

MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD

**THE MIRACLE OF HIS OMNIPOTENCE
AND THE ABYSS OF HIS GRACE**

**THE DIVINE HISTORY AND LIFE OF THE VIRGIN
MOTHER OF GOD
OUR QUEEN AND OUR LADY, MOST HOLY MARY
EXPIATRIX OF THE FAULT OF EVE
AND MEDIATRIX OF GRACE**

Manifested in these later
ages by that Lady to her handmaid

SISTER MARY OF JESUS

*Superioress of the convent of the Immaculate Conception of the town
of Agreda, of the province of Burgos in Spain,*

under obedience to the regular observance
of the seraphic father

SAINT FRANCIS

*For new enlightenment of the world, for rejoicing
of the Catholic Church, and encouragement of men.
Translation from the Original Authorised Spanish Edition*

BY FISCAR MARISON

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*From this holy work of Divine Providence;
with some chronological notes (p.33ff.)*

The Year of Creation – the Year of Christ’s Conception :

The Miracle of His Conception:

‘CHAPTER XI

MARY LISTENS TO THE MESSAGE OF THE HOLY ANGEL;
THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION IS ENACTED BY
THE CONCEPTION OF THE ETERNAL WORD IN HER WOMB.

123. I wish to confess before heaven and earth and its inhabitants, and in the presence of the Creator of the universe and the eternal God, that in setting myself to write of the profound mystery of the Incarnation, my feeble strength deserts me, my tongue is struck mute, my discourse is silenced, my faculties are benumbed, my understanding is eclipsed and overwhelmed by the divine light, which guides and instructs me. In it all is perceived without error and without any deviousness ; I see my insignificance and I am made aware of the emptiness of words and the insufficiency of human terms for doing justice to my concepts of this sacrament, which comprehends at one and the same time God himself and the greatest and most wonderful work of his Omnipotence. I see in this mystery the divine and admirable harmony of his infinite providence and wisdom, with which from all eternity He has ordained and prearranged it, and by which He directed all creation toward its fulfillment. All his works and all his creatures were only well adjusted means of advancing toward this apex of his aims, the condescension of a God in assuming human nature.

124. I saw that the eternal Word had awaited and chosen, as the most opportune time and hour for his descent from the bosom of the Father, the midnight of mortal perversion (Wis. 18, 14), when the whole posterity of Adam was buried and absorbed in the sleep of forgetfulness and ignorance of their true God, and when there was no one to open his mouth in confessing and blessing Him, except some chosen souls among his people. All the rest of the world was lost in silent darkness, having passed a protracted night of five thousand and about two hundred years. Age had succeeded age, and generations followed upon generations, each one in the time predestined and decreed by the eternal Wisdom, each also having an opportunity to know and find Him, its Creator; for all had Him so nigh to them, that He gave them life, movement and existence within their own selves (Acts 17, 28). But as the clear day of his inaccessible light had not arrived, though some of the mortals, like the blind, came nigh to Him and touched Him in his creatures, yet they did not attain to the Divinity (Rom. 1, 23) and in failing to recognize Him, they cast themselves upon the sensible and most vile things of the earth.

125. The day then had arrived in which the Most High, setting aside the long ages of this dark ignorance, resolved to manifest Himself to men and begin the Redemption of the human race by assuming their nature in the womb of most holy Mary, now prepared for this event. In order to be able to describe what was revealed concerning this event to me, it is necessary to make mention of some hidden sacraments connected with the descent of the Onlybegotten from the bosom of the Father. I assume as firmly established what the holy faith teaches in regard to the divine Persons, that although there is a real personal distinction between the three Persons, yet there is no inequality in wisdom, omnipotence or other attributes, just as little as there is in the divine nature; and just as They are equal in dignity and infinite perfection, so They are also equal in these operations *ad extra*, which proceed from God himself for the production of some creature or temporal object. These operations are indivisibly wrought by three divine Persons; for not one Person alone produces them, but all Three in so far as They are one and the same God, possessing one and the same wisdom, one and the same understanding and will. Thus what the Son knows and wishes, that also the Father knows and wishes; and so also the Holy Ghost knows and wishes whatever is known and willed by the Father and the Son.

126. In this indivisibility of action the three Persons wrought and executed, by one and the same act, the mystery of the Incarnation, although only the person of the Son accepted for Himself the nature of man, uniting it to Himself hypostatically. Therefore we say that the Son was sent by the eternal Father, from whose intelligence He proceeds, and that the Father sent Him by the intervening operations of the Holy Ghost. As it was the Person of the Son which came to be made man, this same Person before descending from the heavens and the bosom of the Father, in the name of that same humanity to be received by Him, made a conditional request, that, on account of his foreseen merits, his salvation and satisfaction of the divine justice for sins be extended to the whole human race. He desired the fiat or ratification of the most blessed will of the Father, who sent Him, for the acceptance of this Redemption by means of his most holy works and his passion, and through the mysteries, which He was to enact in the new Church and in the law of grace.

127. The eternal Father accepted this petition and the foreseen merits of the Word; He conceded all that was proposed and asked for the mortals, and He himself confirmed the elect and predestined souls as the inheritance and possession of Christ forever. Hence, Christ himself, our Lord, through saint John says that He has not lost nor has allowed to perish, those whom the Father had given him (John 18, 9). In another place it is said : that no one shall snatch his sheep from his hands nor from those of his Father (John 17, 12). The same would hold good of all those that are born, if they would avail themselves of the Redemption, which, as it is sufficient, should also be efficacious for all and in all; since his divine mercy desired to exclude no one, if only all of them would make themselves capable of receiving its benefits through the Redeemer.

128. All this, according to our way of understanding, happened in heaven at the throne of the most blessed Trinity as a prelude to the fiat of the most holy Mary, of which I will presently speak. At the moment, in which the Onlybegotten of the Father descended to her virginal womb, all the heavens and the creatures were set in commotion. On account of the inseparable union of the divine Persons, the Three of Them descended with the Word, though the Word alone was to become incarnate.

And with the Lord their God, all the hosts of the celestial army, issued from heaven, full of invincible strength and splendor. Although it was not necessary to prepare the way, since the Divinity fills the universe, is present in all places and cannot be impeded by anything; nevertheless all the eleven material heavens showed deference to their Creator, and, together with the inferior elements, opened up and parted as it were, for his passage; the stars shone with greater brilliancy, the moon and sun with the planets hastened their course in the service of their Maker, anxious to witness the greatest of his wonderful works.

129. Mortals did not perceive this commotion and renewal of all the creatures; both because it happened during the night, as well as because the Lord wished it to be known only to the angels. These with new wonder praised Him, knowing these profound and venerable mysteries to be hidden from men. For they knew that men were far removed from understanding these wonderful benefits, so admirable even in the eyes of angelic spirits. To these angelic spirits alone was at that time assigned the duty of giving glory, praise and reverence for these benefits to their Maker. However, in the hearts of some of the just the Most High infused at that hour a new feeling and affection of extraordinary joy of which they became conscious. They conceived new and grand ideas concerning the Lord; some of them were inspired and began to confer within themselves, whether this new sensation, which they felt, was not the effect of the coming of the Messiah in order to redeem the world; but all this remained concealed, for each one thought, that he alone had experienced this renewal of his interior.

130. In the other creatures there was a like renovation and change. The birds moved about with new songs and joyousness; the plants and trees gave forth more fruit and fragrance; and in like proportion all the rest of the creatures received and felt some kind of vivifying change. But among those that received the greatest share, were the Fathers and Saints in limbo, whither the archangel Michael was sent with the glad message, in order to console them and cause in them the fullness of jubilee and praise. Only for hell it was a cause of new consternation and grief; for at the descent of the eternal Word from on high, the demons felt an impetuous force of the divine power, which came upon them like the waves of the sea and buried all of them in the deepest caverns of their darkness without leaving them any strength of resistance or recovery. When by divine permission they were again able to rise, they poured forth upon the world and hastened about to discover what strange happening had thus undone them. However, although they held several conferences among themselves, they were unable to find the cause.

The divine Power concealed from them the sacrament of the Incarnation and the manner in which most holy Mary conceived the incarnate Word (326). Not until the death of Christ on the cross did they arrive at the certainty, that He was God and true man, as we shall there relate.

131. In order that the mystery of the Most High might be fulfilled, the holy archangel Gabriel, in the shape described in the preceding chapter and accompanied by innumerable angels in visible human forms and resplendent with incomparable beauty, entered into the chamber, where most holy Mary was praying. It was on a Thursday at six o'clock in the evening and at the approach of night. The great modesty and restraint of the Princess of heaven did not permit Her to look at him more than was necessary to recognize him as an angel of the Lord. Recognizing him as such, She, in her usual humility, wished to do him reverence; the holy prince would not allow it; on the contrary he himself bowed profoundly as before his Queen and Mistress, in whom he adored the heavenly mysteries of his Creator.

At the same time he understood that from that day on the ancient times and the custom of old whereby men should worship angels, as Abraham had done (Gen. 28,2), were changed. For as human nature was raised to the dignity of God himself in the person of the Word, men now held the position of adopted children, of companions and brethren of the angels, as the angel said to Evangelist Saint John, when he refused to be worshipped (Apoc. 19, 10).

132. The holy archangel saluted our and his Queen and said: "Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus" (Luke 1, 28). Hearing this new salutation of the angel, this most humble of all creatures was disturbed, but not confused in mind (Luke 1, 29).

This disturbance arose from two causes : first, from her humility, for She thought Herself the lowest of the creatures and thus in her humility, was taken unawares at hearing Herself saluted and called the "Blessed among women;" secondly, when She heard this salute and began to consider within Herself how She should receive it, She was interiorly made to understand by the Lord, that He chose Her for his Mother, and this caused a still greater perturbation, having such an humble opinion of Herself. On account of this perturbation the angel proceeded to explain to Her the decree of the Lord, saying : "Do not fear, Mary, for thou hast found grace before the Lord (Luke 1, 30) ; behold thou shalt conceive a Son in thy womb, and thou shalt give birth to Him, and thou shalt name Him Jesus; He shall be great, and He shall be called Son of the Most High," and the rest as recorded of the holy archangel.

133. Our most prudent and humble Queen alone, among all the creatures, was sufficiently intelligent and magnanimous to estimate at its true value such a new and unheard of sacrament; and in proportion as She realized its greatness, so She was also moved with admiration. But She raised her humble heart to the Lord, who could not refuse Her any petition, and in the secret of her spirit She asked new

light and assistance by which to govern Herself in such an arduous transaction; for, as we have said in the preceding chapter, the Most High, in order to permit Her to act in this mystery solely in faith, hope and charity, left Her in the common state and suspended all other kinds of favors and interior elevations, which She so frequently or continually enjoyed.

In this disposition She replied and said to holy Gabriel, what is written in saint Luke: "How shall this happen, that I conceive and bear; since I know not, nor can know, man?" At the same time She interiorly represented to the Lord the vow of chastity, which She had made and the espousal, which his Majesty had celebrated with Her.

134. The holy prince Gabriel replied (Luke 1, 24) : "Lady, it is easy for the divine power to make Thee a Mother without the co-operation of man ; the Holy Spirit shall remain with Thee by a new presence and the virtue of the Most High shall overshadow Thee, so that the Holy of holies can be born of Thee, who shall himself be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth has likewise conceived a son in her sterile years and this is the sixth month of her conception ; for nothing is impossible with God. He that can make her conceive, who was sterile, can bring it about, that Thou, Lady, be his Mother, still preserving thy virginity and enhancing thy purity. To the Son whom Thou shalt bear, God will give the throne of his father David and his reign shall be everlasting in the house of Jacob. Thou art not ignorant, O Lady, of the prophecy of Isaias (Is.7, 14), that a Virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, whose name shall be Emmanuel, God with us. This prophecy is infallible and it shall be fulfilled in thy person. Thou knowest also of the great mystery of the bush, which Moses saw burning without its being consumed by the fire (Exod. 3, 2). This signified that the two natures, divine and human, are to be united in such a manner, that the latter is not consumed by the divine, and that the Mother of the Messiah shall conceive and give birth without violation of her virginal purity. Remember also, Lady, the promise of the eternal God to the Patriarch Abraham, that, after the captivity of his posterity for four generations, they should return to this land; the mysterious signification of which was, that in this, the fourth generation,* the incarnate God is to rescue the whole race of Adam through thy co-operation from the oppression of the devil (Gen. 15, 16). And the ladder, which Jacob saw in his sleep (Gen. 28, 12), was an express figure of the royal way, which the eternal Word was to open up and by which the mortals are to ascend to heaven and the angels to descend to earth.

