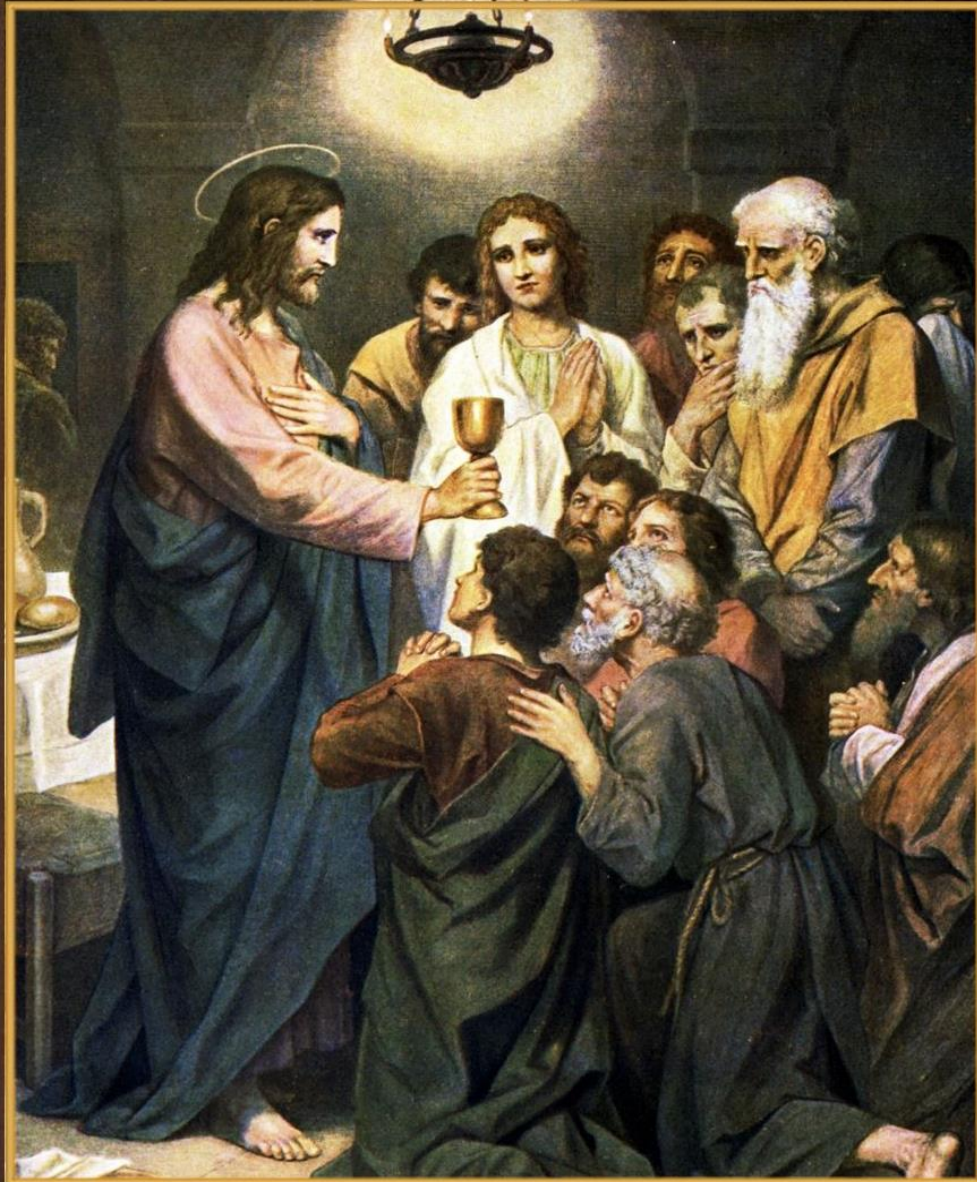


Extract from the
Holy Palmarian Bible
Sixteenth Part



Acts of the Apostles

*Life of the Church from the
Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ
until Saint John the Evangelist
is rapt up to Mary's Planet*

Sixteenth Part
Acts of the Apostles

Life of the Church
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Book I

From the Coming of the Holy Ghost until Saul's conversion

Chapter I

The Apostles, disciples and disciplesses prepare for the Coming of the Holy Ghost

From the Ascension of the Lord, on the days preceding Pentecost, the eleven Apostles, the disciples and disciplesses who were in the Cenacle gathered about the Divine Mary, under Her wisest guidance duly prepared themselves to receive the Holy Ghost. Both religious communities, each in its own conventual quarters, lived with one mind and heart in charity, prayer and fasting, everyone fulfilling their duties; though in the Cenacle there were also faithful of both sexes who were not religious. Among other prayers, the Virgin Mary counselled the Our Father, being the most complete and most gratifying to the Father. Their greatest spiritual strengthening, however, came to them from the Holy Sacrifice of Mass that Peter celebrated daily for both religious communities, at which they received Holy Communion; while the other Apostles also celebrated the Eucharistic Sacrifice at different times of the day.

Chapter II

Pope Peter completes the number of the Apostolic College by electing Matthias as Apostle

1. On Monday the 9th of May in the year 34, Pope Peter, as Head and supreme authority of the Church, spoke to all present at the Cenacle of Jerusalem, addressing himself principally to the other Apostles and the disciples, saying: *“Worthy brethren, as you see, by Judas Iscariot's faithlessness, has been fulfilled what according to Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost foretold through David's lips, concerning the one who was guide and leader of those who seized Jesus. Judas Iscariot, who was among the number of the Apostles and had taken part in our ministry, after sealing his treachery by delivering up the Divine Master, went and hanged himself from a cypress tree, his body bursting asunder and his entrails all spilling out upon the ground. This lamentable event is well-known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The field where that tree is to be found was called ‘Blood Field’ when the temple priests bought it for the price of the betrayal. In the Book of Psalms it is written: ‘O my God, come out in defence of Me, Your Onlybegotten. Because the lips of the impious, the lips of the traitor, have opened against Me. He has spoken against Me with deceitful tongue, and has opposed Me without cause. Instead of loving Me, he spoke ill of Me; but I*

prayed to You for him. He repaid Me ill for good, and hatred for love. He is under the dominion of the evil one, and has Satan at his right. When he shall be judged, he shall be irremediably damned, since his obstinacy in impiety is irreversible. His hours are numbered. After his death let another take his bishopric.’” In this Psalm, besides foretelling the deicide perfidy and eternal damnation of Judas Iscariot, the election of a new Apostle is also indicated, as substitute for the deicide traitor bishop.

2. Pope Peter continued, saying: *“It is well, then, that from among those men who have been in our company the whole time that Christ Jesus, Our Lord God, lived among us, until the day when, separating from us, He ascended into Heaven, one be elected who, together with us, may be a witness to His Resurrection.”* At Peter’s requirement, the other Apostles proposed two of the disciples who had been with Christ from the beginning: Joseph, who was called Barsabas, and surnamed the Just; and Matthias. Once the two candidates had been proposed, Pope Peter ordered all present to beseech God which of the two should be elected. Therefore they prayed thus: *“You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show us which of these two You have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate from which Judas Iscariot fell by his prevarication to go to the place of eternal damnation for his villainous obstinacy.”* After those in the Cenacle had prayed, asking the Lord to enlighten Peter, he by virtue of his Supreme Apostolic Authority, in the presence of all, elected Matthias to fill the vacant post in the Apostolic College. After the election, that same day, during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, Apostle Peter conferred on Matthias the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate by a single laying on of his hands upon the head of the candidate, without any words. In this solemn ceremony, Pope Peter also conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on the Prophet Agabus, and at the same time named him Vice-Superior General of the Essenian or Carmelite Order, though this office was subject to the authority of each of the twelve Apostles, and more principally to the authority of Pope Peter, who was Superior General of the Essenes.

3. Prior to the election of the new candidate to the Apostolic College, although the Most Holy Virgin Mary knew who the new Apostle should be, She had nevertheless commended this task to Peter, so that he might begin to exercise the office of Supreme Pontiff and Visible Head, as Vicar of Christ, in the New Church. The Divine Mary directed Apostle Peter to make the election in the presence of the Apostles, disciples, disciplesses and others present in the Cenacle, so that all might see him acting as Supreme Head of the Church.

Chapter III

Pope Peter completes the number of the seventy-two official disciples by electing further disciples.

The Divine Mary accepts new religious or disciplesses of Hers

1. On the 9th of May in the year 34, after the election of Matthias, Pope Peter completed the number of seventy-two official disciples or Princes of the Church (understood as inferior to the Apostles), by electing eight disciples, namely: Sidonius, and the seven apostolic men: by name Abenadar Ctesiphon, Indaletius, Cecil, Torquatus, Euphrasius, Esiquius and Secundus.

2. That same day, the Most Holy Virgin Mary admitted as nuns and new disciplesses of Hers: Mary, spouse of Obed; and the wife of the Cyrenian, who took the name of Mary at Baptism. The number of friars and nuns present in the Cenacle at that date, without counting the Most Holy Virgin Mary, was one hundred and twenty-four persons, of whom eighty-four formed the branch of friars, and forty the branch of nuns.

Chapter IV

The Apostles, disciples, disciplesses and faithful present in the Cenacle of Jerusalem

List of those in company with the Divine Mother of Jesus on that 9th of May in the year 34 following the elections of Apostle Matthias, of the eight new disciples and of the two new disciplesses:

a) Male Religious members of the Carmelite Order:

The twelve Apostles: Pope Peter, James the Greater, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the Less, Thaddeus, Simon and Matthias.

The seventy-two disciples: The Prophet Agabus; Judas Barsabas; Joseph Barsabas, called the Just; Joseph of Arimathea; Nicodemus; Obed, father of Mark; Mark, future evangelist; Stephen, future protomartyr; Ananias; Joseph, surnamed Barnabas; Aristaria; Cocharia; Saturninus; Parmenas; Tarsicius; Aristobulus; the four brothers Cleophas of Emmaus, Jacob of Emmaus, Judas of Emmaus and Japhet of Emmaus; Arran; Temmeny; Colaya; Aristarchus; Jonah of Cyprus; Mnason of Cyprus; Jason; the three shepherds of Bethlehem: Ruben, Issachar and Mathathias; Isai, the ex-possessed pharisee, Lea's husband; Lazarus of Bethany; Gamaliel; Abib, son of Gamaliel; Luke, future evangelist; Simon the leper; Cirinus of Cyprus; Appeles; Lucius of Cyrene; Aristion; Joseph the indecisive; Thomas the waverer; Silas; Zachaeus of Jericho; Abdeus, afterwards Evangelizer of Edessa now in Turkey; Philip; Procorus; Nicanor; Timmon; Manasses the scribe; Martial, son of the widow of Naim; Elpidius, the paralytic of Bethesda; Pius, the Samaritan leper who among the ten cleansed returned to give thanks; Nazarius, one of the blind men of Jericho, also called Bartimeus; Abelius, the other blind man of Jericho; Ases, one of the ex-possessed of Gerasa; Josias, the other ex-possessed of Gerasa; Henoah, son of the widow

of the mite; Chusa Menahem the Ruler; Jonathan, the blind man of Bethsaida; Linus, first successor to Saint Peter in the Papacy; Cletus, second successor to Saint Peter in the Papacy; Clement, third successor to Saint Peter in the Papacy; Longinus, the soldier who pierced Christ's Deific Side; Sidonius; and the seven Apostolic men who went to Spain: Abenadar Ctesiphon, Indaletius, Cecil, Torquatus, Euphrasius, Esiquius and Secundus.

b) Female Religious members of the Carmelite Order:

The 40 pious women or disciplesses of Mary: Mary Cleophas, sister of the Most Holy Virgin Mary; Mary Salome, sister of the Most Holy Virgin Mary; Seraphia the Veronica; Lazarus's sisters Mary Magdalen and Martha, of Bethany; Seba of Nazareth; Photina the Samaritaness; Apostle Peter's wife Carmel, name given her by the Most Holy Virgin Mary the day she became a nun; Junia, wife of Apostle Matthew; Rose, wife of Apostle Andrew; Sarah, wife of Apostle Philip; Mara, Apostle Peter's mother-in-law; Anne Cleophas, mother of Apostle Bartholomew; Joan Chusa, the Ruler's wife; Lea of Nazareth; Susanna of Cana; Elizabeth, of the widow's mite; Mary Mercuria; Miriam, wife of Zachaeus; Lea, wife of Isai the pharisee; Salome, daughter of Jairus; Petronilla, Peter's daughter born to his marriage before he was chosen by Christ; Claudia Procula, Pontius Pilate's wife; the disciple Philip's four daughters Barucha, Abigail, Jonasa and Lydia; Mary, mother of Mark the Evangelist; Justa the Canaaness; Berenice, daughter of the Canaaness; Venusia, the stooped woman of Bethany; Rose; Lycinia, the converted adulteress; Maroni, the widow of Naim; Mary, Simon the Cyrenian's wife; Enoue, the haemorrhaged woman; Tabitha; Jacobina, the dropsical woman from Cyprus; Claudia Procula's sisters Flora and Nora.

c) Tertiary members of the Carmelite Order:

Among the considerable number of tertiaries of the Carmelite Order present in the Cenacle, were: Jairus and his wife Lucy, parents of the nun Salome, whom Christ raised from the dead; Simon the Cyrenian and his two sons Alexander and Rufus; the seventeen compassionate women who grieved and wept over Jesus bearing the Cross, by name: Rachel, Mara, Miriam, Clavelia, Sarah, Mary, Martha, Rachel, Ana, Susanna, Venusia, Rachel, Lia, Martha, Deborah, Ana and Mary.

Chapter V

Apotheosis coming of the Holy Ghost in the Cenacle

1. On Sunday the 15th of May in the year 34, took place the Coming of the Holy Ghost in the Jerusalem Cenacle where, gathered about the Divine Mary, were the twelve Apostles, the seventy-two disciples, the forty pious women or Mary's disciplesses, and a good number of tertiary faithful of the Carmelite Order. The planetary Apostles Elias, Henoah and Moses, so as to take part as well in such a great event, had come from the Planet of Mary to the Cenacle, becoming visible to all gathered there.

2. Since the Most Holy Virgin Mary knew the day and the hour of the Holy Ghost's Coming, She procured that all Her children be duly prepared. For this purpose, She told Pope Peter to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of Mass at 8 in the morning on that memorable Pentecost Sunday, in the Cenacle hall where the Last Supper of the Lord had taken place, chamber now turned into a Chapel.

3. Once worship had ended, Most Holy Mary, perceiving that the hour of Pentecost had arrived, seated Herself in the centre of the sacred hall, facing the Tabernacle, surrounded on both sides by the Apostles, disciples, disciples and tertiary faithful. When all were of one mind in prayer there about the Divine Lady, at exactly 9 in the morning that glorious Sunday the 15th of May in the year 34, the air was rent by a resounding clap of thunder and a vehement wind or spirit of great brilliance like fiery lightning; all of which headed for the Cenacle building filling it with light. And the Holy Ghost, like Most Divine Fire, was poured out upon that holy congregation, a Tongue of that same Fire appearing and resting upon the head of each of those present, all being filled with the Holy Ghost. At the same time they were rapt up in beatific vision, and for seven seconds were able to contemplate the mysteries of the Trinity. By Pentecost, all those congregated in the Jerusalem Cenacle received the grace proper to the Sacrament of Confirmation, including the fullness of the common juridical espousal, of divine right, indissoluble and eternal. Among other manifold supernatural gifts received were the Grace of confirmation in the Faith and the gift of tongues.

4. The resounding clap of thunder and the vehement wind accompanied by whirls of fire had originated high up in the firmament, and had then suddenly descended upon the house of the Cenacle, which became enveloped and at the same time penetrated by this prodigious manifestation of the Paraclete. In the city of Jerusalem, as besides the inhabitants there were numerous pilgrims who had come on account of the Jewish Pentecost feast, when they heard the thunder and saw the whirls of wind and fire that, from on high, plunged roaring towards a specific spot in the city, which was where the house of the Cenacle stood, they hastened to where that phenomenon had headed, at the same time telling others. Once before the Holy House, they saw that it was enveloped in flaming brilliance which, far from instilling fear, produced a suave and irresistible attraction.

5. At 10 in the morning on that Pentecost Sunday, the Prophets Elias, Henoah and Moses returned to their planetary mission, to give testimony there of all that had occurred.

Chapter VI

Amazement of the gathering crowds

As Pope Peter had become aware of the multitude that had gathered before the Cenacle, he and the other Apostles went out to give valiant testimony to Christ. The multitude was astonished because they saw a Tongue of Fire upon the head of each, and heard them speak in different languages; for the Apostles spoke in Aramaic, and miraculously those who did not know this language understood them in the language of their own lands. But what caused the deepest impression on that multitude was the supernatural wisdom flowing from the lips of the Apostles. Accordingly, the great majority of those assembled before the Cenacle said in astonishment: *“Are those men who are speaking not by chance all Galileans? How is it that we each hear them speaking in our native language? For here are Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome, Crete, Arabia, Israel... and we observe that those of Jewish origin as much as the proselytes can each hear them speaking of the wonders of God in his own language.”* And in stunned wonderment they said to one another: *“What does this all mean!”* But as there was a marked number of sanhedrin members and many other perfidious Jews as well intermingled with the crowd, making fun of the Apostles and seeking to discredit the prodigious events that guaranteed the evangelical work of the Messiah, whom they had crucified with the aim of banishing His name and doctrine, they said: *“Doubtless those fellows are drunk.”*

Chapter VII

Pope Peter’s sermon

1. Then, as Peter saw that the tumult caused by Christ’s enemies was increasing, with the consequent danger that the supernatural effects of the Holy Ghost be stifled in no few of that great audience, he alone, imposing his authority, decided to pronounce as Pope and Visible Head of the Church, his first public sermon in Jerusalem, so that the other Apostles gathered about him. Thereupon Apostle Peter spoke in this way to the crowd: *“O all you who have congregated here in the sight of such prodigious heavenly signs! Be very attentive to what I am about to say to you: we are not intoxicated as some of you are saying, nor is it the most appropriate hour for a meal that gives rise to excessive drinking.”*

2. Peter continued saying: *“About the prodigies you are witnessing, I remind you of what was foretold by the Prophet Joel for these times and for the latter days: ‘Thus says the Lord God of Hosts: «I will pour My Spirit out upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have prophetic dreams, and your young men will have visions. In those days I will pour My Spirit out upon My servants and handmaids; and I will perform prodigies in heaven and on earth; and there will be blood and fire*

and whirlwinds of smoke. The sun will be transformed into darkness and the moon into blood, before the arrival of the great and terrible day on which I shall come as Supreme Judge. And it shall come to pass that whoever invokes My Name will be saved; because the remnants of My faithful people whom I will have gathered round about Me shall find salvation in My Church.»’”

3. *“O children of Israel! Listen to me most attentively: Jesus the Nazarene who, besides being Man, has proven before your eyes to be God Himself by His holiness of life, by the sublime doctrine He has taught you, and by the miracles and other wonders He has performed among you, as you all know; this Jesus, given up to your will by decree of the Eternal Father, you have killed, nailing Him to the Cross by wicked hands. But mark that He, by virtue of the divine power He possesses, has broken the fetters of His death and risen from the dead, as it was not possible for death to have dominion over Him. Because David himself once said of Jesus: ‘I have the Lord ever present before me. He is at my right hand to sustain me. Thus my heart rejoices, and my tongue bursts forth in joyful song. Even my flesh will rest in the hope of the resurrection; by virtue that Christ my Saviour shall rise first from the dead, as He Himself said to the Father: «You will not leave My Soul in heavenly glory long separated from My Body; nor will You permit the Body of Your Holy One to see corruption.» O Christ my Saviour! You made me know the ways of Eternal Life, in which You will fill me with the joy of Your Countenance, and at Your right hand I will delight forever.’”*

4. Peter went on to say: *“O all of you who hear me! Permit me to tell you in complete liberty and without the slightest qualm: the Prophet David died and was buried, and the place of his burial has been kept in remembrance among us down to the present day. Since he was a Prophet, besides the promise God made him under oath that Christ, one of his descendants, would sit on his throne, he knew in addition that Christ was to rise again, since His Body would not be retained in the sepulchre nor would His Flesh suffer corruption. This Jesus, true God and true Man, is He who has risen by virtue of His divine power, to which we are all witnesses. Exalted then, at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, He has poured Him out upon us in the manner you are seeing and hearing. Because David himself has written: ‘The Lord God said to the Messiah my Lord: «Sit at My right hand until I place Your enemies as a footstool at Your feet.» O Christ! From Sion the Lord will cause to issue the sceptre of Your power: may You rule in the midst of Your enemies. To You pertains the principality over every work, since Your Most Divine Soul has been created with fullness of sanctity before any other thing existed. The Lord swore irrevocably on anointing His Son the Messiah, saying: «Eternal Priest are You, according to the Order of Melchisedech.» Your Anointed, O my Lord and God, is at Your right hand: on the day of His anger, He will shatter the pride of the powerful, judge the nations, banish impiety forever*

and chastise unbowed heads by sentence of condemnation. From the torrent He will drink along the way, accordingly God will exalt His Head.’ Therefore, let the whole people of Israel know with all certainty that God, at the beginning of the world, made this Jesus as Man to be Lord and Christ, whom you crucified.”

Chapter VIII **Conversion of many**

1. Pope Peter’s deeply inspired words made such a deep impression on many of those congregated before the Cenacle that they, with compunction of heart, said to Peter and the other Apostles: *“Worthy brethren, what are we to do?”* To which Peter replied: *“Repent, and be baptized each one of you with the Baptism instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Because this promise is for you, for your children and for all who wish to be saved, since the Lord Our God calls everyone.”* On announcing to them that they would receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Apostle was referring to: the reception of Sanctifying Grace through the Sacrament of Baptism; an increase in Sanctifying Grace through the Sacrament of Confirmation; and, moreover, that they would be favoured with the Paraclete’s extraordinary charisms. By many other reasonings, Pope Peter also gave firm testimony of faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ to those numerous converts, who numbered more than three thousand. He alerted them, moreover, against the apostate Jewish church, saying: *“Free yourselves from this depraved generation”*; announcing to them that before Baptism they would have to make a public abjuration of Judaism.

2. Next, at the request of Apostle Peter, the Divine Mary, coming out to the door of the Jerusalem Cenacle, addressed the numerous group of converts with the following words of encouragement and consolation, which each heard in his own language: *“Give wholehearted thanks and praise to Almighty God, because from among all men He has brought you and called you to the true way of eternal life by the news of the Holy Faith. Be steadfast in it, so as to confess it with all your heart; and to hear, believe and practise all that the law of Grace contains, as its true Master, Jesus, my Son and your Redeemer, ordained and taught; and to hear and obey His Apostles, who will teach and catechize you. By Baptism you will be marked with the sign and character of sons of the Most High.”*

3. On that day of Pentecost, 15th of May in the year 34, after the Most Holy Virgin Mary had maternally exhorted the more than three thousand catechumens, they went with the twelve Apostles and a good number of disciples to the nearby Hinnon brook, where they were further instructed by Peter in the fundamental points of Evangelical Law; and, once they had all abjured their errors and very earnestly professed faith in Christ, the Holy

Sacrament of Baptism was administered to them by the twelve Apostles, who did so in the effusion form, always used by Christ; that is, at the same time as each Apostle pronounced the formula: *“I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”*, he poured baptismal water upon the heads of his neophytes, baptizing them one after another. Next the new Christians received the Sacrament of Confirmation from the Apostles; who each, to confirm them, laid his right hand upon the head of every neophyte, at the same time anointing the forehead with Holy Chrism making the sign of the cross. A good number of the over three thousand neophytes were male Essenian religious living in other countries, who had not previously had the opportunity of being baptized, as contact with Christ had not been possible for them. Many of the converts, now baptized and confirmed, returned to their countries exceedingly fortified by the Paraclete to form new Christian communities there, which would later be visited by the Apostles; though a good number, men as well as women, did not wish to depart from Jerusalem, to avoid separation from the Divine Mother of Jesus and those living with Her in the Cenacle, where friars and nuns, duly separated, dwelt. As those celibate Essenes who had been converted became integrated into the Christian religious communities, it was necessary to organize new conventual houses: Lazarus’s house in Bethany, and as well that in Jerusalem, were occupied by the friars; and Simon the Leper’s house in Bethany, and Obed’s in Bethphage, were occupied by the nuns. Those not called to the religious life, however, lived their own separate family life. Living in those Carmelite religious communities, besides the seventy-two official disciples or Princes of the Church, were the other new friars, who were also considered disciples, in contrast to the seculars who were known as tertiary faithful. On the evening of that same day of Pentecost, the 15th of May in the year 34, Pope Peter, to comply with Christ’s command, in the presence of the other Apostles, disciples and the rest assembled in the Cenacle, imposed on the entire Church the obligation of the Sacrament of Penance for the forgiveness of mortal sins, precisely as Christ had instituted it on Resurrection Sunday. One of those converted on the day of Pentecost on seeing the Tongues of Fire upon the heads of the Apostles, was Gerontius, a Sephardic Jew, native of Itálica in the province of Seville, Spain, whom Pope Peter baptized and also admitted into the Carmelite Order as a religious on that day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Gerontius later received the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate in a single laying on of hands by Pope Peter; but he did not become one of the seventy-two official disciples or Princes of the Church.

Chapter IX

Exemplary evangelical life of those first Christians

1. The members of the two Carmelite religious communities observed the evangelical counsels with utmost zeal, and the tertiary faithful were fervent and submissive to the Church. The great majority persevered in the Faith, were observant of the apostolic instructions, and assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass celebrated by the Apostles in the Cenacle of Jerusalem, Christianity's first Church; though the Apostles celebrated Holy Mass as well in the friars' and nuns' community chapels, and in some of the private homes of the tertiary faithful, so that by this means assistance at Holy Mass and reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist might be easier for all, who received Communion with joy and simplicity of heart. The chapel most frequented by the faithful was that of the Cenacle, where they persevered with one mind in prayer. Every day divine worship was held in the Cenacle, as well as catechism for the neophytes given by the disciples and disciplesses.

2. Those first Christian tertiary faithful lived united among themselves, and possessed all their goods in common. They generously sold their possessions and other effects, giving the proceeds to the Church for her to share out among all, according to the needs of each. The number of believers multiplied each day. Their fervour in faith and charity was so ardent that many began to imitate the poverty of Christ, despising riches and personal property, placing whatever they possessed unreservedly at the feet of the Apostles, considering nothing as their own. All things were held in common by the faithful, and all wished to unburden themselves of the danger of wealth and to live in poverty, sincerity, humility and continuous prayer, concerned only with eternal salvation and nothing else, as all considered themselves to be brethren, and children of one Father who is in Heaven. The generous attitude, then, of many of those first families of Christian tertiary faithful was laudable, since without being consecrated to the religious life, nor therefore obliged by vow of poverty, they renounced no few of their legitimate properties, placing them at the disposal of the Church for the common benefit of all her members. This detachment from personal belongings, however, was always motivated by the generosity of the faithful and not by any imposition on the part of the Hierarchy of the Church; for she is the first to respect and defend private property, one of man's natural rights. Hence, the detachment of many of those first Christian faithful was of the greatest meritorious value, as they heroically put into practice Christ's sublime counsel on poverty of spirit, which not only implied voluntary and generous detachment from material things to dedicate themselves to spiritual ones, but included the renunciation of legitimate rights. Besides, the magnanimous attitude of those first Christians was faithful testimony to their confidence in Divine Providence, which never abandons those who practise

the works of mercy. Those first Christians, by their virtue, won the esteem and admiration of no few of Jerusalem's inhabitants, with great fruits of conversions and the resultant increase in numbers of the Church's faithful.

