

“The hardships of the Holy Family being in poverty”

(Mary of Agreda)

653. The Holy Family passed through many cities in Egypt and then reached Heliopolis, where they took up their residence. When the Family arrived, Jesus ruined the temples and idols like He had done in the other Egyptian towns. Also the Lord Jesus had resolved to perform still other miracles for His glory and for the rescue of souls. The inhabitants of this city had named it "City of the Sun". Foretelling how this city would see the Sun of justice. And so it happened when Jesus entered the city blessing the people.

Saint Joseph sought to purchase for a suitable price some dwelling outside the city. The Lord Jesus made it happen that Joseph would find a poor and humble, yet serviceable house. The dwelling was a short distance from Heliopolis.

654. Having therefore found this dwelling near Heliopolis, the Holy Family took their residence therein. When Holy Mary entered into the home along side Her spouse and divine Son, She prostrated Herself to the ground, kissing it in profound humility. Lovingly thanking the Most High for having secured Them this place after their prolonged and laborious journeys. She thanked also the earth and the weather for bearing with Her, since in Her humility She made Herself unworthy of all favors. Always adoring the unchangeable being of God in all things.

Mary dedicated all that She was to do in this place for the Lord's honor and worship. Interiorly She made an offering of Her Soul to readily and with all joy fulfill the labors by which the Almighty could be served. By means of Her divine knowledge She set a great value on sufferings. Mary understand how highly they are valued by the Holy Trinity. And how Her most holy Son looked upon them as a rich treasure. Having performed these exalted acts of devotion, She set about humbly to clean and arrange the poor little house. The shelter consisted of bare walls, no furniture.

And since they now lived among people, Angelic assistance came to an end. Running out of food and hungry, saint Joseph went forth to seek alms. Giving thereby an example to the poor not to complain of their affliction. With all other means failing, seeking alms is not to be ashamed of.

655. During the first three days the Holy Family had no food except what was begged by saint Joseph. When he began to earn some wages by his work, he made an humble couch for the Mother and a cradle for Her Son. While he himself had the bare ground as a resting place. For the house was without any furniture until by his own labor he succeeded in making some pieces for the convenience of all Three. In Their extreme poverty most holy Mary and Joseph did not look back

at their home in Nazareth with regrets. They didn't send word to their relations and friends for aid. They had no sorrows of giving away the gifts of the three kings. All of these regrets were far from their minds. But they carried all hardships with joy and peace, because they relied on the Lord.

Man does not know the science of relying on the Lord. Rather man will complain of missing this or neglecting that advantage. Should have done this or that, and missed the misfortune. All these complaints are useless and most foolish, since they can't bring relief. Although it would have been good if sin wasn't committed and punished by that sin. Yet very often men are only sorry for sin because of the disadvantages, and not for the guilt connected with sin. Slow and stupid of heart are men to understand the spiritual things they should do. While on the other hand men are full of fleshly and earthly solutions when solving their anxieties. But now men have an example on how they should govern their lives. Rely on God's will.

656. The most prudent Lady and Her spouse, void of all family and friend's help, joyfully excepted Their poverty. The three rooms which the home contained, one room was assigned for the Infant Jesus under the tender care of the most pure Mother. It was here they placed the cradle and Her couch after Joseph had constructed them. Through the kindness of some pious Egyptian women, these woman gave as alms blankets for the beds. Another room was set aside for the sleeping place of saint Joseph. The third served as a workshop

for working his trade. Saint Joseph soon found difficulty finding sufficient employment as a carpenter. With Joseph finding little work, the Holy Mother obtained needlework through the intervention of pious Egyptian women. These Egyptians were attracted by Mary's modesty and sweetness, and began to have conversations with Her. Mary's reputation for needlework soon spread, so that She never was in need of employment.

657. In order to obtain clothing and furnish the house ever so moderately and pay the necessary expenses, it seemed to our Queen that She must work during the day and spend Her night in Her prayers. She contemplated the mysteries of God during the day in the presence of the infant Jesus. The most prudent Queen continued to asked the eternal Father to provide help for the Holy Family; but at the same time She continued to labor. She prayed for the necessities of life and She also labored for them. Very important to labor like other men.

