

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Flower of Mary's Martyrdom.

SECOND PART.

"When Jesus saw his Mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved,—he saith to his Mother: Woman,—behold thy Son."—*John xix, 26.*

THE Three Years, on which all the years of human history lean and will forever lean for the light of truth, for grace divine and for salvation were coming to a close. The words that fell from the lips of Christ during those years shine still like heavenly stars above all the horizons of time.

Palm Sunday came and passed with its Hosannas. Monday and Tuesday he taught in the temple, returning to Bethany every evening. His Mother was there. Wednesday night he spent amid the hills alone in prayer. Thursday morning he returned to Bethany. He had asked her consent to His Incarnation. He comes to ask her consent to His Passion,—and to bid her farewell. He knelt to His Mother and begged her blessing. She refused to bless her God and fell on her knees to adore His Divinity. They both remained kneeling and at last each blessed the other. She had given her consent to the crucifixion. She had given her child away to the world. Unutterable human anguish filled her heart,—for by supernatural light she saw every single detail of the awful drama in which Christ

was to be the victim. But above all the dark anguish, like the far calm sky above the storm-swept sea and angry clouds, her will was tranquil and her soul was full of such graces as she had never known before. She needed them all to meet her coming desolation.

On Thursday night she was in Jerusalem. It was the Eucharistic night. Did she, in some way, receive her Son's body and blood to give her strength to bear the woes of Good Friday?—Many think she did. Next morning came. Accused, tried, not convicted yet condemned, scourged, crowned with thorns, accompanied by two malefactors, preceded by Roman soldiers, surrounded by a savage crowd whose blasphemies rent and desecrated the air, followed by an immense multitude, some wondering,—some pitying, some weeping but the most clamoring for His death,—Jesus went on His way through the streets to Calvary. John the Virgin and Magdalen the outcast stood by the Mother of the Son of God. The Apostles had fled. Jostled by the crowd Mary stood at the corner of a street by which her Son would pass. He saw her blue mantle. Their eyes met. Ah! what a meeting! One moment,—but it was equal to an age of grief. Higher, darker surged the waves of sorrow in the Mother's soul. Grace held her up. The next moment Jesus fell under the weight of His cross and His Mother's sorrow. He rose again. More savage rose the clamors for His blood. They echoed and re-echoed through the streets of Jerusalem,—but ah! they rang through Mary's heart and filled it with an agony like to His in Gethsemane. And she? She was praying for them all. John, Magdalen, Mary followed the multitudes. They crept up the slopes of Calvary. She saw it all, every detail of the awful cruci-

fixion. Her ears heard every stroke of the hammer driving in the nails. Christ was lifted up on the cross. No wonder the earth was shaken from centre to circumference,—appalled by the murder of its God by men,—and these,—men of His chosen race. But not only the sin-stained earth gave signs of terror;—in the sinless heavens there were portents of sorrow,—as if they knew and felt the infinite horror on Golgotha. Darkness came creeping over the hill;—growing deeper and deeper;—hushing the blasphemies on the lips of the rabble, who now filled with fear rushed away from the cross back to Jerusalem when they heard that strange and awful sounds had issued from the temple and that the veil in the temple had been rent in twain.

In the darkness Mary and Magdalen and John came together to the cross. Mary and John stood. Magdalen crept to her old place,—crouched on the ground;—kissed and kissed the nailed feet;—and mystery of mysteries! the tears of the forgiven outcast mingled with the blood of the Son of God.

Silence came. Seven times was it broken by the dying Saviour. In a tone of infinite pathos rose from his lips: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Mary stood beside the cross calm in her illimitable woe;—making in her breaking heart an almost infinite act of almost infinite contrition for the murderers of her Son and for all sinners. Her silent act of contrition ascended to the Father blessed with the prayer of Jesus. But ah! if sinners need a divine Saviour,—do they not need a human, sinless Mother?—Wait awhile. There is silence again. When she became His mother in Bethlehem thirty-three years ago,—it was in joy—in rapture, in ecstasy. His human nature

was sinless. But now she is to be made the Mother of all sinners on Calvary; she must suffer the penalty of such motherhood. She will be made their Mother when her soul and body are suffering agonizing throes beyond the reach of thought. When she has reached her closest union with her dying Son in the pangs of her compassion;—when His Passion and her compassion become almost as one, then shall her second motherhood be proclaimed to the world by the dying lips of the world's Redeemer. Silence still. Poor Magdalen is weeping her very heart away—kissing now the nails as if to make them less cruel. The moment of the second maternity came.