3. Those first Christians professed great love for the Apostles, feeling deep respect for them, not only on account of the doctrine they taught, but also owing to the many miracles and prodigious signs they wrought. By the Coming of the Holy Ghost the Apostles were solidly prepared to preach the Gospel throughout the world, and left on this mission some time later; the Lord working through them, confirming by many miracles the doctrine they taught.

Chapter X

Cure of the man crippled from birth

1. At the prodigious Pentecost, the twelve Apostles and the others gathered in the Cenacle were confirmed in the Faith, and thus preserved forever from the sin of apostasy; and as a consequence their final perseverance or eternal salvation was guaranteed. But the privilege of confirmation in Faith should not be confused with that of confirmation in Grace, as by virtue of the latter impeccancy is also acquired.

2. The Apostles, exceedingly fortified by the Holy Ghost, began to give valiant testimony to Christ throughout the city of Jerusalem; and though well aware that the only places for true worship of God were the Chapel of the Cenacle, the chapels of the other convents and the houses of the Christian faithful, yet they regularly frequented one of the porches of the Jerusalem temple without entering further, given that their sole object was to preach the Gospel; since by the death of Christ this building, however sumptuous, had become the house of Satan. Nevertheless, it was there that the Apostles could more easily address the many Jews who assembled, above all at the times of public prayer held at the hours of terce and none, on account of the morning and evening sacrifice of the lamb, prescribed in the Law of Moses, which continued to be sacrificed at those times, though invalidly.

3. Pope Peter and Apostle John customarily went up to the porch of the Jewish temple at the prayer hour of none with the sole aim of carrying out their apostolate, taking no part whatsoever in Jewish worship. When Peter and John arrived on one of those days, Saturday the 21st of May in the year 34, they found before the Golden Gate of the temple a man called Elias who had been crippled from his mother's womb, and who was brought daily by his relatives to beg alms from those who entered. When the invalid saw that the two Apostles were about to enter Solomon's porch, he begged alms from them. Peter, then, gazing upon him with John, said: "*Look at us.*" The cripple looked at them attentively, hoping to receive an alms. Peter told him: "*Gold or silver have I none, but what I have I give you: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*" And taking him by the right hand, he

raised him up, and instantly his legs and feet were consolidated, so that leaping up he began to walk, entering with them into the porch of the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God. Elias, then, was converted to the Faith of Christ, and was baptized later by Apostle Peter.

4. The crowd of people there, knowing that the cured man was the same one who had sat begging at the Golden Gate of the temple, when they saw him walking and praising God, were astonished and beside themselves at the miraculous occurrence, which became well known inside the temple and throughout the city of Jerusalem.

Chapter XI

Pope Peter's sermon in Solomon's porch

As Elias held fast to Peter and John, not wishing to separate himself from his benefactors, many of the people inside the Jewish temple and many others from the city came running up to where the three stood in Solomon's porch. Seeing this, Peter spoke thus to those gathered: *"O children of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Why do you stare at us as if we had made this man who was an invalid walk by our own virtue or power? By this miracle the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His Son Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied before the tribunal of Pilate, when he judged that Jesus should be set free. You rejected the Holy and Just One, and asked that Barrabas the murderer be given grace. You put to death Jesus the Author of life. He, however, besides being true Man is true God, and by His infinite power rose from the dead, and we are witnesses to His Resurrection. By Faith in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it has been confirmed to the one you saw and knew when he was an invalid that the Name of Jesus is Almighty; since by the Faith that has come to us from Jesus, this sick man has been completely cured, as can be seen by all. This is proof that Jesus is true God, who has employed me as an instrument of His. Now I tell you that, though when putting to death Jesus, the Son of God, you and your pontiffs were not ignorant of the gravity of your crime nor of its terrible eternal consequences, nevertheless you were incapable of evaluating it in its extreme degree of gravity and eternal transcendence. For that reason, Jesus Himself, on the Cross, said of you: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' Everlasting God had already announced the Passion of His Christ long before through the lips of His Prophets, and in that manner it was fulfilled. Repent, then, and be converted, so that your sins may be forgiven, in order that when the time arrives for Jesus Christ, who was preached to you, to come and judge you, you may enjoy the repose of eternal blessedness. It is in God's plan, however, that Jesus Christ direct His Church from Heaven by means of the Rock upon which it is built, until the time arrives for Him to come glorious to restore all things, which from olden times was foretold by God through*

the lips of His Holy Prophets.” That is, Apostle Peter tells the Jews that it was necessary for Jesus Christ, Invisible Head of the Church, to direct her from Heaven through the Visible Head, namely the Pope, His legitimate Vicar on Earth, until He shall return to establish the Messianic Kingdom. Peter continued saying: *“Concerning this Jesus, the Messiah, God prophesied saying to Moses: ‘I will raise up a Prophet for them in the midst of his brethren similar to you: and I will place My words in His mouth, and He shall tell them all that I command Him.’ Many of the Prophets have announced these days. You, if you acknowledge Jesus as the Promised Messiah, will again take part in the Covenant God established with our fathers, when He said to Abraham: ‘In a Descendant of yours all the nations of the earth shall be blest.’ God, by incarnating His Son, sent Him to you first to bless you, so that each might turn away from his evil ways. Therefore, you who have rejected Christ, do not now scorn the new opportunity of salvation He gives you through me, His Vicar on Earth, and through the other Apostles.”* The miracle of the curing of the man crippled from birth, and Peter’s sermon in Solomon’s porch, brought to the true Faith a good number of those present, as five thousand, counting men, women and children, believed in Jesus Christ and His Church and were later baptized by the Apostles.

Chapter XII

First persecution of the growing Church. Apostles Peter and John are seized, imprisoned and judged by the sanhedrin

1. Apostle Peter having concluded his sermon, both he and Apostle John stayed on in Solomon’s porch teaching the crowds gathered there. While they were speaking to the people, unexpectedly some chief priests from the sect of the Sadducees accompanied by the temple magistrate came up, angered that Peter and John should teach the people and preach the resurrection of the dead in the person of Jesus; accordingly, having seized the two Apostles, they put them into supreme pontiff Caiphas’s palace prison until the following day, because it was by then too late to judge them that day. This had been Christ’s prison before His public trial. This action of the sanhedrin members was done without the least hindrance on the part of the Roman authorities, above all as Pilate was then at his official residence in Caesarea Maritime.

2. The following day, 22nd of May in that year 34, in Jerusalem, pontiffs Caiphas and Annas met together with the sanhedrin in full, including Caiphas’s iniquitous sons John and Alexander, who had filled the vacancies left by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Annas, who had founded freemasonry, was the malevolent brain behind the sanhedrin’s perverse plans; nevertheless villainous Caiphas was officially the supreme pontiff and chief authority over the apostate Jewish church. Although the official hall of

the sanhedritic council was located inside the Jerusalem temple, notwithstanding, on occasion they were accustomed to meet in other places, particularly in Annas's and Caiphas's palace, as occurred at Christ's ecclesiastical trial, and now with Apostles Peter and John.

3. When Apostles Peter and John found themselves before pontiffs Caiphas and Annas and the sanhedritic council, the two were asked: *"By what authority or in whose name have you done this?"* Then Pope Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, told them very resolutely, among other things: *"Rulers of the people, listen: since today an account is asked of us for the benefit done to an invalid, and by whose virtue he has been cured, we declare to you all and to the whole People of Israel that the cure was done in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, and who rose on the third day by His own Divine Power. By virtue of Him, then, is this man cured. This Jesus the Nazarene is the stone you the builders have rejected, and who has been placed as cornerstone. Solely in Him is there Salvation, and in no other, since no other name under Heaven has been given to man by which we can be saved, but that of Jesus alone."* When Peter finished speaking, those iniquitous judges questioned John, who defended Christ's cause too, with great steadfastness and sound arguments.

4. Caiphas, Annas and the members of the sanhedrin, seeing the courage and fortitude of Peter and John, as they considered them men without studies belonging to the common people, and knowing moreover that they were Jesus' disciples, were astonished at their resoluteness and uncommon wisdom and at the eloquence with which they both expressed themselves. Those satanic jews became even more confounded when they saw the invalid cured by Peter present himself before them and stand beside the two Apostles, thereby giving public testimony to the wondrous miracle worked upon him in the Name of Jesus. In view of the evidence of the miracle they dared not say anything against it, so they ordered Apostles Peter and John to leave the sanhedrin council hall. Once outside, Caiphas, Annas and the members of the sanhedrin began to confer among themselves, saying: *"What shall we do with these men? For they have worked a miracle well known to all those who live in Jerusalem, and it is so evident that we cannot deny it. So that it may no more be divulged to the people, however, let us threaten them so that from now on they speak no more to any man in the Name of Jesus."* Then they called Peter and John, and charged them neither to speak nor to teach any more in the Name of Jesus. But Peter replied to this telling them: *"Judge for yourselves if it be just before God to obey you instead of Him, because we cannot cease to speak of the things we have seen and heard. Besides, you, Caiphas, Annas and members of the sanhedrin, no longer have any authority over the true People of God, since I am the chief authority over the true People of God or Church of Jesus Christ, whom you put to death."* Then John valiantly ratified what Peter had said, saying: *"Amen"*; that is,

Peter and John, fortified by the Holy Ghost, gave faithful testimony to posterity that God must always be obeyed before men.

Chapter XIII

Peter and John return to the Cenacle

That same day, 22nd of May in the year 34, Apostles Peter and John, once released by the sanhedrin, returned to the Cenacle and related to their followers what had happened to them. Then the members of the two religious communities, as well as the tertiary faithful present, prompted by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, unanimously raised their voices to God to sing His eternal praises, saying: *“O Lord, Maker of heaven, earth, sea and all they contain! You, by the Holy Ghost, said through David your servant: ‘Why do the wicked rebel against God, and the ungodly nations scheme subversive plans against Him? Many kings of earth have leagued up with the princes of Hell to make war on God and on His Anointed, saying: Let us reject His authority and shake off the yoke of His Law.’ Because verily, against Your Holy Son Jesus whom You anointed, in this city pontiffs Annas and Caiphas, the sanhedrin, King Herod Antipas, Procurator Pontius Pilate and the great majority of the people of Israel leagued up as one. All of them, by their iniquitous conduct, carried out Your decree concerning the Passion of Jesus, the Christ. Now then, Lord, see their threats, and let Your servants preach Your word in all freedom, stretching forth Your hand to perform cures, prodigies and wonders in the Name of Your Holy Son Jesus.”* This prayer having ended, the place where they were assembled shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and announced the word of God resolutely. That is, the Holy Ghost again became manifest to them, though in far lower degree, and with this fresh stimulus from the Paraclete, they preached the Gospel with greater ardour.

Chapter XIV

Vow of poverty in the religious communities. Chastisement of Ananias and Saphira

1. The numerous Christian faithful were of one heart and soul. No one among them considered anything he possessed as his own, having all things in common. Thus among them there was no needy person, since all who had possessions or houses, selling them brought the sale price and laid it at the Apostles' feet, which was distributed according to the needs of each.

2. This generous action, while not binding for the Carmelite tertiaries, was indeed so for the friars and nuns of both communities, as was the case of Joseph of Cyprus, surnamed Barnabas. As he was a friar, he sold land recently inherited and gave the full sale price to the Apostles. That is an instance of the obligation that members of both Carmelite religious communities had of not owning personal goods, by virtue of the vow of poverty; which, together with obedience and chastity, constituted even then the essential basis of religious life.

3. Among the Christian tertiary faithful were Ananias and his wife Saphira who, still young, of their own free will had made the decision to separate and enter the respective religious communities. As this sublime consecration to God required each of its members, by virtue of the vow of poverty at the moment of taking it in perpetuity, to give up all property, both of them, before entering their convents, sold land they possessed to give the money to the Apostles. Tempted to greed, however, by mutual agreement husband and wife secretly decided to withhold part of the sale price, giving the other part to the Apostles, saying to Peter that the sum handed over was the full sale price of the land. It chanced that when Ananias arrived first at the Cenacle to enter as a friar, Peter who, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, was aware of the deceit plotted by the married couple, said to him: *“Why did you let yourself be borne away by the temptation of Satan, who has taken possession of your heart, and try to deceive the Holy Ghost by retaining for yourself part of the price of the land? Has anyone by chance forced you to enter religious life? Is it not true that, continuing as a tertiary faithful, you could have kept it for yourself, and should you have sold it the full price would have been at your disposal? Even as a friar you could have kept the land, or part or all of its price until the moment you professed the three perpetual vows. With what object, then, have you contrived this fraud in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”* Ananias, on hearing these words, fell to the ground and expired. The grave-diggers then removed his body and gave it burial.

4. And so three hours later Saphira arrived at the Cenacle to enter as a nun, unaware of what had happened to her husband. Peter said to her: *“Tell me, woman, did you sell the land for the price you gave to the Church?”* She replied: *“Yes, for that price.”* Peter said to her: *“Why have you agreed to try the Holy Ghost? Did anyone by chance force you to enter religious life? You know well that, your husband like yourself, as tertiary faithful could have kept the land or the full sale price. Even as religious you could have kept the land, or part or all of its price until the moment you professed the three perpetual vows. Here at the door are those who have buried your husband, and they will take you away for burial as well.”* At once the woman fell to the ground and expired. The grave-diggers then removed her body and gave it burial with her husband’s. Owing to this lamentable affair of Ananias and Saphira, great fear came upon all the members of the Church and upon whoever heard of these things. In the consciences of the children of the Church, the Supreme Authority of the Pope thus became quite manifest and indisputable.

Chapter XV

The Apostles' intense preaching. Their miraculous doings and fruitfulness of their apostolate

1. The Apostles very courageously gave testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and God, working many miracles and prodigies before the people. Grace shone forth in the Christian faithful.

2. Pope Peter and the other Apostles frequented Solomon's porch to evangelize the crowds coming up to the Jewish temple. The prestige of those first Prelates of the Church of Christ increased daily owing to the extraordinary charisms the Holy Ghost infused into them. Therefore, in view of the supernatural powers the Apostles were gifted with, especially Peter, many came to them from Jerusalem and other places to be cured of every kind of ailment, and at the same time to hear the divine teachings from their lips. While Caiaphas, Annas, the Sanhedrin and the whole horde of Jews loyal to their dictates did not dare to accept the Apostles, rather laid terrible pitfalls for them, many of the simple folk praised them for their doctrine and miracles, so that the number of men and women who believed in the Lord Jesus increased ever further. They brought the sick out into the streets placing them on stretchers and litters, so that when Peter passed by at least his shadow might touch some of them, and they be freed from their ailments. Many people also came to Jerusalem from nearby towns bringing the sick and possessed, all of whom were cured.

Chapter XVI

Second persecution of the growing Church. The twelve Apostles are seized by the temple guards while preaching in Solomon's porch. Archangel Saint Michael frees the twelve Apostles from prison

1. Pontiffs Annas and Caiaphas and all those comprising the Sanhedrin, blinded by envy at the Apostles' success before the people, decided to lay hands upon them and do away with them.

2. On Sunday morning, 5th of June in the year 34, when the twelve Apostles were in Solomon's porch preaching to the crowds, they were seized by the temple guards in accord with orders given by the hierarchs of the Jewish church, and conducted to the prison in the supreme pontiff's palace in which Peter and John had been imprisoned days previously.

3. The next day, however, 6th of June, when it was still dark, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who was in the Cenacle praying for the Apostles, sent Archangel Saint Michael to free them from their chains and open the prison gates for them. So then, that same day the Archangel opened the gates of the prison by night and, leading the twelve Apostles out, said to them: "*Go and present yourselves at the porch of the Jewish temple; and once there preach to the people the doctrine of eternal life taught to you by Jesus your Divine Master.*" Although the prison was diligently guarded by the Sanhedrin

warders, the departure of the twelve Apostles from the dungeon as well as from the pontiffs' palace mysteriously went unnoticed by them. The twelve Apostles, finding themselves at liberty, first went to the Cenacle in order by their presence to console the disciples and disciplesses; who, exceedingly afflicted, were praying together with the Most Holy Virgin Mary for their release.

Chapter XVII

The twelve Apostles return to Solomon's porch to preach.

Caiphas, Annas and the sanhedrin meet to judge and condemn the twelve Apostles

1. That same day Monday 6th of June, the twelve Apostles, carrying out God's command through Archangel Saint Michael who had freed them, presented themselves at Solomon's porch to preach the Gospel, since at that hour many Jews gathered for public morning prayer.

2. While the twelve Apostles taught in Solomon's porch, it came to pass that at 10 in the morning that same day, at which hour the sanhedritic council had been convoked, supreme pontiff Caiphas accompanied by Annas arrived at the council hall in the palace of the high priests, thus inaugurating the extraordinary session at which the twelve Apostles were to be judged and condemned. Caiphas sent the temple magistrate together with the bailiffs to fetch the prisoners. On arriving and opening the doors of the prison, however, they did not find them. So they returned with the news saying: *"We found the prison indeed securely locked, and the guards there at the doors to guard it; but having opened the doors we found no one inside."* When the sanhedritic tribunal heard this they were bewildered, wondering what could have become of the twelve Apostles. The temple magistrate was the new chief bailiff and Annas's and Caiphas's fully confidential official, in substitution for the perfidious Malchus who had buffeted Christ and was cast body and soul into Hell on the day of Pentecost at the very moment the Holy Ghost descended upon those in the Cenacle.

3. While the sanhedrin in full was still bewildered at the mysterious disappearance of the Apostles, a messenger arrived from the Jewish temple to communicate to the sanhedritic council that the twelve Apostles were to be found in Solomon's Porch preaching to the people. The magistrate then went with the bailiffs, and brought them without violence as the bailiffs were afraid of being stoned by the people.

Chapter XVIII

The twelve Apostles before Caiphas, Annas and the sanhedrin in full

1. Once the twelve Apostles came before the sanhedritic council, supreme pontiff Caiphas interrogated them saying: *"By express command we forbade you to preach in the Name of Jesus, and you, instead of obeying, have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, trying to make us responsible for the Blood of that Man."* Peter replied saying valiantly: *"It is necessary to obey God"*

before men. Besides, I repeat to you: Caiphas, Annas and members of the sanhedrin, you no longer have any authority over the true People of God, since I possess the chief authority in the true People of God or Church of Jesus Christ, fulfilling in this way the prophecy in David's Psalms: 'Their dwelling will be left deserted, and no one will inhabit their homes, because they persecuted Him whom You struck, and augmented the hurt of Him whom You wounded. They will heap baseness upon baseness, and refuse to enter the sheepfold of Your own''; and the other Apostles, ratifying Peter's words, said "Amen." Pope Peter then continued speaking: "This Jesus Christ, whom you put to death by crucifying Him on a cross, has risen by virtue of the Divine Power He possesses as God that He is as well. This Jesus Christ was exalted by the right hand of God the Father, and placed as Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. We are witnesses to these truths, as also is the Holy Ghost whom God has given to us and to all who obey Him: as likewise are you yourselves, Annas and Caiphas, and three of the chief priests, since He presented Himself before you following His Resurrection, and you rejected Him." On hearing this the members of the sanhedrin were filled with rage and deliberated among themselves on how to put them to death.

2. While the twelve Apostles appeared before the sanhedrin that day, the 6th of June, the disciple Gamaliel, leaving the Cenacle cloister for the purpose by order of the Divine Mary, presented himself before the council. As Gamaliel, prior to his conversion to the Faith of Christ, had belonged to the pharisee sect, had been a doctor of the law and member of the sanhedrin, he enjoyed great prestige and respect before the people. Hence he could easily present himself before the council in session to intervene in the Apostles' favour. So then, Gamaliel asked the sanhedrin to let the twelve Apostles go outside briefly. Once they had left, Gamaliel commenced his discourse before the sanhedritic council, saying: "Men of Israel, consider well what you are to do with these men. You know that not long ago an individual called Theodas rose up and gained a reputation as a person of great importance, and about four hundred men associated with him. He was killed, however, and his followers dispersed, and it all came to nothing. Then Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of Governor Quirinus's census, and drew the people after him. But he perished as well, and all his followers dispersed. Now I say to you, do not meddle with these twelve men, but set them free; because if the work they are raising up is from men, it will disappear of its own accord; but if it is from God you cannot destroy it, and besides you will be opposing God." Then Gamaliel continued his discourse, making quite clear his attitude in favour of the doctrine preached by the Apostles, which he professed as being a divine and indestructible work. After Gamaliel's reasonings, and fearful that he might influence the people against them, Caiphas, Annas and the members of the sanhedrin, deliberating among

themselves, opted to heed Gamaliel's opinion; consequently, they told him to withdraw from the sanhedrin council hall and that they would afterwards let the Apostles go free. Once Gamaliel had left, the members of the sanhedrin called in the Apostles; and after having them scourged, warned them to speak no more in the Name of Jesus, and let them go. The Apostles withdrew from the council's presence greatly rejoicing at having been found worthy to suffer affronts for their Divine Master, and continued to preach ceaselessly on Jesus Christ at Solomon's porch in the Jerusalem temple, in the Jews' houses and throughout the city.

Chapter XIX

Pope Peter ordains seven Deacons

1. For the effective administration and distribution of the Church's goods destined for works of charity, Peter had named various lay faithful to share out relief to the most needy, and moreover carry out other charitable missions. These laypeople, in turn, made use of certain virtuous widows who wished to serve the Church in this state of life, not having a religious vocation. As many of those joining the ever increasing number of lay faithful were Greek-speaking, those entrusted with the works of charity, being generally Hebrews, continued requesting this charitable service more from widows of their own language than from those of the Greek language. This gave rise to backbiting among the Greek faithful to whom it seemed there was discrimination against widows of their own language. Peter, with the aim of avoiding contentions between the children of the Church, resolved that the supervision of this work of charity pass into the hands of the hierarchy, but without the direct intervention of the twelve Apostles.

2. Peter, then, decided to ordain seven of the friars as Deacons, in order for them to organize the administration and sharing out of alms with equity, employing the services of laymen and widows named by the Deacons without distinction of language or nation. For this purpose, Pope Peter convoked the other eleven Apostles and all the disciples, and said: *"It is not right that we, the Apostles, neglect the word of God to occupy ourselves with the administration and sharing out of alms. I will choose, then, brethren from among you, seven men of good reputation, filled with the Holy Ghost and with wisdom, whom I will entrust with this work; and thus we can employ ourselves wholly in prayer and in preaching the Divine Word."* This proposal seemed good to the entire gathering. And Pope Peter, taking into account the opinion of the other Apostles, elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timmon, Parmenas, and Nicholas who was a proselyte from Antioch of Syria, the only one not a member of the group of seventy-two official disciples or Princes of the Church.

3. On the 16th of July in the year 34, the ceremony for the ordination of the seven Deacons by Pope Peter took place in the Cenacle, in the presence of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the members of the two religious communities, and tertiary faithful of both branches. The ordination ceremony of the seven Deacons followed the celebration of Holy Mass by Pope Peter before all those present. To be ordained Deacon, each of the seven candidates knelt before Peter, who in silence laid his hands upon the head of each, thereby conferring the Diaconate; and though the other Apostles laid hands upon them as well, to bless them and give greater solemnity to the act, their participation did not form part of the essence of the Sacrament.

Chapter XX

Massive growth of Christ's Mystical Body. The Divine Mary, Mother, Shepherdess and Doctress of the Newborn Church

The evangelizing work of the Apostles continued to produce admirable effects among the Jews, for the word of the Lord spread, the number of Christian faithful greatly multiplied in Jerusalem, and a large number of levitical priests joined the Apostles. This was a clear demonstration of the massive growth of Christ's Mystical Body at that time, and of the evident spiritual ruin of the apostate jewish church; since among the deicide people, despite the obstinacy of the majority, there were many who yielded to the effects of grace, which is always propitious towards those who still retain in their hearts at least a little goodwill in search of the truth. What made the deepest impression on many of these Jews, besides the prodigious signs they saw in the Apostles, was the irreproachable conduct of those first members of the Church, whose lives were in harmony with the evangelical doctrine they professed; while the prelates of the apostate jewish church became increasingly corrupt. This is also why a good number of levitical priests dedicated to the ministry in the temple of Jerusalem and in many synagogues inside and outside Israel joined the Apostles, recognizing that in the doctrine professed by the Church of Christ was contained the purity of the Law of Moses in its maximum perfection, in conformity with the Evangelical spirit preached by that Messiah inexorably combated and ignominiously crucified by His own people. However, none of those converted priests formed part of the sanhedritic council. The surprising fruits of conversion continually brought about by the evangelizing labour of the Apostles was due to the prodigality of the action of the Holy Ghost in souls, in attention to the continuous solicitude of His Divine Spouse, the Virgin Mary, in such a way that the little barque of the New Church, governed by the Divine Mistress, sailed ahead prosperously with the counsels She gave, the doctrine She taught, the admonishments She gave, as likewise the prayers and petitions She unceasingly offered on the Church's behalf, without Her for a moment ceasing to attend the Church in all that was necessary for this and for the

consolation of the Apostles and the other faithful. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, most vigilant Mother and Shepherdess, zealously looked after the sheep of the fold entrusted to Her care by Her Divine Son, protecting them from the pitfalls and dangers of the infernal wolves; in such a fashion that this Christian family was secure under the protection of the Divine and Most Pious Mother; who not only concerned Herself with the spiritual needs and tribulations of Her children, but with their corporal ones as well, even working the miraculous cure of the most grievous illnesses. She was most perfect model of Christian charity towards all the children of the Church, since She often served them in person, visiting, teaching and comforting them; the poorer they were the more solicitous She was towards them, even feeding them as well with Her Purest Hands, making their beds and attending to their cleanliness as if She were the servant of each. Such was the humility, charity and concern of the great Queen of Heaven, that She denied no service to Her children the faithful, filling them all with sweetest joy and consolation in their hardships. The inexpressible labour of charity the Divine Mother continually exercised was not limited to the children of the Church, but also extended to those outside her, since with great concern She succoured folk in their many needs so as to draw them to the light of the Gospel. Thanks to the magisterial teaching and heroic example of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Apostles, disciples, disciplesses and Church faithful in general, put into practice with great perfection the works of mercy, sublimely lived and preached by Christ during His Public Life. Hence can be understood why no few Jews reacted favourably towards the Gospel.

Chapter XXI

Martyrdom of Stephen, disciple and Deacon.

Peter elects the Deacon Nicholas to occupy the post left vacant by Stephen among the seventy-two disciples

1. Stephen had been born in the Ophel district of the city of Jerusalem on the 26th of December in the year 5199. He was well versed in the Law and Sacred Scripture thanks to his talent and application in study; for together with Saul, who was afterwards to become Apostle Paul, he had been educated in the school of the famous teacher Gamaliel, later a disciple of Jesus Christ. During their years of study a close friendship grew up between the two fellow students. The Deacon protomartyr during his youth was distinguished by his upright observance of the Law of Moses, and was of great moral purity. Shortly after the Precursor, John the Baptist, began preaching at the banks of the Jordan, Stephen followed him as a disciple, received from him the baptism of penance, and by him was put in contact with Jesus Christ. On the 15th of May in the year 31, Christ, preaching by the Jordan, administered the Sacrament of Baptism to Stephen, who, from then on ever followed the Divine Master, being elected disciple in February

of the year 32; and on the 22nd of August that same year was named an official disciple.

