

HIS MOTHER

A series of Meditations on Some Lesser Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Occurring Each Month of the Year
BY MOTHER ST. PAUL

I.—OUR LADY'S ESPOUSALS. (January 23rd.)

“Mary was espoused to Joseph”—(St. Matthew i. 18.)

1st Prelude.—A Picture of the marriage of Our Lady with St. Joseph.

2nd Prelude.—“*May we—on this, the joyful festival of the Espousals—be blessed with an increase of peace.*” (First Collect for the Feast.)

POINT 1.—THE CHOICE.

WHEN the little daughter of Joachim and Anne was about fifteen years old, the priests, in whose charge she had been in the Temple School since she was three, found themselves faced with a difficult problem. Mary ought to be married—every Jewish maiden was—but where were they going to find a husband worthy of a child so gracious, so pure, so unearthly? She belonged to the royal race of David, and could only marry someone in the royal line; and then there was that extraordinary Vow of Virginity which she had persisted in making. Nothing certainly would induce Mary to renounce that. The matter could only be settled by heaven, for it was too difficult for earth. There is a beautiful legend which tells that when the suitors thronged the Temple courts, the priests handed to each one a staff, and then prayed that the staff of the one chosen by God should blossom. Immediately the staff of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, blossomed into beautiful lilies, and all the other suitors saluted him as Mary's spouse, carrying “Aaron's rod that budded.”

POINT 2.—ST. JOSEPH.

The priests knew him well, for he came regularly to the Temple at the Feasts, and they were glad to see him amongst the suitors, for they had often wondered why he never married. They knew of their little maiden's strange vow, but Joseph's secret was locked up in his own breast, as so many others were to be. Though only a carpenter, he belonged to the royal line. He was a just man, and respected by all who knew him in Nazareth; but he was reserved and silent, and kept his own counsel. This was the man chosen by God to be Our Lady's spouse, and the little one simply said, “Fiat” (“Be it so,”) when the priests told her.

So does God cover up His designs, He had need of St. Joseph to carry out His Divine plans. Mary's Son would be called “the son of the carpenter,” and she herself would teach Him to call him Father (St. Luke, ii. 48), but she knew that he was but the shadow of the Eternal Father, and that His presence concealed from the world the overshadowing of her invisible Spouse—the Holy Ghost. St. Joseph was the man God chose to co-operate with Himself in the great mystery of the Incarnation. Why? Because He could trust him. He had made the sacrifice of himself, he was silent, obedient, courageous, faithful.

“*May, O Lord, the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Mother profit us, and may his prayers win for us those blessings which we, of ourselves, avail not to obtain*”—(Second Collect for the Feast).

POINT 3.—THE MARRIAGE.

The marriage of Mary and Joseph was a true and valid one, but as each knew of the other's vow, their mutual contract was a safeguard of their virginity. The marriage must have taken place in the Temple, for Mary had now no other home, and it must have been with sorrow in her heart that she left its sacred precincts. But with a heart full of joy, because it was God's Will, she entered the little house at Nazareth which henceforth was to mean so much to her and to the whole Church.

The marriage of Our Lady, then, leads us to think of another, for its sole object was to cover the great mystery of the union between the Divinity and Humanity—a union which made possible the marriage of Christ and the Church.

It was at my Baptism that Christ espoused me to Himself, gave me His own life, and allowed me to share in His Divinity. He made me a part of His own body, the Church. To do this, He sacrificed all, and He asks in return the love of a faithful spouse.

Colloquy.—With Our Lady and St. Joseph.

Resolution.—To be faithful to the contract that I have made with my heavenly Spouse.

Spiritual Bouquet—“The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church”—(Eph. v. 23).

II-OUR LADY OF LOURDES. (February 11th.)

1st Prelude.—A Picture of the well-known Apparition at Lourdes to the little Bernadette.

2nd Prelude.—Grace to realise that God is not “far away from every one of us.”—(Acts xvii. 27.)

POINT 1.-THE INSTRUMENT CHOSEN.

OUR Lady wanted something done. It was no small thing that she wanted; but the beginnings were small as they are wont to be when great things are concerned—a little child, a little spring of water, a little message sent to the priest. From these little things have sprung the great Basilica at Lourdes of world-wide fame, pilgrimages, thither from all nations, countless miracles of grace, and miracles of healing, which, while they stagger the world, seem only natural to “the household of Faith,” for what could be more natural than that a Mother should care for and help her suffering children? And what was the instrument chosen to bring about all these wonders? A little, unlettered, peasant-girl, who had gone out to gather sticks. To her Our Lady appeared many times in the niche of a rock, said her Rosary with her, told her secrets, which were only for herself, sent messages by her, gave her little things to do for her, such as opening up the source of the Lourdes water, praying for sinners, and doing penance, and finally told her who she was.

“The weak things of the world has God chosen, that He may confound the strong.” (1 Cor. i. 27). It is always His way. He chooses little ones—the weak and humble, those who are “foolish and base in the eyes of the world.” “If I would be one of His instruments, let me remember that He will have no flesh to glory in His sight.” (1 Cor. i. 29). The work is all His and when, in His great condescension, He makes use of an instrument, He chooses one that is sufficiently selfless not to interfere with His work. Our Lady herself was one of these, and when she wanted help at Lourdes she chose little Bernadette.

POINT 2.-MIRACLES OF HEALING.