"When Jesus therefore saw His Mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His Mother: 'Woman, behold thy Son.' Then to the disciple: 'Behold thy Mother.'"

Ah! what a transfer from Jesus to John! Has He given His Mother away? Yes. Has He abandoned Her? No. He has given her away to those for whom He is giving away His life. He gives her away and still keeps her. How? The soul that takes Him must take her. The sinner that calls Him Saviour must call the Saviour's Mother his Mother. He gives Himself to sinners as their Saviour;—He gives her to sinners as their Mother. So Jesus and Mary are still together. From Bethlehem to Calvary together. From Calvary's Cross to heaven's crown together. The Mother of the Redeemer is proclaimed by Christ,—Mother of the Redeemed. The Mother of Christ is the Mother of Christians. John the Apostle, on Calvary, becomes the representative of all the posterity of Jesus Christ. Mark the Scripture words: "He said to the

beloved disciple: 'Behold thy Mother.'" On Calvary John represented all the beloved disciples of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom that was to last to the end of time. And therefore Mary, by Christ's appointment is made forever the Mother of His disciples.

Ah! Cross of mercy eternal! wherever you are preached;—wherever you are planted,—wherever the sunshine of your salvation is cast;—you are not true to the great Good Friday;—you are not true to Calvary—unless who so preaches or plants you still keeps Mary His Mother standing beside you.

The scene on Calvary on that Good Friday is framed in every day and hour of time. On the Mount, the Cross,—on the cross Jesus Christ; beside the Cross; Mary His Mother. She must be there as part of the picture. If not there,—the picture is false. No—no—if I go in in my sins and sorrows for pardon or comfort to the foot of the Cross of Christ, I find kneeling there a sinner like myself the Magdalen; and I find standing there Mary His Mother. Can I thrust her aside? No—no. It is her place to stand there not only for the three hours in visible form,—but to the eyes of faith forever.

To the eyes of Faith, Magdalen the sinner has her arms around the foot of the Cross forever.

To the eyes of Faith the well-beloved of Christ, representative of His disciples, stands beside his and our Mother. For Good Friday lasts forever. No after day has gone back to it; but it has come to every day of time bringing the Cross and the Christ and the Mother, and the penitent sinner. Will you take the Cross and Him—and reject her? Do not the deepest meanings of God's eternal decrees gather around

the Cross on Calvary? Did Mary stand there for nothing? Were her presence and even her posture there meaningless? Who will dare to say so? Were His words to her and John without meaning? John would care for her anyhow,—and the Apostles. When He said to His Mother: "Behold thy son:" could He have meant it literally? No. A literal meaning is nonsense. John was not her son. What else could He mean? Why: His words on Calvary are as wide and deep as His work of mercy on Calvary. They reach beyond that hill and that day,—and the spiritual meaning of the words He spoke will last as long as the work of mercy He accomplished. When to John He said: "Behold thy Mother:" what did He mean? Only John? She was not John's mother. Taken in literal sense His last dying words would be false. Who will dare say so? What then did He mean? He meant it in a spiritual or mystical sense. As He is mystical Head of the Church,—she is the mystical Mother of all the members of the Church. Why?—We are brothers of Christ;—He was her Son; and therefore we are her spiritual children.

In Bethlehem in joy she became the Mother of the Redeemer. On Calvary in the throes of sorrow she became the Mother of the Redeemed.

Oh! Mother of our Redeemer! look down upon us from thy throne in heaven; and as thou didst follow thy own adorable Son from His birth even unto His death; guide us thy children through every day of our lives; and as thou didst stand at the foot of thy Son's Cross, in the hour of His death, be with us in our last hour when we shall commend our spirit into the hands of our eternal Father.

ASPIRATION.

"GREAT as the sea is my sorrow."

PRAYER.

O God, at whose passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow did pierce through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary; mercifully grant that we, who devoutly celebrate her transfixion and suffering, may, through the mediation of the glorious merits and prayers of all the saints who faithfully stand beneath the cross, obtain the blessed fruit of thy passion.



 TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

 The Flower of Mary's Martyrdom.

 THIRD PART.

"After that he saith to his disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own."—*Luke xix, 27.*

THE dead who had come out of their graves, awakened to life by the death of Christ, were walking through the streets of Jerusalem, seen of many, who awe-struck rushed away to hide themselves from the appalling sight. There was terror in the city,—and a horror indescribable fell over the hearts of all. Jesus still hung on the Cross. The centurion rode down the slopes of Calvary crying out in the darkness through which light had entered his soul: "Truly this was the Son of God."

