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OUR LADY'S MONTH



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OUR LADY'S MONTH

BY

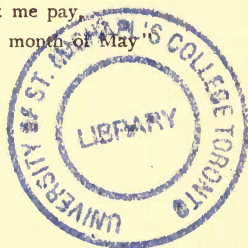
SISTER M. PHILIP

OF THE BAR CONVENT, YORK

PREFACE BY THE

RIGHT REV. BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON

"Joy of my Heart, O let me pay
To thee thy own sweet month of May"



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PREFACE

MATER AMABILIS

WE choose our friends ; we do not choose our mother. We change our friends ; we do not change our mother. The love of friend waxes and wanes ; the love of a mother is steadfast. Friends are many ; our mother is only one.

So it is with our spiritual attachments. We choose our patron saints. We vary in the fervour of our devotion to them. The patron saints of childhood are sometimes more or less abandoned for those we only get to know in later years. Our preference seems to be determined by our age, by our state in life, by our occupation, by our temptations or aspirations, or even by the “ vogue ” a particular saint has acquired. Only One is everywhere and always everybody’s Patron, because only One is everywhere and always everybody’s Mother ; not adopted by us, but bequeathed to

us by Our Redeemer's last act and deed : " Child, behold thy Mother."

Everywhere and always everybody's Mother ! Verily, " the Mother of all the living," because on Calvary She brought forth in anguish the whole family of the redeemed. Singularly " blessed among women," because Her Name was predestined from all eternity to be on the lips of all generations. We can sin, alas ! against the love of our Heavenly Mother, as we can sin against the love of our earthly mother ; but no frantic blasphemy, no callous neglect, can rupture either bond. The prodigal who has outraged and forfeited every title of sonship creeps back with no misgiving to the breast that suckled him ; and the sinner, with no less assurance, casts himself at the feet of Her Who is his refuge. " Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the child of her womb ? "

Devotion to Our Lady, then, is not an optional, but a necessary devotion ; just as love of parents is not an optional, but a necessary virtue. Therefore, training in devotion to Our Lady is not an optional, but a necessary subject in every syllabus of religious instruction. This little book has grown out of the lesson-notes of a practical teacher, who has successfully moulded the minds and hearts of the many children who have passed

through her hands in the knowledge and love of their Heavenly Mother. The writer's purpose is to help her fellow-teachers to secure the like happy results ; mine, to bless her, and those who practise the same sublime art of inscribing on virgin souls the sacred characters—MARIA.

“ May Her sweet Name be lisped by little ones and linger on the lips of the aged and the dying ; and may it be invoked by the afflicted, and hymned by the joyful ; that this Star of the Sea being their protection and their guide, all may come to the harbour of eternal salvation,” through Her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

✠ F. W. BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| The Eve of Our Lady's Month | II |
| 1. Our Lady, the Virgin Most Renowned | 15 |
| 2. Our Lady, the Sweet Virgin Mary | 19 |
| 3. Our Lady Immaculate | 24 |
| 4. Our Lady, the Seat of Wisdom | 28 |
| 5. Our Lady, the Queen of Angels | 32 |
| 6. Our Lady of Mount Carmel | 37 |
| 7. Our Lady of Dolours | 42 |
| 8. Our Lady of Mercy | 47 |
| 9. Our Lady, the Mother of Fair Love | 52 |
| 10. Our Lady of Lourdes, the Health of the Sick | 57 |
| 11. Our Lady of Good Success | 62 |
| 12. Our Lady, the Mother of Christ | 67 |
| 13. Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament | 72 |
| 14. Our Lady, the Mother Most Admirable | 76 |
| 15. Our Lady, the Virgin Most Faithful | 80 |
| 16. Our Lady of the Wayside | 84 |
| 17. Our Lady of Peace | 89 |

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 18. Our Lady of Good Counsel | 93 |
| 19. Our Lady of Consolation, the Comforter of the Afflicted | 98 |
| 20. Our Lady, the Cause of Our Joy | 103 |
| 21. Our Lady, the Virgin Most Powerful | 108 |
| 22. Our Lady, the Refuge of Sinners | 112 |
| 23. Our Lady, the Gate of Heaven | 117 |
| 24. Our Lady of the Rosary | 121 |
| 25. Our Lady of Perpetual Succour | 126 |
| 26. Our Lady, the Star of the Sea | 130 |
| 27. Our Lady, the House of Gold | 135 |
| 28. Our Lady, the Mystical Rose | 140 |
| 29. Our Lady, the Queen of Apostles | 144 |
| 30. Our Lady, the Queen of All Saints | 148 |
| 31. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart | 153 |

OUR LADY'S MONTH

THE EVE OF OUR LADY'S MONTH

To English-speaking Catholics the title "Our Lady" is one which falls most naturally from their lips whenever they speak of the Holy Mother of God. We speak of Our Lady's Altar, Our Lady's Litany, a Votive Mass of Our Lady, Our Lady's Feasts, Our Lady's Month; and it is this month on which we are about to enter. To how many of us has this Month of Mary been among the dearest and most cherished recollections of our childhood? We were taught to love it from our earliest years. The fairest flowers, the sweetest blossoms were for Our Lady; and the memory of daily prayers around her statue remains as one of the happiest of our lives. And here we are at the beginning of another May; and Our Lady looks down upon us and welcomes us as we gather round her feet. She loves to see our altars with their lights and flowers; she loves to hear our hymns and prayers; she loves to see us taking part in pro-

cessions in her honour ; but there is something she loves far more than this, something which she expects and looks for, something for which she asks, —the homage of our hearts. It is our love that she wants, that childlike devotion, by which young and old honour her as their Mother. She wants our hearts, not for herself alone, but in order that she may pass them on and secure them for her Son, so that, offered by her, He may more readily accept them. What then are we going to do for Our Lady during this Month of May ? Are we going to give her what she asks ? If we really strove during this one month to honour her as perfectly as we are able, who can tell what a difference these days would make in our lives ? We do not know ; perhaps we never shall know in this world, but a difference there will be nevertheless. She will be more our Mother since we shall have shown her that we really desire to be her children ; and most certainly she will show us a Mother's care. She will protect us in danger, shield us in temptation, and bring us back if we should wander from the right path. Her prayers for us are of more avail than those of any saint or holy person ; if she pleads our cause with God, we need have no fear. Let us then give her our heart's affection during this May especially ; let us think more of

her—and for this we might ponder each day for a few minutes on one of the many beautiful titles given her by the Church in her different prayers. Take for instance the *Salve Regina*, where she is invoked as “Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope,” and again as “our most gracious Advocate,” and the “most clement, loving, and sweet Virgin Mary.” Then there are the titles of her Litany, and others which are quite familiar, as Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of Lourdes, and her latest title, approved only since the outbreak of the European War—Our Lady of Peace. All or any of these furnish matter for loving thought of God’s Mother and ours; and as we grow in knowledge and love of her, so too shall we grow in desire to imitate her. We shall follow her, trying in our small measure to reproduce in our lives the virtues which she practised all through her own life—her humility, her charity, her obedience, her recollection, her prayer, and her resignation to God’s Will.

Let us cling to her, for no one can lead us to Jesus so quickly or so surely as she. Father Faber tells us, “Mary is the short road to Jesus.” Thus following and thinking of her, we shall experience the truth of St Bernard’s words: “Following

her, you will never go astray ; when you implore her aid, you will never yield to despair ; thinking on her, you will not err ; under her patronage, you will never wander ; beneath her protection, you will not fear ; she being your guide, you will not weary. . . . If anger, covetousness, or other passions beat on the vessel of your soul, look up to Mary. Let her not depart from your lips, let her not depart from your heart, and that you may win the suffrage of her prayers, never depart from the example of her life."

OUR LADY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED

IN the Communion Prayer for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception we find these words : “ Glorious things are said of thee, O Virgin Mother of God, because He that is mighty hath done great things for thee.” This then is the secret of Mary’s renown. She tells us so herself in her Canticle : “ Behold all generations shall call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done great things for me.” He that is mighty—Our Lady took no credit for herself. She was the handmaid whose lowliness so charmed the Heart of her Lord that He chose her to be His Mother. Our Lady forgot herself ; she had no thoughts but for Him Whom she loved ; and so it is that through all the ages God has ordained that she shall indeed be called blessed ; that age after age, Saint, Doctor, and Pope

should vie with each other in pouring sweet titles upon her.

“ How to praise thee, O Mary, we know not :
Fair and spotless alone thou art ;
But we pour sweet titles upon thee,
As they rise from our loving heart ;
When they reach thee beyond the skies,
Turn to us thy merciful eyes.”—S.M.X.

It is indeed the mind of the Church that we should praise Our Mother. Does she not pray in the antiphon for the season of Lent and in words used in her Office throughout the year, “ Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O sacred Virgin ” ? and what can be sweeter to the heart of a child than the praises of her Mother ? If we are glad of the honour paid on earth to those we love, how much more should our hearts rejoice at the praises of the Queen of Heaven ? “ Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Blessed be the Lord, Who made heaven and earth . . . because He hath so magnified thy name this day that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men . . . for in every nation that shall hear thy name, the God of Israel shall be magnified on occasion of thee ” (Judith xiii.). Ages before Our Lady's birth God celebrated her praises. The Holy Scriptures

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED 17

are full of passages abounding in sweet titles which are applied to her.

“ Lifted high as the palm and the cedar,
Blooming low as the flower of field,
Eastern Gate to the Sun of Justice,
Garden enclosed and Fountain sealed.
Glorious things are said of thee,
City of God, so fair to see.”—S.M.X.

And when Our Blessed Lord became Man, how did He not honour His Mother? “ He went down to Nazareth and was subject to her.” He spent thirty, out of the thirty-three years of His life, in closest intimacy with her. The first public miracle that He wrought, was wrought at the request of His Mother. Even when dying on the Cross, He would not be separated from her: “ Mary stood beneath the Cross ”; and all holy writers agree that we do not need to be told that it was to Mary, His Mother, that Our Lord first appeared after the Resurrection. Who, again, taught the Saints to say such glorious things of her? Where did the Angels learn those hymns which, as the Regina Cœli, have passed from the mouth of the Church triumphant to that of the Church militant?

In the nineteenth century numberless new titles have been bestowed on Our Lady by Holy Church.

And now let us turn to ourselves. We are each of us bound to Mary by the closest ties : she is our Protectress, our Queen, our Advocate, our Mother. What do we do to honour her ? Do we ever think of trying to make her renown, her honour, her dignity more widely known ? If Our Lord reckons every honour done for His sake to one of the least among His creatures, as done to Himself, what reward may we not expect for promoting the glory of His Mother ? But apart from reward, what work could be sweeter ? It is indeed an untold honour to us, to be allowed to extol the excellence of so great a Queen, so incomparable a Mother. Shall we not then take every opportunity of praising her ? We can often find means of saying a word in her honour, if we are on the look out for occasions. Love is inventive in ways of praising the one beloved, and soon it would become our pleasure to turn to her, saying :—

“ What shall we call thee, O beautiful Mother ?

Lily of Israel, Rose without thorn !

Joy to thee, praise to thee, love to thee, thanks to thee,

Light of thy people ! sweet Star of the Morn ! ”

OUR LADY, VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED,
PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE SWEET VIRGIN MARY

“Come thou my lips and widely proclaim,
O Mary ! how sweet is thy name.”

THE Fathers and Doctors of the Church seem to excel in praising the holy name of Mary. Perhaps their words may warm our cold hearts, and kindle within them a greater love for that spotless Queen and Mother, of whom Saint Luke writes : “ And the Virgin’s name was Mary ” (Luke ii.).

We owe the title “ Sweet Virgin Mary,” which is so familiar to us as the closing word of the prayer “ Hail, Holy Queen,” to the great St Bernard. He was one day in the Abbey of Affligheim, and was asked to intone the Salve Regina. This he did, and when the monks had sung the words, “ after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus,” which was then the end of the anthem, St Bernard, in a transport of love, exclaimed, “ O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin

Mary!" Indeed, we find passage after passage, in the writings of this great Saint, which extol the name of Mary. "O great, O loving one!" he cries, "O thou who art worthy of all praise! O most Holy Virgin Mary! Thy Name is so sweet and amiable, that it cannot be pronounced without inflaming those who do so with love towards thee and God. It need only occur to the thought of thy lovers, to move them to love thee more, and to console them. Thou canst not be named without inflaming; thou canst not be thought of, by those who love thee, without filling their minds with joy!" It is said that St Anthony of Padua found the same sweetness in the name of Mary that St Bernard found in that of Jesus. "Name of Jesus!" exclaimed the one, "O name of Mary!" replied the other; "joy in the heart, honey in the mouth, melody to the ear of her devout clients!" St Alphonsus Liguori points out to us, that from the Sacred Canticle we gather that on the Assumption of Our Lady, the angels asked her name three times: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke?" (Cant. iii. 6). "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?" (Cant. vi. 9). And again, "Who is she that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, and leaning upon her beloved?" (Cant. viii. 5). "And

why," says Richard of St Laurence, "do the angels so often ask the name of their Queen?" He answers that it was so sweet even to the angels to hear it pronounced, that they desired to hear that sweet name in reply. Let us listen to the words of another servant of Mary, the Abbot Francone, who says: "After the most sacred name of Jesus, the name of Mary is so rich, in every good thing, that on earth and in heaven, there is no other from which devout souls receive so much grace, hope, and sweetness. For there is something so admirable, sweet, and divine, in this name of Mary, that when it meets with friendly hearts it breathes into them an odour of delightful sweetness. The wonder of this great name is, that if heard by the lovers of Mary, a thousand times, it is always heard again with renewed pleasure, for they always experience the same sweetness each time it is pronounced." Blessed Henry Suso used to exclaim lovingly: "O most sweet name! O Mary, what must thou thyself be, since thy name alone is thus amiable and gracious?" St Bonaventure declares that the holy name of Mary cannot be pronounced without bringing some grace to him who says it devoutly. St Ambrose exhorts us to pray to Our Lady, saying, "Grant, O Lady, that we may often remember to name thee with

love and confidence, for this either shows the possession of Divine Grace, or else is a pledge that we shall soon recover it. And truly it is so, O Mary. For the remembrance of thy name comforts the afflicted, recalls those who have erred to the way of salvation, and encourages sinners that they may not abandon themselves to despair."

We find again this beautiful passage in St Alphonsus, *Glories of Mary*: "In every danger of forfeiting Divine Grace, we should think of Mary, and invoke her name, together with that of Jesus; for these two names always go together. Oh, then, never let us permit these two most sweet names to leave our hearts, or be off our lips; for they will give us strength, not only not to yield, but to conquer all our temptations." Thomas à Kempis writes: "If you desire consolation in every labour, have recourse to Mary, invoke the name of Mary, honour Mary, recommend yourselves to Mary, rejoice with Mary, weep with Mary, pray with Mary, seek Jesus with Mary. In fine, desire to live and die with Jesus and Mary. By acting thus, you will always advance in the ways of God, for Mary will most willingly pray for you, and the Son will most certainly grant all that His Mother asks."

We have listened to the words of the great

servants of God, in praise of Our Mother's name. Let us lay them up in our hearts, that for us, too, the name of Mary may be "sweeter than honey." And in the tender words of St Bernard, let us invoke her, saying, "I ask thee, O Mary, for the glory of thy name, to come and meet my soul when it is departing from this world, and to take it in thy arms. Disdain not, O Mary, to come then and comfort me, by thy presence. Be thyself my soul's ladder, and way to heaven. Do thou thyself obtain for it, the grace of forgiveness and eternal repose. Amen."

OUR LADY, SWEET VIRGIN MARY, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY IMMACULATE

“Thou art all fair, my beloved, and the original stain is not in thee.”

WHO can think of God's Mother in this mystery of her Immaculate Conception and not be moved to joy and gratitude at the thought that at least one of our fallen human race has been from the first moment of her existence spotless and fair in the sight of her Creator. We cannot but be glad that there has been one human soul that has been in very truth all His own, realising completely the ideal of a creature in regard to the Creator; one of whom we poor sinful ones can think as being absolutely spotless without stain from the very first moment of her life. We know the familiar lines of Father Faber :

“None had e'er owned thee, dear Mother ! but He,
And He blessed thy clear shining, sweet Star of the Sea.”

