

THE THEATRE OF PARADISE

by MATTIA DA SALÒ

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Even though no young Doctoral candidate has as yet taken this for the subject of his Thesis, as the Dominican Friar Innocenzo Coloso hoped in 1963, the spiritual treatise *The Theatre of Paradise* or meditations on the glory of Heaven by Mattia da Salò, which was printed after his death in Salò in 1620 by his Brother Giovanni Bellintani da Salò, is “one of the most attractive, original and profound books” that has been written concerning life in Heaven.

Containing 150 meditations, it deals with considerations of the glory of Heaven as man’s ultimate destiny, the nature of God, the union of man with God in heaven, the absolute and comparative attributes of the Most Holy Trinity and above all the glory of the Incarnate Word, which is treated in 45 meditations which are spread out over considerations of the excellence of His humanity, the nature of His virtues, the sanctity of His soul, the dignity and glory of His body. They go on to deal with the Saints, the Virgin Mary, Angels and men, the Saints as Christ’s Mystical Body, the adornments of the soul, the happiness in our feelings, divine sonship and the inheritance that comes with it, admiration and joy, praise, humility, thanksgiving and the vision of God, the state of blessedness which the Saints receive from Christ’s humanity, the contentment of creatures and the sufferings of the damned: a fruitful, vast and profound panorama of theological doctrine, with many touches of Bonaventure and Scotus, that astound the reader.

When he published the third and fourth parts of his *Practice of Mental Prayer*, which dealt with the last four things, in 1607, explained the origin of these meditations on the glory of heaven: “I thought”, he wrote, “that there was not much that could be written since the subject is so far removed from what we know about. However, I soon expanded my treatment as I realised that one section would be needed to treat these matters and hell as had been required when I treated death and judgement. Because of this I realised that I had to take up my pen again, and rely on the help that God’s goodness would provide for me to treat divine glory. I planned to treat the topics using an appropriate number of considerations, and a simpler style in this fourth section. Thus as I had used one hundred and fifty consideration in the first part, I set out to accomplish the present work with the intention of restricting myself to the extent that simple people could understand the material which is extremely rich by its nature and for the most part very far removed from the grasp of our bodily senses. Because it was beyond me to do this I decided to compose something else which was easier and clearer and that is what I have tried to do...If this is pleasing to God we publish the one hundred and fifty considerations once again with a chapter or two on contemplation, which we have entitled *The Theatre of Paradise*.” (From the Introduction to the Fourth part). This project was finalised by his brother Giovanni.

The structure of the individual meditations is the same for all and they are set out in a series of three steps or acts similar to that in *The Practice of Mental Prayer*: preamble, mediation and action. However, the content is much more elaborate, to suit (the author says) those who only want to use the book for reading and not as a specific tool for meditating, as they would have done with the popular edition of the first part of *The Practice*, where, so that the intellect

would have more scope for meditation and to carry out the other actions, I had tried to use few words by simply stating the concepts, indicating the individual acts of the practices by the use of numbers. However, for those who only want to read these two things seemed to be a bother with so many numbers being a nuisance, making the content, which could be expressed in a few words, appear dry and glossed over without any feeling.

For these reasons and to accommodate the wishes of these “readers” in the last two parts of his Practice of Mental Prayer, Mattia da Salò explained the content at greater depth by means of a more articulate treatment. In spite of this compromise, this “mediocrity” as he called it, he was convinced that the meditations would be useful to both souls who wanted to pray as well as to those who only wanted to read, “hoping that the result would be that the readers would gradually become people of prayer and progress from reading to praying.” (From the Introduction to the Third Part.)

We have chosen five “practices” from these splendid meditations to give the modern reader a taste of what they contain. Even in the linguistic tradition of the seventeenth century, the depth of the theological concepts that Bellintani knew how to translate into vibrant piety and devotion for himself and for others justly deserves the judgement that was passed on him by Francesco Panigarola, an Observant Friar Minor: “Father Mattia could be numbered among the holy Fathers of the Church”. He really was “a great theoretician of the method of meditation – writes Innocenzo Colosio – and he remains an incomparable master in balancing and harmonising the use of the various human faculties in such a delicate exercise and difficult exercise as mental prayer”.

Meditations on the Glory of Heaven

*Concerning the Fatherhood of God.
Practice IV*

Preamble

4408 I now turn to You, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who mercifully console Your children[1] in their time of need, adopting the way, namely holy prayer, through which You usually console them more strongly, and in which You prepare them to be able to receive such delight so that they detest any other delight that might present itself.

Help me to conduct myself in a manner that is pleasing to You so that I may receive the outcome that I am anticipating.

In the meantime grant me purity of heart, attentiveness of mind and composure of emotions so that I may readily receive Your heavenly inspiration and open my heart to grasp Your holy mysteries.

Meditation

4409 *Man* – Christ the Son of God, who were so pleasing to Your Father that because You loved us You worked in unison with Your Father so that through Your grace He might accept us and make us His children together with You so that You and we would have the same Father, I beg of You through the love that You demonstrated in this manner, to grant me access to the Father Himself to see,

through contemplation, how right this most excellent and loving fatherhood is for me, by means of which the Saints in heaven have been blessed.

Christ. This is something that is precisely most pleasing to Me. I am Myself the way by which everyone can come to the Father and this is why I manifested His name to mankind.[2]

Man Oh that I may acknowledge Your name even though we wretched mortals on earth cannot see You, whereas the Saints in heaven see Your face quite clearly. Oh my Brother grant that in Your mercy You and Your Father will shine Your face on us[3] and, even though we do not see You face to face, at least let us see through a mirror, dimly.[4]

4410 *Christ* – But, my brother, this is knowing His holy Name by seeing it through a mirror. However, because of My brotherhood with you I am constrained to tell you what you are capable of understanding of what the Saints see clearly.

Because the Father was the first origin of everything else, through being the infinite fullness of being in itself, He produced everything in proper order. The first work which He carried out was to generate Me, and therefore He is My Father and I am His Son. Since He is a person in so far as He is distinct from any other person, He is a person in generating Me, and in generating Me He is distinct from Me, in as much as fatherhood, which came about by means of generation, means that He is a Person. To sum up, He is a person therefore in being a Father. Thus all his personal perfection and nobility is contained in His fatherhood.

4411 In as much as all that is perfection properly speaking, both with respect to the divine essence and with respect to the essence of reality, must be the perfection that resides in a person, it is necessary that this perfection must be a person and, being a person, all the perfections of His essence is His and belongs to Him. Just as you contemplate the perfections that belong to Him, so the Saints behold them in His person and adore, praise and rejoice over them as His perfections, and this is how they are blessed, for otherwise the Saints would not be blessed in being united to the divine as they really are.