"When the evening was come there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also himself one of the disciples of Jesus: he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus." "And there came also Nicodemus (who at the first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh about an hundred pound in weight,"—to embalm the body of the dead Christ. They and their servants found Mary still standing beside the Cross. She as Mother had watched o'er the crib—and she as Mother is guarding the Cross. That body is hers. She had given it its life out of her own life. He

has given it away for the sins of the world. She stands there the sinless watcher and the sorrowful weeper over her Son's death.

She saw them coming,—and she waited. They neared the Cross. White as a lily was the face of the Dead; and white as the lily of the Valley was the face of the Mother of the Dead. Poor Magdalen was in her chosen place at the foot of the Cross bathing the dead feet with her tears. John was calm and still beside Mary. His vocation was a high one. Peter was to have charge of the Church; but John was to take care of Mary the Mother of all the disciples of her divine Son.

Against the Cross a ladder was fixed. Joseph and Nicodemus mounted. The crown of thorns is gently loosened from the head and passed down to Mary.

Ah! such a crown and so cruel and for such a King! His blood is on it. That crown can never wither. It never has;—nor shall.

Better thorns than flowers;—for flowers fade. Never mind! the thorns will bloom into immortelles of mercy and love and joy. The nails were loosened in the hands and feet. They are gently letting the body down.

Now Sorrowful Mother! you may kneel down and take Him in your arms again and nestle the poor sacred head upon your breast. He is coming back to you. To whom else would He first come dead who living first came to you? And to you for us? The hands of poor Magdalen are the home of His feet. They seem to be thirsty for her tears. And they rest so sweetly in her hands.

But ah! around that scene hovered unseen hosts of angels. Gabriel of the Annunciation was there strengthening the soul of the Mother in her sorrows,—strengthening her arms to bear the dead Burden.

Not a word was heard;—only Magdalen could not help but wail;—for she could not understand it all. Jesus was dead and her heart was breaking. The Mother's heart was already broken.

What woe was like His Mother's woe? She would have died holding the dead Christ had not God's strong grace held her up. She smoothed the tangled and blood-clotted hair as calmly as she smoothed His hair long ago when He was a child. 'Twas deep joy then. It is deepest sorrow now.

She sits down on the grass,—and the dead Christ is resting in her lap. "He had no place to rest His weary head" in life,—He said it Himself long ago. In death as in birth He rests on His mother. Wait awhile! She is gazing in unutterable grief on the wan, white face. What a long, intense, searching look. Does she read there the names of all the elect? Her grief is brightened. Does she read there the names of all lost souls?

Ah! how her sorrow puts on a darker darkness:

Let her alone. 'Tis the saddest picture this world shall ever look upon. Somehow the outstretched arms will not be closed. Even dead they want to stay wide open with mercy's welcome for all the world.

The mingled myrrh and aloes she, with the others, applies to the wounds. Magdalen embalms the Feet. Poor thing! and did she not know that if His feet were her's, His heart was her's as well? One last look of absolute agony at the dead Face;—the winding sheet is wrapped around the body;—and then Joseph and Nicodemus gently raise the sacred corpse, assisted by John, and wend their way down the slopes of the mount to the tomb in the garden below. Mary and Magdalen

walk together,—the sinless and the sinner. Is it not ever so?

It was Joseph's Garden. In it he had built a tomb for himself. It was hewn out of the solid rock. In it no dead had as yet lain. Slowly,—silently they came down from the mount. They reached the sepulchre. It was almost night. The heavens and the earth, awhile ago so stirred with terror, were now as calm and peaceful as the Face of the dead Christ.

In the tomb they laid their burden down. They adored It with profoundest adoration. The Mother looked her last on the shrouded form of her dead Son;—calm with an almost infinite calmness,—sorrowful with an almost infinite sorrow. Her grief was an icy, frozen grief that could not melt into the tears that relieve. Magdalen sobbed as sinners sob after pardon has come;—wept as those do weep who have lost all they love. The great stone was rolled against the door of the sepulchre. The restless Christ had found a place of rest at last. He will not rest even there long. Away from the closed tomb went the mother with a Christ-like calm covering the inner sea of sorrow that was whelming her soul down into depths too deep to fathom, where all was dark as all was deep, for the light of her life was hidden away in the sepulchre. Mary Magdalen could scarcely tear herself away from the grave of Him who had shown such loving mercy to her. But the Mother of the dead Christ was now her Mother also, and when called away by the voice of the sinless Mary,—the Magdalen, like a little child, obeyed. They passed across Calvary on their way to the city. The Paschal moon was shining on the Cross. At its feet again fell Magdalen. She fain would linger there all

night long. Ah! it had been a cruel bed of death for her beautiful Christ! The bed was empty;—but though empty she would watch it still.