Perhaps, even, the thought they suggest may have comforted us somewhat in our own feeling of

failure and perpetual falling short of what we know we ought to be. With Mary there was no falling short. She, "our tainted nature's solitary boast," as the Protestant poet Wordsworth calls her, was all God's own. "Thou art all fair, My love" (Cant. iv. 7) are the words of Holy Writ applied to Mary by the Church. "How beautiful art thou, and how comely, My dearest in delights" (*ibid.* vii. 6). And again: "One is My dove, My perfect one is but one" (*ibid.* vi. 8).

We think of God's mercy, of His love, of the countless blessings He showers upon each one of us, day by day, hour by hour; of the Infinite Patience of that Eternal Love, and we rejoice to remember the glory and joy that redound to His honour because of the sinless purity of His Mother.

"O Mary," exclaims St Tarasius, "where shall I find words to praise thee? Maiden undefiled, Virgin unstained, exaltation of women, glory of daughters! Holy Maiden Mother, blessed art thou amongst women, thy glory is thy guilelessness, and thy name is a name of purity." And St Epiphanius says: "I am at a loss what words or terms I ought to employ in speaking of this illustrious and holy Virgin. She is raised above all things except God; she was made much higher

than the cherubim and seraphim, and the whole host of heaven. Neither the voices of heaven nor of earth are full enough to set forth her majesty ; no ! not the voice of angels ! O blessed Virgin ! O pure dove and bride of heaven ! O Mary, at once the heaven, the temple, and the throne of God ! Mother of the Sun that shineth both on heaven and on earth, even Christ ! Bright cloud through which the Son of Man hath come as the lightning, that lighteneth from the east even unto the west ! Hail, Gate of Heaven, full of grace, of whom the prophet, in the Song of Songs, speaketh in the course of his prayer, saying : ' A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed.' "

Theologians tell us that no gift was ever bestowed on any creature with which the Blessed Virgin was not also enriched. St Bernard says on this subject : " It is certainly not wrong to suppose that that which has evidently been bestowed, even on only a few, was not denied to so great a Virgin." St Thomas of Villanova adds : " Nothing was ever granted to any Saint which did not shine in a much higher degree in Mary, from the very first moment of her existence." And as it is true that there is an infinite difference between the Mother of God and the servants of God, according to the celebrated

saying of St John Damascene, we must certainly suppose that "God conferred privileges of grace in every way greater on His Mother than on His servants."

Mary's sinlessness, then, must stand ever as a shield between our sinfulness and the Justice of our God. Looking on her beauty, God's wrath is appeased. Who can tell the sinners that have been saved through the prayers of our Immaculate Mother? Who can tell the perils from which we may yet be saved if we call on Mary?

"Deep night hath come down on us, Mother, deep night,
And we need more than ever the guide of thy light;
For the darker the night is, the brighter should be
Thy beautiful shining, sweet Star of the Sea!"

OUR LADY IMMACULATE, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE SEAT OF WISDOM

“ All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”—Isaias liv. 13.

WHAT do we mean when we invoke Our Lady as the Seat of Wisdom? We know that in the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is called “ Solomon’s Throne ” : this is only another rendering of the same idea. Solomon’s throne was made of ivory, symbolical of the purity of Mary’s soul ; it was covered with gold, an emblem of her charity. Then again, King Solomon, the wisest of monarchs, uttered his words of wisdom when seated on that throne, his subjects surrounded it, petitioning for the solution of, and for help in, their doubts and difficulties. All this is surely symbolical of Mary, who seated on her throne holds on her knee Wisdom Incarnate. Oh ! that we could learn “ where is wisdom, where is under-

standing, where is strength " ! and who can teach us as Our Lady can ?

" Oh, Seat of Wisdom, light up our way,
Safe through the night-gloom into the day ;
Oh, Seat of Wisdom, light up our way,
Safe to the bright eternal day."—S.M.X.

Our Lady is the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and is filled with the plenitude of His gifts. The Spirit of Wisdom, of Understanding, and of Knowledge fills her soul with light, therefore it is that we should have recourse to her that she may be as a " lamp unto our footsteps." We know how darkness makes us stumble, how slowly we can advance if there is no light to guide us ; if then we would make progress in perfection, let us go to Mary. She calls us herself : " Now, therefore, ye children, hear me. Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. . . . He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord " (Prov. viii.). And again, Holy Scripture tells us, " If a man desire much knowledge, she knoweth things past, and judgeth of things to come ; she knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and the solutions of arguments ; she knoweth signs and wonders before they be done, and the events of times and ages. . . . She glorifieth her nobility by being versant

with God : yea, and the Lord of all things hath loved her. For it is she that reacheth the knowledge of God " (Wisd. vii.). To Our Mother, then, we turn, that she may obtain for us, by her prayers, those great gifts of the Holy Spirit.

" Make us to grow in grace and knowledge,
Kindle our love from day to day,
Fill us with wisdom and with counsel,
O Sedes Sapientiæ."—S.M.X.

The great wisdom, the only true wisdom, is to love and serve God. " This is eternal life, to know Thee, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." All the rest is folly if we exclude this. " Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but to love God and serve Him alone."

This, then, is the knowledge and the wisdom we beg Our Lady to teach us. Who knows God as she does ? Who understands more fully than she, the lessons of Jesus Christ ? What treasures of wisdom and knowledge must she not have treasured up during the thirty years of the hidden life, when she was in constant intercourse with the Son of God made Man.

Learning and science are good,—the Church has always fostered and encouraged both, whatever the world may say ; but the powers of our soul must be used for God and blessed by Him, other-

wise our so-called knowledge is worthless in His sight. Let us, then, call on Our Lady, the Seat of Wisdom :—

“ Here is our memory so wayward,
Ah ! keep it lest it go astray ;
Take thou our intellect and train it
Christ’s blessed teaching to obey ;
Brace up our will to perseverance,
O Sedes Sapientiæ.”—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, SEAT OF WISDOM, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE QUEEN OF ANGELS

“ Above all the angels, in glory untold,
Standing next to the King in a vesture of gold.”

THE angels are of a higher nature than we are ; their power and gifts far surpass those of man ; their knowledge, their love, their subtilty, their beauty far surpasses ours ; and yet pre-eminently more excellent than the angels is the excellence of Mary. For her soul is more closely united to God than are any of the Seraphim ; her knowledge is greater than theirs ; her praise of God is deeper ; her submission to God's Will more perfect. The gifts of the angels are God's gifts, but as their nature is higher, the gifts of Mary's soul manifest more clearly the power and the love of God ; and so it is that the angels delight to hold themselves in readiness to serve their Queen. They joyfully acknowledge that she is more excellent than themselves ; they know that her humility gives

more praise to God than they are capable of giving, for she understands more clearly than they do all that is contained in the cry of their Prince and Leader St Michael, "Who is like to God?" So it is that the angels reverence and love Our Lady. "O Mary, Queen of Angels," says St Sophronius, "who shall worthily set forth thy glory? Who shall make bold to say what thou art? Who will hold himself able to tell of all thy splendour? Thou art the exaltation of humanity, thou art made much higher than the angels, thy brightness hath thrown the brightness of the Archangels into shadow; thou lookest down upon the lofty seats of the Thrones; thou makest the heights of the Dominations to seem low; thy rank taketh precedence before that of the Principalities; compared with thee, the Powers are weakness; thou art a mighty one, mightier than all the mighty; thine earthly eyes see further than the contemplation of the Cherubim can reach; the Seraphim have six wings, but their flight is not so noble as thine; in a word, thou hast excelled every other work of God, thou wast far purer than any other creature . . . thou hast been chosen out of all He has made to be His Mother" (*De Assump.*).

It is, then, the delight and privilege of the angels to be associated with Our Lady. Every child of

Adam is guarded by a special angel ; some of the Saints have been so favoured as to have two guardian angels ; others, as St Frances of Rome, have been able to see and converse with their protecting angel. What then must have been the intercourse between Mary and the angels ? How they must have hovered round the cradle of that wondrous child who was destined to become the Mother of their God !

“ Angels cluster around thy cradle,
Smiling into thy little face,
Whispering now as they whisper later,
The Lord is with thee, O full of grace !
We too, Mary, would hail thee thus,
More than to angels thou art to us.”

Mary was fair, spotless, and lovely in the sight of God. She was all that God wished her to be. He looked on her with delight. What must the angels have felt when they first saw their Queen ? How glorious and blessed their service for her was during her girlhood. Each holy inspiration bore its perfect fruit ; each grace was most faithfully corresponded to ; each prayer from her lips which the angels carried before the throne of the Most High was in perfect accordance with the Divine Will. Surely the task of Our Lady's guardian angels was a delightful one ? Then came the

announcement of the great mystery of the Incarnation, and it was to the Archangel Gabriel that the message was entrusted. With what awe and reverence he saluted her and bowed down before her : “ Hail, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee.” We can well imagine that from that hour the number of blessed spirits in immediate attendance on their Queen was increased. Angels accompanied Mary when she went to visit her cousin, St Elizabeth ; angels surrounded her during her journey to Bethlehem, and angels hovered around and above and within that poor cave wherein Jesus was born. The tidings of joy were announced to the shepherds by angels ; by an angel, again, was the warning given which was to protect the Child Jesus from Herod’s cruelty. Angels protected the Holy Family on their journey to and from Egypt, and we may be sure that throngs of angels kept watch over the Holy House of Nazareth during the Thirty Years. Our Lord had an angel to comfort Him during His Agony, and may we not be sure that God sent a special messenger to console the most sorrowful Mother during all the time of the Passion of her Son ? Then years later, when at last the time of Mary’s Assumption came, with what jubilee did not the whole angelic host come out to meet their Queen and bear her up till she reached

the throne of God. "Mary is assumed into heaven, rejoice, ye angels," sings the Church. Oh yes! that was a feast indeed for those blessed spirits.

"Sing, sing, ye angel bands,
All beautiful and bright;
For higher still and higher,
Through fields of starry light,
Mary your Queen ascends,
Like the sweet moon at night."—FABER.

There, then, is Mary enthroned for evermore as Queen of Angels. The very thought of her under this title is calculated to give us strength and courage, to raise our hearts from the things of sense and fix them on the eternal goods of heaven.

By invoking her as Queen of Angels, we shall enlist all heaven to help us, we shall honour the Incarnation of her Son, and shall prepare ourselves to join her company and that of the angels for all eternity.

"Holy Queen of angels,
Bid thine angels come
To escort us safely
To our heavenly home."—FABER.

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF ANGELS, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

“ As . . . Carmel by the Sea
Blooms with flowers of every hue,
So is every virtue seen
Blossoming in Carmel’s Queen.”

OUR Lady of Mount Carmel is the title under which the Church honours the Mother of God, on July the 16th. A tradition so ancient that its origin seems lost in antiquity, connects Our Blessed Lady with certain holy hermits and virgins, who served God in the fastnesses of Mount Carmel. The Carmelite archives possess a notice, written between 1247 and 1274, which states in general terms that, “from the days of Elias and Eliseus, the holy Fathers of the Old and New Dispensation dwelt on Mount Carmel,” and that after the Incarnation they built there “a chapel in honour of Our Lady, for which they were called in Papal Bulls, ‘Friars of Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel.’” Indeed, Our Lady is said to have visited her servants from

time to time, hence the origin of the title " Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

The symbolism of the title is singularly beautiful. Mount Carmel is situated in what was once one of the most fertile parts of Judea, and its slopes seem to have been noted for luxuriant vegetation even in so productive a country. The name " Carmel " means " garden," and an Eastern garden was a treasure, a most exquisite enclosure, full of flowers and herbs and aromatical spices. What more expressive emblem could there be of Mary, to whom we apply the words of the Canticle of Canticles, " My sister, my Spouse, is a garden enclosed " (iv. 12). Truly is she a garden enclosed, in which all virtues breathe forth their perfume. Truly could she say after the Incarnation, " My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the bed of aromatical spices, to feed in His garden and to gather lilies. I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me, Who feedeth among the lilies " (Canticle of Canticles vi. 1, 2). And again of Our Lady may we say, " Thy head is like Carmel . . . how beautiful art thou, how comely in delights " (*ibid.* vii. 5, 6). Again and again in Scripture we come upon references to this fruitful hill of Carmel—its fertility made it a type of country favoured by God's blessing ; and here also we find the emblem of her

who was pronounced "blessed among women." Its wooded summits and tortuous caverns formed secure hiding places for fugitives—fitting symbol of the Mother and Refuge of sinners, to whom no one has ever had recourse in vain, and who shields her guilty children from the anger of God, which they have so justly merited.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel was then dear to the hearts of the members of her Order, and it was her pleasure to show them special tokens of her affection and protection. One of the greatest of these favours was bestowed in England on an Englishman.

St Simon came of a good family in Kent ; from his twelfth year he gave himself entirely to God ; he lived in a forest in the hollow of a great oak-tree, which fact procured for him the surname "Stock." Here he served God for twenty years, until a divine revelation bade him join a certain Religious Order, lately introduced into England from Palestine. These Carmelites came from Mount Carmel, in 1205. St Simon was attracted by their penitential and contemplative life, and especially by their devotion to Our Lady. He joined their holy company in 1212, and was sent by his superiors to Oxford, in order to complete his studies. Only three years later, his reputation for sanctity was so

great, that he was elected Vicar-General, with full powers over all the Western Provinces. Later, again, he spent some years in Palestine, visiting his brethren of Mount Carmel. In 1245, St Simon was elected General of the Carmelites, and soon afterwards, whilst commending the affairs of his Order to the protection of Our Lady in these words, "O Flower of Carmel, blooming Vine, splendour of heaven, sweet Virgin Mother, all excelling, knowing not man, grant thy privilege to the Carmelites, O Star of the Sea!"—the Queen of Heaven appeared to him holding a scapular in her hands, which she gave to him with these words, "My dear son, receive the scapular of thy Order, as a sign of my confraternity, a privilege for thee and all Carmelites; whosoever dies in it, shall not suffer the fire of hell. Behold, it is a sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger, a pledge of peace, and of an everlasting covenant."

From that time, the 16th of July (the day on which Our Lady appeared to St Simon) has been kept as the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It extended only to the Carmelite Order, until, in the eighteenth century, Pope Benedict XIII. decreed that it should henceforth be kept on that date throughout the Universal Church.

Next to the devotion of the Rosary, there is

no way of honouring Our Lady so well known to Catholics, as that of wearing her scapular—commonly known as the “Brown Scapular.” The Church has granted many indulgences to all who wear it with devotion, and Mary herself promised, as we have seen, that it should be “a safeguard in danger.” That it has been so, both in the spiritual and temporal order, has been proved times without number.

No child of the Church should be content to be without this pledge of Mary’s protection. If worn out of filial love for Our Lady, it will certainly obtain for us the blessings which the Church asks for each, in conferring the scapular; that in the hour of our decease, she may “bruise the serpent’s head, who is our adversary, so that we may finally, as conquerors, obtain the palm and crown of our everlasting inheritance.”

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF DOLOURS

“ Is there one who would not weep,
 'Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold ? ”

“ THE Dolours of Mary attract us strangely, as pain and sorrow always do. The Sacred Heart of Jesus has Its thorny circlet, and the Immaculate heart of Mary is pierced by a sword. In the Gospels, little is said of the Joys of Mary, as if her Magnificat suffices, and hardly a word in mention of her glory ; but her Sorrows are not omitted, her grief swells the pathos of the life of Our Lord. Our Lady was willing that we should contemplate the greatness of her Sorrow, and has invited us to do so, because from the greatness of the sorrow we can learn the greatness of her love of Jesus, and in a way that even her humility would allow ” (Fr. Digby Best).