658. The Infant Jesus was much pleased with the prudence of His Mother. He wished to lighten the labors She had taken upon Herself. One day He spoke to Her from the cradle and said: "My Mother, I wish to set up a rule for Your daily life and labors." Immediately the heavenly Mother knelt before Him and answered: "My sweetest Love, and Lord of all My Being, I praise and exult You because You have listened to My secret thoughts and desires. May it please You to direct My footsteps according to Your Holy Will, to govern all My labors according to Your wishes. Schedule all My labors in each hour of the day

according to Your divine pleasure. And since My God has listened to this lowly creature and Her thoughts, speak, You are Light of My eyes, for Your Servant hears." The Lord replied: "My dear Mother, from the time of nightfall You shall take some sleep and rest. And from midnight until the break of day You may occupy Yourself in contemplation with Me, and We will praise the eternal Father together. Thereupon prepare the necessary food for Yourself and Joseph; and afterwards give Me nourishment and hold Me in Your Arms until the third hour (Third hour of the day is three hours after dawn, 9:00 AM), when You shall place Me in the arms of Your husband, in order to give him some joy in his labors. Go to Your work until it is time to prepare His meal and return to Your work. Since You do not have the Sacred Scriptures with You, You can enter into the doctrines of eternal life by following Me in perfect imitation. And continually pray to the eternal Father for the sinners."

659. By these rules the most holy Mary governed Her activities during Her stay in Egypt. Three times daily She nursed the infant God at Her breast. Whenever the heavenly Mother was engaged in any work, She always performed it in His presence. During these times Jesus from His cradle and the Mother at Her work, both would brake out in songs of praise. By these hymns the heavenly Mother was continually filled with new influences of the Divinity, and new longings to be united to His unchangeable being. *For She alone was the royal Eagle which could penetrate into God's light and soar from height to heights. She was fulfilling the reason*

why the divine Word had assumed flesh in Her virginal womb, namely to draw on and elevate humanity to the Divinity. She was the only Man which did not produce obstacles of sin. Free from the appetites of the flesh, She flew upward to Her Beloved and to His exalted habitation, not resting until She reached Her Center, which was the Divinity. She had always in view the Soul of Jesus. Her desires and passions were centered in the Most High. Therefore She hurried on in burning fervor, embracing Her goal. Flying towards it and living more in Her love than in Her life.

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661. Whenever She wished saint Joseph the joy of holding the Infant Jesus, the Mother of God said: "My Son and Lord, look upon Your faithful servant Joseph with the love of a Son and father, and delight Yourself in the purity of His affectionate soul, so acceptable in Your eyes." And She said to Saint Joseph: "My Spouse, receive in your arms the Lord, who created and holds with His hands the entire universe. Refresh yourself from your labors in Him who is the glory of all creation." For these favors saint Joseph returned most humble thanks. He would ask his Spouse whether he could dare to caress the Child. Encouraged by Her, he would do so. This privilege made him forget all the hardships of his labor, and made them easy and sweet in his eyes. Whenever Mary and Joseph were at their meals the Infant Jesus was with them. In serving the meals, the heavenly Queen held Jesus in Her arms, partaking of the food with great modesty. In holding Him, She adored and loved Him as the eternal God and caressing Him with the

tenderness of a Mother. Mary fulfilled all obligations that was due to Jesus being Her Creator. Looking upon Him in His Divinity, as Son of the eternal Father, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the Maker and Preserver of all the universe. And also to give Him all the attention that He deserved as an Infant, serving Him and nursing Him. Doing both, Mary was entirely inflamed with love, and Her whole Being consumed in heroic acts of admiration, praise and affection.

Words of enlightenment from Mother Mary.

662. My daughter, I came into Egypt, where I knew no family or friends. The people had fallen into the hands of the demons and offered sacrifices to them. I wasn't able to offer home or protection to My Son, whom I loved so much. With patience and strength We accepted all this. Even the Angels cannot estimate the reward I merited from the Most High by the love with which I carried them. It is true, I grieved to see My husband in such necessity but at the same time I blessed the Lord to be able to suffer them. In this most noble patience and joy of spirit I wish that you imitate Me whenever the Lord offers trials. And that you learn to act with prudence interiorly and exteriorly.

663. When the necessities of life are needed to those under your care, work properly to obtain them. (Mary of Agreda was the leader of her convent with other sisters in her care.) You need not lose your peace of mind. Especially if you remember what I have told you. Do not to lose sight of the presence of the Lord.

If you are careful and preserve your peace, you can do all things. Whatever can be obtained by human work do not expect a miracle. Do not be lazy and expect a supernatural help on the part of God. For the Lord values highly the ordinary and natural course of created things. The labor of the body working with the corporation of the soul is rewarded by our Lord. While at work the man should praise God and adore Him in spirit and in truth. In order to fulfill this duty, direct your activity according His pleasure. Consult His Will, your attention must be on the divine light which the Almighty infuses in your soul.