The Mother kissed the Cross, and bade Magdalen rise and come. They entered the city away in the night. Roman soldiers were already guarding the grave of Christ. And what a night for Mary the Mother!

Every moment,—and every moment was one of intense painful wakefulness,—for her sorrow would not go to sleep,—filled the Mother's heart with desolation.

What if the Roman soldiers would desecrate her Son's grave? What if they would roll away the stone and drag the body forth and maltreat the dead as they had maltreated the living? The light in Mary's soul has gone out. Down in her heart where all was now so dark,—like to Christ's cry upon the Cross,—she cried in agony: "My Son! my Son! why hast thou forsaken me?"—And yet, like Him, she was resigned.

And the night passed on and away. The Sabbath dawned. One by one the scattered Apostles gathered around her. She was their Mother now. Surely Magdalen stole away that day to go up to Calvary. If He was not there, His Cross was there. Did Mary the Mother try to approach the grave that day? Or did she go to the Temple to pray for the crucifiers of her Son? The day wore on. The awful gloom of yesterday hung like a pall 'round that Sabbath. Night came again. "In three days I shall rise again;" the Mother knew the words and knew they would be realized. All that night the words were singing in the heart of Magdalen.
* * * Let us pause and think. The Mother stood by the Cross to the last. The Mother received into her own arms the dead Christ taken down from the Cross.

It was her right. The birth-right gave her the death-right. To hold Him in her arms living and dead was her right and her's only. To see that He was fittingly buried was her duty,—a mother's. No doubt,—Joseph of Aramathea asked her consent to accept his sepulchre for her divine Son. From first to last,—from the Annunciation to the burial of her Son her will had its place and her consent its part.

For Mary was not a tool to be used by God for awhile and for a purpose, and then to be flung away as useless. Men work with tools. God works with wills. And as never Creature was more perfect,—or could be, than Mary,—chosen from all eternity to be the Mother of Christ;—so never creature had will as full and free and perfect in its workings as the will of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the perfect freedom of her will she is more like God in the infinite freedom of His will than all other created beings. The Father did not force her to become the Mother of His Son. A forced divine motherhood would have been an infinite sacrilege. He chose her one out of all. She could reject or accept the choice, with full, free will,—yet not without asking and knowing the conditions and consequences of such maternity, she accepted it. And from the moment Mary said: "Be it done unto me according to thy will,"—until the last moment of her sinless life, her will was as free as a creature in her finite sphere as God's will is free as a Creator in His infinite sphere. It is the perfect freedom of her will united to the will of God,—more than her perfect intelligence,—that crowns her with her glories. Eve's will yielded to Satan. Hence the Fall. Mary's will yielded to God's,—hence the Redemption.

Her giving her will to God's will gave us our Redeemer. That act of Mary's will last as long as the days of Redemption, and has something to do with every grace of Redemption. It was a finite act with infinite consequences. It was done in a moment,—and it is eternalized.

So two wills govern the Kingdom of the Redeemed;—the will of God and the will of His Mother Mary.

You cannot break the union of these two wills,—the divine and infinite,—God's;—the human and finite,—Mary's. Their accord is eternal. And, therefore, in a finite way but everlastingly, the will of Mary given, for our sakes, to God, in a real, though finite way bears on every day and deed of our Redeemer and Redemption; as in an infinite way on every detail of Redemption bears the will of God who accepted her will and made it His own. You cannot divide the two wills,—God's and Mary's. They began Redemption's work; and the two wills are working together still. If the wills;—the persons who own the wills. Therefore the will of Jesus and the will of Mary,—and therefore the Person of Jesus and the person of Mary can never be separated in any single work of this world's salvation.

And that Saturday night when she was waiting and watching for the Resurrection (for her grace-enlightened intelligence knew it all beforehand) her will was as passive and patient as the dead Christ in His grave.

She would not hasten that glory for even one instant.

Her will was resting in God as peacefully as the dead Christ was resting in His grave.