2. Stephen, a man full of grace and fortitude, worked great prodigies and miracles among the people, and impelled by the Holy Ghost spoke with great wisdom. The prestige which the Deacon acquired in Jerusalem was such that, on Saturday the 24th of December in the year 34, while teaching in a public square near the old Sheep Gate, close by today's Saint Stephen's Gate, he was spied on by members of the official synagogue or Jewish church belonging to Greek-speaking Jewish communities known as 'of the freedmen', Cyrenians, Alexandrians, from Cilicia and from Asia. And as they were listening to Stephen's Gospel teachings, they launched out into a dispute with him on the Law and the Scriptures, but were outclassed by the Deacon's wisdom. One of the Jews there present was the rabbi Saul, of the Pharisee sect, who days previously had come from Tarsus, curious about the recent events of Christ's Death and the Coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Cenacle; having heard about them from some Cilicians who had been converted on hearing Peter's Pentecost Day sermon. They had also informed Saul that Gamaliel, his cherished former master, and Stephen his ex-fellow student, belonged to the group of followers of the crucified Nazarene. A heated argument broke out between Stephen and Saul in which the Deacon taught lessons to his former fellow student. Both Saul and his fanatic Jewish coreligionists, unable to endure the inspired wisdom with which Stephen spoke, stung to fury against the Deacon, planned means to arrest him at the first occasion that might present itself. It was pontiffs Caiphas and Annas, however, who bribed some to say that they had heard Stephen uttering blasphemies against Moses and against God, also making this calumnious accusation public throughout the city, so as thereby to count, in their criminal intentions, on the support of the people, since Stephen enjoyed great prestige among them for his wisdom, holiness and miracles. By such defamation they stirred up the hierarchs of the Jewish church and many of the people, who leagued up against Stephen.

3. On Monday the 26th of December in the year 34, the Deacon Stephen, who was teaching a crowd in the usual place, which was beside the aforementioned Sheep Gate, was arrested by supreme pontiff Caiphas's guards and brought before him. Caiphas was in the Sanhedrin council hall of the Jerusalem temple, holding a meeting with many who were Sanhedrites and others who were not. At the trial false witnesses came forward to say of Stephen: "*This man does not cease to utter words against this holy place and against the Law: for we heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place and change the traditions given to us by Moses.*" Saul, also present there, sincerely believed in the truth of these accusations. Those same Jewish dignitaries, gazing upon Stephen, beheld his face transformed, like

the face of an Angel, due to the heavenly splendour the Deacon displayed before all at the Most Holy Virgin Mary's apparition to him; for She, without leaving the Cenacle, became present to him at those moments to strengthen and inspire him.

4. Then high priest Caiphas hypocritically asked the Deacon if all they had said against him was true. In answer to the iniquitous pontiff's question, however, and to the defamations of which he was accused, Stephen gave a masterly summary of the Sacred Scriptures. At the same time as he defended holy Jewish traditions, Stephen confessed his fidelity to Abraham, Father in the Faith, his profound respect for what the prophets had foretold and his most zealous observance of the Law of Moses in accord with the Gospel spirit, in order thus to crown his doctrinal apology demonstrating that in Our Lord Jesus Christ all the Old Testament was fulfilled, He being the announced and Promised Messiah, whom they as deicides and traitors had put to death. Here is Stephen's discourse: *"Hear me, all: the God of Glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haram, and said to him: 'Go out from your land, from your kinsfolk and from the house of your father, and come to the land I will show you. I will make you father and head of a great people, and I will bless you and make your name great, and you will be blessed. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you, and in one of your descendants all the generations of the earth will be blessed.'* So Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haram. After his father's death he moved from there to this land where you now dwell, and God promised to give it in possession to him and to his descendants after him, though he still had no children. God said to him, moreover, referring to the land of Egypt: *'Know from now that your posterity will be pilgrims in a land that is not theirs (Egypt), and then will be subjected to servitude, and will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will judge the nation they are to serve, and afterwards they will leave with great wealth, and return here (Canaan) in the fourth generation.'* God then made the covenant with him, sealed by circumcision. So Abraham was circumcised; and after having engendered Isaac he circumcised him as well on the eighth day, and Isaac did likewise to his son Jacob. And Jacob too circumcised his twelve sons. Ten of them, moved by envy, sold their brother Joseph, who was taken down into Egypt as a slave. God, however, who was with him, brought him out of all his trials, giving him grace and wisdom before Egypt's pharaoh, who constituted him viceroy of that country and of his entire court. Afterwards there was widespread famine in all Egypt and in the land of Canaan, and misery was extreme, so that Jacob and his children had nothing to eat. But as Jacob knew there was abundant wheat in Egypt, he sent ten of his sons there the first time; and the second time that he sent ten of his sons, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and his lineage was revealed to the pharaoh. Joseph then sent for his father and all his

kinsfolk. So Jacob went down into Egypt, where in due course he died, as did his sons. The People of Israel grew and multiplied in Egypt, until another sovereign reigned there who did not take into account all that Joseph had done in favour of his nation. Employing malicious guile against the children of Israel, the pharaoh persecuted them, even compelling them to kill their newly born children when they exceeded the limit established by him. At that time Moses was born. He was pleasing to God, and was secretly nursed for the space of three months in his parents' home, as he was their third child. In view of the danger of discovery, however, his mother, enlightened by God, laid him in a reed basket which she left on the river Nile. He was taken up from there by the daughter of the pharaoh, who had him cared for as his own son. So Moses was instructed in Egyptian sciences, and came to be a powerful man in word and deed. When he was forty years old, seeing one of Israel's children struck by an Egyptian, he defended him, killing the oppressor. The following day, seeing two Israelites fight to the death between themselves, he sought to reconcile them, saying to one of them: 'Why are you beating your neighbour?' He replied: 'Who has placed you as prince and judge over us? Do you perhaps want to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' And on being denounced for the crime by the two pastors, the pharaoh ordered that Moses be sought out and killed, but he fled with a small group of Israelites, taking refuge on Mount Horeb, where God anointed him Prophet and Shepherd of His People's children. Afterwards, Moses went to live in the land of Madian, where he married and begot two sons. Forty years later, while taking his livestock into the inner part of the desert, Moses saw something mysterious on the summit of Mount Horeb which enticed him to go up; and after climbing up, he saw God under human figure in the midst of the flames of a burning bush. Marvelling that the bush burned and was not consumed, Moses drew nearer to examine it more closely; then God, in the midst of the bush, said to him: 'Come no closer. Take the shoes from your feet, because the place you are on is holy ground.' And added: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And the Lord told him: 'I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their outcry at the overseers' heartlessness. And knowing their suffering I have come down to liberate them from the hands of the Egyptians... Come, then, for I will send you to the pharaoh in order that you take the children of Israel, My people, out of Egypt.' And Moses said to God: 'Who am I to go to the pharaoh and take the sons of Israel out of Egypt?' God responded: 'I will be with you.' God, then, sent Moses as Caudillo and Liberator of His People, and he delivered them by divine power, working prodigies and miracles in the land of Egypt, in the Red Sea and in the desert for the space of forty years. This Moses is the one who, on Mount Sinai, received the Divine Law, the word of life, to deliver to his people. But many, desiring in their hearts to go back again to Egypt, said to

Aaron: 'Make us a god to go before us. As for Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him.' They then made a golden calf, offering sacrifices to the idol, and made merry before that work of their hands. This Moses who, as Israel's Caudillo, presided over the assembly of the Church in the Sinai desert, was rejected by many of his people disobeying his authority. By God's command to Moses, and according to the model he was shown, they fabricated the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant they took with them in the desert. This is that same Moses who transmitted to Israel's children the following words received from God: 'I will raise up a Prophet for them in the midst of his brethren similar to you, and I will place My words in His mouth, and He shall tell them all that I command Him.' Moses was succeeded in the Caudilloship of Israel by Joshua, who was the one who then guided the children of Israel, and they brought the Tabernacle of the Covenant into this land which they seized from its pagan dwellers, whom God exterminated by the sword of the new Caudillo. Joshua then buried Joseph's bones in Sichem, on the land Jacob had bought from Hemor's sons. Then, in the days of David's reign, who found grace before the Lord, the king manifested to the Most High God of Israel his desire to build Him a sumptuous Temple in Jerusalem; it was his son Solomon, however, who later raised it up at God's command. Despite God's clemency and mercy, how often have the People of Israel strayed from Almighty God to erect altars and on them adore idols! Such was the blindness of many in this people, that God permitted them to be deported, first to Nineveh and later to Babylonia, and that the city of Jerusalem and its majestic Temple built by Solomon be completely destroyed."

5. Stephen went on to say: *"Stiff-necked men, pagan of heart and of hearing, stubborn in resisting the Holy Ghost, and continuers of the iniquity of many of your forefathers! What Prophet did many of them not persecute? They put to death those who announced the Coming of the Righteous One, Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have now delivered up and crucified, betraying the Faith of the true People of God, thus rejecting Christ and the Gospel Law He preached. Take greatly into account that God Most High, who has Heaven for throne, and earth as footstool, no longer dwells in the reconstructed temple of Jerusalem, however majestic it may seem to you, and of which not a stone will remain upon a stone. God now dwells in the small Temple of those who follow His Son Jesus Christ."*

6. On hearing these things, the members of that gathering inwardly seethed with rage and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, and fixing his eyes on Heaven, saw the glory of God and Jesus who stood at the right hand of God the Father. And he said: *"Lo, I see the Heavens thrown open, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God the Father."* With a tumultuous clamour, they stopped up their ears and all as

one furiously fell upon him. The pontiff's guards, led by rabbi Saul, dragged Stephen violently out of the temple by one of the gates near the pool of Bethesda, where they were joined by another considerable number of perfidious jews. The Deacon was then taken outside the city by the old Sheep Gate, and thence to the Valley of Cedron where, in accord with that established in the law of Moses for blasphemers, he was stoned. The custom had been introduced that the official witnesses of the stoning be dressed in mantles proper to the occasion, which were to be removed beforehand and placed at the feet of whoever presided, on this occasion Saul, as a sign that the stones were cast in the name of the sanhedrin. Following this initial procedure, all those present also hurled stones at Stephen, while he prayed, saying: *"Lord Jesus receive my spirit"*; and God caused wonders in his body to be visible to all those present. Shortly before dying, falling to his knees, he prayed aloud saying: *"Lord, do not hold this sin against them."* Having said this, he fell asleep in the Lord. This prayer of Stephen enclosed an earnest petition for the conversion of his executioners, especially for that of his ex-fellow student Saul, upon whom the holy martyr looked with great tenderness before dying. Saul consented to Stephen's death; for by his intellectual preparation, prestige among the pharisee sect, fanatic zeal for the Law and natural tenacity, he had quickly won the confidence of the sanhedritic council, which saw in him a singularly useful instrument in its perverse plans against the Christians.

7. Stephen's death occurred at 3 in the afternoon that Monday the 26th of December in the year 34, at which time of year Pontius Pilate was not to be found in Jerusalem, but staying at his official residence in Caesarea Maritime. Thus the sanhedrin could more easily contrive Stephen's death, and afterwards communicate to Pilate's representative that the referred stoning was due to a popular reprisal against the Christians for their street disturbances in detriment to the Law, an imputation we know to be false. Saint Stephen's martyrdom occurred on the spot where today the Church of Saint Stephen rises, in the Valley of Josaphat or Cedron brook, a short distance from what is known as the Sepulchre of the Virgin or Church of the Assumption, beside the Garden of Olives. The fact that veracious Christian tradition situates the spot of Stephen's martyrdom in that valley or brook, where the actual Church in the Saint's honour was later erected, is the reason why the name Stephen was given to the present-day gate in the walls constructed near the old Sheep Gate, through which the saint was taken out of the city to be put to death. As some faithful Christians were present at Stephen's martyrdom, they informed the Apostles; consequently, the Most Holy Virgin Mary considered it most prudent that Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and Gamaliel, persons of some consideration in the city, be the ones to undertake to remove the Deacon protomartyr's corpse and convey it that same evening to a property donated by Gamaliel to the Church, located

some thirty kilometres from Jerusalem, known as Caphargamala. This translation was carried out exactly as had been ordered. Once it was night, the Most Holy Virgin Mary went there accompanied by Her two sisters, by Peter, the other Apostles and a good number of disciples and discipleses, for the funeral rites at which Pope Peter was to officiate the following day with great solemnity. That very 27th of December in the year 34, in the tomb Gamaliel had prepared for himself, the venerable body of the Christian protomartyr received Christian burial. Stephen's martyrdom produced great emotion and at the same time profound admiration in the whole Church, he being the first to shed his blood following Christ's death. By reason of the martyr's burial in Caphargamala, a new religious community of friars was established on the property, under the direction of Gamaliel; who from there worked unceasingly in the propagation of Christianity until his holy death.

8. After Stephen's death, Peter elected Deacon Nicholas to occupy the vacancy left by the protomartyr in the number of the seventy-two official disciples or Princes of the Church.

Chapter XXII

Precautions taken by the Church at the imminence of a fresh persecution. Pope Peter ordains Priests and new Deacons from among the seventy-two disciples. The seventy-two disciples are sent out to preach the Gospel away from Jerusalem

1. The death of Deacon Stephen was the beginning of the third and most cruel persecution hitherto suffered by those primitive Christian communities in Jerusalem; though two days later, by means of a sanhedritic decree, this persecution was to take on an official character.

2. The bloodthirsty and fierce hatred of the sanhedrin and its henchmen for Christ's followers, far from being satisfied with Stephen's martyrdom, intensified yet further in view of the heroic fortitude displayed by the saint, the heavenly wisdom that fell from his lips and the prodigies ennobling his venerable body during his bloody stoning. Stephen's martyrdom was for those perfidious jews another irrefutable proof that the children of the Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ are the legitimate successors of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Law, and depositaries of the holy Jewish traditions now perfected in the Gospel Law. On the other hand, the testimony given by Stephen and the blood he shed in his martyrdom had quite noticeably affected many Jews of humble spirit, so that a profound admiration for the Christians could be discerned in no few, as well as a desire to be united to them. Hence the sanhedrin, in its dogged hatred of the Church, above all now with the influence of the fanatical jew Saul, decided to assail her officially again, with the aim of eradicating the work of Christianity from Jerusalem and instilling fear into those who sympathized with the Gospel. While those iniquitous pontiffs Caiphas and Annas worked out their criminal

designs, the Church of Christ, increasingly fortified, prudently organized herself to withstand that inevitable and imminent persecution; and at the same time to spread the Gospel to other places and regions beyond Jerusalem.

3. On the night of the 27th of December in the year 34, once the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Apostles and others had returned from Caphargamala, Pope Peter, by the most sapient counsel of the Heavenly Mother, spoke to the other Apostles, the seventy-two official disciples and the rest present in the Cenacle, of the great persecution threatening them; and of the measures necessary to ensure the Church's continuity, and of how they should fortify themselves by prayer and penance so as to emerge victorious from that trial, which would redound in supernatural fruits for Christ's Mystical Body. Furthermore, as it was not possible to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem at that time, due to the imminent risk of death given the persecutors' belligerent aggressiveness, the moment had arrived to leave the city in order to spread Christianity to other places and regions. In the divine plan, however, the mission of travelling abroad to spread the Gospel was to pertain first to the official disciples or Princes of the Church, while the Apostles were to remain in Jerusalem for the time being, together with the disciplesses and the other friars.

4. As the evangelical mission of the seventy-two official disciples could not lack what was most essential to the apostolate, Mass and the Sacraments, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, told Peter that before they left he should proceed to ordain Deacons and Priests from among them, so that each Priest be accompanied by a Deacon. Agabus was not included in these ordinations, since he had already received the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate at the hands of Apostle Peter four days after the Lord's Ascension. Therefore, of the other seventy-one official disciples, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timmon, Parmenas and Nicholas, already Deacons, were ordained Priests; of the other sixty-five disciples without Sacred Orders, twenty-nine received the Diaconate and the Presbyterate, of whom we specially mention Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel and Lazarus of Bethany; and thirty-six received solely the Diaconate, as was the case of Aristarchus. This ceremony was performed by Pope Peter that same day, 27th of December in the year 34. Before dawn the following day the seventy-two disciples left in pairs, after receiving Peter's instructions and his papal benediction; each of them also took his leave of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who as Divine Shepherdess and Doctress of the Church, after sound advice, fortified them with Her motherly blessing for the difficult mission entrusted to them. The Divine Mary consoled and encouraged the Apostles to be constant and to hope for divine favour in that tribulation; and in virtue of this exhortation none of the Twelve left Jerusalem. As Gamaliel was assigned to the Caphargamala cloister as superior, after being ordained by

Peter in the Cenacle he returned there accompanied by one of the Deacons; from where he was to fulfil his mission of spreading the Gospel.

Chapter XXIII

The Sanhedrin officially decrees the third persecution of the Church. Rabbi Saul, chief driving force behind the violent persecution. Mary Mercuria's martyrdom. The Divine Mary's Heart torn at the sufferings of Her children

1. The third persecution of the Church was decreed and put into effect by the sanhedrin on the 28th of December in the year 34, the principal driving force behind that violent persecution being rabbi Saul. Though big-hearted, magnanimous, high-minded, zealous, active, efficacious and constant in his undertakings, yet, being stubborn in his thinking, Saul displayed great zeal for rabbinic traditions; and in his mistaken opinion judged it unworthy and contradictory that, against those traditions and against Moses, a new Law be promulgated invented by a Man crucified as a criminal, when Moses had received the Law on Mount Sinai from God Himself. So it was that Saul conceived deep abhorrence and contempt for Christ, His Law and His disciples. Therefore, despite Saul's human qualities, until his conversion he was a useful instrument of Satan in those perverse plans against Christianity; and due to his hardness of heart did not value the holy testimonies of many of Christ's followers, like the highly sapient sermon given by protomartyr Stephen at his martyrdom, the transfiguration of his face and the heroic patience displayed by the saint at his death, which would have been more than sufficient for the conceited Saul to desist from his cruel and perverse attitude towards Christians, were it not for his stubborn jewish fanaticism and mistaken zeal for God.

2. The persistent diabolical scheming of Caiphas and Annas against Christianity and the tenacious drive of a persuasive man like Saul, gave rise to the third persecution of the Church being in addition officially decreed; measure which counted on the support of the Roman representative in Jerusalem of Pontius Pilate, who was himself then residing in Caesarea Maritime. It was precisely Saul who, with his adroit dialectical prowess, presented the sanhedrin's proposal to the civil authorities, so that they might deign to grant their approval to the persecution of Christians, unjustly branded as disturbers of public order and transgressors of jewish traditions. Saul, using the authority received from pontiffs Caiphas and Annas, and in his bold tenacity in putting an end to Christianity, laid waste to the Church of Christ, entering into houses, violently dragging off men and women and imprisoning them; and as well often had them taken to the dungeons of the jewish synagogues where they were tortured and forced to blaspheme so that they might renounce Faith in Christ, some of the weakest succumbing. The third persecution of the Church in Jerusalem directed by the fanatical Saul

was notable for its cruelty, since many Christians were imprisoned and ill-treated, no few crowning their martyrdom with death, as was the case of Mary Mercuria, discipless protomartyr. She, having left the Cenacle to comfort some persecuted families, was assailed by a group of jews who tried to force her to deny the Name of Jesus Christ. But as she valiantly confessed that she was a Christian, she was brought to Saul who, seeing the constancy with which she confessed the Faith, ordered her to be stoned. Mary Mercuria's martyrdom took place on the 1st of January in the year 35, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, near the spot where Stephen had been martyred.

3. While the Church was victim of the sanhedrin's and impetuous Saul's terrible persecution, the Divine Mary, as Mother of Christ's Mystical Body, unceasingly prayed to Her Most Divine Son to quell that bloody tempest quickly; for though the blood shed by the martyrs yielded abundant conversions, with the consequent increase of the faithful and expansion of the Church, Mary's Immaculate Heart was dolorously rent by the sufferings of Her children, in such a fashion that She lived a continuous mystical death, as corresponded to Her who is Queen of Martyrs. In turn Pope Peter and the other Apostles participated in the Most Dolorous Heavenly Mother's affliction, united to Her in clamorous prayer. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, without leaving the Cenacle, comforted the persecuted children of the Church, becoming visible to many; whereby they were exceedingly fortified so as not to apostatize from the Faith, and to accept martyrdom submissively. Peter and the other Apostles also contrived to assist the faithful of the Church, above all with the Sacraments, particularly Holy Communion; doing so by counsel of the Divine Mary, who protected them powerfully so that none of the Twelve might perish. Many members of the two religious communities also showed themselves to be true servants of charity towards their persecuted brethren. No few Christians fled from Jerusalem, however, to continue spreading their Faith in Jesus Christ beyond that bloody scene of persecution, founding new cenacles in those places where the official disciples were to be found missioning. Besides, many who were foreigners returned to their faraway lands, thereby spreading Christianity further.

Chapter XXIV

Respite in Saul's persecution of the Church. Opening, celebration and closure of the First Council of the Church

1. The savage persecution instigated by Saul which laid waste to the Church, while it lasted somewhat more than a year, had its corresponding respites. One such respite commenced on the 30th of March in the year 35, as the sanhedrin, given the multitudes of jews who were to assemble in Jerusalem for the forthcoming passover, considered it inopportune to continue to harass the Christians at that time, since violence against them would draw new proselytes to Christ's Church from among jewish pilgrims,

thanks to the admirable testimony of faith given by the persecuted faithful. Notwithstanding, Caiphas and Annas promulgated an edict which was fixed to the door of every synagogue in Jerusalem, whereby those who associated with the followers of Jesus Christ crucified were penalized with expulsion from the Jewish church. With these and many other precautions and harsh measures, the Jewish people celebrated the Jewish Passover that year 35. By the edict, over the Christians of Jerusalem there hung a continuous threat from the Sanhedrin; which generally employed violence and aggression against them except during the brief periods of apparent calm, especially on Jewish feasts, when the persecution was underhand, for the reasons previously given. Due to Saul's implacable activity in Jerusalem and its vicinity, and the near impossibility now of preaching the Gospel there, Christianity continually extended her field of apostolate to other regions of Israel's territory and beyond.

2. Taking advantage of a period of peace in the persecution of the Christians, Pope Peter, under the most sapient guidance of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, convoked the Apostolic College in the Cenacle of Jerusalem for the celebration of the First Ecumenical Council of the Church, which was solemnly inaugurated on Friday the 5th of May in the year 35, first anniversary of the Lord's admirable Ascension into Heaven; the most solemn closure of this Holy Council taking place on Monday the 15th of May that same year, first anniversary of the apothéosic Coming of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles and others assembled in the Cenacle. In the sessions of the First Holy Council of Jerusalem, doctrinal, liturgical and disciplinary matters were dealt with so that the unity of the Church might stand out in everything. Most transcendent was the drawing up of a Creed in which the principal articles of the Christian Faith were formulated, and which, once composed by the twelve Apostles, received Peter's infallible approbation. This Creed is known in the Church as "*Symbol of the Apostles.*" The First Council of Jerusalem ended, the required copies were made of the Creed drawn up and of the other decrees; all of which, by means of some of the friars, was urgently conveyed to the seventy-two official disciples posted in the various missions. The Apostles' Creed, then, was promulgated as irrefutable Symbol of the Christian Faith and indispensable for whoever wished to belong to the fold of the Church.

Chapter XXV

Fruitful apostolate of the seventy-two official disciples.

Apostolate of the disciple Philip in the town of Samaria. Philip baptizes Simon Magus

1. The seventy-two disciples sent out to preach the Gospel away from Jerusalem went from one region to another announcing the word of God, carrying out a great apostolate which redounded in abundant fruits of conversions, with the resultant increase in Church membership. In many

towns new Christian communities of lay faithful were founded, from which many religious vocations blossomed too, of men as well as of women. To Bishop and Prophet Agabus, then Vice-Superior General of the Carmelite Order, pertained the instruction and supervision of the new religious convents being founded outside Jerusalem.

2. While at the beginning of their mission the seventy-two disciples preached the Gospel in other parts of the region of Judea and throughout the region of Samaria, gradually they extended their field of apostolate to Galilee, Phoenicia, Damascus, Cyprus, Antioch of Syria, among other regions. It fell to the disciple Philip to preach the Gospel in the town of Samaria, also known as Sebaste, where the people listened with great interest to the disciple's teaching, which was confirmed by many miracles, causing great joy in that town. Thanks to Philip's intense apostolate, numerous conversions took place in the town of Samaria; and, therefore, a great expansion of Christians occurred, of both men and women; who, having believed what Philip preached about the Kingdom of God, received the Sacrament of Baptism.

3. In the town of Samaria at that time there was a man named Simon, a Jew from Ghiton, a town in the region of Samaria, who practised the art of magic, deceiving the people with false prodigies and persuading them that he was a great personage, as he made himself out to be a god. Many of the citizens, great and lowly, listened to him and said: "*He is God's great might*"; and they adhered to him, since for quite some time he had bewitched them by his diabolical arts. However, as his false prodigies were eclipsed by the supernatural miracles the disciple Philip worked in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Simon felt himself so drawn to Philip that he followed him to listen to his words and observe his actions, thereby becoming convinced that the Christian Faith was the true one, and that were he to continue with his magic arts he would be damned. The fear of God felt by Simon, then, brought him to request baptism from Philip, and he was baptized by the disciple. While at the beginning Simon Magus's conversion was sincere, nonetheless, he was partly motivated by the ambition of acquiring dignities and honours within Christ's Church, and thus be in possession of supernatural powers and make use of them. Philip, seeing in him a minimum of good will, admitted him into the bosom of the Church. For a time Simon Magus tried to restrain his ambitious aspiration to the priesthood, contenting himself with accompanying Priest Philip, without missing the slightest detail of all he did in the course of his ministry.

Chapter XXVI

Apostolic journey of Pope Peter accompanied by Apostle John. Peter and John in the town of Samaria or Sebaste.

Simon Magus attempts to buy Episcopal powers. Peter's and John's apostolate throughout the region of Samaria

1. Following the celebration of the First Council of Jerusalem, some of the friars living in different convents of the city had been sent to take the Apostles' Creed and other council decrees to the seventy-two disciples. When they arrived at the various missions of the disciples, these messengers could verify with great astonishment the abundant fruits obtained. Hence, on their return to Jerusalem they gave an account of all to the twelve Apostles, mentioning very specially the abundant conversions made in the town of Samaria through the disciple Philip's apostolate.

2. As Pope Peter and the others frequently consulted with the Most Holy Virgin Mary before making any decision in order thus to proceed with greater security, She it was who, as Mother of the Church and acceding to the desire of Pope Peter, sent him and John to the town of Samaria, with the object that they complete the mission being accomplished by the disciple Philip. The two Apostles, accompanied by some disciples from the Cenacle, left Jerusalem for the town of Samaria on the 29th of June in that year 35, arriving two days later. Once there, after praying for all those who had received the Sacrament of Baptism, Peter and John administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to them by laying the right hand on their heads and anointing them with Holy Chrism, they receiving in their souls a greater fullness of the Holy Ghost or greater operation of the Most Divine Paraclete.