The little spring, dug out by the hands of Bernadette on February 25th, 1858, in obedience to her Vision, began in the same week to pour forth 27,000 gallons of healing water every day, which it has done ever since. And in this new pool of Bethesda thousands of sufferers have found health and strength. At Bethesda “an angel of the Lord descended into the pond,” but at Lourdes, it is the Queen of Angels herself who, though they see her not, gently bathes the sufferers and heals them sometimes of their physical infirmities, but more often of their spiritual ones. The miracles of healing the sick take place more often during the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Mary, as is ever her wont, leads her children to her Son, and bids them to wait where “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by”; and often, as of old, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them by the King Himself, and go away with His blessing.

POINT 3.-“I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.”

A little more than three years before (in 1854), the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady had been defined and made a dogma of Our Holy Faith. At Lourdes Our Lady came to verify it and to make that name in a special way her own. It was on March 25th—one of the last times that the Vision appeared to her—that Bernadette cried out: “O Lady, have the goodness to tell me who you are and what is your name.” Three times, and each time more earnestly, the little one made her petition, and then the answer came: “I am the Immaculate Conception.” There was no doubt now in the child’s mind, even if there ever had been, who her Lady was.

“O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Little Bernadette wept when these words were said at the family night prayers on the day that she had seen her Vision for the first time.

Not only was Mary conceived without any stain of sin, but she was also, excepting, of course, the Sacred Humanity of Christ, the one human conception of the Divine mind which was fully realised. Adam was another conception. I am another. May Our Lady of Lourdes, who cares so much for her suffering children, help me to carry out God’s designs for me, cost what they may!

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of Lourdes.

Resolution.—To be little enough to carry out God’s plans for me.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for me.”

III.—OUR LADY OF SEVEN DOLOURS.

(Friday in Passion Week.)

1st Prelude.—Mary standing at the Foot of the Cross.

2nd Prelude.—Grace of devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows.

POINT 1.—MARY'S SORROWS.

THE Church, which has kept this Feast in Passion week since the fifteenth century, would have us to-day stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross and gather up all her Sorrows into one—that of watching her Son die. The Feast used to be called “The Compassion of Our Lady,” for she was suffering with her Son.

Mary had a very definite place in God's plan of Redemption. “She shall crush thy head,” were His words to the Serpent in Eden. The work of the Son of God on earth was to found His Church, and at the three most critical stages of that work God enlisted Mary's co-operation: (1) at the Incarnation, He waited to begin His work till Mary had consented; (2) on Calvary it was Mary who supplied the Victim for the Sacrifice; (3) at Pentecost Mary was there to take her place as Mother of the new-born Church.

From first to last she was the Mother of Sorrows, for the sword of Simeon's prophecy was always piercing her pure heart. Does it not show me the value God sets upon suffering? It was the best treasure Our Lord could find to give to His Mother.

POINT 2.—MARY'S WORK

Why did Mary stand at the Foot of the Cross, instead of kneeling with Magdalen and with all her children who to the end of time will humbly adore the Cross? Because hers is a different position. She has a work to do. God wants her co-operation in the work of Redemption, as He had wanted it at the Incarnation. He is now on the Cross offering Himself to His Father, and the Mother of the Victim is standing by to assist. What is her part? It is she who has provided the offering, she has given her Son to be sacrificed. “There is one Mediator of God and men—the Man Christ Jesus” (I. Tim. ii. 5), just as there is only one Priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. But as the Priest has a deacon to assist him and bring him the offering, so Mary has brought her offering. She dedicated Him to God as a Victim when He was only forty days old. Now the time for the Sacrifice has come, and Mary is standing courageously to keep her word. She knew the desire of His Heart was to die for His people, she knew it was for this that He had become incarnate; and His desires were hers. With an intense love for the wishes of her Son, and with a great desire that the world's redemption should be wrought, and Satan's terrible work undone, she stands to take her part in the sacrifice.

Is it possible for me, her child, to take my Mother as a model here? Yes, for it was her obedience and submission to God's Will which enabled her to co-operate in His plans. He asked, for her greatest treasure, and she did not hesitate before the sacrifice.

POINT 3.—MARY'S CHILDREN.

“There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.” She was His greatest consolation and help, and He wanted her to be the same to all those who were to form a part of Himself. So He said to her: “Woman, behold thy son.” She knew that He meant that she was to see in John all the disciples whom He loved—all those for whose salvation she had sacrificed Him. It was only right that they should be hers. “From that hour the disciple took her to his own,” and so may all who are a part of her Son's body—the Church.

To me, too, God has given His Son that I may have something worthy of His acceptance to offer Him. Every time I assist at Mass, I am assisting at the same sacrifice which Mary assisted at on Calvary, and I can offer Him there for the souls so precious to Him, and so co-operate in His work. I can co-operate by suffering, too, for the Head has chosen to allow His work to depend for its completion on the sufferings of the body. St. Paul speaks of things that have to be filled up in the sufferings of Christ (Col. i. 24), left there on purpose that we might share in His work. That is why when He wants something special done for some particular soul He gives some special suffering to one of His members in order to obtain the grace needed.

Colloquy —With the Mother of Sorrows.

Resolution.—To welcome suffering as one of my greatest privileges and opportunities.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Stabat Mater Dolorosa.”

IV.—OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL. (April 26th.)