There are several obvious reasons for cultivating the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows just now. Thousands of parents are mourning the loss of their

children. Mothers' hearts are wrung at the thought of the sons whose faces they can never hope to see again in this world. Others suffer anxiety for the welfare of the souls of their dear ones. Others, again, see their sons return, but only to require nursing and care, which in so many cases is so difficult if not impossible to bestow. To all these the thought of Our Lady, the Mother of Sorrows, must come as solace and strength, cheering and soothing their grief-stricken hearts. With her they will learn to "stand beneath the Cross"; and with her too they will receive in due time joy proportionate to their sorrows.

There is an old tradition that, some years after her death, Our Lady appeared in company with her Son, to St John the Evangelist, who frequently pondered devoutly over her Dolours, and that in his presence Our Lady turned to Our Lord and asked Him what reward He would give to those who kept her Sorrows in remembrance. Our Lord replied that He would grant them four special graces: perfect contrition for all their sins some time before their death; a particular protection at the hour of death; that their minds should have the mysteries of the Passion deeply imprinted on them; and that Mary's prayers on their behalf should have a particular power of impetration.

Of St Catherine of Bologna it is related that when she was one day weeping bitterly over Our Lady's Sorrows, she suddenly saw seven angels weeping also and joining their tears with hers.

Our Lady's Sorrows were life-long and numberless, but Holy Church has selected seven for our special devotion: Simeon's Prophecy, the Flight into Egypt, the Three Days' Loss, the Meeting with Jesus on His way to Calvary, the Crucifixion, the Taking down from the Cross, and the Burial of Jesus. The Rosary of the Seven Dolours is a richly indulgenced devotion in honour of these seven swords which pierced the sinless heart of God's Mother. The Dolours are also embedded in the Antiphons of the Divine Office on both the Feasts, that of the Friday in Passion Week as well as the one in September, and the Missal contains that most touching Sequence, the "Stabat Mater," for the devout recitation of which an indulgence of one hundred days is attached. The Month of September has been set aside by the Church in honour of Our Blessed Lady of Sorrows. Pope Pius IX. in 1857 granted an indulgence of three hundred days, every day of the month, to all who with a contrite heart and devotion should practise this devout exercise, making use of some approved book that treats of the Sorrows of Mary.

It is perhaps the thought of the immensity of Mary's Dolours, almost more than any other, that will help us to bear bravely our share of the Cross of Christ. In comparison with what she suffered, our own troubles, great though they may be, must needs dwindle down and appear less. To Mary, the Church applies the words of Jeremias : " To what shall I compare thee ? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem ? To what shall I equal thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion ? for great as the sea is thy broken-heartedness : who shall heal thee ? " (Lam. i.). She loved most, and therefore she suffered most. Father Faber tells us that " suffering seems to be the golden coin in which Love repays our love." And Monsignor Benson pointed out another reason for Our Lady's Sorrows, when he wrote : " This is the bond which unites Mary to ourselves—not that she sang Magnificat, but that the sword pierced her own heart also. . . . She is the Mother of the redeemed because she was the Mother of Redemption. She stood by the Cross of Jesus, as she had knelt by His cradle ; and she is our Mother, then, by that very Blood by which both she and we alike are redeemed. The Mother of Sorrows must always be nearer to the human race than even the Cause of our Joy."

“Blessed,” then, “are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Such is the teaching of Our Divine Master, and we all lovingly recognise and confess that in this, as in all, the most blessed, because the most faithful and perfect sufferer, is Mary the Queen of Martyrs.

May the hand of thy Son, which wiped the tears from thine own eyes, O Mary, at thy pleading wipe them away from our own!

OUR LADY OF DOLOURS, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF MERCY

“ Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, hail ! ”

SAINT ALPHONSUS tells us that Mary “ is a Queen so sweet, clement, and so ready to help us in our miseries, that Holy Church wills that we should salute her under the title of Queen and Mother of Mercy.” Gerson, the great Chancellor of Paris, a devout client of Mary, says : “ The kingdom of God consists in power and mercy ; reserving power to Himself, He, in some way, yielded the empire of mercy to His Mother.” This is confirmed by St Thomas Aquinas, in his preface to the Canonical Epistles, where we find these words : “ When the Blessed Virgin conceived The Eternal Word in her womb, and brought Him forth, she obtained half the kingdom of God ; so that she is Queen of Mercy, as Jesus Christ is King of Justice.” St Bonaventure, paraphrasing the words of David, thus interprets them : “ Give to the King Thy

judgment, O God, and Thy Mercy to the Queen His Mother." St Bernard asks why the Church calls Mary "the Queen of Mercy"? And he replies that it is because we believe that she opens the abyss of the mercy of God to whomsoever she wills, when she wills, and as she wills, so that there is no sinner, however great, who is lost, if Mary protects him. "What fear," the Saint continues, "can the miserable have, to approach this Queen of Mercy, for she inspires no terror, and shows no severity, to those who come to her; but is all sweetness and gentleness." Saint after Saint thus speaks of this Virgin most merciful. Let us listen further to their words. Ought we not to be overawed at the majesty and holiness of this great Queen? "No," says St Gregory, "for the higher and more holy she is, the greater is her sweetness and compassion towards sinners, who have recourse to her with the desire to amend their lives." Lanspergis assures us that Our Lady "cannot send away anyone dissatisfied, who prays to her." "How," asks the humble St Bonaventure, "canst thou, O Mary, who art the Queen of Mercy, refuse to succour the miserable? And who are the subjects for mercy if not the miserable? And since thou art the Queen of Mercy, and I am the most miserable of sinners, it follows that I am the first

of thy subjects. How then, O Lady, canst thou do otherwise than exercise thy mercy on me ? ”

We read in the Scriptural account of the valiant woman, that “ the law of clemency is on her lips.” Of no woman can this be more truly said than of Our Lady. We have only seven words of hers recorded, but it is not difficult for us to picture what her kindness in speech must have been ; Mary pondered the Scriptures. She could make the words of David her own : “ How sweet, O Lord, are Thy words to my lips.” She had read in the Inspired Writings that Our God is a God of Mercy and Compassion ; that His Mercy is above all His works ; and also the injunction “ according to thy ability, be merciful.” And she, who was ever so attentive to the Will of God, pondered these things, and reproduced them in her life. Then when Our Blessed Lord became Man, His Mother fed her soul on the words which fell from His lips. More than once in the Gospels we are told, “ Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.” Do we ponder the words of God ? “ I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” “ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” We are all sinners, all weak and frail, liable to falls and mistakes ; who can measure the need we have for mercy, for kindly judgment ? And if we need it ourselves,

so do those around us need it. If we strive to obtain this merciful spirit, with how great confidence can we not turn to Our Lady with the familiar petition, "Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy upon us"? St Anselm felt such joy in the thought of Our Lady of Mercy, that he cried out, "O happy confidence, O safe refuge, the Mother of God is my Mother!" How firm, then, should be our confidence, since our salvation depends on the judgment of a good Brother and a tender Mother! "Oh, how easy," says Blessed Albert the Great, "is it for those who love Mary to find her, and to find her full of compassion and love."

In the Chronicles of the Order of St Dominic, it is related that one of the friars, named Leonard, used to recommend himself two hundred times a day to this Mother of Mercy, and that when he was attacked by his last illness, he saw a most beautiful Queen by his side, who thus addressed him: "Leonard, wilt thou die, and come and dwell with my Son and with me?" "And who art thou?" he replied. "I am," said the Most Blessed Virgin, for it was she, "I am the Mother of Mercy. Thou hast so many times invoked me, behold, I am now come to take thee. Let us go together to Paradise."

Does it not, then, behove us to be devout to this

merciful Mother. And can we not say to her with earnest hearts :

“ Get me the grace to love thee more,—
Jesus wilt give if thou wilt plead.
And, Mother, when life's cares are o'er,
Oh, I will love thee then indeed.”—FABER.

OUR LADY, MOTHER OF MERCY, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE

ST JOHN tells us that " God is love " (1 St John iv. 8) ; and the Church applies to Our Lady those words of Ecclesiasticus : " I am the Mother of fair love and of fear and knowledge and holy hope " (xxiv.). As Our Lady is the Mother of God, so is she necessarily the Mother of Love. Now love is the greatest of all the virtues. St Paul says : " Now there remain faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity " (1 Cor. xiii. 13). Love is the end for which we were created—the love of God ; and love will endure for eternity. Therefore it is that St Paul pronounces love to be greater than faith or hope, for we shall have no need of faith in heaven ; nor any need to lift up our hearts in hope, for we shall possess God Himself, the Object of all our hope. Our heaven will consist in loving and praising God. Just as here on earth our only true happiness consists in that same love. To help

us to realise this, we have only to ponder Our Lord's own words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (St Matt. xxii. 37-39).

Love, then, is our chief duty, nay it is the one in which all the others are comprised. St Augustine understood this when he said: "Love, and do what thou wilt." Now to whom can we more fittingly turn to teach us this lesson of love than to Our Lady, the Mother of fair love? No creature has ever approached the perfection wherewith she loved God while on earth, and with which she loves Him now eternally in heaven. Holy Church teaches us thus to go to Mary for love; she calls her the Fount of love.

" O thou Mother, fount of love,
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord.
Let me feel as thou hast felt,
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord."

How did Mary show and prove her love? Was it by words? None of Our Lady's recorded words are specially marked by terms of endearment, though no doubt she used them in all reverence

and affection. But she who understood so well the nature of real love, proved it by action far more than by words. St John, who had lived so long with Our Lady after the Ascension till her Assumption, had doubtless learnt from her example the best way of testifying our love for God, for he leaves us this advice in one of his epistles: "Let us love one another not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 St John iii. 18). Our Lady's love was strong as death. No one ever loved, as Mary loved Jesus. He was not only her Child, He was her God. Now, Our Lady's love was shown principally in her entire submission to God's Will: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." And "Whatever He shall say unto you, do ye." This was true devotion, true love. It entailed suffering, greater suffering than any of us are called upon to bear. Our Lady knew it, and she never faltered. When on the morning of her Purification, she took her Divine Child to the Temple, we read of St Joseph, Holy Simeon, and Anna being present, and yet it was to Our Lady only that the words "thine own soul a sword shall pierce" were uttered, and she was the best loved of that little company. Jesus did not spare His Mother; nor did she wish to be spared. She is the Mother of beautiful love, and

the love that is most fair is that which has been most tested in the crucible of sorrow ; therefore it was that “ Mary stood beneath the Cross.” Certainly no one can teach us so surely as she what it really means to love God.

“ Who would have known the way to love
Our Jesus as we ought,
If thou in varied joy or woe
Hadst not that lesson taught ? ” —FABER.

There was nothing exclusive in Mary’s love of Jesus. She loved Him so intensely that she wanted everyone else to love Him too. We can imagine her saying to us : “ Come, taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” One of her greatest consolations during the years she spent on earth after the Ascension of her Son, must have been the fact that she could help others to love Jesus. We are told that the Apostles left the Mount of the Ascension rejoicing, and can we suppose that Our Lady was wrapped up in her own sorrow at the loss of the visible presence of Jesus ?

“ Yes ! He hath left thee, Mother dear !
His throne is far above ;
How canst thou be so full of joy,
When thou hast lost thy love ?

Why do thy sweet hands not detain.
His feet upon their way ?
Oh ! why doth not the Mother speak
And bid her Son to stay ?

Ah no ! thy love is rightful love,
From all self-seeking free ;
The change that is such gain to Him
Can be no loss to thee."—FABER.

When we think that the Angel saluted Our Lady at the Annunciation with the words " Hail, full of grace ! " we are lost in wonder at the thought of the degree of love to which she must have attained at the end of her long life. No wonder she died of love. No wonder, then, that she claims the title " Mother of fair love," for from first to last she loved her Lord with the whole strength of her sinless heart. Oh, Mother of love, teach us too to love the Lord our God !

OUR LADY, MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, THE HEALTH OF THE SICK

IN the month of December 1854, the whole Catholic world was made glad by the definition of the decree which proclaimed Our Lady's Immaculate Conception to be an article of faith. Little more than three years later, that is to say, in February 1858, Our Blessed Mother herself ratified the decree, for in that year she appeared among the rocks of Massabielle, in the South of France, to Bernadette Soubirous. Eighteen times, between the 11th of February and the 25th of March, did Mary show herself to the happy little shepherdess ; three times did Our Lady whisper secrets to the innocent child, which she commanded her not to make known. But there were other messages too, and from the words of Bernadette herself to the Curé of the parish, we learn what the import of these

communications was. First, Our Lady wished people to visit the scene of the apparitions, and secondly, Mary wished them to build a church in her honour. Bernadette had faithfully delivered these messages ; but the Curé naturally and rightly desired some proof of the child's truthfulness ; and this is the account the little one gave of Our Lady's next visit. " I have seen the vision, and I said to her : ' Monsieur le Curé asks you to give some proofs, for example, to cause the rose-tree which is beneath your feet to flower, because my word does not suffice for the priests, and they are not willing to trust me.' Then she smiled, but without speaking. Then she told me to pray for sinners, and commanded me to descend even to the bottom of the grotto. And she cried out three times the words : ' Penance ! Penance ! Penance ! ' which I repeated while I drew myself on my knees to the bottom of the grotto."

At last, on the Feast of the Annunciation, the final apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes to Bernadette took place. As on all former occasions, she was surrounded with light and of surpassing splendour and sweetness. Covered with a veil, her robe whiter than dazzling snow fell around her. Two roses, full blown and of the colour of purest gold, were over her feet. Her girdle was blue as the

firmament. Bernadette in ecstasy forgot all but the beauty she saw before her. "Oh, my Lady," she said, "will you have the goodness to tell me who you are, and what is your name?" The Church in her Office was chanting joyfully, "Hail, full of grace! Hail, full of grace!" But the Apparition was silent and only smiled sweetly on the upturned face of the child. Four times did Bernadette repeat her question, and then at last, Our Lady, unjoining her hands in which a rosary was clasped, and raising her arms towards heaven, as if to shower blessings upon the earth, said with an accent of unspeakable love and gratitude: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Then the vision disappeared.

Now, what is the lesson Our Lady of Lourdes, the Health of the Weak, has taught us in these latter days? Is it not the hatefulness of sin? True, the healing waters of Lourdes have given health and strength to thousands of invalids, so that fitly we may apply these words of Isaias to this chosen sanctuary of Mary: there "shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf man be unstopped"; there "shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free; for waters are broken out in the desert, and streams in the wilderness" (Is. xxxv.). But how much

more does Our Lady of Lourdes do for the souls of those who have recourse to her. Is it not chiefly for those who are spiritually blind, or deaf or weak, that she lifts up her sinless hands in prayer? The fact of her having used the words "Penance! Penance! Penance!" to little Bernadette, shows us for whom her Mother's heart is yearning. Those whose lukewarmness and love of pleasure cause them to languish in many diseases of the soul, even though they may not have turned against her Son and crucified Him by mortal sin; those who on account of past sin, feel the weakness which it has left in their souls; those who are paralysed in God's service by unfilial fear; those who are languid and weary, ready almost to give up the struggle;—to all these Our Lady stretches forth her hands in order to heal and strengthen. See how tenderly she helps the weak as though she, as well as St Paul, would assure us: "Who is weak and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. xi. 29); and yet she is the strong and valiant woman "who stood by the Cross of Jesus." She makes herself all to all, pitying our infirmity, be it of body or of soul. She who is sinless, has compassion for the faults and failings of our daily lives; she can uphold us in temptation so that our weakness shall not be overcome. Let us then go to her

and cast our weakness on to her strength, firm in the knowledge that this kind Mother will show to us, as to others, that she is truly—the Health of the Weak.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF GOOD SUCCESS

THIS is a title under which Our Lady is sometimes invoked, and she has been pleased to grant many favours to those who place their petitions before her, and call on her to bring their undertakings to a successful conclusion. It is a title which speaks to us of confidence and humility, on our side, and of motherly care on hers. So often in life we feel as though, humanly speaking, success were impossible. It may be only in small things, or in greater things affecting ourselves ; it may be in very important affairs, concerning the welfare of many. But no matter what the particular need is, we all of us naturally desire that our work should turn out successfully. Failure is a hard word,—we do not like to face it. True, failure may be, and most often is, an immense blessing from God. Our Lord chose apparent failure for His earthly portion. Who among the lookers-on, that first

Good Friday, would have reckoned Our Lord's death as anything but a most signal failure? One poor thief, and a centurion, are the only two conversions we read of as the outcome of the greatest sacrifice the world can ever know. Yet, in spite of Our Lord's acceptance of what the world calls failure, we know that it is natural to our nature to love success. We wish for it instinctively, and it requires a great grace from God, to make us accept failure, not with resignation only, but as a special token of God's love. We will put aside for the moment the thought of failure, and think rather of the success to which we may link Our Lady's name,—the success for which we may confidently look for at her hands, if we do our best, and leave results to her.