3. At Pope Peter's arrival in the town of Samaria, accompanied by Apostle John and some of the disciples, Simon Magus's aspirations became bolder on seeing that when the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered to the faithful, Simon himself included, by the two Apostles, great supernatural signs were wrought. The heart of the perverse magus then became corrupt in such a manner that, interiorly, to be merely a Priest like Philip no longer satisfied him, rather he aspired to Peter's and John's Episcopate, which implied greater supernatural powers, manifested with quite extraordinary prodigies. Simon sought first, with appearance of virtue, to win over the two Apostles and thus achieve his conceited aspirations. But as Peter, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, knew of the perverse schemes of that heart ever more corrupt, he severely admonished Simon Magus so that he might amend; who, far from so doing, tried to buy Episcopal powers from Peter and John for himself; for he saw by the miraculous external signs that the Apostles communicated the Holy Ghost through the laying on of their hands. Accordingly, perverse Simon, offering money to Peter and John, said to them: "*Give me as well the power you possess, so that whoever I lay my hands upon may receive the Holy Ghost*". By this impious proposal Simon Magus incurred in that very grievous sin known afterwards in moral theology as simony, derived from his name. But Pope Peter replied to him: "*May your money perish with you, because you have supposed that the gift of God can*

be acquired by money. You can have no part or calling in our Priestly Ministry, because in the eyes of God your heart is not upright. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, do penance and pray to God so that you may be forgiven the evil thoughts of your heart; because I see you enveloped in gall of bitterness and bound up in noose of iniquity"; by which last words Pope Peter foretold the ruinous activity that the devious Simon was to carry out after his apostasy from the Faith, since he was to deploy against the Church the gall of his venom and the hatred of his bitter resentment; which would occasion his eternal damnation if he were not sincerely converted to the Church of Christ. Simon Magus replied: *"Pray to the Lord for me, so that no such misfortunes befall me."* In this refined phrase filled with hypocrisy under the guise of humility, can be made out the perverse Simon's complete conviction that the offensive plan he was to undertake against the Church from then on would be the cause of his eternal damnation if he did not retract in time. Simon Magus was the founder of the gnostic heresy, mother of all heresies, as it consists in the most insulting disdain for theological and moral truths, employing a bogus science in which the most perverse errors are gathered up, giving rise to a multitude of sects for the purpose of subverting the Church of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, in gnosticism the Church's authority in her interpretation of Sacred Scripture is utterly scorned. This heresy is one of the first and most perverse forms of sionism's activity in its constant persecution of the Church. Simon Magus, figure of Antichrist, was to die years later in Rome, victim of his own diabolical arts; since, after procuring that Satan raise him up into the air in the sight of many, in this way to simulate divine powers and be the object of adoration by onlookers, he was hurled down from on high by the demon himself and died as a result of the fall; a chastisement he received thanks to the prayers of Apostles Peter and Paul, who were in Rome.

4. On the 16th of July in the year 35, after Pope Peter had celebrated Holy Mass in the town of Samaria before the many Christians gathered there, he and John left for Jerusalem accompanied by some of the disciples he had brought from the Cenacle, as others had stayed on in Samaria to help the disciple Philip. The two Apostles, instead of returning by the shortest route, went back carrying out a most fruitful evangelization in many other places of the Samaritan region, with the consequent increase in the Church's faithful, and arrived at Jerusalem on the 30th of July that same year.

Chapter XXVII

In a dream the disciple Philip sees an angel who sends him to preach the Gospel in Gaza. On the journey, Philip makes a brief stopover in Jerusalem. The Ethiopian eunuch is converted by Philip. Philip's apostolate in Gaza and other Mediterranean towns

1. Very early on the 27th of July in that year 35, before dawn, the disciple Philip, asleep at his home in the town of Samaria, had a dream in which he

saw an angel who, on the Lord's behalf, spoke to him saying: "*Arise and go southwards; and passing through Jerusalem first, direct your steps to the town of Gaza, where there are no faithful of Christ's Church.*" Philip left at once and went to Jerusalem, and in the Cenacle visited the Most Holy Virgin Mary and also Pope Peter, who had by then returned from his apostolic journey, the other eleven Apostles and the other persons there; giving an account of the apostolate which, by divine command, he was to carry out in the south of Israel's territory, and of the need that his vacant post in Samaria be taken over by another missionary. The disciple Philip stayed for three days at the Cenacle, fortifying himself in the company of the Divine Mary, from whom he received wise and prudent counsel; and also informed the Pope about the mission accomplished and that which was to be carried out in the future. Pope Peter, to fill the vacant post in Samaria, conferred the Presbyterate on Philip's deacon companion, called Abib, whom he immediately sent off to that town with another friar from the Cenacle.

2. On the 3rd of August, Philip left Jerusalem on his own, heading in a southerly direction by the route that passes through Bethlehem, Hebron, Eleutheropolis and so forth; that is, by the same road the Holy Family had followed on the flight into Egypt. On leaving the town of Bethlehem, Philip met an Ethiopian eunuch, minister of Queen Candice of Ethiopia and superintendent of all her treasures. The Ethiopian, who was physically castrated, was a Jewish proselyte who had come to Jerusalem to visit the Jewish temple; and had remained in the city until the 3rd of August, when he began his return journey to Ethiopia. During his stay in Jerusalem he had been informed of Christ's Passion and Death; which aroused in him special interest to become better acquainted with Gospel Truth, towards which he already felt interiorly moved. Given the high post he occupied in his country, he made the journey in an elegant carriage, accompanied by his servants, and went on his way scrutinizing what the prophets had foretold concerning the Promised Messiah.

3. When Priest Philip saw the Ethiopian's carriage, the Holy Ghost said to the disciple: "*Quickly, go up to that carriage.*" And drawing near, Philip heard the eunuch reading aloud the following passage from the Prophet Isaias, which says: "*He was led like a sheep to the slaughterhouse, and was dumb like a lamb before the shearer, and did not open His lips. After being condemned to death in iniquitous trial, and suffering ignominious oppression without anyone defending His cause, He was raised up on high, torn from the land of the living, and killed for the wrongdoing of His people.*" Philip then said to the eunuch: "*Do you by chance understand what you read?*" He replied: "*How can I understand if someone does not explain it to me?*" And he besought Philip to come up and sit beside him. The eunuch then asked Philip: "*Tell me, of whom does the prophet speak, of himself or of another?*" Philip then spoke up and announced that Isaias's text was

fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ of God, who had offered Himself up as a Propitiatory Victim dying on a Cross for the salvation of humanity. For a good part of the way the disciple went on further completing the eunuch's evangelical instruction, until they arrived at a place where there was water, known today as Philip's Wellspring, a little outside the city of Hebron. The Ethiopian then said: "*Here is water. Is being a eunuch a hindrance to my receiving Baptism?*" Philip said to him: "*If you believe with your whole heart you can be baptized.*" The Ethiopian replied: "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" He then gave orders to stop the carriage and both of them went down to the water, where Philip baptized the eunuch, giving him the name John. Philip also baptized all those who formed the Ethiopian's entourage, as they manifested the desire to become Christians. The form used by the disciple in the administration of this Sacrament was to pour water upon the head of each one, pronouncing the ritual words at the same time. Once all were baptized, the Holy Ghost rapt Philip up and he was seen no more by the eunuch, who continued his journey overflowing with joy.

4. Philip suddenly found himself in the town of Azotus, from where he went on to Gaza, spreading the Gospel throughout all that Mediterranean area until he arrived at Caesarea Maritime, city he evangelized as well. John the eunuch, having arrived back in Ethiopia, accomplished a great apostolate there, thus preparing the way for the apostolic evangelization that would come later, during which this Ethiopian would receive Holy Orders, obtaining the episcopate included.

5. Like Philip, many of the seventy-two missionary disciples did not always stay in the same place; rather, with Peter's authorization they used to interchange, since with certain frequency they went to Jerusalem to visit the Most Holy Virgin Mary and the Pope. In one of these visits the missionary disciple Elpidius, who was one of the Priests, by order of Peter, stayed behind at the Apostolic See. To occupy the post left vacant by Elpidius in the missions, Peter ordained Simon of Cyrene, who did not pertain to the official disciples, and sent him out as a missionary.

Chapter XXVIII

The Apostles' evangelizing projects. Peter distributes the apostolic missionary territories.

Nine of the Apostles leave for their corresponding missions

1. In accord with the divine plan, it was imperative that nine of the Apostles leave to preach the Faith of Christ, in order that testimony be given throughout the world, and that the other three fulfil their mission in Jerusalem. Accordingly, in the Cenacle, under the authority of Pope Peter and with the most sapient advice of the Divine Mary, the Apostles busied themselves with these evangelization plans. As it was advisable to allocate the different territories in which it would correspond to each Apostle to preach, at least provisionally, before meeting for this task they prepared

themselves for nine days with prayer, fasting and other special penances, in accord with the judicious advice of the Mother of the Church. The day after the novena ended, that is, on the 15th of August in the year 35, a solemn ceremony took place in the Cenacle, which began with the celebration of Holy Mass by Pope Peter, at which the Divine Mary, the other eleven Apostles and a great part of the disciples and disciplesses residing in the Jerusalem convents were present. After Holy Mass, all those congregated there, in union with the Most Holy Virgin Mary, invoked the Divine Paraclete so that He might manifest His will in that matter. This prayer ended, an admirable light descended over the Cenacle that enveloped all, and a voice was heard which said: *“Let Peter My Vicar assign provinces to each one”*; whereby Christ reaffirmed the supreme dignity of Peter as Head and Universal Shepherd of the Church, and thus the other Apostles might better understand that they were to evangelize the territories assigned to them under the authority of the Pope. Before their distribution, Peter revealed the secret mandate received from Christ the day he was constituted Pope, that first he would have his Cathedra in Jerusalem; later he would transfer it to Antioch of Syria; and then to Rome. Next Peter assigned the posts of the other Apostles, in accord with the following distribution:

2. James the Greater he assigned to Spain, as the Lord Himself had already manifested to the Apostle personally; the date of his departure was the 20th of August in the year 35. He reminded John that his mission was to take care of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and to accompany Her wherever She went. He ordered Andrew to evangelize eastern Europe, namely: Ukraine, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, European Turkey, Yugoslavia, Albania and finally Greece; for this mission he left the Cenacle on the 22nd of September in the year 35. He assigned Philip to Asia Minor; the date of his departure was the 15th of September in the year 35. He assigned Bartholomew to Persia and Armenia; who set off on his journey on the 21st of September in the year 35. He assigned Matthew to Ethiopia; the date of his departure was the 16th of September in the year 35. He destined Thomas to India; the date for his leaving was the 29th of September in the year 35. He left James the Less in Jerusalem as Bishop of that diocese, Pope Peter being Patriarch of the city. To Thaddeus he entrusted the evangelization of southern Mesopotamia, today Iraq; his departure from the Cenacle was on the 17th of September in the year 35. He assigned Simon to Egypt; he left on the 23rd of September in the year 35. To Matthias he entrusted the evangelization of what today is Saudi Arabia, along with other neighbouring localities; the date of his leaving was the 26th of September in the year 35.

3. Peter, moreover, disposed that each of the mentioned missionary Apostles be accompanied by several disciples; who were not of the number

of the seventy-two official ones, with the exception of Elpidius and the seven apostolic men who accompanied James the Greater.

4. When Pope Peter finished speaking, the Holy Ghost manifested Himself to them by means of a singularly resplendent lightning flash and a mighty clap of thunder, and Christ's voice was heard to say: *"Let each acknowledge his assignment without any fear. I shall be with you"*; at which the various Apostles, prostrate on the ground, gave their unanimous acceptance. By this submission to the Divine Will they were very specially fortified for the difficult mission commended, which would be full of dangers, toils and hardships; though they would not lack special charisms. Before the nine Apostles designated to set out on their respective missions departed, they again visited the places sanctified by the Passion and Death of the Lord, and then took their leave of His Most Holy Mother, receiving Her counsel and blessing. Once the nine Apostles sent out to evangelize had left for their respective missions on the aforementioned dates, Pope Peter, accompanied by Apostle John, busied himself with visiting the Christian communities of Israel and neighbouring regions, to fortify them in the Faith. On the occasion of this visit Peter consecrated many Priest disciples Bishops, and also conferred the Presbyterate on many Deacon disciples. Both groups pertained to the number of the seventy-two official disciples. While each of the Apostles sent out to evangelize had the location of his mission assigned to him, in practice their apostolate was not restricted to the distribution made by Peter, since they widened their field of operations in keeping with available opportunities and according to the inspirations they received from God.

Chapter XXIX

James the Greater's apostolic mission in Spain

1. On the 20th of August in the year 35, James the Greater, accompanied by Elpidius and the seven apostolic men, left the Cenacle of Jerusalem and headed for the port of Jaffa, beside present-day Tel-Aviv, making use of the journey to preach the Gospel in that part of Israel. They then boarded ship in Jaffa on the 8th of September that same year, bound for Spain; and once off the southern coast of this nation, they sailed up the river Betis, now the Guadalquivir, until they arrived at the fluvial port of Hispalis, now Seville, on the 12th of October that same year, and began to spread the seed of the Gospel throughout the city. During his sojourn in Seville, James the Greater was visited several times by the Divine Mary, Queen of the Apostles, She all the while remaining in the Cenacle of Jerusalem. The first to be converted in Seville by the Apostle's preaching was a Sevillian sculptor who had his workshop between the localities of Puebla and Coria del Río. He was baptized receiving the name of Pius. Apostle James the Greater, after converting Pius, in Seville also converted: Severus, who was from Utrera,

Seville; then Fermin, a native of Pamplona, Navarre; and next Theodore, born in Padrón, Coruña. These four converts and the eight disciples come with him from Jerusalem accompanied James the Greater on his journey throughout Spain. The second city he visited was Cordoba. Next he went to Granada, where the Apostle had to bear serious persecution from the Jewish communities living there; but in these sufferings was consoled by a visit to him from the Most Holy Virgin Mary on the 2nd of January in the year 36, in that part of the city known today as Sacromonte, where She miraculously left the mark of Her purest footprint. At this apparition spot James the Greater consecrated Bishop the eight disciples who had come with him from Jerusalem, and conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on the four he had converted in Seville.

2. Apostle James the Greater, in his evangelical labour, travelled the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula, formed by Spain and Portugal, and was often encouraged by further apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. It was in Zaragoza, however, where the Queen of Heaven manifested Herself with greater solemnity to the Apostle, when She appeared to him on the 2nd of January in the year 40, accompanied by a host of angels who brought a small image of the Virgin Mary sculptured by the disciple Luke, on top of part of the column of Our Lord's Scourging. The Divine Lady not only comforted James the Greater in his trials owing to difficulties in the apostolate, but also ordered him to erect a Temple in Her honour on the banks of the Ebro; and, furthermore, made him the great promise that in Spain the Faith of Christ would triumph and endure forever. The Most Holy Virgin Mary's apparition in Zaragoza to Apostle James the Greater took place upon the ruins of a pagan temple dedicated to Minerva, idol of wisdom. The twelve who accompanied the Apostle were present at this apparition. In Zaragoza, after the Virgin's apparition, James the Greater appointed the twelve Bishops accompanying him to their respective dioceses: Elpidius, to Toledo; Abenadar Ctesiphon, to Vergi, Almería; Torquatus, to Guadix, Granada; Secundus, to Ávila; Indaletius, to Pechina, Almería; Cecil, to Granada; Esiquius, to Cadiz; Euphrasius, to Andújar, Jaén; Pius, to Seville; Severus, to Utrera, Seville; Fermin, to Pamplona, Navarre; and Theodore, to Padrón, Coruña. Pius, who had seen the image of the Virgin of the Pillar brought by the angels to Zaragoza on top of the column, made a replica of it in Seville, proclaiming Her Patroness of the city, and in Her honour built a chapel, which was the first cathedral in Seville.

3. In these Last Times, the Most Holy Virgin Mary's promise to Apostle James the Greater, that the Faith of Christ would endure forever in Spain, is being fulfilled in the Sacred Place of El Palmar de Troya, See of the true Church: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian, which was ruled by Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great, following his death by Pope Saint Peter II the Great, and at the present by the Pope happily reigning. This is

proof of the most singular predilection the Most High still has for Spain, since from El Palmar He continues to sustain the Faith in these chaotic times of universal apostasy. Mark how in El Palmar de Troya, divine providence prepared the unshakeable Column of the Lentisco, where the Sacred Face of Jesus and the Image of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar preside, as bulwark of the Catholic Faith, in the face of the spiritual ruin of the Pillar of Zaragoza, now converted into an instrument of propagation for the roman church's heresies. Hence as far as these Last Times are concerned, the Most Holy Virgin Mary's promise to Apostle James the Greater is fulfilled in the Sacred Place of El Palmar de Troya.

Book II

From the conversion of Saul to the translation of the Apostolic See to Rome

Chapter I

Birth and upbringing of Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Apostle Paul

1. Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, was born in the year 4 in the town of Tarsus, Cilicia, in the south of present-day Turkey. His parents, natives of Galilee, bought Roman citizenship while living for a time in Rome, and afterwards moved to Tarsus of Cilicia. After preparatory studies in his native town, Saul, when fifteen years old, was taken to Jerusalem by his father to complete his education in the Law, becoming a student at the most prestigious school at that time, directed by the sanhedritic Gamaliel. Saul, after spending nine years in Jerusalem, in the year 28 at the age of twenty-four, now with the title of rabbi, left the city and set out for Tarsus. It happened that on the way he fell heavily from his horse, seriously injuring his legs; so that for six years his physical activity in the town of Tarsus was drastically curtailed and restricted to life at home. Saul, who was very short of stature, became somewhat bandy-legged as a result of the fall, and always suffered from poor health.

2. The learned Saul, whose training in judaism would have gained him high office in the synagogues and prestigious fame in the then academic town of Tarsus, and including membership of the sanhedrin, at home dedicated himself during the time of his disablement to teaching the Law of Moses to the youth of the town, alternating this work with the trade of tent-maker, with which he was familiar. In this way God preserved Saul from contamination by the corruption, hypocrisy and perfidy of those perverse levitical hierarchs, which might have led him to fall into the same irreparable obstinacy as them. Saul did not know Jesus personally during His life on earth. In Tarsus, however, he did receive somewhat vague news of Jesus' teaching and miracles during His Public Life, without giving it all much importance, considering Him to be yet another sectarian who would fall of his own accord.

3. By the year 34 Saul had almost completely recovered from the physical malady which had prevented all normal activity. Though on medical advice he should not yet have gone to Jerusalem, he did so in November of the year 34, availing himself of the feast of the dedication of the temple, as he was deeply concerned by the alarming news reaching Tarsus concerning the Death of Christ, His Resurrection and the Pentecost over the Apostles, with the resulting progress of Christianity, considered by Saul as implacable enemy of the Law of Moses, given his fanatical adherence to judaism. That is why Saul, till his conversion, had a completely erroneous idea of Christ. Furthermore, as he was fully convinced that the truth was in judaism, he persecuted Christians deeming them to be destroyers of Moses' Law, believing that he served God thereby. Saul was incredulous towards Christ's Faith out of ignorance which, though not insincere, could however have been overcome were it not for his fanaticism, recklessness and indiscreet zeal; hence in this sense his ignorance was in part blameworthy and the cause of his fighting against the Church of Christ until his conversion took place.

Chapter II

Satan instigates pontiffs Caiphas and Annas to do away with the Divine Mary. They seek to execute their dreadful crime through Saul. Saul has a dream about the mystery of Calvary, and desists from the monstrous plan.

Saul, to escape Caiphas's and Annas's pressure on him against the Divine Mary, decides to leave for Damascus

1. Caiphas and Annas, exceedingly alarmed at the spread of Christianity in Jerusalem and other places, realized that all came about through the intervention of the Mother of Jesus. Although the two pontiffs did not even attempt to lay their iniquitous hands on the Divine Mary during Christ's Passion, this was because the satanic fury of both was chiefly focused on Jesus, the Son of God; thinking that once He was dead His followers would disperse and His work thus be destroyed. Hence when the two iniquitous pontiffs Caiphas and Annas saw that Christians multiplied more and more after Christ's death, they now focused their diabolical plans on Mary Most Holy, judging that Christianity continued to make ever greater progress owing to Her intervention. Yet despite all this, out of mysterious and irresistible dread, they did not dare to proceed directly against the Mother of Jesus. Accordingly, instigated by Satan, they turned to Saul; as they hoped that he, with his fanaticism and intrepidity, would have no scruple in doing away with Her whom Christians acknowledged as Mother and in Whom they felt inordinately fortified and secure. Saul, despite his natural impetus and resolve, bridled his first impulses in order to consider the matter with the required prudence. While on the one hand he thought that by doing away with the Mother of Jesus the work of Christianity would be utterly undone,

on the other interiorly he felt something quite strange that held him back from such a crime.

2. So it came about that in December of the year 35, the nine Apostles having by then left to preach the Gospel throughout the world, Saul, deeply concerned at the sanhedrin's perverse plans against the Most Holy Virgin Mary, had a dream one night of the mystery of Calvary in which, to the right of a Man ignominiously crucified and dead, he saw His afflicted Mother, wholly absorbed by the toils and sufferings of Christ's Passion, so that to Saul She seemed an august woman worthy of veneration. The contemplation of that profoundly dolorous and at the same time patiently serene Woman so impressed Saul that he went as far as to feel compassion for Her sufferings and afflictions, which seemed very intense to him; and so he completely desisted from executing the sanhedrin's plans against the worthy Lady.

3. Saul, to free himself from the pressure that the reprobates Caiphaz and Annas continually brought to bear upon him to do away with the Most Holy Virgin Mary, resolved to abandon Jerusalem as soon as possible and continue his furious persecution of Christians elsewhere. This was his chief reason for going to Damascus, where on the way he would attain conversion by Christ appearing to him at the request of His Divine Mother. Hence the compassion he had for the Most Holy Virgin Mary was to obtain for Saul the mercy of Her Divine Son.

Chapter III

The Divine Mary pleads before Christ for Saul's conversion

On the 22nd of January in the year 36, in the Jerusalem Cenacle, the Most Holy Virgin Mary besought Saul's conversion from Her Divine Son Jesus, in order that the terrible persecution of Christians in the city might thus diminish as well; since throughout the year they had lived under the threats and persecutions of the sanhedrin, whose executive instrument was Saul. Whereupon the Lord answered Her: *"My Mother, how can My justice be satisfied and be inclined to mercy, and I thus use My clemency with Saul, when he deserves My just indignation and chastisement for his incredulity and bad conduct, heartening My enemies so as to destroy My Church and efface My Name from the world?"* In these words Christ recriminated Saul's obstinate attitude, since despite the supernatural signs he had received in the dream, he persisted in his contumacious incredulity and in his infernal raging against the Church. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, however, as solicitous Advocatrix of sinners, appealed before the very same tribunal of the ever-Just Onlybegotten of God, invoking in favour of Saul's conversion the infinite sufferings Her Divine Son had endured on Calvary and Her own at the foot of the Cross. At this intercession on Saul's behalf, the fire of charity became so inflamed within Her that it would have sufficed to consume Her natural life had the Lord Himself not preserved it by His divine virtue. As

Her Son was unable to resist the force of the tender love that wounded His Mother's Immaculate Heart, He consoled Her deeming Himself bound by Her pleas, with these words: *"My Mother, elect among all creatures, let Your desire be accomplished without delay: I will do for Saul all You ask, giving him a very special grace; and if he responds to it, I will further mould his soul so that he may become a great defender of My Church, which he now persecutes, and a tireless preacher of My glory and My Name. I shall endeavour to reduce him to My friendship and Grace."* This most beautiful and mysterious colloquy between the benevolent Jesus and His solicitous Mother took place on the very day Saul left the palace of the perfidious pontiffs and set out for Damascus.

Chapter IV **Saul's conversion**

1. Though Saul of Tarsus had resolved to leave Jerusalem to avoid committing himself to making an attempt on the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, not on that account had he desisted from his implacable persecution of the Christians. Thus Saul, uttering threats and death against the Lord Jesus' followers, presented himself before the sanhedrin on the 22nd of January in that year 36, requesting papers from supreme pontiff Caiphas that would accredit him before the authorities of the Jewish synagogues in Damascus; so that in that city they might request of King Aretas permission to persecute Christ's followers there, and bring back prisoner to Jerusalem all those men and women who professed Christianity, to be punished.

2. After receiving full powers from the sanhedrin, Saul left Jerusalem that same day with a group of collaborators, heading for Damascus. Now it happened that on Friday the 25th of January in the year 36, when Saul, on his way to Damascus, passed through the vicinity of the village of El Kockab, situated some twelve kilometres from the city of Damascus, at 12 noon he was surprised by a resounding clap of thunder, and lightning, and in the heavens saw a great light which surpassed the brightness of the sun, and which suddenly enveloped him and his companions, causing them and their horses as well such terror that they were all thrown to the ground. At the very moment the intrepid and perfidious persecutor found himself prone on the ground, he heard a voice that said to him in the Hebraic Aramaic language: *"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"* Saul, raising his head in the direction of the voice, saw only the heavenly light; and asked: *"Who are you, Lord?"* Then Christ showed Himself to him visibly with majesty and glory, answering him at the same time: *"I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute. Difficult it is for you to withstand the might of My power."* By these last words Jesus gave Saul to understand that his intention to destroy the Church was useless, as she is imperishable; that He offered him sufficient grace to know the truth of the Gospel, so that he might respond by sincere

conversion; which was dependent on his own free acceptance or rejection of grace; and that he was called to a lofty mission in the Church he so persecuted, vocation which he should accept, since his eternal salvation depended upon it.

3. Christ's words penetrated so deeply into Saul's heart that he freely accepted the grace offered him, firmly believing that Jesus was the Onlybegotten of God, thus passing from infidel to believer. Consequently, through an act of perfect contrition for his sins, inwardly he implored pardon for them; and the Lord pardoned him, at once conferring upon him Sanctifying Grace by virtue of the reception in his soul of the Drop of Mary's Blood; he therefore received all that the Sacrament of Baptism imparts, except for the common juridical espousal, or baptismal character, of divine right, indissoluble and eternal. Right then Saul was absorbed in beatific vision, and penetrated by many of the divine mysteries. This vision of the Trinitary Essence lasted for three seconds; though, when finished, Saul continued to see Jesus in His majestic apparition. Saul, trembling and terror-stricken, said to Him: "*Lord, what would You have me do?*" At Saul's swift and generous response, the Kind-hearted Master revealed the mystery of his vocation in the Church more explicitly to him, saying: "*Stand up, and arise as a new man in the service of My Church; for I have appeared so as to draw you out of the apostasy of the Jewish people, preserve you from the paganism of the gentiles, appoint you as My Minister, and to be witness to the things you have seen and to those I will show you in My future apparitions. I send you now to those of the Jewish people and to those of the Gentile people, so that you may open their eyes to the true Faith, in order that they be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and thus receive pardon for their sins and inheritance among the saints through the Faith which is in Me.*" As Saul listened to these words still prostrate upon the ground, when the Lord had finished saying this, He said to him: "*Arise, enter the city of Damascus, and there you will be told what you should do.*" Saul understood by this that he was to place himself in the hands of the Ministers of Christ's Church and subject himself to her Supreme Authority. Christ then disappeared.

4. Saul's companions on that journey to Damascus, though contemplating in astonishment the dazzling brightness enveloping them, neither saw Jesus nor heard His voice; but they did hear convert Saul's lips repeat what Christ was saying; and only in this way did they all hear the dialogue between the two. At 12.15 pm Saul rose from the ground, and though his eyes were open he saw nothing, having become miraculously blind owing to the mysterious force of the heavenly light. His companions took him by the hand, mounted him upon his horse and guided him to Damascus. Once in the city they brought him into the house of an acquaintance of his named Judas, who had a hostel on Straight Street. Saul stayed there for three days without seeing

anything, and neither ate nor drank, absorbed in profound reflection, loftiest prayer and repentance for his sins. In his penitential seclusion Saul was overwhelmed by his own vileness, feeling himself so unworthy of such a towering Grace received by the infinite mercy of God, that his distress at having persecuted Our Lord Jesus Christ would, including, have put an end to his life had he not been exceedingly comforted by the Divine Mary. She, with this aim, became visible to the afflicted convert to console him in his dark night and assure him that Her Divine Son and She too had pardoned him. The Sweetest Lady, moreover, promised him Her maternal protection in the apostolic mission he was to accomplish, mission which Saul felt powerless to carry out in view of his own human frailty.

5. Saul, at the moment of his conversion on the road to Damascus, acknowledged that this Grace had come to him partly through the prayer Stephen had made for him at his martyrdom, but above all through the intercession of Mary Most Holy who, by virtue of Her prayers, had brought forward that happy moment. Henceforth Saul, grateful for Her motherly concern, was filled with tender affection and veneration for the great Queen of Heaven.