Therefore my Father possesses the kind of paternity that makes Him a divine Person, so that all divine perfections and divinity, which is the summing up of all goodness, is His, so the perfection of power becomes the power of the Father, of wisdom, the wisdom of the Father, and so on with the other perfections, and so all the acts of these perfections become the Father's acts. It follows from this that charity and the very act of loving, which is what constitutes the divine nature, are the Father's acts who loves what is worthy of being loved by acting out this love.

Man. O Lord, I begin to see where you are leading me, as I grasp from what You speak about how from all eternity the Father was father by generating while at the same time remaining eternal and loving You with the essence of the love that was His. As love, especially divine love, is always a delight, in loving You He enjoyed infinite delight. He possessed that love and delight in You in Himself as a Person even though His love was nonetheless for You and His enjoyment centred on His dearly beloved Son.

4412 *Christ.* – You are thinking well. When you have experiences it deeply try to draw out the sap of heavenly sweetness, and to achieve this remember what I said in the Gospel: “The only begotten Son is close to the Father's heart.”[5] Does this not present you with a picture of the infinite love with which the Father held me in

His arms and lovingly embraced me? This is what my Apostle meant when he wrote that all paternity took its name from the Father.[6] You can see that whatever paternal relationship has come or could come between a father and his child would all be derived from the love Father had for Me, and consequently all of a father's happiness in loving a son is derived from the infinite happiness that My Father had for Me. It was not only for the sake of the human race that the Father spoke from heaven about Me: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased",[7] but also, indeed primarily and principally because of His divinity and this is why in the parable of the vineyard I called Myself His most beloved and dear Son[8]

4413 Man – It seems to me whom You called so sweetly to be Your brother, O Lord, that in order to relish these mysteries, I should leave aside the dry distinctions of scholastic theology, where I have difficulty with the concept of personal relationships, with no mention of perfections. There would be more relish in following Scripture which speaks of the Father's delight and love of You, His Son. To make use of both it seems to me to be good to consider the perfections of the divine essence as they exist in the Persons as this seems to involve the attributes and appropriations that are assigned to the persons in Scripture and theology.

However, I still have a difficulty concerning the word of the Apostle where he says that all paternity in heaven and on earth comes from Your Father. Is there any paternity in heaven besides His paternity? Angels do not generate and human paternity is on earth.[9] What else is there?

4414 Christ, - Tell me this, are the angels not called sons of God?[10] Did I not say that because of the resurrection the just will be called God's children?[11] Are the children of the Father alone or of God as One and Three? When I taught you to pray saying "Our Father who art in heaven",[12] did I not intend that you address your requests to the whole Trinity, as you expect grace from all of them? This is the paternity that is in heaven. Who could it come from if not the Father, as God One and Three Persons, who are Father of the elect and the faithful with the same paternity which belongs to the Father alone?

From this you may also draw the appetizing and sweet thought that just as I remain eternally in the most sweet embrace of the Father's heart,[13] so too do the blessed remain, in their own way, in the loving heart of their common Father, who holds them to His heart in a fatherly manner caressing and kissing them much more strongly than He suggested concerning people who would caress as a mother would her child, while dangling him on her knee;[14] or a bride would her bridegroom;[15] or the merciful father did to the Prodigal Son;[16] which are examples far removed from what is done most gloriously in heaven.

4415 Man. – O how blessed are you who are Blessed, and who are so highly favoured by God. You are wonderfully consoled in a thousand ways in this situation. You see what constitutes God's Majesty, which is infinite. You clearly contemplate Him on the highest throne of infinite glory, and although He sees you bowed down He looks on you as His children and loves you with all the strength of His love and regards you with honour with all His immense Majesty. You do not recognise the love that He has for you only from those embraces, but your eye penetrates the depths of His heart where such love resides You take this love into yourself and experience its grandeur and sweetness in your very being. You enjoy much more than even what is said in Scripture, more that we can conjecture by using symbols, more than we can conceive of with our intellect. Still we, who are so poor and far

removed from such mysteries, push ahead using what we can to assist our weakness so as not to be completely starved of the bread of Angels.

Action

4416 *Christ.* – O Man, see how you are supported by divine favour in that you can address me your God and Father quite naturally even on earth. This is not simply a manner of speaking, but is a real fact with implications. Otherwise I would not have told you to say this when you pray. You experience some of the consequences now, but in heaven you will experience them in full and to the greatest perfection. Just as the consequences are far removed from your understanding, so this favour is far beyond your comprehension. Indeed you do not appreciate the divine fatherhood which is yours even now.[17]

Man. – O, our wretched ignorance, because of which we do not recognise so many of the favours that have been given to us! However, who could ever be so ignorant as not to understand and proclaim just how great is the favour that has been granted to us unworthy men of having God as our Father? Would whoever had received such grace on earth not look forward to receiving immense glory in heaven from the same God who did him so much honour on earth? Because He is really our Father and since we do not now realise what a blessing this is, should we not be certain that one day He will enable us to see Him? When the divine favours are perfected forever, we could not think that He would confer His paternity on us to a low degree. O grace, which flows from such fatherly love!

O men, whose Father is really God, do we regard such grandeur and our nobility as worth nothing? Have we not shockingly sold and squandered this birthright for lentil stew?[18] Do we not regard ourselves as only being children of the world? Do we who are so ungrateful for such an honour not show ourselves to be most iniquitous? Do we not regard as nothing the heavenly excellence which comes from such grace and which is endowed with such glory?

4417 O, my soul, place yourself in thought in the loving arms of your loving Father, and receive those indescribable caresses and enjoy what experience has already taught you to expect. See if a thousand worlds could provide such consolation even if you travelled a thousand miles.

Remember that maternal affection and behaviour are also derived from divine paternity, so that from its breasts the saints suck completely the milk of eternal sweetness, proving that which the spouse says to his bride is true: *Thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.*[19]

Remain here, stay here for a while, in the bosom of your most loving Father, forgetting everything else, and counting as nothing everything other than this.

Ask Him for some graces, whatever you wish. He has taught and exhorted you through the Prophet to delight in Him and He will certainly grant you the requests of your heart.[20] Ask for even more and in greater abundance, since if He gives to everyone with abundance, He will give the wonderful fullness of His graces to the one who is in His bosom. *Thanks be to God.*

Our Father, Hail Mary.