In the first place, then, we want our lives to be successful; this is the most important thing of all. Whether we excel in this particular virtue or in that, whether we attain to this degree of perfection or to one not quite so exalted; whether we work our way to heaven by this path or by that, one thing we must attain, and that is, that our lives shall be a success great enough for us to hear Our Lord saying to us at death, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Surely Our Lady of Good

Success will not fail to take this cause into her hands, if we will allow her, and bring it to a happy issue.

Then, again, it may be that we seem to be struggling in vain against some besetting fault. It seems no use. A hopeless case, as we should say. Do we ever think of betaking ourselves to Our Lady, and asking her to give us the success we long for in the fight? She can obtain grace for us by her prayers. Our success or our failure means a great deal to her. For is she not our Mother? And what mother is there who is indifferent to the welfare of her child?

Again, it may be that we shall find ourselves in circumstances which seem, of themselves, to put an obstacle to all success. It may be that we live far from church, or among those who have no love for our holy religion. And we ask ourselves, "How can my spiritual life possibly be successful under such conditions?"

Or, it may be that we are hindered by this circumstance, or by that, from following that which, after much prayer, we know to be God's call to us. It seems as though there were no possibility of our being able to follow our vocation. But let us remember our Mother. If we place our troubles in her hands, with the confidence of children, there

is no doubt but that she will bring all round to a successful end. There is a story told of a young priest (some think it was St Albert the Great), who had no aptitude whatever for preaching. It seemed to be beyond his powers altogether. He studied and practised, wrote out his sermons with the utmost care, and did all he could to ensure success, but the result was always the same. He broke down whenever he began to preach. The worst of it was, that he was a Dominican, and, as one of the great works of the Order is preaching, the poor young friar thought he would be quite a useless member. At last he remembered Our Lady, and prayed to her earnestly. She appeared to him, and told him that he would henceforth have no more trouble in preaching; "but," she added, "that you may know that it is a gift I have obtained for you from my Son, the power will be entirely taken away from you three years before your death." From that day, the young Dominican was the best preacher in the province, and his eloquence won many a heart to God. Years afterwards, he was one day delivering a sermon on Our Lady, in a church crowded with people; suddenly he lost the thread of his discourse, all power of language failed him, and remembering Our Lady's words, he told his story to the people, and then left the pulpit

for ever, and spent the next three years in preparation for death.

This example may serve to show us that Our Lady is willing to obtain, not only spiritual, but natural gifts for us. Do we want to succeed in our studies? Let us place them, as did the great St Thomas, under the protection of Our Mother. Do we want to pass an examination? Again let us ask Our Lady to help us. Whatever be our need, let us place it in her hands, saying with filial confidence :

“ Our Lady, Our Queen, Our Mother, in the name of Jesus, and for the love of Jesus, we beseech thee to take our cause in hand, and to grant it good success.”

OUR LADY OF GOOD SUCCESS, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

YESTERDAY we were thinking of Our Lady of Good Success, and we saw how willing she is to take our cause in hand, to help us in our need, to bring our undertakings to a successful and happy issue. We feel confident that with her, we are safe, and the chief reason of our confidence is, because we made our request "in the Name of Jesus, and for the love of Jesus." That is an appeal she cannot resist. The sweet Name of Jesus is an all-powerful plea. Is not He her Son, her beloved One, her God? Can she possibly refuse to hear prayers addressed to her in His Name? For is she not the Mother of Christ, the Mother of Jesus? We use the words almost as if we would force Our Blessed Lady to hear and answer us "in the Name of Jesus, and for the love of Jesus," but it is undoubtedly a force

to which she delights to be subjected. It reminds her of those days at Nazareth, those blissful days of the thirty years in which Jesus and Mary lived in such intimate and unbroken familiarity. They were Mother and Son, the most loving Mother and the most loving Son the world can ever see. St Joseph shared the little home for many years, guarding the Mother and the Son, yet never intruding upon their loving intercourse ; ever effacing himself and silently standing in the background, until the Son and the Mother would repay him by the most loving attentions and care. After the death of St Joseph, the intercourse between Jesus and Mary must have been still more intense, still more intimate. Even when the thirty years were finished, and Jesus left His Mother to fulfil the Will of His Eternal Father, we may be sure that He visited her from time to time, and that she would follow Him from place to place, yearning to minister to Him still, and to feast her eyes on His beauty as of yore.

“ Yes, Mother of Christ, Mother of Christ,
He was all in all to thee ;
In the winter's cave, in Nazareth's home,
In the hamlets of Galilee.”—S.M.X.

He was “ all in all ” to her. The very light of her eyes, the Child of her love, her Son, her Beloved,

her King ; nay, even her very God Himself. And it is in His Name, and for His love, that we ask her protection and her help. Let us ask, then, and ask confidently.

Again, in the words of the hymn we know so well, we may each say to her :—

“ He will not say nay to thee ;
When He lifts His face to thy sweet embrace,
Speak to Him, Mother, of me.”—S.M.X.

But we have our part to do. And this too is expressed in the words “ in the Name of Jesus, and for the love of Jesus.” In order to thus present our petition, our request must be a worthy one. We are sure of petitions for spiritual graces being worthy, but possibly God may see that at that particular time, such a grace is not befitting us, we are not perhaps well enough prepared. Still we know that if that particular grace is not given to us immediately, God will certainly bestow other spiritual gifts upon us. Thus we can always ask confidently in His Name for the grace we desire. But when we come to petition for merely natural things, the case is not quite the same. Take for instance, the example of praying for success in an examination. Why do we want to come off brilliantly ? Is it that we may obtain some post

that we think God wishes us to fill? Is it to give pleasure to our parents? Is it perhaps that we may be able to earn a salary sufficient to help our parents? Again, is it for the good of our country, to obtain a commission in the army, for example? Or in the case of a doctor or a nurse, to benefit their fellow-men? Or is it merely self, that we have in view? That others may think us clever, that we may obtain the first place, and thus triumph over so and so? There is a great difference in these motives. The first set are all good and excellent, and we may confidently place our cause in Our Lady's hands "in the Name of Jesus, and for the love of Jesus." But the second set of motives is unworthy, and we cannot couple them with the Holy Name of Jesus. Thus we see that the purity of our intention makes all the difference. If we can go to Our Lady, and say to her sincerely,

" I will love thy Son with the whole of my strength,
My only King shall He be " (S.M.X.),

and this whether our petition is answered or not, we may be quite certain that the Mother of Jesus will plead with her Son, and that all will be well with us. Then can each one of us be sure, that she will finally grant the last petition of all, and that

OUR LADY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST 71

when the end comes, we shall obtain the answer
to our prayer,

“ When the voyage is o’er, oh, stand on the shore,
And show Him at last to me.”—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, MOTHER OF CHRIST, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

THIS is one of the more recent titles of Our Lady. It was approved by our late Holy Father Pius X., who is known as the Pope of the Eucharist. We all know how he strove in every way to foster devotion to Our Lord in His Sacramental Life. Was it not he who issued in 1905 the Decree on Daily Communion, urging on all alike, the desire of Christ to be united to each one of us? Was it not he who, shortly after the publication of this decree, issued another concerning the Communion of little children? "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," were the words of the Divine Master; and Pope Pius published them far and wide, calling even tiny children to communion with their Lord. It is not surprising, then, to be told that this same venerable Pontiff should have added one more to the titles of Our Lady,

and should have greeted her as “ Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.”

We cannot exclude the Mother when honouring the Son, for “ How can we rightly love thy Son, sweet Mother, if we love not thee? ” and indeed the title seems only what we should naturally expect to be bestowed on her. We may well be grateful that we are privileged to live in the days of Daily Communion, and that Our Lady is given to us under this new title to teach us how to cherish and use our privilege.

Some holy writers think that Our Lady was present in the Cenacle at the Last Supper, not indeed in the Upper Room with Our Lord and the Apostles, but in a smaller apartment on the same floor, and that she, with the holy women who accompanied her, received their First Communion, as did the Apostles, from the Hands of Our Lord Himself. Be this as it may, it is certain that Our Lady received Holy Communion frequently during the long fifteen years that she lived after the Ascension of her Son. We are familiar with pictures of her receiving the Sacred Host from the hands of St John at Ephesus ; and it is a pious belief that the Sacred Species remained unconsumed in her heart from one communion to another, so that she was never without the actual Sacramental

Presence of Jesus. Truly might they have named her, then as now, "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament."

There is another thought suggested by this title ; that of the care and custody Our Lady has for the honour of her Son in His Eucharistic Life. It seems as though in His great love for us Our Lord has thrown aside all honour, as though He would have none of it, if only He can make Himself accessible to us, if only He can draw us to come to Him. He hides His Majesty, His glory, and His power, nay He hides even His Humanity ; He puts Himself at our mercy, as it were. He endures even insult and sacrilege that He may be united to the poor human hearts He loves so well. Therefore is it that His Mother yearns to help us to prepare ourselves for His visits. No one knows so well as she what He desires our preparation and thanksgiving to be ; no one realises as she does what is befitting Our Divine Guest. To whom then can we turn with more complete trust than to Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament ? If we ask her, she will prepare our hearts for Him, she will kindle within us faith and trust ; she will share with us her own love ; she will speak to us of humility and desire until our cold hearts are warmed and we long for the coming of our King. Then,

OUR LADY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT 75

when we are united to Him, when we bear Him in our hearts, she with us will offer Him both praise and thanks, and our prayers united to hers will sound like music in the ears of Him Whom we love. For her dear sake He will answer our petitions more readily, and will fill our souls more abundantly with His grace.

Let us then call on Our Lady under this title which must be so dear to her ; let us give her charge of our preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion ; let us love to remind her that the honour of her Divine Son is involved whenever we invoke her as Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.

“ Had I but Mary’s sinless heart
To love Thee with, my dearest King,
Oh ! with what bursts of fervent praise
Thy goodness, Jesus, would I sing.”

OUR LADY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT,
PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE MOTHER MOST ADMIRABLE

IN the Convent of the Sacred Heart at the Trinita dei Monti, Rome, there is a sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady under the title of "Mater Admirabilis." This sanctury is visited by crowds of pilgrims, and many and great are the favours Our Lady bestows there.

The fresco of Mater Admirabilis was painted on the wall of the convent by a postulant who was seeking admission to the Order of the Sacred Heart. It was intended at first merely to satisfy the devotion of the nuns, who desired to keep before their eyes the model of all industry, the Most Holy Virgin Mary. From the religious, however, the devotion passed rapidly to the pupils of the convent, and indeed the painting represents Our Lady spinning flax within the precincts of the Temple,

at the age of fifteen years, fitting Pattern indeed of all who are passing through their time of maidenhood.

In October 1846, Pope Pius IX. was visiting the convent, and stopped to pray before the fresco and to solemnly bless it. "It was a pious thought," he said, "to represent the Most Holy Virgin at an age when she seems to have been forgotten." Mary has since proved by innumerable favours that she is well pleased with this thought. That very year, 1846, a missionary priest from Oceania recovered his voice at the feet of Mater Admirabilis, after having been deprived of the use of it for twenty-one months. In a transport of gratitude, he besought the Holy Father to allow him to celebrate Mass before the fresco, and from that day the favoured cloister became a real sanctuary.

It is particularly as a model of girlhood that Our Blessed Lady is honoured under the title of Mater Admirabilis. One of our hymns describes very beautifully both the representation and its symbolism :—

"Thou hast many portraits, Mother,
All of them are dear to us,
But our girlhood chiefly loves thee
In thy girlhood's beauty thus,
And thy sweetest title this,
Mater Admirabilis."—S.M.X.

What a model to us all Our Lady's life in the Temple is. What sweeter example could be taken to show us the virtues of girlhood, than that of the young Jewish maiden, who had already vowed her virginity and her life to God.

“Near thee blooms the spotless lily,
Emblem of thy brightest grace,
And thy sinless soul is shining
In thy modest downcast face :
Make us like to thee in this,
Mater Admirabilis.”—S.M.X.

We have to keep our souls unspotted in the midst of a sinful world. We have to remember that we are Mary's children, and that we must not dishonour our Mother. There is so much forwardness among young girls nowadays, that we are apt to forget the quiet, retiring spirit which is the honour of our sex ; yet Mary in the Temple is still our model, however much the so-called rights of women may be flaunted before us by the worldly. Shall we not try to follow in the footsteps of our Queen ?

Yet another danger of the present day is love of pleasure ; and here again Mary pleads with us by her example.

“Open book and distaff tell us
Thou hast laboured too, as we ;
Let our hand and mind, sweet Mother,
Work for Jesus and for thee.
Make us thine, and therefore His,
Mater Admirabilis.”—S.M.X.

The years of our girlhood pass rapidly enough ; shall we not try to live them for, and to fill them with, another and a worthier object than mere pleasure ? Not that many of life's pleasant things are wrong—God forbid ! but a mere ceaseless round of gaiety and worldly amusements cannot possibly fit us for the serious duties of life ; nor can we expect such things to make us happy or admirable in any way ! No, rather will we foster in ourselves a love of work befitting one who is to take her place in the world as a thoroughly devoted Catholic woman ; rather will we strive to pass our girlhood under the direct protection of Our Blessed Lady, saying to her with all our hearts :—

“ Gentle Mother, to thy keeping
Take our wayward maidenhood,
Make us pass our years of training
As thou meanest that we should.
Let us not thy graces miss,
Mater Admirabilis.”—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, MOTHER MOST ADMIRABLE,
PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”—Apoc. ii. 10.

HOLY Scripture tells us that “a faithful friend is a strong defence,” and that “he that hath found him hath found a treasure” (Ecclus. vi.). Thus it is that Mary has become a treasure most precious to us all, for her fidelity is equalled only by her love. She is the faithful Virgin who never swerved from the Will of her Lord. She is the faithful Mother, who stood by the Cross of Jesus. The faithful Queen who, because of her fidelity, rules over saints and angels.

Our Lady is most faithful to God—most faithful to us. And who does not know that constant fidelity is a proof of love? Now, all that we know of Mary shows us how completely faithful she was to God. At the time of the Annunciation, she was greeted

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL 81

by the Angel, "Hail, full of grace!" What does this imply? Simply Our Lady's absolute fidelity to each grace as it came to her. Thus grace was added to grace in her soul. She never let one slip, never passed by a single grace unheeded, and this all through her childhood and girlhood. Mary was sent at the age of three years to the Temple, and there she served God in perfect fidelity. At prayer, at work, in conversation, in study, the faithful Virgin was always attentive to God's Will. She learnt to know God in prayer, and knowing Him, she trusted Him fully. This trust was the ground of her fidelity.

