

## THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

### The Flower of Catholic Devotion to Mary.

"Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ."—*St. Paul.*

WE have gathered Flowers for the Crown of our Mother and Queen from Heaven and from earth;—flowers whose roots are in the eternities,—which bloom in the vases of the Scriptures and blossom in the Dogmas and on the altars of our Holy Church;—their spiritual beauty and their glory and their fragrance filling all the days of time. Let us come back to our poor, little earth to find a fadeless flower growing out of the hearts of the Faithful of Christ,—and cull it,—and twine it in the crown of our Queen. And she will be glad. Christ was devoted to His Mother in life, in death and after death. His Church like Himself is devoted to Mary. That devotion is one of the signs and proofs of its Truth. Jesus was subject to Mary in the days of time and is subject to her in the days of eternity. For He never changes. So His Church subject to Him is subject for His sake to Mary. Both subjections have their reasons in her divine maternity. Subjection is another name for devotion. And Devotion is another name for love. Jesus Christ loved Mary more than He could love all other created beings,—loved her for her incomparable graces,—loved her for her love for Him,—loved her with the infinite love of God for His Mother. So

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the Church loves Mary,—and must,—in order to be in harmony with the divine heart of Jesus. The measure of the Faith that adores Christ measures the Faith that honors Mary. And the measure of the love that springs from Faith in the Son of God measures the love that is given to His Mother Mary.

Love is the beating heart of Faith,—the lifted look of Faith,—the wide, everlasting embrace of Faith. The heart of the Church beats towards Mary;—the Face of the Church is ever lifted in love's look to the Face of Mary;—and the arms of the Virgin-Mother Church are clasped around the Mother of Jesus in an everlasting embrace. It cannot but be so. It is in the nature of things and in the super-nature of things that it should and must be so.

The children of the true Faith,—not only the sinners but the saints, have announced to the world the glorious ignominy of their slavery to Mary. In the face of the world they hold up their chains,—Rosaries and Scapulars,—chains for their hands and chains for their necks. They openly exhibit the signs of their lofty degradation,—they wear them in the brave pride of the Faith that defies the scorn of this world. They are medals,—golden,—silver, brass or of humbler materials made. But no matter. Her figure is graven on them,—or her name. That alone,—and is it not enough?—makes them precious. They are related to the Crucifix as Mary is related to Jesus. Wherever the Crucifix goes,—and where has it not gone?—they follow. Not because the Crucifix absolutely needs them;—but because the Crucifix lovingly wants them. What the Crucifix means for Christ,—they mean for Mary. They are a part of the adornments that enhance the beauty of the Church,—the Bride of the Lamb.

All round the world the Rosary chains are clanking. All round the world the scapulars are living their mysterious hidden life out of the world's but in heaven's sight. And all the earth over, the outward-worn medal reflects the rays of every sun in every clime. They are the marks of "The Legion of Honor" in the army of Jesus Christ.

Love wants nearness. Her pictures on the temple walls or hung in Christian homes,—and her statues on the altars are sweet and beautiful to the eyes of the Faith that loves her Son.

But they are too far off. Love wants something nearer,—something to touch and hold and possess and wear. And if natural love has her own ingenuities,—supernatural love has her's as well. Blessed the neck that hides the holy scapulars! Blessed the hands that hold the blessed beads! Blessed the heart beating back of the breast where shines the blessed medal! Is it foolish? Well;—it is the folly of Faith. Is it blindness? Let it be called so. It is the blindness of love. Is it superstition? Well;—and in reverence we write it,—it is like the superstition of Christ Himself who wore and would only wear the seamless garment woven by His Mother's pure hands.

If the world laughs at these signs of our Faith;—why let it laugh,—poor blind thing that it is;—for how can it understand the spirit of our Faith?

And if so-called Christians scorn us for what we do in Mary's honor (they doing nothing for her while they pretend to do every thing for Christ, her Son)—why let them scorn,—for scorn like their's does but simply show that we and our Holy Church are Mary-like—and therefore Christ-like.

The inheritance of the saints is the contempt of the world without any belief and the scorn of those who only half-believe. Between non-believers and half-believers there is an alliance not openly proclaimed yet none the less hiddenly existing. For, the enmities between Satan and the woman, and "between his seed and her seed" find,—sad and shameful as it is to say it,—soldiers and standards and weapons not only in the Godless world,—but even in the camps of those who pretend to be the soldiers of Christ. So-called Christian soldiers! the banner of Mary waves over every word of Scripture. On its pure, white folds in red letters of blood is blazoned the name of Jesus. Now—tear—if you dare,—that banner down,—trail it in the dust of the beliefless world's denial, or in the half-cold ashes where the flames of Faith once brightly glowed. Are you not traitors? Take heed,—and have a care! To betray Mary and her honor is to betray Jesus Christ Himself and His honor.

Be on your guard. You may kiss Christ, as Judas did, with the kiss of a pretended love only to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies. And you may kiss your Scriptures where Mary's name is written (I wonder do you?) with a kiss of Faith that falters and half-denies, and with no love at all,—thereby delivering the Mother of your Christ into the hands of unbelievers! And you have done it. It is the sacrilege of your system.

Never mind. Mary was not in the garden of Gethsemane desecrated by the kiss of Judas. But she stood beside the cross of Jesus on Calvary, consecrated by His dying on it and her presence beneath it. You cannot drag her thence. Why,—the very Cross with the infinite dead burden on it would go with her who came up

to it with her heart by sorrow broken. And Magdalen, who is crouching there, would even leave His feet and rise to defend the Mother whose prayers had helped to save her soul from ruin;—and with Faith's divine wrath ablaze in her glorious eyes, and in tones ringing with the authority of an Apostle,—she would bid you begone. Or she might tell you where to find the tree, whereon, in the dark, the other traitor hung himself. . . .