To this earth the Onlybegotten of the Father shall lower Himself in order to converse with men and communicate to them the treasures of his Divinity, imparting to them his virtues and his immutable and eternal perfections."

135. With these and many other words the ambassador of heaven instructed the most holy Mary, in order that, by the remembrance of the ancient promises and prophecies of holy Writ, by the reliance and trust in them and in the infinite power of the Most High, She might overcome her hesitancy at the heavenly message.

But as the Lady herself exceeded the angels in wisdom, prudence and in all sanctity, She withheld her answer,*

** In the autograph manuscript Mary of Agreda explains this fourth generation as follows:*

*"The mystery of this fourth generation is that there are four generations:
1st, that of Adam without a father or mother; 2nd, that of Eve without a mother;
3rd, of our own, from a father and mother; 4th, that of our Lord Jesus Christ,
from a Mother without a father."*

in order to be able to give it in accordance with the divine will and that it might be worthy of the greatest of all the mysteries and sacraments of the divine power. She reflected that upon her answer depended the pledge of the most blessed Trinity, the fulfillment of his promises and prophecies, the most pleasing and acceptable of all sacrifices, the opening of the gates of paradise, the victory and triumph over hell, the Redemption of all the human race, the satisfaction of the divine justice, the foundation of the new law of grace, the glorification of men, the rejoicing of the angels, and whatever was connected with the Incarnation of the Onlybegotten of the Father and his assuming the form of servant in her virginal womb (Philip 2, 7).

136. A great wonder, indeed, and worthy of our admiration, that all these mysteries and whatever others they included, should be intrusted by the Almighty to an humble Maiden and made dependent upon her fiat.

But befittingly and securely He left them to the wise and strong decision of this courageous Woman (Prov. 31,11), since She would consider them with such magnanimity and nobility, that perforce his confidence in Her was not misplaced. The operations, which proceed within the divine Essence, depend not on the co-operation of creatures, for they have no part in them and God could not expect such co-operations for executing the works ad intra; but in the works ad extra and such as were contingent, among which that of becoming man was the most exalted, He could not proceed without the co-operation of most holy Mary and without her free consent. For He wished to reach this acme of all the works outside Himself in Her and through Her and He wished that we should owe this benefit to this Mother of wisdom and our Reparatrix.

137. Therefore this great Lady considered and inspected profoundly this spacious field of the dignity of Mother of God (Prov. 21, 11) in order to purchase it by her fiat; She clothed Herself in fortitude more than human, and She tasted and saw how profitable was this enterprise and commerce with the Divinity. She comprehended the ways of his hidden benevolence and adorned Herself with fortitude and beauty. And having conferred with Herself and with the heavenly messenger Gabriel about the grandeur of these high and divine sacraments, and finding Herself in excellent condition to receive the message sent to Her, her purest soul was absorbed and elevated in admiration, reverence and highest intensity of divine

love. By the intensity of these movements and supernal affections, her most pure heart, as it were by natural consequence, was contracted and compressed with such force, that it distilled three drops of her most pure blood, and these, finding their way to the natural place for the act of conception, were formed by the power of the divine and holy Spirit, into the body of Christ our Lord. Thus the matter, from which the most holy humanity of the Word for our Redemption is composed, was furnished and administered by the most pure heart of Mary and through the sheer force of her true love. At the same moment, with a humility never sufficiently to be extolled, inclining slightly her head and joining her hands, She pronounced these words, which were the beginning of our salvation: "Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum" (Luke 1,31).

138. At the pronouncing of this "fiat," so sweet to the hearing of God and so fortunate for us, in one instant, four things happened. First, the most holy body of Christ our Lord was formed from the three drops of blood furnished by the heart of most holy Mary. Secondly, the most holy soul of the same Lord was created, just as the other souls. Thirdly, the soul and the body united in order to compose his perfect humanity. Fourthly, the Divinity united Itself in the Person of the Word with the humanity, which together became one composite being in hypostatical union ; *and thus was formed Christ true God and Man, our Lord and Redeemer.*

This happened in springtime on the twentyfifth of March, at break or dawning of the day, in the same hour, in which our first father Adam was made and in the year of the creation of the world 5199, which agrees also with the count of the Roman Church in her Martyrology under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. This reckoning is the true and certain one, as was told me, when I inquired at command of my superiors. Conformable to this the world was created in the month of March, which corresponds to the beginning of creation. And as the works of the Most High are perfect and complete (Deut. 32, 4), the plants and trees come forth from the hands of his Majesty bearing fruit, and they would have borne them continually without intermission, if sin had not changed the whole nature, as I will expressly relate in another treatise, if it is the will of the Lord; now however I will not detain myself therewith, since it does not pertain to our subject.

139. In the same instant, in which the Almighty celebrated the nuptials of the hypostatic union in the womb of most holy Mary, the heavenly Lady was elevated to the beatific vision and the Divinity manifested Itself to Her clearly and intuitively. She saw most high sacraments, of which I will speak in the next chapter. The mysteries of the inscriptions, with which She was adorned and which the angels exhibited as related in the seventh chapter (No. 82, also Part I, 207, 363-4), were made clear to Her each in particular. The divine Child began to grow in the natural manner in the recess of the womb, being nourished by the substance and the blood of its most holy Mother, just as other men; yet it was more free and exempt from the imperfections, to which other children of Adam are subject in that place and period. For from some of these, namely those that are accidental and unnecessary to the substance of the act of generation, being merely effects of sin, the Empress of

heaven was free. She was also free from the superfluities caused by sin, which in other women are common and happen naturally in the formation, sustenance and growth of their children. For the necessary matter, which is proper to the infected nature of the descendants of Eve and which was wanting in Her, was supplied and administered in Her by the exercise of heroic acts of virtue and especially by charity. By the fervor of her soul and her loving affections the blood and humors of her body were changed and thereby divine Providence provided for the sustenance of the divine Child. Thus in a natural manner the humanity of our Redeemer was nourished, while his Divinity was recreated and pleased with her heroic virtues.

Most holy Mary furnished to the Holy Ghost, for the formation of this body, pure and limpid blood, free from sin and all its tendencies. And whatever impure and imperfect matter is supplied by other mothers for the growth of their children was administered by the Queen of heaven most pure and delicate in substance. For it was built up and supplied by the power of her loving affections and her other virtues. In a like manner was purified whatever served as food for the heavenly Queen. For, as She knew that her nourishment was at the same time to sustain and nourish the Son of God, She partook of it with such heroic acts of virtue, that the angelic spirits wondered how such common human actions could be connected with such supernal heights of merit and perfection in the sight of God.

140. The heavenly Lady was thus established in such high privileges in her position as Mother of God, that those which I have already mentioned and which I shall yet mention, convey not even the smallest idea of her excellence, and my tongue cannot describe it. For, neither is it possible to conceive it by the understanding, nor can the most learned, nor the most wise of men find adequate terms to express it. The humble, who are proficient in the art of divine love, become aware of it by infused light and by the interior taste and feeling, by which such sacraments are perceived. Not only was most holy Mary become a heaven, a temple and dwelling place of the most holy Trinity, transformed thereto, elevated and made godlike by the special and unheard of operation of the Divinity in her most pure womb; but her humble cottage and her poor little oratory was consecrated by the Divinity as a new sanctuary of God. The heavenly spirits, who as witnesses of this marvelous transformation were present to contemplate it, magnified the Almighty with ineffable praise and jubilee; in union with this most happy Mother, they blessed Him in his name and in the name of the human race, which was ignorant of this the greatest of his benefits and mercies.

INSTRUCTION OF THE MOST HOLY QUEEN MARY.

141. *"My daughter, thou art filled with astonishment at seeing, by means of new light, the mystery of the humiliation of the Divinity in uniting Himself with the human nature in the womb of a poor maiden such as I was. I wish, however, my dearest, that thou turn thy attention toward thyself and consider, how God humiliated Himself, and came into my womb, not only for myself alone, but for thee as well. The Lord is infinite in his mercy and his love has no limit, and thus He attends and esteems and assists every soul who receives Him, and He rejoices in it, as if He had created it alone, and as if He had been made man*

for it alone. Therefore with all the affection of thy soul thou must, as it were, consider thyself as being thyself in person bound to render the full measure of thanks of all the world for his coming; and for his coming to redeem all. And if, with a lively faith thou art convinced and confessest, that the same God who, infinite in his attributes and eternal in his majesty, lowered Himself to assume human flesh in my womb, seeks also thee, calls thee, rejoices thee, caresses thee, and thinks of thee alone, as if thou wert his only creature (Gal. 2, 20) ; think well and reflect to what his admirable condescension obliges thee.

Convert this admiration into living acts of faith and love; for, that He condescends to come to thee, thou owest entirely to the goodness of the King and Savior, since thou thyself couldst never find Him nor attain Him.

142. Considering merely that which this Lord can give thee outside of Himself, it will appear to thee grand, even when thou perceivest it only by a mere human intelligence and affection. It is certainly true that any gift from such an eminent and supreme King is worthy of all estimation. But when thou beginst to consider and know by divine light, that this gift is God Himself and that He makes Thee partaker of his Divinity, when thou wilt understand, that without thy God and without his coming, all creation would be as nothing and despicable in thy sight; thou wouldst want to enjoy thyself and find rest only in the consciousness of possessing such a God, so loving, so amiable, so powerful, sweet and affluent ; who, being such a great and infinite God, humiliates Himself to thy lowliness in order to raise thee from the dust and enrich thy poverty, performing toward thee the duties of a Shepherd, of a Father, a Spouse and most faithful Friend.

143. Attend, therefore, my daughter, in the secret of thy heart to all the consequences of these truths. Ponder and confer within thyself about this sweetest love of the great King for thee; how faithful He is in his gifts and caresses, in his favors, in the works confided to thee, in the enlightenment of thy interior, instructing thee by divine science in the infinite greatness of his Being, in his admirable works and most hidden mysteries, in universal truth and in the nothingness of visible existence. This science is the first beginning and principle, the basis and foundation of the knowledge which I have given thee in order that thou mayest attain to the decorum and magnanimity, with which thou art to treat the favors and benefits of this thy Lord and God, thy true blessedness, thy treasure, thy light and thy Guide.

Look upon Him as upon the infinite God, loving, yet terrible. Listen, my dearest, to my words, to my teachings and discipline, for therein are contained the peace and the enlightenment of thy soul."

END OF THIS INSTRUCTION BY THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD.

from the: MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD by St. Maria de Agreda.

The Year of Creation – the Year of Christ’s Birth :

The Miracle of His Birth:

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST OUR SAVIOR IS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN BETHLEHEM, JUDA

468. The palace which the supreme King of kings and the Lord of lords had chosen for entertaining his eternal and incarnate Son in this world was a most poor and insignificant hut or cave, to which most holy Mary and Joseph betook themselves after they had been denied all hospitality and the most ordinary kindness by their fellow-men, as I have described in the foregoing chapter.

This place was held in such contempt that though the town of Bethlehem was full of strangers in want of nightshelter, none would demean or degrade himself so far as to make use of it for a lodging; for there was none who deemed it suitable or desirable for such a purpose, except the Teachers of humility and poverty, Christ our Savior and his purest Mother. On this account the wisdom of the eternal Father had reserved it for Them, consecrating it in all its bareness, loneliness and poverty as the first temple of light (Malachy 4, 2, Ps. III, 4) and as the house of the true Sun of justice, which was to arise for the upright of heart from the resplendent Aurora Mary, turning the night of sin into the daylight of grace.

