

“Joseph holds the Messiah ” (Mary of Agreda)

505. When for the first time She placed the infant God in his arms, the most holy Mary said to him “My husband and My helper, receive in your arms the Creator of heaven and earth and enjoy His sweet company, in order that My Lord and My God may be delighted and you be rewarded by your faithful services. Take to yourself the Treasure of the eternal Father and participate in this blessing of the human race.” And speaking interiorly to the divine Infant, She said: “Sweetest Love of My soul and Light of My eyes, rest in the arms of Joseph, My friend and spouse. Much do I feel the loss of You even for one instant, but I wish to communicate without envy the good I have received, to all that are worthy.” Her most faithful husband, acknowledging this new blessing, humbled himself to the earth and answered: “Lady, my Spouse, how can I, being so unworthy, presume to hold in my arms God Himself, in whose presence tremble the pillars of heaven? How can this vile worm have courage to accept such an exalted favor? I am but dust and ashes, but do You, Lady, assist me in my lowliness and ask His Majesty to look upon me with mercy and make me worthy through his grace.”

506. His desire of holding the infant God and his reverence and fear of Him caused in Saint Joseph heroic acts of love, of faith, of humility and up most reverence. Trembling with discreet fear He fell on

his knees to receive Him from the hands of his most holy Mother, while sweetest tears of joy and delight flowed from his eyes. The divine Infant looked at him and at the same time renewed his inmost soul divine effects as no words will suffice to explain.



Joseph broke out in new songs of praise at seeing himself thus enriched with such magnificent blessings and favors. After having for some time enjoyed in spirit the sweetest effects of holding in his arms the Lord, He replaced Him into the arms of his fortunate Mother, both of them being on their knees in receiving and giving Him. Similar reverence the most prudent Mother observed every time She took Him up or released Him, in which also saint Joseph imitated Her, as often as it was his happy time to hold

the Jesus. When they approached His Majesty, they also made three genuflections, kissing the earth and exciting heroic acts of humility, worship and reverence. Thus both the great Queen and the blessed Joseph observed all carefully in receiving or giving the Child from and to one another.

507. When the heavenly Mother judged it time to nourish Him at Her breast, She reverently asked permission of Her Son; for although She knew, that She was to nourish Him as Her true and human Child, She nevertheless bore in mind, that He was at the same time the true God and Lord and that a great distance intervened between the infinite Being and a mere creature such as She was. As this consciousness was unailing in the most prudent Virgin, Her reverence remained faultless and undiminished and permitted not the least forgetfulness in Her. She was always filled with a clear insight and She always reached perfection in all Her acts. Therefore She nourished, served and tended Her Child, not with an uneasy haste, but with care, reverence and discretion, causing ever new admiration in the Angels, whose heavenly understanding reached not so far as to comprehend such heroic acts of a tender Maiden. As Angels were always visibly present during the time which She spent at the gates of Bethlehem, the Angels administered to Her in all things demanded by the service of the infant God and of Her. All these mysteries are so wonderful and admirable, and so worthy of our attention and remembrance, that we cannot deny our negligence in forgetting them, and we cannot acknowledge sufficiently, *what*

harm we are doing ourselves in not contemplating them, nor do we sufficiently understand the divine effect, which the memory of them produces in the faithful and grateful children of the Church.

508. From what has been revealed to me of the reverence, with which most holy Mary and the glorious Saint Joseph as well as the Angelic many treated the Son of God, I could easily extend my conversation on the subject. Though I refrain, I yet wish to confess the lack of reverence, with which I have until now in my behavior toward God, and how many faults, of which I have been guilty toward Him in this respect, have become known to me. As I said, and will relate further on, in order to assist the Queen, all the Angels of Her guard remained present in visible forms from the time of the Birth until the flight of the Child into Egypt. The care of the humble and loving Mother for Her divine Infant was so never ending, that She would not part with Him to place Him in the arms of Saint Joseph or into those of the holy princes Michael or Gabriel, except on rare occasions when She was obliged to take some nourishment; for these two Archangels had asked Her, to give the Child to their care during meals or when Saint Joseph was at his work. Thus He was placed into the hands of the Angels, in admirable fulfillment of the words of David: "In their hands they shall bear You up."

Ps 91:9 Because You have made the LORD Your refuge, the Most High Your habitation,

^{91:10} no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near Your tent.

^{91:11} For He will give His Angels charge of You to guard You in all Your ways.