“Her counsels are more deep than the great ocean.” —(Ecclus. xxiv. 39.)

1st Prelude.—A picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The original picture is in the Augustinian Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, at Genazzano, near Rome, whither it is said to have arrived in 1467, floating in a little cloud.

2nd Prelude.—“*O God, Who has given the Mother of Thy Blessed Son to be a Mother to us, and hast deigned to make her beautiful picture famous by a wonderful apparition, grant, we beseech Thee, that constantly cleaving to her counsels, we may be able to live after Thy Heart, and happily reach our heavenly country.*” —(Collect for the Feast.)

POINT 1.—THE GIFT.

ACCORDING to the Collect of the Mass, it is Almighty God Himself Who has given the Mother of His Son to be our Mother. He, the great ‘and tender Father, Who Himself loves us, gave us, not only His only-begotten Son, but with Him freely gave us all things, even His Mother. It is His plan that we, His adopted children, should share the privileges of His First-born, so we naturally share His Mother. He constantly reminds us of this precious gift by the miracles that He works through her for her children. One of the most touching of these, perhaps, was when “He deigned to make her beautiful picture famous by a wonderful apparition.” The land where it had been loved and venerated had fallen into the hands of the Turks, and the Faithful could come no longer to the church of Good Counsel in Scutari, but there was another church, near Rome, also dedicated to Our Lady of Good Counsel, which was being rebuilt. Here, to the strains of heavenly music, the little picture one day descended and took up its position near one of the newly-built walls. What stronger proof could God have given than this to show that He wanted His children to honour their Mother by seeking her counsels.

POINT 2.—HER COUNSELS.

We ask in the Collect for today that we may “cleave to her counsels.” What are these counsels, and whence does she get them? A look at our picture will tell us. The thought of all that is going to happen to her Son, and necessarily to all her other children, too—for they are one with Him—is making her sad; she is already by anticipation the Mother of Sorrows. But her little Son’s arms are twined about her neck, and He is whispering sweet words of consolation into her ear. What is He saying, dear Mother? Is this consolation for me, too? My child, He is telling me secrets, but I can translate them for you into one word of good counsel. It is the only one I ever gave on earth, and it is the only one I have to give now: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.” (St. John ii. 5). In following this counsel, difficulties will be solved, tears dried, and a peace of which the world knows nothing, will follow. Yes, but what does He tell me to do in this particular difficulty? He says: “It is I; be not afraid. Wherefore didst thou doubt. Lo, I am with you always.”

POINT 3.—THE RESULT.

Two results are spoken of in the Collect, and we may be quite sure that they will follow if we make a habit of consulting the Mother of Good Counsel frequently in our journey through life:

(1) We shall be able to live in union with the Sacred Heart.

The counsels come straight from the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the most pure heart of His Mother, and if we ask for and follow these counsels, we are in the closest union with Jesus and His Mother; we are living in the spirit of the Sacred Heart—according to the wishes and plans of Him Who is directing our lives.

(2) We shall happily reach our heavenly country.

We need not fear; we have consulted the best guide, and are on the most direct route. Unless we deliberately and persistently deviate from the plain directions: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye,” we shall happily reach our heavenly country. We shall see Jesus, for His Mother’s counsels always lead souls to Him.

Colloquy.—With the Mother of Good Counsel.

Resolution.—To consult her more frequently.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Mother of Good Counsel, pray for us.” (Invocation added to the Litany by Pius IX.)

V.—OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE (MADONNA DELLA STRADA). (May 24th.)

“In Me are all graces of the way.” (Introit of the Mass.)

1st Prelude.—The picture of Our Lady of the Wayside, said to have been painted in Rome about 400 A.D.—One of

the earliest extant pictures of the Mother of God. She has in her arms the Holy Child, Who is carrying a closed book in His left hand, and raising His right in blessing. For hundreds of years the picture was venerated in a little wayside shrine in one of the streets of Rome. St. Ignatius loved to make his meditation before it, and when the first Jesuit church was built he managed to secure it for Our Lady's altar. It is now in the church of the Gesu at Rome.

2nd Prelude.—*“O Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the way, the truth and the life, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, mercifully grant that, running in the way of Thy Commandments, we may in the end attain to life everlasting.”*—Collect of the Mass.)

POINT 1.—THE CLOSED BOOK.

THE Child and His Mother are always there sitting over against the wayside of my life's journey. The guide book He holds in His hand is closed; I may not read it, but “He knoweth my way.” (Job xxiii. 10). Only step by step and day by day will He disclose it to me, for He would have me walk by faith and not by sight. I will go on my way then rejoicing. Our Lady's Child gives His blessing to the travellers. “I am the Way,” He says to them, “and as long as you keep close to Me and My Blessed Mother you are on the right road and will gain the heavenly city.”

POINT 2.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE WAY.

They are many, and that is why Our Lady of the Wayside never leaves the travellers unprotected. The Epistle tells us that there are “stumbling blocks and paths of the wicked” and “a way of evil men,” and enemies who cannot sleep unless they have managed to make “some to fall” on the way. But we need not fear, for we can hear the voice of our Mother calling to us: “I will show thee the path of wisdom; I will lead thee by the path of equity.” For those who pass eagerly and joyfully along life's way, caring nothing for the difficulties, if only they can press forward, “the path of the just is as a shining light,” they cannot mistake it; it is lit up by the presence of the Child and His Mother, and ever “goeth forward (without any bye-paths) and increaseth even to perfect day,” when we shall see Our Lady of the Wayside with her Child face to face, and only then recognise from what dangers they have shielded us.

