

## CHAPTER X.

*O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

O SWEET VIRGIN MARY.

**The Sweetness of the Name of Mary during Life and at Death.**

THE great name of Mary, which was given to the divine Mother, did not come to her from her parents, nor was it given to her by the mind or will of man, as is the case with all other names that are imposed in this world; but it came from heaven, and was given her by a divine ordinance. This is attested by St. Jerome,<sup>1</sup> St. Epiphanius,<sup>2</sup> St. Antoninus,<sup>3</sup> and others. "The name of Mary came from the treasury of the divinity,"<sup>4</sup> says St. Peter Damian. Ah, yes, O Mary, it was from that treasury that thy high and admirable name came forth; for the most Blessed Trinity, says Richard of St. Laurence, bestowed on thee a name above every other name after that of thy Son, and ennobled it with such majesty and power, that he willed that all heaven, earth, and hell, on only hearing it, should fall down and venerate it; but I will give the author's own words: "The whole Trinity, O Mary, gave thee a name after that of thy Son above every other name, that in thy name every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth."<sup>5</sup> But amongst the other privileges of the name of Mary, and which were given to it by God, we will now examine that of the peculiar sweetness found in it by the servants of this most holy Lady during life and in death.

And in the first place, speaking of the course of our

<sup>1</sup> *De Nat. M. V.*<sup>2</sup> *Or. de Pras. Deip.*<sup>3</sup> *Hist.* p. 1, t. 4, c. 6, § 10.<sup>4</sup> "De thesauro Divinitatis, Mariæ nomen evolvitur."—*S. de Annunt.*<sup>5</sup> "Dedit tibi, Maria, tota Trinitas nomen quod est super omne nomen, post nomen Filii sui, ut in nomine ejus omne genua flectatur coelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum"—*De Laud. B. M. l. 1, c. 2.*

life, the holy anchorite Honorius used to say, that "this name of Mary is filled with every sweetness and divine savor;"<sup>1</sup> so much so, that the glorious 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."<sup>2</sup> It is narrated in the life of the Ven. Father Juvenal Ancina, Bishop of Saluzzo, that in pronouncing the name of Mary he tasted so great and sensible a sweetness, that, after doing so, he licked his lips. We read also that a lady at Cologne told the Bishop Massilius, that as often as she uttered the name of Mary she experienced a taste far sweeter than honey. The Bishop imitated her, and experienced the same thing.<sup>3</sup>

We gather from the sacred canticles, that on the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, the angels asked her name three times. *Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke?*<sup>4</sup> again, *Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?*<sup>5</sup> and again, *Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?*<sup>6</sup> "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."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Hoc nomen Mariæ plenum est omni dulcedine suavitate divina."  
—*Ap. Lyr. Tris. Mar.* l. 2. m. 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Jubilus in corde, mel in ore, melos in aure."—*Dom.* 3 *Quadr.* s. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Cæsarius, Dial.* l. 7. c. 50.

<sup>4</sup> "Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi?"—*Cant.* iii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> "Quæ est ista, quæ progreditur quasi aurora consurgens?"—*ib.* vi. 9.

<sup>6</sup> "Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens?"—*ib.* i. iii. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Forsitan quia dulce nomen sibi desiderant responderi."—*De Laud. V. M.* l. 1, c. 2.

But here I do not intend to speak of that sensible sweetness, for it is not granted to all; I speak of that salutary sweetness of consolation, of love, of joy, of confidence, of strength, which the name of Mary ordinarily brings to those who pronounce it with devotion.

The Abbot Francone, speaking on this subject, says, "there is no other name after that of the Son, in heaven or on earth, whence pious minds derive so much grace, hope, and sweetness."<sup>1</sup> 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," he continues, "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 odor of delightful sweetness." And he adds, in conclusion, "that 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."<sup>2</sup>

The Blessed Henry Suso,<sup>3</sup> also speaking of this sweetness, says, "that when he named Mary, he felt himself so excited to confidence, and inflamed with such love and joy, that between the tears and joy with which he pronounced the beloved name, he desired that his heart might leave his breast; for he declared that this most sweet name was like a honeycomb dissolving in the inmost recess of the soul;" and then he would exclaim:

<sup>1</sup> "Neque enim, post Filii sui nomen, aliud nomen cœlum aut terra nominat, unde tantum gratiæ, tantum spei, tantum suavitatis, piæ mentes concipiant."

<sup>2</sup> "Nomen namque Mariæ, mirum quid, suave, ac divinum, in se continet, ut, cum sonuerit amicis cordibus, amicæ suavitatis odorem spiret. Et mirum illud est de nomine Mariæ, ut, millies auditum, semper audiatur quasi novum."—*De Grat. D. l. 6.*

<sup>3</sup> *Dial. c. 16.*

“O most sweet name! O Mary, what must thou thyself be, since thy name alone is thus amiable and gracious!”

