ways; since charity, together with penance, has the three states of spiritual childhood, growth and perfection.

Those recently justified, who are like children recently born to the life of Grace, have to take as matter for meditation especially the mysteries of the Incarnation and Childhood of Jesus Christ Our Lord; and there will find sufficient motives, both to continue purifying themselves from the vices and passions still left over from their past lives, and as well to go on strengthening themselves in the virtues contrary to those vices.

Those who do well and grow in virtue should go on practising works of virtue, or else undergo persecutions and afflictions. And this path, though rougher, is better for growing in the virtues.

Christ Our Lord trod these two paths with all excellence, and dedicated Himself to performing wonders and suffering hardships, and all for our instruction. This is dealt with in the Life of the Lord in the sorrowful mysteries, which are powerful for moving us to all kinds of virtue.

For men with faults and imperfections, or afflicted with labours, it is well for them to take as remedy the consideration of their own miserable nature, earth and dust, and consideration of the mysteries of the humanity and humility of Jesus Christ Our Lord, to benefit from His teaching and example. We have another path for acquiring the perfect union of love by contemplating the glorious life of Christ Our Lord, and the wonderful works he wrought after rising again, sending the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, upon His disciples, and with the consideration of the mysteries of the Divinity and Glory of Christ.

Such meditations are like wings by which to leave earthly things behind and fly up to the heavenly. And after having been purified and perfected, fly as well to purify and enlighten others, desiring them all to burn with the love which burns in themselves. Those who make most progress draw from these meditations more perfect mortification of self, and a purer way of imitating Christ Our Lord in His virtues.

In this amendment of life, the Most Holy Virgin, as Refuge of sinners, goes about preparing Her gifts and favours to help sinners return to the life of Grace.

Example. *Mary attends a devotee of Hers.* In Reichersberg, Upper Austria, Fr. Arnold, a regular Canon, lived deeply devoted to the Most Holy Virgin. Close to death he received the Holy Sacraments and requested the religious not to abandon him in that state. Hardly had he said this, in the sight of all he began to tremble, his eyes glazed over and he was covered in a cold sweat, and began to say in a hesitant voice: "Do you not see those devils who want to draw me down to Hell?" And afterwards he cried out: "Brothers, invoke Mary's help for me, I trust that She will give me victory." On hearing this they began to pray the Litany of Loreto, and on saying 'Holy Mary, pray for him', the dying man said: "Repeat, repeat the name of Mary, I feel as though I am before God's Tribunal." He was silent for a time and then exclaimed: "It is true that I did that, but then I also did penance." And turning to the Most Holy Virgin he entreated: "O Mary, I will save myself if You help me." At once the demons began a new assault, but he defended himself by making the sign of the cross with a crucifix and invoking Mary. Thus he spent that whole night. At last, come morning, quite serene, Arnold exclaimed: "Mary, my Lady and my Refuge, has obtained my pardon and salvation." And gazing at the Most Holy Virgin Mary who was inviting him to follow Her, he told Her: "I'm going, dear Lady, I'm going." And making an effort to sit up, he could not follow in body, sighing sweetly he followed Her with his soul, so we hope, to the glory of the Blessed.

A soul in whom any virtue is predominant, whatever he meditates on, no matter what, gives him occasion to draw out an increase in that same virtue. If the spirit of humility predominates, whether he meditates on Hell, or on Heaven, or dwells on his miseries or on divine perfections, he will draw out sentiments of humility from them all. And if it is the spirit of love which predominates, though he meditates on Judgement and Hell, he will turn all that he draws out into sentiments of love. Thus beginners, as they advance, and the perfect as well, no matter what they meditate on, can draw out sentiments and resolutions in accord with their state and needs.

It happens that some cannot apply themselves to considerations of fear, while they are easily moved by meditations on love, and others the contrary. Some find devotion and profit by considering the mysteries of Christ Our Lord's childhood, others by considering the mysteries of His Passion; and some one mystery and others another; and this is the reason Our Lady wished for such an abundance and profusion of matter for meditation, so that all can find profit.

Example. *Communion of the Most Holy Virgin.* The Most Holy Virgin Mary intervenes



in a special way throughout Saint Louis de la Puente's spiritual life and particularly in his relations with the Eucharist. A delicate passage from his 'Sentiments' shows us this: "Asking Our Lady one day after Mass as Mistress to place in my heart some sentiment in accord with that which She felt when communing, it was shown to me that when Our Lady communed, receiving Christ Her Son sacramentally, were renewed the joy and sentiments She had when receiving Him for the first time when in Her womb She conceived Him by the action of the Holy Ghost. And I understood that, since Christ Our Lord was in the womb of but one woman, His Mother, for which cause He communicated to Her the greatest favours to our benefit – Blessed be the womb that bore Thee – His Majesty willed by means of

this Sacrament to enter really and truly, in the way possible and convenient, into the breasts of all his faithful, and that all might have Him within themselves, in the way (proportionally) His Mother had Him, and thereby communicate to them, in their measure, some of the graces and gifts She had. And thus the entry of Christ into the breast of the communicant is an imitation of the entry He made into the womb of the Most Holy Virgin, to grant us a share in the gifts which She gained for us by that entry." In certain writings of his, Saint John of Ávila expressed a somewhat similar sentiment.

5. *To begin prayer.* It is a counsel of the Holy Ghost that we prepare our souls before prayer since, if we lack the proper dispositions, we are as though tempting God by seeking the goal and the fruit of prayer without making use of the adequate means to obtain them.

Before beginning to meditate on the mysteries, it is well to raise the heart to Our Lord God and to His Most Holy Mother, considering Them present there, with an interior, attentive, reverential and loving glance; since whoever needs to talk with a ruler needs to go to his palace, or wherever he is, and enter his presence, since if absent we cannot speak, and, as God is present in Heaven and on earth and in every place attentive to everything, and seeing everything, when I have to pray and speak with Him there is no need to look for Him elsewhere, but with lively faith see Him present there where I am, convinced that when I pray I am not alone, but that there too is the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, with Whom I speak, and He sees me and hears me, and usually replies to the heart with inspirations and lights, communicating the light of truth to the understanding, fervent sentiments of devotion to the will, and infusing virtues and other graces into the soul.

Sometimes I can contemplate God as He is all around me, on all sides, and myself within Him like a fish in the sea; at other times I contemplate Him as He is within me by His essence (if I am in Grace), presence and power, aware of all I do, and helping me to do it; and in this way you enter within your heart, and closing the door to your senses, pray to the Heavenly Father in private; and your Father, who is there and sees you, will give you all you ask. This truth of God's presence within me and about me, wherever I may be praying, we should foment considerably, in order to move us to reverence and confidence and due presence of mind; since God's presence should not be lost from sight throughout the time of prayer.

I then have to adore my Lord and God, Father of immense majesty and Universal Sovereign, and humble myself owing to the great importance of revering God in prayer so that He hear us.

Kneeling, it will be good to sign ourselves, entreating God that by that sign He free us from the enemies that usually trouble us at prayer, saying: 'By the sign + of the Holy Cross, from our + enemies deliver us, O Lord + our God'; and then, as one who would begin his prayer not by his own virtue, but by virtue of the Most Holy Trinity, add: 'In the name + of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' The act of contrition is in order to

begin humbly, and entreat Our Lord to channel our prayer to His honour and glory, and give us the grace necessary to do our prayer as He Wills. Tell Him from the heart: "I offer Thee, O Lord, my life, my deeds and my works..." , so that He help us to pray the way He wills, for the glory of His Most Holy Name and profit for the soul. Let us endeavour to imitate Mary Most Holy and join ourselves to Her sentiments, and thus pray the way She prayed, so that our prayer be agreeable to God as was Hers. Let us ask Mary to teach us to pray, to help us to pray with presence of mind, purity and fervour, and so that She move us to request aright.

Example. *Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque*. Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, who was very mortified, one day out of tiredness and without thinking overmuch, allowed herself to pray the Rosary seated and not kneeling as she usually did. While praying, she heard a voice telling her: "My daughter, it surprises me that today you serve Me with such negligence." No sooner had she heard the gentle reprimand than she quickly knelt, asking forgiveness with all her heart and proposing never again to recite the Rosary seated. From then on, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque began daily to recite the fifteen mysteries kneeling. In prayer, for love of God, let us show Him all the respect He deserves, whenever possible to us.

6. *On how to meditate and how to resist the distractions which assail us*. The labour of the mind, which we call meditation, is among the most difficult there are in mental prayer; given that, though it is quite easy to think of several things, jumping haphazardly from one to another, yet it is no easy matter to dwell on a single one with attention, keeping mind and memory fixed on God, and without turning to other matters.

We all experience this problem, and it can arise from several causes: 1. The devil, to hinder the fruits of prayer. 2. From our own imagination which is flighty and hard to govern. 3. From failing to mortify certain inclinations, which draw our thoughts in pursuit of them, since where our treasure is, there is our heart. 4. From worries which oppress and break our hearts. 5. From slackness and tepidity, to avoid making the effort to apply ourselves to this noble exercise. 6. Out of ignorance, inability to reflect, or meditate, or seek after hidden truths, or not dwelling on them in a way that can move our will and awaken sentiments of devotion. But this ignorance can be remedied, counting on Heaven's favour.

In meditation we should first dedicate ourselves closely to the truth of the mystery which the Faith teaches us, making sure to believe and understand it as it truly happened and as revealed. Afterwards we should ask ourselves the origin of whatever we are meditating; then we should reflect seeking the reasons for which it was ordained. Later, the effects which proceed from this mystery should be considered, namely the utility or harm it brings. And lastly certain properties and circumstances which accompany it. With the following example this will be better understood:

If I want to meditate on the mystery of the Incarnation, I first have to consider carefully and understand what the Faith teaches us, that is, that the Son of God joined together in Himself, in the unity of His Person, our bodily human nature together with His pre-existing Most Divine Soul already united to His Divine Nature, in His body, so that God is truly a complete Man and the complete Man is God. Then I have to examine those things proposed above, considering that the causes and roots of this Work were not our merits, but solely the Goodness and Mercy of God, and that the purposes were Reparation to God, Redemption of the world and the display of Divine Goodness and Charity. Afterwards I will consider the benefits they proportion to us; that is, the forgiveness of sins, destruction of death, entry into Heaven and others. Moreover the harm we would suffer if this Work had not been carried out: We would all still be God's enemies, slaves of the devil, damned to Hell. And finally the circumstances of this Work, regarding place, time and manner, and the properties of the Body which God acquired when He became incarnate, and those of His Most Divine Soul.

In each of these phases, the understanding should pause, and linger on as long as devotion and spiritual delight are to be found, without being anxious to pass on to another phase, moving the will to different sentiments of love and confidence, making petitions and



conversing with Our Lord and Mary Most Holy, according to the things meditated and desired; and, after pondering well one such phase, we can pass on to another with the same peace, and thus proceed with others. In like manner we shall meditate on the other mysteries.

When the Holy Ghost with special inspiration moves us to prayer, all is easy and calm, since He keeps the memory subject, enlivens the discourses and meditations, inflames sentiments, ordains our petitions and does the whole prayer exercise perfectly, with our cooperation but no labour. But when this special help is lacking, it behoves us ourselves, by the help of grace which never fails us, to apply our powers to the exercise of its acts in the way explained, by which we provoke the Holy Ghost to help us with His inspirations, since those who pray should not be like ships which cannot sail unless by wind, rather be like galleys which sail by wind and by oar; so that when the prosperous wind of

divine inspiration is lacking, they will sail by the oars of their powers, helped by grace, though maybe not sensibly. And this method of praying is usually more gainful, though not so pleasant, owing to the great merits of struggling against distractions and dryness of heart; and if we persevere in rowing and praying, in due time Christ Our Lord will come and the storm will cease, as happened to the Apostles in a like case.

Consolation of the Virgin Mary for those who pray the Rosary without the devotion they would like. The Queen of Heaven appeared to a fervent devotee of hers, who was about to leave the church because, in his opinion, he was not praying the Rosary with attention or devotion, and thought that it was not worthwhile: because he was not attentive to its sacred mysteries, and the devil was putting great temptations in his mind. This man then, so fearful and cowardly, thinking that he was not doing anything useful, wanted to leave church. And the Queen of Heaven appeared to him, and said to him: "Son, do not flee," at which words his feet became paralyzed, so that he could no longer take a step forward, and the Virgin said to him: "Son, if you doubt who I am, and who are these daughters of mine with me, cross yourself with the sign of the Cross, which no spirit of lies resists, and we will stay with you; and you will see us more clearly." Which the man did, and his mind became clearer, understanding that She was the Mother of God, who said to him: "Know, my son, that one cannot pass through the world without temptations; that even my Son was tempted in it; and I did not choose you as my devotee for you to let yourself be overcome like a lazy and cowardly person, but for you to defend yourself like a stalwart. Do not be frightened by the dryness and lukewarmness you have suffered for some days, you should take this as punishment and scourge from God's hand in penance for your sins so that you may be tried and practise patience; nor should you be frightened at being unable to meditate on the divine mysteries of the Rosary; for God hears all those who come with an upright intention and can do no more." And She told him a gracious example, saying: "Tell me, if a mother had three children, one who spoke well and knew how to say what he thinks, another who spoke but with difficulty and did not know how to explain well what he needs, and another who was two months old and spoke nothing nor understood anything except to bawl and cry out as little children do, showing that he has needs without knowing how to show or manifest them. Hearing the petitions of her children, and remedying each of them according to her ability, to which of them would she show greater compassion? Surely the one who does not know how to ask, but only complain, and being a tender child, will soften his mother's heart more. So too is God with His children, who is greatly moved by the ignorant when they have upright intention and strength of heart, and try to make their petitions, though they do not know how to say what they understand

and pray. Just as one who goes to Rome in the company of others who know the way, and he does not, by going in such company reaches Rome like the others. In the same way, the devotees of this Holy Rosary, going in the company of so many Saints who pray it and know how to pray it, all reach the end of their journey; for good medicine has its effect both in the stomach of the gentleman, as in that of the man in the street, or in that of any other common man: in the same way these sacred mysteries of the Rosary are a heavenly medicine with which souls are medicated and comforted, and so you too should receive comfort"; and the vision disappeared, leaving him very consoled.

The arms for fighting against distractions of heart and dryness of spirit are chiefly four:

1. Deep humility, acknowledging our weakness and misery, shame for being in God's presence with such distractions, and accusing ourselves of past and present faults, for which we are punished in prayer; since whoever in this way humbles himself in prayer, in prayer will be exalted.

2. Fortitude of spirit, by resolving manfully not to admit any thought that knowingly keeps us from our prayer, though it be something which gives us much pleasure or appears highly important, since during prayer there is nothing more important than attending to prayer itself, to God and to His Most Holy Mother, before Whom we are praying. And when, without wishing, we be distracted, we will return to the thread of the good thoughts begun; and if we were distracted a thousand times, a thousand times would we do the same, without losing heart or confidence.

3. Prayer itself. And it has great force, since prayer is so powerful that it can obtain anything from God, using amid these disturbances certain brief prayers for the purpose. And if we persevere in our clamour, though it be with dryness and struggle, Christ Our Lord will not cease to show compassion on us, as He had compassion on those two blind men who shouted out 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us.'

4. Great trust in God Our Lord, convinced that if He orders us to pray, He will give us the grace and help to do so, by which we can resist the devil, keep the imagination under control, repress the passions, moderate our worries, overcome our tepidity, so that we be not hindered in the exercise of prayer. And also great trust in His Most Holy Mother, since if the Most Holy Virgin frees from the enemy's fury those who honour Her from the heart, with greater reason She will free from the souls' enemies that soul who desires to pray with devotion and employs the means to succeed.

Example. *A statue to Mary for her maternal protection.* For some years back the Parishioners of Roiffieux, near Annonay, were almost entirely associates of the Perpetual Rosary. And this primitive fervour, far from cooling, increased day by day, thanks to the piety and zeal of the venerable Parish Priest. In 1870-1871, when invaded by innumerable enemies, France called on the valour and patriotism of her sons, the small parish of Roiffieux sent seventy-two youths: some to the infantry, others as guards, others to be mobilized in carriages to other destinations. The grief of separation, and the sorrow occasioned by so many empty places in family hearths, were common scenes throughout the district. But in Roiffieux a consoling thought soon came to hearten the people. A Confraternity member was doing his hour of guard duty when all of a sudden he exclaimed: "Are we not perhaps soldiers of Mary? Have we not received Her Rosary? For a long time now we have battled and watched for Her, and will She do nothing in our favour? Impossible. Mary the Queen of the Rosary must protect the children of Roiffieux, let us promise to raise a beautiful statue to Her in the town centre if She returns all our soldiers to us." This idea was received as though sent from Heaven; the vote was accepted and from that moment hope was reborn in every family. It



was no small matter to ask for the return of seventy youths spread about in an immense battlefield. Many of Roiffieux's sons had to bear unheard-of fatigues, were exposed to the greatest dangers, and took part in the most bloody combats. Later, a new sacrifice for the parish of Roiffieux, and another considerable number of her sons were sent out to the Loire army, and afterwards to the mobile troops in Ardeche. Amid so many and such great dangers, all found themselves wonderfully protected. It might be said that an invisible hand watched over and protected them. The war over, not a single one failed to return to his home! Following the universal enthusiasm began the subscription, in fulfilment of their vow, to raise up a statue to the Most Holy Virgin. Each person presented his contribution; whoever had much, gave much; whoever had little, gave what he could. There were poor families that wept, giving thanks to the collectors for their goodness in accepting the mite of their indigence. Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of the whole Parish, it was easy to raise up a monument to Most Holy Mary worthy of so notable a benefit.

So too should we cultivate our confidence in Mary, since She desires to protect us from the assaults of our enemies who try to hinder our Rosaries, while She besides helps us advance along the road to union with God by way of trusting prayer.

But to this confidence we have to join diligence, making sure to remove, before prayer, all that we do not want to suffer in it, imitating in this the sagacity of our adversary, who, as Abbot Saint Nilo says, arranges all the temptations he sends during the day to spiritual persons to hinder their prayer and its fruit: he tempts them to gluttony, so that in prayer they feel burdened and drowsy; he tempts them to impatience, so that they be troubled; to curiosity of the senses, so that they be distracted; to a host of business worries, so that they be anxious; to pride or thanklessness, so that they be dry. And since we should be no less prepared and watchful for our good than the devil is for our harm, it is well to plan the tasks and business of the day so that they all contribute towards prayer pleasing to God and to His Most Holy Mother, and profitable to ourselves. By this, in some way, we shall fulfil what Christ Our Lord taught: that it is necessary ever to pray and never to lose heart; since he ever prays who spends all his time at prayer, or in preparing for it.

7. How we are to be helped by the imagination and speech and the other powers in mental prayer. Though prayer is the work of the three supreme powers of the soul, memory, understanding and will, yet the other powers of the soul can contribute to its practice, such as the imagination which, though it notably hinders prayer when it strays uncontrolled, it also helps greatly when it can form certain images of the things to be meditated, which is like restricting it to a single place, and spiritually place the scene to be meditated before the soul as though actually there. According to this, before beginning the meditation, it is good to have the imagination build up within us an image of the meditation we are planning, with the greatest vividness and propriety we can. If I am going to think about Hell, I will imagine a dark dungeon, narrow and terrible, full of fire, and the souls there ablaze amidst those flames. And if I want to think of Jesus' Birth, I will imagine a poorly protected shelter, and a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, placed in a manger; and likewise the rest, recognizing that we do this without forcing ourselves too much. Highly imaginative persons should be cautious, since their fervent imaginations can be an occasion for illusions, thinking that their imagination is revelation, and that the image they form within is reality, turning what with moderation can be of profit into something harmful.

Speech also helps in prayer, since mental prayer and vocal prayer, which is with audible words, do not oppose each other, but are sisters, helping each other. Vocal prayer usually enlivens the soul, and makes it more attentive in mental prayer; and thus, when we feel distracted or dry, it is a good remedy to attend to the words which can awaken us and recollect us, speaking with Our Lord and His Divine Mother, since as the body helps the soul, so the actions of the body usually help the soul, and the word spoken by the tongue often reaches the heart. Our Lord looks rather to the response of the heart and of the fervour

of sentiments rather than to that of the words; and is more pleased with the rough words of the stuttering child and of the repentant sinner, than to the well chosen words of the studious proud. Thus the Most Holy Virgin likewise listens piously to the fervent prayer of humble and sincere hearts.

Example. *Hail Mary full of grace.* A great sinner entered a monastery as a religious, and being quite rustic was unable to learn Christian doctrine by memory, nor even the complete Hail Mary, but just these words: ‘Hail Mary full of grace’, which he often repeated, and dwelt on them with great sweetness;



and thus constantly had them on his lips and in his heart. This religious died and was buried. Not long afterwards a very beautiful tree took root in his sepulchre in whose leaves were written these words: ‘Hail Mary, full of grace’. The miracle was divulged, and the Bishop came, and ordered digging, and all saw that the root of the tree came from his mouth. How pleasing to God must that unceasing prayer of the simple religious have been!

With respect to the corporal senses, no sure rule can be given, since some feel better with their eyes closed, while it helps others to have them open, gazing up at the heavens, at the tabernacle or at some image. We can say the same of other movements and bodily postures such as arms outstretched in the form of a cross, kneeling on the ground, standing firm somewhere or strolling about in some place, or seated in some humble chair, in all of which should be chosen that which most favours calm and the heart’s devotion, considering the frailty of the person praying, and also the edification of those present, if the place is in public, since in that case a bodily posture should be adopted which helps the piety of those round about.

Example. *Seat of Wisdom.* Well known in the annals of learning is the distinguished Doctor of the Church Saint Albert the Great, a Friar of the Order of Preachers. This illustrious man who, with his wisdom, explained the theological and philosophical sciences, scarcely had he taken the habit of Saint Dominic than he was on the verge of abandoning his vocation because of his meagre talent for study. Confused to see that, despite his best efforts, his philosophy classmates were leaving him far behind in their progress in this difficult study, he came to believe that he should adopt another kind of life. But his devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, to whom he had piously turned for light, saved him. One night, asleep, he thought he saw that, while placing a ladder on the priory walls to escape, and beginning to climb it, four venerable matrons appeared on the top of the wall, among whom one surpassed the others in beauty and majesty. It seemed to him that they were stopping him from going up, and three times he tried to do so in vain; but, finally, one of them asked him the reason that had led him to make that decision. Albert answered: “I’m leaving because I see that my classmates are making great progress in philosophy, while I apply myself in vain.” Then the matron who had put the question told him: “Behold the Queen of Heaven, Seat of Wisdom, turn to Her and you will obtain what you want.” Albert, addressing the Celestial Lady, begged Her to give him sufficient understanding to make progress in his studies. Mary heard his plea kindly and assured him that he would obtain what he sought, adding: “But so that you may know that you have obtained this grace through My intercession, there will come a day when, while teaching publicly, you will suddenly forget everything you have learnt.” The results showed that the vision had not been a simple dream, because the next day Albert made such rapid progress in his studies that he amazed everyone by his talent and wisdom. He explained with admirable clarity the most difficult questions of Theology and Philosophy, and very shortly became the most distinguished teacher of these studies and the luminary of his century. And so that nothing might be lacking in the fulfilment of the

prediction made by his Sovereign Protectress, three years before his death, while in Cologne, he suddenly lost his memory, retaining not even a trace of the great wealth of learning with which he had astounded the world. Very moved, he then told his disciples about the happening of that previous time, telling them that all the learning which had earned him the title of Great was a generous gift from Her who is rightly called the Seat of Wisdom. This prodigy shows us all the path whereby we should seek wisdom and progress in study. Let us turn to Mary, every day, in our doubts and in our needs.

8. *Of the examination of the prayer and of the fruits to be drawn.* The prayer finished, it is very beneficial to examine all that has happened to us, whether in the Rosary or at Holy Mass.

I should examine whether I truly felt myself in the presence of God, and the purity of intention I had, proposing to amend whatever fault I might find.

I should examine whether I was attentive or distracted, whether I was happy just with discourses (since this would not be prayer, but study); or if I had good sentiments and resolutions, if I asked and spoke with God with reverence and confidence, or without; and if I find that all has gone well with me, I will give thanks to God, attributing this not to my diligence but to His grace and mercy. But if I should find that it has gone badly, I will examine the cause, if for some fault of mine, or some wilful inclination, or some weakness, and with remorse for the fault, I will propose to amend with the resolution to remove the cause of the harm.