After the Annunciation, Our Lady, we can well imagine, would have liked to remain in retirement at Nazareth, but she knew it was God's Will that she should go and comfort her cousin St Elizabeth, and so with prompt and cheerful fidelity, she set off on her journey. "Mary rose with haste and went into the hill country" (St Luke i. 39). Again, we might have supposed that Mary would be exempt from the edict, which ordered every Jew to be enrolled in his own city. There were many good reasons why that journey need not have been taken. But Mary was faithful. She saw the Will of God in the Emperor's decree, and therefore without hesitation she went to Bethlehem. Later, at the

time of her Purification, she knew perfectly well that she was exempt from the law which bound other Jewish women, but she would take no excuse for herself, and so we read of her, that she took Jesus to the Temple, "to present Him to the Lord . . . and to offer a sacrifice according to the law" (St Luke ii. 22, 24). Think how faithfully she sought Our Blessed Lord, when, without any fault of hers, He was lost for three days. And when she had found Him, with what loving and solicitous fidelity would she not minister to Him, faithful to His slightest word, on the look out to follow and perform even His unspoken wishes. Did not the constant, daily faithfulness of those thirty years prepare Our Lady for the great test of her fidelity during the Passion of her Son? "Mary stood beneath the Cross." She stood, strong in her power of endurance, strong to fulfil God's Will, strong to bear her grief, faithful to the end. O Virgin most faithful, wilt thou not obtain for us some measure of thine own fidelity! We are placed over few things, it is true, in comparison with thee; but does not thy Son say to us, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater"? Let us at least beg of Mary to obtain for us that firm trust in God which was the foundation of all her fidelity. Does she not say to us,

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL 83

“ Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye ” ? We may not always understand God’s Will concerning us, but neither did Our Lady. For we read that when Our Lord told Mary and Joseph that He “ must be about His Father’s business,” they “ understood not the word that He spoke to them ” ; but His Mother “ kept all these words in her heart,” waiting His own time of explanation, and meantime neglecting none of those things which she already knew to be His Will. We can imitate our Mother in this. We can be faithful to the daily grace and the daily duty. And who can know the treasure of merit that is acquired by this constant fidelity in small things as in great ? It is certainly a test of love, and one in which we may rely on the help of the faithful Virgin, Mother of God. For Our Lady is faithful to her children. “ Forsake her not, and she shall keep thee ; love her, and she shall preserve thee.” Oh, most faithful Virgin, obtain for us this fidelity, that so at last, we may hear from the lips of thy Son, “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over few things, I will place thee over many. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

OUR LADY, VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE

IN the famous church of the Gesù in Rome, there is a celebrated picture which goes by the name of the "Madonna della Strada," "Our Lady of the Wayside." It is surrounded by numerous ex-votos, testifying to the gratitude of those who have sought Our Lady's help and have not sought in vain.

The title, "Our Lady of the Wayside," is a suggestive one. It speaks to us of a Mother ever at hand to guide and protect. When we kneel in prayer before a statue of Our Lady, either in church or in our homes, we in a certain sense expect her to help us ; to listen to our prayers ; to cast upon us those merciful eyes of hers. But there is more than this expressed in the title we are now considering. We are all pilgrims making our way to our heavenly home, joyous at times, weary and footsore at others, ready often to sink beneath the burden and give up our journey. Times of prayer

refresh us ; it if were not for prayer, and the strength received from the Sacraments, we could not face the road we have to travel. But if we would reach our goal, continue we must. And it is just when the journey seems intolerable, that Our Lady comes to meet us, thus showing us that she is truly " Our Lady of the Wayside." Her tenderness consoles us, her smile lightens our burden, and her help gives us strength to walk on in the ways of God.

" Mother, Mother, I am coming
Home to Jesus and to thee,
But my country's hills are distant,
And their light I cannot see.
Mother, hearken as I pray,
Meet me on my homeward way,
Meet me, Mother mine, to-day."—S.M.X.

Many thoughts of Our Lady's life are connected with the wayside. We remember her first journey, when immediately after the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, Mary " rising up went into the hill country " (St Luke i. 39), she and her Divine Son hallowing the roads and paths they traversed. It was spring-time, and the beauty of the flowers and foliage must have intensified the longing she had to behold the human beauty of her Son, Who was the Creator of the lovely world around her. Is it any wonder that the gladness of

that young Mother's heart broke forth into song and gave us her Magnificat ?

Six months later we have another journey. This time the roads are cold and bleak ; the days short and dark ; the way long and weary. But Our Lady does not hesitate, and blesses thereby our rough journey through life. In winter as in spring, in sunshine and in storm, she is always Our Lady of the Wayside.

“ Oftentimes my skies are clouded,
I can see nor sun nor star,
And the road is rough and narrow,
And the end seems very far :
Lest perchance my feet should stray,
Meet me, Mother, on my way,
Meet me, Mother mine, to-day.”—S.M.X.

A short time after Our Lord's birth we see our Mother again by the wayside ; this time on her way to Egypt with St Joseph and her Divine Son. The Holy Family must often have stopped to rest by the roadside or under the few trees to be found in the oasis of the desert. What must not the hardships of this journey have been ? The desert is not a pleasant place to travel through. Our Lady must have suffered both from the burning sun by day, and the chill winds of the night ; but her Son wished her to travel thus in His company, that our journey through life might be made easier for us,

that we might not give up hope, when the heat of temptation oppresses us, or the cold blasts of trial chill our hearts. All Our Lady's troubles on those journeys to and from Egypt were forgotten because of the Presence of Jesus. If we ask her earnestly, will she not obtain the same grace for us ?

“ I must cross the burning desert,
I shall thirst, O Mother mine ;
Fill thy vessel at the Fountain
Of thy Son's sweet Heart Divine :
Lest I faint upon the way,
Tender Mother, stoop, I pray,
Give my soul to drink to-day.”—S.M.X.

In the mystery of the Three Days Loss we have again a picture of Our Lady of the Wayside. Up and down the streets she wandered with St Joseph seeking the Child of her heart. How often must she have questioned the passers-by : “ Tell me, I beseech thee, where is my Beloved. I sought Him and I found Him not ” (Cant. iii. 2). If we remind her of her anguish on this occasion and of her joy when she found Him, and could say : “ I have found Him Whom my soul loveth, I hold Him and I will not let Him go ” (Cant. iii. 4), may we not be sure that Our Lady will meet us and turn our steps from the paths of sin by which only we can lose Jesus, and help us to persevere in the love of her Son.

Lastly, Our Lady of the Wayside comes before us in the Passion. Think of her there at the bend of the road, waiting for Jesus, Who is coming weighed down beneath the Cross which He is carrying for love of us. What were the thoughts of her heart then? She was not allowed to console Him, or to help Him, but when we go to her in trouble, her one care is to comfort and sustain us, so that we can say with confidence: "O Mother of the Wayside, be with us throughout our journey, for all thy ways are beautiful, and all thy paths are peace."

OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF PEACE

QUITE recently, since the outbreak of the Great War, this title of Our Lady has been added by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV., to her Litany. Now we close the titles of endearment under which we invoke her in that prayer by the words "Queen of Peace, pray for us." The reason is obvious, and the special peace for which the Vicar of Christ bids us lift up our hearts and call on Mary is the concord among nations for which we hope and long. It behoves us to be mindful of the wishes of the Supreme Pontiff, and especially during this Month of May, to call on Our Lady, the Queen of Peace.

It is not only at a special time of stress and sorrow such as the present that the title of Our Lady of Peace is put before us by the Church. In more than one of the collects for the Feasts of the Mother of God, for instance, in those of her Nativity and her

Visitation, the Liturgy prays that by the intercession of Mary we may obtain an increase of peace ; and what is this but bidding us look on her as the Mother of Peace. So also in the Little Office of Our Lady at Matins we find the invocation : “ Through the Virgin Mother of God, may the Lord grant us salvation and peace.” As Jesus is the Prince of Peace, so is Mary, His Mother, the Queen of Peace. Our Lady is the Mother of Peace also because the birth of her Divine Son was to bring peace on earth to men of good will. St Epiphanius says that “ heavenly peace was once for all given to the world by Mary.” And Blessed Albert the Great, in writing of her, makes her say : “ I am that dove of Noah which brought the olive branch of universal peace to the Church.” Again, the rainbow seen by St John, which encircled the throne of God, was an express figure of Mary. “ And there was a rainbow about the throne ” (Apoc. i.) St Bernadine of Siena tells us “ it was of this rainbow that God spoke when He promised Noah that He would place it in the clouds as a sign of peace, that on looking at it He might remember the eternal peace which He had covenanted to man.” Mary, continues the Saint, is this bow of eternal peace, for as God on seeing it remembers the peace promised to the earth, so does He, at the prayers of Mary, forgive the crimes of sinners, and confirm

His peace with them. "Mary is the great peace-maker," writes Cardinal Hugo, "who finds and obtains, the reconciliation of enemies with God, pardon for sinners, and mercy for those who are in despair. Therefore was she called by the Divine Bridegroom in the Canticle 'beautiful as the tents of Solomon' (Cant. i. 4). In the tents of David, questions of war alone were treated, but in those of Solomon only questions of peace were entertained; and thus does Holy Scripture give us to understand that this Mother of Mercy never treats of war and vengeance against sinners, but only of peace and forgiveness for them."

Now what is this spiritual peace of which Our Lord spoke so often, and of which Our Lady is the Queen? It is one of the great fruits of the Holy Ghost. It is God's peace. "My peace I give to you, My peace I leave to you; not as the world giveth do I give to you" (St John xiv. 27); and St Paul is speaking of this same precious fruit when he says: "May the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your minds and hearts in Christ Jesus Our Lord."

What must have been the ever-flowing fount of peace in the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady? There, there was no sin, no slightest deviation from the Will of God; and it is in the absence of sin and

the complete submission to our Creator, that our only true peace consists. If we would have rest and peace of heart, then must we conform ourselves to the Will of God. This is where Our Lady of Peace can help us. She can teach us to keep our souls free from sin. She can obtain grace for us, in all our difficulties, to echo her own words which brought peace to her own soul and peace to us all : " Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word."

O Mother of Peace, give us the peace for which we long ; peace with God, peace with others, peace with ourselves ; and by thy powerful prayers maintain peace in the Church of God. Lift up thy sinless hands in prayer for the storm-tossed world, that at last thy Son may have pity, and calm the waves of tribulation that threaten to destroy us, with the words, " Peace, be still."

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

“ Be of all my friends the best and dearest,
Be my Counsellor sincere and true ;
In all my doubts I fly to thee for guidance,
Mother, tell me what I am to do.”

WHO does not know the picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel ? The original representation is a fresco, which was miraculously detached from the wall of a church in Scutari, and which under the form of a thin cloud passed through the door of the church, crossed the Adriatic, and finally rested upon a low wall in an unfinished church at Genazzano, near Rome. “ The fresco, which is about the thickness of a penny piece, remains standing on this low wall, upon which it descended in the fifteenth century. It was unsupported on either side then, and thus it has remained to this day. This is of course concealed by the framework of the altar which enshrines the miraculous fresco,

but this can be removed and the picture may be seen in its original position. There is a story told of a certain Cardinal, who would not believe that the picture remained unsupported, and came to Genazzano provided with the necessary authorisation for making a thorough investigation. The heavy framework was removed, and the Cardinal was then able to judge for himself as to the truth of the statement that the detached fresco remains unsupported on either side. Pope Urban VIII., who set himself so resolutely against the sanctioning in any way of miraculous stories, resting on no sufficient foundation, came to the sanctuary at Genazzano in 1630, on purpose that he might pray before this picture" (Northcote's *Shrines of the Madonna*). The devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel went on increasing. In 1779, the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved a proper Office to be used by all the Augustinian Order. Pontiffs after Pontiffs have given proofs of their love, by their gifts to the Sanctuary at Genazzano. Pope Pius IX., following in the footsteps of his predecessors, used to gather his household daily round a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, for the devotions of the Month of May. Pope Leo XIII. added the invocation "Mother of Good Counsel, pray for us" to the Litany. This was towards the end

of his Pontificate, but long before, he had had himself enrolled in a confraternity of Our Lady under this title. Thus we see that Christ's Vicars upon earth have sought light and guidance from the Mother whose "thoughts are more vast than the sea," and whose "counsels more deep than the great ocean" (Ecclus. xxiv.).

Many of the saints have put themselves under the guidance of Our Lady, and shall we be less wise ?

"The way is dark, the way is long,
And we who tread it weak and blind,
And great the risk if we go wrong,
And hard again the path to find."—S.M.X.

There is so much folly in the world, such evil counsel given, many wrong views entertained, such a spirit of worldliness to be found everywhere. Is not this the reason why Our Lady is put before us as that wise and good Counsellor to whom we shall do well to have recourse ?

"The world is bright, the world is fair,
It shows the false as if the true,
And we are dazzled by the glare,
Unless thou tell us what to do.
We cry to thee in doubt and fear,
Then, prudent Mother, stoop to hear :
Ah ! whisper as a Mother should
Thy loving Counsel, wise and good."—S.M.X.

There is plenty of advice to be had in the world. People give it freely right and left, and often on matters about which they know nothing, and about which their opinion has neither been asked or desired. It is not so with Our Lady. She only advises us when we turn to her and ask her help. She draws her knowledge of our need from her Son. The picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel is symbolical of this.

“Thou hast not far the word to seek,
Eternal Wisdom to thee clings;
Thy face is pressed against His cheek,
His lips are breathing happy things.”—S.M.X.

Our Lady is ready to receive all who need her. The Book of Wisdom tells us that she goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her” (Wisd. vi.), that is, such as are not too wilful and headstrong to be counselled and advised. And to those who love to seek their Mother and beg her help in their doubts and perplexities, Holy Scripture says: “She is easily seen by those who love her, and is found by them that seek her” (Wisd. vi. 13).

To her, then, under the sweet title of Our Lady of Good Counsel, let us have recourse through life, that we may arrive safely under her guidance at our eternal home.

“ Oh ! ever till the goal is won,
In doubt and danger counsel thus,
Still whisper of us to thy Son,
And speak His answer back to us.”—S.M.X.

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION, THE COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED

“ To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee
do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in
this vale of tears.”

SURELY this title of Our Lady appeals to us all. We cannot pass through life without sorrow, and for this reason Holy Church bids us call on Mary from this valley of tears that she may cast upon us her eyes of mercy. And truly Our Lady never fails to comfort. The compassion of her Mother's heart goes out to her suffering children. “ There is no one amongst the saints in heaven,” says St Antoninus, “ whose heart is capable of compassionating our sufferings, like the heart of the ever Blessed Virgin.” To our Lady of Consolation, then, we can turn in all our sorrows.

“ Mother of God, let my poor love
A mother's prayers and pity move ;
Look at us, Mother Mary ! see
How piteously we look to thee.”—FABER.

Was it not in order that she might become the Mother of all afflicted souls that "a sword pierced her own heart"? Was it not again to be our consolation that Our Lord bequeathed His Mother to us from the Cross? Again, we always find that the truest sympathy comes to us from those who have themselves suffered. Therefore Mary, who is pre-eminently the Queen of Martyrs and the Mother of Sorrows, has a most certain right to be, above all other creatures, the Comforter of the Afflicted. With the one exception of sin, there is no sorrow that Mary has not felt. "Like Jesus, she has borne the weight of the punishment of sin, she has felt all its bitterness on Calvary. Full well she knows the anguish which can rend the heart, the anxiety which can torture the mind, the sufferings which can crush the body." Of her it is said: "My sorrow is above all sorrow, and my heart mourneth within me" (Jer. viii. 18). Whatever our sorrow is, how deep soever the affliction which befalls us, Our Lady can and will comfort us, if only we will turn to her. It is well for us to dwell on this thought of the boundless compassion of the heart of our Mother. It was for our sakes that God willed Our Lady to suffer so intensely.

“ Mother of God, He broke thy heart
That it might wider be,
That in the vastness of its love
There might be room for me.”—FABER.