The enamoured St. Bernard, raising his heart to his good Mother, says with tenderness, “O great! O pious! 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 only need 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.”<sup>1</sup> “And if riches comfort the poor, because they relieve them in their distress, O how much more does thy name, O Mary,” says Richard of St. Laurence, “comfort us than any earthly riches! It comforts us in the anguishes of this life.” “Thy name, O Mary, is far better than riches, because it can better relieve poverty.”<sup>2</sup>

In fine, “thy name, O Mother of God, is filled with divine graces and blessings,”<sup>3</sup> as St. Methodius says. So much so, that St. Bonaventure declares, “that thy name, O Mary, cannot be pronounced without bringing some grace to him who does so devoutly.”<sup>4</sup> The Blessed Raymond Jordano says, “that however hardened and diffident a heart may be, the name of this most Blessed Virgin has such efficacy, that if it is only pronounced, that heart will be wonderfully softened.” I will, how-

<sup>1</sup> “O magna, O pia, O multum amabilis Maria! tu nec nominari potes, quin accendas, nec cogitari, quin recrees affectus diligentium te.” —*Depr. gl. V.*

<sup>2</sup> “Mariæ nomen longe melius quam divitiæ, quia melius angustiam relevat.” —*De Laud. B. M. l. 1, c. 2.*

<sup>3</sup> “Tuum, Dei genitrix, nomen divinis benedictionibus et gratiis ex omni parte refertum.” —*De Sim. et Anna.*

<sup>4</sup> “Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest sine nominantis utilitate.” —*Spec. B. V. lect. 9.*

ever, give his own words. "The power of thy most holy name, O ever-blessed Virgin Mary, is such that it softens the hardness of the human heart in a wonderful manner." He then tells us that it is she who leads sinners to the hope of pardon and grace: "By thee does the sinner recover the hope of forgiveness and of grace."<sup>1</sup>

Thy most sweet name, O Mary, according to St. Ambrose, "is a precious ointment, which breathes forth the odor of divine grace." The saint then prays to the divine Mother, saying: "Let this ointment of salvation enter the inmost recesses of our souls:"<sup>2</sup> that is, grant, O Lady, that we may often remember to name thee with love and confidence; for this practice 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." It is thus that Ludolph of Saxony addresses her.<sup>3</sup>

Father Pelbart says, "that as Jesus Christ by his five wounds gave a remedy for the evils of the world, so also does Mary, by her most holy name which is composed of five letters, daily bring pardon to sinners."<sup>4</sup>

For this reason is the holy name of Mary likened in the sacred canticles to oil: *Thy name is as oil poured out.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Tanta est virtus tui sacratissimi nominis, O semper benedicta Virgo Maria! quod mirabiliter emollit duritiam cordis humani; peccator per te respirat in spe veniæ ei gratiæ."—*Cont. de V. M.* c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Unguentum, nomen tuum; descendat istud unguentum in animæ præcordia. Sancta Maria, quod divina gratiæ spiramenta redolet."—*Instit. Virg.* c. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "O Mariæ! tui recordatio nominis, mœstos lætificat, errantes ad viam salutis revocat et peccatores, ne desperent, confortat."—*Vita Chr.* p. 2. c. 86.

<sup>4</sup> "Sic Maria, suo sanctissimo nomine, quod quinque litteris constat, confert quotidie veniam peccatoribus."—*Stell.* l. 6, p. 1. a. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Oleum effusum, nomen tuum."—*Off. B. V. resp.* 6.

On these words blessed Alan says that the glory of her name is compared to oil poured out; because oil heals the sick, sends out a sweet odor, and nourishes flames.<sup>1</sup> Thus also does the name of Mary heal sinners, rejoice hearts, and inflame them with divine love. Hence Richard of St. Laurence “encourages sinners to have recourse to this great name,” because it alone will suffice to cure them of all their evils; and “there is no disorder, however malignant, that does not immediately yield to the power of the name of Mary.”<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Thomas à Kempis affirms “that the devils fear the Queen of heaven to such a degree, that only on hearing her great name pronounced, they fly from him who does so as from a burning fire.”<sup>3</sup> The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget “that there is not on earth a sinner, however devoid he may be of the love of God, from whom the devil is not obliged immediately to fly, if he invokes her holy name with a determination to repent.”<sup>4</sup> On another occasion she repeated the same thing to the saint, saying, “that all the devils venerate and fear her name to such a degree, that on hearing it they immediately loosen the claws with which they hold the soul captive.”<sup>5</sup> Our Blessed Lady also told St. Bridget, “that in the same

<sup>1</sup> “Gloria nominis ejus oleo effuso comparatur; oleum ægrotantem sanat. odorem parit. flammam nutrit.”—*In Cant.* i.

<sup>2</sup> “Peccator es. ad Mariæ nomen confugias; ipsum solum sufficit ad medendum: nulla enim pestis quæ. ad nomen Mariæ. non cedit continuo.”—*De Laud. B. M.* l. i. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> “Expavescunt cœli Reginam spiritus maligni, et diffugiunt, audito nomine ejus. velut ab igne.”—*Ad Non.* s. 23.

<sup>4</sup> “Nullus tam frigidus ab amore Dei est, nisi sit damnatus, si invocaverit hoc nomen, hac intentione. ut nunquam reverti velit ad opus solitum, quod non discedat ab eo statim diabolus.”