469. Most holy Mary and saint Joseph entered the lodging thus provided for them and by the effulgence of the ten thousand angels of their guard they could easily ascertain its poverty and loneliness, which they esteemed as favors and welcomed with tears of consolation and joy. Without delay the two holy travelers fell on their knees and praised the Lord, giving Him thanks for his benefit, which they knew had been provided by his wisdom for his own hidden designs. Of this mystery the heavenly Princess Mary had a better insight ; for as soon as She sanctified the interior of the cave by her sacred footsteps She felt a fullness of joy which entirely elevated and vivified Her. She besought the Lord to bless with a generous hand all the inhabitants of the neighboring city, because by rejecting Her they had given occasion to the vast favors, which She awaited in this neglected cavern.

It was formed entirely of the bare and coarse rocks, without any natural beauty or artificial adornment; a place intended merely for the shelter of animals ; yet the eternal Father had selected it for the shelter and dwelling-place of his own Son.

470. The angelic spirits, who like a celestial militia guarded their Queen and Mistress, formed themselves into cohorts in the manner of court guards in a royal palace. They showed themselves in their visible forms also to saint Joseph ; for on this occasion it was befitting that he should enjoy such a favor, on the one hand in order to assuage his sorrow by allowing him to behold this poor lodging thus beautified and adorned by their celestial presence, and on the other, in order to enliven and encourage him for the events which the Lord intended to bring about

during that night, and in this forsaken place. The great Queen and Empress, who was already informed of the mystery to be transacted here, set about cleaning with her own hands the cave, which was so soon to serve as a royal throne and sacred mercyseat; for neither did She want to miss this occasion for exercising her humility, nor would She deprive her onlybegotten Son of the worship and reverence implied by this preparation and cleansing of his temple.

471. Saint Joseph, mindful of the majesty of his heavenly Spouse (which, it seemed to him, She was forgetting in her ardent longing for humiliation), besought Her not to deprive Him of this work, which he considered as his alone ; and he hastened to set about cleaning the floor and the corners of the cave, although the humble Queen continued to assist him therein. As the holy angels were then present in visible forms, they were (according to our mode of speaking) abashed at such eagerness for humiliation, and they speedily emulated with each other to join in this work; or rather, in order to say it more succinctly, in the shortest time possible they had cleansed and set in order that cave, filling it with holy fragrance. Saint Joseph started a fire with the material which he had brought for that purpose. As it was very cold, they sat at the fire in order to get warm.

They partook of the food which they had brought, and they ate this, their frugal supper, with incomparable joy of their souls. The Queen of heaven was so absorbed and taken up with the thought of the impending mystery of her divine delivery, that She would not have partaken of food if She had not been urged thereto by obedience to her spouse.

472. After their supper they gave thanks to the Lord as was their custom. Having spent a short time in this prayer and conferring about the mysteries of the incarnate Word, the most prudent Virgin felt the approach of the most blessed Birth. She requested her spouse saint Joseph to betake himself to rest and sleep as the night was already far advanced. The man of God yielded to the request of his Spouse and urged Her to do the same; and for this purpose he arranged and prepared a sort of couch with the articles of wear in their possession, making use of a crib or manger, that had been left by the shepherds for their animals. Leaving most holy Mary in the portion of the cave thus furnished, saint Joseph retired to a corner of the entrance, where he began to pray. He was immediately visited by the divine Spirit and felt a most sweet and extraordinary influence, by which he was wrapt and elevated into an ecstasy. In it was shown him all that passed during that night in this blessed cave; for he did not return to consciousness until his heavenly Spouse called him. Such was the sleep which saint Joseph enjoyed in that night, more exalted and blessed than that of Adam in paradise (Gen. 21, 2).

473. The Queen of all creatures was called from her resting-place by a loud voice of the Most High, which strongly and sweetly raised Her above all created things and caused Her to feel new effects of divine power; for this was one of the most singular and admirable ecstasies of her most holy life.

Immediately also She was filled with new enlightenment and divine influences, such as I have described in other places, until She reached the clear vision of the Divinity. The veil fell and She saw intuitively the Godhead itself in such glory and plenitude of insight, as all the capacity of men and angels could not describe or fully understand.

All the knowledge of the Divinity and humanity of her most holy Son, which She had ever received in former visions was renewed and, moreover, other secrets of the inexhaustible archives of the bosom of God were revealed to Her. I have not ideas or words sufficient and adequate for expressing what I have been allowed to see of these sacraments by the divine light ; and their abundance and multiplicity convince me of the poverty and want of proper expression in created language.

474. The Most High announced to his Virgin Mother, that the time of his coming into the world had arrived and what would be the manner in which this was now to be fulfilled and executed. The most prudent Lady perceived in this vision the purpose and exalted scope of these wonderful mysteries and sacraments, as well in so far as related to the Lord himself as also in so far as they concerned creatures, for whose benefit they had been primarily decreed. She prostrated Herself before the throne of his Divinity and gave Him glory, magnificence, thanks and praise for Herself and for all creatures, such as was befitting the ineffable mercy and condescension of his divine love. At the same time She asked of the divine Majesty new light and grace in order to be able worthily to undertake the service and worship and the rearing up of the Word made flesh, whom She was to bear in Her arms and nourish with her virginal milk.

This petition the heavenly Mother brought forward with the profoundest humility, as one who understood the greatness of this new sacrament. She held Herself unworthy of the office of rearing up and conversing as a Mother with a God incarnate of which even the highest seraphim are incapable. Prudently and humbly did the Mother of wisdom ponder and weigh this matter. And because She humbled Herself to the dust and acknowledged her nothingness in the presence of the Almighty, therefore his Majesty raised Her up and confirmed anew upon Her the title of Mother of God. He commanded Her to exercise this office and ministry of a legitimate and true Mother of Himself; that She should treat Him as the Son of the eternal Father and at the same time the Son of her womb.

All this could be easily entrusted to such a Mother, in whom was contained an excellence that words cannot express.

475. The most holy Mary remained in this ecstasy and beatific vision for over an hour immediately preceding her divine delivery. At the moment when She issued from it and regained the use of her senses She felt and saw that the body of the infant God began to move in her virginal womb; how, releasing and freeing Himself from the place which in the course of nature He had occupied for nine months, He now prepared to issue forth from that sacred bridal chamber.

This movement not only did not cause any pain or hardship, as happens with the other daughters of Adam and Eve in their childbirths; but filled Her with incomparable joy and delight, causing in her soul and in her virginal body such exalted and divine effects that they exceed all thoughts of men.

Her body became so spiritualized with the beauty of heaven that She seemed no more a human and earthly creature. Her countenance emitted rays of light, like a sun incarnadined, and shone in indescribable earnestness and majesty, all inflamed with fervent love. She was kneeling in the manger, her eyes raised to heaven, her hands joined and folded at her breast, her soul wrapped in the Divinity and She herself was entirely deified.

In this position, at the end of the heavenly rapture, the most exalted Lady gave to the world the Onlybegotten of the Father and her own, our Savior Jesus, true God and man, at the hour of midnight, on a Sunday, in the year of the creation of the world five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine (5199) which is the date given in the Roman Church, and which date has been manifested to me as the true and certain one.

476. There are other wonderful circumstances and particulars, which all the faithful assume to have miraculously accompanied this most divine Birth; but as the only witnesses were the Queen of heaven and her courtiers, they cannot all be certified, except only those which the Lord himself manifests in his holy Church to all or to some particular souls in diverse ways.

As I think there is some divergence of opinion in this matter, which is most sublime and venerable, as soon as I had manifested to my superiors and directors what had been made known to me, they commanded me under obedience to consult anew the divine oracle and ask the Empress of heaven, my Mother and Teacher, and the holy angels that attend on me, for information on some particulars necessary for a clearer statement of the most sacred parturition of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, our Redeemer. In order to comply with this command I returned for a better understanding of these same happenings and it was then expounded to me in the following manner:

477. At the end of the beatific rapture and vision of the Mother ever Virgin, which I have described above (473), was born the Sun of Justice, the Onlybegotten of the eternal Father and of Mary most pure, beautiful, refulgent and immaculate, leaving Her untouched in her virginal integrity and purity and making Her more god-like and forever sacred; for He did not divide, but penetrated the virginal chamber as the rays of the sun penetrate the crystal shrine, lighting it up in prismatic beauty.

Before I describe the miraculous manner in which this took place, I wish to say that the divine Child was born pure and disengaged, without the protecting shield called secundina, surrounded by which other children are commonly born, and in

which they are enveloped in the wombs of their mothers. I will not detain myself in explaining the cause and origin of the error, which is contrary to this statement.

It is enough to know and suppose that in the generation and birth of the incarnate Word the arm of the Almighty selected and made use of all that substantially and unavoidably belonged to natural human generation, so that the Word could truly call Himself conceived and engendered as a true man and born of the substance of his Mother ever Virgin.

In regard to the other circumstances, which are not essential but accidental to generation and nativity, we must disconnect our ideas of Christ our Lord and of the most holy Mary not only from all that are in any way related or consequent upon any sin, original or actual; but also from many others which are not necessary for the essential reality of the generation or birth and which imply some impurity or superfluity, that could in any way lessen or impair the dignity of Mary as the Queen of heaven and as true Mother of Christ our Lord. For many such imperfections of sin or nature were not necessary either for the true humanity of Christ, or for his office of Redeemer or Teacher; and whatever was not necessary for these three ends, and whatever by its absence would redound to the greater dignity of Christ and his Mother, must be denied of Both.

Nor must we be niggardly in presuming wonderful intervention of the Author of nature and grace in favor of Her who was his worthy Mother, prepared, adorned and made increasingly beautiful for this purpose : for the divine right hand enriched Her at all times with gifts and graces and reached the utmost limits of his Omnipotence possible in regard to a mere creature.

478. In accordance with this truth her true motherhood was not impaired by her remaining a Virgin in his conception and birth through operation of the Holy Ghost. Although She could have lost her virginity in a natural manner without incurring any fault, yet in that case the Mother of God would also be without this singular prerogative of virginity. Therefore we must say, in order that She might not be without it, the divine power of her most holy Son preserved it for Her.

Likewise the divine Child could have been born with this covering or cuticle in which others are born; yet this was not necessary in order to be born a natural Son of the blessed Mother; hence He could chose not to take it forth with Him from the virginal and maternal womb, just as He chose not to pay to nature other penal tributes of impurity, which other human beings do pay at their coming into the light.

It was not just that the incarnate Word should be subject to all the laws of the sons of Adam; but it was consequent upon his miraculous Birth that He be exempt and free from all that could be caused by the corruption or uncleanness of matter. Thus also this covering, or secundina, was not to fall a prey to corruption outside of the virginal womb, because it had been so closely connected and attached to his most holy body and because it was composed of the blood and substance of his Mother;

in like manner it was not advisable to keep and preserve it outside of Her, nor was it becoming to give it the same privileges and importance as to his divine body in coming forth from the body of his most holy Mother, as I will yet explain. The wonder which would have to be wrought to dispose of that sacred covering outside of the womb could be wrought much more appropriately within.

479. The infant God therefore was brought forth from the virginal chamber unencumbered by any corporeal or material substance foreign to Himself.

But He came forth glorious and transfigured for the divine and infinite wisdom decreed and ordained that the glory of his most holy soul should in his Birth overflow and communicate itself to his body, participating in the gifts of glory in the same way as happened afterwards his Transfiguration on mount Tabor in the presence of the Apostles (Matth. 17, 2).

This miracle was not necessary in order to penetrate the virginal enclosure and to leave unimpaired the virginal integrity; for without this Transfiguration God could have brought this about by other miracles. Thus say the holy doctors, who see no other miracle in this Birth than that the Child was born without impairing the virginity of the Mother. It was the will of God that the most blessed Virgin should look upon the body of her Son, the Godman, for this first time in a glorified state for two reasons.

The one was in order that by this divine vision the most prudent Mother should conceive the highest reverence for the Majesty of Him whom She was to treat as her Son, the true God-man. Although She was already informed of his two-fold nature, the Lord nevertheless ordained that by ocular demonstration she be filled with new graces, corresponding to the greatness of her most holy Son, which was thus manifested to Her in a visible manner.