6. For his conversion on the road to Damascus, Saul was given none other than sufficient grace in the required degree; which he freely and sovereignly accepted. While it is true that the sufficient grace given to Saul was accompanied by portentous signs, this was because he needed all those manifestations in order that, freely and voluntarily, he might be converted and accept the divine plans relating to him; without his free will being hampered in the slightest on that account; nor was grace so compelling that he had perforce to accept conversion. So then, Saul's acceptance, on the road to Damascus, of God's will implied in him a heroic act, as it afterwards involved preaching in favour of Christianity, openly confronting the sanhedrin and its partisans, swallowing his personal pride, losing his prestige before the jews as likewise undergoing persecution from them, and many other hardships.

Chapter V

**Saul receives the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Confirmation.
Paul stays with Ananias for three months listening to his teachings and further
strengthening himself**

1. In the city of Damascus was to be found Bishop Ananias, one of the seventy-two official disciples of the Lord, who had been destined there to shepherd the Christian faithful of that mission. Ananias was a just and upright man in accordance with the Law of God and the Gospel spirit, as testified by his virtues, acknowledged not only by Christians but even by the jews themselves. It happened that, on the 28th of January in that year 36, the Lord Jesus said to him in a vision: "*Ananias*"; and he replied: "*Here I am,*

Lord.” Jesus told him: *“Rise up and go to the street called Straight, and in the house of Judas seek out a man from Tarsus called Saul, who is now at prayer.”* Saul, while praying in the hostel on Straight Street, in vision contemplated in advance Ananias coming to seek him out and laying his hands upon him so that he might recover his sight; since in his prayer Saul also asked to be freed from blindness as soon as possible in order to labour in the cause of Christ. Ananias replied to Jesus: *“Lord, I have heard many say that this man has done great harm to the Christians of Jerusalem, and that he has come here with powers from the members of the sanhedrin to seize those who invoke Your Name.”* But the Lord said to him: *“Go to where Saul is, as he who was previously My persecutor is now an instrument chosen by Me to bear My Name and announce it to those of the Jewish people and to those of many other nations. I will make him see how many trials he shall have to undergo for My Name.”*

2. Once the Lord had dispelled his fears, Ananias set off, entering the hostel where Saul, known to all as a fanatical persecutor of Christians, was lodged. Ananias, placing his hands upon the eyes of the convert, told him: *“Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came to Damascus, has sent me so that you may recover your sight and be further strengthened by the Holy Ghost”*; and instantly a kind of scales fell from the eyes of Saul, who fully recovered his sight. Ananias then said to him: *“The God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, chose you so that you might know His Will, see the Righteous One, hear the voice of His mouth and be His witness before men of the things you have seen and heard.”* Ananias, after announcing to Saul the mission he was to accomplish in the Church, exhorted him to prepare himself duly for it, saying: *“And now make haste! Receive the Sacrament of Baptism”*; for Saul, at the moment of his conversion, had not received the common juridical espousal or character of Baptism, which can only be received in this life through the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism.

3. That day, Monday the 28th of January in the year 36, Saul, expressly desiring to abjure his errors and give testimony of his submission to Christ’s doctrine, asked Bishop Ananias for the rite of the Sacrament of Baptism to be performed in the sight of the people of Damascus. Therefore they went to a canal of the river Barada, where not only was Saul baptized receiving the name Paul, but so too were all those present at the moment of his conversion on the road to Damascus. Then Ananias administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to Paul, who received a greater fullness of the Holy Ghost, or greater operation of the Most Divine Paraclete, as well as certain extraordinary charisms; and also confirmed those who accompanied him. After Ananias had administered the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation to Paul and his escort, all went to the chapel the Missionary Bishop had in Damascus, where he celebrated Holy Mass and administered

Holy Communion to the neophytes. Paul felt spiritually comforted by this supernatural nourishment; and since he had been three days without eating or drinking, then took some food, feeling physically restored. Following his Baptism, Paul stayed a little over three months in Damascus at Ananias's side, listening to his teachings and strengthening himself with the Sacraments and the good example of the other Christians in that city. The Most Holy Virgin Mary had informed Pope Peter of the happy event of Paul's conversion the very day it took place.

Chapter VI

Paul withdraws into the desert. Paul stays in Moses' cave on Mount Horeb. Christ impresses the stigmata of His Passion on Paul

1. On the 30th of April in the year 36, while hearing Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Ananias, Paul was interiorly prompted by the Holy Ghost to withdraw into the desert for a time, and there in solitude prepare himself for his future apostolate. Paul made this known to Ananias, asking him to communicate to Peter that after his stay in the desert was finished he would as soon as possible go and prostrate himself at his feet. Paul, after receiving Bishop Ananias's blessing and respectfully kissing his hand, left Damascus on horseback bound for the desert of Arabia Petrea, entering Israel and then following the route along the east bank of the river Jordan, to the place where Christ was baptized. From there, along the east side of the Dead Sea, he made his way to the Sinai peninsula, afterwards heading for Mount Horeb, or Mount Sinai or Mount of Ananias, where God had appeared to Moses. Once he had arrived at this sacred place on the 27th of June in the same year 36, he made his abode in the same cave where God had appeared to Moses and later on to Elias. During his three-year stay in the desert, Paul lived in the most complete austerity, given up to prayer, penance and fasting. At the same time as he purified himself in this way of the sins of his past life, his union with Christ became ever more intimate, reaching high degrees of mysticism. In the desert Paul was amply instructed in the truths of Faith by the Most Divine Master in many of His apparitions to him, and by the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost the Paraclete. As he had no Priest within reach, very often Christ Himself nourished him with the Holy Eucharist.

2. On the 25th of March in the year 37, third anniversary of Christ's Death, while Paul was on Mount Horeb, the Lord Jesus nailed to the Cross appeared to him; and as the convert manifested his most vehement desire to live crucified together with his Divine Master, Christ made him partaker of His Most Sacred Wounds through mysterious rays which wounded, among other parts of Paul's body, his right side, hands and feet, so that Paul became permanently and invisibly stigmatized, and ever bore the stigmata of the Lord Jesus in his body. On different occasions the Most Holy Virgin Mary also became visible to Paul in the Sinai desert, to comfort him in his

austerities with the sweet balm of Her Divine Maternity, at the same time indoctrinating him on the mysteries of Christ, Herself and the Church. Though Paul acquired great doctrinal wisdom thanks to the heavenly teaching, nevertheless, some mysteries were not revealed to him directly by Christ and Mary, so that he might learn them at the proper time from Peter himself who, as Head of the Church and Vicar of Jesus Christ, was the sole bearer of papal Infallibility, guarantee to the veracity of every doctrine. By divine revelation, during his stay in the desert, Paul also learnt the burial site of the bodies of the three Holy Magi Kings, Melchor, Gaspar and Balthassar, who, after abdicating their respective thrones, had lived in seclusion on Mount Horeb until their deaths in the year 35.

Chapter VII

Peter's apostolic journey. Peter miraculously cures Eneas the paralytic in Lydda. In Joppe Peter brings Tabitha back to life

1. With Paul's conversion the sanhedrin's fury against the Christians was placated for a while, unable now to count on that dauntless persecutor as the principal instrument he had been in those bloody doings on behalf of the Jewish church or synagogue of Satan. Hence the Church of Christ then enjoyed peace in the regions of Judea, Samaria and Galilee, spreading in the fear of the Lord under the solace of the Holy Ghost. Pope Peter took advantage of this period of tranquillity for his apostolic visit to many of the Christian communities in the territory of Israel. This papal journey began on the 16th of May in the year 36, that is, the day after the second anniversary of the apotheosis of Pentecost upon the Cenacle. During this apostolic journey, which he made accompanied by some of the disciples from the Cenacle community, Peter did not lose contact with the Holy See in Jerusalem, returning with certain frequency, and resuming his journey shortly afterwards.

2. Among the many Christian communities in Israel's territory, Pope Peter visited the faithful residing in Lydda, now Lod, situated between Jerusalem and Jaffa. Here he encountered a Jew named Eneas, a simple man, paralysed in bed for eight years. Eneas made known his desire to hear Peter preach; who spoke to him of Jesus, His doctrine and the Church He had founded. To further facilitate the cripple's conversion, Peter said to him: "*Eneas, the Lord Jesus Christ cures you. Rise up and make the bed yourself.*" Eneas at once rose up cured. By this miracle, which took place on the 25th of March in the year 37, Eneas became fully convinced of the Faith of Christ; hence Peter, yielding to his desires, administered the Sacrament of Baptism to him. Many of the town's Jewish and Gentile inhabitants, and including those of the Mediterranean region of Sharon, were converted to the Lord Jesus on hearing about this miracle.

3. Another of the towns visited by Pope Peter was Joppe or Jaffa, where there was another Christian community as well, with its corresponding chapel or cenacle. In Joppe there was a discipless of Mary who had been a nun at the Cenacle convent in Jerusalem, and who had later been sent to Joppe by the Virgin Mary to found and direct a religious community of Carmelite nuns. This nun, called Tabitha, meaning “gazelle”, was regarded as very virtuous because of her good deeds and almsgiving. It chanced that while Peter was in Lydda she fell ill and died, and after her body had been washed and shrouded it was placed in the convent chapel. As Lydda was close by Joppe, the men religious of the Joppe community, hearing that Peter was in Lydda, sent two tertiary faithful there with this petition: “*Do not delay in coming to us.*” Peter, rising up, went with them to Joppe, where they led him to the convent of Carmelite nuns, in whose chapel Tabitha’s body lay, and beside her a good number of widows weeping over her death; who showed Peter the tunics and clothing she had made for them, imploring him to bring their benefactress back to life, since they were poor and Tabitha succoured them. Peter made everyone leave and, falling to his knees, prayed; then, facing the corpse, he said: “*Tabitha, arise!*” At once, opening her eyes and seeing Peter, she sat upright. He, giving her his hand, helped her to her feet and gave her back alive to the two religious communities and the other faithful, among whom were the widows. This miracle, which occurred on the 22nd of April in that year 37, became public knowledge throughout the town of Joppe, so that many of the inhabitants, Jews and Gentiles, believed in the Lord Jesus and were baptized. Peter stayed many days in Joppe, living at the house of a tanner named Simon. Though there was a missionary disciple in the town, Peter and those accompanying him nonetheless lodged at the home of Simon, one of the lay faithful, as there was insufficient room in the friars’ cloister.

Chapter VIII

Centurion Cornelius sends for Apostle Peter. In the town of Joppe Pope Peter has the symbolical vision of unclean animals

1. At that time in the city of Caesarea Maritime lived the Centurion Cornelius, who had previously resided in the town of Capharnaum and whose servant had been miraculously cured of an illness by Christ. Cornelius, a Gentile, had been baptized by Christ in Capharnaum together with all his household. Deeply religious and God-fearing, he gave abundant alms to the people and prayed to God unceasingly. Cornelius was centurion of a cohort of soldiers from Itálica, his birthplace, town situated close to Seville, Spain.

2. As Cornelius saw the tendency of many Jews now Christians against evangelizing the Gentiles, and in view of Pope Peter’s indecision, the centurion vehemently implored God that the difficulties hindering the

universal preaching of the Gospel might cease. While he was at prayer, at around the hour of none, Christ appeared to him. Cornelius, gazing upon Him awestricken, said: *“What do you will of me, Lord?”* Christ replied to him: *“Cornelius, your prayers and almsgiving have risen up into the presence of God the Father, and have been taken into account. Now then, send someone to Joppe to seek out Apostle Peter, who is lodging at the home of Simon the tanner, which is by the sea. He will tell you the things necessary for the salvation of the Gentile people.”* When the Lord departed, Cornelius summoned two servants of his and a soldier under his orders, God-fearing men, and after having confided everything to them sent them off to Joppe in search of Peter.

3. The next day, 13th of May in the year 37, while Cornelius’s messengers were on their way and nearing the town of Joppe, Peter, at about the hour of sext, went up to the top of the house to pray; and feeling hungry wished to eat. While they prepared him a meal he was rapt up in ecstasy, in which he saw heaven thrown open, and something like a great tablecloth, held up by the four corners, was lowered from heaven to earth. In it there were all kinds of animals declared unclean by the Law of Moses. He heard the voice of Christ telling him: *“Peter, get up, kill and eat.”* Peter said: *“How can I do that, Lord, since I have never eaten anything profane or unclean?”* The same voice replied to him: *“What God has purified you should not call unclean.”* This was repeated three times, and then the cloth rose up to heaven again.

4. While Peter was wondering to himself what the vision he had just received might mean, the messengers sent by Cornelius arrived at the door of Simon the tanner’s house; and knocking, asked if Apostle Peter was there. He, still meditating on the vision’s meaning, received the following message from the Holy Ghost, who said to him: *“See, down below are three men who are looking for you. Arise, go down and leave with them without the slightest misgiving, because I have sent them.”* Peter went down and said to the three messengers: *“I am the one you seek. What is the reason for your journey?”* They answered him: *“Centurion Cornelius, a righteous and God-fearing man, esteemed and considered as such including by many Jews, received an order from the Lord that we come here and seek you out, and take you to his home so that he can listen to what you have to say to him.”* Then Peter, bidding them enter, lodged them with himself. Thanks to Cornelius’s prayers, the Lord gave Pope Peter to understand more clearly that His Most Precious Blood had been shed on the Cross not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well; which He first demonstrated with the previous symbolical vision in which He had ordered him to kill and eat animals declared unclean by the Law, the meaning of which was connected with the labour Peter was to realize in Centurion Cornelius’s home in Caesarea Maritime.

Chapter IX

Pentecost in Cornelius's home upon Christians come from the Gentiles. Pope Peter officially decrees the evangelization of the Gentile world

1. The day after Cornelius's emissaries arrived in Joppe, guided by them, Pope Peter, together with the disciples accompanying him on the apostolic journey, left for Caesarea Maritime, arriving at this city on the 15th of the same month and year. Centurion Cornelius, knowing that Peter was on the way, gathered all the Christians come from gentiledom of that zone into his home and eagerly awaited the Pope's arrival. As Peter was about to enter the house, the Centurion went out to receive him, and prostrating himself, revered him by kissing his feet as a sign of deference to his papal authority. Then Peter entered the house and said to the Christians assembled there: *"You are quite aware that having friendly dealings with Christians of Gentile origin is frowned upon by Christians of Jewish origin. The Lord Jesus has shown me, however, that He came to save equally both the Gentile and the Jewish peoples. Now I ask you, for what reason have you called me?"* To which Cornelius replied: *"Four days ago I was praying in my house at the hour of none, when of a sudden Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me and said: 'Cornelius, your prayers and almsgiving have risen up into the presence of God the Father, and have been taken into account. Now then, send someone to Joppe to seek out Apostle Peter, who is lodging at the home of Simon the tanner, which is by the sea. He will tell you the things necessary for the salvation of the Gentile peoples.' At once, then, I sent for you, and you have granted me the grace of coming. We are in your presence to hear all that the Lord may have told you to tell us for the salvation of the Gentiles."* Then Pope Peter spoke in this manner: *"Truly I have come to recognize that in God there is no acceptance of persons; rather, in any nation, whoever fears Him and lives uprightly, merits His favour. He sent His word to the children of Israel through Our Lord God Jesus Christ, to announce true peace to them. You know that following the baptism preached by John, the Kingdom of God was announced by Jesus in all Israel, beginning from Galilee; and that God anointed this Jesus as Man with the fullness of the Holy Ghost at the beginning of the world, inundating Him with His divine virtue. You also know that He did good wherever He went, and among His numerous miracles, cured many who were under the oppression of the devil, because as well as true Man, He is true God. We are witnesses, as too are some of you, of all the things Jesus did in Israel's territory and in the city of Jerusalem, where, nevertheless, as you well know, they took His life, hanging Him from a Cross. And that He, by His divine virtue, rose from the dead on the third day, and once risen, let Himself be seen by all His Apostles, disciples and pious women; that He celebrated Holy Mass as well in our presence, and many of us including ate with Him. Jesus, as you know, ordered us to preach the Gospel He had taught and give testimony to every*

creature that He has been constituted Judge of the living and the dead by God the Father. All the Prophets give testimony to Him, saying that as many as believe in His Name and repent of their sins, will receive God's pardon."

2. Peter was still speaking when the Holy Ghost descended upon his listeners, the Paraclete manifesting Himself visibly by way of tongues of fire that appeared on the heads of all present there, and by other prodigious signs. The disciples who came with Peter were astonished to see the Grace of the Holy Ghost poured out as well upon the Christians come from the Gentiles, since they heard them speak in various languages and publish the greatness of God. In view of this transcendent event, Peter exclaimed: *"Who can deny that baptismal water also be poured out upon all those of the Gentile people who accept the Gospel teachings? For while it is true that the Holy Ghost manifested Himself visibly in the Cenacle, both to me as to others of Jewish origin, now He has manifested Himself visibly to those gathered here of Gentile origin as well."* By these words, Pope Peter referred to the urgent need for the evangelization of the Gentiles, infallibly affirming that the same Grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation received by the Apostles and many others in the Cenacle of Jerusalem at the Pentecost of the Christians of Jewish origin, was also received by Cornelius and those with him at the Pentecost of the Christians of Gentile origin, occurring in his own home.

3. On this visit, Pope Peter conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on Cornelius, a widower; and, furthermore, conferred the Diaconate and Presbyterate on other baptized men who were with him. In this way Centurion Cornelius became the first representative of the Episcopate chosen from among Christians come from gentiledom, with his See in Caesarea Maritime. After these ceremonies, Pope Peter ordered that from then on all those of Gentile origin who accepted the true Faith be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. With this command, moved by burning zeal, Pope Peter promulgated the Apostolic Law on the Evangelization of the Gentiles, charging Bishop Cornelius and the new Priests to dedicate themselves fully to this important mission; and they, that very day, baptized several Gentiles who manifested their faith in Jesus Christ and who had come to the house on learning of Peter's presence and of the prodigy of the second Pentecost. The official evangelization of the Gentile world, then, began as from the Pentecost upon the Christians of Gentile origin occurring on the 15th of May in the year 37 in Cornelius's home, that is, three years from the Cenacle Pentecost. Pope Peter visited many other Christian communities during this apostolic journey, with the consequent expansion of the Church; he visited as well the homes of many Gentiles, eating and living together with them, thereby achieving abundant fruits of conversion.

Chapter X

Sundry reactions of those in the Cenacle of Jerusalem on receiving the news of Peter's apostolic activity among Christians of Gentile origin

1. The news of Peter's apostolic activity among Christians of Gentile origin in Cornelius's home, of his living together with them, and of his Apostolic Law on the evangelization of the Gentiles, was the motive for sundry reactions from those at the Jerusalem Cenacle and from many other Christians of Jewish origin in the city. The only two Apostles in the Cenacle of Jerusalem were John and James the Less, since the others were at their different missions. Apostle John received the good news of Peter's apostolate in Caesarea Maritime among the Christians come from the Gentiles with great jubilee and thanksgiving to the Most High; a joy that was also shared by the greater part of the members of both religious communities. James the Less, however, as also some of the recently converted disciples who were from the levitical priestly class and the pharisee sect, not having wholly overcome their judaizing tendencies in favour of circumcision, maintained certain opposition to Peter's conduct and dispositions in favour of the evangelization of the Gentiles, perturbing others with their ideas.

2. Hence, on the 1st of November in the year 37, when Peter returned to Jerusalem from his apostolic journey, he received expressions of disagreement from James the Less and the disciples sharing his view, who argued with the Pope saying to him: "*Why did you make provision for the Gentiles in the Gospel plan of salvation, entering their homes to preach and eat with them?*" Peter then dispelled their doubts narrating to them the prodigious events that had impelled him to decree the evangelization of the Gentiles, such as the symbolical vision of the unclean animals, the arrival in Joppe of Cornelius's emissaries requiring his presence by order of the Lord, and the prodigious Pentecost in Caesarea Maritime over the Christians of Gentile origin, concluding his report with these words: "*Well then, if God gave them the same Grace He gave to us, who am I to oppose God's plan?*" On hearing this they were reassured and glorified God saying: "*God then has granted to the Gentiles as well to be able to attain eternal life by means of grace and penance.*"

3. Until Pope Peter decreed the official evangelization of the Gentiles, the nine Apostles sent out to their respective missions dedicated themselves almost exclusively to preaching the Gospel to the Jews. The seventy-two official disciples, who were still dispersed in different parts within Israel's territory and without, did the same. Following the Apostolic Decree given by Peter on the 15th of May in the year 37 favouring the evangelization of the Gentiles, preaching to them gradually increased, and more especially so from the year 40 onwards, owing to the apostolic zeal of Paul, as principal executor.

4. Following Peter's decree, two disciples natives of Cyrene went to Antioch of Syria to announce the Gospel to the Gentiles: Lucius, one of the seventy-two official disciples, and Simon of Cyrene surnamed Niger for being of the black race, who did not pertain to the official disciples. The hand of God succoured them in their apostolate, in such fashion that a great number of persons believed and were converted to the Lord Jesus. This growth of Christ's Faith in Antioch of Syria among the Gentiles took place during the years 38 to 40.

Chapter XI

Paul withdraws from the desert and goes to Damascus. Paul's tireless apostolate in this city.

The jewish hierarchy plots Paul's death. Paul flees Damascus and goes to Jerusalem

1. Once Paul, in the desert of Arabia Petrea, had expiated his faults, become more saturated with divine love and further consolidated in the Gospel Faith, he felt himself impelled by the Holy Ghost to return to Damascus, where he was to preach tirelessly in defence of Christ. On the 27th of June in the year 39, departing from Mount Horeb, Paul docilely set off towards Damascus by the way the Holy Ghost led him: across the Sinai Peninsula, the land of Idumea, and then Israelite territory along the Mediterranean coast, passing through Joppe and Caesarea Maritime, from where he went on to Megiddo, Nazareth, the west of the Sea of Galilee, and Caesarea Philippi; and then, having entered Syria, passing by the spot of his conversion, he reached Damascus on the 12th of October in the year 39. During this long trek, inflamed by the love of Christ, Paul gave testimony to the Gospel Faith to the Jews in various towns.

2. Once in Damascus, Paul first presented himself to Bishop Ananias. Then he commenced his ceaseless preaching of the Gospel, both in jewish synagogues as well as in public squares and other places, where he firmly proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, the true Son of God, at the same time acknowledging his error in having persecuted Him so fiercely before. All the jews who heard him were astounded and said: *"Is this not the fellow who in Jerusalem persecuted those invoking the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, and then came to Damascus intending to seize Christians here and take them prisoner to the pontiffs?"* Nonetheless, Paul exerted himself all the more affirming that Jesus is the Christ, leaving the jews dwelling in Damascus astounded. As they saw, however, that Paul's fiery preaching drew many to Christianity, with the consequent humiliation this implied for the addicts of judaism, on the 18th of December that same year 39, the principal hierarchs from the synagogues of Damascus gathered in council for the purpose of settling Paul's death. They put their plan into action by mutual agreement with King Aretas's governor in that province; so the civil authorities placed guards throughout the city to seize Paul with the aim of killing him. When

Paul was advised of the plans laid against him, following the prudent advice of Bishop Ananias, he went into hiding in the hope of fleeing at the first opportunity. As the gates of Damascus were under continuous surveillance, however, on the 5th of January in the year 40, Paul took to flight through a window in the walls, from where he was lowered down in a basket outside the city by some of the faithful.

3. Paul's persecution by the Jews in Damascus was permitted by God so that he abandon the city and go to Jerusalem, and prostrate himself humbly at the feet of the Vicar of Christ, Pope Peter. Hence that night, the 5th of January in the year 40, once outside Damascus Paul interiorly felt the impulse to head for Jerusalem; which meant for him an act of supreme heroism; since while he would have the lofty grace of meeting the Pope for the first time, he would not lack hard combats from that Sanhedrin which he had previously served with unswerving loyalty. Besides, the intrepid and audacious Paul now felt great timidity and shame at having to present himself before the Jerusalem Christian community he had so bloodily persecuted years before, though he was not unaware that evangelical charity reigned in the Lord's followers. In this anguished distress the Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to him along the way to assure him that he should go to Jerusalem, but that on his arrival She would no longer be there. Paul, comforted by the Divine Mother's words, headed resolutely for Jerusalem.

Chapter XII

The Virgin Mary, with Apostle John, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, leaves for Ephesus. Intense apostolate in Ephesus. Destruction of the idol Diana's temple. Foundation of a Carmelite religious community

1. As the Exalted Mother of Jesus knew that a fresh persecution of the Church on the part of the Sanhedrin was approaching, caused by Paul's proximate return to Jerusalem, since his visit would provoke the Pontiff's fury, the deep concern overwhelming the Divine Mary's Soul was reflected on Her virginal Countenance, at the same time as She felt indescribable joy at the singular strengthening in the Faith Christians receive by way of persecution, with the consequent greater consolidation of the Church. While the Divine Mother ardently desired to share the forthcoming afflictions with Her children in Jerusalem, such was not the design of the Most High; who, so that His Divine Will be fulfilled, availed Himself of Apostle John, into whose safekeeping the Divine Mary was entrusted by Christ's command. As it was the Apostle who best perceived the Most Holy Virgin Mary's spiritual suffering, he asked Her the cause, and She told him. From that moment, John felt drawn to convey Her far from Jerusalem to free Her from the grievous risk She would run in the fresh persecution. To this considerate suggestion She manifested that She would abide by his decision, if that were also the will of Pope Peter. In order to execute His lofty plans, God had determined

that the destination of the Divine Mary's journey be the city of Ephesus; of this She was not unaware, but remained silent so that God might reveal it to John, and She thus practise submission and obedience to the Ministers of the Church, as an example to posterity.

2. On the 6th of January in the year 40, the Divine Mary, Apostle John, and Her sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, after humbly receiving Pope Peter's blessing, left the Cenacle with the aim of first venerating the places where the sacred mysteries of Christ's Passion and Death had taken place. From Calvary itself, at 12 noon the four left for the seaport of Joppe, from where on the 9th of January they took ship for the port of Ephesus itself, in present-day Turkey. As the voyage lasted fifteen days, they arrived at Ephesus on the 24th of January in the year 40, establishing themselves in a modest house belonging to some Christian faithful who had come from Jerusalem years previously as a result of the persecution by Paul.

3. Once they had arrived at Ephesus, Mary Most Holy, with the help of Apostle John, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, carried out an intense apostolic labour; for John, by his preaching and miracles, drew many to the Faith of Christ; and then sent them to the Divine Mistress and Doctress for further instruction and enlightenment in the Faith. The Divine Mary, moreover, was a most exemplary model of Christian charity towards the poor, the sick and the dying, all of whom She maternally attended according to their manifold needs; also delivering many possessed from the powerful influence Satan exerted over them. So many were the souls whom She drew to the way of truth and eternal life, and so numerous the miracles She wrought for this purpose in the city of Ephesus, that not even in many volumes could they be written down. Among the countless wonders performed in Ephesus through Mary Most Holy's intervention, the destruction of the famous temple of the idol Diana, an important focus of paganism and corruption, should be specially mentioned; for in the temple were a considerable number of licentious women consecrated to satanism through worship of the idol, worship which was exceedingly widespread throughout the city and all Asia Minor; and its many followers had contributed to the construction of the temple, then considered as one of the seven wonders of the world, in which multitudes of pilgrims gathered.

4. As the sheer presence of the Divine Mary in Ephesus was incompatible with the continuance of that abominable temple, She charged Archangel Saint Michael with the mission of destroying it, which he executed in the briefest space of time. Those inside were buried in the ruins, with the exception of nine of the priestesses, towards whom the Divine Mary had shown special mercy since they had better dispositions; so that they were later converted to Christianity. With the destruction of the pagan temple, Apostle John preached with greater force to draw the Ephesians out of the

terrible error that deluded them; demonstrating to them as well that the abominable statue of the idol they had venerated in the temple had been powerless to prevent its own destruction and that of the edifice dedicated to it. Following the ruin of the pagan temple, in the same year 40, Mary Most Holy desired to found a monastery of Carmelite nuns in Ephesus, so that chastity might flourish and God be offered reparation for the innumerable abominations that had been committed for so many centuries in that now destroyed temple of Diana. The nine convert priestesses, miraculously rescued from the ruins of the temple through Mary Most Holy's intervention, formed part of this religious community.