I should examine the resolutions I made in my prayer, to see when and how I can put them into practice; and generally I have to examine the fruit I drew from the prayer and from my relationship with God, as I do not want my prayer to be a tree with no fruit, like the accursed fig tree, for if it bears fruit it will be blest. The fruits of prayer are these: moral reform; withdrawal from sins though they be ever so slight; flight from occasions and all that is imperfection; subjection of the passions, control of the senses, mortification of disorderly inclinations, resolution against repugnance and difficulties I feel in virtue; valiant struggle against temptation; steadfastness in suffering many troubles with joy; and, above all, readiness gladly to fulfil the Will of God declared in His holy Law, in the Evangelical Counsels, and in the rules and norms of my state and occupation. Moreover, procuring an increase of virtues by imitating those of Christ Jesus our Lord, especially His charity and humility, His obedience and patience in affliction, His love of the cross and of contempt, and of mortification of the flesh. And particularly each should seek that virtue of which he is most in need according to his state, whether it be modesty, or chastity, or fortitude, or any other of the theological or moral virtues, with the firmest resolution and purpose. On making my examination of prayer I must assure myself of having secured some of these fruits.

Example. *Conduct changed after hearing the Rosary.* At the start of the XIX century, before the independence revolution broke out in Venezuela, there lived a widow with her young children, owner of an estate close to Puerto Cabello. One night two Spanish soldiers appeared at her home saying that on leaving for the city they had lost their way, and requested her to let them rest there so as to leave before dawn and join their battalion. The lady welcomed them kindly, giving her servants orders to prepare them a room with two beds and give them a good supper. The lady had the custom of gathering her family to pray the Holy Rosary before retiring; this religious act concluded, she saw the two soldiers motionless behind her servants, and it even seemed to her that she saw a tear on their cheeks. Wishing them goodnight, she told them: "Go to rest, my sons, you will be tired." She charged the cook to have a breakfast prepared before dawn, taking care to rise early herself to see her orders carried out and send her guests off. They, on seeing her, were moved, and the most resolute, taking up the word, exclaimed: "Lady, we are wretches who do not merit the hospitality you have shown us! We came to this house with the sole idea of robbing, and of taking flight as deserters. We would have been great criminals; but at the sight of your kindness and above

all by the recital of the Holy Rosary which, without realizing, we too recited, remembering the times we prayed with our mothers, we have changed our minds and repented of our intentions.” – “We give you our word of honour”, the other added, “that from today we will be different men; hopefully our absence will not be noticed if we succeed in entering our barracks before the reveille sounds. If we do, we will make sure by our conduct to forget our wicked intentions.” – “That does not suffice,” said the lady; “if you are truly repentant, in your battalion you have a chaplain; by confessing your faults before God, you will receive his absolution and also the Holy Eucharist, which will leave you purified so that your proposal be sincere; besides, I hope you will not forget to pray the Holy Rosary, and so I give you these two which are blessed, with them invoke Mary Most Holy, who will hear your requests.”

The soldiers kissed the hand offering the rosaries and went their way. Shortly afterwards the revolution broke out in that beautiful country, without anything having altered the peace which reigned in that home, until four years later it was assaulted by the insurgents; however, at those critical moments, a squad of Spanish soldiers appeared with two valorous officials who defended it heroically, repelling the enemy. What would be the amazement of the owner on recognizing them as her former guests! – “Here we are, lady, always aware of your kindness, and disposed to shed our blood to save your life and interests. If today we boast such wonderful posts, we owe it to your counsels and to these rosaries, which have never left us.” And opening their uniforms, they showed them worn on their breasts. “Gentlemen”, the lady said with dignity, “today I have much to thank you for, without having previously done anything other than my duty by giving you hospitality. It was the hand of God which guided you to my home as straying sheep; the rest has been the doing of the Most Holy Virgin, by mediation of the Holy Rosary. To this Merciful Mother and to this devotion so acceptable to Her your thanks should be offered up, as I offer mine up for having sent you today to save my interests, which you previously coveted.” After an affectionate farewell, the lady did not see them again, but heard that they had gone on to occupy distinguished posts in the military, and she, in turn, gained the blessings of Heaven seeing her children established and happy.

9. *Different forms of praying according to objective and situation.* Man’s tastes are so vitiated in spiritual exercises, that he soon feels tedium and dislike if his food is given to him always prepared after the same fashion, though it be ever so precious; just as the Israelites were cloyed with manna, though it was exceeding sweet, because it was always the same. Hence the saints and spiritual masters have explained different forms of prayer, presenting the prayer of the Holy Rosary in many ways, so that this variety may take away the weariness we might have in its exercise always in the same way. Thus the Spirit of God renews its delightfulness for us, so that we ever sing to the Lord a new canticle, as David says.

With how much love does the Mother of God, and our Mother, seek the simplest ways of leading us to God!

We should meditate on the words which God speaks to man, as one who really hears God, who is his master, lawgiver, counsellor, protector and rewarder, and listens to Him with the desire to learn from His teachings, to perform His commandments, to follow His counsels, to fear His threats, to await His promises and to love Him for all He says, considering what it is He commands or counsels, threatens or promises, or what it is He asks or proposes.

Sometimes we pray with the desire to praise God and thank Him for the benefits He has given to our soul, or to our people. At others with the spirit of contrition, to ask His forgiveness for our sins. And yet others with a troubled spirit together with great confidence to ask Him for help in trials.



Prayer leads to the knowledge and sentiments of the truths of Faith to grow in spirit. We should meditate with greater attention on the salutation of the Angel, and the prayer of the Our Father, since this is the prayer of Our Lord, whose words, as Saint Peter says, are ‘words of eternal life’, and the Lord Himself said: “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life”, and thus those who meditate on them fittingly will draw abundant spirit, and the purest life of grace, by which they will become worthy of eternal life.

Another prayer method is by way of sentiments, procuring that often from the depths of our soul we breathe forth some holy sentiment, or some groaning of spirit or some short or prayerful invocation, spending time in our considerations or sentiments, and spiritual delight in what we desire or request, or in that for which we groan and sigh to God. This method is very fitting for those who aspire and long for actual union with God, and with this desire seek to pray continuously and frequently, since prayer is as necessary to the perfect spiritual life of the soul as breathing is to bodily life. And in testimony to this, every time they open their lips to breathe, they want to pray, and since this is not possible owing to our frailty, on some occasions for a while they do this exercise, making use of prayerful invocations in this manner, launching them at Heaven like darts or arrows shot from the heart as from a bow, with vehement fire of love.

Example. *“I am going to tell your Mother!”* Among a group of the sick in Lourdes, there was one whose death was to be expected from one moment to another. While the Priest with the monstrance was giving him the Blessing over his head, the sick man said in a loud voice, with great confidence: “Jesus, Son of Mary, give me back my health!” And Jesus passed on without hearing his prayer. The sick man then sat up and, summoning all his reduced energies, exclaimed: “Jesus, Son of Mary, you have not healed me. I am going to tell Your Mother!” And he fell back onto the pillows. The Priest, moved, turned back and gave him the Blessing a second time. And then, from the Son of Mary came a supernatural force and healed the patient all of a sudden. He, standing up and addressing the Blessed Sacrament, shouted out: “Jesus, Son of Mary, You have healed me! I am going to tell Your Mother to help me give You thanks!”

10. How some can meditate without so many discourses. The end of all meditation and reflection is to acquire a threefold understanding: 1. Of oneself, of the countless needs and miseries of body and soul. 2. Of Jesus Christ Our Lord, true God and true Man, and of His Most Holy Mother, together with Their perfect virtues, especially those which shone forth at the Birth of the Redeemer, His Passion and His Death. 3. Of God One and Three, of His infinite perfections, and of the benefits, both natural and supernatural which proceed from Him. This threefold understanding forms a close unity, and from it is born devotion, which includes three kinds of sentiments which have their correspondence in the will.

The affects or sentiments to which this understanding leads are: 1. For oneself, confusion at one’s own sins and tepidity, grief at them, with purpose of amendment, humbling oneself faced with one’s own nothingness and at the harvest for which one is to blame. 2. For Christ Our Lord and Mary Most Holy, compassion for Their sufferings, joy for Their virtues, the desire to imitate Them and ask for the graces to do so. 3. For the Most Holy Trinity, admiration for Their Grandeur, praise for Them, gratitude for the benefits given us and sincerest self-offering to serve for them. In prayer, to all this should be added requests for heavenly graces and gifts for oneself, for the whole Church and for neighbour, naming the most urgent of those needs.

If this has been duly done, any person desirous of practising mental prayer, though he be spiritually weak, can place himself in the presence of the living God, who dwells beside and within him; and calmly exercise the appropriate sentiments. Sometimes he will confess all his miseries to God, one by one, humbling himself with grief, and asking Him to remedy them. At others in his memory he will go over the virtues which shone out in some mystery of Christ Our Lord or of the Most Holy Virgin, Their humility, obedience and patience, with

the urge and desire to imitate them. At others he will recall the benefits he has received from God with sentiments of gratitude, or call to mind God's infinite perfections, His Goodness, Mercy and Providence, with sentiments of praise and joy. And with divine favour it will not be difficult to arrive at these sentiments, since the mysteries and truths of our Faith emit sparks of love which, if the soul is well disposed to receive them, make flames of great sentiments and feelings flare up. To make this easier, it will help greatly to do some reading on each mystery, trying to bear in mind certain truths to nourish such sentiments and to have gathered many truths on these mysteries, keeping them in mind to gaze at them quite simply with the eyes of the spirit, and embracing them with the heart's blazing sentiments, and applying them to oneself for the purpose of imitation. As a basis for prayer, from these should be taken at one time a truth of Faith, at another after the fashion of Christ Our Lord on recollecting Himself to pray in the Garden of Gethsemani, when three times for the matter of His prayer He took these brief words: "My Father... if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." And He spent a long while reflecting on these words.



Example. *His vocation by devotion to Mary.* How very much the Most Holy Virgin loves to give Her devotees to share in Her graces! This appears evident in the life of one of Her predilect sons, Saint Bernardine of Siena, a guiding light of the Order of Saint Francis. Still young, by his singular modesty, by his love for chastity and by his serious ways, he made it evident that the Virgin Mary had set Her eyes on him to make of him a faithful imitator of the young Jesus. But what shone out most in the virtuous youth were his very tender and singular sentiments for the Queen of the Angels, gleaming like rays from his countenance when he named Her. His chief devotion was to an image of Our Lady with the title of Camillia, over one of the Siena City gates. Every day he went to visit Her, and falling to the ground on both knees, he offered Her his attentions and told Her that he loved Her with preference, and that after God all his confidence was in Her. He called Mary his Mother, his Friend, his Beloved... His confidence in the Mother of Divine Grace was not in vain, as he was able to leave a world full of dangers and enter the Order of Friars Minor, as he had ardently desired for some time. His devotion and his zeal were so agreeable to the Most Holy Virgin that She granted him the grace of his religious vocation, and after having lavished blessings on him in the Order of Saint Francis, to which he belonged, She deigned to appear to him one day and told him: "Your devotion pleases me, and as a pledge of greater recompense I grant you the talent of preaching and the power of working miracles, gifts I have obtained for you from My Son, and moreover I offer you a share in Eternal Blessedness with Me in Heaven." This apparition was later shown to be true by its fruits, since Saint Bernardine was one of the most illustrious preachers who illuminated the Church with his doctrine, his holiness and his miracles. His Superiors having given him the mission of preaching in several Italian cities to call men to lead the life of Christians, by Mary's intercession he was miraculously freed from a voice defect caused by an illness, and so became fit for preaching. In many cities where he had to preach, vices and moral corruption reigned, as well as hatred and fratricidal fighting, scandals and usury. The Most Holy Virgin, however, under whose protection he had commended all the success of his apostolic labours, helped him in a visible way in the conversion of sinners and in the sanctification of souls. At his preaching scandals ceased, disputes were settled, injuries were forgiven, the wayward returned to the strait and narrow. His apostolic journeys were so many other triumphs of grace over sin... His most intimate friends heard him say that he believed that he had received no grace from God that was not the fruit of that devotion and a sign of favour from the

Queen of Heaven. He said that he had been born on the Feastday of Our Lady's birth and received baptism that same day, and on the same calendar day had taken the religious habit and professed. Consumed by his labours and by his penances, on the 20th of May 1444 he died in peace and flew to receive his eternal reward in recompense for his fruitful apostolic life. Such were the fruits of his devotion to Mary and of a vocation practised under the protection of the Mother of Divine Grace, which, acknowledged from so many gifts, She granted him Her protection in promoting the glory of Her Son and Her own, and made him great before God and before men.

11. *Of the many ways in which God communicates Himself in meditation.* In the first place, Our Lord God sometimes communicates to His servants by way of lights, which reveal to them some truth; and though they soon pass, they leave the heart ablaze in various sentiments of love for God or grief for sins. By these same lights God also touches sinners to convert them, in a moment revealing to them the gravity of their sins, their danger of damnation and other like truths to move them to amend their lives.

Another way Our Lord has of communicating is by means of inspirations, by speaking some interior words within the soul, by which He teaches a certain truth, or reveals His Will so effectually as to incline the soul to fulfil that Will. At times, the soul yields, grows tender and melts in the love of God; so that a soul with a sad, feeble and frozen heart, hardened to spiritual things, by one of these interior words, in a single moment, becomes cheerful, trusting, zealous and ready for whatever God wishes to do with her.

These interior words in the ordinary way are for everyone, and are called inspirations; since as the glorious doctor Saint Augustine says, Our Lord God has an interior way of speaking that is a secret inspiration by which He invisibly reveals His Will, or some truth, to the soul. He speaks in this way to the just and to sinners, and teaches, corrects, reprimands or exhorts, consoles and moves to works of virtue and perfection. And thus David, as one highly experienced in feeling these divine inspirations and impulses, said: "I will hear what the Lord God may tell me," desiring that God speak to him, showing himself ready to do whatever He might say.

Our Lord God sometimes communicates fervour and sweetness to the soul in things of the spirit. The soul, by experiencing this sweetness and its marvellous effects, comes to know the grandeur of God, the excellence of His Law and that of heavenly virtues and rewards. By savouring all this, it is known how gentle, how good, how wise, how powerful, how liberal and merciful He is. And in the same way we can say: "Taste and see how sweet is the Lord," how gentle His yoke and His Law, how gentle is obedience and humility; patience, temperance, chastity and charity, since each virtue has its own sweetness. In His mysteries and virtues God has a great variety of wonderful consolations. If manna had the savour of every fare to regale the just with corporal sweetness, will God not have supreme sweetness to console those who converse with Him in prayer? And to some He gives it for meditating on His perfections, or meditating on His benefits, or meditating on His Holy Law, or meditating on the mysteries of the Life of Jesus and Mary. But this sweetness is reserved for those who fear God and reverence Him, since they alone will taste it with greater abundance. It is certain that God also gives it in part to beginners, and even to sinners, to detach them from earthly consolations; but far more abundantly does He give it to those who for His love have mortified and deprived themselves of such consolations, since God opens their spiritual senses, given that, as Saint Gregory says, if the outward senses close, the inward senses open. Contrariwise, says Saint Augustine, the inward senses fall asleep if the outward senses turn to pleasure.

Example. *Sister Dominica's vision of Paradise.* This virtuous daughter of poor parents was born in a village called Paradise, near Florence, Italy. In her life, written by Father Ignatius de Niente, a Dominican, it is read that she began to serve the Divine Mother from girlhood. She fasted in Her honour every day of the week, and afterwards on Saturdays

shared with the poor the food she had not eaten. Going out to the garden of her home or to the neighbouring fields, she picked the flowers she could and took them to the image of the Most Holy Virgin with the Child in Her arms at home. But let us see now the many favours with which the most grateful Lady compensated the gifts offered by this servantmaid of Hers. When aged ten, looking out of a window, in the street she saw a Woman of beautiful aspect with a Child, and that Both stretched out their hand as though to beg alms. She went to take bread and, without opening the door, she saw Them in front of her, and noticed that the Child had wounds in His hands, feet and breast. So that she asked: "Tell me, Madam, who has wounded this Child?" The Mother replied: "Love has wounded Him." Dominica, enamoured of the incomparable beauty and angelical modesty of that Child, asked Him if the wounds hurt much. But He gave no reply other than a heavenly smile. Meanwhile, close to the image of Jesus and Mary, the Lady said to Dominica: "Tell me, daughter, who moved you to crown these images with flowers?" She replied, "The love I have for Jesus and Mary moved me." – "And how much do you love Them?" – "I love them as much as I can." – "And how much is that?" – "As much as They help me." – "Go ahead," the Lady then said, "keep on loving Them, and you will see how well They will reward you in Heaven." The girl then, perceiving the most precious heavenly aroma coming from those wounds, asked the Mother with what balm She anointed them and if it could be bought. The Lady replied: "It can be bought by faith and by good works." Dominica offered them the bread. The Mother rejoined: "My Son's food is love: tell Him that you love Jesus, and you will fill Him with joy." The Child, on hearing the word love, seemed very happy and, turning to Dominica, asked: "How much do you love Jesus?" And she replied: "I love Him so much that I think of Him day and night, and my whole desire is to please Him in all that I can." "Well and good," He added, "love Him, love will teach you what you should do to please Him." The intensity of the aroma exhaled by those wounds was growing, until Dominica, beside herself, exclaimed: "My God! This fragrance makes me die of love. If the aroma of this Child is so suave, how will the aroma of Paradise be?" But at this point the scene suddenly changed: the Mother appeared decked as a queen dressed with the clearest light, and the Child, beautiful and resplendent like a sun, took the flowers from the image of the Virgin and sprinkled them over Dominica's head and she, then recognizing Mary and Jesus, fell prostrate to the ground in ecstasy, adoring Jesus, deeply venerating his Most Holy Mother, and loving Both with all her heart. And the vision thus came to an end. In time, Dominica took the habit of Saint Dominic and died in holiness in the year 1553.



12 *Of the time to dedicate to prayer.* As Saint Basil says, it is better to pray little and well with attention, than pray much without it; since God is not to be pleased by the amount of prayer but by its love and fervour.

It is no exaggeration to make great efforts in this holy exercise, since, as Saint Bonaventure says, at all times and at each hour we can gain by prayer something far greater in worth than the whole world. And clearly this is so, since if a man were to spend the whole day in interior acts of blasphemy, vengeance, hatred for God, and resolutions to commit other grave sins, at the day's end he would have deserved a terrible hell. So if on the contrary a man spends the day in interior acts of prayer, with petitions for the virtues alternating with holy desires and resolutions to please God, at the day's end will find an incredible increase of heavenly gifts and of eternal reward; since God is no less liberal in rewarding than rigorous in chastising.



Example. *The best use of time.* One evening, towards the end of the XIX century, the Parish Priest of Domdam (Seine, Oise) entered his church and observed an elderly person praying the Rosary on his knees before an altar to the Most Holy Virgin. The Rosary ended, the man approached the Priest, telling him: “Perhaps it will have surprised you, good Father, to see a stranger in your church at these hours. I am Chevreul (one of the most prestigious scientists of the time). I have missed the train on an excursion. And while I wait for another I thought I could not make better use of the time than by coming to pray at the feet of the Most Holy Virgin.” The Priest replied: ‘O that all the learned were like him in Christian faith and piety.’ What a wonderful spectacle to see this eminence kneeling with the Rosary in his hands before Mary’s altar, proclaiming the kinship between science and the Faith! Eugene Chevreul, 1786-1889, was an eminent chemist, author of numerous works, a great investigator and tireless worker all his life of centenarian and more.

13. *Some comments regarding meditation.* Saint Bernard says that reading disposes and helps meditation, and without reading, or something equivalent, meditation is usually wayward, wandering and distracted, and in such a case it is well to read the points in the Bible or the Treatise on the Holy Mass which help us to meditate the mysteries. And from these points it would be good to take two or three brief truths for the meditation, to consider at greater length.

Example. *“Heal me of my physical and moral blindness!”* Henry Lasserre lived in Paris, and spent long hours studying night and day without the least fatigue. Suddenly his eyesight gradually began to fail to the point that he could no longer read or write. Medical treatments by the most eminent doctors were unavailing. A friend of his recommended taking Lourdes water, and as the friend repeated his suggestion, he replied: “I shall tell you the whole truth. I do not lack faith, but I have defects, weaknesses, countless miseries sadly rooted in my poor nature. Now then, a miraculous cure would involve the obligation to sacrifice all that and become holy. My responsibility would be terrible. I am a coward and afraid...” Finally the water was ordered. Lasserre relates: “In my illness there was no change; reading and writing were quite impossible. On Friday the 10th of October 1862, about four in the afternoon, I went back home. When starting to climb the stairs, the porter called me. ‘They have brought a package for you from the railways’, he told me. I turned back to the porter’s lodge where I found a parcel with my name and address on one side, and on the other these words: ‘Natural water’. It was Lourdes water. In the depths of my soul, I felt a violent emotion, which I repressed. ‘Good’, I said to the porter. ‘I will collect it in a moment; I am going out for a while. I’ll be back soon.’ I left pensive and ambled about for a while in the street. ‘The matter is serious,’ I said to myself. ‘Without having purified myself I cannot ask God for a miracle in my favour. I cannot implore such a great grace with my heart full of deliberate miseries. Ea! First sort your soul out before imploring a grace for your body’. And I went to the home of a Priest, Father Ferrand de Missol. He was very busy, his valet told me, and would return after the meal. I went back home. I received the parcel from the porter, to which an account of the Lourdes apparitions was attached. Hardly had I reached my room when I knelt beside my bed and prayed. I was doubting whether to open the parcel or wait for confession. The struggle lasted several minutes and ended with a prayer. ‘Yes, my God’, I exclaimed... ‘I will confess my sins today to your minister, but my faith cannot wait. Pardon me, Lord, and cure me. And You, O Mother of Mercy, come to the help of Your miserable son!’ After having comforted myself by prayer

I opened the parcel: it contained a bottle full of water. I uncorked it, poured water into a cup and took a serviette from my commode. I felt my soul ablaze with faith, a living, ardent faith. When the preparatives were finished, I again knelt down and said out loud: 'O Most Holy Virgin Mary, have pity on me and heal my physical and moral blindness!' And with heart full of confidence I successively rubbed my eyes and forehead with the serviette moistened in the Lourdes water. The operation lasted no longer than half a minute. What would be my surprise! Hardly had I touched the eyes and the forehead with the miraculous water than I felt myself suddenly cured, in a moment, without transition and in such an instantaneous fashion that, in my imperfect language, I could only compare it to lightning. 'I am healed!', I exclaimed. I wanted to take any book to read, but I abstained. 'No, no!', I said to myself; 'I should not take just any book.' And I went to get the account of the Apparitions from the mantelpiece. That was in justice. I read a hundred and forty pages without a break and without feeling the least fatigue. Twenty minutes previously I would not have been able to read even three lines. I confessed that night and recounted to Father Ferrand the notable favour the Most Holy Virgin had just granted me." Grateful for that remarkable benefit, Lasserre wrote a very beautiful and important work entitled 'Our Lady of Lourdes', which is one of the most precious monuments to the greater glory of Mary on Her Apparitions and the extraordinary events that came to pass in Lourdes.

Meditation on the Mysteries of the Passion of Christ and Mary.

General aspects of the Passion. Three of the seven parts of the Holy Rosary are dedicated to the Sorrowful Mysteries, given the great importance of meditation on the Passion and its value for souls, and daily we pray the Holy Way of the Cross. We insist that meditation on the mysteries of the Passion of Christ and Mary is highly profitable for all kinds of people; for sinners will find motives there to purify themselves from their sins, beginners will find motives for mortifying their passions; the proficient, incentives for making progress in all kinds of virtues; and the perfect, for acquiring union with God through fervent love. Hence, Saint Bernard says, the Passion of Christ down to this very day makes the earth tremble, breaks up rocks, opens sepulchres, tears the veil of the temple in two, sundering it from top to bottom, since those who duly meditate the Passion, if they are earthly by culpable attachment to earthly things, tremble with the holy fear of God and at the rigorous justice He dealt out to His own Son, and will feel moved to abandon their attachment to the earthly. If they are stones by their hardness of heart, they soften and break up with piercing sorrow for their sins as likewise for the pains which Christ bore for them. And if they are closed tombs, closed by shame at making known their faults, they open for confession, so as to send death far away and rise to a new life. And finally, for everyone it tears asunder the veil which divided us from God, so that we can contemplate the Glory of the Lord more openly, in the abyss of heavenly secrets.

With all reason, says Saint Albert the Great, the simple memory and devout meditation on the Passion of Christ is more beneficial to man than solely practising outward good works; since outward works do not possess the same power for purifying the heart of vices, enlightening it with truths and virtues and perfecting it with lively sentiments of divine love. This power is certainly possessed by thoughtful and deep meditation on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and that of His Most Holy Mother, which besides gives spirit and life to our penances and outward works, effectively moving us to practise them with fervour.