Though her mother-heart hungered to see His face again; though once long ago she knew that He had worked a miracle, as He Himself said, before His time,

for her sake; her prayer before the Resurrection was just like her prayer at the Annunciation: "Let it be done according to Thy will." For her perfect will had risen from height to height until it touched,—transfigured without losing its freedom,—the infinite will of God. And the free "Fiat" of God and the free "Fiat" of Mary met and mingled in free and perfect union.

Ah Mother of the free and perfect will! thy children's wills are weak and wayward,—and their consents to heavenly calls, slow and uncertain;—pray for us, oh holy Mother! that our wills may be as thine, united to God's will always; and that our consent to calls of grace may be as thine prompt and full and fervent and always faithful,—so that we, like thy divine Son, Our Saviour may live only and always "to do the will of our Father who is in heaven."

ASPIRATION.

"SON! behold thy Mother."

PRAYER.

O GOD! from whom Judas received the punishment of his sin, and the thief the reward of his confession: grant us the effects of thy mercy; that as our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of his passion bestowed on each a different recompense of his merits, so having destroyed the old man in us, he may give us the grace of his resurrection. Who liveth.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The Flower of the Glory of the Resurrection.

"Peace be to you."—*John xx, 21.*

ROMAN soldiers were guarding the closed grave. The stone was sealed with Pilate's seal. No doubt that with the soldiers were some of the Jews who had assisted at the Crucifixion. The Sabbath night wore on. The dawn was breaking. Suddenly there was a great earthquake; the stone was rolled away; the Keepers of the tomb were struck with terror and rushed away from the garden to the city. Jesus had risen. Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had hurried early in the morning to the sepulchre bringing sweet spices to anoint the Dead. In the garden He first appeared to the Magdalen, and sent her the sinner to be the Apostle of His Resurrection to Peter and the others, bidding them meet Him in Galilee. But already because she had the first right to see Him, in His glory, He had appeared to His blessed Mother. She had not gone forth to the grave because He had come to her. And oh! what a meeting between the Risen Christ and Mary! How the soul that on Calvary was overwhelmed with sorrow, was now filled with joy unspeakable! How she worshipped Him in His glory with all a creature's adoration and with all a Mother's love! His glory shone around her as the darkness of

Calvary had gathered about her. She was the first to make the grand act of Faith in His Resurrection. No more sorrow now. Her soul is lifted up into ecstasy. His Face has come back to her again radiant and triumphant. She holds the shining hands in her own. Yes,—this is her own Jesus. And how all the memories of His life from Bethlehem to Calvary melted into that one golden vision before her! No more darkness for her now. The vision of Light she gazed upon flashed its splendors o'er her soul; and new graces without number as without measure filled her heart;—and as Christ had risen from the grave, Mary rose, higher and higher into brightest spiritual spheres beyond the touch of human thought. That body now glorified and risen He had received from her. Those hands, feet, face, heart had been fashioned out of her flesh and blood. The Crucified was her own and the Risen one is her's as well. He is the same Christ. He has not lost His human identity and that human identity springs from her motherhood. Yes,—He has come back changed in appearance,—but not in body. And Risen He is still her's and because her's, our's. The body, which she gave Him,—dying and dead, proved His humanity. And the self-same body rising and risen attests His divinity. The same body received from her proves that Christ was the Son of Man and proves that He is the Son of God. His body is the argument. She who gave the body is necessary to the argument. There is no one living on that Easter Sunday morning to prove that the Risen Saviour was the babe of Bethlehem, except Mary. The Mother of Jesus is the single solitary personal eye-witness to testify that He of whom the Angel says to-day: "He is risen He is not here:"—is the self-same one over

whom the Angels sang the *Gloria* thirty-three years ago. Over the lowly crib she bent and claimed the babe as her own. Beside the Cross she stood "the Mother of Jesus" claiming Him as her own. And now beside the open grave she stands—Mother still;—and testifies: "Yes,—He is the same: The Risen Christ was the babe of Bethlehem. I know it;—for I am His Mother."

She has a real and rightful (and for us a necessary) place in the glory of the Resurrection as she had in the mystery of the Crucifixion. She cannot be done without.