^{91:12} On their hands they will bear You up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

The most watchful Mother would not take any sleep in Her caring for Her most holy Son, except when His Majesty commanded Her to do so. In reward for Her diligence He provided for Her a new and more miraculous kind of sleep than that which She had until then enjoyed. For while She slept, Her heart was awake, continuing or rather not interrupting the divine intelligence and contemplation of the Divinity.

Songs ^{5:1} I come to my garden, my sister, my bride, I gather my myrrh with my spice, I eat my honeycomb with my honey, I drink my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, and drink: drink deeply, O lovers!

^{5:2} *I slept, but my heart was awake.* Hark! my beloved is knocking. "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night."

But from this day on the Lord added still another miracle, namely, during the sleep, which was necessary, She retained in Her arms the power of holding and embracing the Child in the same way as if She were awake. She gazed upon Him with the eyes of Her intellect, as if She were looking upon Him with Her bodily eyes, understanding all that She Herself and Her Child did exteriorly. Thus was

miraculously fulfilled, what is said in the Songs: "I sleep, but my heart is awake." 509. The songs of praise and exalting in the works of God, which our heavenly Queen composed in honor of the Child, singing them with the holy Angels and also with Her spouse Joseph, I cannot express by my limited terms of speech. Of them alone there would be much to write, for they were uninterrupted; but the knowledge of them is reserved for the special enjoyment of the elect. Among all mortals the most faithful Joseph was privileged and blessed in this respect, for in many of them he himself participated and many of them he understood. Beside this he enjoyed another favor, of special benefit and comfort to his soul. Namely, many times, in speaking with Joseph of the Child, Mary spoke of Him as His father. Not that He was the natural Son of Saint Joseph, since in the supernatural order He was the Son of the eternal Father and in the natural order, the Son of His Virgin Mother; but because in the opinion of men He was reputed to be the son of Joseph. This favor and privilege was of very valuable to the saint and caused him immeasurable delight; on this account Joseph was delighted when Mary spoke of Joseph as the father of Jesus.

Lk ^{2:8} And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been looking for You anxiously."

Words of enlightenment from Mary.

510. My daughter, I see you full of happiness, because of My relationship

with my Son, my spouse and the holy Angels, since we held Him present to our bodily eyes. I wish to console you and guide you toward the same happiness which you see Us enjoy. For this purpose, beloved, recall what you have already understood concerning the ways of God. You have attained this knowledge by being favored with so many particular calls and enlightenments of the Lord, wherein He continually waits at the doors of your heart, and urges you onward expecting your conversion.

^{Wis 6:11} Therefore set your desire on My words; long for them, and you will be instructed.

^{6:12} Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and She is easily discerned by those who love Her, and is found by those who seek Her.

^{6:13} She hastens to make Herself known to those who desire Her.

^{6:14} He who rises early to seek Her will have no difficulty, for he will find Her sitting at his gates.

511. Faith likewise teaches you, that God is present in all places and that to Him are open all your thoughts, your desires and sighs without exception. If you cooperate with this truth so as to preserve the graces, which you receive through the sacraments and other channels divinely instituted, the Lord will remain with you also by divine and special assistance. In it He will shower you with His love as His chosen spouse. Now since you know and understand all these truths, tell Me, what more can you envy or desire, when you already possesses! What I require of you, and all that remains for you to do,

is, that you are to reproduce in yourself the purity of the Angels and My husband Joseph, and to copy in yourself My life, as far as possible, in order to be a fit dwelling-place of the Most High.

^{1 Cor 3:16} Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

^{3:17} If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

For if you imitate Me, you may rest secure, that you have Me as a Teacher and the Lord for an assured possession of your soul. In this assurance you can speak to Him, embrace Him and delight yourself with Him, as with One who is present. In order to communicate these delights to the pure and untainted souls He has assumed human flesh and become a Child. But always look upon Him as the great God, though a Child, in order that you may be guarded by reverence and your love accompanied by holy fear.

512. In this manner of conversation you must continue without intervals of luke warmness, lest you disgust Him. Your legitimate and chosen occupation should be none other than the love and the praise of the infinite God. All the rest you must enter into only sparingly, in such a way as if visible and earthly things scarcely concerned you and cannot detain you even for a moment. You must maintain yourself in this soaring height, so that you seem not to have anything earnestly to attend to, except to seek the highest and true God. Me you should imitate and for God alone you should live; all the rest should not exist for you, nor should you

exist for it. But the gifts and blessings, which you receive I wish you give and communicate for the good of your fellowmen, observing the perfect order of holy charity; thus your gifts will not evaporate, but be still more increased.

¹ Cor 13:8 Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

In all this you must keep the regulations, which befit your condition and state, as I have already shown and instructed you in other places at other times.