Chapter XIII

Paul arrives at the Cenacle of Jerusalem. The disciple Barnabas brings Paul into Peter's presence.

Peter confers the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on Paul in the Cenacle of Jerusalem

1. In his journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, Paul as a pilgrim visited those places especially related to the life of the Saviour, such as Lake Tiberias, Nazareth, Cana, Mount Tabor, Bethlehem, and including Mount Calvary, entering Jerusalem by the same gate in the walls through which years previously Christ had left carrying the Cross. Once in the city, he headed for the Cenacle.

2. On the 25th of January in the year 40, fourth anniversary of his conversion, Paul knocked at the door of the Cenacle. As his unexpected arrival instilled a certain dread in everyone, Peter's immediate reaction was to refuse him entry, which the disciples did with great promptitude. While Paul's conversion was well known to the majority of Christians in Jerusalem and other places, as the Divine Virgin Mary as well had informed them of it at the opportune time, four years had now passed since that extraordinary event and the figure of Paul had been forgotten by many owing to his long retreat in the desert of Arabia Petrea. Nonetheless, news of the public defence of Christ that Paul had made in Damascus after his return from the desert had reached Jerusalem. But those rumours had not yet been confirmed by reliable testimony, and suspicions still existed whether Paul had really persevered in the Grace of his conversion, and whether his conduct was that of a true Christian. Besides, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, before leaving for Ephesus, had not wished to disclose Paul's impending arrival to those in the Cenacle, with the object that Peter act in accord with his authority and prudence; and that Paul too, on being at first refused, might exercise humility in expiation for the immense harm he had done to the Church when he was the driving force behind the persecutions against her.

3. Paul, with bitter desolation, seeing the doors of the Cenacle closed to him, went to the house that Lazarus once had in Jerusalem, where there was

now another community of disciples. Providentially, the disciple Barnabas was to be found at this cloister, having been summoned by Peter to fulfil certain missions in the Apostolic See. This disciple, on finding out that convert Paul wished to speak with them, went out to receive him; since, besides, years before there had been close friendship between the two, when they were both students at Gamaliel's school. Barnabas, who was by then already a Bishop, received light to see Paul's sincerity as a faithful member of the Church. To this his having known Paul previously as a man very loyal to his personal convictions and opposed to lying contributed no little. Accordingly, given the difficulties Paul had experienced at the Cenacle, Barnabas accompanied him there with the aim of introducing him to Pope Peter, so that he might accept him without any distrust. On the way, Barnabas endeavoured to inform himself yet further concerning his friend's conversion, retreat in the desert and recent apostolate in Damascus. Meanwhile Peter, James the Less and the others in the Cenacle prayed unceasingly, asking light from the Lord as to what best to do with Paul.

4. Near 12 midday on that Wednesday 25th of January in the year 40, Barnabas and Paul arrived at the Cenacle, and Paul was ushered by the disciple into Peter's presence. The supernatural emotion that Paul felt on seeing the Vicar of Christ for the first time was such that, deeply moved, he fell at his feet shedding abundant tears. By this action the human suspicions which they all harboured concerning him were dispelled. While Paul remained prostrate on the ground, Barnabas, deeply moved, highlighted his greatness of spirit, his penance in the desert of Arabia Petrea and the persecution he had recently suffered in Damascus for his unprecedented valour in defence of Christ. Nevertheless, Peter and the rest already knew many of these facts, though with certain misgivings, now dispelled. With inexpressible jubilee and deeply paternal heart, Peter accepted the one who was to become the Second Pillar of the Church, at the same time as all gave humble and fervent thanks to the Lord for the wonders He had worked in that convert.

5. By supernatural inspiration Peter realized that the moment had come to confer Holy Orders on Paul, to which the latter gave his consent. Therefore, at 3 in the afternoon on that same day the 25th of January in the year 40, Peter celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of Mass with great solemnity in the Cenacle, during which, laying his hands on the head of Paul, he conferred on him the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate, Paul being incorporated from that moment into the Carmelite Order as a religious member. Paul received Holy Orders with extreme joy of soul, as he yearned for this intensely. The Vicar of Christ, moreover, in his emotive address, urged Paul to preach throughout Jerusalem in testimony to the truth which he had previously persecuted, recommending to him very especially the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, mission which Paul soon began to carry out

with most vehement zeal. During the days he stayed at the Cenacle there was intimate familiarity between Paul, the two Apostles, the disciples and the other followers of the Gospel Law.

Chapter XIV

Paul's intense preaching in Jerusalem. Paul abandons the city by order of Christ and sets out for Tarsus of Cilicia.

Paul's apostolate along the way and in the city of Tarsus

1. By reception of Holy Orders, Bishop Paul's apostolic impulse became yet more sublime and vehement; in such fashion that he gave living testimony to the Gospel Faith to Christians of Jewish and of Gentile origin, and above all to those professing the Jewish faith and to the Gentiles, throughout the city of Jerusalem. Paul's words were like fiery darts that penetrated the hearts of all who heard him, so that in just the first two days of his preaching all Jerusalem was moved. The members of the Sanhedrin, and in general all its followers, could not overcome their astonishment at seeing Paul proclaim and spread everywhere the Lord Jesus' Name and doctrine, which he had previously combated with unrelenting fury. They were unable to understand the radical change wrought in him; since, from a voracious instrument of the Sanhedritic Council for the persecution of Christians, he had become an intrepid bulwark in their defence. The members of the Sanhedrin and their closest collaborators, seeing the grave danger that Paul created for the Jewish Church, gathered together with the aim of plotting his death.

2. On the 8th of February in that year 40, while Paul was celebrating Holy Mass in the Cenacle Chapel or first Christian Temple, during the elevation of the Most Sacred Eucharistic Body, he fell into ecstasy when Our Lord Jesus Christ, full of glory and majesty, became visible to him. The Lord urged him to leave the city, telling him: "*Make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, because the Jews not only reject your testimony concerning Me, but wish to kill you as well.*" Paul said: "*Lord, they themselves know that I was the one who cruelly persecuted those who believed in You, that I put them into prison; and as well brought them to the synagogues where I had them scourged, and ordered them to blaspheme against You; besides, when the blood of Your faithful witness and martyr Stephen was shed, I was present, and consented to it, and minded the garments of those who killed him.*" The Lord gave him further to understand that, owing to the obstinacy of a great part of the Jews, they did not deserve Paul's dedicating himself to preaching to them, especially since elsewhere there were numberless souls who would willingly listen to his words; and therefore there was no time to lose. Finally, the Lord said to Paul: "*Go away from Jerusalem, because I shall send you out to evangelize faraway nations.*" Paul recounted to Peter the vision and

message he had received from the Lord, so that the Pope, considering the danger to Paul's life, sent him away from Jerusalem to preach to the Gentiles.

3. On the 9th of February in the year 40, Paul left Jerusalem intending to go to Tarsus, his hometown, as he desired to rejoin the members of his family in an endeavour to convert them to the Gospel Faith, and also to wait there until the Lord should communicate to him what he ought to do next. Some of the disciples from the Cenacle accompanied Paul as far as Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he preached to Jews and Gentiles, at the same time visiting the Christian missions in the regions of Judea, Samaria and Galilee, whose faithful did not know him by sight, as they had only heard said: *“That man who persecuted us before is now one of us and preaches the Faith which he previously combated.”* All glorified God for the marvels He had worked in Paul. Once in Caesarea Philippi, Paul set out for Syria; and next, from there, went to Phoenicia, to board a ship in the port of Tyre bound for Tarsus of Cilicia, where he not only gained his family for Christ, but many others of his fellow citizens as well.

Chapter XV

Progress of the Christian Faith in Antioch of Syria. Paul in Antioch of Syria

1. The great propagation of Faith in Christ among the Gentiles of Antioch of Syria, thanks to the intense labour of the disciples Lucius and Simon of Cyrene, among others, became well-known throughout the regions of Asia Minor, Israel and many other places. When the news came to the notice of the Apostolic See of the Church or Cathedra of Saint Peter, which was in Jerusalem, the Pope, taking into account the promising progress of Christianity, decided to send a legate to the city of Antioch of Syria to inform himself personally of the favourable reception of Christianity on the part of the Gentiles. For this mission, Peter chose the disciple Barnabas; so that he, accompanied by other disciples, left Jerusalem on the 25th of March in the year 40, finding themselves in Antioch of Syria within a few days. Arriving there, seeing the wonders of God's grace, Barnabas was filled with jubilee, and exhorted all to abide in the Lord with a firm and constant heart. By the apostolate of Barnabas, a virtuous man of great faith and filled with the Holy Ghost, the Church was yet further enlarged by the extraordinary increment of faithful in the city of Antioch of Syria.

2. On the 30th of April in the year 40, that is, a month after Barnabas's arrival in the city, he sent individuals to inform Pope Peter about the extraordinary progress of Christianity among the Gentiles, and of the convenience that someone else with missionary experience help him in that promising apostolic labour. As Barnabas opted for Paul of Tarsus for this mission, he proposed this to the Pope; who in turn sent a message with his approval, ordering him besides to seek out Paul, who was then still in Tarsus. Accordingly, on the 10th of May the same year, the disciple Barnabas set off

for the city of Tarsus of Cilicia in search of Paul; who, on the disciple's arrival, was not at his parents' home, but had withdrawn to a grotto he was accustomed to visit on the town's outskirts in order to devote himself to contemplation. Five days after Barnabas's arrival, that is on the 20th of May that same year 40, he and Paul left for Antioch of Syria, reaching this city on the 25th of the same month and year. So greatly had the Gospel flourished in Antioch of Syria that, while Barnabas had gone in search of Paul, Pope Peter had ordered to go there as well, with the aim of sharing in the apostolate, among others, the disciples Agabus, Judas Barsabas and Silas, who besides being Bishops possessed the gift of prophecy, and who had come from their missions to Jerusalem some time previously in the service of the Apostolic See. The three Prophet Bishops arrived in Antioch of Syria at the end of May in the same year 40. Paul and Barnabas spent all that year in this mission, instructing a great multitude of people, so that it was in Antioch of Syria that the disciples began to be called Christians.

3. While the Prophet Agabus was in the city, enlightened by the Holy Ghost he prophesied that a great famine was to come. This shortage of foodstuffs occurred during the years 44 to 48, when the Roman empire was ruled by Emperor Claudius. While a great part of the empire was scourged, nevertheless the region of Judea was the most affected, particularly the Christian communities there. So from other regions the missionaries sent economic help to the Bishops and Priests of the region of Judea, Barnabas and Paul being those chiefly entrusted to take that succour in their different journeys to Jerusalem and other towns of the region.

Chapter XVI

James the Greater leaves Spain for Italy. The Apostle goes to Ephesus to visit the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

James the Greater carries out a great apostolate in Jerusalem

1. Some months after building the chapel that Mary Most Holy had requested in Her honour in the city of Zaragoza, on the banks of the Ebro, Apostle James the Greater interiorly sensed that his labour in Spain was coming to an end. In Zaragoza he left Bishop Athanasius, a native of the city, who had been converted there by him and designated Bishop of the city. James the Greater then traversed anew a great part of the Iberian Peninsula, especially Galicia; until, accompanied by some of his disciples, on the 8th of December in the year 40, he embarked at the port of Tarragona for Italy; and once there, without delaying long to preach, continued his journey on by sea to Ephesus, since he ardently desired to see the Most Holy Virgin Mary, his Lady and Refuge.

2. On the 25th of December in the same year 40, James the Greater arrived in Ephesus and prostrated himself at the feet of the Queen of Heaven and Earth, with great consolation of soul at the immense happiness of finding

himself again in the presence of the Mother of his Creator. With humble affection and abundant tears of joy and veneration, Apostle James the Greater gave thanks to the Divine Mary for the incomparable favours received from the Most High in his apostolic labour in Spain through Her intercession. The Divine Mary, seeing the Apostle prostrate before Her, raised him from the ground and said to him: *“I remind you that you are an anointed of the Lord and His minister, and I a poor little worm.”* These words spoken, the great Lady knelt and asked the blessing of James the Greater as Priest of the Most High. James the Greater also received great happiness and consolation on embracing his own mother Mary Salome, his aunt Mary Cleophas and his brother John. The Apostle of Spain remained at Ephesus with Most Holy Mary for a month, since he longed intensely to be at Her side to give Her an account of the mission fulfilled and besides strengthen himself for the future. Before leaving Ephesus, James the Greater learned confidentially from the lips of the Most Holy Virgin Mary that he would soon crown his apostolic life by shedding his blood for Christ in Jerusalem. The Apostle asked Mary Most Holy for Her blessing for him to go to receive martyrdom for Her Divine Son.

3. On the 25th of January in the year 41, James the Greater set out from Ephesus by sea for the port of Joppe, arriving in Jerusalem on the 8th of February that same year; and once in the Cenacle, humbly prostrated himself at the feet of Pope Peter to receive his blessing, then rendering him an account of the apostolic labour realized in Spain. He also embraced his cousin James the Less with brotherly affection. By James the Greater’s visit to the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Ephesus, and the knowledge he now had of his imminent martyrdom, his soul burned with deepest desire now to consummate his evangelizing mission in Jerusalem. If at the start of the previous year this city had been spiritually convulsed by Paul’s fiery words, no less was it now by James the Greater’s most vehement preaching, since neither Jews nor Gentiles could resist the heavenly wisdom and apostolic fire that burned and consumed the soul of this *“son of thunder.”* James the Greater’s labour in Jerusalem, until his death, drew many to the Faith of Christ, with the consequent animadversion of the infernal sanhedrin, who saw Christ’s Church swell ever more with faithful.

Chapter XVII

King Herod Agrippa I’s vast territories. Herod Agrippa I is named king of Judea and establishes his court in Jerusalem

1. King Herod Agrippa I came to hold under his crown not solely the extensive lands possessed by his grandfather Herod the Great the Cutthroat, but the region of Phoenicia or Lebanon as well.

2. Herod Agrippa I was son of Aristobulus, second of Herod the Great’s five sons by Marianne. Aristobulus, when in Rome in the year 7, was

murdered by order of his father, who suspected that by using his influence on the Roman emperor he was seeking to depose him as king.

3. As already said, shortly before his death on the 30th of March in the year 8, Herod the Great had made his testament in favour of four of his sons, dividing his kingdom as follows: to Archelaus he left Judea; to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea; to Herod Philip, Samaria; and to Philip, Bathanea, Trachonitides, Iturea and Gaulanitides.

4. The province of Samaria became directly dependent on the Roman empire shortly after Herod Philip took possession of it, since he renounced the crown and went off to live in Rome. This province was later placed under the crown of Archelaus by order of the Roman emperor. The province of Judea, with Idumea and Samaria as well, became directly dependent on the Roman empire following Archelaus's banishment by order of the Roman emperor. The provinces of Bathanea, Trachonitides, Iturea and Gaulanitides became directly dependent on the Roman empire following the death of tetrarch Philip in the year 34, though Emperor Tiberius later attached them to the Roman province of Syria. The provinces of Galilee and Perea became directly dependent on the Roman empire after Herod Antipas was banished by order of the Roman emperor, owing to intrigues and defamations by Herod Agrippa against that uncle of his.

5. After Emperor Tiberius's death, Emperor Caligula gave Herod Agrippa I, with the title of king, the four provinces that had belonged to tetrarch Philip, as well as the two provinces that had belonged to Herod Antipas, placing under his crown as well the region of Phoenicia or Lebanon. Towards the end of January in the year 41, Herod Agrippa I was in Rome at the time of Caligula's assassination and Claudius's proclamation as successor to the empire. Emperor Claudius favoured his close friend Herod Agrippa with the title of king of Judea, giving him the province of Judea with Idumea, and Samaria as well. From then on Herod Agrippa I's crown included all the far-flung territory that Herod the Great the Cutthroat had possessed, together with Phoenicia or Lebanon as well. With his naming as king of Judea, Herod Agrippa I established his court in Jerusalem at the end of February in the year 41.

6. After Herod Agrippa I was named king of Judea, Emperor Claudius suppressed in this province, and consequently in Idumea and Samaria, the post of procurator, held at the time by Marullus, whose predecessor had been Marcellus; and before him Pontius Pilate, removed from office in the year 36 by Emperor Tiberius.

Chapter XVIII

Fourth persecution of the Church. Martyrdom of Apostle Saint James the Greater

1. As King Herod Agrippa I, prior to having the territory of Judea under his dominion, had ever shown himself to be a partisan of the pharisees and

defender of Jewish traditions and customs, the then supreme pontiff of the apostate Jewish church, Abiathar by name, saw the way clear to obtaining from the king elect another persecution of Jerusalem's Christians, since they were multiplying further and further, especially due to the apostolic zeal of James the Greater. The fourth persecution suffered by the Church in Jerusalem, then, was at the instance of the Sanhedrin and carried out by King Herod Agrippa I.

2. On the 25th of March in the year 41, when James the Greater was to be found preaching to the people of Jerusalem, with great fruits of conversion, he was arrested by Roman soldiers at the request of villainous Abiathar, who was among the crowd listening to him. After the Apostle had been secured by a halter around his neck, he was publicly accused as seditious, enemy of the Roman empire and perverter of the people. With these and other charges he was led before Herod Agrippa I, who, to satisfy the bloodthirsty desires of the Jews, condemned James the Greater to be decapitated without previous trial.

3. From Herod Agrippa I's sumptuous palace, edifice where Christ had appeared before Herod Antipas, James the Greater was brought to the market square, near to the present-day Sion Gate, to be decapitated there. It happened that on the way a paralytic was presented to him, whom the Apostle healed. By virtue of this miracle Josias, one of the executioners who had more directly taken part in James the Greater's arrest, was converted. The Apostle embraced the convert, inviting him to be his companion in martyrdom, and he readily agreed, also shedding his blood for Christ. James the Greater, at the moment of martyrdom, invoked Mary Most Holy so that She might assist him at his death, and She, from Ephesus, became present at the same time in Jerusalem to comfort him in his supreme immolation. At the moment the Apostle bent his knees to the ground to receive the sword-stroke and offer to God the sacrifice of his life, he saw on high the Queen of Heaven and invoked Her in his heart in this way: *"May Your most pure and innocent hands be the altar of my sacrifice today, so that it may be favourably received by Him who offered Himself on the Holy Cross for me. Into Your hands, and through them into those of my Creator, I commend my spirit."* His prayer ended, the Apostle became absorbed for several moments in beatific vision, and was then decapitated. James the Greater's arrest and martyrdom took place on the 25th of March in the year 41, when he was thirty-two years old, as he had been born in December of the year 8.

4. Following the death of James the Greater, some of the disciples who were witnesses of the event took his body and his separated head and, with the authorization of Pope Peter, secretly brought the sacred mortal remains to the port of Joppe, where a Christian community existed. From there all was taken to Spain by ship; and after disembarking at the Galician port of Padrón, he was buried at the spot in Galicia chosen by him, known today as

Santiago de Compostela. In this manner proof was left that the Faith of Christ had reached what was then considered to be the end of the earth.

Chapter XIX

Pope Peter is seized and imprisoned during the fourth persecution of the Church. Peter is miraculously unchained and freed from prison. Peter goes to Antioch of Syria to establish the Apostolic See there. The Church of Christ grows and multiplies more and more

1. On Friday the 12th of April in the year 41, date which coincided with the days on which the Jewish Passover or Azymes was being celebrated, while Apostle Peter was giving verbal testimony to Christ in a public place of Jerusalem, he was arrested by a detachment of sixteen soldiers sent by Herod Agrippa I at the instance of iniquitous Supreme Pontiff Abiathar. As the Sanhedrin deemed it more convenient to judge him before the people once the days of Passover had ended, Peter, bound by two chains, was taken to the Praetorium edifice and imprisoned there until the celebrations were to conclude. During his imprisonment, the sixteen soldiers mentioned took turns at guard duty, eight at a time, in the following manner: two, one at either side of the Apostle inside the dungeon; two more outside guarding the entrance door; and another four soldiers at the main entrance to the prison from the Praetorium. Such extreme vigilance was due to the fear that he might mysteriously be freed as on another occasion.

2. While Peter, shackled with two chains, was confined in the Praetorium prison, the Church prayed for him without cease; for Apostle James the Less, who was in Jerusalem, the other religious of both communities in their respective houses, and the lay faithful, unceasingly implored divine protection for the Pope, in order thus to obtain his miraculous release from prison. Owing to the Christians' unceasing prayer, the Divine Mary asked Her Divine Son to send Archangel Saint Michael to the prison to accomplish the lofty mission of delivering Peter from his enemies.

3. It came to pass that, at 12 midnight beginning Sunday the 14th of April in the year 41, the day on which Herod thought to judge and kill Peter, while the Pope slept bound by two chains between the two soldiers guarding him in the dungeon, with the other six on duty at their posts, Archangel Saint Michael suddenly appeared inside the Apostle's dungeon, the place becoming radiant with light. The celestial personage, touching Peter on one hand, wakened him and said: "*Arise quickly*"; and the chains that bound the Apostle instantly fell off. The Archangel then said: "*Gird up your tunic and put on your sandals*", and he did so; and after this the Archangel told him: "*Wrap your cloak about you and follow me.*" The presence in prison of Archangel Saint Michael, full of heavenly splendour, deprived the eight guards on duty of all sensory perception, in such a fashion that they neither heard nor saw anything. Peter, utterly perplexed at the extraordinary event, which seemed to him more illusory than real, his gaze fixed on his angelic

Guide, followed his footsteps, miraculously passing with him through the closed door of his own dungeon and the access door from the prison to the praetorium courtyard; so that the two passed unnoticed by the two guards watching over Peter inside the cell, by the other two keeping guard outside the door, and by the four stationed at the entrance to the vaults used as dungeons, all of whom comprised the first guard. Once outside the vaults, without being noticed by the second guard, which was the official praetorium guard, Saint Michael and Peter crossed the rectangular courtyard or Lithostrotos up to the central door of the main entrance to the praetorium, through which also, without it opening, they passed. Once in the porch where Christ was judged, the great chancel or iron gate miraculously opened, and both went down the stairway by which Christ had descended bearing the Cross. Afterwards Archangel Saint Michael, having left Peter on one of the city streets at exactly the same spot where Christ bearing His Cross had met His Divine Mother, vanished from the Apostle's presence. Then Peter, emerging from the celestial ecstasy produced in him by the contemplation of the Archangel, now in his normal state, marvelled at all that had happened to him, saying: *"Now I know in truth that the Lord has sent His Angel and delivered me from the hands of Herod, and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."*

4. Pope Peter, meditating on the wonderful protection the Lord had afforded him, went to the Cenacle where many were to be found assembled in prayer. When he knocked at the side-door, Rose, a nun, went up to hear who it was; and realizing it was Peter's voice her joy was such that, instead of opening, she rushed to give the news that the Pope was at the door. But those in the Cenacle said to her: *"You are crazy."* As Rose insisted that she spoke the truth, they commented among themselves: *"Doubtless it will be his angel."* Peter, meanwhile, continued knocking at the door, and when they opened and saw him they were stupefied. Peter, however, making signs with his hands to silence them, then told them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. Because of the persecution James the Less was not in the Cenacle, as he was hidden at the mansion of a Jerusalem Christian family. Peter prayed before the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel of the Cenacle asking for light as to what he should do, understanding it to be the divine will that he leave Jerusalem and establish the Cathedra of the Church in Antioch of Syria. Therefore, designating twelve disciples, he prepared everything necessary to depart with them on the journey. Before his departure he told those in the Cenacle to inform James the Less and the other faithful in Jerusalem of his miraculous deliverance. At 3 in the morning on that Sunday the 14th of April in the year 41, the Vicar of Christ, with his twelve companions, set out from the Cenacle of Jerusalem for Antioch of Syria, visiting some of the Christian communities along the way.

5. At daybreak, when Peter's mysterious disappearance from the praetorium prison was noticed, there was a great uproar among the soldiers. As Herod Agrippa had planned to judge and kill the Apostle that day, he sent to fetch him, and nobody could explain what had happened. The villainous monarch, thwarted of the pleasure of slaying Peter, then cruelly vented his rage on the sixteen soldiers specially charged with his custody. They, though astonished at what had happened, being unable to give an explication, were executed without further ado.

6. Thanks to the fecund missionary labour carried out by the Apostles and disciples, rendered prodigiously fruitful by the suffering and bloodshed of the Christians in the persecutions, the Gospel spread ever further and the faithful multiplied prolifically.

Chapter XX

Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, who is no longer there. Paul, Barnabas and Mark go to Antioch of Syria

1. To take preventive measures against the great food shortage foretold by the Prophet Agabus that was to affect many regions, among them Judea, Paul and Barnabas took upon themselves the task of collecting donations and then bringing them to the poorest districts, especially Jerusalem. For though the scourge of famine was to reach its greatest severity from the year 44 onwards, not knowing the moment, all were taking preventive measures. So Paul and Barnabas, while preaching on the different missions, at the same time collected donations and distributed them among the most needy.

2. While Peter and his twelve disciples visited some of the Christian communities on his journey to Antioch of Syria, Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem at the beginning of May in the year 41, with the intention of visiting the Pope and of supplying the Christian communities resident there with provisions. But learning that Peter was on his way to Antioch of Syria, Paul and Barnabas decided to return to that city, which was their official residence. The two took with them the disciple Mark, one of the future evangelists, who wished to be back at the Pope's side, with whom he had lived so long.

Chapter XXI

Pope Peter translates the Apostolic See from Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria. Peter names Paul: Apostle, Vice-Vicar and Second Column of the Church. Peter names Barnabas Apostle. Peter orders Paul and Barnabas to preach especially to the Gentiles

1. Pope Peter arrived at Antioch of Syria on Friday the 3rd of May in the year 41, on which day he established the Cathedra of the Church there. This transfer of the Apostolic See of the Church took place seven years after Peter had established it in Jerusalem, on the 3rd of May in the year 34.

2. At the beginning of June in that same year, when the Apostolic See of the Church was already established in Antioch of Syria, Paul, Barnabas and

Mark arrived there. Pope Peter was assisted by a curia composed of Prophets and Doctors, among whom stood out Paul of Tarsus, Barnabas, Simon of Cyrene, Lucius of Cyrene and Chusa Menahem.

3. On the 7th of July in the year 41, while Pope Peter was celebrating Holy Mass with the assistance of a good number of disciples, the Holy Ghost told him: “Assign for Me Paul and Barnabas to the work of evangelization of the Gentiles.” The Divine Paraclete communicated to him, moreover, that James the Greater having died, he should name Paul an Apostle, and thus complete the number of the Twelve; and raise him besides to the office of Vice-Vicar and Second Column of the Church; and that he should also name Barnabas an Apostle, without him on that account forming part of the Official Apostolic College instituted by Christ. Pope Peter communicated to all present the order he had received from the Holy Ghost.

4. Peter fixed the date of the ceremony of these nominations for the 16th of July in the year 41, anniversary of the Foundation of the Order of Mount Carmel, ceremony preceded by nine days of special fasting and prayer. By this disposition of the Holy Ghost concerning Paul and Barnabas, the divine plan for the evangelization of the Gentiles was confirmed anew, this labour being entrusted more especially to those two. Pope Peter sent the two Apostles to carry out their apostolate after blessing them by laying his hands upon them; and in like manner they received the blessing of the other members of the papal curia. The title of Vice-Vicar given to Paul was always inferior to the Papacy; as Paul was Peter’s Vicar, not Christ’s, since the Pope is sole Vicar of Christ on Earth. In this ceremony of his nomination, Christ confirmed Paul in the Faith, he thus being forever preserved from the sin of apostasy and his final perseverance or eternal salvation guaranteed.