POINT 3.—RULES FOR TRAVELLERS ON THE WAY.

The Passport is a Cross. Without this no traveller can be accepted for the journey, for “whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (St. Luke xiv. 27).

Very little luggage is allowed “for we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out” (I Tim. vi. 7).

The traveller is advised to lay aside “every weight”—anything that could hinder him and prevent him from running on the way (Heb. xii. 1).

Children are especially welcomed, for “of such is the Kingdom of heaven,” and “unless you become as little children you shall not enter.” “Whosoever is a little one let him come to Me” (Prov. ix. 4).

Four directions given by Our Lady of the Wayside:

- (1) Obedience: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.”
- (2) Fidelity and Constancy: “Go not aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. Thy ears shall hear the words of one admonishing thee behind thy back: This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isaias xxx. 21).
- (3) Copy the Model: “Looking on Jesus, Who endured the Cross” (Heb. xii. 2).
- (4) Devotion to Our Lady: “Come over to me all ye that desire me” (Gradual).

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of the Wayside.

Resolution.—“In the streets and the broadways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth” (Cant. iii. 2).

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Without the Way there is no going” (Imitation of Christ, iii. 56).

VI.—OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR. (June 27th.)

1st Prelude.—The well-known picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, supposed by some to date back as far as the 5th century, and by others to have been painted in Rome in the 15th. Since 1866 it has been preserved by the order of Pius IX in the church of St. Alphonsus Liguori, in Rome.

2nd Prelude.—*“Almighty and merciful God, Who summonest us to remember with special devotion the picture of Thy Most Blessed Mother, entitled Our Lady of Perpetual Succour: mercifully grant that, in every trial and change of this our life and pilgrimage, we may at all times be safeguarded by the protection of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin,*

and may thus be accounted worthy to have part in the everlasting fruit of the Redemption which Thou hast wrought.”—(Collect of the Mass.)

POINT 1.—THE SORROW IN THE PICTURE.

THIS month we are called upon by Holy Church “to venerate with special devotion” the picture of “Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.” Let us try to understand more clearly in what this special devotion consists.

We cannot look carefully at the picture without being struck by the anxious, pained expression on the Holy Mother’s face—indeed in the East, this picture is called “Our Lady of the Sorrowful Vision,” and we have not to look far to find the cause of her sorrow. Behind her, on either side, are the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, bearing the Cross and the instruments of the Passion, which they are showing to the Holy Child in her arms. As He turns to look at them, fear makes Him cling to His Mother’s hand. It was the same sort of fear which He had during His Agony in the Garden—a shrinking fear which is not incompatible with a perfect submission to God’s Will. And in the fear He turns to His Mother for help.

Now we see when we may specially turn to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and expect her to help us—it is at those times when we are dreading our cross, feeling that it is too heavy. Let us come and put ourselves trustfully into the position of the Child in the picture, turning to receive the Cross while we cling to our Mother’s hand. “There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.” It was true even from His Cradle. And it is true of our cross, too.

POINT 2.—THE ANGELS IN THE PICTURE.

Our crosses come straight from heaven—they are brought by God’s messengers. It was an angel who brought the first indication of the Cross to Mary, and though she was “troubled,” she said her *Fiat* all the same. Let us be quite sure of the fact that our crosses come from God Himself, though the channels through which they come are for us more often human than angelic, and then the *Fiat* cannot but be in our hearts, though we may be shrinking and full of fear, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour will help us to say it.

POINT 3.—THE LOOSED SANDAL.

All babies manage to kick off their shoes, and Jesus was a perfectly human baby; but He was more, and there is a meaning in this act. But for it our picture would not be complete. It would be as though the Agony in the Garden had stopped at the prayer: “Remove this chalice from Me,” and had never gone on to the next part: “Yet not My Will but Thine be done.” It did not stop there; neither does the picture.

The putting off of the shoe under the old law meant:

- (1) The yielding of one’s rights to another (Ruth iv. 7).
- (2) The wish to be treated as a servant or a captive (Isaias xx).
- (3) Readiness for reproach and infamy (Deut. xxv. 9).

Now we can complete our picture. As the Child looks at the terrifying instruments and clings to His Mother, the little shoe slips from His Foot and He says His *Fiat*—“Not My Will but Thine.” “He emptied Himself of all His rights and took the form of a servant, and did not turn away His face from them that rebuked Him and spat upon Him” (Isaias 1. 6).

We can imagine Michael and Gabriel going back to Heaven and being asked: “What did He say?” “He was frightened and clung to His Mother, but He took off His shoe.”

Let us go that we may die with Him—go to the death of self—no rights, the servant of all, God’s captive whom all may despise.

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

Resolution.—“To be accounted worthy to have part in the everlasting fruit of the Redemption” (Collect).

Spiritual Bouquet.—“I have left you an example.”

VII.—OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL. (July 16th.)

1st Prelude.—The Brown Scapular.

2nd Prelude.—“*O God, Who hast been pleased to honour the Order of the Most Blessed Mother, Mary ever a Virgin, with the noble title of Mount Carmel: grant, we beseech Thee, that she, whose commemoration we this day celebrate with solemn Offices, may ever so surely safeguard us that we may be found worthy to share in that*

happiness which has no end.” (Collect for the Feast.)