*Concerning the special blessedness of the Saints
in doing God's will.
Practice XXX*

Preamble

4418 O source of all good, divine will, who made those who love Your saints because they did Your will, I beg of You to send Your Spirit down on me, your servant, so that I may know and desire what You want me to do, since up to now I have not desired this, but have been cold because I have damaged vision and weak willpower.

To achieve this, just as here on earth you show me what You require of those who belong to You, which is what You command, so too make me understand, as far as one who is on the journey can, that which You promise to give in heaven, and what we should ask of You at present.

This quality, which makes those who possess it saints, will also enable us who observe all the good things that You will, once we recognise it, to see how wretched our present state is where we have done so many things that are contrary to Your will.

Meditation

4419 If the Son of God incorporated so many of His virtuous actions, which contain the peak of perfection, under the heading of doing the Father's divine will,[21] because that is where they originate, what they mean to achieve, their measuring stick and perfection, you cannot doubt that all heavenly beatitude is contained in the divine will, so that it is the only source of every creature and also their highest objective, and what it was that prearranged the first and second stages of created perfection when they were created and structured and what gives them their ultimate perfection in being united to Him as they move ahead.

O God, make me worthy to understand a little of how the Saints are made blessed by this process. I know that there is only one state of blessedness, which comes from only one source, where all that is good is gathered into one substance. However, since I cannot behold this goodness in itself, let us proceed by means of various concepts and terminology, which are taken from creatures, through knowledge and conjecture, as our intellect rises to the knowledge of the highest happiness that is beyond what we can enjoy here and which can be investigated in no other way that by following different pieces of evidence.

4420 Now as one of these pieces of evidence is to be found in contemplating God's will as the origin of blessedness by investigating this the intellect will discover the greatest good fortune of the blessed. By becoming aware in general that on one hand God's will is the source from which all good things come to creatures, and on the other hand that their highest good is the beatitude that can only come from this very source. There is no good fortune apart from Him and it can only come about in union with Him. Whoever is united with Him, cannot be lacking in good fortune. Thus what the blessed enjoy is being gloriously united to Him. If every kind of good fortune comes from Him it follows that it depends on Him, and because of this

whoever receives anything from His is bound to Him as if by a rope. What the blessed enjoy, on earth by means of grace and in heaven by means of glory, is this kind of union. The heavenly union goes beyond the earthly union by so much that the Apostle calls the heavenly union “being with Christ” and the earthly union “walking with the Lord.”[22] Thus perfect union with the source of all goodness fills with supreme goodness those who are united with Him and makes them blessed.

4421 By contemplating in a general way we see that the prime reason that moved the divine will to make the world was to bestow the highest good on those who were not God and to make it possible for them to receive such goodness. Another point is that highest possible union is union with God. This is what is achieved by the great multitude of the elect, when each one returns to the source from which it has come. Because this is precisely the will of God, therefore the blessed say that this was why everything was created,[23] and why they are so specially blessed.

Coming to a specific point, such is the nature of the divine will; such is its very essence, that of itself it gives delight to those who behold it. To all those who know a man of good will be loved almost as a necessary consequence, so great is the strength and influence of love, which of itself enchants everyone. What, then, is to be said of the divine will when it is viewed in its own substance? O what a spectacle, blessed are those who behold it! There is nothing in this world that could match it.

4422 There is a consequence that follows this vision, because the kindness of such love, which is goodness in itself, draws the created will to itself, where it discovers its own purpose and fulfilment and immerses itself completely in that infinite abyss, desiring to annihilate itself in order to transform itself into this and become totally what it is beholding. O how poor we are if we do not know these things!

To this we need to add that the divine will is infinitely pleased with the created will, because it is the unique image of the divine will, not only by its nature, but also but because like the divine will it is free and holy because of this freedom which is well regulated and saintly and most of all because the created will has reached such glory and achieved this because while on earth it made the effort to be conformed to the divine will. On earth it achieved this by the practice of virtue, in heaven it is gloriously conformed to the divine will. Why should the divine will not be pleased with the created will when it sees such conformity? Even more because this conformity is the specific outcome of the divine will. The divine will is what created this image with its own hands and thus because it is its own and was made by it the divine will loves it and is pleased with it.

4423 How greatly does this provoke the will of a saintly person to love God by means of exalted reasoning? O how beautiful is the embrace of lovers who love one another! Whatever kind of union there might be here below it could not allure the intellect of a person who is on a thousand mile journey as effectively as this most blessed union does in which the will of the omnipotent God, by means of the reflection and image of itself, entices the person by transforming him into itself in a most holy manner. It entices the saintly person ahead with all its strength to focus himself on the divine infinite abyss, in which when he has lost himself and died to himself, he will experience a life of complete contentment.

The more the person realises that this is God's will the more exciting will his enticement be and the more vigorously will it motivate him. Since what he regarded as his achievement and strength on earth was to carry out God's will, and sees being perfectly conformed to God's will as his glory and reward in heaven, there could be nothing more pleasing and dear to him than continually executing God's will. Then he will engage as energetically and deeply as he can in what gives him enjoyment in the supreme good when he recognises that this is God's will. Thus to derive greater enjoyment in what will make him blessed, he will enter into this sharing with all his might, and enjoy his blessedness in a special way because he will see clearly how pleasing this is to God's will. I repeat that the creature will enjoy the good he has received in his own person.

Action

4424 Be still, my soul, and do not become involved in the circle[24] from which there is no escape, where God wants a person to be blessed for his own wellbeing and the person wants to be blessed because it is God's will. Here the argument of God wanting the best for the person and the person wishing to please God spins around endlessly, while not denying a second goal which is the glory of God which is the destiny of everything, God's infinitely free intent with respect to men by which He wishes then to be happy. This does not mean that men should not be grateful that all their wellbeing is connected to the will and honour of God.

I tell you, my soul, to remain at the centre and not let yourself become giddy by the spinning of this great circle. Remain with you feet on the ground where you are bound by what you know and consider in your surroundings. In the midst of all this keep your mind fixed on God and do His will. Convince yourself of the good that is to come. Does He not lead you with the chords of Adam and the bonds of charity?[25] Does he not lead you; I mean to say in ways that are typical of men, that is by means of strong arguments in order to taunt our will?

O faculty of free will you are the one who has to conform to God's will in order to be beatified. You have to conform on earth so this will await you in heaven. In heaven God Himself will bring this to perfection. You have to deserve this and He will reward you, with each working in its own way. This is the time to become deserving of the reward.