Example. *Conversion of the unhappy Benedicta.* In Florence there lived a girl named Benedicta, but who better deserved to be called Maledicta for the scandalous and indecent life she led. Saint Dominic arrived to preach in the city and she, out of simple curiosity, went to listen to him. And the Lord placed such compunction in her heart on hearing him, that weeping she went to confess to the Saint. He confessed her, absolved her and imposed the penance of praying the Rosary daily. But the unhappy girl, drawn by her evil habits, returned to her bad life. The Saint knew of this, and going out in search of her, obtained that she

confess again. And God, to confirm her in virtue, showed her a vision of Hell in which she saw some there who had damned themselves through her fault. Afterwards, in an open book, he made her read the frightful account of her sins. Horrified at this vision, Benedicta turned to the Most Holy Virgin Mary for help. And she understood that this Divine Mother, from God, had obtained time for her to weep over all her sins. The vision over, Benedicta gave herself up decidedly to leading a life of prayer and penance. But this time she made her prayer with that terrible ordeal she had seen ever before her eyes, and meditating on her own faults. One day she set down to pray thus to her Consolatrix: "Mother, it is true that I, by my excesses should be in the depths of Hell, but now that You, by Your intercession, have freed me by obtaining time for me to do penance, I ask of You this other grace: I don't want ever to cease weeping for my sins, but do have them erased from that book." This prayer concluded, the Virgin Mary appeared and told her that to obtain what she asked, it was necessary from then on to meditate on the Mercy God had shown her and on the Passion which Her Son had suffered for love of her; and that she consider how many, with fewer faults than her, had damned themselves... Benedicta obeyed the Most Holy Virgin faithfully, and from then on always had ever present the Passion and Most Dolorous Death which Our Divine Saviour and His Most Holy Mother had suffered to make reparation for her faults. One day Jesus Christ appeared to her, and showing her the book, told her: "Look, your sins are blotted out from the book and the pages are blank. Now write acts of love and virtue." Benedicta did so from then on, leading a saintly life and dying in holiness.

1. Of the purpose that meditation on the Passion should have. Just as persons who meditate on the Passion of Christ are different, so too are the spiritual fruits, according to the state of each soul: whether purifying their faults and inordinate attachments, or adorning themselves with heroic virtues, or uniting themselves to God with fervent sentiments of charity. The means to obtain all this is to enliven sentiments of compassion.

The Passion of Christ is the greatest of God's benefits, and can be meditated by concentrating on the abyss of Divine Mercy it reveals: the gates of Heaven open, Charity's immensity is displayed, and the esteem which God holds for man is declared; since that which has cost the Blood of the Son of God cannot be vile.

Another way of meditating the Passion is by taking as object for reflection how very bitter and direful that Passion was for Our Lord Jesus Christ and for His Divine Mother, occasioned by our sins. Likewise by taking for contemplation all the virtues of which They gave us example, especially those which shone forth amid those indescribable torments; and in this way be moved to sorrow and compassion for Them, who suffered so greatly for us. Christ Himself was saddened on recalling them, so that it is only right that we be saddened together with Him.

However, so that this compassion be rightly understood, we should realize that Christ Our Lord drank the bitter chalice of His Passion in two ways. One, physically, at the hands of the bailiffs, warders, when taken prisoner, scourged, crowned with thorns and crucified. The other, spiritually, by the remembrance and lively representation and imagination of the same sufferings, and of their cause, namely our sins. Mary Most Holy participated fully in these sufferings, since in Her Soul and in Her Body She felt all the spiritual and physical sufferings of Christ.

From this follow the purposes we should have in these meditations, and the profit we should draw from them; reduced to uniting us, transforming us and conforming ourselves to Christ and Mary, afflicted and tormented in the two ways as said, drinking as well in both forms and in our own manner the few drops from the chalice of His Passion which by Divine Mercy They have reserved to us.

Firstly, in the meditation, try to feel in ourselves what Christ felt, with sentiments of compassion, sorrow and grief, in such fashion that we become transformed into Christ, sad and afflicted for our sakes, and spiritually crucified with Him, just as the Most Holy Virgin

felt the pain of Her Son; hence Simeon told Her that a sword would pierce Her soul. This manner of living the Passion of Christ is a special gift of the Lord Himself, who gives eyes to see His torments and weep for them. Hence those who receive from God the spirit of prayer, with lively faith see Him Whom they crucified by their sins, and bitterly weep over His death. It is a great disorder to seek sweetness in Christ's griefs, and wish for consolations meditating on his afflictions; which should be meditated precisely to feel His pain and take part in it.

Secondly, in these meditations, we should intend to drink the chalice of the Passion physically as well, following after Christ Our Lord in His sufferings, drawing courage and strength to suffer, together with very efficacious resolutions, enduring with patience and joy the sufferings that God may send us or permit. We should firmly believe, as Saint Paul says, that it is also a gift of God to suffer for Christ, just as it is to have compassion for Christ. And thus in imitation of the same Apostle we should be sure, when meditating the Passion, to bear our everyday cross, so that we can each say: 'with Christ I am nailed to the cross', both by compassion as by suffering for Him, as He suffered for me.

Thirdly, from this, in these meditations, we should purpose to follow after Christ in the heroic virtues He practised, drinking His chalice, spiritually and physically; that is, exercising ourselves in the love of God and of men, in zeal for the salvation of souls, in purity of intention, in dispositions of obedience, humility, patience and poverty, and outward deeds of these and other virtues; and especially in practising scorn for earthly things, and mortification of any inclinations there may be to seek them or retain them. In such a way that, armed, as Saint Peter says, with the thought of what Christ suffered, we become like Him in everything; and meditation on His Passion serve us as strong, shining and beautiful armour, to arm and cover us from head to foot, and make us terrible to the demons, terrible to the flesh, admirable to the world, agreeable to the Angels and dear to God and to His Most Holy Mother.

Example. *Slavery to Mary*. About the year 1000, Blessed Marin, brother of Saint Peter Damian, was the first to give example of offering himself to the Most Holy Virgin as a slave. And this is what has afterwards been called Holy Slavery to Mary. He made his profession of subjecting himself to this slavery before an altar dedicated to the Virgin, offering himself to Her as Her slave. To conduct himself as such, after having read the act of his profession, he imposed on himself some of the practices of rigour and austerity which in certain regions used to be employed on slaves. After this, he placed a coin on the Virgin's altar and promised to pay this tribute annually in his capacity as a slave and in recognition of Her dominion over him. And from then on he considered himself as property of the glorious Queen of Heaven and of Earth, to whom he belonged as Her slave. From this act he gained the most abundant fruits in order to reach the degree of sanctity which shone out in his life and in the glorious passage of death. With time this practice spread, and the custom of wearing small chains as a sign of slavery was introduced. Henry-Mary Boudon 1624-1702, in the excellent treatise he wrote on this matter, includes an extensive list of great men, Saints and kings, who have held it a very singular honour to be enlisted among the slaves of the Virgin Mother of God.

2. *Dispositions for meditating the Passion*. To obtain our purposes in meditating the Passion, it is important to prepare ourselves as best we possibly can. While it is necessary to prepare the soul before any prayer, as the Holy Ghost says, and not begin tempting God by expecting graces from Heaven without preparing, preparation is still more important for prayer and meditation on the sorrows and labours of our Lord Jesus Christ. With great





love He prepared Himself to suffer them, and wills that they be considered and meditated with great fervour.

Thus I will call to mind very particularly, and with great fervour, His labours and afflictions, feeling them so intimately that my soul be pained at the greatness of His grief and sorrow. Not content with having thought only once of all His pains, I will do so many times over with great attention and feeling, and from them draw great confidence.

Humility, trust, diligence and purity of heart are the dispositions and virtues which wonderfully dispose us to receive from God the gifts and graces He usually communicates to those who practise these meditations.

The first is humility of heart, entering into meditation with shame and confusion at our offences; because our sins are the cause of the torments of Christ, whom we are contemplating; as if a father were put into prison, thrown into a dungeon, bound with shackles and fetters, among thieves, suffering grievous sorrows and disgrace, not for his own, but for his son's offences. Such a son, if he should go to visit him, no doubt would enter with great humility, shame and confusion, for having being the cause of his father's torments. And this humility means to be clothed in mourning, that is to say, adequately dressed for celebrating the memory of the Passion, or when meditating on it specially. It should reflect outward humility, for whoever goes to visit someone afflicted should not go dressed as for a celebration, but grieving, in accord with the sufferer. It also pertains to humility to acknowledge oneself unworthy to assist at these mysteries, and to feel great grief at them, deeming it a special favour which Almighty God affords to His best beloved friends, as it was to share part of His sorrows with His three apostles in the garden: and to grant to His mother, to Saint John, to Mary Magdalen and others, to be present with Him at the foot of the Cross on Mount Calvary. And this special grace is not given but to the humble.

The second disposition is to have great trust in Our Lord's Mercy since, just as He deigned to suffer so much for us, He will also deign to grant us to feel compassion for Him. We trust in this on account of the compassion he showed there to sinners, by becoming their advocate and praying for them that they might become capable of receiving the fruits of His Passion. We trust in this on account of the generosity he showed towards Dismas, the good thief, who with humility and confidence asked Him to remember him in His kingdom, and obtained far more than he asked for. Let us say, like Saint Lawrence Justinian: "I however, after accusing myself as a sinner like the thief, with humility and trust will say to my Lord hanging upon the Cross: 'Lord, remember me, not only so that I may go to Your kingdom, but so that I may also feel compassion for Your pains and share in Your Passion; for I well know that if I suffer with You, I will also reign with You'." We should thus increase our trust in Christ, since the greater the trust, the more enabled will we be to receive His divine gifts, since by humility of heart I become empty of myself and well disposed to receive those gifts. Let us trust in Her who is Mother of Mercy, who will lead us safely to God Our Lord.

Example. *He awaited a Priest...* In a country behind the 'iron curtain', namely a communist country, where, in the first months of the year 1968, the religious persecution increased in rigour, one of the Bishops located there received a note in which someone informed him confidentially that an attempt against his life was in preparation, so that he should flee without loss of time and hide. Obeying the warning received, the mentioned Bishop left his residence dressed as a farmer and fled across country, walking all day. At nightfall, he spied a large garden. Making use of the darkness, he approached a house he saw nearby and asked the residents to allow him to rest for a few hours seated on a chair. The occupants of the house, a married couple with several small children, accepted the request for lodging from

a man they thought to be a travelling labourer, but not only offered him a chair, but also had him sup with them and then settled him into a room with a good bed. During the supper, as the guest noticed great concern and visible sadness in the couple, he asked the motive for their anxiety and distress. They then told him that the elderly father of one of them was not able to sit at table with them being very seriously ill now for some days, and they, charitably insisting that he make a good preparation for death, in case it should come, he answered that he would not yet die and, therefore, was not preparing... There were some brief commentaries on the matter, but owing to the danger involved, no one dared make mention of its religious aspect. All having retired to rest, and the night over, the visitor and guest made ready to continue on his way; and on bidding farewell and thanking those who had treated him with such kindness, asked if they would allow him to greet the elderly patient to see the gravity of his illness, to which they agreed with pleasure and accompanied him. Once at the patient's bedside and a brief friendly greeting, the latter, adopting a decided gesture and tone, said: "Look, sir, I know I am very ill and that I will not recover; but I also know that I will not die right now." On hearing him speak so confidently, all smiled at him. And at those smiles, he added: "You laugh because I have said I am sure that for now I will not die... Well and good. I repeat it. And do you know why?... Look, I do not know who you are, nor what you think, but as in the situation I am in I no longer fear anyone, I shall tell you the truth: I base my assurance on being a Catholic; the years of religious persecution have not wiped out my faith, and every day I have prayed, and pray, the three Hail Marys, asking the Virgin Mary that at the hour of death I be attended by a Priest who will prepare me for passing on, and you will understand that having requested the Most Holy Virgin so many times, the Virgin will not consent to have me die without a Priest at my side; and as I do not have one, I am therefore quite sure that for now I shall not die." The Bishop, moved by the declaration of the ancient, took him by the hand and told him: "The great faith you have, and that daily supplication to the Mother of God, reciting the three Hail Marys, has drawn down the favour of Heaven and it has been Providence which has guided me here... The Virgin Mary has not sent you a Priest but your Bishop... because I am the Bishop of this diocese, on my way to exile." The impression, and at the same time the joy of the grandfather and his children was enormous. So great that they did not know how to express their surprise and their reverence... The Bishop then celebrated Holy Mass in the sick man's room, and gave them all Holy Communion; leaving the grandfather spiritually disposed to undertake his last journey with destiny Heaven... A journey which took place two days after that exceptional Mass.

The third disposition is great fervour and diligence in meditation, since it would be something shameful to ponder with tepidity on what Christ suffered with such fervour. This diligence will make the meditation more attentive, profound and devout; it will shake off distractions from the memory; overcome sluggishness of mind for penetrating the mysteries; and with the will reject coldness in the sentiments, making them wholly fervent like those of Jesus Christ. This too should lead us to take the generous decision to accompany Him, not sleeping like the three Apostles in the garden, but watching as He watched, and at the agony praying the petitions with the perseverance with which He prayed, and spending several hours on this as He did. May He not have to reproach us: "Could you not watch even a single hour with Me?"

The fourth disposition is cleanliness of heart, taking care to purify ourselves and remain free of guilt, so that entering into prayer cleansed, this prayer be with great trust, without remorse, and well disposed to receive the gifts of God and the fruits of His Most Precious Blood, since no sensible person wants to pour a precious liquor into a very dirty vessel. Hence, says Saint Bernard, as the blessing is superabundant, in order to receive it, prepare clean vessels, devout souls, vigilant spirits, well oriented sentiments and pure consciences, into whom so many graces are to be poured as are communicated here. These are the dispositions which we should have in order to meditate these mysteries. But if anyone were



not to have such dispositions, not on that account should he omit the meditation, because that itself will inflame the desire for them, as also move him on to other virtues.

Example. *The devotee from Rome*. Take care to avoid the obstinacy of that devotee in Rome spoken of in 'The Wonders of the Rosary'. She was so pious and fervent that by her holy life she confounded the most austere Religious in God's Church. She wanted to consult Saint Dominic. She confessed to him. The Saint imposed as penance to pray a Rosary and counselled her to pray it every day. She excused herself saying that she had all

her pious practices already organized: every day she gained the stations indulgences in Rome, wore hairshirts, took the discipline several times a week and kept so many fasts and a thousand other penances. The Saint again exhorted her to follow his counsel. But she refused to do so and left the confessional almost scandalized at the way this new director wanted to make her accept a devotion against her tastes. One day when in prayer, she was rapt up in ecstasy, and saw her soul obliged to appear before the Supreme Judge. In one pan of the scales, Saint Michael placed all her penances and prayers and in the other her sins and imperfections. The pan with the good works rose, and rose higher without counterbalancing the other. Alarmed, she implored mercy. She addressed the Most Holy Virgin, her Defence, who let the one Rosary she had recited for penance fall into the pan of the good works. This weighed so much that it counterbalanced the weight of the sins and the good works. At the same time the Most Holy Virgin reproached her for not having followed the counsel of Her servant Dominic, of reciting the Rosary every day. On coming to herself, she ran to throw herself at Saint Dominic's feet. She recounted the happening, asked him to forgive her incredulity, and promised to recite the Holy Rosary every day; and by this means arrived at Christian perfection and eternal glory. Pious soul! Learn then the efficacy, value and importance of devotion to the Holy Rosary and meditation on its mysteries!

3. *On several ways of meditating the Passion*. To avoid the repugnance our tepidity can cause by meditating always in the same way, it is good to know the different methods there are of meditating the Passion, besides those already mentioned: meditating the Passion as beneficial for us, or as Sorrowful for Christ. There are two other principal methods, to which the rest are reduced. Just as at dinners, there are usually two alternative ways of serving: one, by placing each dish separately and, once eaten, place another; another way is to place many dishes together, and each diner takes a morsel from each according to his taste or need. Likewise in this spiritual dinner of the mysteries of the Passion, there are two methods of receiving them spiritually. The first and most ordinary is by meditating each mystery by itself, pondering in each whatever is worthy of consideration, following historical order, and especially contemplating the persons taking part in it, the Persons of Christ Our Lord, of His Mother and of the disciples, and also of His persecutors, penetrating into the qualities and conditions of each; besides meditating on the words they say, and on the deeds they perform, learning from all that Our Lord says and does, and fleeing from the evils His persecutors say and do. And finally, thinking of Christ's sufferings, pondering how the Divinity in certain fashion hides, not destroying His enemies, but permitting them to torture His Most Sacred Humanity. From this it results that it is right that I labour and suffer for Him who laboured and suffered for me. We should converse lovingly with Our Lord and God on this.

The second method of meditating these mysteries is bearing them all in mind, and taking as matter for meditation some special suffering, or some special virtue of Jesus Christ. For example, if I want to meditate on Our Lord's humility, I will go about reasoning and pondering, first, His acts of humility when He washed the feet of His Apostles, afterwards

those of his capture, when He submitted to His enemies, and proceed thus up till those He practised on the Cross. And if I wish to begin further back, I can meditate on the acts of humility he performed as from His Birth, Childhood and Youth, those of His public Life, and from them all drawing motives for exercising this virtue to the full, since in each mystery something special pertaining to His perfection shines out. In this same way can be meditated the Saviour's obedience, charity and patience.

And in the same way matter for meditation can be taken from some special kind of work, or pain or discredit, passing through the mysteries of the Passion, concentrating solely on whatever concerns suffering, as it would be to meditate on the times His garments were removed to His great shame; the times He shed His Precious Blood; the stations through which He was passing at that time, the affronts in matter of virtue or in matter of wisdom He experienced, in each case seeking to feel compassion for the Saviour and heartening myself to suffer something for Him in that kind of outrage. And at other times I can take as matter for meditation the special pain Christ had in some of His members or senses, such as would be to meditate on the pain in His hands, when they tied Him up in the Garden, and later at the pillar, and in the prison, and when they nailed Him to the Cross, and so on for the rest.

To these two methods of meditating the Passion can be added a third, namely the application of the soul's interior senses to each mystery. Firstly, with the eyes of the soul, to see the outward aspect of Christ Our Lord, so pitiful, and the interior state of His Soul, on the one hand so beautiful, and on the other so afflicted, feeling astonishment and pity that being the Anointed of God and figure of His Substance, He be so disfigured by my sins. Secondly, to hear interiorly, while sensing the words so benign and loving of this Lord, the clamour against Him by His enemies, so coarse and furious; the noise of the cuffs, of the buffets, of the lashings and hammerings, feeling in my heart what Christ and Mary would feel in Theirs. Thirdly, smell with interior olfaction, both the stench of the sins which caused the death of this Sovereign and Eternal Priest, as also the sweet odour of the sacrifice He offered up for them, and the aroma of the virtues He exercised in this wholly devout oblation of His Passion; considering the way He thus placated the wrath of the Eternal Father, who gave us as sign of reconciliation, not the rainbow formed in the clouds, but His Son, stretched out like an arc upon the Cross, raining His Blood upon us. Fourthly, to taste the vinegars and galls of Christ, feeling embittered and grieved at them, as if I were experiencing them bodily. And taste as well the sweetness of the love with which he bore them, and be amazed at the sight of the union of such sweetness with such bitterness. Fifthly, with the senses of the soul, to touch the terrible instruments of Christ's Passion, the rigour and harshness of the ropes, scourges, thorns, cross and nails, feeling in my spirit as the Lord would feel in His Body, and exercising the sentiments which usually arise from such feelings.

Example. *Mary's favour towards a sinner.* The Venerable John Herolt, who out of humility called himself 'the Disciple', relates that there was a married man who had lost Grace before God. His wife, unable to make him desist from sin, pleaded with him that in that miserable state he at least show the Mother of God the attention of always greeting Her with the Hail Mary every time he passed before some image of Hers. And the husband began this devotion. One night the wretch, going out to sin, saw a light; he looked and saw that it was a lamp burning before a devout image of Mary with the Child Jesus in Her arms. He prayed his Hail Mary as usual, but then he saw the Child Jesus covered with wounds which bled fresh blood. Affrighted and moved, thinking that he by his offences had wounded his Redeemer that way, he broke into tears. And he observed that the Child turned His back on him, so that he, full of confusion, had recourse to the Most Holy Virgin, telling Her: "Mother of Mercy, Your Son rejects me, I cannot find a more pious and powerful advocate than You, who are my Mother. My Queen, help me and plead for me." The Mother of God replied from the image: "You sinners call Me Mother of Mercy, but you do not cease to make Me Mother of misery by renewing the Passion of My Son and My Dolours." But as Mary is incapable of



leaving anyone who falls prostrate at Her feet disconsolate, She again asked Her Son to pardon that sinner. Jesus was still reluctant to forgive him. Then the Virgin, leaving the Child on the throne, prostrated before Him saying: “My Son, see Me at Your feet pleading for this sinner to be pardoned.” And then Jesus told Her: “Mother, I can deny you nothing. Do you want me to forgive him? I, for love of You, forgive him; let him come up and kiss these wounds.” The sinner approached weeping profusely, and as he went kissing the Child’s wounds, they healed over. At last Jesus gave him an embrace as a sign of pardon. The man changed his life, and from then on led a holy life, and was most devout to the Virgin Mary who had obtained such an extraordinary grace for him.

Fundamental aspects on the Passion of Christ and Mary. The necessary considerations on each mystery of the Passion can be

reduced to nine chief points, which are: – Who was the Person suffering these torments; – how many and how grievous were they; – from whom did He suffer them; – for whom and for what cause; – with what love and sentiments; – the virtues He practised suffering them; – the route Christ followed in His Passion; – the Dolours His glorious Mother suffered with Him, – and the heroic virtues She practised in the Passion of Her Son.

1. On the Person who suffered. In the person of Christ Our Lord, who suffered these torments, three things can be considered for moving us more effectively to sentiments of compassion, gratitude, love and the desire to imitate Him.

Firstly: the innocence and holiness of this Lord, utterly innocent, without stain of sin; Most Holy with every species of holiness; full of all graces and virtues; Most Wise and Prudent, in whom was enclosed all the spiritual wealth of God’s Wisdom, and of His Divine Spirit without measure; so that all He suffered was blameless on His part, though His enemies pretended that He was guilty, and tortured Him as though guilty. So how will I not feel compassion on seeing such an Innocent, Wise and Holy Lord suffer? If the centurion and many others who were to be found on Mount Calvary struck their breasts with grief, seeing the suffering of one they held to be righteous, how should I not strike mine, considering that He is no ordinary just man, rather supreme among all the just, without having any guilt on any occasion to justify such sufferings? O my heart!, harder than stone, how is it that you are not broken from pain on seeing all that this Fount of Grace and Model of all Sanctity suffered?

Secondly: I will consider the Omnipotence and the magnanimous Generosity of this Lord in doing good to all, and in being Universal Benefactor of all; for He spent His whole life doing good: He freed those possessed by the devil, gave light to the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick and raised the dead to life. And besides this He did good to those same souls, forgiving their sins, freeing them from Hell, communicating to them the light of superlative doctrine and fire of charity, with the brilliance of all the virtues and finally, by His Death, opening up to them the Gates of Heaven. From whence it follows that He suffered torments and dishonour not only blamelessly, but also in justice merited supreme honour and recompense. Hence Saint Augustine says that Christ lived in the world doing wonderful things, and suffering very grievous things, until suspended on the rood. For how is it, my soul, that you do not melt with pain on seeing this Benefactor of yours and of the whole world who, doing good and benefiting all, received but wrongs and injuries from all? Oh! Who can attain the grace to suffer some evil and adversity for His love by doing good like my Lord? I do not want a reward from men for my good works, for my Redeemer received grievous torments for His.

Thirdly: I will consider the infinite Charity of this Lord in giving Himself to all, and making Himself one with all, pondering that He is my Father, my Master, my Physician,

my Shepherd, my Creator, my Blessedness, Spouse of my soul, my God and my All. And shortly before His Passion He became my Food and Drink to enter within me and become one with me; for which I have to take His sufferings as my very own, show compassion for them and feel them as if my own, for so very mine is the One who suffers them, and the love He bears for me so great. If the son weeps his father's death and the spouse her husband's, and the friend his dearest friend's, how can I not weep the Passion and Death of such a Father, such a Spouse, such a Friend?

Example. *A dream which increased love and devotion for God.* Some years ago, a Palmarian faithful had a dream which he considered to be a great grace from God. He found himself beside a road on which there was a great crowd shouting out furiously. He did not take long to realize that it was the Way of Bitter Sorrow and that the object of their hatred was Jesus, who went pitifully along bearing the Cross. His heart began to beat fast. The Roman soldiers, as in procession, marched with clamour of arms, clubs, shouts. Men, women, all jostled forward to see the Divine Culprit and shout at Him. Suddenly a man in front, whose back was all he could see, took some resolute steps towards Jesus to give Him a ferocious blow, raising back his right hand to give the blow with greater force, so that the Palmarian took firm hold of his hand to prevent him striking, and shouted out: "No!" The man, furious, then turned upon him and look at him fiercely... and the faithful recognized himself; it was his own countenance, it was he who wanted to strike Jesus! He awoke with a shock and bathed in sweat. This faithful had always led an orderly life, but this dream increased his love and devotion for God, and today we venerate him on the altars as Saint Anthony Ferri; for he came to understand deeply Who it is who suffers, and why He suffers so.