POINT 1.-OUR LADY’S DRESS.

WHY do we celebrate the commemoration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel today? Because it is the anniversary of her appearing to St. Simon Stock in 1245. He was the General of the Order of Mount Carmel and had served God for twenty years before he became a Carmelite. On this day, nearly 700 years ago, he was praying to the “Flower of Carmel,” as he loved to call Our Lady, and begging for some special privilege for his large family, when Our Lady appeared to him and gave him a Scapular—“a heavenly garment,” as the Liturgy calls it—telling him that no one who died while wearing it would be lost; and that it was not only a sign of Salvation, but also a safeguard in danger, a pledge of peace and a token of an everlasting covenant.

The privileges of the Scapular and also of the Feast have been extended now to the whole Church, and those who wear the “heavenly garment” should never forget that they, in some sense, are linked by it to the great Order of Carmel, and share in its prayers and merits.

In wearing my Scapular, then, I am wearing my Mother’s dress, and shall be known everywhere by it as one of her children. It is a sign of salvation, for it links me to the Mother of divine grace; it is a safeguard in danger, for it unites me to the Refuge of Sinners; it is a pledge of peace, for the Queen of Peace gave it to me; it is a token of an everlasting Covenant between Our Lady of Mount Carmel and me, her child.

POINT 2.-OUR LADY’S GARDEN.

The word Carmel means a “garden.” Isaias speaks of “the beauty of Carmel” (Cant. xxxv. 2), and Jeremias of its “fruit” (Cant. ii. 7). This “garden enclosed” (Cant. iv. 2) is Our Lady of Carmel herself, and all her wealth of beauty and fruit are for her Son. He greatly desires her beauty, and it is all “within” (Psalm xlv. 12-14), hidden away in the enclosed garden, which only He may enter. All the fruit, too, is grown for Him alone—“Let my Beloved come into His garden and eat the fruit” (Cant. v. 1). “My Beloved is gone down into His garden to the bed of aromatical spices to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies” (Cant. vi. 1).

Our Lady of Mount Carmel wants all her children to be thus “enclosed.” We cannot all be Carmelites, but we can all have a little Carmel of our own, where we can shut ourselves up with the Child and His Mother, even amongst the most distracting surroundings. There we can cultivate all the sweet flowers that Our Lady loves—purity, charity, humility, obedience, contrition—and there her Beloved is always sure of finding fruit. If I see to it that the garden of my heart is well enclosed I may be quite sure that Jesus and Mary will be attracted to it.

It is a picture for me to dwell upon after my Communions. Jesus does not only come to feed me, but to feed Himself with the choicest fruits that I have grown for Him in my Carmel.

She leads us to the top of Carmel, and says it is there that the enclosed garden must be. Why? (1) Because if we are to seek heaven we must rise above earth. (2) Because our garden must be in-accessible to the world. (3) Because it must be exposed to every wind that blows. “Arise, O North wind, and come, O South wind,” Our Lady prays, “blow through my garden and let the aromatical spices thereof flow” (Cant. iv. 16). It is when the north wind of temptation and trouble and difficulty blows through our garden that we shall work the hardest, to shelter our flowers and preserve the fruit; and it is the gentle south wind which will scatter the aromatical spices, making our garden, though so carefully enclosed, a benefit to others. And who can say how far the winds will carry the little seeds? Our Lady knows what to ask for her Carmels.

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of Mount Cannel.

Resolution.—To have a little Carmel of my own.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Let my Beloved come into His garden.”

VIII.—OUR LADY OF THE SNOW. (August 5th.)

1st Prelude.—The Church of St. Mary Major built on the Esquiline Hill of Rome, and dedicated to St. Mary of the Snow in the 4th century. It contains two precious treasures, the Crib of Jesus and the portrait of Our Lady painted by St. Luke.

2nd Prelude.—Grace to offer my heart as a Temple.

POINT 1.-THE SNOW.

A RICH noble Roman called John, having no children, vowed the whole of his fortune to Our Lady. He and his wife begged her to let them know how she would like the money used. On the 5th of August when Rome's heat is at its height, the Esquiline Hill was covered with snow during the night, and to John and his wife, each separately, Our Lady appeared in a dream telling them she would like a church built where they found snow. They went at once to the Pope (Liberius) only to find he had dreamt the same thing. So the Church was built with John's money on the spot chosen by Our Lady. So runs the beautiful legend of the Church's Office; and because of it we annually celebrate the dedication of the church of Our Lady of the Snow.

It is purity that Our Lady wants—a pure heart in a pure body, a pure intention, a pure offering. She will obtain it for those who really desire it, and it is an essential for those who would build a temple for her Son. They must give themselves, give their alms, their prayers—give their all, then the promise will be theirs: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” He will make their heart His temple, and He will dwell there.

POINT 2.-THE TEMPLE.