<sup>5</sup> “Omnes dæmones verentur hoc nomen. et timent; qui audientes hoc nomen, Maria, statim relinquunt animam de unguibus, quibus tenebant eam.”

way as the rebel angels fly from sinners who invoke the name of Mary, so also do the good angels approach nearer to just souls who pronounce her name with devotion."<sup>1</sup>

St. Germanus declares, "that as breathing is a sign of life, so also is the frequent pronounciation of the name of Mary a sign either of the life of divine grace, or that it will soon come; for this powerful name has in it the virtue of obtaining help and life for him who invokes it devoutly." Addressing the Blessed Virgin, he says, "As breathing is a sign of life in the body, so is the frequent repetition of thy most holy name, O Virgin, by thy servants, not only a sign of life and of strength, but also it procures and conciliates both."<sup>2</sup>

In fine, "This admirable name of our Sovereign Lady," says Richard of St. Laurence, "is like a fortified tower, in which, if a sinner takes refuge, he will be delivered from death; for it defends and saves even the most abandoned."<sup>3</sup> But it is a tower of strength, which not only delivers sinners from chastisement, but also defends the just from the assaults of hell. Thus the same Richard says, "that after the name of Jesus, there is no other in which men find so powerful assistance and salvation as in the great name of Mary."<sup>4</sup> He says, "there is not such powerful help in any name, nor is there any other name given to men, after that of Jesus, from which

<sup>1</sup> "Angeli boni, audito hoc nomine, statim appropinquant magis justis."—*Rev.* l. I, c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Quomodo corpus vitalis signum operationis habet respirationem, ita etiam sanctissimum nomen tuum, O Virgo! quod in ore servorum tuorum versatur assidue, vitæ et auxilii non solum signum est, sed etiam ea procurat et conciliat."—*De Zona Deip.*

<sup>3</sup> "Turris fortissima, nomen Dominæ: ad ipsam fugiet peccator et liberabitur; hæc defendit quoslibet et quantumlibet peccatores."

<sup>4</sup> "Non est in aliquo alio nomine, tam potens adjutorium, nec est aliquod nomen datum hominibus, post dulce nomen Jesu, ex quo tanta salus refundatur hominibus."—*De Laud. B. M. l. II.*

so much salvation is poured forth upon men as from the name of Mary." Moreover, it is well known, and is daily experienced by the clients of Mary, that her powerful name gives the particular strength necessary to overcome temptations against purity. The same author in his commentary on the words of St. Luke, *and the Virgin's name was Mary*,<sup>1</sup> remarks that these two words, Mary and Virgin, are joined together by the Evangelist, to denote that the name of this most pure Virgin should always be coupled with the virtue of chastity."<sup>2</sup> Hence St. Peter Chrysologus says, "that the name of Mary is an indication of chastity,"<sup>3</sup> meaning, that when we doubt as to whether we have consented to thoughts against this virtue, if we remember having invoked the name of Mary, we have a certain proof that we have not sinned.

Let us, therefore, always take advantage of the beautiful advice given us by St. Bernard, in these words: "In dangers, in perplexities, in doubtful cases, think of Mary, call on Mary; let her not leave thy lips; let her not depart from thy heart."<sup>4</sup> 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. O, 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.

Consoling indeed are the promises of help made by Jesus Christ to those who have devotion to the name of Mary; for one day in the hearing of St. Bridget, he

<sup>1</sup> "Et nomen, Virginis Maria."—*Luke*, i. 27.

<sup>2</sup> "Nomini Mariæ virginitas et sanctitas inseparabiliter sunt adjuncta."—*Loco cit.*

<sup>3</sup> "Nomen hoc, iudicium castitatis."—*Serm.* 146.

<sup>4</sup> "In periculis, in angustiis, in rebus dubiis, Mariam cogita, Mariam invoca; non recedat ab ore, non recedat a corde."—*De Laud. V. M.* hom. 2.

promised his most holy Mother that he would grant three special graces to those who invoke that holy name with confidence: first, that he would grant them perfect sorrow for their sins; secondly, that their crimes should be atoned for; and, thirdly, that he would give them strength to attain perfection, and at length the glory of paradise. And then our divine Saviour added: "For thy words, O my Mother, are so sweet and agreeable to me, that I cannot deny what thou askest."<sup>1</sup>

St. Ephrem goes so far as to say, "that the name of Mary is the key of the gates of heaven,"<sup>2</sup> in the hands of those who devoutly invoke it. And thus it is not without reason that St. Bonaventure says "that Mary is the salvation of all who call upon her:" for he addresses her, saying: "O salvation of all who invoke thee!"<sup>3</sup> meaning, that to obtain eternal salvation and invoke her name are synonymous; and Richard of St. Laurence affirms, "that the devout invocation of this sweet and holy name leads to the acquisition of superabundant graces in this life, and a very high degree of glory in the next."<sup>4</sup> "If then, O brethren," concludes Thomas à Kempis, "you desire consolation in every labor, have recourse to Mary; invoke the name of Mary, honor Mary, recommend yourselves to Mary, rejoice with Mary, weep with Mary, pray with Mary, walk with Mary, seek Jesus with Mary; in fine, desire to live and die with Jesus and Mary. By acting thus you will always advance

<sup>1</sup> "Habitatores mundi indigent tribus: contritione pro peccatis, satisfactione, fortitudine ad faciendum bona. Quicumque invocaverit nomen tuum, et spem habet in te, cum proposito emendandi commissa, ista tria dabuntur ei, insuper et regnum cœleste. Tanta enim est mihi dulcedo in verbis tuis, ut non possim negare quæ petis."—*Rev. l. 1, c. 50.*

<sup>2</sup> "Nomen Mariæ est reseratorium portæ cœli."—*De Laud. Dei Gen.*

<sup>3</sup> "O Salus te invocantium!"