2. *Of the infinity and gravity of the torments of Our Lord Jesus Christ.* The infinity and gravity of the torments Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in His Passion can be reduced in general to two orders: some exterior, figured by Baptism, which bathes the body outwardly; others interior, figured by the drinking of the Chalice, which enters and penetrates within, since the Lord Himself made use of these two likenesses to declare them when He said: "Can you drink the chalice that I am to drink, or be baptized with the baptism of blood with which I shall be baptized?"

Firstly, beginning with outward torments, all the different kinds of physical pain from which He suffered greatly should be meditated. In the estate and goods He possessed, He came to undergo such poverty and scarcity that He died publicly almost naked, his clothes taken from Him by the soldiers to divide up among themselves. Besides, in his own Body He suffered dreadful dolours, both because they were excruciating in themselves and as well because of His most delicate constitution, so that He felt any pain or bodily injury far more than others did.

As all that the world considers good is the deceit used to lead us into the sins of covetousness, sensuality and pride, in place of these vices, You, Lord, in everything, want to suffer poverty, torment and humiliation. As from today, may the goods of this world be to me rather instruments to serve You, as up till now they have been to offend You! O my soul!, compare the excellences of this Divine Person with the shamefulness and pain that He suffers, so that you be confounded at your pride and sensuality, and feel moved to suffer by imitating Him, for His love.

Secondly, we can think of Christ Our Lord's five senses, considering how much He suffered in each of them. Given that, firstly, His eyes were pained seeing the gestures, mockery and commotion of His enemies, and the tears and sobs of His friends; eyes of His which were



clouded as well, since among other filth they flung spittle and dirt into His Most Divine Countenance in such quantities that those eyes were blinded; He also bore with His Most Precious Blood running down from His Head into His eyes, together with the ardour of the burning tears He shed for His children. His *ears*, besides the perforations made by the thorns of the Crown, suffered at hearing so many and such monstrous blasphemies, insults, false testimonies and outrageous slanders from His enemies. His sense of *smell* suffered at the offensive odours on Mount Calvary, where He was crucified. His *taste* underwent terrible thirst, and was given no relief, rather tormented by gall and vinegar. His *touch* underwent the most grievous torture of the scourging, of the thorns and of the nails which pierced his limbs. Oh! Senses of my sweet and beloved Jesus! worthy to be recreated by all that gives delight on this earth, how despite everything you are afflicted by all that is bitterest and most painful in this life! Oh that my senses might be conformed to those of my Lord, and suffer the same pains, since it is from my senses that my guilt comes!

Let us meditate as well on the same afflictions which truly and mystically His Most Holy Mother bore. She well knows about all dolours and all afflictions, and uses ours to help us reach God.

Example. *Breton legend.* According to an ancient Breton legend, a young man fell deeply in love with an inconstant and heartless woman who, as proof of his love, demanded of him nothing less than his own mother's heart. The youth killed his mother and drew out her heart. On the way, holding it in his hand, he tripped over a stone and fell, and the heart rolled on the ground. On bending down to pick it up, the son heard an anxious question from that bleeding heart: "Son!, have you hurt yourself?" This legend speaks of a mother's love. One can imagine the love of the Mother of Heaven for each one of Her children.

Thirdly, the outward sufferings of all Our Lord Jesus Christ's members and chief bodily parts can also be pondered, in which He underwent extraordinary dolours and torments. His Head was jabbed with thorns and struck by a cane; the hair and beard were torn out; the face buffeted; the arms pulled out of joint, so that His bones could be counted; the wrists were tightly bound with ropes; hands and feet pierced through by nails; the back and the whole Body lacerated by the cruellest scourging; and as these wounds were in such sensitive areas, they caused excruciating pain. Oh most delicate Body, how rightly it can be said of You that from the sole of the feet to the crown of the Head You had nothing sound, only lesions and contusions, wounds and the most terrible dolours! Oh, with how much more reason should my body be tormented in all its parts and senses, since in them all and from them all have welled up innumerable sins! O Good Jesus, by the wounds of Your Body heal the wounds of my soul; and by Your bodily pain free me from my spiritual evils.

Example. *By forgiving injuries, we make reparation to Christ and Mary.* A soulless individual had killed the brother of John Galberto, who sought the murderer to avenge his brother's death. It happened on one of those days that he found the culprit who, seeing himself in such dire trouble, knelt before John and cried out over and over again: "By Jesus Christ, forgive me!" John Galberto then replied: "For Christ's sake I forgive you, so that He too forgive me", and let him go. Still moved by the event, John entered a church and fell prostrate before a crucifix. All of a sudden, Christ crucified became alive, unnailed His right arm, and with it removed the crown of thorns from His Head, thanking him for having pardoned the murderer for His love, giving him to understand that by this good work he had made reparation for the crown of thorns He had suffered in His Passion. Touched in his interior by so great a grace from God, received by the intercession of Mary Most Holy, John Galberto entered religious life.

The second aspect to meditate. Consideration of the interior sufferings and pains of Our Lord, which accompanied the outward ones, and were also many and most grievous in everything that the Most Pure Soul of the Saviour could suffer without imperfection, such as interior abandonment by the Eternal Father, suspension of sensible consolations of the

heart, passionate grief of the Will at the injuries inflicted on God and at the perdition of men; fears, tedium, and terrible agonies; to which the sweat of Blood bore testimony, as we see in the meditation on the mysteries in the Garden.

Publicly He was afflicted interiorly in His honour, since He suffered countless gibes and affronts, was treated as a thief, an evildoer, a blasphemer against God, and was blasphemed for this reason. Against His good name He bore many false testimonies with which they attempted to discredit Him; so that in matters of virtue and holiness, He was despised and held as a sinner, as a samaritan, as possessed, as a subverter of the people, as a glutton, a drunkard and a blasphemer. And as consequence, He was held to be a man reproved by God and condemned, which is the greatest affront there can be. Besides this, as for wisdom and knowledge, He was despised and held to be ignorant and uneducated, as mad and delirious, as imprudent and foolish. As for His miracles, He was considered a liar and bewitcher, a man in league with Beelzebub and Satan. Finally, He suffered in His friends and relatives: in part because His Apostles forsook Him; and in part because, having them present, He had compassion on the dolour and affront they bore, especially His Most Holy Mother. Oh! Most generous Redeemer, how well You pay for our trespasses with Your agonies!

Finally, though the pains of the body were terrible, greater were those of the spirit, since interiorly He took as much pain as He wished, for as He loved much He wanted it to be much, to make full reparation to the Eternal Father and for the greater good of those whom He loved so dearly. Oh sweet Redeemer! I now see with how much reason Isaias says of You: “Man of Sorrows, acquainted with hardship and suffering,” since on all sides You are bounded by dolour and hedged around by affliction! The storms of a sea of bitterness bathed and tormented Your Body, and its waves entered Your soul. Outwardly a dreadful baptism of blood afflicted You, and inwardly the bitterest chalice of grief. Grant me, Lord, to be like You in all these pains, so that my body and spirit may please You, and become cleansed of all their stains! O Mother of Mercy! By the sea of bitterness that afflicted You, have pity on our bitterness and protect us by Your Mantle!

Example. *Tears of love for God.* Blessed Saint Clare felt such great compassion for the unspeakable sufferings of Christ and Mary in Their most dolorous Passion that, praying, she shed the tenderest tears and, on occasions, so abundantly that she could not stop sobbing. The devil, aware of the profit she drew from them to conform her will to that of God, tempted her by appearing as a negro boy to counsel her: “Weep not so, Clare, because you will become blind: Your eyesight is from God so that you can serve Him by seeing, and you cannot wear them out by crying, for that would be to take another’s goods.” Saint Clare replied: “By these tears I wash the eyes with which I am to see the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ my Saviour in Heaven.” Not satisfied with this defeat, he tempted her anew, going up to her again saying: “Look, you are going to lose your eyesight and be unable to pray the divine office; and thus you will lose more by taking care of less: you would have to disregard your obligation for what is devotion.” But the Saint resisted the temptations, recognizing by divine light that they came from Satan. She persevered in her tears, sometimes of tenderness with loving colloquies with her Sweet Spouse; at others of compassion for Jesus’ and Mary’s sufferings for her sake; at still others of contrition for her sins and the many she might commit if not sustained by the powerful hand of Mary Most Holy. She also had tears of charity for others’ injuries and neighbours’ needs, both spiritual as well as corporal.

3. *On the persecutors and enemies who tormented Christ Our Lord in His Passion.* On this point, first to consider is the crowd and the quality of the people who conspired against Our Lord to disparage and torment Him in His Passion, pondering the way that



kings, judges, governors, supreme pontiffs, priests, doctors and religious of that time, courtiers, soldiers, gentiles and jews all schemed together. King Herod with his court scoffed at Him; the judge Pilate condemned Him, Annas and Caiphas, high priests, reproved Him; the scribes and pharisees accused Him; the soldiers arrested and mocked Him, the executioners scourged Him, crowned Him and crucified Him, the people shouted out against Him demanding His death; a disciple sold Him, another denied Him, and all forsook Him. To which should be added that they had all received countless benefits from the Lord for which to love Him, honour Him and serve Him; since besides the general benefits which as God and Redeemer He bestows on all, He had granted many others very particularly to that people, teaching them His doctrine, performing many miracles in their presence, curing them of their illnesses and those of their children, servants or friends, giving them miraculously to eat, for which they wanted to proclaim Him king, and received Him into their city with the greatest pomp that any earthly prince was ever received.

Well, all those who were not among Jesus' followers became turncoats and rose up against their God and Redeemer, and against their Infinite Benefactor, injuring, tormenting and killing the One who had done them so much good, whom shortly before they had judged worthy of supreme honour, and acclaimed as the Author of life. Oh sweet Jesus, King of kings, Judge of the living and the dead, Sovereign Pontiff and Eternal High Priest, Fount of knowledge and holiness, Cornerstone of Gentiles and jews, how come You are persecuted by earthly kings and judges, by priests and learned of this earth, and by all the peoples and nations of the world? It is no surprise that those who know You not should persecute You; but to see You persecuted by those who know You, those who were bound to serve You! O would that I had never grieved You by my sins! Lord, do not allow me to grieve You further by them, rather that by my services I may respond faithfully to Your countless benefits.

In the second place, we should ponder the cruelty and barbarity of those enemies and persecutors. As they were proud, ambitious, covetous, hypocritical and dissembling, they were also enemies of the truth and of the Master who taught the truth, and of the physician who longed to cure their mortal wounds. And besides this, they were possessed by spite, hatred and envy of Christ because He reproached them for their vices and tarnished their vain dignities by the authority of His wisdom, holiness and miracles, and therefore they longed to ruin Him: some out of malice, to avenge His reproaches; others out of fear, so as not to lose the favour of Caesar or of the people; others out of ignorance, for not clearly knowing Who He was; others out of false zeal for religion or for the public good; a zeal which when joined to envy, increased their cruelty and made them worse than beasts. O meekest Lamb! With every reason You said with the Prophet Saint David, that many dogs and bullocks, and fierce bulls and raging lions have beset you, because Your enemies, like wild beasts beset You and spread terror by their bellowing, ripped with their claws, bit with their teeth and with their horns led you hither and thither, from one court to another, striking You with such cruelty as though You were no man but the outcast of the people! Oh! Who can free You from their diabolic fury! But Your charity does not yield to Your omnipotence which could free You, so that amid so many wild beasts Your sovereign virtues might shine out! However I see to my great confusion, that I am the one who torments You thus, that it is my sins that tear Your flesh apart and my cowardice betrays You! Help me, Lord, to love You with all my soul, so that my prayer be a balm for Your wounds and make reparation for my guilt and that of my brethren! May Mary Most Holy help us to overcome those who attack us so furiously, especially the enemies of our soul.

Example. *To drive the devil away.* The Most Holy Virgin revealed to Saint Bridget that there is no sinner so weak in Divine Love who, by invoking the name of Mary and proposing to amend, may not drive the devil away. And the Virgin confirmed it by saying that the devils respect and fear Her Name so much that, on hearing it pronounced, they leave the soul free from their grasping claws. Nothing sweeter to holy souls, nor more beneficial to

sinner, than to join these two Names together: 'Jesus-Mary', and pronounce them and invoke them often with all devotion. And for yet greater profit, repeat with love: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love You, save souls!

I will besides meditate on how great the pains of the Lord were, since with the eyes of His Wisest Soul He knew the fury of His enemies, not only from their outward doings and indications, like the rest of men, but because He penetrated their hearts, clearly saw the diabolical cravings they had to torment Him far more than they showed outwardly. Therefore, though the torments they inflicted on Him were many and very grave,



they wanted to give Him many more and greater ones if they had been able. O wisest Jesus! Your own knowledge increases Your dolour, without thereby cooling Your love, since Your Heart is more full of love towards Your enemies so as to suffer to their profit, than theirs of hatred to seek Your harm. Fill me, Lord, with Your blazing charity, so that I may imitate Your invincible patience and Your heroic obedience to the commands of Your Eternal Father!

Finally I will ponder how Jesus' chief persecutors were the powers of the darkness of Hell, namely the devils, who detested Him utterly, since He expelled them from the possessed, undid their power over souls and destroyed their kingdom, which was the kingdom of sin. Hence in order to take vengeance on Him they roused up the ferocity of the men persecuting Him. Satan instigated Judas to sell Him, the soldiers to invent the mockery they made of Him; and in the jews provoked the anger which blazed up in them. The divine permission he was given for this was not limited as was that given against Saint Job, so that he was not content to throw Him full of lesions onto a dung heap, but wanted to take His life encompassed by dreadful torments. O Jesus, my Redeemer! How can it be that Satan was given such power over Your Sacred Body? O love insatiable, not content to be tormented by men alone, You wanted the devils to provoke them, so as by Your torments to free me from those torments reserved for my sins.

We as well are afflicted by the infernal spirits, but must trust in the Most Holy Virgin, since it is She who crushes his proud head, and protects us so that we can serve God lovingly.

Example. *Attacked by Satan, with the "Memorare" he found peace of soul.* When Saint Francis de Sales was aged sixteen and studying in Paris, the Lord permitted the devil to get him to believe that all he did to advance along the path to sanctity was useless, since he was unremittingly damned. At the same time, the Lord left great obscurity and dryness in his soul, so that he found himself insensible to the sweetest thoughts on Divine Goodness, and thus the temptation be stronger in afflicting the heart of the saintly youth, making him lose his appetite, his sleep, his colour and his good spirits, and cause compassion just to glance at him. Amid this storm, all the thoughts and words of the Saint were of confidence and grief, and he broke out in laments such as: "Have I to live deprived of the grace of my God who previously showed Himself to me so gentle and loving? O Love, O Infinite Beauty, to whom I have consecrated my whole soul! Have Your consolations come to an end for me? O Purest Virgin, Mother of God, the most beautiful of Jerusalem's daughters! Am I never to see Your lovely countenance in Heaven? Ah, dear Lady! If my misfortune is to be so great, at least never permit me to say any blasphemy against You in Hell." Such were the tender sentiments of that afflicted love enamoured of God and of His Most Holy Mother. The trial lasted one month, at the end of which the Lord deigned to free him by way of Mary Most Holy, to whom the Saint had consecrated his virginity, and in Whom he said he had placed all his hopes. He returned home one evening and on the way entered a church, where he saw an image of the Virgin, and written on the base Saint Bernard's prayer, which begins: "Remember (*Memorare*), O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy protection, implored Thy help or sought Thy

intercession, was left unaided..." He fell prostrate there in front, said the prayer with great devotion, renewed his vow of virginity, promised besides to recite the Holy Rosary every day, and added: "My Queen and Lady, be my advocate before Your Divine Son, to whom I dare not have recourse. My Mother, if in the other world I am to have the uttermost misfortune of not loving my God, so worthy to be loved, obtain for me at least that in this life I may love You all I can. This is the grace I ask and hope for from You." But scarcely had he concluded his prayer, in one instant the Virgin freed him from the temptation. He recovered entire peace of soul, and lived most devout to Mary, whose praises and mercies he did not cease to announce in sermons and books all his life.

4. *Of the persons for whose good Christ Our Lord suffered and why He suffered.* First to be considered is how Christ Our Saviour suffered all these offences and dolours for the sins of past, present and future men, by paying all their debts with the treasure of His Blood, shed amid tremendous suffering and scorn.

From this we can deduce the reasons for His sovereign Passion. Namely, to defend the honour of His Father, vilified by so many offences; to placate the just indignation He bore against men by reconciling them with Him, and to free them from their trespasses and the pains they deserved for them, both temporal and eternal; to merit for them and obtain grace and charity for them, and all the virtues, together with the necessary and convenient means for their justification and perfection; and finally, to open the Gates of Heaven to them, and introduce them into glory and eternal life, removing all the hindrances there had been.

Hence, as men's sins were infinite in number and gravity, for being against an infinite God, it was necessary that the Person who was to suffer these dolours be infinitely excellent in order to be able to pay that debt by His dolours; and though any pain of Our Lord Jesus Christ, just one Drop of His Blood, would have sufficed for all this, being such a Person, being infinite, He wanted to suffer all those torments so that Redemption might be more abundant, and men come to realize the infinite gravity of our sins since, as Saint Bernard says: "by the consideration of the Remedy I see the gravity of my danger." Oh! How grave are the wounds for which it was necessary for Christ to be wounded! If they were not death wounds, eternal death wounds, the Son of God would not have died for them!

Our Redeemer gazed at the whole mystical body of human lineage, wounded from head to foot by countless trespasses, and to heal it wills that His own Body be wounded from Head to Foot with countless wounds, and His Spirit be afflicted with the most shameful dishonour so that the medicine be adequate for our wounds.

For our inordinate hankering after worldly goods, Lord, You are almost wholly stripped on a Cross; for the pride of the learned You are taken to be a lunatic; for the vanity of those who presume to be holy, You are derided as a sinner; for the self-importance of the influential, You are treated as a wretch and insignificant, for the satisfactions of the carnal, You are loaded with torments. The dolours of Your five senses pay for the excesses of our senses; Your Head is crowned by thorns in atonement for our ambitions; Your tongue is soured with vinegar and gall for our gluttony; Your hands and feet are pierced through with nails as the pains for our evil conduct and malicious steps; Your back is chastised with scourges for the thefts and misdeeds which weigh upon us. Your shoulders were oppressed by the burden of the cross, since ours cast aside the burden of Your Law. O Most Generous Redeemer, whose Redemption is so abundant that it would suffice to redeem infinite worlds, apply It to this poor world you raised up, so that all may rejoice thereat and be saved!

Example. *The gravity of excommunication.* On one occasion some faithful went to Saint Antonine to ask him to excommunicate others whom they accused of certain faults. Saint Antonine did not want Christians to think that an excommunication was something of little importance, but wanted to show them the transcendence of the ecclesiastical pain of being separated from the True Church of Christ. He told them to bring him a fresh loaf of bread, and meanwhile he prayed fervently. As soon as they arrived with the recently baked

bread, Saint Antonine launched an excommunication against it, and at once it turned black as coal. He then told the accusers that this was so that they might understand the force of the Church's malediction, and not ask for this pain except in grave need, and for all to avoid exposure to this ecclesiastical censure as the greatest of evils. He then absolved the bread loaf and it became as it was before.

Secondly, I will meditate on how Christ Our Lord suffered all these tortures for those very enemies who tortured Him, and shed His Most Precious Blood to pay for the sins which His persecutors committed by shedding His Blood. In testimony of this, while on the Cross, He prayed for them and excused them. And so immense was His charity that He offered His Passion up to infuse charity into those who detested Him, to give honour to those who dishonoured Him, to give freedom to those who held Him prisoner, to give rest to those who afflicted Him and to give eternal life to those who dealt Him a cruel Death. My Saviour, blest be Your immense charity, and may Your infinite mercy be glorified! Oh! If Your enemies were to comprehend, how they would feel confounded at their own ingratitude, and once converted into friends would never cease to praise You and serve You with love far greater than the malice with which they previously persecuted You! Lord, open the eyes of those who now persecute You, so that they cease to persecute You, and ceasing to persecute You, strive to serve You in all truth.



Thirdly, I will consider with particular attention how Christ Our Lord suffered all these mockeries and dolours for all men in the world, in such fashion that He suffered and offered them up specially for each one of them as though he were the only one in the world, having him present in His memory and in His Heart, and pondering his sins, miseries and needs, as though He had no one else to attend and restore. In such a way that I can say with Saint Paul, speaking of Jesus Christ, “who loved me and gave Himself up for me” to death. Oh my soul!, if you were to see yourself in your sweet Jesus’ Heart at the time He suffered these dolours! Oh, if you were to understand the love and care with which He offered them up for your sins, without doubt you would melt with grief for being the cause of His sufferings, and would blaze with love at seeing yourself so loved amid them. Weep then for your sins now, for which He who so loved you suffered so dearly, and with all your strength love Him who suffered so dearly for you, and as though He suffered so much for you alone, and thus praise Him and glorify Him for ages without end.

Example. *A devotee of Mary, prisoner by free choice; and a sinner converted and freed from prison by devotion to Mary.* Saint Alan de la Rupe tells that a schoolmaster, after having led the most abominable life, was handed over to the law and condemned to perpetual imprisonment on bread and water for the rest of his life. After one year of his sentence, he was surprised to see resignation and good spirits in one of his companions of misfortune under the same sentence. Having asked him how he could bear with patience an adversity which would only change at death, the prisoner answered that he could only attribute it to his devotion to the Virgin; but the schoolmaster retorted: “If this devotion you practise with such care is so advantageous and produces so many goods for those who have it, how is it that you stay a prisoner and your devotion does not win your freedom?” The other replied: “For a long time it has been in my power to recover my liberty; but I have not wished nor wish to accept it, and am quite happy to do a true and harsh penance for the rest of my life to satisfy Divine Justice, and by temporal labour avoid the eternal pains I have deserved by my crimes. If I were to leave here I have reasons for believing that my perverse inclinations would lead me to fall once more into the abyss of vice and evil from which I am at present free. Considered from this point of view, prison seems

sweet to me, the fasts are tolerable, and I prefer all the rigour of my present situation to worldly pleasures. I owe all these graces to the Most Holy Virgin; I will ask Her to grant you the same happiness, and you will see how She protects you if you become Her devotee." These words convinced the schoolmaster, filling him with confidence in Mary's protection, to Whom he raised the following entreaty: "Holy Virgin, take pity on Your servant. I vow to serve You all my life long and promise to pray the Rosary every day if You draw me out of this prison." His request was heard, and when he obtained liberty he left for another country where he again practised his profession, and gave his pupils a thoroughly Christian instruction, inspiring them with devotion to the Most Holy Virgin Mary and having them recite the Rosary every morning and every evening. The pupils taught this devotion to their parents, who were steadfast in its practice; and after some time the schoolmaster took the habit of Saint Dominic and led an exemplary life, and died in holiness.

5. *On the love and sentiments with which Christ Our Lord suffered.* This point is the most tender and the one which should serve us to find spiritual delectation and relish whenever we meditate on the Passion: Consider the awe-inspiring immensity of the love with which this Lord suffered all His torments. He did not suffer them out of need or by force, rather, as the Prophet Isaias said, of His own Will, solely because He so wished, because He is good and merciful, and disposed to give pleasure to His Eternal Father. He suffered infinitely to do good to all men, to reveal to them the infinite riches of the charity, mercy and liberality of God towards His creatures.

Hence as He loved His Eternal Father and, for love of Him, so loved men, with that same immensity of love He suffered for them all that He suffered, accepting it all with great happiness and consolation at their good. O who can penetrate into the length and breadth, into the height and depths of Jesus' charity! O who may enter His blazing Heart and see the furnace of infinite fire burning in Him, and be burnt with that fire, and leave, all full of love, to love others as I am loved and to suffer with love for the One who suffers with such love! From this interior love were born such outward signs and displays that suffice to melt hearts more frozen than ice itself, and harder than rock.

Since firstly, it is the sign of love for sufferings to desire that they come soon; to speak with pleasure of them, to recall the memory of them often, to enter with joy and elation into the place to suffer them, and to grieve on seeing their delay in coming, and to reprehend those who seek to impede them, calling them Satan and adversaries. All this our Sweet Jesus did, as truly enamoured of suffering. Therefore He said to His disciples: "By baptism of blood it behoves Me to be baptized, and what anguish I feel until it be accomplished!" O my Beloved!, if this baptism were of water, I would not be surprised that a delay might trouble You; but being a baptism of blood, and of blood pouring from Your veins amid terrible pain, how can You desire it with such eagerness? Oh that I might be given such hunger and desire to suffer labour and hardship, and that I might enjoy them more than resting!