The second reason was to reward by this wonder the fidelity and holiness of the divine Mother; for her most pure and chaste eyes, that had turned away from all earthly things for love of her most holy Son, were to see Him at his very Birth in this glory and thus be rejoiced and rewarded for her loyalty and beautiful love.

480. The sacred evangelist Luke tells us that the Mother Virgin, having brought forth her firstbegotten Son, wrapped Him in swathing clothes and placed Him in a manger. He does not say that She received Him in her arms from her virginal womb; for this did not pertain to the purpose of his narrative.

But the two sovereign princes, saint Michael and saint Gabriel, were the assistants of the Virgin on this occasion. They stood by at proper distance in human corporeal forms at the moment when the incarnate Word, penetrating the virginal chamber by divine power, issued forth to the light, and they received Him in their hands with ineffable reverence. In the same manner as a priest exhibits the sacred host to the people for adoration, so these two celestial ministers presented to the

divine Mother her glorious and refulgent Son. All this happened in a short space of time.

In the same moment in which the holy angels thus presented the divine Child to his Mother, both Son and Mother looked upon each other, and in this look, She wounded with love the sweet Infant and was at the same time exalted and transformed in Him. From the arms of the holy princes the Prince of all the heavens spoke to his holy Mother:

"Mother, become like unto Me, since on this day, for the human existence, which thou hast today given Me, I will give thee another more exalted existence in grace, assimilating thy existence as a mere creature to the likeness of Me, who am God and Man."

The most prudent Mother answered :

"Traheme post Te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum" (Cant. 1, 3).
'Raise me, elevate me, Lord, and I will run after Thee in the odor of thy ointments.'

In the same way many of the hidden mysteries of the Canticles were fulfilled; and other sayings which passed between the infant God and the Virgin Mother had been recorded in that book of songs, as for instance : *"My Beloved to me, and I to Him, and his desire is toward me" (Cant. 2, 16). "Behold thou art beautiful, my friend, and thy eyes are dove's eyes. Behold, my beloved, for thou art beautiful";* and many other sacramental words which to mention would unduly prolong this chapter.

481. The words, which most holy Mary heard from the mouth of her most holy Son, served to make Her understand at the same time the interior acts of his holiest soul united with the Divinity; in order that by imitating them She might become like unto Him. This was one of the greatest blessings, which the most faithful and fortunate Mother received at the hands of her Son, the true God and man, not only because it was continued from that day on through all her life, but because it furnished Her the means of copying his own divine life as faithfully as was possible to a mere creature.

At the same time the heavenly Lady perceived and felt the presence of the most holy Trinity, and She heard the voice of the eternal Father saying :

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am greatly pleased and delighted" (Mat.17, 5).

The most prudent Mother made entirely godlike in the overflow of so many sacraments, answered:

"Eternal Father and exalted God, Lord and Creator of the universe, give me anew thy permission and benediction to receive in my arms the Desired of nations (Agg. 2, 8) ; and teach me to fulfill as thy unworthy Mother and lowly slave, thy holy will."

Immediately She heard a voice, which said:

"Receive thy Onlybegotten Son, imitate Him and rear Him; and remember, that thou must sacrifice Him when I shall demand it of thee."

The divine Mother answered :

"Behold the creature of thy hands, adorn me with thy grace so that thy Son and my God receive me for his slave; and if Thou wilt come to my aid with thy Omnipotence, I shall be faithful in his service; and do Thou count it no presumption in thy insignificant creature, that she bear in her arms and nourish at her breast her own Lord and Creator."

482. After this interchange of words, so full of mysteries, the divine Child suspended the miracle of his transfiguration, or rather He inaugurated the other miracle, that of suspending the effects of glory in his most holy body, confining them solely to his soul; and He now assumed the appearance of one capable of suffering.

In this form the most pure Mother now saw Him and, still remaining in a kneeling position and adoring Him with profound humility and reverence, She received Him in her arms from the hands of the holy angels.

And when She saw Him in her arms, She spoke to Him and said :

"My sweetest Love and light of my eyes and being of my soul, Thou hast arrived in good hour into this world as the Sun of justice (Malach. 4, 2), in order to disperse the darkness of sin and death ! True God of the true God, save thy servants and let all flesh see Him, who shall draw upon it salvation (Is. 9, 2). Receive me thy servant as thy slave and supply my deficiency, in order that I may properly serve Thee. Make me, my Son, such as Thou desirest me to be in thy service."

Then the most prudent Mother turned toward the eternal Father to offer up to Him his Onlybegotten, saying:

"Exalted Creator of all the Universe, here is the altar and the sacrifice acceptable in thy eyes (Malachy 3, 4). From this hour on, O Lord, look upon the human race with mercy ; and inasmuch as we have deserved thy anger, it is now time that Thou be appeased in thy Son and mine. Let thy justice now come to rest, and let thy mercy be exalted; for on this account the Word has clothed itself in the semblance of sinful flesh (Rom. 8, 3), and became a Brother of mortals and sinners (Philip 2, 7). In this title I recognize them as brothers and I intercede for them from my inmost soul."

Thou, Lord, hast made me the Mother of thy Onlybegotten without my merit, since this dignity is above all merit of a creature ; but I partly owe to men the occasion of this incomparable good fortune; since it is on their account that I am the Mother of the Word made man and Redeemer of them all. I will not deny them my love, or remit my care and watchfulness for their salvation. Receive, eternal God, my wishes and petitions for that which is according to thy pleasure and good will."

483. The Mother of mercy turned also toward all mortals and addressed them, saying:

"Be consoled ye afflicted and rejoice ye disconsolate, be raised up ye fallen, come to rest ye uneasy. Let the just be gladdened and the saints be rejoiced; let the heavenly spirits break out in new jubilee, let the Prophets and Patriarchs of limbo draw new hope, and let all the generations praise and magnify the Lord, who renews his wonders.

Come, come ye poor; approach ye little ones, without fear, for in my arms I bear the Lion made a lamb, the Almighty, become weak, the Invincible subdued. Come to draw life, hasten to obtain salvation, approach to gain eternal rest, since I have all this for all, and it will be given to you freely and communicated to you without envy. Do not be slow and heavy of heart, ye sons of men; and Thou, O sweetest joy of my soul, give me permission to receive from Thee that kiss desired by all creatures."

Therewith the most blessed Mother applied her most chaste and heavenly lips in order to receive the loving caresses of the divine Child, who on his part, as her true Son, had desired them from Her.

484. Holding Him in Her arms She thus served as the altar and the sanctuary, where the ten thousand angels adored in visible human forms their Creator incarnate.

And as the most blessed Trinity assisted in an especial manner at the birth of the Word, heaven was as it were emptied of its inhabitants, for the whole heavenly court had betaken itself to that blessed cave of Bethlehem and was adoring the Creator in his garb and habit of a pilgrim (Phil. 2, 7).

And in their concert of praise the holy angels intoned the new canticle :

"Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis" (Luke 2,14).

In sweetest and sonorous harmony they repeated it, transfixed in wonder at the new miracles then being fulfilled and at the unspeakable prudence, grace, humility and beauty of that tender Maiden of fifteen years, who had become the worthy Trustee and Minister of such vast and magnificent sacraments.

485. It was now time to call saint Joseph, the faithful spouse of the most discreet and attentive Lady.

As I have said above (472) he was wrapped in ecstasy, in which he was informed by divine revelation of all the mysteries of this sacred Birth during this night.

But it was becoming that he should see, and, before all other mortals, should in his corporeal faculties and senses be present and experience, adore and reverence the Word made flesh; for he of all others had been chosen to act as the faithful warden of this great sacrament.

At the desire of his heavenly Spouse he issued from his ecstasy and, on being restored to consciousness, the first sight of his eyes was the divine Child in the arms of the Virgin Mother reclining against her sacred countenance and breast.

There he adored Him in profoundest humility and in tears of joy. He kissed his feet in great joy and admiration, which no doubt would have taken away and destroyed life in him, if divine power had not preserved it; and he certainly would have lost all the use of his senses, if the occasion had permitted.

When saint Joseph had begun to adore the Child, the most prudent Mother asked leave of her Son to arise (for until then She had remained on her knees) and, while saint Joseph handed Her the wrappings and swaddling-clothes, which She had brought, She clothed Him with incomparable reverence, devotion and tenderness.

Having thus swathed and clothed Him, his Mother, with heavenly wisdom, laid Him in the crib, as related by saint Luke (Luke 2, 7). For this purpose She had arranged some straw and hay upon a stone in order to prepare for the God-Man his first resting-place upon earth next to that which He had found in her arms.

According to divine ordainment an ox from the neighboring fields ran up in great haste and, entering the cave, joined the beast of burden brought by the Queen. The blessed Mother commanded them, with what show of reverence was possible to them to acknowledge and adore their Creator. The humble animals obeyed their Mistress and prostrated themselves before the Child, warming Him with their breath and rendering Him the service refused by men.

And thus the God made man was placed between two animals, wrapped in swaddling-clothes and wonderfully fulfilling the prophecy, that "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood."

TEACHING OF THE MOST HOLY QUEEN MARY.

486. "My daughter, if men would keep their heart disengaged and if they would rightly and worthily consider this great sacrament of the kindness of the Most High towards men, it would be a powerful means of conducting them in the pathway of life and subjecting them to the love of their Creator and Redeemer. For as men are capable of reasoning, if they would only make use of their freedom to treat this sacrament with the reverence due to its greatness, who would be so hardened as not to be moved to tenderness at the sight of their God become man, humiliated in poverty, despised, unknown, entering the world in a cave, lying in a manger surrounded by brute animals, protected only by a poverty-stricken Mother, and cast off by the foolish arrogance of the world? Who will dare to love the vanity and pride, which was openly abhorred and condemned by the Creator of heaven and earth in his conduct? No one can despise the humility, poverty and indigence, which the Lord loved and chose for Himself as the very means of teaching the way of eternal life. Few there are, who stop to consider this truth and example: and on account of this vile ingratitude only the few will reap the fruit of these great sacraments.

487. But if the condescension of my most holy Son was so great as to bestow so generously upon thee his light and knowledge concerning these vast blessings, ponder well how much thou art bound to co-operate with this light. In order that thou mayest correspond to this obligation, I remind and exhort thee to forget all that is of earth and lose it out of thy sight; that thou seek nothing, or engage thyself with nothing except what can help thee to withdraw and detach thee from the world and its inhabitants; so that, with a heart freed from all terrestrial affection, thou dispose thyself to celebrate in it the mysteries of the poverty, humility and divine love of the incarnate God.

Learn from my example the reverence, fear and respect, with which thou must treat Him, remembering how I acted, when I held Him in my arms ; follow my example, whenever thou receivest Him in thy heart in the venerable sacrament of the holy Eucharist, wherein is contained the same God-Man, who was born of my womb. In this holy Sacrament thou receivest Him and possessest Him just as really, and He remains in thee just as actually, as I possessed Him and conversed with Him, although in another manner.

488. I desire that thou go even to extremes in this holy reverence and fear ; and I wish that thou take notice and be convinced, that in entering into thy heart in the holy Sacrament, thy God exhorts thee in the same words, which thou hast recorded as spoken to me : become like unto Me.

His coming down from heaven onto the earth, his being born in humility and poverty, his living and dying in it, giving such rare example of the contempt of the world and its de- ceits; the knowledge, which thou hast received concerning his conduct and which thou hast penetrated so deeply by divine intelligence : all these things should be for thee like living voices, which thou must heed and inscribe into the interior of thy heart.

These privileges have all been granted to thee in order that thou discreetly use the common blessings to their fullest extent, and in order that thou mayest understand, how thankful thou must be to my most holy Son and Lord, and how thou shouldst strive to make as great a return for his goodness, as if He had come from heaven to redeem thee alone and as if He had instituted all his wonders and doctrines in the holy Church for none else than thee (Gal. 7, 20)."

END OF THIS INSTRUCTION BY THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD.

from the: **MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD** by St. Maria de Agreda.