<sup>4</sup> "Devota invocatio nominis ejus ducit ad virorem gratiæ in præsentem, ad virorem gloriæ in futuro"—*De Laud B. M. l. 1, c. 2.*

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.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the most holy name of Mary is sweet indeed to her clients during life, on account of the very great graces that she obtains for them. But sweeter still will it be to them in death, on account of the tranquil and holy end that it will insure them.

Father Sertorius Caputo, of the Society of Jesus, exhorted all who assist the dying frequently to pronounce the name of Mary; for this name of life and hope, when repeated at the hour of death, suffices to put the devils to flight, and to comfort such persons in their sufferings.

“The invocation of the sacred names of Jesus and Mary,” says Thomas à Kempis, “is a short prayer which is as sweet to the mind, and as powerful to protect those who use it against the enemies of their salvation, as it is easy to remember.”<sup>2</sup>

“Blessed is the man who loves thy name, O Mary,”<sup>3</sup> exclaims St. Bonaventure. “Yes, truly blessed is he who loves thy sweet name, O Mother of God! for,” he continues, “thy name is so glorious and admirable, that no one who remembers it has any fears at the hour of death.”<sup>4</sup> Such is its power, that none of those who invoke it at the hour of death fear the assaults of their enemies.

<sup>1</sup> “Si consolari in omni tribulatione queritis, accedite ad Mariam. Mariam invocate, Mariam honorate, Mariæ vos commendate; cum Maria gaudete, cum Maria dolete, cum Maria orate, cum Maria ambulate, cum Maria Jesum querite, cum Maria et Jesu vivere et mori desiderate. Fratres, si ista exercetis, proficietis; Maria libenter pro vobis orabit, et Jesus libenter Matrem suam exaudiet.”—*Ad Nov.* s. 21.

<sup>2</sup> “Hæc sancta oratio: ‘Jesus et Maria,’ brevis est ad legendum, facilis ad tenendum, dulcis ad cogitandum, fortis ad protegendum.”—*Vall. lil.* c. 13.

<sup>3</sup> “Beatus vir qui diligit nomen tuum, Maria.”

<sup>4</sup> “Gloriosum et admirabile est nomen tuum; qui illud retinent, non expavescent in puncto mortis.”—*Psalt. B. V.* ps. i. 110.

Oh, that we may end our lives as did the Capuchin Father, Fulgentius of Ascoli, who expired singing, "O Mary, O Mary, the most beautiful of creatures! let us depart together;" or according to the annals of the Order, like Blessed Henry the Cistercian, who expired in the very moment that he was pronouncing the most sweet name of Mary.<sup>1</sup>

Let us then, O devout reader, beg God to grant us, that at death the name of Mary may be the last word on our lips. This was the prayer of St. Germanus: "May the last movement of my tongue be to pronounce the name of the Mother of God;"<sup>2</sup> O sweet, O safe is that death which is accompanied and protected by so saving a name; for God only grants the grace of invoking it to those whom he is about to save.

O my sweet Lady and Mother, I love thee much, and because I love thee I also love thy holy name. I purpose and hope, with thy assistance, always to invoke it during life and at death. And to conclude with the tender prayer of St. Bonaventure: "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 thine arms."<sup>3</sup> "Disdain not, O Mary," the saint continues, "to come then and comfort me with 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."<sup>4</sup> He then concludes saying, "O Mary, our advocate, it is for thee to defend thy clients, and to undertake their cause before the tribunal of Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Inter ipsam dulcissimi nominis articulationem!"

<sup>2</sup> "Dei Matris nomen sit mihi ultimus linguæ loquentis motus."—*In Deip. Ann.*

<sup>3</sup> "In exitu animæ meæ de hoc mundo, occurre illi, Domina, et suscipe eam."

<sup>4</sup> "Consolare eam vultu sancto tuo; esto illi scala et iter ad paradysum Dei; impetra ei indulgentiam pacis, et sedem lucis."

<sup>5</sup> "Sustine devotos ante tribunal Christi; suscipe causam eorum in manibus tuis."—*Psalt. B. V. ps. 113.*

EXAMPLE.\*

St. Camillus de Lellis urged the members of his community to remind the dying often to utter the holy name of Jesus and Mary. Such was his custom when assisting people in their last hour. When he himself came to die he gave an edifying example of confidence in the holy names. His biographer relates that when death was approaching, the saint invoked the sweet names of Jesus and Mary with such tender devotion that all present were inflamed with love for the sacred names. With his eyes fixed on the images of Jesus and Mary, and his arms crossed on his breast, an expression of heavenly peace rested on his face when his soul took its flight. His last words were the sacred names of Jesus and Mary.