4425 What are you doing now, o my lazy soul? Why let your will waste time? Why do you not always control your will and align it with God's will so that it will always act in conformity to God's will? O, may I never make a move that is different from what God originally wanted!

Is not anything that you do different to this either useless or worthy of damnation? O what exceeding ignorance! O the negligence of people who do nothing else but transgress God's will! God's will is good and He loves us by means of what He wills. We will obtain goodness if we act in accord with His will. We will do evil if we follow what we want, when this is contrary to His will. All the evil we do comes from this, since it is only by doing His will that we do what is good.

Therefore, O my soul, make a firm resolution to always be intent on following God's will alone and in all circumstances and in all that you do raise your eyes to see what aspect of it is pleasing to God. Whenever you are uncertain, pray that He will show

you. Ask advice from the proper channels with the intention of pleasing God in all that you do.

To achieve this objective proceed with care and trepidation in His service. Study the law of God, keep up your spiritual exercises, most of all prayer from which you will receive the enlightenment and strength to carry out God's will.

Once meditations like these have warmed your heart causing it to sparkle with sighs and impetuous prayers to the Almighty, ask Him to assist you in this most necessary undertaking. Also join to this petition some prayers for your needs and the needs of others, for the living and the dead. Offer thanksgiving.[26]

Our Father, Hail Mary.

*Concerning the excellence of the union of
the elect with Christ.
Practice XVIII*

Preamble

4426 The sacred strength of holy prayer and its glorious effect is such that its first fruit is to unite the mind to God, which is certainly the only thing that will suffice to make me pray frequently and fervently, since this is the best outcome that we may expect from praying.

Indeed the reason why God allows us to feel other needs is so that when we seek His help, we will come to obtain the higher gift of our mind being united with Him.

O Lord, this is what I desire to be the motive for my coming before You now for guidance; so that because of this motivation, which is something more noble, I may in future always act thus make me aware now of the excellence of our union with You.

Meditation

4427 The sacred privilege of the Saints and the glorious condition of paradise is that up there all goodness and how it is obtained can be seen whereas here we know very little and are quite ignorant, so ordinarily none of us are certain of having God's grace and of being united with God. Even when we are certain of this we do not see grace itself. Much less do we see God in Himself nor do we realise how such goodness could reside in man. However, the saints see all of this.

What they know about union with God and what clarity they possess about how great this union is, they know by seeing God Himself as living in them. They see God's indwelling with all its circumstances and all its effects as being the main aspect of this union. Consequently they are happier.

Therefore anyone who wishes to taste the delights of heaven while on earth would do well to investigate their good fortune. To do this it is good to consider certain matters and this is the first, namely that no one can go to God except through Christ, nor will anyone be closely united with God except in so far as he is either united to Christ or not.[27]

4428 The second consideration is that just as union with Christ is the means by which all men are united with God; consequently union with God will be the greater or lesser in proportion to the strength of this union. Thus in order to understand the excellence of union with God it is most useful to go back to considering the latter union

To do this we have to consider some other things. In the first place, because we cannot see the object clearly, but have to proceed by using metaphors, as God did in reference to this matter we should choose the noblest and most accurate of these that we can find. These are to be found within ourselves since we are the noblest of creatures and above all others in the world. Because we experience the deepest kind of union, this also serves to provide understanding for us to rise by means of what is spiritual using our intellect.

Let us first understand that the noblest of unions within is the union of soul and body because the union of these two distinct entities constitutes one person. This is a useful representation of the personal union in Christ. Just as the rational soul and the flesh constitute a single person, so Godhead and Humanity are one in Christ.[28] The two unions which follow this are head and body and husband and wife, all of which were made and constituted by God. These represent the union between Christ and the Church, which is very deep, but not as deep as the personal union in Christ.

4429 We note the excellence of this union in the first place through the similarity of the parts, since God made woman, similar to man, as his helpmate.[29] There is no doubt that just as the union of Adam and Eve is a symbol of the union of Christ and the Church, the union of Christ and the Church is even nobler and more perfect than that. Unlike Adam who was made in God's image and likeness, Christ is the very Image of the Father, so that whoever sees Christ sees the Father at the same time.[30] For the Church to be the image of Christ who is so intimately the image of God implies an extraordinary excellence in the Church. If the natural similarity of man to God implies that he is exalted far above other creatures,[31] what must the similarity between Christ and the Church and Christ and God imply? O how poor are our tongue and mind that they can neither describe nor conceive our worth! Blessed are the saints who are joyful in beholding it and while being joyful see it!

This similarity is so intense that that Christ is not simply called the bridegroom but the head, and the Church is not simply called the bride but the body,[32] because such a degree of similarity which exists between the head and the body is required so that it is not just for show but can be defined as part of the nature of the thing.

However, the similarity and the union are related to each other, just as the woman, who is similar to the man, is his associate by being his helpmate. The union of the head to the body is for their mutual benefit and united wellbeing. The excellence of the Church is derived from its union with Christ. What is more in this case similarity and union go hand in hand, since the two are not only united because they are similar, but in this union the similarity of the Church with what is divine is like the impression a seal makes on wax when it is pressed on it.

4430 Does it not follow from this that the all the goodness of Christ really that of the Church, to which He gives everything that is His in this indescribable union and that she gives everything to Him? If in marriage here on earth the couple present the vitality of their bodies to one another, this will take place in a much more noble manner where there is not simply a union of bodies, but a union that is total, in

which Christ and the Church give each other completely to one another. This is another wonderful sharing through which both are enriched by receiving one another and having received this enrichment freely give themselves to one another again. Thus when the Church possesses the whole Christ as He has given Himself to her, she turns back to Him adorned with this, presenting Him with the rich and free gift of herself and Himself, and Christ who possesses the Church by means of grace, gives and shares Himself with her once again.

This is most ardent love, that heavenly furnace, in which the two are melted together, not making themselves one flesh, but one spirit, one body, one object which no metaphor in the world could possibly capture. Thus it follows that they enjoy this together and individually, not as belonging to an individual, but a common property. The Church does not rejoice over what she is in herself but what she is in Christ. Christ does the same in loving and rejoicing over His Church, for it pleases Him that she is like Him, in being rich, beautiful, sweet, great, powerful, worthy, because when the Church possesses these things she possesses what He wants her to possess. In addition to this He has another pleasure when He sees that she has received such good things from Him. She also experiences delight in the goodness of her bridegroom and in what He has given her and she only wishes to honour and please Him in every way.