Chapter XXII

Paul, Barnabas and Mark arrive in Cyprus. Great apostolate in many towns of the island, especially in Salamis and Paphos.

Conversion of Proconsul Sergius and of the magus Barjesus

1. That Tuesday the 16th of July in the year 41, when Peter by will of the Most Divine Paraclete sent Paul and Barnabas off to preach, they, accompanied by Priest Mark, Barnabas’s nephew, left Antioch of Syria for the nearby Mediterranean port of Seleucia, from where the following day they embarked for the island of Cyprus, arriving at the Cypriot town of Salamis on Friday the 19th of the same month and year.

2. As the principal mission entrusted by Pope Peter to the two Apostles was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, on the very day of their arrival in Salamis Apostle Paul addressed the multitudes in a public square, to the great wonder of many at the new and edifying doctrine. While it is true that Christ had visited the island of Cyprus eight years previously, with fruits of conversion, and that from the island disciples had emerged, as well as Mary

Mercuria, protomartyr of Mary's disciples, and that missionaries as well had recently preached the Gospel there, nevertheless, all that labour had been directed more especially at the Jews. Accordingly, when Paul arrived openly proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentile people, there was great expectation in the packed auditorium. Paul's and Barnabas's labour, then, with the Gentiles of Salamis, was very fruitful in conversions, as it was also to be in other parts of Cyprus. As Apostle Paul wished to give the benefit of his ministry also to the Jews, the following day, Saturday the 20th of July, with Barnabas and Mark he entered the principal synagogue of Salamis, where he wisely proclaimed that in Christ all the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled, causing great expectancy and no little controversy on the part of many of those fanatics of Judaism, whom Barnabas too had to reproach energetically for their absurd stubbornness in rejecting Christ as God's Onlybegotten and Messiah sent.

3. In view of the promising apostolic fruits among the Gentiles, Paul and his two companions remained some two months in Salamis, chiefly dedicated to the Gentile people, who for their simplicity of heart were more docile in accepting the Gospel truths; though on Saturdays they generally preached in the various synagogues so that neither might the Jews lack the word of God. After Paul and Barnabas had swelled the ranks of the faithful in the Christian community of Salamis, and placed three Priests ordained by Paul in charge of them, they left the town on the 23rd of September of the year 41, setting off for the town of Paphos on the opposite side of the island. Paul made use of this journey across Cyprus to tour many other towns, principally those Christ had visited before, such as Chitri the home town of Apostle Barnabas, Mallep and Cyrine.

4. On the 20th of October in that year 41, Paul, Barnabas and Mark arrived at the town of Paphos. Here they encountered a Jew, a false prophet named Barjesus, known also as the Magus. He was counsellor to the Roman proconsul Sergius, a prudent man who at the time exercised his office of governor in Paphos. Previously, in the month of May in the year 33, when he was governor in the town of Salamis, Sergius had had a meeting with Christ on His visit there, and was deeply impressed by evangelical doctrine. The Roman proconsul requested of Paul and Barnabas to hear the word of God. As the false prophet Barjesus sought to hinder this so that Sergius might not embrace Faith in Christ, Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fixing his gaze on the magus, said to him: "*Man full of fraud and trickery, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness! Why have you the effrontery to hamper the Lord's upright ways?*" Then Paul, cursing him, told him: "*May you be blind, and not see the sun until a certain time has passed*"; and at that moment thick darkness descended upon Barjesus' eyes, and owing to his total blindness he groped around for someone to give him a hand. When the

proconsul saw what had happened, he was deeply impressed and filled with fear. After hearing the evangelical doctrine preached by Paul, marvelling at it, he embraced the Faith of Christ. The proconsul, on being baptized by the Apostle of the Gentiles, received the name of Paul.

5. Apostle Paul, together with Barnabas and Mark, stayed in the town of Paphos for more than two months. On the 25th of December in that same year, magus Barjesus embraced Christianity and, on being baptized by Paul, at the same time as receiving life of soul he recovered the sight of his eyes; but sadly years later he apostatized, and subsequently caused the death of Apostle Barnabas.

6. Proconsul Paul, years after his conversion, when Lazarus of Bethany was first Bishop of Marseille, France, received the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate from him, becoming the first Bishop of Narbonne.

Chapter XXIII

**Paul, with Barnabas and Mark, leaves the port of Paphos for Pamphylia.
The disciple Mark returns to Jerusalem. Paul preaches in Antioch of Pisidia**

1. On the 1st of January in the year 42, Paul and his two companions left the Cypriot port of Paphos, and once on the coast of Pamphylia in present-day Turkey, went by the river now called Ak-su to the town of Perga, arriving on the 6th of the same month and year. This town was famous for the temple dedicated to the idol Artemisa.

2. Here, Mark decided to part company with Paul and Barnabas and return to Jerusalem, availing himself of two disciples on their way there with provisions for the Christian communities; so that he sailed with them as far as Caesarea Maritime, then continuing the journey by land. By this strange conduct of Mark, decidedly against the will of God, the future evangelist revealed yet again his at times inconstant behaviour. Though previously he had made known his desire to go with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria to be with Pope Peter, later he asked to go with them both on their apostolic journey; and now, tired of Paul's exacting character, by his own wish he decided to return to Jerusalem.

3. Once Mark had boarded a ship bound for Israelite territory, Apostles Paul and Barnabas went from Perga of Pamphylia to the town Antioch of Pisidia, further inland in present-day Turkey. During their stay in this town of Antioch, both carried out a great missionary labour among the Gentile people.

4. On Saturday the 25th of January in the year 42, Apostle Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, entered the town synagogue and sat down. When the reading of the Law and Prophets had ended, the principals of the synagogue sent to them, saying: "*Brethren, if you have a word of encouragement for the people, speak.*" Then Paul, standing up and asking for silence with a gesture of his hand, said: "*Worthy men of Israel and those*

who fear God, listen: the God of the People of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted His people when they dwelt as foreigners in the land of Egypt. Afterwards, when they were oppressed by those same Egyptians, He brought them out of that land with the sovereign and sublime power of His arm; and for the space of forty years in the desert suffered with patience the unfaithfulness and ingratitude of many. Then, after destroying the pagan dwellers in the land of Canaan and other adjoining lands, He distributed those territories among the thirteen tribes of Israel about four hundred and fifty years after Abraham's circumcision ordered by God. Once His people were established in the territory of Israel, God ruled them, firstly by Caudillos; afterwards by Judges, until Samuel; and when the people asked for a king, God gave them, for forty years, Saul, son of Cis, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. When Saul died, God raised David up as king, of whom He gave testimony, saying: 'I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after My own heart, who will fulfil all My desires.' From his lineage, according to His promise, God determined that Jesus be born to be Israel's Saviour. Before His public manifestation, John prepared His ways preaching the baptism of penance to all the people of Israel. John himself, when the Jewish authorities asked him who he was, replied: 'I am not the Christ'; and then said as well: 'But among you there is One whom you do not know. He is the One whom I told you is to come after me, who has been made before me, whose sandal-strap I am not worthy to loose.'"

5. *"Now then, my worthy brethren, descendants of Abraham, and those who fear God, listen: to you as well has the announcement of salvation been sent by the Lord Jesus, Whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their spiritual leaders, not wishing to acknowledge as the Messiah sent, despite the fact that He was foretold in the Prophets whose texts all read on Saturdays, condemned to death, as was also foretold would happen; and not finding in Him any just cause to condemn Him, nevertheless petitioned Pontius Pilate that His life be taken. And when all the things written about Him concerning His shameful Passion and Death were fulfilled, He was taken down from the Cross and laid in a sepulchre. But thereupon He, by virtue of His Divine Power, rose from the dead on the third day, and for many days appeared to those who had come with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and who until the present day are giving testimony to Him to the people. We, then, announce to you the fulfilment of the promise made to our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which God the Father has certainly fulfilled by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His Divine Son, as is written in the Book of Henoah. This Jesus Christ rose from among the dead without knowing corruption, as was prophesied as well by David in his Psalms in these words: 'You will not leave My Soul in heavenly glory long separated from My Body; nor will You permit the Body of Your Holy One to see corruption.' Let it be, then, well known to you, worthy brethren, that through this Jesus Christ you*

are offered the remission of your sins and of all that you could not be justified by Moses' Law; since whoever believes in Him, is baptized and puts His divine teaching into practice, shall be justified. Therefore, take care that what the Prophet Habacuc prophesied to the despisers of God's word does not happen to you as well: 'Take a look at other nations and observe how they harass each other. However, be filled with astonishment and terror! Because in your days something much more terrible shall come to pass in this land of Israel, which will be hard to believe when recounted afterwards.'"

6. Such was the impression caused in many of the God-fearing jews and proselytes who heard the doctrine taught by Paul that, as he left the synagogue with Barnabas, they asked him to speak to them again the next Saturday, and including followed them both. Some were converted and baptized that same day, whom Paul and Barnabas exhorted to persevere in the Grace of God through the practice of the virtues of the Gospel Law.

7. The following Saturday, 1st of February that year 42, almost the entire town of Antioch of Pisidia came to the synagogue to hear the word of God taught by Apostle Paul. While he spoke inside with great enthusiasm, many also listened to him from outside the synagogue. The multitudinous gathering and Paul's preaching so exasperated the levitical hierarchy, that they began furiously to contradict the Gospel teaching, hurling abuse at the two Apostles and uttering blasphemies against Christ; this having been planned beforehand by those perfidious synagogue chiefs not in agreement with Paul's and Barnabas's presence in the town. Paul, however, with inexpressible firmness told them: *"It pertains first to you that we speak the Word of God, but as you reject it and thus become unworthy of eternal life, from now on we shall preach more chiefly to the Gentiles. Because the Lord so ordered me when He told me: 'I have set you up as light for the Gentiles, so that you be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.'"* On hearing this many of the Gentiles assembled there were overjoyed and glorified the word of God accepting the Gospel Faith. Thereupon, at the rejection of Christ's doctrine by the majority of jews and its favourable reception by the Gentile people, from then on Paul and Barnabas, during their stay in Antioch of Pisidia, dedicated themselves almost exclusively to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, not only to those of the town, but also to those from the entire region of Pisidia and other nearby regions; since from different parts they came to Antioch of Pisidia to hear the two Apostles' teaching, with great fruits of conversion, many being cured of their illnesses. The word of the Lord spread, then, through the whole region of Pisidia.

8. While Paul and Barnabas continued preaching the Gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, there took place the translation of the Apostolic See of the Church by Pope Peter from Antioch of Syria to Rome.

Book III

From the translation to Rome of the Apostolic See from Antioch of Syria until the Transit of the Most Holy Virgin Mary

Chapter I

Christ orders Peter to translate the Apostolic See from Antioch of Syria to Rome. Apostolic journey of Peter with destination Rome. Peter and his retinue visit the Virgin in Ephesus

1. On the 4th of May in the year 42, that is, one day after completing a year from the establishment of the Cathedra of the Church in Antioch of Syria by Pope Peter, while Peter was at prayer Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him ordering him to translate the Cathedra of the Church to Rome. Pope Peter, desirous of complying promptly with the divine command, chose twenty-four disciples from among the members of his Curia and other friars resident in Antioch of Syria, among whom were Linus, Cletus, Clement, Simon of Cyrene, Lucius of Cyrene, Chusa Menahem and Gerontius, leaving the numerous Antioch of Syria community in charge of Bishop Evodius, a native of this city, one of the first converts there, on whom Peter had conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate, leaving some Priests and Deacons with him as well.

2. The following day, 5th of May, Peter and his twenty-four strong retinue went to the nearby port of Seleucia, where they boarded a ship bound for Myra of Lycia in present-day Turkey. As Peter wished to visit the Most Holy Virgin Mary before going to Rome, he accordingly continued his journey by ship to Ephesus, arriving at this city on the 15th of May in the year 42. The joy that overwhelmed Peter's heart on finding himself again in the presence of the Queen of Heaven and Earth was such that, moved by an irresistible inner impulse and with abundant tears, he knelt at the immaculate feet of the Divine Lady, kissing them with indescribable love and veneration, at the same time asking Her blessing. This gesture of the Pope so consoled the Immaculate Heart of the Most Sweet Mother that She, with Her divine hands, raised Peter from the ground, embraced him with indescribable maternal tenderness and then knelt down before him asking him to bless Her. Peter and his twenty-four companions stayed fifteen days in Ephesus. He made use of this time to consult the Most Holy Virgin Mary on different questions relating to the government of the Church, and entreated Her for a greater clarification on some mysteries of the Faith. Furthermore, he visited the Christian communities in the city and other adjoining places, with the consequent fortification in the Faith of those children of the Church. Many too were the conversions Peter gained with his Papal Magisterium, accompanied at times by miracles. Pope Peter's stay in Ephesus, then, was for him an efficacious preparation for his future establishment in Rome, since his soul was greatly fortified and comforted by being together with the

Mother of the Church, receiving as well great consolation from Her sisters, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, as also from Apostle John. While the Pope remained in Ephesus, the Divine Mary disclosed to him the advisability of celebrating a second Council in the near future; since it was well to secure the doctrine and discipline of the Church ever further, at the prospect of constantly increasing numbers of faithful. Besides, She guaranteed Peter that She would also be present at the future Council, to help him in that laborious task.

3. The mystery that in God's plan Rome be the city chosen as the Apostolic See of the Church and centre of universal Catholicism, was due among others to the following principal reasons: many Jewish communities existed in Rome, and it was most convenient that the Church of Christ base her cathedra there to give those numerous adherents of Judaism the opportunity of conversion; Rome was also the centre of paganism, and it was very appropriate to establish the Cathedra of the Church there with the aim of giving a greater impulse to the evangelization of the Gentiles, and from there Christian civilization be spread more effectively throughout the Roman empire's provinces. Geographically, Rome was the centre of the ancient world, with communications by important land and sea routes, which enormously facilitated the propagation of Christianity. Furthermore, it was in God's plan that the pagan empire of Rome yield to the irresistible impulse of the Holy Empire of the Church, and in this way evidence that the baneful power of Satan submitted to the supernatural and vivifying power of Divine Grace. The proof of this we have in that while the primitive pagan civilization of Rome and its provinces succumbed victim of its own corruption, Christian civilization, glorious and majestic, was established upon the ruins of that decadent and destructive paganism of ancient Rome. In short, while Christ's Immaculate Spouse, the Church He founded, has kept herself invincible and indestructible, all other powers opposed to Her have necessarily succumbed, and will succumb, before the infinite power of God, by virtue of which solely and exclusively the Truth will shine forth.

Chapter II

Peter and his retinue leave Ephesus. Pope Peter's apostolate in Corinth and Syracuse.

Peter arrives at Rome with his retinue and translates the Church's Cathedra there

1. On the 30th of May in that year 42, Pope Peter, with his retinue of twenty-four, after receiving the maternal blessing of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, left Ephesus by ship sailing for Corinth, arriving at this city on the 5th of June and remaining there until the 12th, effecting a great apostolate with fruits of conversion. Then from Corinth he embarked for the Sicilian port of Syracuse, arriving there on the 20th of June in the same year, remaining in this town for three days, which the Pope used to spread the evangelical light. Finally, from Sicily they headed for the port of Ostia, arriving at Rome on

the 29th of June in the year 42, the date on which the translation of the Cathedra and the establishment of the Apostolic See of the Church in Rome took place. At that time Emperor Claudius ruled in the Roman empire.

2. At his arrival in Rome, Peter found some Christian communities of Jewish and Gentile origin who had embraced the Faith of Christ for having been present at Pentecost in the Cenacle of Jerusalem. Among the Christians Peter met on his arrival were Aquila and his wife Priscilla, of Jewish origin, who lived on one of the hills called the Aventine. It was at their home that Pope Peter stayed most frequently, since its greater capacity allowed many faithful to assemble there for worship. The fact that Peter established the Cathedra of the Church in Rome did not imply that he was always in the city; since he was frequently absent from the city of the seven hills owing to his untiring and unrelenting apostolic mission in the different nations of the then-known world; so that the glorious sandals of Pope Peter blessed, with their firm tread, all the nations where Christian communities existed. He was eminently a travelling Pope, with a very intense apostolate, and continuous preaching everywhere. He did not need to write many letters; he preached resolutely far and wide. Thus it is not strange that the very courteous Apostle Paul, so given to sending greetings, does not greet Apostle Peter in his Letter to the Romans; since Paul knew that at the time Peter was absent fulfilling a great apostolic mission in different parts of the known world.

Chapter III

Paul's and Barnabas's fecund apostolate in the regions of Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia and other places in Turkey.

Persecutions and trials. Conversion of Timothy and Titus

1. While Pope Peter made the long journey from Antioch of Syria to Rome and established there the Cathedra of the Church, Paul and Barnabas stayed on in Antioch of Pisidia, consolidating the Christian community just founded there. The Jews, however, seeing that Christianity made ever greater progress in Antioch of Pisidia, planned some way to rid themselves of Paul and Barnabas; and to do so made use of some women with certain prestige in the town for their high social standing and scrupulous practice of Judaism, which accredited them before the people as virtuous. As these women, moreover, were married to men in civil authority, they exerted strong influence on their husbands to do away with Paul, deeming him the more dangerous. The two Apostles, then, were arrested and imprisoned, though Paul was more cruelly treated and received from the Jews forty lashes less one. Later, the authorities, seeing that it was not convenient to kill the two Apostles, since their prestige extended even beyond the city, limited themselves to throwing them out. Before departing, however, which was on the 13th of July in the year 42, Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet against them, and set off for the town of Iconium. By the heroic example of the two Apostles, the

faithful of the Christian community in Antioch of Pisidia were edified in such a fashion that their souls overflowed with heavenly consolation and fortitude, thanks to the joy infused into them by the Holy Ghost.

2. On the 15th of July in the year 42, Paul and Barnabas arrived at the town of Iconium in Lycaonia, where they carried out a great apostolate, replete as well with no little opposition. Both Apostles announced the Gospel to the Jews congregated in the synagogue, and also to the Gentiles in different parts of the town. By their preaching they converted a good number of Jews and Greek-speaking proselytes of Judaism, and Gentiles. But the Jews who remained incredulous incited and stirred the Gentiles up against Paul, Barnabas and the converts. Despite these adversities, both Apostles stayed on in the town of Iconium for quite some time, labouring full of confidence in the Lord, who by prodigies and miracles confirmed the truth of the doctrine they preached. Thereupon the populace of the town divided into two bands, some on the side of the Jews, and others on the side of the Apostles. These dissensions were brought to a head by a massive tumult of Jews and Gentiles, induced and guided by their respective leaders, with the intention of ill-treating the two Apostles and stoning them to death; but having knowledge of this the Apostles fled the town on the 23rd of September in the same year 42, with the object of freeing themselves from the evils menacing them. On the occasion of this apostolic mission in Iconium, Paul converted to Christianity a woman of Gentile origin who was later to become the martyr Saint Thecla.

3. From the town of Iconium Paul and Barnabas fled to the town of Lystra, also in the region of Lycaonia. In Lystra there was a man crippled from birth. On the 25th of September in that same year, when this cripple was listening to Paul's sermon, the Apostle, fixing his gaze upon him and inwardly sensing that the cripple had faith that he would be cured, said to him in a loud voice: *"Arise, and stand up straight"*; the invalid immediately stood up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, raising their voices, they said of the Apostles in the Lycaonian tongue: *"Gods in human form have come down to us"*; and gave Barnabas the name of Jupiter, and Paul, Mercury, because he it was who spoke. Moreover, the priest of Jupiter, whose temple stood at the entrance to the town, bringing bulls bedecked with garlands, followed by the people, wanted to offer the animals in sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. When they heard this, rending their garments they rushed out amid the people, and Paul crying out told them: *"What are you doing? We too are mortal men like you. And we preach to you so that you abandon this profane worship and be converted to the living God who created heaven, earth, sea and all contained in them. Despite the fact that you, the Gentiles, have lived in corruption and idolatry, He has never ceased to give testimony to Who He is, bestowing benefits from heaven, sending rain and good*

weather for the harvests, giving you an abundance of provisions and filling your hearts with gladness.” Yet even saying such things, they had considerable difficulty in convincing the people not to offer them sacrifices.

4. In Lystra Paul came to know a Jewish family consisting of an elderly lady called Loida, her daughter Eunice, and Eunice’s son called Timothy, a youth of fifteen, son of a Gentile father deceased some time previously. The two women not only welcomed Paul and Barnabas, but were also converted to the Faith of the Gospel, being baptized; thus constituting the first Christian community of the town.

5. On Thursday the 25th of January in the year 43, when the two Apostles were in Lystra of Lycaonia, some Jews from Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium came to the town and, having won over the populace, stoned Paul; doing so with such cruelty that his enemies dragged him outside the town and left him for dead. Apostle Barnabas and the other Christian faithful went out to where Paul lay and, on seeing him, believed he was dead; but he, finding himself miraculously cured, went with them to the home of Eunice and Loida; and the following day the two Apostles left for the town of Derbe. After they had left, the two women Loida and Eunice won young Timothy over to the Faith of Christ, and he was baptized.

6. Paul and Barnabas remained in Derbe until the 17th of May in that same year 43, time which they made use of to preach the Gospel intensely, with abundant fruits of conversion. Before leaving the town Paul ordained several Priests and consecrated a Bishop, leaving them in charge of the Christian community, to continue the apostolic mission begun by him. After their mission in Derbe, on the 17th of May in the same year 43, Paul and Barnabas again headed for Lystra, where Paul had been stoned months previously. From Lystra they went once more to Iconium and, after passing through other parts of Lycaonian territory, headed for Antioch of Pisidia. In the new visits made by both Apostles to these last three towns, they confirmed the hearts of the Christians further in the Gospel, exhorting them to persevere in the Faith, saying to them, moreover, that *“we must needs enter the Kingdom of God by way of many trials.”* In Antioch of Pisidia Paul became acquainted with a youth of Gentile origin named Titus; who, embracing the Faith, was baptized; and then joined the two Apostles on their journey, after Paul had conferred upon him the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate. In Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia Paul also left a Bishop and several Priests in charge of the Christian communities.

7. On the 27th of October in the year 43, Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Titus, left Antioch; and crossing the region of Pisidia, entered Pamphylia and preached the Gospel in Perga. As it was an important centre of paganism, Paul and Barnabas had not tarried when passing through in January of the year 42; so now they busied themselves there, accomplishing a great

apostolate which was most fruitful, despite the many difficulties that arose for preaching the Gospel from the famous pagan temple there dedicated to the idol Artemisa. Apostle Paul, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus, remained in Perga of Pamphylia until the 16th of January in the year 44; from where the three afterwards went to Attalia, preaching the Gospel there until the 20th of May in the same year. In this last town, as in Perga, Paul left a Bishop and several Priests in charge of the new Christian communities.

Chapter IV

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch of Syria. Fruitful apostolate during the journey

1. On the 20th of May in the year 44, Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Titus, left the city of Attalia for the Cypriot port of Paphos, where they remained about twenty days. Here they strengthened the existing Christian communities further in the Faith, reorganizing them and giving them a new apostolic impulse; accordingly Paul placed a Bishop and several Priests in charge of that diocese. Afterwards he did the same in the town of Salamis. From this port Paul and his two companions left by ship bound for Seleucia, arriving in Antioch of Syria on the 15th of August in the same year 44.

2. Once in the city of Antioch of Syria, Paul assembled the clerics and faithful of that Christian community, and informed them of all he had done on his long journey, and how he had converted many Gentiles to the Faith of Christ.

Chapter V

Disputes about the necessity or otherwise of circumcision. Convocation of a fresh Council to be celebrated in Jerusalem

1. It is well to recall that Pope Peter, during his stay in Jerusalem, had made the obligation quite clear, both to James the Less and to others with judaizing tendencies, of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles too without requiring them to be circumcised. After Peter had left, however, new disciples came, converted from judaism, who maintained an attitude in favour of circumcision, not only of Gentiles, but also of uncircumcised Jews, without James the Less giving this due importance. While it is true that the Apostle was in favour of Christians of Jewish origin conserving the outward sign of their race, so that he permitted them to practise circumcision, the Apostle's attitude did not in any way imply that he believed and taught that this rite was necessary for salvation. Nevertheless, certain Christians with judaizing tendencies interpreted James the Less's imprudent condescension wrongly, and so even came to believe that he was in favour of the rite of circumcision being necessary for salvation.

2. It came to pass that many days after Paul, with Barnabas and Titus, had returned to Antioch of Syria, and this news had reached Jerusalem, James the Less sent some disciple friars from the Cenacle cloister to fetch the

donations that Paul and Barnabas had brought from other places. As among those coming from Jerusalem were some of the aforementioned disciples who favoured circumcision, they published among the members of the Christian community in Antioch of Syria the necessity of this rite for salvation, saying: *“If you are not circumcised according to the rite of Moses, you cannot be saved”*; giving to understand as well that this was also the view of James the Less. Paul and Barnabas radically opposed the opinion of these disciples, disputing with them without being able to convince them.

3. Despite the preaching of Pope Peter and of the other Apostles and Bishops that the rite of circumcision was now inefficacious, having been abolished by the Sacrament of Baptism, and that other precepts of Mosaic law, principally those of worship, had also been abolished at the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass and, in general, by the Gospel Law itself, nevertheless, no few Jews from the pharisee sect who were being converted to Christianity remained convinced of the need for circumcision and the above ceremonies of Mosaic law in order to be saved; accordingly, they required Christians of Gentile origin and uncircumcised Jews to be circumcised, and to observe the ceremonies of Mosaic law. This requirement did not come, then, either from Pope Peter, or from James the Less or the other Apostles. It was certainly true that in the first days of his Papacy, Pope Peter, and James the Less as well, had certain judaizing tendencies, this being widely known; and perhaps those who required uncircumcised Christians to be circumcised based themselves on this.

4. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, who was in Ephesus with Apostle John, aware of the doctrinal controversy between the two groups concerning the rite of circumcision, prayed intensely to Her Divine Son to clarify the doctrine in obfuscated minds, so that the question might at last be settled in Holy Mother Church. Christ, to comply with the desires of His Divine Mother, ordered that She Herself communicate to Pope Peter and the other Apostles the need to celebrate the fresh Council that She had previously recommended to him. Therefore, on the 8th of September that same year 44, She appeared first to Peter, who was in Rome, to tell him that he should make his way to Jerusalem and there convoke the Second Council of the Church, advising him that She would appear to the other Apostles as well to make the event known to them, so that all might be present. Jerusalem had been chosen as the venue for the Council because it was the city with most judaizing tendencies among the Christians, being the centre of the apostate Jewish church. Once the twelve Apostles were notified of Christ's decision through His Divine Mother, they started out on the journey to Jerusalem from the respective countries in which they found themselves. Regarding Apostle Paul, however, on being notified by the Most Holy Virgin Mary of the forthcoming gathering of the Council, he communicated this to the Christian community at Antioch of Syria, at the same time resolving that Barnabas,

Evodius and some others there should accompany him to Jerusalem, telling them that Pope Peter, the rest of the Apostles, and other Bishops from different dioceses, were to gather in Council to deal with those matters of circumcision that were the object of dispute among some Christians.

Chapter VI

Disastrous death of King Herod Agrippa I. Herod Agrippa II succeeds his father to the throne of Israel.

The Roman emperor institutes bicephalous government in Israel

1. As already stated, Herod Agrippa I also held under his crown the province of Phoenicia or Lebanon; though the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon possessed certain exemptions or privileges given to them previously by Rome.