*Prayer.*

O great Mother of God and my Mother Mary, it is true that I am unworthy to name thee; but thou, who lovest me and desirest my salvation, must, notwithstanding the impurity of my tongue, grant that I may always invoke thy most holy and powerful name in my aid, for thy name is the succor of the living, and the salvation of the dying. Ah, most pure Mary, most sweet Mary, grant that henceforth thy name may be the breath of my life. O Lady, delay not to help me when I invoke thee, for in all the temptations which assail me, and in all my wants, I will never cease calling upon thee, and repeating again and again, Mary, Mary. Thus it is that I hope to act during my life, and more particularly at death, that after that last struggle I may eternally praise thy beloved name in heaven, O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary. Ah, Mary, most amiable Mary, with what consolation, what sweetness, what confidence, what tenderness, is my soul penetrated in only naming, in only thinking of thee! I thank my Lord and God, who, for my good, has given thee a name so sweet and deserving of love, and at the same time so powerful. But, my sovereign Lady, I am not satisfied with only naming thee, I wish to name thee with love: I desire that my love may every hour remind me to call on thee, so that I may be able to exclaim with St. Bonaventure, "O name of the Mother of God, thou art my love."<sup>1</sup> My own dear Mary, O my beloved Jesus, may your most sweet names reign in my heart, and in all hearts. Grant that I may forget all others to remember, and always invoke, your adorable names alone. Ah! Jesus my Redeemer, and my Mother Mary, when the moment of death comes when I must breathe forth my soul and leave this world, deign, through your merits, to grant that I may then pronounce my last words, and that they may be, "I love thee, O Jesus; I love thee, O Mary; to you do I give my heart and my soul."

<sup>1</sup> "O amor mei, nomen Matris Dei."—*Med. de Sal. B. V.*

## Beautiful and fervent Prayers

ADDRESSED BY THE VARIOUS SAINTS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER.\*

### *Prayer of St. Ephrem.*

O immaculate and entirely pure Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of the universe, our own good Lady; thou art above all the saints, the only hope of the patriarchs, and the joy of the saints. Through thee we have been reconciled with our God. Thou art the only advocate of sinners, and the secure haven of those who are sailing on the sea of this life. Thou art the consolation of the world, the ransom of captives, the joy of the sick, the comfort of the afflicted, the refuge, the salvation of the whole world.

O great Princess, Mother of God, cover us with the wings of thy mercy, and pity us. We hope only in thee, O most pure Virgin. We are given to thee, and consecrated to thy service; we bear the name of thy servants. O, then, permit not that Lucifer should drag us to hell. O immaculate Virgin, we are under thy protection, and therefore unitedly we have recourse to thee; and we beseech thee to prevent thy beloved Son, who is irritated by our sins, from abandoning us to the power of the devil.

O thou who art full of grace, enlighten my understanding, loosen my tongue, that it may sing thy praises; and more particularly the angelic salutation, so worthy of thee. I salute thee, O peace, O joy, O consolation of the whole world. I salute thee, O greatest of miracles, O paradise of delights, secure haven of those who are in danger, fountain of graces, mediatrix between God and men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Laud. Dei Gen.*

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\* These Prayers are put here, not only that they may be used, but also that they may show the high idea that the saints had of the power and mercy of Mary, and the great confidence they had in her patronage.

*Prayer of St. Bernard.*

We raise our eyes to thee, O Queen of the world. We must appear before our Judge after so many sins: who will appease him? No one can do it better than thou canst, O holy Lady, who hast loved him so much, and by whom thou art so tenderly beloved. Open, then, O Mother of mercy, thy heart to our sighs and prayers. We fly to thy protection; appease the wrath of thy Son, and restore us to his grace. Thou dost not abhor a sinner, however loathsome he may be. Thou dost not despise him, if he sends up his sighs to thee, and, repentant, asks thy intercession. Thou, with thy compassionate hand, deliverest him from despair. Thou animatest him to hope, and dost not leave him until thou hast reconciled him with his Judge. Thou art that chosen Lady in whom our Lord found repose, and in whom he has deposited all his treasures without measure. Hence the whole world, O my most holy Lady, honors thy chaste womb as the temple of God, in which the salvation of the world began. In thee was effected the reconciliation between God and man. Thou, O great Mother of God, art the enclosed garden, into which the hand of a sinner never entered to gather its flowers. Thou art the beautiful garden in which God has planted all the flowers that adorn the Church, and amongst others the violet of thy humility, the lily of thy purity, the rose of thy charity. With whom can we compare thee, O Mother of grace and beauty? Thou art the paradise of God; from thee issued forth the fountain of living water that irrigates the whole earth. O, how many benefits thou hast bestowed on the world by meriting to be so salutary a channel!