4431 There is no doubt that this kind of love exists in Christ since it is the noblest kind of love. However, it is certain that He also has been and is in His Church in which there have always been men like Him who, in the name of the entire body, with the purest of souls, speak with Christ Himself in divine contemplation. All His servants, all hermits, all those living in seclusion and all who have been chosen by the Spirit of the bridegroom and whom He will never abandon, have been called to these heights.[33]

In heaven this is carried out most nobly by both parties. When the saints see this being done in the name of the Church they experience infinite contentment. They offer supplication in glory, for what the Church militant cannot do because of their situation in the present life, asking that they be gloriously transformed into Christ.

They gain special enjoyment from another excellent aspect of this union, namely, that Christ remains continually before the Father, not only as head, bridegroom or special person, and also remains together with the entire multitude of the elect who are united with Him as the head with its body, with all of them, in the sight of the Father, casting glances of admiration over the beauty coming from His infinity. Oh the unspeakable contentment of the saints in beholding this host united with the Son of God, which is so pleasing in the sight of God and who stands before Him with so much trust! This comes about through Christ, over whose glory they rejoice infinitely, experiencing special joy that He receives such honour and glory in this manner and that God is so delighted in His Son, through whom He receives all glory from creatures. This is the deep abyss of fulfilment in which the saints are submerged that is unspeakable and indescribable to us.

Action

4432 Oh my soul, consider some of these lofty concepts of blessed glory and of the delights that await us in heaven. Recall the delights of love that depict Christ and the Church in the images of love in the Canticle recognising that they are images

and that all the kinds of love or delight that is found in the world amounts to nothing.

At the same time remember that you belong to this body as a member and are Christ's spouse.[34] Because of this you are infinitely obligated to God, and ought to thank Him with all the love in your heart.

Think of how much injury you cause when you violate and stain the holy body of so great a head, which always occurs whenever you commit sin. Oh who would understand the wrong you do to Christ when through sinning you offend Him in that way! Would you not rather wish that the ground would open and swallow you, than that you should contaminate something that is so holy?

Oh, if He were in a situation where He could suffer, how much would he endure when a person separated himself from Christ cutting himself off from His body? However, the state of glory now prevents this from happening. He would have felt this on earth because of the way He loves. Oh, my soul, how many mortal sins, how many ferocious wound have we inflicted on the heart of the loving Christ through sinning, killing His members that were living! Oh sin, who can estimate your wickedness, how is it possible that you ever committed such a thing?

Alternatively, consider our dignity and the goodness when we share in being members of this holy body. Consider how we ought to put all our efforts into preparing ourselves for this very noble and rich state.

4433 Beg God, that as we are probably already in an exalted state with Christ in His sight, to impress this on our mind so that we look upon ourselves as being in the state which Christ has placed us. Once a person has experienced the spiritual significance of this as he should, let him pray to the Almighty to become worthy to enter this state and to never fall so as to abandon it, but pass each day profitably receiving more grace as this is in accord with such dignity.

Waiting here in the arena of prayer where our Advocate[35] is always present, let us pray for all our needs, those that we have which are spiritual and temporal, in this life and in the next, whether they are our needs or those of other people, but especially for those to whom we are most indebted.

Let us pray for those who are being cleansed in the next life and who are most surely members of this body and who are most certainly alive, that, by sharing in the benefits of this body, they may experience the assistance of our prayers which everything indicates we ought to offer for them out of charity.

Let us thank God who gives them a share in His blessings.[36]

Our Father, Hail Mary.

*Concerning Christ's High Priesthood.
Practice XXXVIII.*

4434 Since because of what happened in the world mankind was expelled from Paradise,[37] from that time onwards he had to offer sacrifice to God, and nothing else than this would suffice on earth apart from prayer which is a true sacrifice offered to the Almighty and consequently I am bound to pray always and never cease.

But so that this sacrifice might be acceptable it must be spotless. Because it comes from unclean seed,[38] no one can be found on earth that can make mankind clear except You alone, Oh Lord. Ultimately I have recourse to You, praying to You to condescend to clean me and praying to You in such a way that I offer myself to You.

May fire come down from heaven to consume the whole sacrifice,[39] and to kindle within me those holy emotions which I have employed Your hallowed meditations to arouse.

Meditation

4435 The Apostle St Paul adds to Christ's sublime exaltedness the position of sitting at the Father's right hand as High Priest,[40] such a great dignity that no one can take it upon himself, but had to wait to be called by God as Aaron was.[41] Christ Himself did not take it upon Himself, but received it from God's hand, whom it pleased to confer this honour on His Son, Christ.

As this position of grandeur began on earth, it had its fulfilment in heaven. Just as He had won His supremacy by means of humble obedience, so too He won His supremacy as priest during His mortal life, and now it is consummated and continued in heaven. This is supremacy which belongs to His glory in heaven and which I desire to contemplate.

To understand this I have to remember that Christ's kingship was designed by God to bring about the salvation of mankind. The specific purpose of having superiority is the wellbeing of the people who are given kings to rule and govern them. This is why Christ is prince as well as Saviour.[42] He brought about our salvation by offering Himself as an immaculate victim to God,[43] an action that belongs to a priest. However, by offering Himself He saved the world as priest and Saviour. Because the humility of offering Himself to God as a sacrifice when he died on the Cross was His exaltation. His supremacy came about through His high priesthood. This high priesthood has a very special dignity which is of so great a dignity that it is almost impossible to believe that God would confer it on a man yet he took an oath to give it to this man, and He never repented of having made this oath.[44] Therefore Christ is most glorious in heaven because of this dignity. An indication of this was given when He came to put this priesthood into practice at the time of His Passion and He said to the Father when praying: "The hour has come: glorify your Son." [45]

4436 Such grandeur is composed of two parts, namely, its beginning and its fulfilment. The beginning took place on earth and the fulfilment in heaven. The beginning was on the Cross between two thieves; the fulfilment was on the throne at God's side. The grandeur of the beginning consists in more than one thing. In the first place it consists in that as all mankind was in a disgraceful state in the sight of God and thus unworthy of Paradise, this could be obtained only by His grace and He was the only one who could restore everyone to grace and make them worthy of a heavenly inheritance. He did this by sacrificing Himself to God for the sins of the world.

There is also this consideration, God is the only one who can forgive sins, and yet He gave this man the power to also forgive sins,[46] and, indeed, made other men His vicars, who had the power to remit the sins of sinners.[47] This is so because as He had offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for sinners, He not only merited

forgiveness for them, but the power for He himself to be the one who forgave them and the power to share such a great power with others.