The Queen of Heaven ascends to Heaven

The Miracle of Her Transition:

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GLORIOUS AND HAPPY TRANSITION OF THE MOST HOLY MARY.
HOW THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES ARRIVED PREVIOUSLY IN
JERUSALEM AND WERE PRESENT AT HER DEATH.

732. And now, according to the decree of the divine will, the day was approaching in which the true and living Ark of the covenant was to be placed in the temple of the celestial Jerusalem, with a greater glory and higher jubilee than its prophetic figure was installed by Solomon in the sanctuary beneath the wings of the cherubim (III King 8, 8). Three days before the most happy Transition of the great Lady the Apostles and disciples were gathered in Jerusalem and in the Cenacle.

The first one to arrive was saint Peter, who was transported from Rome by the hands of an angel. At that place the angel appeared to him and told him that the passing away of the most blessed Mary was imminent and that the Lord commanded him to go to Jerusalem in order to be present at that event. Thereupon the angel took him up and brought him from Italy to the Cenacle. Thither the Queen of the world had retired, somewhat weakened in body by the force of her divine love; for since She was so near to her end, She was subjected more completely to love's effects.

733. The great Lady came to the entrance of her oratory in order to receive the vicar of Christ our Savior.

Kneeling at his feet She asked his blessing and said:

"I give thanks and praise to the Almighty, that He has brought to me the holy Father for assisting me in the hour of my death."

Then came saint Paul, to whom the Queen showed the same reverence with similar tokens of her pleasure at seeing him. The Apostles saluted Her as the Mother of God, as their Queen and as Mistress of all creation; but with a sorrow equal to their reverence, because they knew that they had come to witness her passing away. After these Apostles came the others and the disciples still living.

Three days after, they were all assembled in the Cenacle. The heavenly Mother received them all with profound humility, reverence and love, asking each one to bless Her. All of them complied, and saluted Her with admirable reverence. By orders of the Lady given to saint John, and with the assistance of saint James the less, they were all hospitably entertained and accommodated.

734. Some of the Apostles who had been transported by the angels and informed by them of the purpose of their coming, were seized with tenderest grief and shed abundant tears at the thought of losing their only protection and consolation. Others were as yet ignorant of their approaching loss, especially the disciples, who had not been positively informed by the angels, but were moved by interior inspirations and a sweet and forcible intimation of God's will to come to Jerusalem.

They immediately conferred with saint Peter, desirous of knowing the occasion of their meeting; for all of them were convinced, that if there had been no special occasion, the Lord would not have urged them so strongly to come.

The apostle saint Peter, as the head of the Church, called them all together in order to tell them of the cause of their coming, and spoke to the assembly:

"My dearest children and brethren, the Lord has called and brought us to Jerusalem from remote regions not without a cause most urgent and sorrowful to us. The Most High wishes now to raise up to the throne of eternal glory his most blessed Mother, our Mistress, our consolation and protection. His divine decree is that we all be present at her most happy and glorious Transition.

When our Master and Redeemer ascended to the right hand of his Father, although He left us orphaned of his most delightful presence, we still retained his most blessed Mother. As our light now leaves us, what shall we do? What help or hope have we to encourage us on our pilgrimage? I find none except the hope that we all shall follow Her in due time."

735. Saint Peter could speak no farther, because uncontrollable tears and sighs interrupted him. Neither could the rest of the Apostles answer for a long time, during which, amid copious and tenderest tears, they gave vent to the groans of their inmost heart. After some time the vicar of Christ recovered himself and added:

"My children, let us seek the presence of our Mother and Lady. Let us spend the time left of her life in her company and ask Her to bless us." They all betook themselves to the oratory of the great Queen and found Her kneeling upon a couch, on which She was wont to recline for a short rest. They saw Her full of beauty and celestial light, surrounded by the thousand angels of her guard.

736. The natural condition and appearance of her sacred and virginal body were the same as at her thirty-third year; for, as I have already stated, from that age onward it experienced no change. It was not affected by the passing years, showing no signs of age, no wrinkles in her face or body, nor giving signs of weakening or fading, as in other children of Adam, who gradually fall away and drop from the natural perfection of early man or womanhood. This unchangeableness was the privilege of the most blessed Mary alone, as well because it consorted with the stability of her purest soul, as because it was the natural consequence of her immunity from the sin of Adam, the effects of which in this regard touched neither

her sacred body nor her purest soul.

The Apostles and disciples, and some of the other faithful, occupied her chamber, all of them preserving the utmost order in her presence. Saint Peter and saint John placed themselves at the head of the couch. The great Lady looked upon them all with her accustomed modesty and reverence and spoke to them as follows:

"My dearest children, give permission to your servant to speak in your presence and to disclose my humble desires." Saint Peter answered that all listened with attention and would obey Her in all things ; and he begged Her to seat Herself upon the couch, while speaking to them. It seemed to saint Peter that She was exhausted from kneeling so long and that She had taken that position in order to pray to the Lord, and that in speaking to them, it was proper She should be seated as their Queen.

737. But She, who was the Teacher of humility and obedience unto death, practiced both these virtues in that hour. She answered that She would obey in asking of them their blessing, and besought them to afford Her this consolation. With the permission of saint Peter She left the couch and, kneeling before the Apostle, said to him:

"My lord, I beseech thee, as the universal pastor and head of the holy Church, to give me thy blessing in thy own and in its name. Pardon me thy handmaid for the smallness of the service I have rendered in my life.

Grant that John dispose of my vestments, the two tunics, giving them to the two poor maidens, who have always obliged me by their charity." She then prostrated Herself and kissed the feet of saint Peter as the vicar of Christ, by her abundant tears eliciting not less the admiration than the tears of the Apostle and of all the bystanders.

From saint Peter She went to saint John, and kneeling likewise at his feet, said : "Pardon, my son and my master, my not having fulfilled toward thee the duties of a Mother as I ought and as the Lord had commanded me, when from the Cross He appointed thee as my son and me as thy mother (John 19, 27). I humbly and from my heart thank thee for the kindness which thou hast shown me as a son. Give me thy benediction for entering into the vision and company of Him who created me."

738. The sweetest Mother proceeded in her leave-taking, speaking to each of the Apostles in particular and to some of the disciples; and then to all the assembly together ; for there were a great number. She rose to her feet and addressed them all, saying: "Dearest children and my masters, always have I kept you in my soul and written in my heart. I have loved you with that tender love and charity, which was given to me by my divine Son, whom I have seen in you, his chosen friends. In obedience to his holy and eternal will, I now go to the eternal mansions, where I promise you as a Mother I will look upon you by the clearest light of the Divinity, the vision of which my soul hopes and desires in security.

I commend unto you my mother, the Church, the exaltation of the name of the Most High, the spread of the evangelical law, the honor and veneration for the words of my divine Son, the memory of his Passion and Death, the practice of his doctrine. My children, love the Church, and love one another with that bond of charity, which your Master has always inculcated upon you (John 13, 34). To thee, Peter, holy Pontiff, I commend my son John and all the rest."

739. The words of the most blessed Mary, like arrows of a divine fire, penetrated the hearts of all the Apostles and hearers, and as She ceased speaking, all of them were dissolved in streams of tears and, seized with irreparable sorrow, cast themselves upon the ground with sighs and groans sufficient to move to compassion the very earth. All of them wept, and with them wept also the sweetest Mary, who could not resist this bitter and well-founded sorrow of her children.

After some time She spoke to them again, and asked them to pray with Her and for Her in silence, which they did. During this quietness the incarnate Word descended from heaven on a throne of ineffable glory, accompanied by all the saints and innumerable angels, and the house of the Cenacle was filled with glory.

The most blessed Mary adored the Lord and kissed his feet. Prostrate before Him She made the last and most profound act of faith and humility in her mortal life. On this occasion the most pure Creature, the Queen of the heavens, shrank within Herself and lowered Herself to the earth more profoundly than all men together ever have or ever will humiliate themselves for all their sins. Her divine Son gave Her his blessing and in the presence of the courtiers of heaven spoke to Her these words :

"My dearest Mother, whom I have chosen for my dwellingplace, the hour is come in which thou art to pass from the life of this death and of the world into the glory of my Father and mine, where thou shalt possess the throne prepared for thee at my right hand and enjoy it through all eternity. And since, by my power and as my Mother, I have caused thee to enter the world free and exempt from sin, therefore also death shall have no right or permission to touch thee at thy exit from this world. If thou wishest not to pass through it, come with Me now to partake of my glory, which thou hast merited."

740. The most prudent Mother prostrated Herself at the feet of her Son and with a joyous countenance answered:

"My Son and my Lord, I beseech Thee let thy mother and thy servant enter into eternal life by the common portal of natural death, like the other children of Adam. Thou, who art my true God, hast suffered death without being obliged to do so; it is proper that, as I have followed Thee in life, so I follow Thee also in death."

Christ the Savior approved of the decision and the sacrifice of his most blessed Mother, and consented to its fulfillment.

Then all the angels began to sing in celestial harmony some of the verses of the Canticles of Solomon and other new ones. Although only saint John and some of the Apostles were enlightened as to the presence of Christ the Savior, yet the others felt in their interior its divine and powerful effects; but the music was heard as well by the Apostles and disciples, as by many others of the faithful there present.

A divine fragrance also spread about, which penetrated even to the street. The house of the Cenacle was filled with a wonderful effulgence, visible to all, and the Lord ordained that multitudes of the people of Jerusalem gathered in the streets as witnesses to this new miracle.

741. When the angels began their music, the most blessed Mary reclined back upon her couch or bed. Her tunic was folded about her sacred body, her hands were joined and her eyes fixed upon her divine Son, and She was entirely inflamed with the fire of divine love.

And as the angels intoned those verses of the second chapter of the Canticles: "Surge, propera, arnica mea," that is to say: "Arise, haste, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come, the winter has passed," etc., She pronounced those words of her Son on the Cross : "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." Then She closed her virginal eyes and expired.

The sickness which took away her life was love, without any other weakness or accidental intervention of whatever kind. She died at the moment when the divine power suspended the assistance, which until then had counteracted the sensible ardors of her burning love of God. As soon as this miraculous assistance was withdrawn, the fire of her love consumed the life-humors of her heart and thus caused the cessation of her earthly existence.

742. Then this most pure Soul passed from her virginal body to be placed in boundless glory, on the throne at the right hand of her divine Son. Immediately the music of the angels seemed to withdraw to the upper air; for that whole procession of angels and saints accompanied the King and Queen to the empyrean heavens.

The sacred body of the most blessed Mary, which had been the temple and sanctuary of God in life, continued to shine with an effulgent light and breathed forth such a wonderful and unheard of fragrance, that all the bystanders were filled with interior and exterior sweetness. The thousand angels of her guard remained to watch over the inestimable treasure of her virginal body.

The Apostles and disciples, amid the tears and the joy of the wonders they had seen, were absorbed in admiration for some time, and then sang many hymns and psalms in honor of the most blessed Mary now departed.

This glorious Transition of the great Queen took place in the hour in which her divine Son had died, at three o'clock on a Friday, the thirteenth day of August, she being seventy years of age, *less the twenty-six days intervening between the thirteenth of August, on which She died, and the eighth of September, the day of her birth.*

The heavenly Mother had survived the death of Christ the Savior twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days; and his virginal birth, fifty-five years.

This reckoning can be easily made in the following manner: when Christ our Savior was born, his virginal Mother was fifteen years, three months and seventeen days of age. The Lord lived thirty-three years and three months; so that at the time of his sacred Passion the most blessed Lady was forty-eight years, six months and seventeen days old ; adding to these another twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days, we ascertain her age as seventy years, less twenty-five or twenty-six days.*

*In figures as follows:

Birth of Christ, 15 years, 3 months, 17 days.

Death of Christ, 33 years, 3 months, . . . days.
48 years, 6 months, 17 days.

Death of Mary, 21 years, 4 months, 19 days.

Age at death, 69 years, 11 months, 5 or 6 days.