Of thee it is that the question is asked, "Who is she that cometh forth like the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?"<sup>1</sup> Thou camest, then, into the world, O Mary, as a resplendent dawn, preceding with the light of thy sanctity the coming of the Sun of justice. The day on which thou camest into the world can indeed be called a day of salvation, a day of grace. Thou art fair as the moon; for as amongst all planets the moon it is that is most like the sun, so amongst all

<sup>1</sup> Cant vi a.

creatures thou art the nearest in resemblance to God. The moon illumines the night with the light that it receives from the sun, and thou enlightenest our darkness with the splendor of thy virtues. But thou art fairer than the moon, for in thee there is neither spot nor shadow. Thou art bright as the sun; I mean as the Sun that created the sun; he was chosen amongst all men, and thou wast chosen amongst all women. O sweet, O great, O all-amiable Mary, no heart can pronounce thy name but thou inflamest it with thy love; nor can they who love thee think of thee without feeling themselves strengthened to love thee more.

O holy Lady, help our weakness. And who is more fit to address our Lord Jesus Christ than thou, who enjoyest in such close vicinity his most sweet converse? Speak, then, speak, O Lady; for thy Son listens to thee, and thou wilt obtain all that thou askest of him.<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer of St. Germanus of Constantinople.*

O my only and sovereign Lady, who art the sole consolation that I receive from God; thou who art the only celestial dew that gives me refreshment in my pains; thou who art the light of my soul when it is surrounded with darkness; thou who art my guide in journeyings, my strength in weakness; my treasure in poverty, the balm of my wounds, my consolation in sorrow, thou who art my refuge in miseries and the hope of my salvation; listen to my prayers, have pity on me as it becomes the Mother of a God who has such love for men.<sup>2</sup>

O thou who art our defence and joy, grant me all that I ask; make me worthy to enjoy with thee the great happiness that thou enjoyest in heaven. Yes, my Lady, my refuge, my life, my help, my defence, my strength, my joy, my hope, grant that I may one day be with thee in heaven. I know that, being the Mother of God, thou canst, if thou wilt, obtain it for me. O Mary, thou art omnipotent to save sinners, nor needest thou any other recommendation; for thou art the Mother of true life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Depr. ad gl. V.*

<sup>2</sup> *Encom. in S. Deip.*

<sup>3</sup> *In Dorm. V. M. s. 2.*

*Prayer of Blessed Raymond Jordano, Abbot of Celles.\**

Draw me after thee, O Virgin Mary, that I may run to the odor of thy ointments. Draw me, for I am held back by the weight of my sins and by the malice of my enemies. As no one goes to thy Son unless the heavenly Father draws him, so do I presume to say, in a certain manner, that no one goes to him unless thou drawest him by thy holy prayers. It is thou who teachest true wisdom, thou who obtainest grace for sinners, for thou art their advocate; it is thou who promisest glory to him who honors thee, for thou art the treasurer of graces.<sup>1</sup>

Thou, O most sweet Virgin, hast found grace with God, for thou wast preserved from the stain of original sin, wast filled with the Holy Ghost, and didst conceive the Son of God. Thou, O most humble Virgin, didst receive all these graces not for thyself only, but also for us, that thou mightest assist us in all our necessities. And this thou dost indeed; thou succorest the good, preserving them in grace, and the wicked thou preparest to receive divine mercy. Thou assistest the dying, protecting them against the snares of the devil; and thou helpst them also after death, receiving their souls and conducting them to the kingdom of the blessed.<sup>2</sup>

*Prayer of St. Methodius.*

Thy name, O Mother of God, is filled with all graces and divine blessings. Thou hast contained him who cannot be contained, and nourished him who nourishes all creatures. He who fills heaven and earth, and is Lord of all, was pleased to stand in need of thee, for it was thou who didst clothe him with that flesh which he had not before. Rejoice then, O Mother and handmaid of God; be glad then, with exceeding great joy, for thou hast him for thy debtor who gives their being to all creatures. We are all God's debtors, but he is a debtor to thee. Hence it is, O most holy Mother of God, that

<sup>1</sup> *Cont. de V. M. in prol.*<sup>2</sup> *Cont. de V. M. c. 6.*

\* Out of humility he surnamed himself the Idiot.

thou hast greater goodness and greater charity than all the other saints, and hast freer access to God than any of them, for thou art his Mother. Ah, deign, we beseech thee, to remember us in our miseries, who celebrate thy glories, and know how great is thy goodness.<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer of St. John Damascene*

I salute thee, O Mary; thou art the hope of Christians; receive the supplication of a sinner who loves thee tenderly, honors thee in a special manner, and places in thee the whole hope of his salvation. From thee I have my life. Thou dost restore me to the favor of thy Son; thou art the certain pledge of my salvation. I implore thee, then, deliver me from the burden of my sins, dispel the darkness of my mind, banish earthly affections from my heart, repress the temptations of my enemies, and so rule my whole life that by thy means and under thy guidance I may attain the eternal happiness of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

*Prayer of St. Andrew of Crete.\**

I salute thee, O full of grace, our Lord is with thee. I salute thee, O cause of our joy, through whom the sentence of our condemnation was revoked and changed into one of blessings. I salute thee, O temple of the glory of God, sacred dwelling of the King of heaven. Thou art the reconciliation of God with men. I salute thee, O Mother of our joy. Truly thou art blessed, for thou alone amongst all women wast found worthy to be the Mother of thy Creator. All nations call thee Blessed.<sup>3</sup>

O Mary, if I place my confidence in thee, I shall be saved; if I am under thy protection, I have nothing to fear, for the fact of being thy client is the possession of a certainty of salvation, which God only grants to those whom he will save.