Yes! there is room for us all in the heart of the Mother of God. The world may be plunged in grief; thousands, nay, tens of thousands, of people may be suffering unutterable woe, as indeed they are to-day, and yet the heart of our sinless Mother has compassion for all and comfort for all. Do we mourn the loss of those we love? Mary gave up her Son Who was her All; she loved Him as never mother loved her son; no loss of ours can ever compare with the loss she felt when the dead Body of Jesus was placed in her arms; therefore none can comfort us with the true love of sympathy as Mary can. How often, if we go to her, she will show us that what seems such a misfortune to us, is in reality a great blessing. If we have lost riches, she will show us how they might have proved a snare; she will lead us to Nazareth, and from that humble home will prove to us that we can find happiness in our poverty. Have we lost a friend? Mary will whisper that Jesus can take the place of all to us. “ Whosoever finds Jesus finds a good

treasure, yea, good above all goods" (*Imit.* II. viii.). Do we suffer from others? Mary can pour into our hearts the sweetness and strength of her own heart, so that we may learn to rejoice to suffer something in union with Our Lord. Are we in mental anguish? We have but to approach Our Mother and unite our grief to hers, and borne with the help of her motherly care even this can become bearable. Thus in all our sorrows we can look to Mary, sure of her help, certain that to us, as to all who have gone before us and who have called upon her help, she will indeed prove herself to be the Mother of Consolation.

And can we not try afar off to imitate Our Lady in this office of consoling and helping? There is often much we can do for those around us. A kind word, a kind smile, even a look sometimes, will lift a load from those who are in trouble and enable them to bear up more bravely. Surely we can do this in honour of our Mother; and then, perhaps, she will help us further and teach us to try to comfort even the Sacred Heart of her Son, by our reparation and our love. Truly, if we do this, the heart of Mary will be more than ever eager to console us in our own time of affliction and of trial.

OUR LADY'S MONTH

“ Sojourners in this vale of tears,
To thee, blest Advocate, we cry,
Pity our sorrows, calm our fears,
And soothe with hope our misery.
Refuge in grief, Star of the Sea,
Pray for the mourner, pray for me.”

OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE CAUSE OF OUR JOY

WHY is our Lady called the Cause of our Joy? Is it not because God waited for her consent to become the Mother of Jesus, and Mary said: "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word," and straightway the stupendous miracle of the Incarnation took place: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." This, then, is why Our Lady is to all mankind the Cause of Joy.

Joy is the second of the twelve beautiful fruits of the Holy Ghost. Now Our Lady possessed all these gifts and fruits in a far greater measure than any other mere creature ever has or can. She even tells us of her own joy: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." We see here at once her joy and the secret of it. Our Lady did not rejoice in herself, but in God. "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I

will joy in God my Jesus" (Hab. iii. 18). That was the ever-flowing fountain of Mary's joy. How often must she have felt the truth of those words of Holy Writ: "Joy is come to me from the Holy One" (Bar. iv. 22). He was her joy and her gladness. His joy welled up in her heart, and so it is that Holy Church says to our Mother: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel" (Judith xv.); and again in her Litany: "Cause of our joy, pray for us."

"Cause of all our gladness,
Make us glad in Him,
Fill our hearts with fervour,
Fill them to the brim."—FABER.

We remember the first public miracle which is recorded of Our Lord. It was in Cana of Galilee, and the "Mother of Jesus was there." Now what was the occasion? It was a wedding feast. Our Lord and His Mother accepted the invitation to the marriage. A wedding is a joyful occasion. Among the Jews the festivities were kept up for some days; but it was evidently to the principal banquet that Jesus and Mary were invited. Now what do we read? The wine fell short. It would certainly be a great embarrassment, not to say humiliation, for the hosts. Wine was the ordinary drink of the country, and at a wedding it was certainly not

expected to be stinted. Our Lady saw the difficulty, and at once set herself in her own sweet way to set things right. See the kindness with which she whispers to the waiters to pause a moment before telling the master of the feast. Look at her approaching her Divine Son: "They have no wine." There was no need to say more. And although Our Lord told her that His hour had not yet come, she trusted Him completely, and said to the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." We know the result. The water was changed into wine, the joy of the feast was saved, saved by the thoughtful kindness of Mary, the Cause of our Joy. And wilt thou not help us, dear Mother?

"We would owe all to thee,
 Speak to thy Son as thou didst of old
 That feast-day in Galilee,
 Tell Him our needs in thy own sweet way,
 O Causa Nostræ Lætitiæ."—S.M.X.

There was nothing of sadness or of gloom about Our Lady. Sorrow she certainly had, deeper and more piercing than any we shall ever be called upon to bear; but sorrow is not sadness or melancholy. There can be deep peace and a holy joy, even in hearts steeped in grief; and this joy, which comes from God, is that of which Holy Scripture speaks:

“Joyfulness of heart is a never-failing source of holiness.”

The age in which we live is essentially a pleasure-loving age. If we crave after pleasure, if we let ourselves “be carried away by those pleasures even which are in themselves harmless, if we neglect or put off duty because it hinders pleasure, if we make it a point always to seek the maximum of enjoyment, and to choose or reject just according to our natural likes or dislikes,” then we are not following Our Lady’s example; rather let us say to her sincerely :

“Keep us in all that is blest of God,
Give us the joys that endure,
Lips that have smiles and words for all,
Hearts that are kind and pure.”—S.M.X.

To go through life as a joy-giver is a most desirable, but not always a very easy thing to accomplish. It was certainly the part Our Lady took while on earth, and what she continues to be from her throne in heaven. If we study her example and try to imitate it, she will help us so that in our measure we shall then bring gladness to those around us, and pass our lives in the sunshine of the company of Mary; then, too, she will look lovingly upon us, and answer our petition when we say :—

OUR LADY, THE CAUSE OF OUR JOY 107

“ Come when earth’s tears and smiles are o’er,
Mother of peace and love,
Show us to Him Who is joy to earth,
And joy to the hosts above.
So shall we laugh in the latter day,
O Causa Nostræ Lætitiæ.”—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, CAUSE OF OUR JOY, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL

MARY is all-powerful over the Heart of her Divine Son. What she asks, that she obtains. St Bonaventure tells us that " Mary has this great privilege that, with her Son, she above all the Saints is most powerful to obtain whatever she wills." And St Peter Damian, speaking of this power of Mary, says : " When the Mother goes to seek a favour for us from Jesus Christ, her Son esteems her prayers so greatly, and is so desirous to satisfy her, that when she prays it seems as if she rather commanded than prayed, and was rather a Queen than a handmaid." In the revelations of St Bridget we read that one day she heard Jesus talking with Mary and thus addressing her : " Ask of Me what thou wilt, for no petition of thine can be void." As if He had said : " My Mother, thou knowest how much I love thee, therefore ask all that thou wilt of Me, for it is not

possible that I should refuse thee anything." And the reason that Our Lord gave for this was beautiful : " Because thou didst never deny Me anything on earth, I will deny thee nothing in heaven. My Mother, when thou wast in the world, thou didst never refuse to do anything for the love of Me, and now that I am in heaven, it is right that I should deny thee nothing."

Mary, then, is all-powerful with God. She is powerful also over the demons, for of her it is written that " she shall crush the serpent's head " (Genesis). She is the safe tower of refuge, against whom the devils are weak and impotent. St Germanus, addressing Our Blessed Lady, used to say to her : " Thou art the Mother of God, and all-powerful to save sinners, and with God thou needest no other recommendation, for thou art the Mother of true life."

Mary is also powerful on earth. Has anyone ever exercised such sway over the hearts of God's creatures as Mary? Has she not shown us her power again and again. Who can number the miraculous images through which God has been pleased to show forth this prerogative of His Mother. In how many sanctuaries does she not dispense her favours, showing that there is nothing she asks for that she fails to obtain from her Son.

How many times do we read of victory obtained from the hands of Mary? She who is "strong as an army in battle-array," has time after time turned the tide of battle in favour of her clients. To-day we read of statues of Our Lady being set up in the trenches, and the soldiers invoking their powerful Protectress under the title of "Our Lady of the Trenches." On the battle-fields of Europe she is exerting her power: strengthening the arms of those who fight for justice and for right, encouraging the weary, consoling and aiding the dying. Oh! powerful Mother of God, exert thy blessed influence more and more over the world of to-day, torn by war and misery.

With St Peter Damian let us call upon her: "Oh, let thy nature move thee, let thy power move thee, for the more thou art powerful, the greater should thy mercy be." Let us lift up our hearts in earnest appeal to Mary, for St Bernard assures us that "the most powerful and merciful charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion, and in effectual succour; it is equally rich in both."

Now, what is the lesson that Our Lady of Power teaches us? She says of herself: "He that is mighty has done great things in me, and holy is His Name." Again, in the Canticle of Canticles we read: "Who is this that cometh up from the

OUR LADY, VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL 111

desert, leaning on her Beloved ? ” God, and God alone, was the Source of all Our Lady’s strength on earth, and is the Eternal Source of her power in heaven. She was entirely submissive to Him, entirely abandoned to His Will, and therefore He clothed her with strength as with a garment, and has made her powerful beyond all the united power of the saints and angels ; so that we are told that a single sigh of Mary can do more than the united suffrages of all the saints.

We want strength, we want courage and power to combat the many enemies of our soul ; and this strength we can draw from God, and God alone. If we too lean on Him, if we can say with earnestness, “ Thou art my Helper, my Refuge, and my Strength ” ; if we can abandon ourselves into the strong arms of Our God, then we shall find that He will strengthen our weakness and confirm us in His service, giving us victory over our enemies, so that we shall be urged to say with St Paul : “ I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.”

OUR LADY, VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL,
PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, REFUGE OF SINNERS

To how many hearts, sin-laden and sorrowful, who otherwise would not dare to lift their eyes to the Immaculate Queen of Heaven, has this title brought hope and comfort, and led them to the feet of their Mother? We are all sinners. We all need much mercy from God. Therefore we should all call on Our Lady, under the title "Refuge of Sinners."

Our Blessed Lady told St Bridget, that she was the Mother not only of the just and innocent, but also of sinners, provided they were willing to repent. The obdurate and unrepentant sinner cannot take shelter in the safe City of Refuge. God cannot forgive sin that is not repented of. But let a sinner only try to deliver himself from the bonds of wickedness, and call on Mary, and he will experience "the powerful help of her protection." It is recorded of St Bridget, that she

one day heard Our Lord thus address His Mother: "Thou assistest him who endeavours to return to God, and thy consolations are never wanting to anyone." St Gregory the Seventh wrote once to the Princess Matilda: "Resolve to sin no more, and I promise that, undoubtedly, thou wilt find Mary more ready to love thee than any earthly Mother." Have not we ever felt the truth of this ourselves? Have we ever been to Our Lady, implored her help, and been forsaken? Have we ever said:

" Mary, make haste thy child to win,
From sin and from the love of sin.
Oh, for my own, and others sins,
Do thou, who canst, free pardon win;
To sinners all, to me the chief,
Send Mother, send thy kind relief."—FABER.

Have we ever prayed thus to her, and not felt the kindness of her help, and the power of her patronage? If at any time it has seemed that Mary has been deaf to our petitions, we may be quite certain that the fault has been wholly ours. We must show ourselves anxious to be her children, and to turn away from our sin. There was once a sinner who said to Mary, "Show Thyself a Mother." But the Blessed Virgin replied, "Show thyself a son." Another

sinner invoked her as "Mother of Mercy," and she answered, "You sinners, when you want any help, call me Mother of Mercy, and at the same time, do not cease by your sins to make me a Mother of Sorrows, and anguish." These examples show us, that sorrow for sin and a desire of amendment are essential to obtain help from Mary, the Refuge of Sinners. It could not be otherwise, for Our Lady cannot extend a helping hand to one who is wilfully crucifying her Son. But once the heart repents, Our Mother is touched with compassion, her pity is boundless. Let us then pray to her to give us this sorrow for sin, which will secure for us the forgiveness of Jesus, and the tender solicitude of Mary.

"Gentle Mother, we beseech thee,
By thy tears and troubles sore,
By the death of thy dear Offspring,
By the bloody wounds He bore,
Touch our hearts with that deep sorrow
That afflicted thee of yore."

Holy writers almost seem to vie with each other in speaking of the mercy of Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners. "Who can ever tell," says Blossius, "the goodness, the mercy, the compassion, the love, the benignity, the clemency, the fidelity, the benevo-

lence, the charity of this Virgin Mother towards men?" It is such that no words can express it. "Let us then," says St Bernard, "cast ourselves at the feet of this good Mother, and embracing them, let us not depart, until she blesses us, and thus accepts us for her children." And again, in speaking of Our Lady, this holy doctor calls her "the sinner's ladder." "My little children, this is the sinner's ladder to heaven. This is my chiefest trust, this is the whole reason of the hope that is in me. For why? Can her Son thrust her away, or endure that she should be thrust away? Can He either not hear, or not Himself be heard? Plainly He cannot. The angel giveth her this joyful assurance. Thou hast found grace with God. She will always find grace with Him, and grace in all that we need, since by grace we are saved. What else do we want, my brethren? Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary, for he that seeketh, findeth, and cannot be disappointed in his hope."

Can we do better than follow in the footsteps of the saints, and be devout to Our Lady, the Refuge of Sinners? If we fall, she will help us to rise. If we are weak, she will obtain strength for us from her Son. Holy Church, in one of her most familiar prayers, teaches us thus to have recourse to Mary's

intercession : “ Grant Thy help to our weakness,
O most merciful God, that we who are mindful of
the Holy Mother of God, may by the help of her
intercession arise from our iniquities.”

OUR LADY, REFUGE OF SINNERS, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE GATE OF HEAVEN

“ But fairest of all gateways, far,
Art thou, the sinless Mary ;
The Gate that opens, yet secures
God’s inmost Sanctuary !
Gate of the One true Dawn art thou,
Gate of the one sweet Even,
Gate of the Angels into earth,
The Gate of souls to heaven.”—FABER.

“ GATE of Heaven ” is a title under which the Church, and all the faithful of Christ, love to honour and invoke Mary. And they do so, indeed, for very good reasons. Mary is the Gate of Heaven, because through her, Christ came down from heaven, and entered into the world, and He thus taught us that we might also easily find access to heaven, by passing through this Gate.

“ Thou unto the King of Kings
Wert a gate to earth and us :
We must go to Christ through thee,
We can reach Him only thus.”—S.M.X.

When Jacob awoke from the sleep during which he saw the ladder stretching from earth to heaven, and angels descending and ascending upon it, he exclaimed, "This is no other than the Gate of Heaven." And in like manner Holy Church, in speaking of Our Lady, uses these words of her. St Bonaventure says, "The gates of heaven will open to all who confide in the protection of Mary." And St Ephrem calls devotion to Mary "the unlocking of the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem." But she is herself the Gate, the "Felix Cœli Porta," the "happy Gate of Heaven," whom we invoke in her Vesper hymn; for St Bernard says, "As every mandate of grace that is sent by a king, passes by the palace gates, so does every grace that comes from God to the world pass through the hands of Mary." In the words of the hymn, so familiar in this country,

"All our joys do flow from Mary,
All then join her praise to sing."

Yes, she is indeed the Gate, through which we receive all. She is the Eastern Gate, through which the Sun of Justice has come to save us. She is also the Golden Gate, the Gate called Beautiful, the Gate of Heaven, through which we all in our turn must pass to go to God. St Bonaventure says that

Mary is called the "Gate of Heaven," because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing by her. Another holy writer tells us, that "Mary as Queen of Heaven commands as she will, and as Gate of Heaven, admits whom she wills" (Richard of St Laurence).

Our Lord in the Gospel calls Himself the Door (St John x. 9). Just as we cannot enter a palace but by the door, nor reach the door, unless we first enter the gate, so none can enter heaven, but by Our Lord Jesus, who is the Door, nor can they come to Our Lord, but by Mary the Gate. If the Gate is open, we are invited and encouraged to advance to the Door. So may Our Lady always be an open Gate through which we may attain to Jesus.

"Open stand, O Portal blest,
That we may still see the light,
Lifting up our hearts in hope,
Charming all the gloomy night."—S.M.X.

We remember the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. How the Wise had their lamps trimmed, and were ready to meet the Bridegroom, whereas the Foolish had no oil for their lamps, because they had slumbered and slept. And how these foolish virgins begged oil from their wise sisters, who prudently refused the request, saying, "Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you : go

you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." They went, and while they were away the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut. At last came the other virgins, saying, " Lord, Lord, open to us." But He answering, said, " Amen, I say to you, I know you not " (St Matt. xxv.). The Door was shut. The door in this case is the same as the gate. The gate of heaven, oh, how terrible for the soul that should find that gate closed against her. It need not be so for anyone. Our Lord says, " Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We must knock now, and not slumber and sleep through our life, as if there were no hereafter. If we do this, we shall find the portals of our eternal home opened wide to receive us after our exile, and we shall enter in to receive the joy of Our Lord.