However, many presume with respect to sufferings and desire them before they come; once come, however, they detest and fly from them. There is another surer sign of love for suffering, that is, to launch oneself at those same sufferings, to go out to receive them, to speak nothing in one's own defence to be freed from them, though provoked to do so. Likewise to offer himself readily and without resistance to whatever his tormentors sought to do to Him, with such meekness that the enemies lost none of their spirit for tormenting Him, despite all the torments they gave Him. All this and much more did Christ Our Lord practise in His Passion, since He went to the garden where they were to seize Him; He could pray to the Father to send legions of Angels to defend Him, and willed not to do so; He gave licence to His enemies who were prostrate on the ground to rise up and seize Him. He presented His Face to be buffeted and His Body to be scourged, without turning His Face away or moving to avoid any pain; He would not perform miracles so that Herod might favour Him, nor speak in His defence so that Pilate might free Him, though Pilate



insisted and wondered at His silence. And finally, He accepted His unjust sentence, and sweetly embraced the cross and stretched Himself out upon it, letting Himself be nailed with hard iron nails, since He was already nailed far more securely by the nails of love. Oh infinite love and immense fire, which the waters of all those immense afflictions could not douse, rather flared up yet further! Burn me, my Saviour, with this fire, and set me ablaze with this love.

But Jesus' immense love was not satisfied at suffering all He suffered, but desired to suffer infinitely more. He gazed at His enemies' longing to invent fresh torments to try Him and, expanding His love further, not only willed to suffer those torments they gave Him, but was ready to suffer all those they wanted to give Him. And not content with this, He was desirous

and disposed to suffer incomparably greater ones, if they had been for our good.

Oh!, infinite fire always ablaze and that never says enough!, with what shall I repay that desire to suffer? Much do I owe You, for all that You suffered further for me; but far more do I owe You for the greater desire You had to suffer more, if it had been for the salvation of a greater number of souls. If You received thirty-nine scourges, Your love was ready to receive five thousand thousands yet crueller. If Your Head was pierced by seventy-two thorns, Your love was ready to be pierced by seventy thousand. If You hung on the Cross for three hours with exceeding pain, You were ready to stay there until the end of time with far greater torments. Your desire to be tormented was greater than Your enemies' to torment You; and You loved suffering more than all men of the world love to rest. Oh! Who might give me such insatiable love as never to be satisfied at suffering for Him who suffered for me with such insatiable love! A good testimony to this love is the episode in the Garden where this Lord, foreseeing his executioners' torments, sought by His own Will to make a start to them, with such excruciating pain that He sweated Blood.

Example. *The Cross of Beirut*. Archbishop Saint Athanasius collected this wonderful story which occurred about the year 765 in the Libanese city of Beirut. At that time, Constantino V Coprónimo was emperor of Orient, a ferocious iconoclast. Some jews found a Crucifix in a house which had belonged to a Christian. In their permanent hatred for Christ and Christianity, they agreed to crucify the Crucified again on the following Holy Week as their forebears had done. This they did. And their impiety went so far as to pierce his side, from which blood and water flowed, which they caught up in a recipient; and the earth trembled and the sun was darkened, as on the day of the Passion. The jews were taken aback and were filled with admiration, and said: "He healed many, let's see if He still heals them now." They found a paralytic, anointed him with the blood and he was healed. Afterwards they tried the same with the blind and the maimed, and all were healed. Touched by the grace of God, they began to feel great distress for their sins. And as the fame of the miracles began to spread, the jews of the city wept, now convinced, and all confessed Christ, went to the Bishop to ask for Baptism. The jews who had been present at the miracle confessed their sacrileges before him and all that had happened. The Bishop went to see the Crucifix, saw the Christ, and what the jews had done, and afterwards sent some of that Blood to many churches in Christendom, for the consolation of the faithful and confirmation of our Faith. When all those Jews embraced the Faith of Christ, they transformed their synagogues into churches. The custom to consecrate a church began then, for before that time only the altars were consecrated. It is admirable that after that sacrilegious profanation, the jews who had witnessed the miracle recognized that Jesus was truly the Messiah announced by the Prophets, He whom their forefathers awaited; and showing their repentance sought out Bishop Deodatus to give them the waters of Baptism. Twenty-two years later, in 787, in the Second Council of



Nicea, which was the tenth Universal Council, this wonderful miracle of Beirut was one of the arguments in favour of the veneration of Images, in opposition to the iconoclastic heresy. There it was defined that Sacred Images must be exposed for veneration, since the honour given to the image is directed to the person represented in it. The miracle of the Beirut Crucifix gives us to understand that, if it is a great offence to God to outrage a Crucifix, it is also very pleasing to Him that we venerate the Sacred Images of Christ and of His Most Holy Mother.

6. Of the heroic virtues which Christ Our Lord exercised in His Passion. The first to be considered is how Christ Our Lord in His Passion practised all the principal virtues of the perfect Christian life, and each one of them in heroic degree, both in outward actions and as well far more in the interior ones which accompanied them. The causes for this were: 1.- Because He

came to be Master, Exemplar and Model for all the virtues, and hence wanted to be a summary of them all, and give singular example of them, as He said when He had washed the feet of His Apostles. 2.- Because by His Passion He merited and conquered all the virtues for our sakes, and thus wished that merits be founded on the actual exercise of them all. 3.- To defend the honour of the virtues which were very decadent and discredited in the world, especially those whose function was to tread the things of this world underfoot. 4. To bequeath to us as testament and last will, confirmed by His death, excellent works of all His virtues, since as He said in His last sermon, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you,” so that He could say, and said by His deeds: ‘A new commandment I give you, that you humble yourselves as I humbled Myself, and that you obey and suffer as I obeyed and suffered.’ O sweet Master, teach me to practise these virtues, imitating the example You gave me, so that I on my part defend their honour for Your glory.

Secondly, I can ponder the abundance and grandeur of these virtues, meditating on the eight heroic acts which Christ Our Lord called beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, which He exercised in His Passion with all eminence. The first: He practised the spirit of poverty, renouncing all things down to his own clothing, almost naked on the Cross. And together with poverty He practised humility, which it encloses, treading underfoot all the vain honours and pomps of the world, and embracing every manner of scorn as referred. He practised meekness heroically amid so many beasts who mauled and tore Him to pieces, like a lamb, without speaking or defending himself, nor showing indignation, and with such fortitude as though a diamond in all He suffered.

He wept bitterly for our sins, with great dolour and sorrow, to the point of shedding, not just tears from His eyes, but Blood from all the pores of His delicate body. He had insatiable hunger and thirst for justice, and never tired of doing good and undergoing wrongs, in order to justify us and give us examples of sanctity, for which He said on the Cross: “I thirst.” He excelled in the mercy he showed to the unfortunate, giving them whatever He had: property, honour, blood and life to remedy their miseries, and His own Body as nourishment to satisfy their hunger, and His Blood as drink to quench their thirst. He had the most eminent cleanliness of heart, remaining in the midst of such terrible occasions without sin; rather, drawing out of them motives for exercising admirable acts of virtue. He was pacific in most excellent degree, making peace for us with His Eternal Father, winning for us true peace, and retaining it Himself in the face of those who fought such a terrible battle against Him. Finally, He was superlatively patient, undergoing the greatest persecutions ever for justice’ sake, and with the greatest patience ever practised; so that with every reason He is owed all the rewards that pertain to these virtues, which He also gained for those who imitate Him in them.

O sovereign Master! Whoever heard You speak on the Mount of the Beatitudes when You preached these virtues, and likewise saw You suffer on Mount Calvary when You practised them! You were the Same, and had the same purpose on the two Mounts, speaking and acting, teaching to suffer and suffering. Give me grace, Lord, that I may hear what You taught me, and practise what You showed me, conforming myself with You in all that You did and suffered just like Your Most Holy Mother, who heard You transported by love, and practised all that You preached with wonderful perfection and sublime self-immolation, and conformed Herself to all that You did and suffered, for Her will was one with Yours.

Example. *To pray to God for our enemies is an inspiration of Divine Love.* When Saint Engelbert of Cologne was attacked by his enemies, some of them from his own family, and wounded forty-seven times, bathed in his own blood and about to die, he prayed to God for those who were killing him. From his death he was venerated as a martyr and by his intercession many miracles were wrought in Cologne. Some years later, a Priest was called to exorcize a possessed, and the Priest, before driving out the unclean spirit, obliged him to speak. He asked him: "Say, why does Saint Engelbert perform more miracles in this city than all the other Bishop Saints of this city put together." And the devil replied: "Because on dying Engelbert prayed for his enemies, like his Master, for this reason merited to perform more miracles."

Thirdly, these virtues of Christ Our Lord can be pondered each in itself, examining the qualities and degrees each has. And as it would be lengthy to give an example on each, we shall only give one on obedience, which embraces them all, of which Saint Paul said: "Christ became obedient for us unto death, and death on the Cross," and, "being the Son of God, Christ experienced in the passible state of His Soul and Body the unspeakable sufferings entailed by His Eternal High Priesthood, which He exercised bloodily out of obedience to the Heavenly Father." And this obedience was heroic. 1.- Because He not only obeyed in easy and favourable matters but in the most difficult and cruellest things, as was death on the Cross, with all that led up to it. 2.- Because in that extreme situation His obedience was the most perfect, without freeing Himself from anything announced by the Prophets. This is to be noted when almost all the events of His Passion had already been fulfilled, so that for the fulfilment of one of those offences prophesied and not yet fulfilled, to be given vinegar when He felt thirsty, He said: "I thirst," so that the Scripture might thus be fulfilled. 3.- His obedience was the most prompt and punctual, without delay or deferment, nor retort, nor excuse for all He was commanded, though highly callous, and on the part of judges and executioners highly unjust. 4.- He was humble, subjecting Himself to all kinds of bad and perverse men, as He knew this to be the Will of His Father, according as Isaias says of Him: "The Lord God conveyed to me His plans, and I did not demur or turn back... I gave My Body to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out My beard; I did not turn My Face away from those who insulted Me and spat upon Me." 5.- Finally His obedience was constant unto death, willing them to take His life rather than He fail to obey, by dying, obeying; and obeying, dying; and all with the obedience of love, according as the Lord Himself said: "For the world to know that I love the Father, I will voluntarily give Myself up to death, thereby submitting to the commandment the Father gave Me... Rise up, and let us leave here;" – rise up and let us suffer.

I give You thanks, sweetest Lord, for the heroic example You gave me of obedience. Oh!, who might give me suchlike obedience, strong, entire, prompt, punctual, persevering and loving, and submit myself to every human creature for Your love, so that the whole world may know that I love You, and that I fulfil Your Commandments in the way You command! By Your holiest obedience, I request this obedience; command me, my God, whatever You will, but give me virtue to fulfil what You command me.

In the same way we can meditate on humility, poverty, silence, modesty and the other virtues.



Example. *Divine Doctress of the Church*. The famous Franciscan theologian Saint John Duns Scotus, known today by the title of ‘Doctor Sūtilis’, as a child ardently desired instruction, but his limited intelligence meant that he always ended up bottom of the class. However, he applied himself and studied as hard as he could. Above all, he was very devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin and never tired of asking Her to grant him intelligence though it were a crumb. The perseverance and fervour with which he repeated this prayer caused the Mother of Wisdom to appear to him one night in his dreams and promise him the gift of wisdom, provided that, when the opportunity arose, he would use it in Her service. Hardly had he woken up than he found himself with such extraordinary aptitudes for study that his classmates and teachers were amazed. His progress in learning was such that he very soon ended up as

one of the wisest men of his century. The year 1304 then arrived and, by order of the Holy See, the most famous doctors of France met in Paris, in the presence of the Papal Legates, to settle the famous controversy over the Immaculate Conception. Scotus went to the assembly and, as he crossed the University courtyard, he prostrated himself before the image of Mary, making this brief but ardent supplication: ‘*Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata; da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos,*’ which means: ‘Holy Virgin, grant that I praise Thee; give me strength against Thine enemies.’ The statue of the Virgin bowed her head, to signify that She granted him the grace requested; and in that attitude She remained during the centuries that followed. Encouraged by such extraordinary signs, Scotus responded satisfactorily to two hundred arguments invented by doctors opposed to the Immaculate Conception; and he spoke with such energy and soundness that Mary’s Immaculate Conception triumphed in that magnificent assembly. Since then, the University of Paris vowed to defend the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and to celebrate Her Feast every year; and also determined to confer no academic degree on anyone without first requiring an oath to observe it inviolably. What great graces are achieved with fervent and persevering devotion to Mary!

7. *On the seven routes followed by Christ Our Lord in His Passion*. The routes which Christ Our Lord followed on the night of His Passion and on the following day can be reduced to seven, to meditate the seven days of the week, covering the entire Passion. The first was with His disciples, from the Cenacle to the Garden of Gethsemani, where He grieved, prayed and sweated Blood. The second, from the Garden, where He was taken prisoner, to the house of Annas, where He was examined and received a cruel blow. The third, to the house of Caiphas, where He was spat upon, cuffed and suffered the most grievous injuries and dolours all the rest of that night. The fourth, to the house of Pilate, Roman procurator, where He was accused by the jews with many false testimonies. The fifth, to the palace of King Herod, where He was scorned by him and by all his soldiers. The sixth was the return to the house of Pilate, where He was scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked and condemned to death. The seventh was from here to Mount Calvary, bearing upon His shoulder the Cross upon which He was crucified there. For these seven routes we should give thanks to God seven times a day, glorifying Him for the judgements of His Justice and Mercy which shine forth in them, slowly pondering on Who the person is who followed those routes, and the purpose He had in them; the company He had, the place He came from; how He went along, the place at which He arrived; the things He said, did and suffered, drawing from it all the spirit and profit for which they were ordained.

1. In the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ should be considered His infinite dignity, as said, meditating on the acts He performed and the spiritual sentiments which accompanied the steps He trod, ordaining them to the glory of the Eternal Father, to expiate our sins.

Perhaps the routes were seven in chastisement for the malicious steps we have taken in the seven capital sins, and to crush the pride of the rubicund beast with the seven heads that tyrannizes the world, to tame the pride and rebelliousness of the worldly, and give us all an example of humility and patience, that is, so that proud and arrogant hearts, perverse rebels and spirits be humbled and subjected by these routes taken by this eternal Lord, traced out from eternity for this purpose.

O Eternal God, our Saviour! Lamb sacrificed for us from the beginning of the world! Cleanse the eyes of my soul, so that I may consider these routes You followed for our healing, and they obtain for us the purpose for which You ordained them. By them, Lord, forgive my wrongful steps, and set them to rights from now on, according to Your Law, so that no injustice take root in me. O Eternal Father! Who counts the steps of men, the wrongful steps to chastise and the rightful to reward! See the steps of Your dear Son, and by them I implore that You straighten up mine, and they be in conformity with His in everything. My Mother!, guide my steps and help me recover my way, if I should have the misfortune to abandon it!

Example. *"Father, I want to confess."* A pilgrimage from a certain French city arrived at Lourdes. One of the travellers was a worker, vigorous in appearance, called Stephen, incredulous and sceptical. He had arrived with a group of visitors on a tour, "to be present to observe a superstition." Once in Lourdes he went everywhere with the rest, but instead of joining in with the canticles and prayers, he went from one side to the other with hands in his pockets, smiling ironically at those scenes of piety. In the afternoon, when the pilgrimage formed up to take part in the procession of the sick, the Parish Priest was looking for someone to take the Parish Banner. It consisted of a great canvass on a pole with the Crucifix painted on one side and on the back the name of the Church. In the midst of the tumult and hubbub, the Priest held Stephen by the arm and told him: "You are the man we need. A manly fellow is indicated to take our banner..." And before the man had time to answer, he found himself holding the standard, while someone more pious removed his hat. Showing indifference, he shrugged his shoulders. He had gone to Lourdes as a joke and should stay to the end. With a cynical grimace he went to the head of the group, in front of the Priest who led the canticles. They had not gone far when the Priest noticed that the standard-bearer seemed exhausted by the heat. He went up to him to say that he would relieve him at once, but the man refused the offer so brusquely that the Parish Priest, mystified, restarted his canticles, wondering who that man might be. Nevertheless, among the people the rumour ran that the standard-bearer seemed to be ailing. The Priest went back to the head of the group. Our man was pallid and anguished, sweat and tears ran down his tanned face. He then made a gesture to another to come up, who touched Stephen on the arm and told him: "My friend, let someone else carry the banner..." "Banner! You call this a banner!", Stephen said. "I have carried Christ with His Cross, and His sufferings have ruined my heart. No, no, I have to carry it to the end. I will end my Calvary, and then, please, Father, I want to confess..." Another conversion owing to Mary's intercession? Quite possibly...

2. As for the company which escorted Christ Our Lord on these routes, we should consider how He sometimes went accompanied by His disciples like the Shepherd amid his sheep. And thus was the first station from the Cenacle to the Garden, consoling them and exhorting them to watch and pray, defending them from the wolves that sought to persecute and ruin them. But in the other stations He went amid enemies, like a sheep among wolves, and like a lamb among lions and tigers, who with unwarranted cruelty and brutality mauled and tore Him to pieces, tormenting Him with insults, mockery, dolours and tortures, leading Him with hands tied like a sheep taken to the slaughterhouse, without opening his lips to complain. Here was fulfilled in His own Person what He had told His disciples: "Behold I send you out as sheep among wolves; be then intelligent as serpents and simple as doves," since along those routes, despite the terrible persecutions, calumnies and ruses of His



enemies, He always appeared meek as a lamb, unresisting; sincere and simple as a dove, without offending them, more vigilant than serpents, without ever being taken in by them; rather by admirable wisdom confounding them, whether by silence, whether by speaking as convenient.

3. As for the places He left and the manner in which He went and where the station ended, we should consider that for Him they were all places of affliction and torment, leaving one and going on to another; and thus those which followed were almost always more dreadful than the previous, His labour increasing from lesser to greater. And all these passages were rushed owing to the fury of His enemies, who hastened His steps; and to the immensity of the love which urged Him to hurry on to conclude our Redemption promptly.

So that we can say of Him as the Song of Songs: "See Him, He comes glorious leaping over the hills and crossing the heights." The hills and heights are the tribunals and palaces of the pontiffs, presidents and kings, in which this Lord did not delay to enjoy the goods enjoyed there by the worldly, but with great haste passed through each of them, as the doe pursued by the dogs, and there bitten: struck and tormented, until on Mount Calvary they gave Him the last hounding, and He became disjointed and dead upon the Cross.

Hence there is no tribulation unknown to Him, neither to His Most Holy Mother. And She attends to us and protects us so that, amidst them, we may press on to the One Sole Good.

Example. A Face with two cuts that demand reparation. In 1652 the Poles proclaimed the Virgin of Czestochowa, venerated on an icon, as Queen of Poland. It was painted on wood, 122 by 82 cm and represents the bust of a black Virgin with the Child Jesus in Her arms, a work attributed to Saint Lucas. It is conserved in the Sanctuary of Jasna Gora, close to Czestochowa. This Virgin has two wounds on the Face. In 1430 a group of hussite heretics invaded the Sanctuary and robbed the icon, but when they placed it in their cart the horses refused to move. One of the heretics threw the icon to the ground, unsheathed his sword and with two strokes deeply cut the right cheek of Our Mother, but when he tried to strike it again, he fell writhing in agony until he died. During the month of August, in treks up to three hundred and fifty kilometres, in eleven days, people from all over Poland went to Czestochowa, calculated to be up to 830,000 pilgrims in over 200 organized groups. For them it mattered not whether it was hot by day or very cold by night. All along the way, the labourers went out to welcome the travellers, offering them bread and milk, fruit and bacon. After the long journey, the pilgrims went around the Basilica esplanade, quite large, reciting the Way of the Cross in memory of all that Christ and Mary suffered for us. Then they entered to greet their Queen, the Black Virgin of Czestochowa.

4. Lastly, at each of these places, spiritually I will raise up some tents, as Saint Peter sought to raise on Mount Tabor, to dwell there with Christ transfigured in dolours, pondering at length the things He says, does and suffers for my cause. First I will raise a tent in the Garden of Gethsemani, and there will I dwell with Christ sad and afflicted, watching and praying with Him, listening to the words He speaks to His Eternal Father and to His disciples, listening as well to those of the Angel when comforting Him, and those which He replies, and gazing at the struggle He undergoes interiorly, and the sweat of Blood He exudes, and the steps He takes, going to His Apostles to awaken them and coming back to the place of prayer to plead for Himself and for them. Sometimes I will ask Him as a disciple does His Master, to teach me to pray and to watch; and at other times, as a friend or faithful servant, I will console Him in His trials, compassionating on seeing Him disconsolate, accompanying Him in His solitude. And in that same tent I will meditate on how He goes out to receive His enemies, the words He speaks to them, the miracles He performs on

them and the torments He receives from them, taken prisoner, ill-treated and tied up. And though all this was done with haste, I will reflect on it slowly, remaining in this tent until my soul feels satisfied, illuminated and moved to love and imitation of all that I contemplate in my Lord. All this should be drawn from the meditation of this mystery, and in this way proceed at the other sections. We can also raise our tent beside Mary Most Holy, to accompany and compassionate in Her Sorrows.

Example. *The “Good Christian”*. In Tangiers, a Moroccan city on the African coast, in the XV century, Fatima, the daughter of a rich Moroccan family, showed special charity to Christian captives and, as they spoke to her of the true religion, she felt an ardent desire to be baptized, for which she commended herself fervently to the Virgin of Guadalupe of Cáceres. Shortly her father tried to marry her, at which Fatima suffered so much that she wanted to throw herself down from a tower. The Virgin Mary then appeared to her under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Encouraged by Her, at midnight she removed the chains of the captives to fly away with them. On lowering herself down by a rope from a high wall, she fell. They believed that she had killed herself; however, to the admiration of them all, she was none the worse. They embarked with joy, when a tremendous storm kept them at dawn again in the port. The freed captives and the crew implored Our Lady with tears, but not Fatima who was sleeping unaware of the danger they ran. Our Lady then appeared again to Fatima, woke her up, calmed the sea and directed them to Christian lands. No sooner had they arrived when Fatima had herself baptized. She did not want to be called Mary “because it is not proper for the slave to take the name of the Lady” and took that of Isabel. Neither did she accept invitations to rest for a few days, before all she wanted to visit the Most Holy Virgin of Guadalupe. With great fervour she offered herself to Her in perpetual service. She stayed to live on in the neighbourhood, where she married, giving such an example that she was known as ‘the good Christian’. At her death in 1504, these events were engraved on her marble tomb.

8. *On the Dolours which the Virgin Mary, Our Mother and Lady, suffered in Her Son’s Passion*. In these mysteries of the Passion, the dolours and tribulations of the Virgin Mary Our Lady should also be considered, so that we feel compassion for all that Her Son suffered on Her account, who felt all the sufferings of His glorious Mother, for She is also ours, and our sins are the cause of Her afflictions. Right it is to feel Her Dolours, and be motivated to imitate the excellent virtues She displayed in those sufferings.

The magnitude of these Dolours should be deduced from their fundamental root. By the Divine Espousal between Christ and Mary, Our Most Holy Mother suffered spiritually and physically, participating to the full in all the sufferings of Her Divine Son, feeling them in Her Soul and in Her Body. For at the Incarnation of the Divine Word, the Holy Ghost effected the Espousal of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which is the extension of the already existing Espousal of Their Divine Souls. Hence Christ and Mary live fused together in a majestic and unique way, enjoying a perfect communion, in such a way that all the thoughts, sentiments, joys and dolours of Jesus and Mary spring from a single fount: Their Divine Espousal.

Hence She felt a lively apprehension of Her Son’s sufferings, with all their circumstances and, penetrating them with the light of Heaven, finding Herself present at them, not only pondered what Jesus was suffering outwardly, but also penetrated into His interior sufferings, and Their union was so lively a representation of everything, that She suffered all that Her Son suffered, and hence felt all His prosperity and adversity as Her own, and experienced Her Son’s sufferings far more than if they were Her own, as She loved Him more than Herself. And as by the force of this love She was beside Herself, and removed and placed in Her Son’s Heart, whatever He suffered, She suffered, feeling in Herself what the Son felt; and thus could say far better than Saint Paul: “I am nailed to the Cross together with Him. So that I no longer live, rather it is Christ who lives in me,” and I live in Christ. This was the



sword, whetted by knowledge and love, which Simeon announced when he said: “And a sword shall pierce your own Soul, which is espoused to His,” besides the lance-thrust of Longinus which, transpiercing Jesus’ Heart, really and truly transpierced Mary’s Immaculate Heart, and for Her meant that mystical death. In this fashion She too drank the chalice of the Passion, was baptized with the baptism of dolour, and immersed in the bitter sea of tribulation, so that it can be said of Her: “Immense as the sea is Your grief” and the bitterness of Your affliction.