O Mother of mercy, appease thy beloved Son. Whilst thou wast on earth thou didst occupy only a small part of it, but now that thou art raised above the highest heavens, the whole world considers thee as the propitiatory of all nations. I implore

<sup>1</sup> *De Sim. et Anna.*

<sup>2</sup> *In Nat. B. V. s. 1.*

<sup>3</sup> *In S. Deip. Ann.*

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\* Or of Jerusalem; for it is not known whether it was one person under the two titles, or two different persons.

thee, then, O Holy Virgin, to grant me the help of thy prayers with God; prayers which are dearer and more precious to us than all the treasures of the earth; prayers which render God propitious to us in our sins, and obtain us a great abundance of graces, both for the pardon of our offences and the practice of virtue: prayers which check our enemies, confound their designs, and triumph over their strength.<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer of St. Ildephonsus.*

I come to thee, O Mother of God, and implore thee to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, and that I may be cleansed from those of my whole life. I beseech thee to grant me the grace to unite myself in affection to thy Son and to thyself: to thy Son as my God, and to thee as the Mother of my God.<sup>2</sup>

*Prayer of St. Athanasius.*

Give ear to our prayers, O most Holy Virgin, and be mindful of us. Dispense unto us the gifts of thy riches, and the abundance of the graces with which thou art filled. The archangel saluted thee, and called thee full of grace. All nations call thee blessed. The whole hierarchy of heaven blesses thee; and we, who are of the terrestrial hierarchy, also address thee, saying, Hail, O full of grace, our Lord is with thee; pray for us, O holy Mother of God, our Lady and our Queen.<sup>3</sup>

*Prayer of St. Anselm.*

We beseech thee, O Most holy Lady, by the favor that God did thee, in raising thee so high as to make all things possible to thee with him, so to act that the plenitude of grace, which thou didst merit, may render us partakers of thy glory. Strive, O most merciful Lady, to obtain for us that for which God was pleased to become man in thy chaste womb. O, lend us a willing ear. If thou deignest to pray to thy Son for this, he will immediately grant it. It suffices that thou willest our salvation, and then we are sure to obtain it. But who can restrain thy great mercy? If thou, who art our Mother, and the

<sup>1</sup> *In Dorm. S. M. s. 3.*

<sup>2</sup> *De Virginit. perp. S. M. c. 12.*

<sup>3</sup> *In Annunt. Deip.*

Mother of mercy, dost not pity us, what will become of us when thy Son comes to judge us?

Help us, then, O most compassionate Lady, and consider not the multitude of our sins. Remember always that our Creator took human flesh of thee, not to condemn sinners, but to save them. If thou hadst become Mother of God only for thine own advantage, we might say that it signified little to thee whether we were lost or saved; but God clothed himself with thy flesh for thy salvation, and for that of all men. What would thy great power and glory avail us, if thou dost not make us partakers of thy happiness? O, help us, then, and protect us: thou knowest how greatly we stand in need of thy assistance. We recommend ourselves to thee; O, let us not lose our souls, but make us eternally serve and love thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer of St. Peter Damian.*

Holy Virgin, Mother of God, succor those who implore thy aid. O, turn towards us. Hast thou, perhaps, forgotten men, because thou hast been raised to so close a union with God? Ah no, most certainly. Thou knowest well in what danger thou didst leave us, and the wretched condition of thy servants; ah no, it would not become so great a mercy as thine to forget so great misery as ours is. Turn towards us, then, with thy power; for he who is powerful has made thee omnipotent in heaven and on earth. Nothing is impossible to thee, for thou canst raise even those who are in despair to the hope of salvation. The more powerful thou art, the greater should be thy mercy.

Turn also to us in thy love. I know, O my Lady, that thou art all benign, and that thou lovest us with a love that can be surpassed by no other love. How often dost thou not appease the wrath of our Judge, when he is on the point of chastising us? All the treasures of the mercies of God are in thy hands. Ah, never cease to benefit us; thou only seekest occasion to save all the wretched, and to shower thy mercies upon them; for thy glory is increased when, by thy means, penitents are forgiven, and thus reach heaven. Turn, then, towards us, that

<sup>1</sup> *De Excell. V. c. 12.*

we also may be able to go and see thee in heaven ; for the greatest glory we can have will be, after seeing God, to see thee, to love thee, and be under thy protection. Be pleased, then, to grant our prayer ; for thy beloved Son desires to honor thee, by denying thee nothing that thou askest.<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer of William, Bishop of Paris.*

O Mother of God, I have recourse to thee, and I call upon thee not to reject me ; for the whole congregation of the faithful calls and proclaims thee the Mother of mercy. Thou art that one who, from being so dear to God, art always graciously heard ; thy clemency was never wanting to any one ; thy most benign affability never despised any sinner who had recourse to thee, however enormous his crimes. Can it be falsely or in vain that the Church calls thee her advocate, and the refuge of sinners ? Never let it be said that my sins could prevent thee from fulfilling the great office of mercy, which is peculiarly thine own, by which thou art the advocate and mediatrix of peace, the only hope and most secure refuge of the miserable. Never shall it be said that the Mother of God, who for the benefit of the world brought forth him who is the fountain of mercy, denied her mercy to any sinner who had recourse to her. Thine office is that of peacemaker between God and men : let, then, the greatness of thy compassion, and which far exceeds my sins, move thee to help me.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *In Nat. B. M. s. l.*

<sup>2</sup> *De Rhet. div. c. 18.*

## HYMNS.

### I.

**To Mary, our Queen, the Mother of Mercy.**

LOOK down, O Mother Mary!  
From thy bright throne above;  
Cast down upon thy children  
One only glance of love.