Hard words these! Then let them be hard.

The Church of Truth is built on a rock, firm, strong, moveless,—not soft enough to be splintered. Let other churches than ours, with their soft, shaky, shifting foundations, use soft words in their teachings. It becomes them to do so. But it does not become the Church of Christ.

Christ is King of the Church. Mary is Queen. Their united honors;—His Divine and Infinite, her's human, sinless, perfect, highest,—give the true tone to all true teaching. In the temple of God's truth there is nothing soft in the foundations,—in the pillars,—in the stones of the lofty walls,—in the loftier dome,—in the very cement that helps to hold the temple together. Nor in the voice that fills the temple with Faith's eternal accents is there or can there be a falter or an uncertain tremulousness. Firm, strong, certain, true,—ringing as the clarion rings marshalling the ranks for the battle with falsehoods,—sounding as loud trumpets sound clear, triumphant in the hour of Faith's victories and Truth's definitions,—are the voices of the leaders of the hosts of the Lord. Jesus and Mary!—Son and Mother!—go sounding together down the long cross-bannered lines of the close-serried columns.

It was so from the dawn of the day of perfect Truth;

and it will be so to the last Vespers of the day of perfect Faith. Adoration of Jesus necessarily implies Love of Mary. Love implies honor. Honor implies Devotion. Devotion means more than mere profession of Love and Honor of Mary's person and name. It has a higher meaning? What?

Your own hearts feel and your own lips pronounce it;—imitation of Mary's virtues.

"Imitate Mary"—do you doubtingly ask?

"Imitate Mary"—I certainly answer.

Her privileges are beyond you. Her prerogatives are, in a true sense, like God's, incommunicable. Not so her virtues. You cannot touch the sun. It is too far off. But you can catch its rays and see and walk by their light.

Mary's virtues are the rays shining out of her grace-filled, sinless heart. The rays reach sinners as well as saints. Every virtue that has a name she possessed in perfectness. And we can possess them all—though in imperfectness. She will surely help us. Is she not "The Refuge of Sinners" as well as "Queen of all the Saints?" Is she not "The Help of the Weak"—as well as the "Strength of the Strong?"

And she will aid us for the asking.

What virtues do we need the most—the most just now—to give our living testimony to Jesus Christ?

The answer is plain and simple.

We need to be faithful in the possession and practice of those virtues, which the world without God, and Christians of only half-faith, are boldly denying or are forgetting or are almost losing in this our day and generation.

What are these virtues? First,—the chief of all the

virtues,—Faith. The world has boldly ostracized divine Faith. And Christian Churches have chained Faith with the fetters of human opinion. To the world Faith is an outlaw,—in those so-called churches Faith is a slave. The world has reasoned away Revelation. Science has found a Calvary on which to put to death the very name of God. Science is blaspheming still. Faith can wait,—and waiting pray: “Forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Men calling themselves Christians have been trying to uncrown Christ by their efforts to uncrown His Holy Church. Their Faith grows weak as their human opinions grow strong.

Their teachers are not dogmatic. They have shuffled off, as if they were slavery's shackles, the bonds of Faith, to wear the manacles of man's opinions. And they think that they are free, confounding the “liberty of the children of God” who believe all and are free, with truth's freedom, with the license of the children of men who believe what they please and so believing can never be free from human error.

We in Holy Church in our times must confront the conspirators against Religion.

How? By our Faith firm, practical, loyal.

Christ is the object of our Faith. Who ought to be our Model? Whose Faith was first and firmest and fullest? Whose Faith was clearest and most certain and perfect?—Whose? You have pronounced her name—Mary's.

It is an age whose idol is pride,—national pride,—race-pride,—individual pride,—pride of mind,—pride of heart,—pride of will. It laughs at the past and boasts of itself. It believes in bravado. It worships

force. It points to its material prosperity as if that were the very consecration of its genius. It mocks at the very word—humility,—and looks down in scorn on the humble.

To that pride we must oppose humility.

And who our Model? You have called her name,—Mary. “My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.” They are lowly words graven on lofty gates through which the Son of God did enter this world.

But why speak of her other virtues?

Their story can never be fully told.

All virtues ascend towards one,—their Queen. Her name divine Love,—love of God and love of man.

The mystery of Mary's love for God and man is simply beyond the reach of thought. We bow in silence before it as we would bend in worship before a tabernacle with its hidden miracle of Eucharistic love. Mary! Mother! Queen! we kneel in silence before thy altar. Our thoughts fly away from speech. Our souls are still,—too still for aught but a breathless, soundless prayer. Thou art listening to it down in our hearts!—Let us love Jesus with Mary's love.

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ASPIRATION.

HAIL Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! our life and sweetness and our hope!

PRAYER.

OUR Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth

as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. *Amen.*



THE following Legends translated from the French,—and as naively translated as they were simply written, will close; and with their child-like simplicity will crown the “Crown for our Queen.” Legends, sometimes, are based on facts;—but, perhaps, are more frequently, the beautiful imaginings of Faith. For, though Faith is the unquestioning assent of reason to truth, divinely taught—it, still, can, while believing, imagine many beautiful things which, like golden sun-lit clouds, float across the horizons of Truth;—and make the skies of Faith so beautiful. May I say it? I think I may. Legends in unison with Truth are the poetries of Faith. Legends are to the heart somewhat what doctrines are to reason. Irreligion has no legends; nor has Protestantism. We have. So,—just as they were written;—and just as they have been translated by a child-like heart,—they close and crown my humble work.

A. J. R.