743. Great wonders and prodigies happened at the precious death of the Queen; for the sun was eclipsed (as I said above in No. 706) and its light was hidden in sorrow for some hours. Many birds of different kinds gathered around the Cenacle, and by their sorrowful clamors and groans for a while caused the bystanders themselves to weep. All Jerusalem was in commotion, and many of the inhabitants collected in astonished crowds, confessing loudly the power of God and the greatness of his works. Others were astounded and as if beside themselves. The Apostles and disciples with others of the faithful broke forth in tears and sighs.

Many sick persons came who all were cured. The souls in purgatory were released.

But the greatest miracle was that three persons, a man in Jerusalem and two women living in the immediate neighborhood of the Cenacle, died in sin and impenitent in that same hour, subject to eternal damnation; but when their cause came before the tribunal of Christ, his sweetest Mother interceded for them and they were restored to life. They so mended their conduct, that afterwards they died in grace and were saved. This privilege was not extended to others that died on that day in the world, but was restricted to those three who happened to die in that hour in Jerusalem. What festivities were celebrated on that occasion in heaven I will describe in another chapter, lest heavenly things be mixed up with the sacred things of earth.

INSTRUCTION WHICH THE GREAT QUEEN OF HEAVEN,
MOST HOLY MARY, GAVE ME.

744. My daughter, besides what thou hast understood and written of my glorious Transition, I wish to inform thee of another privilege, which was conceded to me by my divine Son in that hour. Thou hast already recorded, that the Lord offered me the choice of entering into beatific vision either with or without passing through the portals of death. If I had preferred not to die, the Most High would have conceded this favor, because sin had no part in me, and hence also not its punishment, which is death. Thus it would also have been with my divine Son, and with a greater right, if He had not taken upon Himself the satisfaction of the divine justice for men through his Passion and Death. Hence I chose death freely in order to imitate and follow Him, as also I did during his grievous passion.

Since I had seen my Son and true God die, I would not have satisfied the love I owe Him, if I had refused death, and I would have left a great gap in my conformity to and my imitation of my Lord the Godman, whereas He wished me to bear a great likeness to Him in his most sacred humanity. As I would thereafter never be able to make up for such a defect, my soul would not enjoy the plenitude of the delight of having died as did my Lord and God.

745. Hence my choosing to die was so pleasing to Him, and my prudent love therein obliged Him to such an extent, that in return He immediately conceded to me a singular favor for the benefit of the children of the Church and conformable to my wishes. It was this, that all those devoted to me, who should call upon me at the hour of death, constituting me as their Advocate in memory of my happy Transition and of my desiring to imitate Him in death, shall be under my special protection in that hour, shall have me as a defense against the demons, as a help and protection, and shall be presented by me before the tribunal of his mercy and there experience my intercession. In consequence the Lord gave me a new power and commission and He promised to confer great helps of his grace for a good death and for a purer life on all those who in veneration of this mystery of my precious death, should invoke my aid. Hence I desire thee, my beloved daughter, from this day on to keep in thy inmost heart a devout and loving memory of this mystery, and to bless, praise, and magnify the Omnipotent, because He wrought such sacred miracles for me and for the mortals. By this solicitude thou wilt oblige the Lord and me to come to thy aid in that last hour.

746. And since death follows upon life and ordinarily corresponds with it, therefore the surest pledge of a good death is a good life; a life in which the heart is freed and detached from earthly love. For this it is, which in that last hour afflicts and oppresses the soul and which is like a heavy chain restraining its liberty and preventing it from rising above the things loved in this world.

O my daughter! How greatly do mortals misunderstand this truth, and how far they err from it in their actions! The Lord gives them life in order that they may

free themselves from the effects of original sin, so as to be unhampered by them at the hour of their death ;

and the ignorant and miserable children of Adam spend all their life in loading upon themselves new burdens and fetters, so that they die captives of their passions and in the tyranny of their hellish foes.

I had no share in original sin and none of its effects had any power over my faculties; nevertheless I lived in the greatest constraint, in poverty and detached from earthly things, most perfect and holy; and this holy freedom I did indeed experience at the hour of my death.

Consider then, my daughter, and be mindful of this living example; free thy heart more and more each day, so that with advancing years thou mayest find thyself more free, more detached and averted from visible things, and so that when the Spouse shall call thee to his nuptials, thou wilt not need to seek in vain the required freedom and prudence.

END OF CHAPTER.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN OFFERING OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING MADE BY ME,
SISTER MARY OF JESUS, THE LEAST OF THE MORTALS,
TO THE LORD AND TO HIS MOST HOLY MOTHER, FOR HAVING BEEN
CHOSEN TO WRITE THIS HEAVENLY HISTORY UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF THE QUEEN AND MISTRESS OF HEAVEN.

786. I confess Thee, God eternal, Lord of heaven, earth, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the one and true God, one substance and majesty in the Trinity of Persons; since, not having received aught from anybody that Thou shouldst repay him (Rom. 11, 35), solely through thy ineffable condescension and clemency, Thou revealest thy mysteries and sacraments to thy little ones (Matth. 11, 25) ; and since Thou dost it in immense bounty and infinite wisdom, pleasing Thyself and doing all things aright. In thy works Thou magnifiest thy holy name, exaltest thy Omnipotence, showest thy greatness, scatterest thy mercies and establishest thy glory, which is due to Thee as the holy, the wise, the powerful, the kind, the generous God, the sole beginning and Author of all that is good. None is so holy as Thou, none so powerful, none so exalted, who raisest the poor from the dust and from nothingness, and enrichest the needy (Ps. 112, 7). Thine are, O Most high God, the ends and the poles of the earth; Thou givest life and givest death; Thou humblest and castest down to the abyss the proud; Thou raisest up the humble according to thy pleasure; Thou enrichest and impoverishest, in order that in thy presence no flesh may boast, nor the strongest presume upon his strength, nor the weakest fear or distrust his weakness and his lowliness.

787. I confess Thee, true Lord, as the King and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. I confess and praise thy holy name, and give glory to Thee, who conferrest wisdom. I confess Thee, Queen of heaven, most holy Mary, worthy Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, beginning of our salvation, Depositary of the treasures of his grace, living temple of the Divinity, Restoratrix of the general ruin of the human race, new joy of the saints, glory of the works of the Almighty and singular instrument of his omnipotence. I confess Thee as the sweetest Mother of mercy, refuge of the unfortunate, Protectress of the poor and of the afflicted. All that the angelic spirits and the saints proclaim of Thee and in Thee and through Thee, I also confess, and I join them in whatever glory and praise they render in Thee and through Thee to the Divinity, blessing, magnifying and confessing and believing with them all things concerning Thee. O sovereign Mistress of all creation, through thy powerful intercession alone and because Thou hast looked upon me with eyes of mercy, thy divine Son has turned toward me in his clemency and as a Father, not disdaining for thy sake to choose me, the vile wormlet of the earth and the least of his creatures, to manifest his venerable secrets and mysteries. The multitudinous waters of my faults, ingratitude, and miseries could not extinguish his immense charity; and my torpidity and sluggishness could not dry up or choke the flow of his divine light and wisdom.

788. I confess, O kindest Mother, before heaven and earth, that I have striven with myself and with thy enemies, and that my interior was sadly troubled in hesitating between my unworthiness and my desire of wisdom. I stretched forth my hands and bewailed my insipidity; I led on my heart and I encountered knowledge, and with knowledge I came into the possession of peace; and when I encountered and loved it, I found it a goodly possession and I was not confounded. The sweet and strong force of wisdom wrought within me; it manifested to me the most hidden things and the knowledge most uncertain. I placed before my eyes Thee, the beautiful image of the Divinity and Mystical City of his habitation, in order that through the dark some night of this mortal life Thou mightest be my guiding star, and light me as the Moon of the immense Light, in order that I might follow Thee as my Leader, love Thee as a Mother, obey Thee as a Mistress, hear Thee as my Teacher, and that I might see myself as in an immaculate mirror and reach highest perfection by having before me thy ineffable example, virtues and works.

789. But who could ever have bent the divine Majesty to so vile a slave, if not Thou, O powerful Queen, who art the greatness of love, the vastness of clemency, the source of mercy, the prodigy of grace, and who has filled up the abysses of the guilt of all the children of Adam ? Thine, O lady, is the credit and the glory for all that I have written, not only because it records thy most holy and admirable life, but because Thou hast given it a beginning, hast furthered it, and brought it to a close; and if Thou hadst not been its Author and Controller, it could never have entered into the thoughts of man. Let then all thanks and credit be thine; because Thou alone canst give a worthy return to thy divine Son and our Redeemer for this new and peerless blessing. That Thou make such a return, I can only ask Thee in the name of the whole Church and in my own name. And this I desire now to do, O Mother and Queen of the virtues. Humbled in thy presence deeper than to the dust, I confess that I have received this and other blessings as favors, which I could never merit. Only what Thou hast taught and commanded, have I written; I was but the mute instrument of thy tongue, moved and governed by thy wisdom. Perfect Thou this work of thy hands, not only for the appropriate glory and praise of the Most High, but add to it what is wanting, in order that I may practice thy doctrine, follow thy footsteps, obey thy commands, and run after the odor of thy ointment, which is the sweetness and fragrance of thy virtues diffused with ineffable kindness through this history.

790. I acknowledge myself, O Empress of heaven, as the most unworthy, the most indebted of all the children of the holy Church. In order that the monstrosity of my ingratitude may not become apparent in the Church, before the Almighty and before Thee, I propose, offer, and seek to make known my renunciation of all that is visible and earthly; I again subject my liberty to the divine will and to thy own, engaging myself not to use my free will, except for God's glory and pleasure. I beseech Thee, the Blessed among all creatures, that, just as by the clemency of the Lord and thy own I hold the title of his spouse, and of thy daughter and disciple, and as thy Son, my Lord, has so often deigned to confirm these titles, Thou permit me not, O purest Lady, to fall short of these titles. Thy protection and assistance

failed me not in the writing of thy wonderful life ; help me now to put in practice thy teachings, wherein eternal life consists.

Thou wishest and commandest me to imitate Thee ; stamp and engrave upon my soul thy living image. Thou hast sown in my earthly heart the holy seed : guard it, cherish it, O Mother, sweet Mistress, that it may bring forth fruit a hundredfold; that it may not be snatched away by the birds of prey, the dragon and his demons; for of their wrath I have been warned in every word I have written of Thee, my Lady. Guide me unto the end, command me as my Queen, instruct me as my Teacher, correct me as my Mother. Receive as thanksgiving for all this thy own life and the high pleasure which Thou hast afforded to the most blessed Trinity, as the perfection of his marvels. Let the angels and saints praise Thee, let all nations and generations know Thee; let all creatures, in Thee and through Thee, eternally bless their Creator and let my soul and all my faculties magnify Thee.

791. This heavenly history (as I have adverted throughout the course of it) I have written in obedience to the commands of my superiors and confessors, who have had the guidance of my soul. They have assured me that I would fulfill the will of God through obedience in writing it, and that I should obey the most blessed Mother, who for many years has commanded me to write it; and although I have always subjected all of it to the criticism and to the will of my superiors, with holding not a single word from their scrutiny : I never theless submit it again to their better judgment. Above all do I submit it to the amendment and correction of the holy Roman Catholic Church, to whose censure and teaching, as her daughter, I protest I will be subject, ready to believe and hold all that this same holy Church, our Mother, approves and believes, and ready to reject all that she rejects; for in obedience to her I wish to live and to die. Amen.

END OF MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD
BY
SANCTA MARIA DE AGREDA.

END OF QUOTES FROM HER WORKS.

mr/29.12.20.

CHRONOLOGICAL DATA from Sta. Maria de Agreda's Life Of Mary, the Queen of Heaven
by Marcel de Ray.

§ 124. *All the rest of the world was lost in silent darkness, having passed a protracted night of five thousand and about two hundred years.*

- Maria de Agreda had seen Christ being conceived about 5,200 years after the Creation of men.