And if a heart so tender  
With pity flows not o'er,  
Then turn away, O Mother!  
And look on us no more.

See how, ungrateful sinners,  
We stand before thy Son;  
His loving heart upbraids us  
The evil we have done.

But if thou wilt appease him,  
Speak for us,—but one word;  
Thou only can'st obtain us  
The pardon of our Lord.

O Mary, dearest Mother!  
If thou wouldst have us live,  
Say that we are thy children,  
And Jesus will forgive.

Our sins make us unworthy  
That title still to bear;  
But thou art still our Mother,  
Then show a Mother's care.

Open to us thy mantle;  
 There stay we without fear:  
 What evil can befall us  
 If, Mother, thou art near?

O sweetest, dearest Mother!  
 Thy sinful children save;  
 Look down on us with pity,  
 Who thy protection crave.

## II.

**To Mary our Mother.**

(BY MGR. MAJELLO.)

WHEN I think o'er my happy lot,  
 That, Mary, I am a child of thine,  
 Then every sorrow, Mother mine,  
 Swift vanishes and is forgot.

Chos'n Mother of my God to be,  
 Thou still art mine own Mother dear;  
 What harm then can I ever fear,  
 Sweet Mary, if thou lovest me?

One only fear can make me sigh,  
 'Tis lest I e'er should lose thy love;  
 But while my heart shall faithful prove,  
 Living or dying, blest am I.

Deprived of thee, my lovely Rose,  
 Each joy doth bitter grief appear;  
 But pain is joy if thou wert near,  
 And death itself is sweet repose.

From Heaven's path he cannot stray  
 Who follows thee, his safest guide;  
 To serve thee and in thee confide,  
 Is of all good the surest way.

Oh, blest is he whose sole desire  
 Is e'er to love thee tenderly ;  
 Yes, happy he who loveth thee,  
 And feels his heart with love on fire.

Then grant to me, my sweetest Queen,  
 Ever to burn with love of thee,  
 Until in heaven I come to see,  
 Unveil'd, thy loveliness serene.

## III.

## To Mary, our Hope.

MARY, thou art Hope the brightest,  
 Love most pure and sweet ;  
 Life and peace I find, reposing  
 At Thy blessed feet !

When I call on thee, O Mary,  
 When I think on thee,  
 Joy and pleasure all-entrancing  
 Fill my heart with glee.

If anon the clouds of sadness  
 Rise within my heart,  
 When they hear thy name, O Mary,  
 Straightway they depart.

Like a star on life's dark ocean,  
 Shining o'er the wave,  
 Thou can'st guide my bark to harbor,  
 Thou my soul canst save.

Under thy protecting mantle,  
 Queen belov'd, I fly ;  
 There I wish to live securely,  
 There I hope to die.

If I chance my life to finish,  
 Mary, loving thee,  
 Then I also know, dear Lady,  
 Heaven is for me.

Cast thy gentle bonds around me,  
 And my heart enchain,  
 Prisoner of love forever  
 Safe will I remain.

Thus my heart, O sweetest Mary,  
 Is not mine, but thine ;  
 Take it ; give it all to Jesus ;  
 Ne'er shall it be mine.

## IV.

## The Name of Mary.

MOTHER MARY, Queen most sweet !  
 Joy and love my heart inflame ;  
 Gladly shall my lips repeat  
 Every moment thy dear name.

Ah ! that name, to God so dear,  
 Has my heart and soul enslaved ;  
 Like a seal it shall appear  
 Deep on heart and soul engraved.

When the morning gilds the skies,  
 I will call on Mary's name ;  
 When at evening twilight dies,  
 Mary, still will I exclaim.

Sweetest Mary, bend thine ear :  
 Thou my own dear Mother art ;  
 Therefore shall thy name so dear.  
 Never from lips depart.

If my soul is sore oppress'd  
By a load of anxious care,  
Peace once more will fill my breast  
When thy name re-echoes there.

Waves of doubt disturb my peace,  
And my heart is faint with fear;  
At thy name the billows cease,  
All my terrors disappear.

When the demon hosts invade,  
When temptation rages high,  
Crying, "Mary, Mother! aid!"  
I will make the tempter fly.

This shall be my comfort sweet,  
When the hand of death is nigh,  
Mary! Mary! to repeat  
Once again,—and then, to die.

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It must be observed that this last hymn, "The Name of Mary," is not by St. Alphonsus, but by Father Apice.—ED.