4437 This sacrifice contained all the superior excellence that could ever be contained in a work that originated in a created nature. Thus it actually contained all the virtues put together and each one to the highest perfection, with all that could be desired in virtues. The One who achieved this and was the priest was exceedingly excellent, in the first place because He was God, and no one but God could have achieved such virtue. Then He received from God the authority of high priest to offer sacrifice through these virtues. This also took place by means of the high degree of grace that existed within Him, by means of which He was most acceptable to God. What is more, He exercised charity in a unique manner by zealously and ardently making this offering for the honour of God and the salvation of mankind. Finally He exercised the virtue of patience to the highest degree. Since He was not only the priest but also the sacrifice in His death, He wished that this death would be the most difficult of deaths that ever was or would be, with all the terrible circumstances of death. This is what He wished to state when He said: "You have brought me down into the dust of death,"[48] even though His body did not return to dust.[49] He reacted to all this with the highest patience, so that just as that death was the worst of deaths; it involved the highest degree of patience.

Likewise and as a consequence this sacrifice resulted in all the triumph that human nature could ever reach, so that if the whole mass of creatures had been involved they could not have produced an effect as strong as that which this sacrifice produced on its own, for it extinguished God's anger against mankind, changing them from enemies into sons and heirs as a consequence of His reign and the marvellous results that attended upon it.

4438 Finally the cross was the source and the price of His excellence in heaven, where it reached its fulfilment which was marked by the following outstanding consequences. Firstly, it kept what had taken place on earth before God's eyes as if it had just taken place and was fresh, as if He had been crucified and undergone His other sufferings this instant, and continually.

Also whereas at the time a great part of what was offered up on the cross was a promise that concerned the future, now it was fulfilled, because on the cross He not only offered Himself with all the riches of so much grace and the many merits of His virtues, but He also offered the merits of His elect by predicting that they too had made this sacrifice with Him. Now this is fulfilled when all the blessed join Him in making a voluntary sacrifice of themselves with Him and through Him. This means that the most blessed fulfilment of Christ's high priesthood is excellent in as much as it is fitting for Him as a priest, together with all the blessed in heaven and the faithful on earth as His ministers, to offer this most holy and perfect sacrifice with each offering himself and all offering it together.

4439 It also has this greatness, that up above He offers Himself with His own hands and not by means of the hands of scoundrels, as happened on earth. He does this now on earth through the hands of His most beloved spouse the holy Church. Now this great priest is not dressed in filthy clothes as he was before,[50] but in a glorious stole and in a holy and honourable robe, as is fitting for such a priest, who stands in the sight of God in the act of making an offering. The ornate vestments of the priests of old were symbols of this.[51] The Church militant imitates this by showing how glorious this sacrifice is and how fitting it is to surround it with all

kinds of glorious pomp. Oh how magnificent is Christ's glory in heaven as the high priest!

To add to this grandeur of the high priesthood it was linked to the attribute of supremacy and so He sits at the right hand of the Father. This is so that He will give the appearance of being the supreme prince and this will make His high priesthood more glorious. Because of this it follows that He possesses all possible grandeur, being prince and high priest from head to foot, so that as a prince every creature is subject to Him, and being high priest He is united to God most intimately, so that He is the only one who can enter the Holy of Holies.[52]

Action

4440 Oh blessed are the citizens of heaven who behold such glory in Christ and behold the charity with which He makes the great offering of Himself and of all the elect to God in such glory, a gift that is infinitely pleasing to the eternal divinity, which endured such iniquity in the world, and converts and guides so many sinners to salvation!

We have a great sea of spiritual riches and witnesses of grace here. What a treasure it is to have such an Advocate before God, who, in glory, offers on our behalf hands filled with what He has merited on earth, in order to gain for us the favours of which we stand in need!

When all the elect in heaven and the faithful on earth bring their share, which is the fruit that comes from the cross, to the divine altar, the tree and its fruit will be pleasing to God. Oh why are we not all concerned about gathering a mass of merits, which Christ would offer to the Father in the name of all mankind? Why do we embark on such an honourable undertaking so poverty stricken?

4441 Why do we approach the sacrifice of the holy Mass, which is greater than anything else as a continuous permanent sacrifice, in which the Church Militant combines with the Church Triumphant, and offer it in such an unworthy and reprehensible manner? Surely this is going too far! Are we not being as irreverent, distracted, ignorant and cold as if it was a common earthly occupation? Oh who will grasp this mystery!

Life yourself up, Oh my soul, by means of contemplation, to the heavenly altar which is nothing but Christ Himself, priest and sacrifice and consider it well, and see the Lamb of God on that altar with all the saints, who come like unspotted lambs to offer you that prized treasure. Indeed because of the beatific union there is only one host, just as the same union makes all of them one priest.

When you have seen this, aspire to finding yourself one day in that heavenly temple to sing that most solemn Mass, which began on the Cross, and will continue while there are still just souls on earth, who though their merits will make this divine holocaust rich and fertile. And with the yearning and expectation of not advancing empty handed (no one shall appear in the glorious sight of God empty handed),[53] advance with hands full of holy and virtuous works.

Since it is now time to reap this harvest, because earth is the only fertile place to sow seed, and the harvest is up above, be careful now and do not waste the short time of the present.

4442 Oh, think carefully about this, dwell on it, study continually how to make yourself rich in merit, which the angels will carry up to heaven to the sacred altar, for by participating at this now you will make yourself more rich and worthy of that most blessed company.

In the midst of your needs remember to enter that heavenly temple by humbly sharing in that most acceptable sacrifice and praying to the Almighty that by virtue of that sacrifice He will kindly condescend to help and support you.

If on earth you have Masses said for your needs or those of others, make sure that you beg the merciful and virtuous Priest to apply the heavenly Mass for these needs because it is most powerful in satisfying and providing for everything. Oh how many benefits do we lose through ignorance!

Oh holiest of Priests, who are so pleased when we present all our needs to You, even though You know the details of all our needs, look upon them with Your kind eye and bring them up to the Father, offering them through Your own holy offering.

I also offer these needs to You, who are also God, who provides for beggars, for those who are in need and for those who yearn to come to the table, that heavenly table, where they shall not eat flesh that has been consecrated, and part of a sacrifice which is finished, since it is never completed or finished, but makes all things one by being consumed and offered.[54] *Deo gratias.*

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Concerning the glory of the most Blessed Virgin Mary.

Practice I.

Preamble

4443 Oh Lord, who have honoured Your Mother so magnificently, thus showing us that we should do the same, I now come to holy prayer with the desire of asking You to teach and assist me to do this.

