

PEARLS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE FOR OUR LITTLE ONES

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"Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."--St. Matt. xviii. 3.

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THE HOLY MOTHER OF JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR AND OUR GOD.

'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.'

—St. Luke i. 28.

In the 'Praises' which we recite at Benediction we say, 'Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary Most Holy.' The Angel Gabriel, who was sent by God to ask Mary's consent to become the Mother of our Redeemer, gave her the same praise, when he said, 'Blessed art thou among women.' Of course, we all know that the Blessed Virgin is not God, she is only a human being like ourselves, but she is the most holy of all created beings, whether angels or men, and now that she is in heaven, she prays for us and obtains from her Divine Son all helps necessary for the salvation of our soul. When the Blessed Virgin was on earth, she gave her heart completely to God, and it was that gift that made God love her with so great a love. For what God seeks from us in a special manner, is the free gift of our heart. He says in the Bible, 'My child, give me thy heart'; and again, when He tells us how we are to love Him, He declares: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.' Mary's heart was, through the Divine blessing, all pure and free from the least spot of sin, and hence most bright and beautiful, and the Lord, looking on her, could say, 'Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no stain in thee.' Then, it was a heart adorned with perfect virtues. Mary was most humble, and the Holy Spirit inspired her to say, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath exulted in God my Saviour, for He hath regarded the lowliness, or humility, of His handmaid, and behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.' She was, also, gentle, kind, and loving to everyone; she obeyed in all things the Divine Will; and prized and practised poverty of spirit, looking upon herself as a stranger and pilgrim in this world, for she valued not the things of earth but longed only for God and heavenly joys. These are the virtues which make the soul pleasing to God, and because the Blessed Virgin possessed them in a very eminent degree, the Eternal Father looked upon her as His well-beloved daughter, the Eternal Son of God chose her to be His Virgin Mother when He became man for our redemption, and the Eternal Holy Ghost regarded her as His Immaculate Spouse and dwelt in her soul and body as in a most noble temple consecrated wholly to His glory.

An important point to bear always in memory is that the Blessed Virgin loves each of us with a tender Mother's love. She loves us, first, because Jesus, her Son, is our brother, and hence she reckons us as her children; secondly, because the Sacred Heart of Jesus loves us, and her Heart, being most like that of her Son is all holy affections, she, too, loves us; and thirdly, because she stood at the foot of the Cross and saw our dear Saviour crucified and shedding the last drop of His blood to rescue us from sin and hell, and she wishes, like him, to leave no means untried to help us to gain the great heavenly reward purchased for us by her Son. Moreover, when our Lord, as He hung on the Cross, gave St. John as a son to Mary, saying,

'Behold thy son,' holy writers in the Church tell us that on that solemn occasion St. John represented each of the faithful, and Jesus gave her a loving mother's heart that she might always intercede for us and protect us in every way during our life of pilgrimage in this world. We see, then, what affection we should cherish for so good and loving a mother, and with what confidence we must go to her in our temptations and sorrows to obtain strength and consolation that we may fight courageously the good fight of faith and win eternal life.

I want to tell you now the story of our Lady of Lourdes. On the 11th of February, 1858, our Lady appeared to a little girl, named Bernadette, on the bank of the river Gave, near the town of Lourdes in the south of France. She stood on a rock in the grotto of Massabielle, and in appearance she was young and most beautiful, wearing a white robe and veil, with a girdle of blue, and on each of her bare feet glowed a golden rose. She appeared to Bernadette eighteen or twenty times, pointed out to her a spot in the grotto whence water broke out, which effected the most wonderful cures as time went on, and directed her to tell the priests that a church should be built, to which people were to go in pilgrimage, doing penance and praying for the conversion of sinners. When the young girl asked her name, the Blessed Virgin, clasping her hands before her breast and raising her eyes to heaven, answered: 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' Numerous miraculous cures were wrought by the water of the grotto spring not only in Lourdes, but all over the world wherever the water was carried; and soon a large and stately church was built near the cave of Massabielle in our Lady's honor. Every year thousands of people go to Lourdes in pilgrimage to obtain health of body and grace for their soul. Those pilgrimages have renewed the fervor of faith and hope and love; and the three great Popes, Pius IX., Leo XIII., and Pius X. have enriched the devotion to our Lady of Lourdes with many indulgences and spiritual privileges. Pius X. commanded that the feast of our Lady of Lourdes was to be observed by the Universal Church on the 11th of February every year.

Prayer to be Said Often.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Hymn.

Hail, Mary, only sinless child
Of guilty Adam's fallen race,
Conceived all pure and undefiled,
Through thy dear Lord's preventing grace.

He would not have the blight of sin
A moment rest thy soul upon,
For pure without and pure within
Must be the Mother of His Son.

From Satan's snare preserve us free,
And keep us safe from earthly stain,
That in this world we pure may be,
And in the next may see thee reign.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

Are you almost disgusted
With life, little man?
I will tell you a wonderful trick,
That will bring you contentment
If anything can --
Do something for somebody, quick;
Do something for somebody, quick!

'Are you 'awfully tired'
With play, little girl?
Weary, discouraged, and sick?