Christmas needs her presence not only as a part of the scene and a factor in the Mystery but as a necessity to the argument of Christ's birth. Calvary needs her not only as a figure in the awful scene, and an actor in the mystery but as an argument for the real physical death of the Body Christ received from her. Easter Sunday needs her presence not only as a part of its mystery of glory but as a living witness that the same human body which she brought forth has risen again. It is still in logic as well as in life Jesus and Mary together. And the logic as well as the life of Faith, that rise triumphant with Christ's body out of the open tomb last forever; and the Mother who stood in the shadows of Calvary that passed away, stands and must of right stand for all days before the eyes of believers as an essential element of that Christian Truth which for its divinity rests upon the mystery of the Resurrection. As Good Friday with the shadows that gathered about the death of Jesus comes to every day of time with its Cross and Mary standing beside it;—a Mystery of infinite love and Mercy; so Easter Sunday with its open grave and Risen Saviour comes with its splendors to

light up, a mystery of infinite power and glory with Faith and Hope, every day of this world's history;—and we see and must see the Mother standing in the glory of its light that shall never pass away.

For Mary gives the human meaning to every divine mystery. She stands amid them all;—she moves along with them; she places them within our reach. Without her they are not humanly real. Without her they are vague, incomplete, far-off and unapproachable. With her they are definite, complete, near unto us and accessible.

Where any mystery of Christ's life presents itself,—she must present herself as Mother, as witness, and as argument. When Christ rose from the dead He did not cease to be man. He was man transfigured, glorified, victorious, never to die again. As man thus risen, in the which He proved His divinity, Mary did not cease to be His Mother. Nor did her rights as Mother cease.

The mysteries of the life of Jesus are the irrefragable arguments attesting that He is the eternal Truth and as such has the right to the faith of every man. You give your faith to Him as Truth and to the truths He taught. But He,—as The Truth as well as the truths which He announced have their reason in His life's mysteries. All those mysteries are human and divine,—physical and spiritual. And Mary alone is the ever-living—ever-lasting,—and to the eyes of true Faith,—the ever-essential element giving earthly reality to the human and physical side of every one of the mysteries of Christ's life.

The mystery of Christ's human priesthood; (for He was not a priest as God) the mystery of Christ's human

Kingship over all men (for only as man is He King of all men); the mystery of Christ's absolute infallible authority as teacher of all men (for it is by the right of His Divine Manhood that He teaches the world),—need Mary and her motherhood as their human reason. Those mysteries lose half their meaning,—or are meaningless; and the truths based on them lose half their evidence—or are evidenceless—if Mary be thrust aside. In the order of Providence she is as necessary to Jesus as He is necessary to us. It is ever and always Jesus and Mary together.

The hand of the human race must rest in the hand of Mary to find beside her and with her, her Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

So His glorified Hands and Feet and Face belonged to her as His Mother in the glory of Easter-morn, as truly as they did, when the weak little Hands and Feet and Face of the Babe belonged to her far back in the Christmas midnight at Bethlehem. And the glorified body,—ah! 'tis the same wondrous truth;—her's,—then His;—then our's. Oh Mary, Mother of the Risen Christ! we hail thee in the triumph of thy divine Son, as we bowed in sorrowing love before thee in thy desolation on Calvary! Thou dost stand forever in His glory as thou did'st stand beside Him in the gloom of the Cross. At the crib, at the cross, at the grave thou art His Mother still,—and because His, our ever-blessed Mother. In the heavens where thou art throned Queen Mother of the Victor of death, pray that we, rising from the grave of sin triumphant by penance victorious in hope, may never lose again the eternal life of His holy grace!

ASPIRATION.

"HE is risen,—he is not here."

PRAYER.

O GOD, who on this day, through thine only begotten Son, didst overcome death, and open unto us the gate of everlasting life; as by thy prompting grace thou dost breathe on the desires of our hearts, so do thou ever accompany them with thy help.



 TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

 The Flower of the Glory of the Ascension.

"And Jesus coming spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—*Matthew xxviii, 18, 19, 20.*

WHEN Jesus died on the cross His human soul still united to the Divinity (as was His body in the grave) true to its mission of mercy for all, descended into Limbo. There all the souls of the dead from the beginning (that had been saved before the day of Redemption as we are saved after it by faith and by participating in the merits of Christ) were waiting, in hope, as the world had waited for "the glad tidings of the great joy." Our Good Friday was their Christmas. Adam and Eve, Abel and Seth, Noah and Abraham, Moses and Aaron and generations of the saved from every race and land dwelt there in Rest and Expectation.

Perhaps by angelic revelation they knew, in part, the work of salvation already accomplished by Christ on earth.

Perhaps Joseph the Foster-father had told them the story of Bethlehem and the Messiah and the Mother.