" When the midnight cry is heard,
Do not let us be too late,
Do not let thy children call
' Open, open, Lord, Thy gate ! '
But because we loved thee here,
Let us in, O Mother dear."—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, GATE OF HEAVEN, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

“ Queen of the Holy Rosary,
O bless us as we pray,
And offer thee our roses
In garlands day by day,
While from our Father’s garden,
With loving hearts and bold,
We gather to thine honour
Buds white, and red, and gold.”

OVER and over again have the Holy Pontiffs taught us to love and use the Rosary. Urban IV. testified that the “ Rosary daily obtained fresh favours for Christendom.” Sixtus IV. declared that this form of prayer “ redounded to the honour of God and of the Blessed Virgin, and was well fitted to avert impending dangers.” Gregory XIII. tells us that “ the Rosary was instituted by St Dominic, to appease the anger of God and to implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” Pius IX., in 1869, wrote : “ As St Dominic employed this prayer as a sword to destroy the monstrous

heresy of the Albigenses, so likewise in our times, the faithful recitation of the Rosary will obtain that by the all-powerful protection of the Mother of God, the many errors infesting the world will be uprooted and destroyed." Leo XIII., in our own day, issued five official documents on the subject of the Rosary, two of which are Encyclical Letters to the Universal Church. We may recall some of his words, for they are certainly no less needed now than when they were first written.

In his first Encyclical on this subject, published in 1883, we read : " Ancient and modern history, and the sacred annals of the Church, alike bear witness to public and private supplication addressed to the Mother of God ; to the help which she has given in return, and to the peace and tranquillity which she has obtained from God. Hence her illustrious titles of Help of Christians, Consoler of the Afflicted, Mighty in War, Victorious, Peace-giver. . . . Our need of divine help is not less to-day than when the great St Dominic preached the Rosary of Mary as a remedy to heal the wounds of Christendom. . . . We who seek a remedy for like evils do not doubt that the prayer introduced by that most holy man, will have the greatest power against the calamities of our times also."

In the sixteenth century the efficacy and power

of the devotion of the Holy Rosary were wonderfully shown. The vast armies of the Turks threatened at that time to devastate Europe. The Pope, St Pius V., roused up among the Christian princes a resolution of common defence. Men went forth to shed their blood for their Faith and their country, and met their foe near the Gulf of Corinth. At the same time, those who were unable to take this active part formed a band of suppliants, who called on Mary and unitedly hailed her again and again in the words of the Rosary, imploring her to give the victory to their companions who were engaged in the fight. Our Lady did grant her aid ; and the Christian fleet gained a magnificent victory. It was in honour of this success at Lepanto that Pope St Pius V. instituted an annual commemoration under the title of the Feast of Our Lady of Victories, which name was afterwards changed by Pope Gregory XIII. into that of " Our Lady of the Rosary." In 1884 Pope Leo XIII. completed the work of his predecessors by decreeing that the special Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary was to be kept over the whole world, and in 1889 he extended the use of the special office of the feast to the entire Church.

Our Lady is reputed to have said to Blessed Alban, a Dominican, that her Psalter would " renew the world in ruins." Truly it would seem to be in

ruins at this time ; but we know " the final triumph is not to be for Satan but for God ; and in this hour the Church rouses herself to give more glory to Him and more honour to His Blessed Mother, through means of the Holy Rosary."

Why does Our Lady so love the Rosary ? Is it not because in it we commemorate all her Divine Son has done for her and for us all ? Anything that gives glory to Jesus, any devotion that stirs our hearts to more gratitude and love for Him, is a cause of unfailing joy to His Mother. No wonder, then, that Mary watches with maternal care over those who regularly and devoutly ponder the mysteries of the Rosary, striving more and more to understand them and to make them their own, and thus finding in them ever more cause for joy and wonder and thankfulness. " The Rosary is the Life of Our Lord lived in company with His Mother " (The Right Rev. Abbot Smith in *Our Lady's Litany*). We meditate on the chief events of that Divine Life lived for us ; the Joyful Mysteries put before us the Child-God in all His beauty and perfection, and Mary, His Mother, is always by His side. In the Sorrowful Mysteries we see the Man-God drinking His cup of bitterness for us in order that we may bear our sorrows with Him and for Him, Who suffered and died to redeem

us. And in the Glorious Mysteries, we lift up our hearts in triumph at His Resurrection, in Hope at His Ascension, in gratitude for the Gift of Pentecost, and in joy and wistful longing when we think of the heaven to which Mary was assumed and in which she reigns as Queen.

So may the alternations of our human lives of joy and sorrow bring us to the glory of our heavenly home. May we indeed meditate on what the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary contain, that we may "obtain what they promise through Jesus Christ Our Lord."

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF THE HOLY ROSARY,
PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR

WHAT an insight into the character of Our Lady this title gives us ! She is the Mother of Perpetual Succour. We all know how to lend a helping hand occasionally ; sometimes, indeed, our charity extends itself into weeks or even into months ; but what when the help demanded be perpetual, continual, under all circumstances and at all times ? Yet this is the help we both look for and receive from Mary. She is ever ready to succour her children. It matters not whether the occasion be great or small, whether the suppliant be young or old, rich or poor, saintly or sinful—one look to Mary, one call for help, and she turns her merciful eyes towards us and hastens to our aid.

Do we ever think what it means for us to have such an Advocate and Mother — a Mother of Perpetual Succour ? It means that no matter

what befalls us in life ; no matter what our difficulties or our distress ; no matter even, what our sins, we can always look on Mary, call on Mary. We can go to her and say :—

“ Remember, Mother, none have ever sought thee,
 In hours of care or pain,
 None came to thee, desolate or dying,
 And came to thee in vain ;
 None from thy side with sorrow have departed :
 Remember this, my Queen.”

The miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour dates back to the close of the fifteenth century. It belonged to an Italian merchant, who with many others was threatened with shipwreck, when escaping from the Island of Crete, which had been invaded by the Turks. The merchant, seeing the danger to which he and his companions were exposed, had the picture brought on deck and publicly invoked Our Lady under the title of Mother of Perpetual Succour. The storm ceased and a favourable breeze soon brought the vessel into port, from whence the merchant proceeded to Rome. Shortly afterwards, being stricken with his last illness, he took means to ensure the Picture of Our Lady being set up for veneration in one of the Roman Churches. Afterwards, the request of the dying man was about to be accomplished, but

the widow, to whom the Picture now belonged, could not decide to which of the three hundred churches then existing in Rome, to give it. However, Our Lady herself settled the question. She appeared to the widow's daughter and said: "I desire to have my home between my beloved Church of St Mary Major and that of my adopted son St John." This then indicated clearly the Church of St Matthew on the Esquiline Hill. Here the Picture remained for three centuries, and Our Lady fully justified her title of Mother of Perpetual Succour. During the days of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, a hostile army occupied the capital of the Catholic world. St Matthew's Basilica was destroyed, but the Picture was rescued by the Augustinian Fathers, who sought shelter in Santa Maria in Posternla, and there kept it hidden, until in 1866 it was restored to its present place of honour in the Redemptorist Church, which is built almost on the site of the old church of St Matthew.

Since that time the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour has spread rapidly. The Church calls Mary the "Perpetual Succour of all the faithful." The greater the necessity for her help, the greater her help will be. Surely in these days we need more succour than ever! To whom shall

we turn in our distress if not to the Mother whose help is ever at our disposal ?

“ Succour us, when clouds of sadness
Hide the light of heaven above,
Hope expires and Faith scarce lingers,
And we dare not think we love.
In this hour of gloom and peril
Show to us thy radiant face,
Smiling down from thy loved image,
Rays of cheering light and grace.”

If we need Our Lady's help so much now, we shall surely need it still more at death. Then we shall need Our Mother to protect us from the enemy. Every time we say the “ Hail Mary,” we ask her to pray for us at the hour of our death. We know neither when, nor where, nor under what circumstances death will come ; but if Our Lady is with us, we need have no fear. She will look after her children ; her help will never fail.

“ Through this life of weary exile,
Succour us in every need,
And when death shall come to free us,
Succour us, ah ! then indeed.”

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

“ Mother, be love of thee, a ray
From heaven, to show the heavenward way.
Thou Mary, art my hope, my life,
The Starlight of this earthly strife.
Sweet Daystar ! let thy beauty be
A light to draw my soul to thee.”—FABER.

ONE of the favourite titles of Our Lady used by the Church is, “ Star of the Sea.” It occurs in the Vesper Hymn “ Ave Maris Stella,” “ Hail, Thou Star of the Ocean.” And again, in the Anthem we use in Advent and at the Christmas season Mary is invoked as the Stella Maris. And again and again in our familiar English hymns we greet Our Mother as Star of the Sea.

“ Hail, Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star,
Guide of the wanderer here below ;
Thrown on life’s surge, we claim thy care,
Save us from peril and from woe.”

St Thomas Aquinas explains the title to us in these words : “ As sailors are guided by a star to

the port, so are Christians guided to heaven by Mary." St Bernard had a particular devotion to Our Lady under this title. He says: "We will dwell awhile on this name of Mary, which is rightly interpreted 'Star of the Sea,' and is therefore admirably appropriate to the Virgin Mother. Fitly is she compared to a Star, which in giving forth its light, suffers no waning, since she brought forth her Son without stain to her Virginity. As the ray of the star lessens not its brightness, so the Son of Mary detracted in no way from her integrity. She is therefore that glorious star of Jacob which casts its radiance over the whole world . . . the star whose splendour rejoices Heaven, terrifies Hell, and sheds its mild and beneficent influence on the poor exiles of earth. She is truly the Star which, being placed over this world's tempestuous sea, shines forth by the lustre of her merits and example." And then the holy Doctor breaks forth into the passage we have already quoted, but which one can never tire of repeating: "O, you who find yourself tossed about by the storms of life, turn not your eyes from the brightness of this Star, if you would not be overwhelmed by its boisterous waves. If the winds of temptations rise, if you fall among the rocks of tribulations, look up at the Star, call on Mary. . . . If she be your propitious Star, you

will arrive safely in the port, and experience for yourself the truth of the words, 'And the Virgin's Name was Mary.' "

Holy Church applies the following words of the Book of Wisdom to Our Lady. "She is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light, for her light cannot be put out. For she is the brightness of eternal light" (Wisd. vii.). Thus is Mary called sometimes, "Our Lady of Light," or the "Mother of Light," for her Son Jesus is He Who said of Himself, "I am come a Light into the world" (St John xii. 46).

We read in the prophecy of Baruch, that when God called on the stars, they replied, "Here we are, and they shined forth with cheerfulness to Him that made them." Is not this a beautiful description of Our Lady, the sinless and beautiful Star of the Sea? Listen to her cheerful acceptance of God's message, brought to her by Gabriel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word." Mariners guide the course of their vessels by their observation of the stars. Thus, in many climes Our Lady, Star of the Sea, has been a title particularly loved by

sailors. The Breton sailors, who are mostly devout Catholics, and whose work endangers them, as the Breton coast is rocky, and the sea about there stormy, are particularly fond of invoking her under this title. They have a boat-song, or hymn, which they are accustomed to sing in her honour on setting out or returning in their boats.

Now, what is this world but a sea, over which we must pass before we can reach the eternal shore ? We have heard what St Bernard says, and shall we not then raise our eyes to Mary and call on her ? We cannot expect our lives to be always calm and unruffled ; storms there must be from time to time ; there are plenty of rocks of danger upon which we may easily be shipwrecked. Darkness may at times envelop our souls as with a thick mist, and we may lose our bearings. We may be carried away in the strong current of worldliness and pleasure. But if we look to Mary, and call on her, she will most certainly be our light and guide. Her light will give us hope, by the light of this star we shall be enabled to continue our voyage. Mary, the Morning Star, will lead us to the City of Light, where there is no need of sun or moon, “ for the Lamb is the Light thereof ” (Apoc. xxi. 23) ; “ where neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow

shall be any more, for the former things (will have) passed away " (Apoc. xxi. 4).

" Ave Maria ! thou portal of heaven,
Harbour of refuge, to thee do we flee.
Lost in the darkness, by stormy winds driven,
Shine on our pathway, fair Star of the Sea."

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE HOUSE OF GOLD

“ Of matchless light, of grace untold,
All love be thine, fair House of Gold.”—FABER.

GOD wanted a Mother for Himself, “ He looked o’er the world, to find hearts that were true.” He scanned the ages, and among all possible creatures, He chose Our Lady. “ The most High hath sanctified His own Tabernacle ” (Ps. xiv. 5). Can we wonder, then, that one of Mary’s titles should be, House of Gold ?

When David wished to erect a Temple to the Lord, he spent years in collecting together all the richest materials from the furthest parts of the then known world. Wood, and metal, and precious stones, delicately wrought embroideries, and finest carving, all were employed for the Temple which he planned, and which his son Solomon built. We read that when finished, it was overlaid with plates of

the finest gold ; doors, walls, and ceilings were all covered with the precious metal. The altar, the Cherubim, the candlesticks, the bowls, and all the vessels, the tongs, and even the nails, " all were made of the finest gold " (2 Paral. iii.). Yet what was Solomon's Temple compared to Mary's soul ? " Know ye not," St Paul says, " that ye are the Temples of God, the dwelling-places of the Holy Spirit ? " And if this is true of each one of us, it has a deeper meaning still when applied to Our Lady. Mary was the chosen Temple of God Incarnate. The Divine Architect would certainly build for Himself a mansion worthy of Himself. " His chosen Mother would be possessed, in the highest degree, of every quality which would render her precious in His sight " (Fr. Purbrick, S.J.). " Holiness becometh Thy House, O Lord " (Ps. xcii.). And thus it is that every virtue is to be found in the heart of Mary. This is what the Church intends to indicate by calling Our Lady, House of Gold, for virtue, according to Solomon, is more excellent than all gold.

Now, what is the special connection between Our Lady, the House of Gold, and ourselves ? If we remember the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit in her soul with the fullness of His Grace, or the nine months she bore the

Son of God in her womb, or His Sacramental presence in her heart, which according to a pious belief was continued from Communion to Communion, from the Ascension to the Assumption, we see that Our Lady was pre-eminently "God's home upon earth." In the words of the familiar hymn, we remind our Mother of this glorious privilege of hers.

"Earth gave Him one lodging, 'twas deep in thy breast,
And God found a home where the sinner finds rest,
His home and His hiding-place both were in thee,
He was won by thy shining, sweet Star of the Sea."

And again a little further on we read, "For the Heaven He left, He found Heaven in thee." Now, thinking of ourselves, we remember that Our Lord tells us, "His delight is to be with the children of men." He still "looks o'er the world to find hearts that are true." He still seeks our hearts as a home where He can dwell. "My child, give Me thy heart." And what do we answer? Are our hearts so many homes of gold, fit dwellings for the King of Kings? Or are they poor, and wretched, perhaps even bleak and cold? Is the home we offer Him when He comes to us in Holy Communion made durable and beautiful by the plates of golden charity with which it is adorned? Is our love constant and pure, as gold highly burnished?

Are not the graces of each day God's preparation for the dwelling He has chosen for Himself? And how do we use these graces? We have seen how even the nails that fastened the cedar-wood of the Temple were of pure gold. Do we neglect the small opportunities of preparing our hearts for Holy Communion? We shall always be unworthy, we shall always fall short; Holy Church implies this by using herself, and teaching us to use, the words of the humble centurion, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." Still, how much more pleasing a dwelling our hearts might be, if we were to beg Our Lady, House of Gold, to obtain a greater measure of the pure gold of her love of God.