Our Lady does her part. What she wants of her child is a temple where her Son can dwell, and she traces out the foundations—the purity of intention, and then says: “Whatsoever He saith, do ye.” It is a matter of obedience. What does He say? “My child, give Me thy heart. Today I must abide in thy house, I must make it My temple!” It is not only for the time of Holy Communion that He says this, but for each moment of the day. He wants it to be His dwelling place where He can come when He will, where sacrifices of the will are continually being offered, where “the prayers, works and sufferings” of each day are dedicated to Him. He does not expect perfection, but He does expect obedience, an honest effort to make the temple what He intended it to be when He traced its plan. And for my consolation I can remember how little satisfies Him, if only my intention is pure. His desire to dwell in my heart is so great that He will come in spite of its dilapidated condition. He will come as the great Architect to repair and rebuild and to show me little by little each day what I am to do to beautify my temple and make it more worthy of Him.

POINT 3.-THE TREASURES.

I know my soul was made the temple of the Blessed Trinity at Baptism, when God chose me to be His Child. I know the Holy Spirit came at my confirmation, and that Jesus comes as often as I ask in Holy Communion, but how can I keep my heart worthy of its Guest, how can I be sure of attracting Him and giving Him a welcome when He comes? By keeping in it two treasures which He loves and which He will never tire of looking at:

(1) His Crib.—The reminder of His Incarnation, of His birth into the world, of His poverty and suffering, of His dependence and helplessness, of His love and gentleness and patience and humility. I can remake His Crib in my heart and thus be His constant delight. I can let Him find there all these virtues which He practised for me when He lay in it, and which He practised for no other reason than to give me an example. It is when I try to follow His example that He is attracted to my heart.

(2) The picture of His Mother.—He can never resist the delight of coming to look at that. When He finds a heart showing even the faintest resemblance to His Mother He is sure to make it His temple, for He knows that she will help her child to make Him welcome. And never can He say: “I know you not” to any soul which bears the family likeness.

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of the Snow, asking her to let me keep her picture always in my heart.

Resolution.—To make my temple attractive.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Behold, God is in this place.”

IX.-THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY. (September 12th.)

“Let the Name of Mary be always in thy heart, always on thy lips.”—(St. Bernard.)

1st Prelude.—Mary receiving her name.

2nd Prelude.—“Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thy faithful who rejoice under the name and protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, may, by her pious intercession, be delivered from all evils on earth, and deserve to arrive at eternal joys in Heaven.”—(Collect for the Feast.)

POINT 1.-“AND THE VIRGIN'S NAME WAS MARY.”

MARY is the name of a Virgin—of the Virgin, Virgo Virginum. The name Mary means Star of the Sea.

The first name ever given to a woman was a name of sadness, and to be a child of Eve is to be a child of sorrow.

But another woman was promised to Eve who should undo the evil she had done. Now, 4,000 years after that first promise was made, a little child was born who was different from all the rest of God's children, for she had escaped the stain and disgrace of Eve's sin. She was pure and beautiful in God's sight from the first moment of her Conception. "And the Virgin's name was Mary," the Star of the Sea. Eve had brought all her children into the tempestuous sea of sin and trouble and sorrow, but Mary's purity and sinlessness shines over that same sea, taking away its terrors, keeping the direction right and the intention pure, dispelling the darkness and quelling the storms, keeping up the flagging spirits by showing the Child in her arms, Who is waiting to receive all who have looked for guidance to the Star of the Sea. "To thee do we turn, poor banished children of Eve," and it is impossible for anyone who turns to Mary to be lost. The Church calls her the "Virgin of Virgins," "the Queen of Virgins," "Most prudent Virgin," "Venerable Virgin," "Renowned Virgin," "Powerful Virgin," "Faithful Virgin." Each title shows us what a priceless treasure purity is. "The Virgin's name was Mary," and she is never invoked in vain by those who are seeking purity of either body or soul. It is the pure who shall see God, and they will be guided to Him by Mary, the Star of the Sea.

POINT 2.-OUR LADY.

This is the name we love to give her, and it is the name she received today, for Mary in Syriac means a lady or a sovereign. She is our Lady and our Queen.

Her name, then, speaks of power, of greatness, of generosity, of magnificence, of royalty. She is Queen of Heaven, of angels, and of the Church, because she has given the King of kings to the world, and reigns with Him. To her He entrusts the distribution of His goods, for all our graces come through Mary. From there she dispenses her gifts, listens to the prayers of her subjects, and makes her request to the King, Who never says her nay. "What is this to me that the Mother of my Lord, Mary, the Mistress of the world, and the Queen of Heaven, should come to me? "She comes because she would be Queen of my heart as she is the Queen of the Heart of Jesus.

POINT 3.-"THERE STOOD BY THE CROSS OF JESUS, HIS MOTHER."

Mary is the name not only of a virgin and of a queen, but is also of a mother—"Mary the Mother of Jesus was there." She was always there with Him, or near Him, from the moment when Gabriel said to her: "The Lord is with thee," till she saw Him ascend to Heaven. It was always "the Child and the Mother." And when He was distributing His gifts before He left this earth, He left His Mother to the Church, so that each member of His mystical body has as much right to call her Mother as has the Head. Mary is then my Mother. As she was with Him, so she will be with me. As she stood by His Cross, so she will stand by mine. Never need I feel alone; Mary, my Mother, is there to help, to guide, to comfort, to encourage, to keep me near to her Son, to intercede for me. "Holy Mary, be a Mother to me."

Colloquy.—With Mary—Virgin, Queen and Mother. "O, Mary, by the name of thy beloved Son, grant us ever to keep the memory of thine own sweetest name. May it be the delicious food of our souls; May it be with us in danger; may it be with us in anguish; may it be to us the beginning of all joy."—St. Anselm.