A woman once listened to the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, demanded by God as proof of Abraham’s obedience. To this narrative the woman replied: “God would never have demanded such a sacrifice from a mother.” That woman was wrong. The Eternal Father demanded of Jesus, Son of

Mary, the sacrifice of the Cross for the Redemption of the world. Jesus went obedient to death and death on the Cross. But Mary, who knew of His sacrifice from the beginning, consented, was present and accompanied Jesus in His Passion. Mary associated Her sufferings to those of Her Son, in oblation to the Heavenly Father. Finally, with Her Divine Son dead in her lap, Mary offered Him up to the Eternal Father for our eternal salvation.

Example. *A remarkable favour promised to Saint Matilda.* Reading one day the words of our Agonizing Divine Saviour addressed to Mary: “Woman, behold Your son”, Saint Matilda felt inspired with the lively desire to ask God to give her to share in the same grace He had granted to Saint John, in whose favour Jesus Christ had pronounced those words from the Cross, and that now in her favour He tell the Most Holy Virgin: “Woman, behold Your daughter”. She had scarcely finished her petition when the happy reply came. The Saint clearly heard the Adorable Redeemer recommend her to the piety of His Mother out of consideration for the Blood He had shed and the Death He had undergone for the salvation of the soul of this daughter, who was besides His spouse by the vows Matilda had pronounced. Flooded with joy and trust after this recommendation, she wanted to make a like petition to Our Lord on behalf of those devotees who might address Him the same petition, and the Divine Saviour deigned to reply that He would never refuse this grace to whoever were to request it with fervour. After this remarkable promise, many are those who have requested a like favour and have been the object of a very special motherly providence shown to them by the Most Holy Virgin.

The Dolours of Our Most Holy Mother were immense as the sea, but were besides intensified by the great love She felt for Christ Our Lord, since according to the measure of love is the joy at the good of the person loved and the dolour at the evil He experiences. This love and dolour were most vehement in the Virgin for many reasons.

1. Because Christ Our Lord was Her own Son according to the flesh, and She loved Him with a love tenderer and purer than all the mothers and fathers of the world have loved their children. She being Mother and Virgin, since the conception of this Son was by the action of the Holy Ghost, who is Love, Her love was thus exceptional; and consequently exceptional the dolour She suffered at His death, so that She could say: “O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like My sorrow!”

2. This Son was besides firstborn and onlybegotten, whose life is usually dearer, and whose death more deeply felt; and thus to emphasize the grief of anything it is called ‘mourning the onlybegotten’. Then how the Virgin must have wept at the death of this Onlybegotten of Hers, who was at once God’s Onlybegotten, seeing Him crucified amid such shame and dolour?

3. The love of the Virgin for Her Son was greater owing to the great likeness between the

two, since likeness, says the sage, is cause of love; and thus parents usually love far more the child most alike to them. For as the Virgin and Her Son were much alike in appearance and condition, in habits and virtues, they were as though just one in everything; and the dolour which transpierced one likewise transpierced the Heart of the other.

4. Because of the infinite Holiness and Wisdom of Her Son, since charity, when well ordered, loves better what is best, namely those who are closest to God; and if to this is joined closeness to us by blood, love grows further, and nature and grace join together for love's perfection. Likewise dolour grows, seeing one who is very holy suffer; and as we know that He suffers blamelessly, our pain augments. For if the daughters of Jerusalem wept bitterly at Christ's torments, considering Him innocent, how much more bitterly would one weep who knew Him to be the Holy of Holies and Fount of all holiness?

5. Because She recognized Him as her Infinite Benefactor, from whom She had received countless and supreme benefits, among them the sovereign good of having been chosen as His Mother. And as love is grateful, it desires infinite goods for the benefactor in recompense for those received. Then what dolour would the Virgin Mary feel seeing the One for whom She desired infinite goods suffer such terrible evils!

6. Since besides being Her Son, He was also Son of the Living God, Infinite God, worthiest of being loved with infinite love for His infinite goodness and beauty; and as the Virgin with great light was aware of this infinite excellence of Her Son, She loved Him with all Her Heart, Soul, Spirit and Strength, without taking back anything of the supreme love She could offer Him. And in this measure Her dolour grew, grieving with all Her Heart, with all Her Soul, with all Her Spirit and with all Her Strength, seeing Him so despised and spurned when for infinite reasons He deserved to be honoured and loved.

7. Finally, as consequence of Her Espousal with Christ, the Holy Ghost had poured out the charity of God into Her Heart, which He united to Himself with a unitive love, so that She become one in spirit with God and with Her Son, and hence She suffered besides unspeakably for the harm in the souls of sinners.

O Sovereign Virgin! Who can count the bitterness you underwent owing to these seven reasons for love and dolour, which like seven knives transpierced Your Heart? You could well say on this occasion: "Don't call me Noemi (that is, gracious) but call me Mara (that is, bitter), because the Almighty has filled me to the brim with bitterness." The Almighty gave You great favours on the day of His Incarnation and the same Almighty has given You great afflictions on the day of His Passion. And as afflictions are also favours, pray for me, that He show His power by giving me to feel what He suffered, and the grace to imitate Him in that suffering.

These considerations show us that the best disposition for feeling the dolours of the Passion of Christ Our Lord is love, and as Saint Bonaventure says: "However more blazing the love may be, so much the greater the dolour and compassion, and that same compassion further increases love." And thus the seven reasons referred shall be those which most increase this fervent love and union with Christ, by which I participate in His dolours and in the gifts which proceed from His precious imitation. This love and this union are the basis for the confidence of devout souls.

Example. *Saint Ferdinand III, King of Spain.* It is difficult to resume the life of this Saint, son of King Alphonse IX of León and of Saint Berenguella of Castile, who was able to impress on her son the indelible seal of the Love of God, of the Most Holy Virgin and of Charity to the poor. All his life he conserved great affection for the mother who had given him being, and he, censured by certain courtiers, answered them: "When I cease to be her son, I will cease to be obedient." From youth up till death, his life was continuous warfare, first to unite León to Castile and then against the sect of the moors, enemies of the Christian religion. The number of his triumphs was that of his battles. Four were his true loves: the love of God, of the Most Holy Virgin, of the poor and of his mother. His fasts were continuous,



his penances rigorous, and under his royal mantle he wore rough hairshirts. For the six months which the siege of Seville lasted, each day he spent two hours in prayer and gave himself three bloody disciplines. All the honour of his triumphs began with Mary and ended with Mary; and to Her, to God and to the valour of his soldiers he attributed his triumphs. He gave up his spirit to the Creator, that great soul, on the 30th of May in the year 1252. His body was buried in the Major Church of Seville, where it is conserved to this day, whole and flexible, exhaling a gentle aroma.

9. *On the heroic virtues which the Virgin Our Lady practised in Her Son's Passion.* Finally, the virtues which the Most Holy Virgin Our Lady practised on this occasion should be considered, in order

to imitate Her. The principal ones were four, in which many others are included.

The first, was loftiest acceptance of the Divine Will, denying Her own natural will in order to conform to God's, telling Him as Her Son had: "Not My will but Yours be done;" and this acceptance is so much the more heroic the greater the pains to which we offer ourselves up by our acceptance.

The second was deepest humility, not flying from contempt, but facing up to it and embracing it, taking pleasure in showing Herself Mother of Him who suffered such contempt, assuming that part of the contempt pertaining to Her. And with this humility She assisted at the crucifixion of Her Son, taking charge of His Passion and Death; since Mary had no sins for which Christ had to die, rather it was She who died spiritually with Him.

The third was great fortitude and magnanimity, and great patience. She moved up to Her Son's Cross, and stood beside it, nothing then being able to separate Her from it, neither the cruelty of the persecutors, nor the intensity of the dolours She suffered for this cause, desiring that She be given the occasion to suffer and die for the One Who suffered so grievously to make reparation to the Eternal Father.

The fourth was blazing charity and love for men, and for Her Son's very enemies, without their blasphemies and cruelties moving Her to indignation, rather to compassion, grieving for the sins they committed and the chastisements they deserved, praying to God for them and excusing them as Her own Son did. In this way the Virgin Mary joined the admirable practice of the virtues to Her terrible afflictions.

Outwardly disconsolate are You, Most Holy Virgin, at the pains You suffer, but interiorly beautiful by the virtues you practise. The Sun of Justice has turned you pallid, since His grief is the cause of Yours; and He Himself makes You beautiful, since by His example Your own shines out, imitating His virtues. Beseech Him, most pious Mother, that by the fiery rays of His light, He may enlighten and set my heart afire, so that I may meditate His sufferings in such fashion that I may have a part in them, imitating His virtues. Amen.

Saint Bernard, the great devotee of Mary Most Holy, in Her honour practised all devotions imaginable; but he had such a particular attachment to the meditation on Her Dolours that its remembrance alone made him shed abundant tears. By this holy practice, doubtless, he obtained singular favours and blessings, and could imitate the Most Holy Virgin in Her patience, Her fortitude, Her love for the Eternal Father and Her entire self-surrender to His Most Divine Will, and Her charity towards fallen mankind.

All that has been said in these nine fundamental points of meditation on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Most Holy Mother, sets forth in a general way what each person, in a more particular way, can consider in every mystery of the Passion, whether in the person of Christ Our Lord, whether in the Most Holy Virgin Mary, His Mother, taking the two as principal matter for meditation and imitation, and the Mother as advocate, to acquire great awareness of what They suffered.

According to Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, Jesus Christ has joined infinite graces

to Most Holy Mary's devotion by way of meditation on the Dolours She suffered during the Passion. Not without reason there exists the pious belief that the Most Holy Virgin, having requested Her Divine Son to grant some special grace to those who honour Her Dolours, Jesus granted, among others, the following four principal graces: 1. That before their death they would do true penance for their sins. 2. That He would assist them in their trials and more especially at the hour of their death. 3. That He would engrave the remembrance of His Passion on their hearts, to reward them afterwards in Heaven. And 4. That He would entrust them to Mary so that She might dispose of them and grant them the graces that She held to be convenient.

In 1921, the Most Holy Virgin announced to Saint Bertha Frances Petit: "Events are approaching like a growing cloud and spreading massively, without anyone showing concern. The nations will perish in fire and blood, as if they were struck by rays coming from Heaven. Terrible prospect! My Motherly Heart would be torn apart if I did not know to what point Divine Justice must be imposed for the salvation of souls and the purification of the peoples. See the Wound of My Heart like unto the Wound of My Son, and the torrents of Graces soon to spring forth. Don't let yourself be held back by any pain, by any deception, by any suffering. You have understood the Dolours My Heart has borne, the sufferings which confronted My whole being for the salvation of the world. I have called Myself the Immaculate Conception. I reveal Myself to you, as the Mother of the Dolorous Heart. This devotion, which My Son desires, pleases Me more than any other, and by it will be granted graces of Mercy and of Salvation in all parts." And in 1924, Our Lord added: "All the nations are heading towards a frightful cataclysm. I am the only one who can pacify all hatred and discord and undertake something positive so that peace may be secured. I will do so when My desire is fulfilled regarding My Mother's Heart; this will occur when the hour of despair arrives, at which all reparation must be made. Then, in reply to the entreaties rising up to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of My Mother, I will manifest My power by a miraculous intervention which will be imposed on all. The whole of Christendom will bow before this triumph which I, as Son, desire for My Mother." In 1940, Jesus confided these declarations to the seeress: "It is hearts that must change, and this can solely be achieved when this devotion becomes known, propagated and preached everywhere. This is the last assistance I give before the End of Time, the refuge of My Mother, under the title I desire for Her universally... As Son, I have conceived this Devotion for My Mother, and as God I demand it." Finally, the Lord told her: "My Mother's Heart shall be duly understood and devotion to this Heart united to Mine will give Peace, true Peace, so long desired and so little deserved... Mankind is heading towards a terrifying storm, which will divide the nations yet further. It will reduce human organizations to ashes and demonstrate that nothing subsists without Me, and that I continue to direct the destinies of the peoples. A frightful hurricane is in preparation. All the forces prepared will come to be unleashed with fury. That is the moment to abandon yourselves to the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary. I repeat that the Devotion to Her Heart united to Mine will give true Peace, so longed for but until now so little deserved."

Towards the middle of the XX century, when in the world the devil's power against Christ's Church became evident, Father Pacios wrote: "The crucial moment for the struggle of the devil against the children of the Woman will be at the end of times, when Satan will be set free to seduce the nations and make war on the lineage of the Woman. The means of seduction then to be used by Satan, though not exclusive, will preferentially be that of pride, given that he is the spirit of pride, inciting man to take God's place. And he will persecute by all the means available to him whoever resists him, and will launch himself upon the lineage of the Woman. But not one of those who invoke Mary and have recourse to Her as Mother will be overcome. Upon them the serpent will vomit rivers of pride so that in their current he may draw them away; but Mary will be beside them protecting



them, and will absorb all the rivers of pride... There are some who think that we are in the Last Times... My Last Time will be the hour of my death. One thing seems certain: that Mary multiplies Her interventions in an attempt to gather together Her dispersed children and draw them to take shelter under Her Mantle, as though an imminent peril was awaiting them..."

The Magnificat

After praising the Most Holy Virgin Mary and pondering her greatness, it is fitting that we consider the admirable response Mary gave when she was first acclaimed as Mother of God, namely Her canticle the 'Magnificat.' It is noteworthy that the first appearance of Most Holy Mary in El Palmar de Troya was on March 30th, on the 1968th anniversary of the Magnificat, precisely to begin the apocalyptic fulfilment of the Magnificat's

prophecies, – to dethrone proud hierarchs with Divine Power and replace them with the humble, – to proclaim the beatitudes of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and of Divine Mercy that always saves those who fear God, – to give abundance of spiritual nourishment to the hungry, – and to assist the Church according to God's promises.

A practice that Saint Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort recommends to true devotees of the Most Holy Mary is "the frequent recitation of the Magnificat, the only canticle we have from Mary, to give thanks to God for His benefits and to obtain new ones. Do not fail to recite it, especially as thanksgiving after Holy Communion, as the Virgin herself did, according to a wise author." In his "Treatise on True Devotion," he says that the faithful slaves of the Most Holy Mary "will frequently recite the Magnificat, following the example of Saint Mary d'Oignies and many other saints, to thank God for the graces He granted to the Most Holy Virgin. The Magnificat is the only canticle composed by the Most Holy Virgin, or rather, in Her by Jesus Christ, who spoke through Mary's lips. It is the greatest sacrifice of praise that God has received in the law of grace. It is the most humble and grateful; at the same time, the most sublime and elevated of all canticles. In it there are mysteries so great and hidden that even the Angels are unaware of them. I know a treatise full of erudition and piety on the explanation of the Magnificat, which tells us many wonderful things about this beautiful and divine canticle. Among other things, it states that the Most Holy Virgin recited it frequently, and particularly in thanksgiving after Holy Communion. The wise Benzonio, in explaining the Magnificat, relates many miracles worked by its virtue, and says that devils tremble and flee when they hear these words of the Magnificat: 'He has shown the might of His arm: He has confounded the proud in the thoughts of their hearts'." It is very beneficial to pray the 'Magnificat' canticle daily, since by reciting it we praise God with the same words that the Most Holy Virgin Mary used to glorify Him. This prayer helps us to obtain Mary's favour and God's gifts and indulgence.

Mary, to say what She is going to say, does not have to force herself, nor reflect in a special way, nor recollect herself more than usual. What She is going to say, or sing if you will, is so simple for Her, so evident. Her soul manifests itself here with words so beautiful and so rich in their simplicity that one could meditate on them for a lifetime without exhausting them, and living them would lead us, by themselves, to the loftiest sanctity.

With the simplicity of a child, the Most Holy Mary pronounces one of the most admirable and formidable prophecies ever uttered by human lips. For she dares to declare, and future centuries will have to prove her right: "Henceforth all generations shall call Me Blessed. Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me."

This is the purest truth, the most indisputable reality. But, and this is where true humility manifests itself; this dizzying greatness comes from God, it is a look of condescension and love from Him who noticed "the littleness of His Slave," who therefore proclaims:

“My soul magnifies the Lord” ... My soul magnifies the Lord, rejoices and delights in Him... She would like to make Him greater than He is, but She cannot: for, fortunately, due to God’s infinity, She is powerless to do so; but She wants to add to Him all that a creature can give Him, namely: loving gratitude for His benefits, the joyful affirmation that He is the source of all that is great, good and beautiful; She wants to praise Him, celebrate Him, and give Him honour and glory with all Her strength...

There are spiritual writers who affirm that the Blessed Virgin Mary frequently repeated her ‘Magnificat’, especially later, after Holy Communion. We gladly believe it. But what counts most and is entirely certain is that Her whole life was an uninterrupted ‘Magnificat’, that is, an unceasing and most perfect glorification of God; that She never acted to please creatures, that She never sought Herself in a self-centred egoism; that She never vainly delighted in Her greatness and holiness; that each of Her thoughts, words and actions were oriented in the most formal way towards God; and that each moment of Her life was a song of praise that rose to the Most High, a sacrifice of sweet odour that exhaled from the precious censer of Her most loving Heart.

Most Holy Mary desired that all glory be for the Holy Name of God, for She was the faithful Echo of the Soul of Jesus, who exclaimed: “In My deeds I do not seek to receive glory from men, but the glory of My Father.”

Following the example of Jesus and Mary, anyone who has understood his relationship with God should live in this way. A true Christian, an authentic devotee of Mary should live in this way. The slave of love of Our Lady, who has consecrated himself totally to Her, should especially live in this way.

Saint Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort reminds us of this obligation, explaining how necessary it is to do every action for the glory of God as its last end, for the soul, in everything it does, must renounce its self-love, which almost always sets itself up as its objective in an imperceptible way. There is no more powerful reason to practise the holy slavery of love than the certainty that, in this way, our life will be a splendid and incessant Magnificat, learnt from Mary and sung together with us by Her who is the incomparable Artiste and Chantress of Divine Greatness.

The Holy Scriptures contain several venerable canticles, to give thanks to God for various extraordinary favours of His Divine Goodness; but the holiest and most worthy of all these canticles is the ‘Magnificat’ of the Most Holy Mother of God, both for the dignity and holiness of the one who proclaims it, and for the great and admirable mysteries contained in it. Add to these the miracles that God has worked through this canticle. We do not know that He has performed any through other canticles. Saint Thomas of Villanova, Archbishop of Valencia, observes that by the pronunciation of this canticle the Holy Ghost worked several wonders in Saint John the Baptist, precursor of the Son of God, as well as in his father Saint Zacharias and his mother Saint Elizabeth; he adds that experience has shown that it is an excellent means to expel the devil from the body of the possessed. Certain other very serious authors report several miracles that have occurred through the recitation of this canticle. Saint Anselm recounts a personal experience: Suffering from various ailments that caused him very acute pain, he was entirely cured upon reciting the Magnificat.

Caesarius tells of a holy religious who had a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin and especially to the recitation of the Magnificat. When he was near his end, the Virgin appeared to him and told him that in seven days he would depart from this world; then She gave him Her blessing. On the seventh day following, at the final moment, while this good religious was in the presence of the prior of the monastery, Mary appeared to him again



accompanied by a great number of Angels and Saints; and She was present until this holy man, with inconceivable joy, surrendered his spirit up to God. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry recounts in the life of Saint Mary of Oignies that when she was near death and singing this canticle of the Mother of God, She appeared to her and warned her to receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. She was later present at her end with several saints and even with the Holy of Holies, Her Son Jesus. This shows us that it is very pleasing to our Saviour and His Divine Mother that this divine canticle be recited with devotion.

We do not know if the Blessed Virgin sang or pronounced it publicly at other times while She was in this world. But it is not possible to doubt that She recited it and perhaps sang it several times in private. Some authors report that She appeared several times in some churches, surrounded by a great number of Angels, during the celebration of vespers, which ended with the canticle of the Magnificat, and she was heard singing this wonderful canticle along with the Priests and religious, in a melodious and enchanting way, and that there are no words that can describe it.

When you sing or recite it, remember that you must render yourself up to the Holy Ghost to become united to the devotion and holy dispositions with which it was sung and recited by the Blessed Virgin Mary and by countless saints who have sung and recited it very piously.

Taking up the recommendation of Saint Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort, we will present a detailed and pious explanation of this beautiful, admirable and divine canticle of the Magnificat.

According to the Holy Gospel: “On Wednesday the 30th of March in that same year [5199] took place the Visitation of the Divine Mary to Her cousin Saint Elizabeth. The mystery happened in this way: Mary entered Zacharias’ and Elizabeth’s home and greeted them, and when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting the child John leapt for joy in the womb of his mother Elizabeth on being presanctified and anointed prophet in superior grade. Saint Elizabeth, at the Presanctification of her child Saint John the Baptist, received an increase of grace and greater enlightenment to know great mysteries, for she was entirely moved by spiritual jubilee, feeling herself filled with the Holy Ghost. And then, aware of the mystery of the Incarnation in the Most Holy Virgin, she cried out aloud saying to Mary: ‘Blessed art Thou amongst all women, and blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb. Whence to me such happiness, that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me? For behold, as soon as the voice of Your greeting sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed are You because You have believed, for as the Incarnation of the Son of God has been accomplished in Your womb, so too shall be all the other things You were told on the Lord’s behalf.’

And Mary said: ‘My Soul magnifies the Lord, and My spirit rejoices in God My Saviour. Because He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave, henceforth all generations shall call Me Blessed. Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me. And His Mercy is poured out from generation to generation upon those who fear Him. He has shown the might of His arm: He has confounded the proud in the thoughts of their hearts, dethroned the mighty and exalted the humble; He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich left empty. He has succoured Israel His people, remembering His mercy, according to the promise He made to our father Abraham and to his posterity for ever and ever’.”

With the help of Saint John Eudes, Saint Louis de la Puente, Saint Paul Segneri, and the venerable Friar Pedro de Santa María Ulloa, let us consider how the Virgin, filled with the loftiest spirit of prophecy, responded upon hearing the words of Saint Elizabeth, when She composed the sovereign canticle of the “Magnificat.” See how the Virgin, having heard so many things in Her praise, did not direct Her response to Saint Elizabeth who was praising Her, as men usually do to show gratitude, but all Her words were referred to God our Lord, teaching us how we should behave with men when they praise us; because the best and

safest way is to change the conversation and speak with God, from whom come the gifts for which we are praised.

Consider how, absorbed and wholly in God, our Lady, opening Her divine lips, composed and spoke in a clear voice that excellent canticle of the Magnificat. It is the canticle of Most Holy Mary. The better to understand it, consider each phrase by parts; for in it you will find great motives for virtue and praise of the Lord.

See how the Virgin, who was so prudent and measured in Her words when speaking with Angels and men, spoke more at length when addressing God, recounting His greatness; because the first is prudence and caution, but the second is abundance of love and gratitude, for those who bless the Lord should praise Him as much as they can, because He is greater than all our praises. When someone is full of God, all their talk is of God, to magnify and glorify Him with all they have; because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; thus the Virgin our Lady, as She was full of God, pronounced this sovereign canticle full of affection for God, which has ten verses, and is like a psaltery or harp of ten strings to glorify God. It is beneficial to meditate on all its words, so that we may know how to recite it with spirit, in honour of the Virgin, and joining with each word or verse some holy affection or some joy for the virtues of this Lady, asking for them for ourselves as well.

Our Lady said that her soul magnified or exalted the Lord, and Her spirit rejoiced in God Her Saviour. Saint Elizabeth praised and exalted the Blessed Virgin Mary, the great Lady, and She responds to the Saint, giving her to understand: "No work, however great, should glory or rejoice on seeing itself exalted; because the greatness and beauty it has comes from the craftsman who made it and placed that beauty in it, and just as the greater the work the more it magnifies the power and wisdom of the craftsman, thus My soul magnifies and exalts the Lord My Maker and Exalter, knowing that everything worthy of blessing and praise is from the Lord." She finds herself acclaimed, blessed and praised, and does not appropriate to Herself these blessings, glories and praises; nor does She want them to lodge in Her soul, nor to linger for an instant in Her but, as soon as they arrive She attributes them to the Lord, whose they are and to Whom they should be given. Learn from these words the fidelity you owe to God: do not believe yourself of greater dignity for gifts that are His; to Him is due all honour, glory, and praise, as the beginning, source, and origin of all that is good. If creatures praise you because they see something good in you, and you do not respond with praise and esteem for God who put that good in you, you are unfaithful and a thief, for you retain what is not yours and take what is another's. Recognize that in you there is nothing good that is yours for which honour, esteem or praise is due to you, but much that is bad, for which contempt, insults, and affronts are due, for sure. And so, if you see yourself honoured and esteemed or praised, it is not you to whom these honours are given, but to the one who in some way through His mercies is seen in you. To that Lord make return, in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of what is His, if you do not want to perish with Lucifer.