As it is a fact that we have nothing to offer her as You had when You exalted her, enriched and enlightened her, it seems that what is expected of us and what suffices for us is that we consider the gifts and favours that You gave her, rejoicing over them and thus increasing her magnificence in our eyes.

Therefore, as You conferred these favours in the first place, replenish them in our hearts thus expanding and amplifying them. So, now I shall begin to meditate on this.

Meditation

4444 It is most certain that among the saints, after her Son, the Blessed Virgin occupies the highest place in heaven. However, to contemplate this glory we must contemplate her lofty position and prominence in detail. The first thing that comes to mind is its cause, which comes about because of her importance and dignity as the Mother of God.

Such distinction belongs to her alone and is greater than any other splendour, because of her outstanding connection with God, to whom she gave her own flesh, from which the Holy Spirit fashioned a pure body, in which the fullness of divinity was pleased to dwell.[55] She alone supplied the material to make the most holy body, which completely overwhelmed the Virgin, filling her, who was the holy temple, with the glory of God, to which no other person could ever have access, no matter how much they desired it.

It stands to reason, then, that in heaven Maria should have a degree of distinction which corresponds to the grandeur of that glory, which exceeds that of all the saints, so that not one of them individually or all put together could have reached such merit or such appropriate giftedness, so that she makes up a choir of beatitudes which are distinct from and superior to all others, which fill her alone with the grandeur of dignity and glory to a degree no less than and, indeed, more than, most of the saints and the innumerable choir of the saints individually or all together.

4445 First of all this, which is designated as being at the right hand of the Son is a more exalted position because, just as being on the Father's right hand is recognised as Christ's place which is the noblest and highest of all, so being at Christ's right hand is deservedly recognised as the place that is nearest to Him and that is raised above all others. However this is not to mean for her the same as it means for Him.[56] It only means that she is there as assisting on Him, as His consort in as far as this is possible. Therefore she is called Queen, although she does not possess the title fully, but as someone who has been given all power in heaven and on earth.[57] The title implies that she is the Queen who is waiting on Christ and also Queen of the Church of which she is a part and a member and that the Church possesses dignity and grandeur by means of its noblest member.

This position is not only higher than any other. but is also adorned in a way that is fitting to such exaltedness and all the noble circumstances that should accompany a position of such glory, such as rest, delight, security, beauty, riches, and especially brilliance, which is a special condition in Paradise, that is caused by many things. She is brilliant of herself, having been made that way by God and furthermore set a glow by the proximity to His position from which He shows the consummate glory of His presence. Because of her position in the glorious Body of Christ she shines as its most worthy member and the one who is nearest to Him. She shines in her virginal body which never loses its dignity as God's nuptial bed. And at the end there is a radiation of splendour from all parts of Paradise, including both the thrones and the bodies which combine to form a very simple mixture of splendours, which is fitting for where the Queen of the supreme King reigns.

4446 All the Virgin's inner glory is proportionate to the position and merit of one who possesses a special plenitude of glory in heaven, just as she possessed fullness of grace on earth.[58] If this fullness prepared her to accommodate God in her own person it endows her with very special union with God in blessedness which is the main source of this glory and is a union that is unknown and beyond understanding to us earthly beings

We may easily engage in such thoughts by turning things over in our minds as follows. If when spouses beget children they become one flesh, one point of origin not two,[59] how great was the union on earth and now in heaven between God and the Virgin who by cooperating with each other brought forth the Eternal Son of God in time? If God commanded consorts to love each with all their hearts in such

a union of the flesh,[60] what must be the kind of love and union of spirit that passes between God and the Virgin as spouses who loved and were loved? What will be the degree of beatitude which she will derive from such a union?

4447 If the union of parents with their children comes as a consequence of their coming together what can compare with Mary's union with the true Son of God? In this case the love is not divided between two persons, the father and the mother, since Christ had only a mother on earth in whom both the love of a father and a mother had to be combined. Therefore her Son had to direct the love which He should have had for father and mother towards His mother because she had taken the place of father and mother. This did not diminish the love for God, since the love of God is of a higher order while the love due to a father and mother in the flesh remains intact but is now directed completely to Mary who also takes the place of His Father. Yet her Son is also God and the total love that is fitting for the Son of God and the Mother of God passes between them. Oh incomprehensible love! What glory this confers upon Mary! Whoever wishes to understand such love must move above into the chorus where others are not permitted to enter.

Because then the love that comes about in such unions as were a unique privilege for Mary is incomprehensible, the joy that accompanies such love is beyond all comparison and is not only beyond our capacity of understanding but also the capacity of all the blessed.

4448 A deeper love is created by love in itself, which is a unifying virtue, by means of which the Virgin is bound very closely to God both as spouse and Son closer it binds the Virgin to God as her spouse and Child, and this is stronger than any other motive for love, such as love of the supreme good, of the Creator, of the Redeemer or the one who confers beatitude. Oh divine and virginal delight!

Thus the happiness of the Virgin's soul through which it is enlightened to recognise light and infinite beauty more than others do, begins when she sees the divine decrees which pertain to her, such as the divine providence which from all eternity chose her to be His Mother and Spouse; when she saw the Wisdom that established the manner in which the world was to be saved, the goodness and charity that moved Him to do this and to shed so many graces on her so that she would cooperate with God in this work in a fitting manner, to a greater degree than anyone else, when she saw all that was involved in the mystery of the Incarnation, and in the Redemption in which she had a role, when she also saw her predestined glory and God's wonderful decrees in carrying this out. Oh sweet contemplation that was appropriate for a person such as this!

4449 Her emotional reactions were completely in line with what she came to know and she reacted with love to so much divine love which she wanted to work in favour of the whole of mankind, which would happen only through her sharing this with mankind those great favours that were her special privilege, so that all generations would have reason to call her blessed.[61]

She derived special pleasure from being the only creature out of all creatures, who responded in the greatest possible degree, to God's excessive love when He wanted to become man and gave to her alone the strength to be His assistant in that work, as one who came the closest to the heat of the furnace, when He accomplished the mystery within her and she became the place in which such a great fire spread its heat. For her this unique privilege is the reason for her indescribable supreme satisfaction, since being full of love she glows with returning love to God. Then

seeing herself to have been chosen beyond all creatures to make the greatest response to such love, she experience the great joy that such a great favour deserves.