§ 124. *This happened in springtime on the twentyfifth of March, at break or dawning of the day, in the same hour, in which our first father Adam was made and in the year of the creation of the world 5199, which agrees also with the count of the Roman Church in her Martyrology under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. This reckoning is the true and certain one, as was told me, when I inquired at command of my superiors. Conformable to this the world was created in the month of March, which corresponds to the beginning of creation.*

Here, Mary de Agreda again sees Christ being conceived in the Year 5,199 and expands further:

- it was the day of the 25th of March, which is in spring;
- it was at sunrise, the break/dawning of the day;
- it was at the same hour as Adam was made in the Year Anno Mundi 0001, also the 25th of March.

§ 475. *In this position, at the end of the heavenly rapture, the most exalted Lady gave to the world the Only-begotten of the Father and her own, our Savior Jesus, true God and man, at the hour of midnight, on a Sunday, in the year of the creation of the world five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine (5199) which is the date given in the Roman Church, and which date has been manifested to me as the true and certain one.*

Sta. Maria de Agreda here again sees Christ having been born in the Year 5,199 Anno Mundi, adding:

- it was at the hour of midnight;
- it was on a Sunday.

If this means: the midnight at the start of Sunday or at the end of it, seems not clear from the text.¹

§ 484. *In sweetest and sonorous harmony they repeated it, transfixed in wonder at the new miracles then being fulfilled and at the unspeakable prudence, grace, humility and beauty of that tender Maiden of fifteen years, who had become the worthy Trustee and Minister of such vast and magnificent sacraments.*

- Mary was 15 years when Christ was born.

§ 120. *The heavenly Mother lived thirty-three years in the company of her Son and true God.*

- Mary had then lived 33 years in the company of her Son.

§ 198. *Saint Stephen died about nine months after the passion and death of Christ, our Redeemer, on the twenty-sixth of December, the same date on which the Church celebrates his feast. On that day he had completed his thirty-fourth year, which, with the addition of one day, was also the thirty-fourth year of the birth of the Savior. Hence saint Stephen was born one day later than Jesus, being only twelve months older, and his birth and death happened on the same day of the year, as was clearly shown to me.*

- Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was 34 years when he died, 9 months after Christ: 26.12.30AD
- this also means, Maria de Agreda saw Christ's death on March 25, an old tradition.

¹ Anna Catharina Emmerich in her visions sees the Birth of Christ at the hour of midnight as well, in the night of Saturday to Sunday, so at the start of Sunday (although in a 4,000 years frame, in the Year Anno Mundi 3,997 in agreement with a MT shorter Creation Calendar of about 4,000 years until our Christian Era).

§ 237. The miraculous conversion of saint Paul took place one year and one month after the martyrdom of saint Stephen, on the twenty-fifth of January, the same day on which the Church celebrates that feast; and it was in the year thirty-six of the birth of our Lord; because saint Stephen, as is said in chapter the twelfth, died completing his thirty-fourth year and one day of his thirty-fifth; whereas the conversion of saint Paul took place after he had completed one month of the thirty-sixth; and then saint James departed on his missionary journey, as I will say in its place.

- Saint Paul's conversion took place 1 year + 1 month after Stephen died, on the 25th of January;
- it was in the 36th year since Christ's Birth, for Stephen died 1 day into Christ's 35th year, and Paul converted 1 month into the 36th year of Christ;
(Christ was 33 when He died, it was during His 34th year).

§ 317. As soon as She found Herself recovered from her ecstasy, She prostrated Herself with her face upon the ground in the form of a cross and with most tender tears and incredible humility thanked the Almighty for this new blessing conferred upon Her in answer to her most humble petitions. For some time She conferred with her holy angels concerning the mysteries and necessities of the Church in order to attend to its most pressing needs. It seemed advisable to prepare and encourage the Apostles for coming trouble, since the common enemy was to direct his main battle against them.

For this purpose She spoke to saint Peter, saint John and the rest in Jerusalem, advising them of many particulars, that were to happen to them and to the whole Church, confirming the report of the conversion of saint Paul and telling them of the zeal, with which he was preaching the name of his Master and Lord.

§ 318. To those Apostles and disciples, who were not in Jerusalem, She sent angels, in order to notify them of the conversion of saint Paul and in order to prepare and encourage them with the same good counsels as those in Jerusalem. She sent an especial angelic messenger to warn saint Paul of the intended assaults of the devil and to animate and confirm him with the hope of divine assistance in his tribulations. Obediently the angels fulfilled all these errands with their accustomed celerity, manifesting themselves in visible forms to the Apostles and disciples.

All of them were exceedingly consoled and encouraged by these favors of the most blessed Mary; and each one answered through the same envoys, sending humble acknowledgment and offering themselves to die for the honor of their Redeemer and Master. Saint Paul especially showed his gratitude in his answer; for his desire of seeing and thanking his Protectress urged him to demonstrate his devotion in a more fervent manner. He was at that time in Damascus preaching and disputing in the synagogues, although soon after he went to Arabia to preach ; but from there he afterwards came to Damascus a second time, as I shall relate further on.

§ 319. Saint James the great was farther away than any of the others. He was the first one to leave Jerusalem, and, having preached some days in Judea, he departed for Spain. For this journey he embarked at Joppe, which is now called Jaffa, in the year thirty-five in the month of August, called Sextilis, one year and five months after the passion of the Lord, eight months after the martyrdom of saint Stephen and five months before the conversion of saint Paul, all according to what I said in the eleventh and fourteenth chapters of this last part.

- Saint James left Judea for Spain in August of the 35th year of Jesus, 1y+5m after the Passion: being: 25.12.30 – 25.12.31 AD: on August 31AD.

Sailing from Jaffa, saint James touched at Sardinia and shortly afterwards arrived in Spain, disembarking at the port of Carthagera where he began his preaching. He tarried but a short time in Carthagera, and guided by the Spirit of the Lord, He took his way to Granada, where he was made aware that the harvest was bountiful and the occasion opportune for beginning his labors for his Master; and so it really turned out.

§ 320. Before going farther I will state, that saint James was one of the most intimate and beloved disciples of the great Mistress of the world. Though he was related to Her, as was also saint John, his brother, not much of this predilection could be seen in her exterior conduct, on account of the impartiality of the most prudent Lady, already referred to in chapter the eleventh. With regard to saint John the whole apostolic college knew that the Lord had appointed him as the Son of his most pure Mother; therefore the most prudent Lady was not under such restrictions in regard to exterior tokens of love with saint John as She was with saint James and the other Apostles.

But interiorly the blessed Lady loved saint James with special tenderness, as I have already stated in the second part, and She manifested it in extraordinary favors, conferred upon him during his life until his martyrdom. Saint James deserved these favors on account of his special piety and affection toward Mary, distinguishing himself therein from all the rest. He needed the protection of the great Queen, because he was of a generous and magnanimous heart, and of a most fervent spirit, being resistlessly drawn on to offer him self for labors and dangers.

Hence he was the first one to go forth preaching the faith and the first of all the Apostles to suffer martyrdom. While on his missionary journeys he was indeed like the lightning flash, like the son of thunder, as he was called and designated by his brethren upon entering into the apostolate (Marc. 3, 17).

§ 321 During his labors in Spain the demons raised up incredible persecutions through the unbelieving Jews.

Nor were those of small import which he afterwards met in Italy and Asia Minor, whither he had returned to preach and to suffer his martyrdom. This he underwent in Jerusalem, having in the few years of his apostolate traveled in many distant countries. As it cannot be my purpose to relate all that saint James suffered in his extensive journeys, I will record only what concerns more closely this history. In general I have understood that the great Queen of heaven watched over him with an especial love, for reasons already stated, and that through her angels She defended and rescued him from many and great dangers, consoled him and comforted him many times, sending information and advice, such as he needed more particularly and oftener than the other Apostles during his short life. Many times also Christ our Savior sent angels from heaven to defend his great Apostle and to carry him from one region to another during his missionary travels.

- after Christ ascended into Heaven, His Mother was present within the early Church as their prayerful and protective Mother;
- since She is immaculately conceived, and like Her Son without sin, She was able to intercede in a most special and effective manner for the apostles of Christ, in founding His Church everywhere;
- saint James, as his brother John, was especially protected and favoured by their Holy Mother.

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

§ 728. "My daughter, since thou admirest my esteem and love for the holy Church, I wish to assist thy affection in conceiving new appreciation and love for it. Thou canst not in thy mortal flesh understand what passed in my soul in contemplating the holy Church. In addition to what thou hast understood already, thou wilt see more, if thou consider what moved my heart; namely, the loving works of my divine Son in the interest of the holy Church; they should be thy meditation day and night; for in what He did for the Church, thou wilt be able to estimate his love toward it.

In order to be its Head and the Chief of the predestined in this world and forever (Col. 1, 18; Rom. 8, 29), He descended from the bosom of the eternal Father and assumed flesh in my womb. In order to regain his children (Luke 19, 10), lost through the first sin of Adam, He took passible and mortal flesh. In order to leave the example of his unblemished life and his true and salutary doctrine (1 Pet. 2, 21), He lived and conversed with men thirty-three years (Baruch 3, 38).

In order to redeem them effectually and merit for them infinite blessings of grace and glory, which they themselves could not merit, He suffered most cruelly, shed his blood accepting a most painful and frightful death on the Cross (Phil. 2, 8).

In order that from his sacred body after its death might spring mysteriously his Church, He permitted it to be torn by the lance (John 19, 34).

§ 729. Since the eternal Father was so well pleased with his Life, Passion and Death, the Redeemer instituted in his Church the sacrifice of his body and blood (Luke 22, 19), in which his memory should live and which the faithful might offer as a satisfaction and peace-offering to the divine Justice.

At the same time through it He wished to remain perpetually present in his Church as a Sacrament for the spiritual nourishment of its children and as a fountain of grace, a viaticum and certain pledge of eternal life.

In addition to this He sent upon his holy Church the Holy Ghost, to fill it with his gifts and his wisdom, promising that He should guide and govern it always without error free from uncertainty and danger (John 15, 26).

He enriched it with all the merits of his Life, Passion and Death, applying them by means of the Sacraments, furnishing all that was necessary for men from their birth to their death for cleansing them from their sins, for persevering in grace, for defending themselves against the demons and vanquishing them by the arms of his Church, for crushing their own natural passions ; and at the same time He instituted fit and apt ministers for securing to his faithful all these blessings.

In the Church militant He communicates familiarly with all the holy soul ; He makes them participants in his hidden and secret favors ; He works wonders and miracles for them, and when it is for his glory, assumes their works; He hears their prayers for themselves or for others, thus maintaining the communion of saints.

§ 730. He left in it also other fountains of light and truth, the holy Gospels and writings dictated by the Holy Ghost, the decisions of the sacred councils, the assured and ancient traditions. He sends at opportune times holy doctors full of wisdom ; He furnishes teachers and learned men, preachers and ministers in abundance.

He spreads the renown of the Church through his wonderful saints; beautifies it with a variety of religious orders, wherein the perfect and apostolic life is professed and preserved; He governs it by many prelates and dignitaries. In order that all may proceed in harmony. He placed over it a supreme head, the Roman Pontiff, his vicar, with the plenitude of highest and divine authority, as the head of this mystical and most beautiful body. He defends and protects him to the end of the world against all the powers of the earth and the infernal abysses (Matth. 16, 18).

Among all these blessings bestowed and still to be bestowed upon his beloved Church, not the least one was, that he left me in it after his wonderful Ascension, in order that it might be spread and governed by my merits and my presence. From that time on and forever I hold this Church as my possession; for the Most High has consigned it to me as a gift and has commanded me to take care of it as its Mother and Mistress.

§ 731. These, my dearest, are the greatest reasons and motives for my past and present love of the holy Church, here made known to thee; and I desire that they rouse and enkindle thy heart to an ardent performance of all that pertains to thee as my disciple, as my daughter and that of the holy Church. Love it, respect and esteem it from thy whole heart, enjoy its treasures, gather in the riches of heaven, deposited together with its Author, in his Church.

Seek to unite it with thee and to unite thyself with it; for in it thou findest thy refuge and thy salvation, consolation in thy labors, hope in thy banishment, light and truth to guide thee in the darkness of this world.