The 'Magnificat' is the canticle of the Heart of the Mother of Love, that is, the canticle of the Holy Ghost. The Divine Love with which She is inflamed makes her pronounce the words of that marvellous canticle, which according to Saint Bernardine, are flames of love that spring from the ardent blaze of divine love that burns in the blessed Heart of this incomparable Virgin. With what respect and veneration should this most holy canticle be proclaimed and sung! What should be the purity of the tongue and the holiness of the lips that recite it. Certainly it would be necessary to be all heart and all love to sing and properly pronounce this canticle of love.

"My soul magnifies the Lord." In this first verse, the Virgin teaches us the spirit of praising





God, feeling loftily and magnificently for Him, and magnifying as far as possible His attributes; that is, His Goodness and Mercy; His Wisdom and Charity, and the excellence of His rule. And this, not only with words, but with the soul and with all its powers, inviting them to praise the Lord. And She did not say that Her soul magnified or will magnify, but magnifies; to signify that Her main office and her perpetual occupation was to magnify God, doing on earth what the Angels do in Heaven. Oh if my soul always magnified its Lord! Oh Lord of infinite greatness, little can I magnify You with my praises; but in the way I can, I praise and magnify You, and confess that You are greater than I can say and feel. Oh sovereign Virgin, whose soul always magnified the Lord, and invited all to magnify Him, grant me that my soul may magnify Him, and be occupied continuously in singing His greatness for all ages. Amen.

To magnify the Lord, says Saint Augustine, is to adore, praise, exalt his immense greatness, his supreme majesty, his infinite excellences and perfections. Man must magnify or exalt God. God exalts man by making him great. God always exalts him on His part, for not satisfied with having already made him great in nature, He is always ready to make him infinitely greater in grace, and greatest in glory. Man, on the contrary, magnifies God by belittling himself in His presence; the more he sees himself exalted by God, the more he humbles himself, disparages himself, and attributes to God all those favours he has so liberally received from His hands. And this is what the Virgin meant in the first verse, because hearing herself praised to a high degree by Elizabeth in those words “Blessed are You, because you have believed”, She did not deny the grandeurs received from God, being one who could not and should not deny them; but declared that, in what was done in Her, only God should be confessed and considered great, since from Him alone came that great work. “My soul magnifies the Lord.”

You falsely lament if you say that you do not know what to do for the glory of God, for you must humble yourself in His presence as far as you are able to comprehend, and intimately understand, that of yourself you are nothing, know nothing, can do nothing good; and if you have nothing of value, say that everything is His, and with this you will then give Him that glory which makes Him grow; at least in relation to yourself. God cannot grow in Himself, because His greatness has no measure. But He can, without any limit, grow in you, because in proportion to that low esteem you have of yourself, with the graces that God gives you, the esteem of God grows in you.

It is true that the Virgin, not content with greatly magnifying God in herself, also greatly magnified Him in others, for that God, who before the Incarnation was known only in a portion of the earth, after the Incarnation soon came to be known throughout the Universe. And considering this, the Virgin could well say “*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*”, because She was the one who gave God that flesh, through which He was to be more exalted in the coming centuries.

Give therefore to the Virgin felicitations for the lot that fell to Her above all creatures, but give it to Her especially because afterwards She knew how to correspond to Her lot better than any creature. The Virgin did not say that She magnified God with Her tongue, but that She magnified Him with Her Soul: “My soul magnifies the Lord;” and this because, without comparison, Mary gave much more glory to God with Her interior powers than She expressed in words. When speaking of God to men, the Virgin Mary needed to use those words common to all; but not so when speaking of God between Herself and God Himself, in giving Him thanks, in admiring Him, in loving Him, in blessing Him. In this, not subject to our rules,

She used those feelings that were Her own, which are incomprehensible to us. No human being can dispose of their own entire soul, to the honour of God, as Mary could dispose of Hers, because She alone was its absolute Mistress, and always had it free from untimely distractions, rebellions, antipathies, and inordinate affections by virtue of intrinsic impeccability by grace; this is so, since the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary “live fused in majestic and unique manner, attaining perfect communion, in such fashion that all Jesus’ and Mary’s thoughts, affections, joys and dolours stem from a single source: Their Divine Espousal.” (Treatise on the Holy Mass). Very justly Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,” for She said what no other among pure creatures could say, since no other can ever call their Soul “their own” as Mary called it.



Can you say at every moment that your soul is yours? How can it be yours when you have so little control over it? Don’t ambition, anger, envy, and vanity still have tyrannical dominion over it? And how can you truthfully call it yours? Until you recover it from the hands of as many barbarians as you have passions, don’t boast that you possess it, for though it’s yours by right, it’s not yours in effect. And if it’s not yours in effect, how could you also frankly say with the Blessed Virgin: “My soul magnifies the Lord”? If you say it, perhaps the demons will laugh at you, knowing with certainty that they currently possess that soul which you call yours. This possessive term is absolutely well used on few lips; on many very badly; and on the lips of the Virgin Mary it was used perpetually with perfection.

Mary doesn’t say: “My soul magnifies My Son,” but “the Lord,” to distance herself further from any shadow of self-praise. By saying “my Son” She would have used a more glorious term for herself, because we couldn’t remember the Son without at the same time understanding that She was the Mother. She wanted to say “Lord,” because then no other title corresponds to Her but “Slave,” and this was precisely the title in which more than any other the Virgin Mary took pleasure; so much so that, if She rejoiced in seeing herself as Mother of the Eternal Word, it was not for the resulting dominion over the universe; but in the more special and closer servitude that, as a Mother, She had to render to Her blessed Son in raising Him, carrying Him, and performing with Him all those incessant services that a poor woman does for her child; the more tender the child, the more needy he is. Blessed, then, whoever esteems nothing greater than serving God. Enjoying the choicest delights of God in prayer is worthy of appreciation and should be esteemed, but not as much as serving Him. The smallest service done to God is worth much more than receiving any gift from His hands.

You, then, who hear how the Virgin acted, learn from Her the lesson or example She gave you, of loving in God no other gift of His other than that of Him being your Lord. This is to remind you of your obligation to employ yourself entirely in His service, without looking out for interests of your own. If you serve God as Powerful, as Good, as Beneficent, you may doubt if perhaps some hidden self-love of yours moves you to do this; but if you serve Him as Lord of yours and of your all, you go very safely, because thus should you serve Him, and you will serve Him even if He denied you all payment. For not all who worship the true God are blest, but those who, worshipping Him, also deal with Him as He is; that is, as their absolute Lord.

Note, however, that the Virgin said: “My soul magnifies the Lord”; that is, She wanted to designate Him only with the term “Lord,” without adding the limiting “my,” so that it would be understood that the Lord is no more Lord of one than of another; He is equally Lord of all. And thus, there is no one who is not obliged to serve Him in the same way. Tell God,



then, in the depths of your heart that He is Lord of all. And at the same time be ashamed when thinking that a Lord of such majesty humbled Himself to take even the form of a Servant, for love of you: He “humbled Himself taking the form of servant and living in the state of man.” (Philippians). This was also the reason why the Virgin Mary preferred to say “My soul magnifies the Lord” rather than saying it in another way to denote that She did not cease to recognize her Son as Lord, even after She saw Him reduced to the state of a Servant.

It is strange that one who has all authority, natural dominion, innate and independent dominion, not dominion by participation or communication, has been sent to serve all men, even the vilest. The Lord of the Universe could not become the Servant of all without great violence: driven by His infinite Love. It is not surprising then that, contemplating such profound excesses of humiliation, the Virgin burst out exclaiming: “My soul magnifies the Lord”. If man, the more he humbles himself, deserves to be exalted by all, how much more does God so deserve?

Consider the other words: “*And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.*” As if to say: “My spirit does not rejoice, nor has it ever rejoiced, in self-praise, honours and esteem, nor in greatness, riches, or vanities, nor in anything outside of God: only in God has it rejoiced, does it rejoice and will it rejoice,” because Mary wanted nothing, awaited nothing and wishes nothing outside of God. This is what Our Lady says, to condemn the worldly vanity, beauty, riches, honours, esteem and vainglory in which worldly people delight and rejoice. Be attentive then to these reasonings, and beware of rejoicing at what made your God weep, sweat blood and suffer shameful and cruel death, and gave immense anguish and bitterness to the Mother of God.

“And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.” In these words the Virgin reveals how we are to rejoice in God, indicating certain conditions for this joy, so that it may be pure and perfect. Because we should not place our main joy and happiness in spiritual things, nor so much in the gifts received, but in the Giver of the gifts, because He is God Himself. Though we should rejoice in God because He is our Creator, we should mainly rejoice that He is our Saviour and Sanctifier; because in this way He is the source of the spiritual joy which is founded on the health of the soul sanctified by divine Grace. And this joy must be primarily in the spirit or higher part of the soul, so that it be cleaner of everything that has a trace of flesh; such as the sensible joy of the body usually is, although sometimes the joy of the spirit also overflows into the flesh.

Finally, our spirit must not rejoice in itself, as if all the gifts in which it rejoices were by its own merits, but its joy must be in God its Saviour, who gave those gifts; in Him must its joy rest, so that the soul may rejoice in the Lord and delight in its Saviour. Such was the joy of the Virgin, who at this point looked at the Saviour She bore in Her womb, and carried away by Her love, said: “My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.” O my soul, rise above yourself in spirit like the Virgin, and rejoice purely in Christ your Saviour, placing all your joy in Him alone. If you desire joy, rejoice in God, and He will fulfil the desires and petitions of your heart, so that your joy may be full and never be taken from you, up till the moment when you enter into the eternal joy of your Lord.

“And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.” Consider how magnifying God is a debt that must be repaid by us with all our internal and external powers, without it being possible for us fully to repay such an obligation. When Mary said: “My Soul magnifies the Lord”, She spoke of the Soul, because in this canticle She also participated bodily with words of praise, intoning before the entire universe. But when speaking of what She rejoiced in

God, She gave Her Soul the name of spirit, because Her rejoicing remained in Her, known only to Her, savouring it without any other person being able to glimpse it, much less understand; responding to the higher part of Her Soul.

Do you know the reason why you exalt God so little? Because you rejoice little in God. Look within yourself and consider your joys: are they sensual or spiritual? You find it difficult to find joy solely in the spirit; you want the spirit to always work in you as a soul, giving the senses any contentment or satisfaction they desire, and never to work as a spirit, refusing to allow this. So, don't be surprised then that you find yourself deprived of the delights and joys of the spirit. The spirit can never have true joy except in God, when it acts as a spirit, rather in its higher part. It is well that you make this fine division between your soul and your spirit. The one who can do this in you is the one who did it in the Virgin Mary.



There are two sources of spiritual joy; one is the good that God so amply possesses in Himself, and the other source is the good that God communicates to us. The first of these joys is by its nature always greater, because it is a supreme good, immense, infinite, and unfailing. From this, it follows that the spirit in love with God can always, and in all fullness, rejoice in such good. The second is always lesser by nature and because it is a limited good; a good that may perhaps seem more sensible to the spirit because it is a good in which it participates. The first of these joys, being nobler, must precede, and the second should follow. All this is wonderfully expressed in these words of the Virgin: "And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." By saying "in God," She points to the first source of joy She enjoyed; and by saying afterwards "my Saviour," She showed us the second. The first source was God viewed in Himself, without any relation to creatures, and to express this She said "in God." The second was God Himself, but who by becoming incarnate had come to Her womb as God of salvation, and to signify this, She added "My Saviour." But if among pure creatures there was none who knew more than the Virgin of that good with which God is overflowing in Himself, nor who participated more in it, who can glimpse the measure of that joy which filled Mary's spirit from these two sources combined? It was a joy proper to the beatific vision, producing in Her the effect of filling Her with ineffable jubilation. The saints on earth are not filled with this ineffable jubilation that corresponds to the Saints in Heaven, because they always see God in a veiled form. It was not so for the Blessed Virgin, because She had within Herself this Infinite Good, which filled her with exultation and jubilation, rejoicing not in Herself, but in God, which is what the Blessed do in Heaven.

What joyful felicitations you should give to the Virgin Mother for the great rejoicing and jubilation that was Hers, such that no pure creature has tasted the like while living on earth. You, since you are not to taste such exultation or joy on earth, at least pray to the Virgin to obtain for you that you may enjoy it in Heaven.

Consider how the Word was not God of Salvation for the Virgin Mary alone, but equally so for all mankind. And yet, the Blessed Virgin appropriated it so much that She regarded it as her own: "And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." She did so with reason, for firstly with this the Virgin gave us an example of what each of the faithful should do. Each one should hold it as undoubted that Christ came into the world for the good of all men. And for sinners He came with more generosity, in order to die to make reparation for our sins and redeem us. No less should each one respond to this benefit, as if He had come to the world for him alone. No one can ever be deceived in this, because Christ came for all as for each one, and He came for one as for all.

But although Christ came into the world for everyone, at the same time it is certain that



among all He distinguished the Virgin Mary in such a way that Christ came more for love of Most Holy Mary than for all others who ever existed together, though She had no need of redemption, being Irredeemed. And this being so, why should the Virgin not call the one who became incarnate primarily for Her ‘My Saviour’? Finally, the Virgin could freely call Christ Her own, because He was Her true son and fruit of Her womb, and although any mother can undoubtedly call ‘her own’ the child born of her, none is as much a mother of her son as Mary was of Christ, for according to the flesh it can be said that He was entirely Mary’s. In saying “And my spirit rejoices in God My Saviour,” She demonstrated Her love for God and God’s love for Her. God preserved Her from all evil, and saturated Her with grace to the utmost; that is, totally full in Herself, full for others with an abundance of fullness to the infinite, and full above all other angelic and human beings combined.

The Virgin did not rejoice in the health or salvation given by God; She rejoiced in God who gave it to Her: “in God my Saviour” and not “in salvation”; so that you may learn that you should not take so much pleasure in the gifts God gives you, but in God Himself. If you take pleasure in His gifts without referring them to God, you will never be able to fill yourself with joy and exultation, because you are only doing what even the sinner knows how to do on earth. But if you take pleasure in God alone and in His goodness, it will be possible for you to rejoice with this ineffable joy, because you are doing what the Blessed continually do in Heaven.

Consider the words that follow: “*For He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He who is Almighty and whose name is holy has done great things in Me,*” As if to say: “The Lord looked upon the littleness and humility of His slave, He was pleased thereby; and as Powerful and Holy He has worked great wonders and ineffable mysteries in Me: for which reason all generations will acclaim, preach, and confess Me as blessed.” Note how the most sacred Queen not only returns to the Lord, as truly humble, the blessings and praises that Saint Elizabeth gives Her, but also returns to Him those that all generations were to give Her in time and eternity, already then consecrating them to the Author of Her prerogatives and excellences; and notice how She continues with humility and gratitude. And since Our Lady prophesies Her praises in all generations, and that these are to be given Her for what the Lord worked in Her most sacred Soul and Body; hence it comes to be that the praises and blessings given to Most Holy Mary redound to the Lord who exalted her; and thus by praising Most Holy Mary, you praise and bless God.

“Because He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave.” In this verse and in the following ones, the Virgin declares ten sovereign benefits, three particular and seven general; which are the main causes and motives She has for magnifying God and rejoicing in Him, and showing Herself so grateful to Him. The first is because He regarded the humility and littleness of His Slave; words with which the Virgin points to two roots of divine benefits; one principal on God’s part, and another on our part. On God’s part, it is deigning to look upon us with benign eyes and to remember us in order to do us good. For though it is true that He sees all things, nonetheless He is not said to look upon, nor take notice of those He leaves in the abyss of nothingness or in the depths of their misery, but upon those to whom shows great mercy.

The root on our part is the recognition of our littleness, by which we dispose ourselves to receive the gifts of divine generosity; and so the Virgin, being so enlightened by God, joined both things, magnifying God because He had looked upon the littleness of His

Slave. By these words, She does not so much confess that She has the virtue of humility, rather exercises it; because as a truly humble person, She does not consider Herself as such, or keeps it quiet, but humbly confesses that She is little, vile, and despicable as a slave; and that despite this, God did not disdain to look upon Her. With this, She taught us that the foundation of God's praises and thanksgiving for the benefits He bestows upon us must be the recognition of our littleness and unworthiness, because in this way there will be no danger of falling into vain complacency, as happened to the proud pharisee of the Gospel; rather, this littleness should be a reason to ask God to look upon me with benevolent eyes and grant me great mercies; because His inclination is to look at little things in Heaven and on earth, and show them great mercies. For God looks upon the humility and littleness of His servants, and delivers their souls from all their miseries. O Most High God, who dwells in the heights of Heaven, look upon the littleness of this vile slave, and show Your accustomed mercy to him, raising this beggar from the dust, and this poor man from the dung, to place him with princes, making him holy like them. Amen.



If we fear to be counted among Satan's slaves yet desire to be among the children of God, let us be horrified by ambition, pride, arrogance, presumption, and vanity. Let us declare mortal war on these monsters of hell and not tolerate them occupying our thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds. Instead, let us strive, as much as possible by God's grace, to establish in us the kingdom of the most holy humility of Jesus and Mary.

"Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." This is the second title that the Virgin had to magnify God, because from the moment that He looked upon Her littleness, and because He looked upon Her, all nations of men who believed in Christ, at that time and in the future, for all centuries, would call Her blessed. With this, the Virgin does not take Her own praises as a reason for joy, but the greatness that God gave Her, on which those praises are based, and the good that would result for all who would serve and praise Her. O sovereign Virgin, for my part, I want to fulfil Your prophecy and be one of those who call You Blessed. You are Blessed because You believed, as Your cousin said; and you are Blessed because You bore the Saviour in Your womb; and much more Blessed because You heard His words and kept them. You are also Blessed with the eight beatitudes that Your Son preached in the Sermon on the Mount: You are poor in spirit, and yours is the Kingdom of Heaven; You are meek, and You possess the land of the living; You wept for the evils of the world, and thus You are comforted; You hungered and thirsted for righteousness, and now You are satisfied; You are merciful, and You obtained mercy, being the Mother of Mercy; You are peaceful, and thus par excellence You are the Daughter of God; You are pure of heart, and You are clearly seeing God; you suffered persecutions for righteousness' sake, and now Yours is the Kingdom of Heaven, as the supreme Queen of all its inhabitants. O sovereign Queen, I rejoice that You are Blessed for so many reasons. Oh, if all the nations of the world would convert to Your Son, and call You Blessed with great faith, so that through You all might come to be blessed, imitating Your life here, and later enjoying Your glory! From this I will also deduce how great a reason for rejoicing in God is the certain hope of being blessed; wherefore Christ Our Lord said to his disciples: "Do not rejoice vainly because the infernal spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that, for your good works, your names are written in Heaven." And Saint Paul says to the Romans that we should rejoice in the hope of attaining the blessedness that is promised to us.

"Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me." This is the third title that the Virgin declares to glorify God, because at that moment She had



present in Her memory the miraculous things that God had worked in Her, and the great benefits He had done to Her from the instant of her creation until then; especially that great miracle of being Virgin and Mother; and not just any mother, but of God Himself and, amazed at so many great things, She praised God for them, attributing them to His Omnipotence and to the Holiness of His name, because with His Omnipotence He did them, and with His Holiness He wanted to do them, so that His name might be sanctified and glorified for all ages. And in saying that God did great things in Her, She also implied that He made Her great in the things that make men great before God, which is holiness and heavenly gifts; because the Son being great, His Mother had to be so as well. Whence it appears that it is not against humility to recognize God's gifts in oneself; rather, the Divine Spirit Himself reveals them to us, so that we may thank Him for them, attributing them not to our merits, but to the Power and Holiness of God, joining these two attributes, like the four mysterious animals that gave glory to God, saying: 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts: He who is, He who was, and He who ever shall be'. (Apocalypse).

God chose Most Holy Mary from the beginning to be Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son and Spouse of God the Holy Ghost. This was such a sublime favour that She could never cease to glorify the One who had dispensed it and to be filled with ineffable joy in God. She says: "He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave," for the Virgin especially excels in the beautiful virtue of humility, considering herself the "Slave of the Lord," as She truly knew Her own nothingness (while we know our own so little) to signify that as far as She Herself is concerned She exists only as God's creature, whom He destined from eternity for the dignity of Mother of God. Mary never had the ambition to be great or powerful; She only yearned to serve God and fulfil His Divine Will in everything. She does not attribute the benefits received to Her own merits, but to the Goodness and Mercy of God, and with this She teaches all Christians the utmost importance of having the virtue of humility. Many do not become humble because they do not come to understand well how great their vileness and misery is: "if someone presumes to be something, he deceives himself, since truly of himself he is nothing." (Galatians). The Immaculate Virgin lowers herself to the maximum by saying that God "has looked upon the littleness of His Slave," for She could not say like any of us: "God has seen my iniquity," nor could She say what Her ancestor King David said: "take into account, Lord, that in sin my mother conceived me, that in guilt I was born," because it would not be true.

It seems that, by reason, humility should be a virtue proper to sinners, who have so many iniquities to accuse themselves of and be ashamed of; and yet, it has never been greater than in Mary and in those most righteous: "Learn from Me, who am meek and humble of heart."

"Henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed." Blessedness on earth does not consist of being free from suffering. You are deceived if you believe that one who is free from all anguish is blessed. That is the blessedness of the life to come, but certainly not of the present. Rather, the blessedness of the present life consists of suffering much for the love of God, so each wayfarer should be considered more blessed the more he has to suffer: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," because thus they can more confidently hope for eternal blessedness: "Blessed be the one who suffers temptation and trial with patience, since after being tried thus, he will receive the crown of eternal life God has promised to those who love Him." (James the Less).

Why do all generations call Mary "Blessed"? Not only for the supreme dignity of being

the Mother of God, but because Mary corresponded most perfectly to this dignity; for in everything She behaved as the most worthy Mother of God and companion of Christ in Reparation and Redemption. To be blessed, it is not enough that God chooses and calls you for the works of His glory, but it is necessary that you then correspond to such election.



The Most Holy Mary prophesied: “Henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed,” saying that in all future centuries the universe would give Her the title of Blessed. Do you want to see how true this is? Well, notice that when you hear someone say: “the Blessed Virgin,” you do not doubt whether they are talking about Saint Agnes, or Saint Cecilia, or Saint Agatha, or Saint Catherine, although all of these are virgins and blessed; you know with certainty that they are only talking about Most Holy Mary. It is so true that the beautiful title of Blessed, absolutely, is seen as Her own, that everyone gives it to Her. Even in this life, this great title began to be given to Her: “Blessed is the womb that bore You!” And the Lord confirmed it: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice!” indicating that Mary is Blessed rather for fulfilling God’s Will. This was to such a degree that, at the same time as the Faith of Christ spread over the earth, the supreme Blessedness of the Mother also spread. And the most admirable thing is that we do not see that such ardour in celebrating Her has cooled in the Church, even after so many centuries, but that it is even more alive and ardent than in its beginnings; for, although the time of the great Roman apostasy came, precisely because the faithful people fell into the satanic deception of believing that honouring Her is not so important, in the true Church devotion to the Most Holy Mary has grown notably. It seems that the Virgin foresaw in spirit all this that the Church was going to do later to honour Her. And among those whom the Virgin foresaw, so eager to exalt Her, did She also foresee you? If She foresaw you, rejoice; for you have reason to rejoice. You will say to the Virgin: “Blessed”; and She, in return, will make you blessed. Do not fear, for She never lets herself be outdone by anyone in tributes; Her response will always be greater.

“Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me.” For God, infinite and almighty, all works are little and easy. But in Mary, God employed all His infinite power. Although Mary is a pure creature, She alone is of greater excellence than all other creatures combined, for She is the Temple and Tabernacle of the Most Holy Trinity: beloved Daughter of God the Father, most loving Mother of God the Son, and purest Spouse of God the Holy Ghost. Until you come to know the greatness of Divine Power, you cannot know how great the Virgin Mary is. Incalculable are the grandeurs of the treasures that God poured into the Soul of the Virgin in order to show Himself magnificent to Her, without measure, for the measure was the power of God and the holiness of God, whose power and holiness have no limits. It can be said that God made use of the maximum of His power, unable to make a Mother who might be greater.

If you want to do something pleasing to the Virgin, you should employ yourself in giving thanks to the Most High for the favours He did to the Virgin by filling Her with Grace; all the more so, since these graces, though given to Her, were given in such abundance so that they might also be showered upon you.