Then, too, we may call to mind the manner in which gold is refined. Is it not by fire? The Holy Scripture tells us, that "as gold is tried in the fire, so is the heart of the just man tried by pain" (Ecclus.). It will perhaps serve to comfort us a little in our sorrows, if we remember that by our suffering, be it bodily, mental, or spiritual, God is refining the gold which is to adorn our hearts for Himself. Our Lady is never far from us when the Hand of God is upon us. She suffered intensely, although there was no dross mixed with

her gold. And she will, if we ask her, sustain us in our pain, and watch over our hearts which are so frequently the chosen dwelling-places of her Son.

OUR LADY, HOUSE OF GOLD, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE MYSTICAL ROSE

“ Mystic Rose ! that precious name,
Mary from the Church doth claim ! ”

WHAT is the meaning of this title ? We know that in the Litany, the rose is the only flower to which Our Lady is compared. In Holy Scripture, we find frequent mention of the rose. “ Let us crown ourselves with roses ” (Wisd. ii.). “ Bud forth as the rose planted by brooks of waters ” (Ecclus. xxix.). “ As the flowers of roses in the days of spring ” (Ecclus. i.). “ I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho ” (Ecclus. xxi.). These last words the Church has embodied in her Office of Our Lady. It is not difficult to appreciate the fitness of the rose as an emblem of her who is full of grace and filled with the fragrance of every virtue.

Blessed Raymond Jordano used to say : “ A rose is red and fiery in colour, which denotes love

of God and our neighbour ; therefore, on account of the ardent love with which the heart of Mary was always inflamed towards God and man, she is called a rose." Dante speaks of the rose as the "flower of sacred love," and of Our Lady as the "Rose wherein the Word Divine was made Incarnate." It is especially Mary's love that is symbolised when we invoke her as the Mystical Rose. "She was not," says St Bernard, "merely penetrated with the love of God, but transfixed, wholly possessed, actuated, informed and transformed by love of Him. Her life was love, and love was the sum and substance of her life."

"O Flower of Grace ! divinest Flower !
 God's light thy life, God's love thy dower !
 That all alone with virgin ray
 Dost make in heaven eternal May,
 Sweet falls the peerless dignity
 Of God's eternal choice on thee."—FABER.

The rose has many characteristics. It is not confined to one country, but is found in nearly all lands and climates. It is available alike to rich and poor. The rich cultivate it in their gardens, the poor pluck it from the hedge-rows or have it climbing up their cottage walls. So is Our Blessed Mother, a Mother to all. She is not exclusive in her love nor in the disposal of her favours. Those rich in this world's goods, and those rich in spiritual

blessings ; the poor of the world and the poor in spirit ; the sinner and the saint ; the young and the aged ; the strong and the weak ; the sick and the dying as also those who are full of health and energy ; all can have recourse to Mary, and all will experience her protection. " Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary," says St Bernard, " remember that no one has ever had recourse to thy protection, implored thy help and sought thy intercession, and been left unaided." Mary, the Mystical Rose of love, sends forth her sweet fragrance to all.

Again, the rose is known under a great variety of names ; so too Our Lady has numberless titles poured upon her by those who love her.

" What shall we call thee, O beautiful Mother ?
 Lily of Israel, Rose without thorn !
 Joy to thee, praise to thee, love to thee, thanks to thee,
 Light of thy people ! sweet Star of the Morn ! "

Are we joyful ? Mary is the Cause of our joy. Sorrowful ? She is the Comforter of the afflicted. She is the Health of the weak. Sinners find in her a Refuge and a powerful Advocate. For those striving after perfection, she is the Queen of Saints. Are we in doubt ? She is the Seat of Wisdom, the Mother of Good Counsel. Does darkness overcloud our souls ? Mary is the Morning Star. Are we depressed and ready to despair ? Our Mother is

the Mother of Hope. If we are anxious and troubled we can turn to Our Lady of Peace. In all dangers, in all needs, on all occasions, Mary is ever the Mother of Perpetual Succour.

The rose is also remarkable for its variety of hue ; fit emblem of the virtues that bloom in the Mystical Rose, God's Mother. In her we find the deep crimson of love, the whiteness of purity, the pale tints of virginal modesty, the gold of constancy and resignation. And in Mary, as in the rose, the fragrance given forth is varied and always sweet. The Rose of Jericho, to which Our Lady is compared, is a small plant, but it bears such beautiful flowers that it makes the whole plain lovely ; so too does Our Lady, if we call upon her, and lift our eyes to her, lighten the dreary desert of life and show us her own loveliness, which is but a reflection of the Eternal Beauty of her Son. O Mystical Rose, beautiful Flower of God, come and adorn my heart, which is so often the chosen dwelling-place of Jesus.

OUR LADY, THE MYSTICAL ROSE, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES

How often have we invoked Our Lady under this title, and simply classed it among those which, though undoubtedly true in their literal application, have no very special reference to ourselves. We think of Mary, after the Ascension of Jesus, fulfilling her part as Queen and Mother of the Apostles. St Luke tells us how "all were persevering in prayer, with Mary the Mother of Jesus" (Acts i. 14). What a comfort and strength she must have been to them in those early days of their arduous labours. How often she must have spoken to them of her Son, Who had been to them, as He was to her in a still greater degree, "All in all." St Jerome tells us that "Mary remained for a time on earth after the Ascension of her Son, with the Apostles, that she might instruct them more fully, since she had seen and handled things more familiarly and was

therefore better able to express them. For things we better know we better utter" (Sermon on the Assump.). St Dionysius of Alexandria, speaking of the Apostles at this time, says: "With them too was the great house of God, the great mansion of God, Mary the Mother of God." It must have been Our Lady who told St Luke many of the facts he has recorded for us in the beginning of his Gospel. St Eusebius writes: "Mary being most wise, preserved in her heart all the words of Jesus Christ, and kept them for us, and caused them to be registered in order that, according to her instruction, their recital and dictation should be published and preached throughout the world and given to us to read." Thus would Our Lady enter into the work of the Apostles and guide and counsel them with her words of wisdom, forgetting herself entirely in her mission towards the Infant Church.

The word Apostle means "Messenger," that is, "one sent." And in this wide sense we are all, or can be, apostles. "Everyone," says Father Faber, "has a special vocation." This does not at all necessarily mean a religious vocation. Some, it is true, are called to the cloister, but by far the greater number are not thus chosen. It would not be consistent with God's plan for the world were it otherwise. Nevertheless, we are all called

to be, to some extent at least, God's messengers or apostles. Who does not know and admire the way in which countless of our fellow-men and women prove themselves real Apostles in the circle within which their lot is cast. We cannot plead lack of example. What has been done, can be done. We cannot say there is no need for us to exercise an apostolate.

“ Fair the fields over all our country,
Lift your eyes and behold the land
White already unto the harvest,
Waiting but for the reaper's hand.
Hark ! the Lord of the harvest calling,
' Rich the grain but the labourers few,
None will help Me My sheaves to garner,
Child of Mary, I look to you.'
'Tis thy Son Who is calling thus,
Queen of Apostles, oh ! pray for us.”—S.M.X.

What then can we do ? Some of us may be able to help others by our active works of zeal or charity. There is plenty of scope for this. If we nurse the sick, we can make sure that they have all the spiritual help it is in our power to procure for them. If we visit the poor, we can whisper words of encouragement or of resignation which may strengthen them not to lose heart. If we instruct the little ones, we can lay foundations of piety in their hearts which no after-stress of temptation will be able to shake or overthrow. Some may be able to further the

Kingdom of Christ by the use of their pen. Others, drawn to none of these things, can exercise a most fruitful apostolate in their own homes, where they can be God's messenger of kindness, patience, joyousness and peace. All, whatever their age or state, can imitate Our Lady, of whom St Ambrose writes: "Hers was the hidden treasure of modesty, hers the high standard of faith, hers the self-sacrifice of earnestness." It is, perhaps, especially this last quality that we want. If we were more in earnest, we should find that opportunities of doing good would never fail us. Until the end of time, the struggle between good and evil will continue, and if we can help one soul to God, our lives will not have been spent in vain.

"Fierce and loud is the battle raging,
Dead and dying are on the field,
Few and weak are the King's battalions,
Slow to conquer and swift to yield.
Hark! the Voice that is calling, calling,
'Who will help in the deadly strife,
Who will rescue from death and danger
The souls for whom I laid down My life?'
'Tis thy Son Who is calling thus,
Queen of Apostles, oh! pray for us."—S.M.X.

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY, THE QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS

“And a throne was set for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right hand.”—3 Kings ii.

“And in the multitude of the elect she shall have praise, and among the blessed she shall be blessed.”

—Ecclus. xxiv.

IN the last of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, we are told to consider the Coronation of Our Lady, and the glory of all the Saints. Now what does that coronation mean? It means that Our Lady is enthroned in the highest heaven. It means that Jesus Christ, her Son, has exalted her above all the Saints in glory. It means that for ever and for ever Mary is the chosen Queen of Heaven. St John Chrysostom writes of her, that “neither prophets, nor apostles, nor martyrs, nor patriarchs, nor angels, nor thrones, nor dominations, nor seraphim, nor cherubim, nor any other creature,

visible or invisible, can be found that is greater or more excellent than she."

Holy Church invokes her as Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins,—and then, as if to sum up all the perfection of this matchless Queen, she adds, "Queen of all Saints, pray for us." Truly Mary surpasses them all in glory as she surpasses them all in holiness. The sanctity of an individual Saint, nay, the sanctity of all the Saints, collectively, does not equal the sanctity of Mary. Her purity surpasses that of all the Virgins, her zeal that of all Apostles; her steadfastness outreaches that of all Confessors, her fortitude exceeds that of all Martyrs. Mary's perseverance shone more resplendently than that of the Patriarchs, and her knowledge eclipses that of the Prophets.

It is the privilege of the Saints, and one of their chief delights, to glory in their Queen,—to acknowledge her dignity, to proclaim themselves her happy subjects. Think of the splendour with which the heavenly courtiers minister to their Queen. Picture the joy of those great Saints, who have so loved her on earth,—of St John, St Bernard, St Anselm, of St Gertrude, St Theresa, and St Catherine. Think of the ever-increasing gratitude of those

happy souls who owe their place in heaven to her prayers. Well may we look, and wonder, and exclaim :

“ The angels answer with their songs,
Bright choirs in gleaming rows,
And Saints flock round thy throne in throngs,
And heaven with bliss o'erflows.”—FABER.

But there are other Saints besides those of the Church Triumphant of whom Mary is the Queen. The word “ Saint ” only means holy, therefore the Souls in Purgatory are all Saints. They have passed from this life in sanctifying grace, and are therefore holy, and so the Queen of Saints acknowledges them as her own, and exercises over them “ the full rights and functions of royalty, queenly munificence, queenly clemency, queenly power ” (Fr. Purbrick, S.J.). “ Oh, how tenderly does Mary bend from her throne over that abyss of sacred suffering ” (*ibid.*). And when their time of expiation is over, with what joy does Mary meet the souls so dear to her. Does she not go forward with her court to greet them, folding them in her arms, and conducting them to her Divine Son, for whose glory she has tended and loved them so long ?

Again, there are the holy ones of earth. All who are in sanctifying grace, are in their measure holy.

OUR LADY, THE QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS 151

All who are striving after perfection may be said to be also saints in their measure. " In every heart in which Jesus reigns as King, Mary there reigns with Him as Queen. Our Lord and His Mother cannot be separated in the Catholic heart. Where she is not, Jesus can never be."

" For, oh, how can we love thy Son,
Sweet Mother, if we love not thee ? "

None can teach us the ways of true holiness as Mary can. " The more entirely our whole being is consecrated to her love and service, the greater will be our growth in holiness, the quicker our passage through Purgatory, the higher our place in heaven " (Fr. Purbrick, S.J.).

We have no more constant and untiring Advocate than Our Lady Queen of Saints. Her one desire is to make us all holy, all fit subjects for the kingdom of her Son. Surely she bids the happy Saints of the Church Triumphant lift up their hands with her sinless hands to implore for us the graces and helps we need. When earth's exile seems long and dreary, let us think of our heavenly home, let us think of the countless Saints who have gone before us, and of their peerless Queen. And so let us encourage ourselves to endure manfully to the end.

“ Queen art thou of the shining angels,
Queen art thou of the happy Saints,
Mother and Queen of exiled children,
Send us help when our courage faints.
Spotless Mother, and Queen divine,
All the love of our hearts is thine.”

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, PRAY FOR US.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

“ Delight of angels, trust of men !
A sceptre unto thee is given,
Queen of the Sacred Heart in heaven ! ”

OUR LADY'S Month has run its course once more. We have thought of our Mother under some of the many beautiful titles by which she is invoked. And now, on the last day of her month and the eve of the month of June, let us pause awhile to consider her as being in a very special way Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Mary's mission is always to lead us to Jesus, therefore it is fitting that the month dedicated to her should be immediately followed by that consecrated to the honour of the Divine Heart of Our Lord. If we have striven, according to our measure of grace, to imitate the virtues of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, then shall we be more ready to learn the lessons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The humility, the love, the zeal, the

meekness and obedience, the generosity and fortitude of Mary are surpassed only by these virtues in the Heart of her Son ; therefore it is in order that we may be more prepared for a closer following of Christ that Mary has called us round her each day of the month of May. She might have said to us in the words of St Paul, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." And the last lesson might well be that of the Marriage Feast of Cana, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye " (St John ii. 5).

No wonder Mary is called Our Lady of the Sacred Heart ! Who ever knew that Heart, at once divine and human, as she did ? Was not Jesus her Son, flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone ? Did not she, time after time, have that Heart beating next her own ? When It beat with love, did not her own heart throb in response ? When It felt grief and anguish, was not the heart of the Mother torn with the sorrow she felt for His pain ? All through the three-and-thirty years from Bethlehem to Calvary, the Heart of Mary beat in unison with the Heart of Jesus.

" Mother of God ! thy Heart and His
Inseparably shine ;
The Sacred Heart thou worshippest
Is dutiful to thine."

We read that when Jesus spoke to Our Lady from the fullness of His Heart, as for instance, when He said, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Mary did not understand, but she kept the words, pondering them in her heart. We may well believe that during that tender intercourse of Nazareth, Jesus explained that as well as many other mysteries of His Heart to her, so that no creature has, or ever can have, a tithe of the knowledge of the Sacred Heart that Mary has. We know that St John leant his head on Our Lord's breast at the Last Supper, and for this reason he is called the Disciple whom Jesus loved, the Disciple of the Sacred Heart; but what he did once, Our Lady did constantly! If St John is called the Disciple whom Jesus loved, what must we say of Mary? Who can fathom the depths of the love of that Divine and Human Heart of Jesus for his Mother? His love for her is that of the best of sons for the tenderest of mothers; but it is more than this, for Jesus is God, and if the measure of His love for sinners is infinite, what can we say of His love for Mary? And on Our Lady's side, was there ever a mother who loved her child as Mary loved Jesus? He was her All,

at once her God and the Child of her heart. Her love stopped short only of the infinite, for Mary is finite as we are.

For all these reasons, then, we may fitly honour Our Mother as Queen of the Sacred Heart. Her one aim is to procure more love and more honour for Him. It was for this end that she bowed her head in acceptance of the charge bequeathed to her on Calvary. "Mother, behold thy son!" said Our Lord; and there and then Mary became the Mother of us all. What an exchange, sinners for Jesus! Surely her Mother's heart must have broken with grief that day, if she had not thought of the glory she could bring to her Son, by becoming the Refuge of sinners.

For the love and glory of the Heart of Jesus, Mary has succoured us during the past month; surely she has turned those merciful eyes upon us as we have gathered daily around her feet! Let us then beg her to finish the work she has begun in our souls, let us allow her to lead us to Jesus. She will not forsake us, for where Jesus is, there also is Mary. She will be with us still, guiding our steps as we strive to walk in the footsteps of her Son; teaching us His lessons, day by day. Trustfully may we leave ourselves in the hands of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART 157

“ Oh ! we love thee, Mary,
Trusting all to thee,
What is past or present
What is yet to be.”

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, PRAY FOR US.

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Mary Philip, Mother.

Our Lady's month /

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