4450 Consequently within her soul there followed the spiritual glow and beauty which was appropriate to such graces and glory, and rewards in line with her virtue and what she deserved. Therefore, she was clothed in gold because of her supreme union with God,[62] and was admirably surrounded by a diversity of glory and beatifying trappings and appeared as brighter than if she was adored with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet and the stars around her head.

She has not lost her bodily beauty and although men have their own beauty she has the beauty that belongs to those women who often appear in Sacred Scripture and who were praised because of their beauty. Just as Mary was blessed among women so she was beautiful among women, indeed the most beautiful. This was a most fitting reward for the flesh with which the eternal Sun clothed Himself who was the clearest expression of God's goodness. This is not all. All the excellence of the bodies of creatures should be and is in this blessed body, which among all the bodies of creatures served God more than any other. Oh how blessed are the saints in beholding this glorious body, gazing on it as the source of the Body of the Creator and Redeemer.

Action

4451 Should not the great obligation which we have incurred because you procured such favours and salvation itself for us from God provoke us into rejoicing and congratulating you on your glory and into being sincerely content over the good pleasure of God who in the depths of His most secret merciful judgements decreed to raise this dear little creature and make her so great?

We have three great reasons to rejoice with Mary over her glory. We should rejoice over the divine pleasure since what is pleasing to God should also be pleasing to us being absolutely certain that it is all good and holy. We should rejoice over Mary's glory in itself because it is amiable, desirable and fitting for one who had been placed in a position similar to light in the sun, and this was indeed Mary's position. We should rejoice thirdly because of our indebtedness to her. We have derived great benefit not only by sharing human nature with this most honourable individual, but by means of this Virgin each one of us personally has been saved and await to receive infinite favours on the Lord's Day.

4452 Therefore let us all honour and bless her joyfully, and through her praise and bless the omnipotent God who worked such great things in her so wonderfully.

In order to prolong this praise and thanksgiving let us prompt our soul with recalling and considering her greatness, pondering the excellence of her spousal and maternal union with God, the love that followed, the joy, the splendour of her soul and body, her glorious position and the reverence that the whole of paradise lovingly renders to her.

Let us be satisfied to be subject to such a Lady, who learnt from God who had merciful regard for her littleness and made it increase so that from her grandeur she turns her eyes of mercy towards poor sinners, not as a remote Queen, but as a merciful Mother.

Therefore let us have recourse to her in our need with great trust since she is our advocate before the great God, from whom she received such graces on earth and enjoys such glory in heaven.

4453 Let us then do this, O Blessed One, asking that you procure pardon for our sins, the light of grace, the exercise of virtue, and a happy taste for heavenly mysteries, especially your beauty and riches, which suffice to beautify and enrich earth and heaven.

Show yourself to be a mother by treating us as your children when we seek your help even in temporal matters, since we do not have purified hearts which would ask for nothing but heavenly gifts. What is more I beg of you that when you grant me these temporal gifts I will be enticed to love your good God, who is so generous as not to give base gifts.

May we who are poor and helpless and in need of someone to help us come before you in prayer, so that you might have regard for our disasters and raise your powerful hand to help us.

Let us ask you to offer our thanks to God for what He has done for us through you and for the graces which we have received through you.

Our Father, Hail Mary.

ENDNOTES

[1] Cf. 2 Cor. 1, 3-4.

[2] Cf. Jn 14, 6; 17, 6.

[3] Cf. Ps 118, 135 (*Vulg.*).

[4] Cf. 1 Cor. 13, 12.

[5] Jn 1, 18.

[6] Cf. Eph 3, 15.

[7] Mt 17, 5.

[8] Lk 20, 13; Mk 12, 6.

[9] Cf. Mt 22, 30.

[10] Job 38, 7.

[11] Cf. Lk 20, 36.

[12] My 6, 9.

[13] Cf. Jn 1, 18.

[14] Cf. Is 60, 12.

[15] Cf. Cant. 1, 2.

[16] Cf. Lk 15, 20.

[17] Cf. I Jn 3, 2.

[18] Gen 25, 34.

[19] Cant 1, 1-2 (*Vulg.*).

[20] Ps 36, 4 (*Vulg.*) This meditation is taken from the *Theatre of Paradise*, part I, book II, 229-234.

[21] Cf. Mt 7, 12; 12, 50; Mk 3, 35; Jn 6, 38.

[22] Cf. Phil 1, 23; 2 Cor 5, 6.

[23] Apoc 4, 11.

[24] This is a figure of speck that Francesco da Jesi transformed into a method of contemplative prayer.

[25] Cf. Hos. 11, 4.

- [26] The meditation is taken from part I, Book II, 350-355.
- [27] Cf. Jn 14, 6. 21; 15, 1-10; 16, 27.
- [28] Cf. St Athanasius *Symb. Quicumque* (PG 28, 1583 B).
- [29] F. Gen 2, 18.
- [30] Cf. 2 Cor 4, 4; Col 1, 13; Jn 14, 9.
- [31] Cf. Gen. 1, 26-27.
- [32] Cf. Eph 5, 23.
- [33] Cf Mt 28, 20.
- [34] Cf 1 Cor 6, 15; 12, 27; Eph 4, 25.
- [35] Cf. 1 Jn 2, 1.
- [36] This splendid meditation is taken from Part II, pages 95-100.
- [37] Cf. 3, 23.
- [38] Cf .Job 14, 4.
- [39] Cf. 1 Kgs 18, 38.
- [40] Cf. Heb 2, 17.
- [41] Cf. Heb 5, 4.
- [42] Cf. Acts 5, 31.
- [43] Cf. Heb 9, 14.
- [44] Cf Ps 109, 4 (*Vulg*); Heb 7, 21.
- [45] Jn 17, 1.
- [46] Cf Lk 5, 21. 24.
- [47] Cf. Jn 20, 23.
- [48] Cf. Ps 21, 16 and 15, 10 (*Vulg*).
- [49] Cf. Acts 2, 31.
- [50] Cf. Zech 3, 3.
- [51] Cf. Ex. 39.
- [52] Cf. Heb. 9, 12.
- [53] Cf, Ex 23, 15.
- [54] Note the theological richness of this meditation which is taken from the work that was cited, Part II, Book I, 203-208.
- [55] Cf.Col 2, 9.
- [56] Cf. Ps 44, 10 (*Vulg*).
- [57] Cf. Mt 28, 18.
- [58] Cf. Lk 1, 28.
- [59] Cf. Mt 19, 6.
- [60] Cf. Eph 5, 25; Col 3, 19.
- [61] Cf. Lk 1, 48.
- [62] Cf. Ps 44, 10 (*Vulg*).