For this holy Church I desire thee to labor during all the rest of thy life ; since this is the purpose for which thou hast been called into existence; thus shalt thou imitate and follow me in my tireless solicitude for the Church on earth; this is thy greatest good fortune, for which thou owest eternal gratitude.

I wish thee, my daughter, to be mindful of the fact, that with this desire and intent I have applied to thee a great portion of the treasures of the Church for the writing of my life; and the Lord has chosen thee as an instrument and as secretary of its mysteries and hidden sacraments for purposes of his greater glory.

Do not conceive, that by having labored somewhat in this work, that thou hast made even a partial return, absolving thee of thy obligations; but rather feel thyself more deeply pledged and obliged to put in practice the doctrine thou hast recorded; and as long as thou refusest to do so, thou wilt remain poor, unrelieved of thy indebtedness, and subject to a rigorous account for all thou hast received. Now is the time to work, so that thou mayest find thyself prepared, at leisure, and disengaged to receive the Spouse at the hour of death.

Look upon my freedom and detachment from all earthly things : govern thyself by it, and let not the oil of light and of love fail thee (Matth. 25, 3), in order that thou mayest enter the nuptials of the Spouse through the open gates of his infinite mercy and clemency."

§ 780. In the foregoing chapter I mentioned that the Transition of our Queen happened on the thirteenth of August, while her Resurrection, Assumption and Coronation happened on Sunday the fifteenth, on the day in which it is celebrated in the Church. Her sacred body remained in the sepulchre thirty-six hours, just as the body of her divine Son; for her Transition and her Resurrection took place in the same hours of the day.

According to the computation given above, I advert that this miracle happened in the year of our Lord fifty-five, which had advanced as many days as intervene between the Nativity of the Lord and the fifteenth of August.

- the Transition of the holy soul of Mary (leaving Her body) was on 13 August, Friday;
- the Resurrection, Assumption and Coronation of Her body & soul was on 15 August, Sunday;
- Her sacred body remained in the sepulchre 36 hours, as Jesus' body did: Fri.18h+36h=Sun.06h
- in the year 55 of our Lord = the 55th year since Jesus' birth, 54y+{25-12 until 15-08}: between 25.12.50 to 24.12.51AD = correct, 13.08.51AD is in between these two dates.

Remark: if so, Jesus was buried at 6 o'clock Friday afternoon + rose at 6 o'clock Sunday morning, and He was buried at the 12th hour of the day that Friday, and rose at the 12th hour of the night at Sunday morning.²

§ 780. We have left the great Lady at the right hand of her divine Son, reigning through all the ages of eternity. We now return to the Apostles and disciples, who in flowing tears surrounded the sepulchre of Mary in the valley of Josaphat. Saint Peter and saint John, who had been the most constant in their attendance, noticed that the celestial music had ceased; for they failed to hear it on the third day.

Partly enlightened by the Holy Ghost, they conjectured that the most pure Mother had arisen and had entered heaven, body and soul, like her divine Son. They conferred about this matter and came to the conclusion that so it must be; and saint Peter, as the head of the Church, decided that such a wonderful fact should be ascertained as far as possible and made known to those who had witnessed her death and burial.

For this purpose, on the same day, he called together the Apostles, disciples and the other faithful at the sepulchre. He told them of his reasons for the conjecture now in the mind of all and the reasons for manifesting the truth of this wonder to the Church, namely, that it should be revered in the coming ages and would rebound to the glory of the Lord and of his most blessed Mother.

All approved of the decision of the vicar of Christ and at his order immediately removed the stone, which closed the sepulchre. This being done, they saw the grave despoiled of the sacred body of the Queen of heaven and the tunic in the same position as when it had covered her, showing that it must have passed through the tunic and the stone of the sepulchre without disturbing any part of them. Saint Peter took out the tunic and the mantle and, with all the others, venerated it, as they were now certain of the Resurrection and Assumption of the blessed Mother into heaven. In mixed joy and sorrow they wept sweet tears at this prodigy and sang psalms and hymns of praise and glory to the Lord and his most blessed Mother.

§ 782. In their affectionate wonder all of them remained looking at the sepulchre, spellbound, until the angel of the Lord descended and manifested himself to them, saying: "Ye men of Galilee, why are you astounded and tarry here? Your and our Queen now lives body and soul in heaven and reigns in it forever with Christ.

She sends me to confirm you in this truth, and in her name I tell you that She recommends to you anew the Church, the conversion of souls, and the spread of the Gospel. She desires to tell you that you now return to your ministry, with which you were charged, and that from her throne She will take care of you."

At this message the Apostles were consoled; they experienced her protection in their wanderings, and much more in the hour of their martyrdom; for to each of them did She appear in that hour to present their souls to the Lord.

² Remark: if so, Jesus died at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon + rose at 3 o'clock Sunday morning, and He died at the 9th hour of the day that Friday, and rose at the 9th hour of the night at Sunday; Friday: 06h+9h of the day=15h, Saturday: 18h+9h of the night=03h Sunday. But a good reading of the numbers shows that Maria de Agreda stated: *in the Sepulchre*, not since the hour of His death, which makes this count start at Friday 18h until Sunday 06h, still 36 hours. He was dead for 39 hours: 3x 13 hours..

Other particulars concerning the Transition and Resurrection of the most blessed Mary were not made known to me for record here; nor have I during the whole course of this heavenly history had any choice of saying except what was made known to me and what I was commanded to write.

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

§ 783. *“My daughter, if anything could lessen the enjoyment of the highest felicity and glory which I possess, and if, in it, I could be capable of any sorrow, without a doubt I would be grieved to see the holy Church and the rest of the world in its present state of labor, notwithstanding that men know me to be their Mother, Advocate and Protectress in heaven, ready to guide and assist them to eternal life.*

In this state of affairs, when the Almighty has granted me so many privileges as his Mother and when there are so many sources of help placed in my hands solely for the benefit of mortals and belonging to me as the Mother of clemency, it is a great cause of sorrow to me to see mortals force me to remain idle, and that, for want of calling upon me, so many souls should be lost. But if I cannot experience grief now, I may justly complain of men, that they load themselves with eternal damnation and refuse me the glory of saving their souls.

§ 784. *How much my intercession and the power I have in heaven is worth has never been hidden in the Church, for I have demonstrated my ability to save all by so many thousands of miracles, prodigies and favors operated in behalf of those devoted to me. With those who have called upon me in their needs I have always shown myself generous, and the Lord has shown himself generous to them on my account. Yet, though many are the souls whom I have helped, they are few in comparison with those, whom I could and am willing to help.*

The world and the centuries are far advanced; while mortals are tardy in turning toward the knowledge of God; the children of the Church are involving themselves in the snares of satan; sinners multiply and crimes increase, because charity is getting cold even after God became incarnate and has taught the world by his life and doctrine, redeemed it by his Passion and Death, established his evangelical law for the guidance of his creatures, illustrated them by so many miracles, enlightenments, blessings, favors in the Church and in its saints.

In addition to all this God has in his goodness opened up his mercies through me and my intercession, constituting me as Mother, Advocate, Protectress and Helper of all men, and, though I am most punctual and generous in fulfilling all these offices, the result is inadequate. After all, since the crimes of men merit the chastisements, which threaten them and which they begin to feel, and since, under these circumstances, the malice of men has already reached the highest possible point, what wonder is it that divine Justice be irritated?

§ 785. *All this, my daughter, is true; but my kind and clement love exceeds all this malice, detains justice and still inclines the infinite Goodness toward men. The Most High still wishes to give generously of his infinite treasures and resolves to favor those who know how to gain my intercession before God.*

This is the secure way and the powerful means of advancing the Church, of improving the Catholic reigns, of spreading the faith, of furthering the welfare of families and of states, of bringing the souls to grace and to the friendship of God.

In this work, my daughter, I have desired thee to labor and assist according to thy power with the divine grace. Thy labor shall consist not only in having written my life, but in imitating it by following the counsels and salutary teachings, which thou hast so abundantly received, both in what thou hast written and in other favors and blessings of the Almighty.

Consider well, my dearest, thy strict obligation of serving me as thy only Mother, as thy legitimate and true Teacher and Superior, who favors thee with all these and many other condescensions. Thou hast likewise often renewed and ratified the vows of thy profession into my hands, and hast therein promised me especial obedience. Remember the promises thou hast so often given to the Lord and his angels. Many times We have manifested to thee our will, that thou live and act as one of them, and that thou, in carnal flesh, participate in the condition and activity of an angel; that thy conversation and intercourse be with those purest spirits; and

just as they converse with each other, and just as the higher enlighten and illumine the lower, so they will enlighten and instruct thee in the perfections of thy Beloved and in the exercise of all virtues, especially of the mistress of all of them, charity, by which thou mayest be inflamed in the love of thy sweet Master and of thy fellowmen.

To this state thou must aspire with all thy powers, in order that the Most High may find thee apt for the fulfillment of his most holy will and of all his wishes. May his powerful right hand give thee his eternal benediction, show thee the joy of his countenance and grant thee peace; see that thou do not make thyself unworthy.

§736. The natural condition and appearance of her sacred and virginal body were the same as at her thirty-third year.

- when The Queen of Heaven passed from this life into eternal Life, she was according to the Vision of Mary de Agreda, still as at her 33rd year of age (or as at her birthday of becoming 33).

§742. This glorious Transition of the great Queen took place in the hour in which her divine Son had died, at three o'clock on a Friday, the thirteenth day of August, she being seventy years of age, less the twenty-six days intervening between the thirteenth of August, on which She died, and the eighth of September, the day of her birth.

In this § Maria de Agreda gives a further explanation of the ages of the Blessed Virgin:

- the Blessed Virgin died and was transported to Heaven at 3 o'clock on a Friday;
- it was the 13th of August;
- most saint Mary was 70 years of age less 25 or 26 days;
less 26 days: this is the period reckoned back from 8 September to 13 August^{inclusive};

The heavenly Mother had survived the death of Christ the Savior twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days; and his virginal birth, fifty-five years.

- the heavenly Mother lived 21 years, 4 months and 19 days, after Jesus had died;
- it was now 55 years since His virginal Birth (70 years minus 15 years = 55 years).

This reckoning can be easily made in the following manner: when Christ our Savior was born, his virginal Mother was fifteen years, three months and seventeen days of age. The Lord lived thirty-three years and three months; so that at the time of his sacred Passion the most blessed Lady was forty-eight years, six months and seventeen days old; adding to these another twenty-one years, four months and nineteen days, we ascertain her age as seventy years, less twenty-five or twenty-six days.*

§743. Great wonders and prodigies happened at the precious death of the Queen; for the sun was eclipsed (as I said above in No. 706) and its light was hidden in sorrow for some hours.

*In figures as follows:

Birth of Christ: 15 years, 3 months, 17 days.

Death of Christ: 33 years, 3 months, . . days.
48 years, 6 months, 17 days.

Death of Mary: 21 years, 4 months, 19 days.

Age at death: 69 years, 11 months, 5 or 6 days.

This reckoning is part of her text. The note was added by some translator?

Concluding:

1. Mary was 15 years + 3 months + 17 days at Christ's Birth;
2. Jesus lived for 33 years + 3 months (+ 0 days?);
3. Mary was 48 years + 6 months + 17 days at Christ's Passion;
4. Mary lived for 21 years + 4 months + 19 days after Christ's Resurrection;
5. So, Mary was 70 years – 25 or 26 days;
being 69 years + 11 months + 5 or 6 days, at her death or Transition.
6. At the hour of Her death, there was a sun eclipse which lasted for some hours.

A sun eclipse:

Many devout holy writers and also some scholars believed there was a sun eclipse at Christ's Death as well, for the sun was darkened for several hours. But we should note that *physically* at Christ's death a sun eclipse as in astronomy cannot have taken place, for the position of the earth, sun and moon at the Day of Passover makes such a astronomical sun eclipse impossible (it is the day following the night of the Full Moon when sun eclipses do not occur). This therefore has to be understood as a 'sun miracle', which has also happened in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 (and was witnessed by thens of thousands of people in Portugal that day) and in Medjugorje, Bosnia in the early years (1980's).

† † †