Now we move on to the text that follows. Consider the words of this sovereign Queen on saying: “And His mercy is poured out from generation to generation upon those who fear Him.” These words are a continuation of those above. There Mary Most Holy said that all generations will bless and praise Her; and now She says that the Lord’s mercy will pass on to all generations. So you should understand and conclude from the words of the Queen of Angels that, in concert with the praises given to Her, divine mercies are granted,



so that in all the world's generations, until the end, whoever praises and blesses Her in Her Most Holy Rosary, praises which are the greatest that can be given in Heaven and on earth, such will obtain divine mercy for the forgiveness of sins and the holy fear to not sin.

“And His mercy is poured out from generation to generation upon those who fear Him.” This is the fourth reason for which the Virgin magnifies God, not only for the benefits received, but for many others that She hoped to receive; and not only benefits for Herself, but also for those received by all the nations of this world, rejoicing that God's mercy is continuous, infinite and everlasting, and reaches out to all who serve and fear Him, of whatever nation they may be. Because it is proper to the Saints, when they recognize the mercies God has shown them, to hope that from His Mercy He will grant them many

other mercies, as Saint Paul says (II Cor.): “He it was who delivered us and still delivers us from such great dangers, and in Whom we trust that He shall yet deliver us.” And it is also proper to the Saints not to limit the Sun of justice to dawning solely upon their own homes, but to feel His mercy deep within, that it reaches out to many others and down through all ages; for which they give thanks to God, considering as their own the benefits for all men, rejoicing at having so merciful a God, who denies His mercy to no one who fears Him, as David confesses in his Psalm of praise for Divine Mercies, in which he does nothing but glorify God for these two titles of mercy: towards himself and towards all other righteous.

“And His mercy is poured out from generation to generation upon those who fear Him.” What is it that makes you distrust having a share in such graces? Is it not the misery of your condition? That is why, among the countless attributes that God possesses, ordered for your good, the Virgin Mary wants you to focus mainly on His Mercy. If She had said that His goodness, or benevolence, or generosity, is poured out upon those who fear Him, then only the good who deserve it could hope for it; but anyone can hope for mercy, as much as anyone else. Including wherever there is greater misery, mercy has a greater opportunity to triumph. And the Virgin encourages you vigorously, affirming that Divine Mercy passes on from generation to generation; a happy announcement, for it is continuous and very great, as it reaches out to everyone and everything in general, unfailingly. Here in Her canticle, Mary refers to the Incarnation as the greatest Mercy that God could bestow on the human race, for it was the Mercy promised by God to the first Patriarchs, desired by them for so many centuries; the one they implored and the one they continually bore in mind, a faith in which they trusted to reach their haven. This mercy had to reach out to all generations and to all peoples. There is no one so miserable that by virtue of this mercy cannot rise to supreme happiness. Whoever the sinner may be, the one most lost, the most perfidious to be found, just by so desiring, can in an instant become a great saint. But note that this mercy is poured out only “upon those who fear Him,” because everyone has to play their part for it to be effective. We must fear God with a reverential and filial fear, born from the sublime esteem we owe to God's Greatness, which is the fear of offending or displeasing Him. This fear, the more it grows, makes us all the more pleasing to God and the more fitting for invoking Him with living faith; and constant mercy is promised to whoever fears. The Virgin does not ask much of us when, to promise us God's mercy, She only asks us to fear Him. Fearing God is not difficult; on the contrary, nothing is easier for a child than to fear his Father, for a servant than to fear his lord, for a subject than to fear his prince. Thus we know what to do to fear Him, since God, with respect to each of us, is Father, Lord, Prince, and everything that can be conceived as great. However, the strange perversity of the human understanding does not know how to yield before such patent truths.

Consider the other words: *“He has shown the might of His arm: He has confounded the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.”* That is, He displayed the power of His Arm, and divided and scattered those who are proud of heart and in their self-esteem. Our Lady, having prophesied that mercy is prepared in all ages for those who bless and praise Her; now continues by explaining the power of Divine Justice against the proud, haughty and contumacious, who through pride of heart refuse to humble themselves and by this means seek mercy; and so our Lady says that the Eternal Father displayed the power of His Justice in His Arm, Arm which is His Most Holy Son: strong Arm, which with its strength ruined the power of Egypt; and that with His powerful Hand and sublime Arm, brought the Chosen People out of the slavery of the devil through the Red Sea of His blood, Torments and Passion. In this strong Arm that humbled and subdued hell, the Lord will display His Justice and Rigour to the proud of the world and will divide them; and, scattered like dust swept



away by the wind over the earth, will be their downfall: just as He did with the high-and-mighty of Babel, who sought to build a tower up to heaven, trying to achieve it by their own strength and not by Divine Mercy. He confounded their tongue and divided them confused out over the world and, so divided, most of them died to grace, with death of the soul. Notice that the Lord displays His power and justice in the Arm which is the Son, and displays His mercy in the Hand which is the Mother, as Saint Albert the Great says. Now look, if you seek Mercy; and if you want Mercy, turn to Most Holy Mary, who has it in Her Hand, and if you don't turn to Her, you will be caught unawares, and who will free you from Justice?

‘He has shown the might of His arm.’ The fifth title for glorifying God is His omnipotence in the Works that He has done by His own virtue and strength, without the help of any other, which the Virgin reviewed in Her memory, remembering the Creation of the world, its conservation and governance with such providence, the prodigious things He did, bringing His people out of Egypt, and leading them through the desert to the promised land, with everything else that Scripture recounts; and mainly She remembered the Work of the Incarnation, in which God showed His power and the virtue of His Arm. For all these things She magnified God, saying in a few words what David did in many, chanting all God's powerful works in detail. In addition to this, in this verse and in the following ones, the Virgin not only recounts what God has done, but what He usually does, or what He is accustomed to doing, according to His Goodness, and thus She glorifies Him because with His Arm He usually works powerfully and does powerful works when He wants and how He wants, and with whom He wants; and as He did in past times, so He does now, and will do in the future. All of which should be a motive for great joy for me in God, trusting that He will also do powerful things in me with His strong arm.

“He has confounded the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.” The sixth title for glorifying God is not only the omnipotence He shows in the works of His mercy, but also that which He shows in the works of His Justice, punishing the proud, undoing their plans and confounding the thoughts of their hearts. This the Virgin pondered in her memory, remembering how God had undone the plans of the proud Lucifer, who wanted to ascend to heaven, place his throne above the stars, and be like the Most High. The plans of the proud who wanted to build the tower of Babel; and the punishments He inflicted on Pharaoh, and on other similar proud. And for all this She also magnified God, for He is worthy of praise for this, just as Christ our Lord proclaimed in the Gospel, when He said: ‘I praise You, My Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hidden these great things from those held to be wise and prudent in this world, and have revealed them to the little and humble.



O Father, thus it is because it has been to Your pleasure.'

Consider these other words: "*He has... dethroned the mighty and exalted the humble; He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich left empty.*" The Lord toppled the powerful from their seats and raised up the humble: He filled the hungry with His goods and left the rich empty. Our Lady proposes two examples to serve as a warning and with them compel sinners to seek mercy in time. One is that of the apostate angels and the other of the jews: the Lord brought down the angels from the thrones of Heaven and raised up men of low and humble nature. Then, the jews who were rich in the doctrine of the saints, prophecies, and treasures proper to holy creatures, were left empty of everything, and He filled the Gentiles who were hungry. When the jews rejected Christ the Lord, He deprived them of the Church, Divine Grace, the light of the Faith, Divine Worship and the understanding of Scripture, and gave it all to the Christians. So He left some empty and others satisfied, as punishment for not producing the fruits of the blessings they owed to God for these goods. And He does the same among Christians themselves who, being in the midst of plenty, die to Grace and their souls perish from hunger;

and others are full of virtues and good works. Those who serve God lack nothing; and those who serve the world, as it pays with vanity alone, for this reason are left vain or empty.

'He has... dethroned the mighty and exalted the humble; He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich left empty.' These two verses embrace another two titles for praising God, because they combine His mercy with His justice, showing His power by casting down the powerful of the world from their thrones and seats, taking away their kingdoms or dignities and the greatness they had; and in their place He generally exalts and enthrones the little and the humble. Thus we see how He cast the proud angels from their heavenly throne, and raised up humble men; and from the throne of this world cast down its proud prince Satan who had tyrannized it, and in his place raised up Christ, teacher of humility; who being little, like a stone descended from heaven, which without any hand to move it, nor by the work of men, demolished the statue, which signified the four monarchies of the world, and through humility grew and came to be a great mountain; (Dan.). And He has always kept this same practice, fulfilling what is written, that whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. And in the same way with the hungry and poor, who consider themselves needy, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, He fills them with spiritual goods, fulfilling their desires, and on the contrary, He leaves empty the rich, who consider themselves in abundance and think they have no need of others; therefore, the rich will be left in need and hunger; but those who seek God will have abundance of all good. Oh my soul, magnify your Lord for the most noble condition He shows in favouring so much the humble and hungry of the earth. Oh my spirit, rejoice in God your Saviour, because He crowns you with mercies, and fulfils your desires with innumerable goods. Take pride in being little, hungry and needy, so that God may lift you up, satisfy you and fulfil your desires; and tremble for being proud and fastidious rich, so that He may not cast you from your see, nor leave you empty of His grace.

Consider the last words of the Canticle: '*He has succoured Israel His people, remembering His Mercy, according to the promise He made to our father Abraham and to his posterity for ever and ever.*' Thus Israel received the Son of God, as a Child, whom the Father had promised, telling the holy Fathers, Abraham and his children, that He would be given to them for all eternity. Here you should ponder, since Our Lady, having said that the Lord had come into

the world to humble the proud and raise up the humble, to fill the hungry poor and despoil the greedy rich, then continues pondering God's goodness, and how faithful and true He is in His promises; since having promised to give us His Son, to redeem and save us, He accomplished as He had promised, to move our hearts to gratitude for such great benefits and to oblige us to respond, and give ourselves up to Him who gives Himself to us, and consecrate ourselves entirely to the service of Him who receives us into the glorious dwellings of His kingdom for ever.

"He has succoured Israel His people, remembering His Mercy, according to the promise He made to our father Abraham and to his posterity for ever and ever." These two verses embrace two other powerful titles to rejoice in God and move us to praise Him. One is the care and providence He has in looking after those He has taken charge of, as His children and family members, personally coming to remedy them; and although it seems that for some time He forgets them, but in His own time He remembers His Mercy, and remedies them, as He remembered Israel and the whole world, and came to remedy it when He became incarnate. The other title is the great fidelity that God has in fulfilling the promises He has made to our fathers, faithfully fulfilling them in all their descendants until the end of the world; just as He fulfilled the word He gave to Abraham and David, that He would come to remedy them, and to give health and life to all their children, for all ages. With these two considerations, the Virgin's soul was set ablaze to magnify God, and Her spirit rejoiced in God Her Saviour, and with Them my soul and my spirit must be set ablaze with similar affections, for every day I see this providence that God has with His children, and the fidelity with which He fulfils what He promised to the Apostles, our Fathers, not forgetting the faithful who are their descendants, until the end of the world. These are the ten titles or reasons that in this canticle the Most Holy Virgin declares to glorify God, inspired by the Eternal Word Incarnate that She bore in Her womb, of which I can make another psalter and harp of ten strings for the same purpose, praising God, now for one title, now for another; and because I don't know how to do this as I should, I have to beg the Incarnate Word to teach me, as He taught His Mother, and Her to obtain it for me for the glory of Her Son. Amen.



As a slave of love, with respect to God, you must try to imitate Most Holy Mary in Her absolute docility as Slave of the Lord, trying to live Her 'Magnificat' and seek God's glory in everything you do, inviting divine love into your entire life and living with the Most Holy Trinity in your soul, in an incessant familiarity, very respectful and filial. You must be faithful to Jesus in everything, for everything, loving no one but Him, living only for Him, aspiring only to His interests, to His reign, always desiring a closer union with Him. You must imitate Mary's humility, and in practice recognize that your talents, successes and virtues come from God, frequently considering your nothingness, your defects, your miseries. Do not put yourself above others in thought, word or deed, so that you may feel joy in being unknown and considered as nothing. To fill your soul with the feelings of the Most Holy Mary, it is necessary to pray the Magnificat frequently, and above all to have it well engraved in your heart to better love, serve and glorify God in union with His Most Holy Mother. Furthermore, the Magnificat is a prayer very pleasing to God, which has been especially recommended as a prayer of great power for difficult, desperate and urgent cases.

In the Messages of El Palmar from the years 1972 and 73 there are several exhortations to meditate on the Magnificat. The first quote is from the Blessed Virgin Mary; the other four are from the Lord:

"God is Infinitely Merciful. But alongside the Mercy is His Justice as well. Only those



who humble themselves will obtain mercy. The proud will be left by the wayside. Woe to the proud! Woe to the proud! Let them meditate on the Magnificat. Let them meditate on the Magnificat. Woe to the proud!”

“Today the authentic seminaries are in the places of apparitions, where the true faith is taught, the true doctrine, where one is taught to love God as He deserves, to proclaim the dogmas of the Eucharist, the dogmas of Mary, and to profess the true Creed. But the wise theologians do not admit that poor ignorant people can know more than they do; they do not understand how unlearned people, with little preparation, can give a theological explanation that alarms learning and education. And there is the hand of God who manifests Himself to the humble, opens the understanding to the humble and closes understanding to the proud. There is the canticle of the Magnificat! Poor

theologians! Poor intellectuals! Poor graduates in arts, with hearts so hard and closed to the Truth! But these poor and miserable Places will be the ones that give Light to today’s life.”

“Every seer must recognize that all these graces come gratuitously by my Will and not by their merits. And always believe themselves to be the least of all, the least of all, which does not mean ceasing to fulfil their corresponding mission. This one here, poor sinner, is the least of all the seers, the dung and the garbage. And because he is that garbage, I wanted to choose him for great missions; because I am the one who chooses as I please, when I please and whom I please. From garbage I make something great. Always meditate on the Magnificat: ‘Because He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave, henceforth all generations shall call Me Blessed. Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me.’ If the Virgin herself says this, what can a seer say? Defend these Places, but you will also wear a crown of thorns, to later turn into roses.”

“Blessed are those who, being great wise men, recognize that they are foolish before the Wisdom of God: Blessed are they, having received the Light of God. Therefore, my children, remember these words of Mine: ‘I praise You, My Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hidden these great things from those held to be wise and prudent in this world, and have revealed them to the little and humble. O Father, thus it is because it has been to Your pleasure.’ And also remember the Magnificat, which is Mary’s teaching for all humanity: ‘Because He has looked upon the littleness of His Slave, henceforth all generations shall call Me Blessed. Because He who is Almighty and whose Name is Holy has done great things in Me.’ As the other part, in which He has dethroned the mighty and exalted the humble: But be careful also with these words, which can be double-edged swords: Not everyone who is humanly poor is humble. And not everyone who is rich is proud. No! The powerful can be found in the rich, the middle-class, and the poor.”

“Use your freedom well. And review the Magnificat. Review the Magnificat: That He dethroned the powerful and exalted the humble... And humility is in accepting God’s word and fulfilling it. And leaving personal things behind and following the path to Heaven.”

Saint Mary of Jesus of Ágreda explains as the Blessed Virgin Mary herself revealed to her: To the words with which Saint Elizabeth exalted our great Queen, the Mistress of wisdom and humility responded referring them all to their Author Himself, and with the sweetest and gentlest voice intoned the Magnificat canticle that the Gospel relates. As Saint Elizabeth was the first to hear this sweet canticle from the lips of Holy Mary, she was also the first to understand it and with her infused intelligence commented on it. She understood in it great mysteries that its author enclosed in so few words. The spirit of Holy Mary magnified the Lord for the excellence of His Infinite Being; to Him She referred and gave all glory and praise, as the beginning and end of all His works, knowing and confessing that it is only in

God that every creature should glory and rejoice, for He alone is all their good and their salvation. She also confessed the righteousness and magnificence of the Most High in attending to the humble and placing His divine love and spirit in them so abundantly, and how very appropriate it is that mortals see, know and ponder that She had merited that all generations call Her blessed through Her humility; and together with Her all the humble will also merit this same happiness, each in their degree. She also manifested in but a few words all the mercies, benefits, and favours that the Almighty, whose Name is holy and admirable, had granted Her, calling them “great things,” because none was little in such an immense heart and disposition as that of this great Queen and Lady.

And as the mercies of the Most High overflowed from the fullness of Holy Mary to benefit all mankind, and She was the Gate of Heaven through which they all came out and come out, and through which we must all enter to share in the Divinity, for this reason She confessed that the Lord’s Mercy towards Her would reach out to all generations to be communicated to those who fear Him. And just as infinite mercies raise up the humble and seek out those who fear God, so also the powerful arm of His justice dissipates and confounds the proud in the thoughts of their hearts and brings them down from their throne or seat to enthrone the poor and humble. With admiration and glory, this justice of the Lord was first exercised on the head of the proud Lucifer and on his followers, when the powerful arm of the Most High dispersed and overthrew them from that elevated place and seat of nature and grace they had occupied by the first Will of the Divine Mind and His Love, by which He wills all to be saved; and their downfall was vanity, attempting to rise up to where they neither could nor should, and by this arrogance came up against the just and inscrutable judgments of the Lord, who dispossessed and brought down the proud angel and all of his followers, who themselves plunged into hell; and in their place enthroned the humble, through Holy Mary, Mother and Throne of Mercy.

For this same reason, this Divine Lady also says and confesses that God enriched the poor, filling them with the abundance of His treasures of grace and glory; while those rich in self-esteem, presumption, and arrogance, and those who fill their hearts with the false goods that the world considers wealth and happiness, these the Most High dismissed and dismisses from Himself, empty of truth, which cannot fit into hearts so occupied and full of lies and fallacies. He received His servant and His child Israel, remembering His Mercy, to teach him where prudence is, where truth is, where understanding is, where long life and its value are, where the light of the eyes and peace are. To him He taught the way of prudence and the hidden paths of wisdom and discipline, which were hidden from the princes of the nations and were unknown to the powerful who dominate over the beasts of the earth and entertain themselves and play with the birds of the air and amass treasures of silver and gold; nor did the wise and prudent proud of this world attain it. But the Most High bestows it on those who are children of light and of Abraham by faith, by hope and obedience, because He promised it to him and his posterity and spiritual generation, through the blessed and happy Fruit of the virginal womb of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Saint Elizabeth understood these hidden mysteries, hearing the Queen of all creatures; and not only did the blessed matron understand them, but also many other and greater mysteries. But in the sweet conversations and divine talks they had, these two ladies, holy and prudent women, Mary Most Pure and her cousin Elizabeth, the burning love of these divine Ladies exceeded all the seraphim, and Most Holy Mary alone loved more than them all. In this divine fire they burned, to soar up to the most sublime comprehension of the





mysteries of the Most High. Both agreed to keep the secret of the mystery of the King to themselves for life, being humbled and annihilated in their low esteem at the sight of such Majesty, for Most Holy Mary enclosed in Her virginal womb the very God of majesty, and with reason and all truth we will say that She covered the throne where the Lord had His seat.

In this publication we have collected together many miracles and, like these, an infinite number of others could be added, for it is plain that nothing is more frequent or more abundant than the miracles performed by the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and by Her Holy Rosary. Christ Our Lord performed countless portentous miracles in the world. But of Mary Most Holy it is written: "So many were the souls whom She drew to the way of truth and eternal life, and so numerous the miracles that She wrought for this purpose in the city of Ephesus, that not

even in many volumes could they be written down." So we too say, that if all the miracles that God has done through His Most Holy Mother in the course of the centuries had to be written down, it would be never ending. It suffices to know that the first public miracle that Christ Our Lord did in the world, was at the wedding turning water into wine, and this at the request of His Most Holy Mother, so that we, His children and devotees, might understand the benefits we can expect from Her generous hand. God is not content with us knowing Him as the Supreme Good and Supreme Truth, but wants us to know His Most Holy Mother as well, and to honour and venerate Her on earth as the Saints and Angels honour Her in Heaven, and to avail ourselves of Her intercession with Her Divine Son.

We have seen something of the sublime grandeur which God has performed in Mary, and the grandeur of all that Mary, by Her insuperable collaboration, has done for God. We have also seen something of the grandeur of Mary in the countless miracles She has performed for Her children in the course of History. But it is vital that we recognize the great miracles She is performing in these present times, in which, according to the Apocalypse, as the Palmarian Holy Bible explains: "'Two wings of a great eagle were given to the Woman so that she might fly into the desert, to the place God had prepared for her, and where she is kept for a time, two times and half a time, from the presence of the infernal serpent.' In this passage is profoundly portrayed the translation of the Cathedra of the Church from Rome to El Palmar de Troya... 'Then the infernal serpent went out after the Woman vomiting rivers of infamy, persecution, confusion, seduction and other manifold filth from its mouth, intending to draw Her down into the current and put an end to Her. The Earth, however, succoured the Woman; for the Earth, opening her mouth, soaked up the river which the Dragon had vomited out of his. The Dragon, seeing he was unable to put an end to the Woman, to take revenge on Her, went off to make war on Her descendants, namely those who keep the Commandments of God and give faithful testimony to Jesus Christ.' In this passage is symbolized the Palmarian Church dreadfully persecuted by Satan and his hordes. The Earth symbolizes the Most Holy Virgin Mary who, as Mother, Shepherdess and Doctress of the Church, invincibly tramples the infernal serpent's head underfoot. The serpent, seeing that the Church is in herself absolutely indestructible, took revenge by fiercely combating her children, the faithful. The establishment of the Palmarian Church marked the commencement of the Sacred Hispano-Palmarian Empire, or Reign of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, though this Empire and Reign are at present reduced to the Sacred Place of El Palmar de Troya or mystical apocalyptic desert."

This miracle of the present day is not a single portent, rather a continuous miracle of grace by which Mary Most Holy shepherds Her faithful children sheltered in the spiritual desert, protected from the corruption and obscenities surrounding them on all sides, and even so

conserving them in Grace, just as the three youths in the Babylonian furnace were preserved amid the flames. Here the grandeur of Mary Most Holy excels in Her love of predilection for Her faithful children, whose honour it is to be Her slaves, which demands great generosity in return, in accord with Christ's sentence: "From everyone to whom much has been given much shall be demanded; and to whom much was entrusted more shall be asked." And how to make a return for such love?" "By love alone is love repaid;" by which it is evident that it is for us to consecrate ourselves now to Mary Most Holy in Love's Holy Slavery, and to do all "by Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary."

Remember that in the Palmarian Creed, referring to the times now approaching, it says: "I believe that, owing to the great general apostasy of the roman church, the terrible Third World War will ensue and the first Three Days of Darkness of the Apocalyptic Era; all of which will be a frightful purifying chastisement, as manifestation of God's just Wrath. I believe

that, together with this great purification, there will occur the apotheotic Apparition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary or Great Miracle of El Palmar de Troya, the Pentecost upon the Palmarian Apostles, the new enchainment of Satan, the universal exaltation of the Holy Palmarian Church, and the Conquest of the Sacred Hispano-Palmarian Empire or Reign of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, brought about by the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face or Crossbearers, captained by the Pope."

The "Great Miracle" will come after the chastisements and purification of the world. Until now the miracles in Palmar have been lesser ones. This is also a grace, so that the good acquire greater merits, since it is by faith that they must act. And it is mercy for the bad, to postpone the Great Miracle until they are disposed to accept it, since if it happened now their guilt would be greater still for rejecting it. Our Lord explains just this in a Message in January 1970: "Have faith. What merit is there in believing after the Miracle? Now is when there is merit in believing, which is what is called faith." Continue firm in the Faith by the path of salvation, without separating from the Church's teachings. Await patiently, for the Great Miracle of Palmar will happen one day, when "Our Heavenly Mother will display the radiance of Her glory as never before in any apparition up till then. By Her glorious and triumphant apocalyptic manifestation, the Most Holy Virgin Mary will give universal and unmistakable proof of the veracity of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church," as announced in the Book of the Apocalypse.

We members of the Church Militant, are called to cooperate as faithful children of Most Holy Mary to win this triumph of Her Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart. And how? By our holiness of life, entirely given up to God's Will, and by our prayers, imploring the help of the Mother of God, above all by way of the Holy Penitential Rosary prayed with attention and meditating deeply on its mysteries.





Contents

The Greatness of the Most Holy Virgin Mary

Introduction 1

Seven sorrows or swords of Mary Most Holy. 43

Mary’s Twelve Stars. 75

The Miraculous Medal. 114

The Holy House of Loreto 148

The Carmelite Scapular 161

The marvellous history of the Holy Rosary: 236

The Magnificat 436