Resolution.—To invoke the sweet name of Mary often.

Spiritual Bouquet.—"And the Virgin's name was Mary."

X.—OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY. (October, 7th.)

1st Prelude.—A pair of Beads—the old English name for a Rosary, from the Saxon *bede*, a prayer.

2nd Prelude.—"*Grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating on these Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise.*" (Collect for the Feast.)

POINT 1.-WHY DO WE SAY THE ROSARY?

(1) Because the Church has sanctioned it by a Feast in its honour and by a special invocation in the Litany.

(2) Because Our Lady loves it. She said it with Blessed Bernadette at Lourdes making the Sign of the Cross at the beginning, and letting the beads slip through her fingers, though it was only at the Glorias that she moved her lips. Bernadette said that the beads on Our Lady's Rosary were big white ones, widely separated, and that the chains were yellow.

(3) Because we need something on the way to link us all together and to keep us in touch with Our Lady of the Wayside and her Child. She puts into our hands a chain made up of innumerable links, every one of which is, to those

who handle them with faith and love, a reflection of the Child and His Mother, and a constant reminder of their presence.

(q) That we may imitate what the Mysteries contain and obtain what they promise.—(Collect.)

The mere fact of carrying a Rosary with us brings a blessing, but when we take out our beads to say them we are linked up not only to our fellow-travellers on the way, but to those who are waiting in Purgatory, who are greatly consoled by the beads which we pass through our fingers and the *bedes* which we say with our hearts and lips. It also links us up to those whose pilgrimage is over and who are now encouraging, by their prayers, those who are still on the way. They understand the marvellous efficacy and power of the Rosary, and they often see wonders worked because some little traveller on the way is telling his beads with faith.

POINT 2.-HOW ARE WE TO SAY THE ROSARY?

If we bear in mind that the object of our Rosary is to keep us in touch with Jesus and Mary, we cannot say it amiss. Each mystery is a picture which our Mother is showing to us, and we look at it so intently under her gentle influence that we can hear what the people in it are saying and understand what they are doing. Long before we have finished looking and listening, our Mother will turn the page to the next picture, for the Our Father and the ten Hail Marys are all said, and the only thing to be done is to say a Gloria in thanksgiving for all she has shown to us.

The Child and His Mother are in every picture, so we have ample opportunity for telling them about any special Intention for which we may wish to offer our Rosary. All the time we keep up a little running conversation with our Mother, like the prattle of a very little child who keeps on saying the same things over and over again, afraid to stop lest its mother should go away and leave it.

POINT 3.-WHEN ARE WE TO SAY THE ROSARY?

The Church orders us to say it especially during the month of October—the Rosary month. October is also the Angels' month, and the two devotions are very easily blended. Our Mother is Queen of the Angels as well as of the Rosary and if we invite the angels to look at our pictures with us, we shall be surprised to find how much they have to do with every mystery. They are familiar with the Hail Mary, too, for God taught it to us through an angel.

But there is no time when we may not say our Rosary, neither dare we make want of time an excuse for not saying it, for the Church puts great value (500 days' Indulgence under certain conditions) on even one Hail Mary said upon the Rosary beads.

Let it be, then, our constant companion, and when fingers and lips are too weary to do their part, and all we can do is to hold the precious beads in our hands, Our Lady will still show us the pictures and the Angels will say the Hail Marys for us.

Colloquy.—With the Child and His Mother.

Resolution.—To say the Rosary every day.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.”

XI.-OUR LADY OF SUFFRAGE.* (November 6th.)*

1st Prelude.—The Wedding Feast of Cana.

2nd Prelude.—Grace to be generous towards the Holy Souls.

POINT 1.-“THE MOTHER OF JESUS WAS THERE.”

OUR Lady of Suffrage was there, and she always will be there when her children are in need of her. When did Our Lady receive her Suffrage —her right, that is, to have a voice or a vote (*Suffragium-a vote*) in the concerns of her children? Surely it was when she stood at the foot of the Cross and her Son gave into her charge all those for whom He was dying. Since then she has always had the right to intercede for her children, and as the suffering ones in a family are always the special objects of a mother's care, so it is her suffering children in Purgatory who receive the special care of Our Lady of Suffrage. “He gave Him to His Mother” may be said about each one whom the Judge dismisses from His judgment seat to hide his shame in Purgatory.

He hands the soul over to her who has a Mother's right to intercede for it and whose suffrage will be sure to be used in its favour. She can sympathise with them, for she knows what it is to be sinless and suffering, and she knows

**This Feast is not celebrated in Ireland*

too what it is to be kept waiting for the vision of God.

We all have a part in this suffrage for the Holy Souls. Each one of us has been made in this respect his “brother’s keeper,” and there is no better way of fulfilling our duty towards them than by having a great devotion to her who is our Mother as well as theirs.

Let us, then, say our Rosary with great devotion; it is a powerful means of helping the Holy Souls. Let us offer up our masses and Communion for the souls in which Our Lady is specially interested, recite her Office with the intention of asking her intercession for the Holy Souls, ask her to come round with us when we make our Stations, and to tell us the story over again while we join our intercession with hers for the Holy Souls for which her Son suffered.

POINT 2.—“MY HOUR IS NOT YET COME.”

This was Our Lord’s answer to His Mother when she told Him that the guests had no wine. He meant that the hour to work His first miracle had not yet come, and then He proceeded at once to work it! How can we explain what looks so contradictory? By believing—the thought comes from Father Coleridge—that Our Lord has two hours, both equally His—(1) the hour fixed by His Divine Providence for an event, and (2) an earlier hour at which He will allow the event to happen if He is constrained to do so by our prayers. This explains many things in Scripture which look, at first sight, as though the God Who changes not had changed His mind.

The guests at the banquet said nothing, but Mary saw their need, and spoke of it to her Son, Who immediately anticipated His hour and supplied the need. Let us think often of the Holy Souls this month. They have a right to the banquet, for they are wearing the wedding garment, but they have been detained on the way. Are we going to let our friends wait till the hour fixed by God’s justice has come, when they have paid “the uttermost farthing” of the debt, or are we going to imitate Our Lady of Suffrage and anticipate His hour by thinking of their needs and telling Him of them?

POINT 3.—“WHATSOEVER HE SHALL SAY, DO YE.”

To enable us to do this, two virtues are necessary, obedience and faith.

(1) Obedience will make us fill the bottles up to the brim. If the servants had only half filled the bottles there would have been only half as much wine for the guests. Our Lord uses what we give Him. He cannot use what our want of generosity or fervour withholds.

(2) Faith will make us believe that the water will be turned into wine—that God is able to use the simplest little things that we do for the Holy Souls, and that He will, because of this, anticipate His hour and shorten the time of waiting.

Let us listen to the order of Our Lady of Suffrage: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye,” and then set to work to anticipate His hour for some of those waiting souls. God has put the matter into our hands, it is we who can open the door to the marriage-supper and give the invited guests the wine for which they thirst.

Colloquy.—With Our Lady of Suffrage.

Resolution.—To do something every day for the Holy Souls.

Spiritual Bouquet.—“They have no wine,”

XII.—OUR LADY’S HOUSE. (December 10th.)

“We will go into His Tabernacle; we will adore in the place where His Feet stood.” (Psalm cxxxi. 7).

“At Loreto, in Picenum, the translation of the Holy House of Mary, the Mother of God, in which the Word was made Flesh.” (Roman Martyrology, 1669.)

1st Prelude.—(1) Picture the joy in Loreto, on December 10th, 1294, when the inhabitants venerated the Holy House believed to have been brought thither by the hands of angels; (2) Picture the beautiful Basilica which now surrounds Mary’s Holy House. Underneath a statue of Mary with her Child, is the Altar bearing the inscription: *Here the Word was made Flesh.*

2nd Prelude.—“O God, Who didst mercifully consecrate the House of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the mystery of the Word made Flesh, and hast miraculously placed that House in the midst of Thy Church, grant that, being separated from the abode of sinners, we may be made worthy to dwell in Thy House.” (Collect for the Feast).

POINT 1.—“WE WILL GO INTO HIS TABERNACLE.”

THE Tabernacle of old contained the Ark, and, on the Ark overshadowed by Cherubim, was the Propitiatory, where God drew near to man, where He spoke to him and dwelt with him (Num. vii. 89). This was a shadow of good things to come. Mary's house at Nazareth was a tabernacle; it contained the *Foedoris Arca* (Ark of the Covenant), which was overshadowed, not by Cherubim, but by the Holy Spirit Himself. There it was that the Incarnation took place, and that God drew near to man, so that He might speak to him, "as a man speaketh to his friend," and dwell with him. The Mother of God and the Archangel were the first to worship the Word made Flesh in this Tabernacle, and from it the first perfect human act of worship rose to heaven.

POINT 2.—"THE PLACE WHERE HIS FEET STOOD."

"This is no other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 17). Here the Son of God stood; here He worked and played, took His meals, and slept; here He talked to His Mother in the long evenings after His work was finished, and here He watched by the death-bed of St. Joseph; here He was subject till He was thirty years old, and did the work of His Father as perfectly as He did it during the last three years of His life. And all that we might stand in "the place where His Feet stood," that is, that we might put our feet into His footprints, follow in His steps, and let them lead us where they led Him—always to do the Will of His Father, though the way will often be marked by the cross. So only shall we be found worthy to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem where His Sacred and Pierced Feet now stand.

POINT 3.—"WE WILL ADORE."

We will fall down and adore each memory, each word, each footprint that we find. But where shall we find them? Everywhere, if we but train ourselves to observe. Continually we may say with Jacob of old: "Indeed the Lord is in this place." He leaves His footprints behind when He comes to us in Holy Communion. How long do they last? How long can others trace them? All the events and circumstances of the lives of His children are stamped with His footprints. He has been there arranging all for me, and, whether I like His arrangements or not, there is only one thing for me to do. I must adore the footprints by accepting all that He arranges. Sometimes it is very difficult to find any trace of Him—all is so unlike Him; neither the order given, nor the way in which it is given, reminds me of Him. What then? Faith shall make me adore still where I cannot see. I know that I am in His House and that His footprints must be there. Even the most common ordinary events of my everyday life are bound to be marked by them; of each of them I may say: This is the place where His Feet have stood, I will adore. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Colloquy.—With Our Lady asking her to take me often in spirit to her Holy House and tell me over again the sweet stories of all that happened there.

Resolution.—To believe that everything is marked with His footprints.

Spiritual Bouquet.—"We will adore in the place where His Feet stood."