2. Following that 14th of April in the year 41 when Pope Peter was miraculously delivered from prison by Archangel Saint Michael, impious King Herod Agrippa I had moved his court from Jerusalem to Caesarea Maritime, in the region of Samaria; since due to his inordinate servility to Rome, his relations with the Jews were becoming increasingly strained, despite the fact that he was a great defender of their traditions.

3. The Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, though under the crown of King Herod Agrippa I, were in the habit of causing him serious problems, basing themselves on the ancient exemptions and privileges they had received from the Roman empire; consequently Herod Agrippa, angry with them, not only refused to send them provisions, but decided as well to use force to make them submit, without listening further to the propositions of peace the inhabitants of both cities made to him. The residents of Tyre and Sidon, in view of the inevitable disaster that would occur to them, bribed the master of the royal chamber, Blastus by name, with the aim that he, by soliciting peace in their name, might succeed in calming the king's anger so that he might not use force; and thus placated, supply them with provisions and other means of subsistence, given the scanty production of those territories of Phoenicia.

4. On the 19th of September in the year 44, date indicated that year for the celebration of public feasts in Caesarea Maritime in honour of Jupiter, it came to pass that during them King Herod Agrippa I, dressed in regal attire and from a rostrum, delivered an extravagant discourse to the people in which, with blasphemous eloquence, he extolled the pagan gods, glorified the Roman empire, and boasted about the achievements of his own reign. Hence the populace, flattering and vain, carried away by the words of their king, applauded him saying: "*You speak as the god you are, and not like a man!*"; praise which the impious monarch received with great satisfaction, making in addition a show of his pretended and false deity. This iniquitous affront to God's Majesty so disgusted Mary Most Holy, that She resolved to

chastise him. But before proceeding with the chastisement, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Herod several opportunities of conversion, which he rejected with the greatest disdain. Thereupon the Divine Mary sent Archangel Saint Michael to Caesarea Maritime as Minister of divine justice, to slay King Herod Agrippa I for having with vain conceit usurped the honour due to God. That same day, the 19th of September in the year 44, Saint Michael wounded Herod internally with a foul-smelling ulcer, from which immediately oozed out a multitude of voracious worms, which in three hours ended the perverse king's life in the multitude's presence, causing great panic to all; he thereby lost not only temporal honours, but was eternally damned as well. Though the Most Holy Virgin Mary suffered and wept over Herod Agrippa I's damnation, She praised the judgments of the Most High, thanking Him for the benefit which that chastisement had brought to the Church, which had suffered greatly under the reign of the impious monarch.

5. At the death of Herod Agrippa I, he was succeeded on the throne of the territory of Israel by his son Herod Agrippa II, who lived in incest with his sister Berenice.

6. In the year 52, eighth in the reign of Herod Agrippa II, Roman emperor Claudius established bicephalous government in Israel, whereby King Herod Agrippa II was head of civil power, and Roman procurator Felix head of military power; with respect to religious affairs relating to the Jews, both heads acted by mutual consent. At the beginning of the month of June in the year 59, Felix ceased in his post as procurator of the territory of Israel, being replaced by Portius Festus, who took up the post on the 18th of June that same year, with the same military and religious authority as his predecessor.

Chapter VII

The Virgin Mary, with her two sisters and Saint John, goes from Ephesus to Jerusalem for the new Council

The Divine Mary's exertions during the four years and nine months She dwelt in Ephesus were most fecund in conversions and religious vocations; for, in addition to the Christian community becoming increasingly more numerous, the Carmelite convents of friars and nuns now had many disciples and disciplesses. Before leaving Ephesus, Mary Most Holy spoke to the members of both communities with the sweetest words to console them for Her obligatory return to Jerusalem, exhorting them that in Her absence they keep ever present the doctrine they had received from Her and from Apostle John, so that in this way they might continue to acknowledge Christ as Lord, Master and Spouse of their souls, wholeheartedly loving and serving Him. Moreover, as Apostle John had consecrated three Bishops and ordained Priests, the Divine Mother insisted on the respect and veneration that the other religious and the lay faithful should have for the Lord's ministers who

stayed there to care for their souls. After these considerations and other counsels, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, accompanied by Her two sisters and John, left Ephesus on the 28th of October that year 44, embarking for Joppe, where they arrived on the 12th of November, as the voyage lasted fifteen days. From there they went on to Jerusalem, where they first visited the holy places of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, later to arrive at the Cenacle on the 15th of that month of November in the year 44. Mary Most Holy's return produced indescribable emotion and delight in the heart of Apostle James the Less, as likewise in the disciples and disciplesses and other faithful of the Jerusalem community; all of whom did not cease to glorify God for having again sent them the Queen of Heaven and Earth to serve as their Guide, fill them with enlightenment and console them in their many toils and afflictions. Once at the Cenacle, She exhorted all to pray earnestly for the happy outcome of the forthcoming Council; and in this way they awaited the other Apostles and the rest of the Council Fathers, who arrived at the Cenacle in Jerusalem between the 20th and the 27th of November.

Chapter VIII

Apostolic journey of Pope Peter from Rome to Jerusalem. The ten missionary Apostles also go to Jerusalem.

Opening of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Church

1. To preside Ecumenical Council II that was to be celebrated in the Cenacle at Jerusalem, Pope Peter, accompanied by two Bishops and some disciples, left Rome on the 15th of September in that year 44, later embarking for Sicily from the nearby port of Ostia. From there he went to the island of Crete, where he remained for some days preaching intensely, with abundant fruits of conversion. From this island he sailed on to that of Cyprus; and after briefly visiting some of the Christian communities, from the port of Salamis he then departed for that of Seleucia, near Antioch of Syria, where he arrived on the 5th of November, Paul having already left the city on his way to Jerusalem. Peter remained ten days in Antioch of Syria, visiting the Christian communities, and then left for Jerusalem, where he arrived on the 20th of November that same year 44. After Peter's arrival in Jerusalem, the other absent Apostles also arrived, as likewise the other Bishops who were to take part in the Council.

2. Paul, with Barnabas, Titus and other disciples, had left Antioch of Syria on the 1st of November in the mentioned year 44. On the way to Jerusalem he visited some of the Christian communities, fortifying them further in the Faith by speaking to them of the many conversions obtained in his journey through Cyprus and the towns of Asia Minor. Following this apostolate, Paul and his companions arrived in Jerusalem on the 27th of November in the

year 44. By then, besides the Divine Mary and Peter, all the other Apostles and the remaining Council Fathers were already at the Cenacle. This second visit of official character made by Paul to Jerusalem occurred four years after his first official visit to Peter in this city, when he met the Pope for the first time and received Holy Orders from him. Though between the two visits he had made another, this was merely in an unofficial capacity to bring donations to Jerusalem. Apostle Paul, on his arrival in Jerusalem, brought Peter and the other Apostles as well up to date respecting the evangelization he had carried out among the Gentiles, intending that the Pope and the others, who had greater experience in the spirit of the Gospel, might clearly tell him if he had acted in accord with Christ's wishes, and if there was anything to rectify in his future apostolate.

3. When Pope Peter and the other Apostles were all in Jerusalem, the Jewish converts in favour of circumcision insisted that Peter require this of Christians of Gentile origin, and of the uncircumcised of Jewish origin; furthermore, they put great pressure on the Pope to have circumcised, among others, the convert Titus, Gentile of origin, who had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. But Pope Peter energetically opposed these intents. By this could be seen the urgent need of some council canons to settle definitively the question of the controversial subject of circumcision, and other doctrinal points.

4. In the Jerusalem Cenacle, on the 30th of November that year 44, Pope Peter, in the presence of the Divine Mary and of all the Council Fathers, declared open Ecumenical Council II of the Church, composed of thirty-six Council Fathers, namely: Pope Peter, the other eleven Apostles and a further twenty-four Bishops. After nine days of intense prayer and preparation, since that month of November had thirty-one days, on the 8th of December in the year 44, anniversary of Mary's Immaculate Conception, the Council began, and was to last eighteen days.

Chapter IX

Progress of Jerusalem Council II and its closure. Doctrinal and disciplinary matters decided at the Council

1. In the Second Ecumenical Council of Jerusalem, not only were the subjects of the abolition of circumcision and of levitical ceremonies dealt with, but other doctrinal matters too were debated and decided.

2. By the dispositions of Jerusalem Council II the following infallible doctrines already taught by Peter were established in a more solemn manner: the Sacrament of Baptism is the sole means of entering the Church of Christ; the Holy Sacrifice of Mass is the sole sacrifice which is agreeable to God and saves and sanctifies man; and the Deific Body and Blood of Christ are the true viands of eternal life. Given that some Christians of Jewish origin continued to be influenced by the Law of Moses regarding Saturday

observance, Jerusalem Council II solemnly decreed as well the infallible doctrine already taught by Peter, that Sunday is the Lord's Day, not Saturday which had been abolished; furthermore, those who believed or taught that observance of the Jewish Saturday was necessary for salvation were anathematized. Though Jerusalem Council II anathematized those who believed or taught that circumcision and Levitical ceremonies were necessary for salvation, given that there were Christians with Judaizing tendencies who continued to hold them as valid, notwithstanding, this Council did not trouble to issue a decree forbidding Christians come from Judaism to practise circumcision or to assist at Levitical ceremonies, provided they did not do so for religious motives or believe them necessary for salvation; besides, the Christian faithful, with very rare exceptions, went neither to the Jewish temple of Jerusalem nor to the synagogues.

Chapter X

Solemn closure of Jerusalem Council II

1. Discussion of the questions dealt with at the Second Jerusalem Council was painstaking and laborious; and despite being definitively settled that circumcision was not only unnecessary for salvation, but that as a religious rite it openly opposed Evangelical Law, some of the Council Fathers, nevertheless, converts from the Pharisee sect, continued insisting before the other Council Fathers that circumcision be demanded of the Gentiles and as well of the uncircumcised of Jewish origin.

2. That, then, is the reason why, on the 25th of December in that year 44, at the solemn closure of the Second Ecumenical Council of Jerusalem, Pope Peter paternally admonished the obstinate in his magisterial sermon, which, as chief authority, he addressed to the other Council Fathers, saying: *“My brethren, you know that Christ ordered the Gospel to be preached to all creatures; and that I was chosen by Him, among the other Apostles, as Supreme Authority, with the aim that the word of the Gospel might be heard more principally from my lips, not only by the Jews, but by the Gentiles as well, so that they too might have the opportunity to believe. Despite the Divine command, however, there has been certain resistance to the evangelization of the Gentiles by some of our own of Jewish origin, and I myself as well was indecisive at this attitude. God, who knows hearts, gave testimony in favour of the evangelization of the Gentiles, causing the Holy Ghost visibly to descend upon Christians come from gentiledom, in Caesarea Maritime, just as previously He descended upon us in this place where we are now. So God in nowise distinguished between us and them, confirming their hearts in the Faith. Now then, why do you try God, desiring to place around the necks of the Gentiles and others uncircumcised the yoke of circumcision, which is not only unnecessary now, but is as well opposed to our Faith? For we, of Jewish origin, like they, of Gentile origin, believe we*

can only be saved by the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Pope Peter therefore, in his Council discourse to all the assembled Fathers, disclosed that he already held and infallibly taught the doctrine issued by the Council; and that therefore neither those come from gentiledom nor anyone else could be compelled to circumcision in order to become members of the Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of his sermon Pope Peter anathematized all those who might believe or teach that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Peter’s words received the unanimous approval of all those present, which they manifested by an explosion of enthusiasm, and from then on, among the assembled Council Fathers, contentious commentaries on the subjects of circumcision and Mosaic ceremonies ceased.

3. Next, Paul and Barnabas confirmed what Peter had just taught by relating the great signs and prodigies worked by God during the apostolate of them both to the Gentiles. When the two Apostles had finished speaking James the Less intervened, principally because he was Bishop of that diocese, See of the Council; and also because, given his judaizing tendencies known to many, it was necessary to make quite clear that this Apostle not only humbly submitted to the dispositions of the Council, but also defended them as truths revealed by the Holy Ghost. So James the Less said: *“Hear me, my brethren: Peter, as chief authority in the Church, has told you how God prodigiously manifested Himself as well to Christians come from the Gentiles in Caesarea Maritime, to choose from among them a people consecrated to His Name.”* So that it might be seen how this providence over the Gentile people was already foretold in Scripture, Apostle James the Less mentioned the following words spoken by God to the Prophet Amos: *“In that time I will restore the Tabernacle of David which will have fallen to the ground, and rebuild what was destroyed, setting it up again as it was before, and My Name shall be invoked.”* Then the Apostle, inspired by the Holy Ghost, added: *“And He said this so that all other men as well might seek God, and He be invoked by all nations.”* Thus, according to Amos’s text interpreted by James the Less, after the apostasy of the Jewish people, God was to rebuild His Church over the ruins of the former one, institute a new worship, Holy Mass, and give entry into the sheepfold of salvation to the Gentiles as well.

4. Apostle James the Less continued, saying: *“The divine plan for the salvation of the Gentiles was ever envisaged by God from all eternity; therefore I adjudge that the Gentiles converted to God should not be troubled by requiring circumcision of them, but that they should indeed refrain from idolatrous worship, from eating things offered to idols, from ritual prostitution, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming animal blood. For Moses, from olden times, in each town placed lectors who recall these precepts, reading them in the synagogues every Saturday.”* That

is, Gentiles were not required to be circumcised as a condition for entering the Christian Church, though they were required to renounce their idolatrous cults, abstain from eating things offered to idols, as well as from ritual prostitution, as all such abominations ran counter to God's Decalogue. Imposed on the Gentiles too was abstention from eating the meat of animals killed without shedding of blood, that is, strangled meat, and animal blood, since observance of these two precepts of Mosaic law was necessary for peaceful coexistence between Christians recently come from gentiledom and from judaism, since for the latter such foods were considered abominable, given their deeply-rooted jewish tradition; for the jewish synagogues, moreover, continued to teach the obligation of observing them, which made it still more difficult for Christians recently come from judaism not to observe the precepts of blood and of strangled meat. Though Christians converted from judaism, with very rare exceptions, did not go to the synagogues, they still continued to be greatly influenced by the teaching they had lately received there; from which in time they freed themselves.

5. Pope Peter then decided, with the other Apostles and Bishops assembled in Council, to choose some persons from among them, and send them with Paul and Barnabas to the Christian communities in Antioch of Syria; thus they designated Judas Barsabas and Silas, for being leading men among them. Here, then, is the letter given to Paul and his companions to be taken to the Christians of Gentile origin in Antioch of Syria and other places: *“Pope Peter, the other Apostles, and the Bishops assembled in Council: to our brethren converted from gentiledom who are in Antioch, in Syria and in Cilicia: Dearly beloved, as we know that some of our own went there of their own accord to alarm you with their discourses and perturb your consciences with requirements not imposed by the authority of the Church, those of us assembled here in Council have unanimously resolved, with the approval of Pope Peter, to choose some persons and send them with our beloved Paul and Barnabas, Apostles who have ventured their lives for the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. With them we send Judas Barsabas and Silas, who will tell you the same orally. We communicate to you, then, that the Holy Ghost has enlightened the Fathers of this Council, directed by the authority of Pope Peter, that by no means is circumcision to be required of you, but that you do indeed abstain from idolatrous worship, from eating things offered to idols, from ritual prostitution, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming animal blood; from all of this you have the duty to abstain. May God be with you.”* God respected the disciplinary accords of the Council Fathers forbidding the faithful of the Church to eat strangled meat and animal blood, as commanded by Mosaic law. By this prohibition it was made quite clear that James the Less's judaizing influence left a certain mark on Jerusalem Council II. This should have been avoided by Pope Peter and the other Council Fathers, since to impose on the faithful of Christ's

Church the Jewish observance of not eating strangled meat and animal blood could have created confusion in no few that animal blood possessed a certain sacred and expiatory character, when it is exclusively the Deific Blood of Christ that redeems and purifies us of our sins.

6. The decisions taken at Jerusalem Council II, both in dogmatic doctrinal as well as in disciplinary matters, were immediately recorded in acts on the day of its closure, that is on the 25th of December in the year 44. Copies of them were then made for the different dioceses. Once Pope Peter and the other Fathers gathered in Jerusalem Council II had finished drafting the Council acts, they were publicly read before the religious and lay faithful congregated for the purpose in the hall of the Cenacle. The reading of these decrees ended, the Holy Ghost, in a visible manner and in the form of tongues of fire, descended upon Peter and the other Council Fathers, confirming in this way the labour of the Council, pouring out special graces and consolations upon all those present. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, who during the sessions of Jerusalem Council II had been praying unceasingly in the chapel of the Cenacle for its happy outcome, was also present at the public reading of the acts that same day, Monday the 25th of December in the year 44, and gave thanks to the Lord for the benefit the Church had received from the Council.

Chapter XI

Paul and Barnabas leave Jerusalem for Antioch of Syria. The missionary Apostles and other Council Fathers leave for their corresponding destinations. Peter's apostolic journey from Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria, and from there on to Rome.

The Divine Mary stays on in Jerusalem until Her glorious Assumption into Heaven

Jerusalem Council II over, Peter and the other Council Fathers began returning to their different missions. The first to do so was Apostle Paul, accompanied by Apostle Barnabas, Judas Barsabas and Silas. Before their departure, Pope Peter as well as Apostles James the Less and John cordially bid farewell to Apostles Paul and Barnabas for them to continue evangelizing the Gentiles, mission previously entrusted to them by the Pope himself; for as God had moved Peter to dedicate himself more especially to evangelize the Jews and they not lack the opportunity of salvation, He had also moved Paul to dedicate himself principally to the Gentiles, as they too were called to the Kingdom of God. On the 1st of January in the year 45, Paul, Barnabas and the others accompanying him left the Jerusalem Cenacle and headed for Antioch of Syria. Departing as well on following days for their different missions were Apostles Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Thaddeus, Simon and Matthias, as well as the other Council Fathers. Pope Peter, who was the last to start out on his journey, left Jerusalem for Antioch of Syria on the 15th of January in that year 45, so as to return, after a long

apostolic journey, to his Apostolic See at Rome. All returned to their missions greatly comforted by the Council's success, and by the motherly advice they had received from the Divine Mary; who, ever in the company of Her two sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, and of Apostle John, now stayed on in Jerusalem where, years later, Her Gentle Dormition and Assumption into Heaven would take place.

Chapter XII

Paul in Antioch of Syria. Peter's sojourn in Antioch of Syria. Paul publicly admonishes Peter in this city

1. On the 15th of January in that year 45, Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, Judas Barsabas and Silas, arrived in Antioch of Syria. On his arrival Paul summoned the different Christian communities of that region; who, when they learned that the Apostle of the Gentiles had come, sent their corresponding delegates to Antioch of Syria with the object of receiving the Council letter and each taking a copy to his respective community. Before Paul handed the letter over to them, he publicly read it out to those congregated there and brought them up to date with the other dispositions of the Council. Following the reading, the Holy Ghost, in the form of Tongues of Fire, visibly manifested Himself upon those gathered there. Moreover, as Judas Barsabas and Silas were prophets, they collaborated as well with their prophecies, to the consolation of many, consolidating them further in the Faith. Those who came as representatives of the different Christian communities remained for some time with Paul, who later sent them off in peace back to their respective communities. When Judas Barsabas and Silas had been in Antioch of Syria for some time, Paul gave both disciples leave to go in peace to Jerusalem. Whereas Judas Barsabas returned alone to Jerusalem, Silas thought it better to remain with Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Syria; and they, with many others, taught and preached the word of God.

2. On the 30th of January, Pope Peter accompanied by his retinue arrived in Antioch of Syria, where Paul, Barnabas and Silas were to be found. All the Christians of the city and nearby communities were highly delighted and consoled at the Pope's new visit, especially the faithful come from the Gentiles, owing to the consoling Letter of the Council, by which they were delivered from the prejudices that no few Christians of Jewish origin manifested against them. But their peace and happiness were soon perturbed by Peter's somewhat strange conduct. For though at the beginning he lived in company with all the faithful equally without distinction of race, gradually, dissembling, he began to withdraw from dealings with those of Gentile origin, increasing yet further his intimacy with those of Jewish origin; who sided with Peter's underhand behaviour, as did Barnabas, induced by them.

3. The reason for Peter's lamentable conduct was the following: some Christians come from judaism, principally from the pharisee sect, who lived together with James the Less in Jerusalem, though they had outwardly manifested their complacency at the Council's dispositions on Gentiles, inwardly did not really admit that Gentiles should be exempted from circumcision. Their blind obstinacy was such that they brought pressure to bear on James the Less to act with caution in dealing with Christians come from gentiledom, so as not to displease those of Jewish origin. They so influenced the Apostle that, while Pope Peter was in Antioch of Syria, James the Less sent to that city a commission made up of friars and lay faithful for that same purpose. Peter, in turn, instead of reacting resolutely, let himself be influenced by those unsound aims; so that he lessened his familiar dealings with Christians come from gentiledom and increased them with Christians of Jewish origin. This behaviour of Peter's sowed confusion in the minds of Christians come from gentiledom, seeing that as uncircumcised they were treated with less consideration than the rest, thereby feeling as though obliged to be circumcised. As Paul observed that Peter's discriminatory conduct was becoming ever more pronounced, though aware that Peter acted out of human respect and not in bad faith, he had no choice but to admonish him, which he did publicly on the 11th of February in that year 45, saying: *"If you, who are Jewish by birth, do not believe yourself bound by the observance of jewish law, and therefore think in the manner of a Gentile convert, and not as a jew, why by your bad example do you lead the Gentile converts to believe that they should observe jewish laws?"* Paul, then, reprimanded Peter's dissembling, since by his conduct he belied his interior convictions as Pope, violated the rights of part of the Church and put the Faith in danger. Though Peter's strange behaviour was deserving of reproach, however, it did not affect his papal infallibility, as he had no intention whatsoever of inducing anyone to error, rather he acted out of excessive condescension towards Christians of Jewish origin; and as was by now customary in him, realizing the harm he had done, he rectified immediately, publicly asking pardon with abundant tears. Barnabas and others who had gone along with the same faults did likewise.

Chapter XIII

Peter continues his apostolic journey. Great apostolate of Peter on his journey before arriving in Rome

Following the referred incident in which Paul admonished Peter, the Pope left Antioch of Syria for the north of Asia Minor on the 14th of February in the same year 45. Entering the territory of Cappadocia, today central Turkey, he remained there about four months. He then headed further north, traversing the maritime region of Pontus, beside the Black Sea, employing some three months in that task. He then preached the Gospel in the north of

Galatia, establishing the centre of his evangelization in the town of Ancyra (today Ankara). In the two months he remained in this region as in the other places, the seed of the Gospel was copiously scattered, Christianity proliferating greatly. From Ankara Peter headed for the province of Bithynia; here, though he established his residence in the city of Nicea, his longing to propagate Christianity moved him to traverse the whole province, visiting as well the towns of Nicomedia and Chalcedon. Following five months of apostolate in Bithynia, Peter travelled through the region of Asia Minor called Asia; preaching for some six months in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea and others, where many Christian communities existed, rich fruit of the apostolate of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and Apostle John during their stay in Ephesus. From the seaport of Ephesus he embarked for the Greek city of Corinth. After a short apostolate he continued his journey by ship to Syracuse in the isle of Sicily, and from there on to the Roman port of Ostia, arriving in Rome on the 18th of January in the year 47. Throughout this long journey, Pope Peter established new Christian communities, increased the numbers in those already existing, founded Carmelite cloisters of both branches and left Bishops and Priests to care for the flock. Once in Rome again, Pope Peter concerned himself with further consolidating the Christian communities existing there, so that during the six months he remained at the Apostolic See the number of faithful increased considerably.

Chapter XIV

Pope Peter's apostolic journey from Rome to the Iberian Peninsula. Pope Peter in Spain

On the 15th of August in the year 47, Pope Peter left Rome bound for the Iberian Peninsula, accompanied by several Bishops, among them Gerontius and Alexander, some Priests and others of his retinue. After embarking at the port of Ostia, he stopped for several days at the island of Sardinia, later continuing his journey across the Mediterranean. Once at the Straits of Gibraltar, he entered Spain by the river Guadalquivir, disembarking at the river port of the city of Seville on the 8th of September that same year 47, this city being the first of Spanish soil he trod. On his arrival this diocese was still ruled by Bishop Pius, converted by James the Greater. Pope Peter's labour, as much in Seville as in other Andalusian towns and in a great part of the rest of Spain and Portugal, was unceasing; since during his stay of a little over a year in the Iberian Peninsula, he visited the cities evangelized by James the Greater where Christian communities existed, and many others as well, consolidating yet further the labour accomplished previously by this Apostle. In many of the cities through which Peter passed, he consecrated Bishops and ordained Priests, in order to leave abundant shepherds to tend the flock. During his long journey through Spain, Pope Peter was often visited by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, without Her thereby ceasing to be in

Jerusalem at the same time. In the course of his long journey throughout the Iberian Peninsula, Peter prayed on several occasions before the image of the Virgin of the Pillar in Zaragoza. By express desire of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Peter brought with him from the Jerusalem Cenacle an image of Her sculpted by the disciple Luke. This image of the Virgin Mary was at that time placed for veneration by the Pope himself in an already existing chapel in the city of Barcelona, and some time later was to be conveyed to the mountain of Montserrat, there to be venerated under the title of Our Lady of Montserrat. Before leaving Spain, Peter assigned Bishop Gerontius, who had been born precisely in the town of Itálica near Seville, to the diocese of Itálica. Furthermore, Peter assigned Bishop Alexander, of the black race, eldest son of Simon the Cyrenian, to the diocese of Écija, in the province of Seville. Gerontius and Alexander, who had come with him and had accompanied him on the journey throughout Spain, were the first Bishops of their respective dioceses. Years later Gerontius was to die a martyr in Itálica and Alexander was to die a martyr in Rome.

Chapter XV

From Spain Pope Peter returns to Rome. Apostolic journey of Peter from Rome bound for Jerusalem.

Peter's intense apostolate in the African and Asian continents. Peter in Jerusalem

On the 15th of September in the year 48, Pope Peter embarked at the port of Barcelona for Rome, and after a brief stopover on the island of Corsica continued the journey to the port of Ostia, arriving in Rome on the 25th of the same month and year. He remained at the Apostolic See of Rome till the beginning of the year 49, when Emperor Claudius expelled all the city's Jewish residents, who dispersed inside and outside the empire. As there were many Christians of Jewish origin among those expelled, the majority of whom had fled to the north of Africa, Peter, finding himself obliged to leave as well, took advantage of the occasion to visit different towns of the African continent such as, among others, Carthage and Hippo in present-day Tunisia, and Cyrene in Libya. On his travels he arrived in Egypt where, now in the company of Apostle Simon, he also visited the cities of Alexandria and Heliopolis (today Cairo). Afterwards Peter journeyed to Ethiopia, where he met up with Apostle Matthew and John, by then a Bishop, known as the Ethiopian eunuch. Next he visited Apostle Matthias, who was evangelizing Saudi Arabia, and later in Mesopotamia met up with Apostle Thaddeus. Throughout this journey Peter further consolidated the different dioceses, Christianity proliferating greatly. As he ardently desired to visit the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Peter set out for Jerusalem, arriving on the 25th of December in the year 55. Here She announced to him that Her admirable Assumption into Heaven was soon to occur, so that She entreated him not to return to Rome until after this event, which took place in the year 57. Peter,

therefore, though he could have returned earlier to the Apostolic See, since in the year 56 Nero allowed Jews to return to Rome, did not do so. He made use of this time to visit the Christian communities in Israel, in Antioch and in other places of Syria, as was the desire of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, taking with him Bishop Ignatius, consecrated by him, who as a child had been placed by Christ as model for entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Ignatius succeeded Bishop Evodius in the diocese of Antioch of Syria. After his great apostolate, Peter returned to Jerusalem on the 30th of June in the year 57. At his arrival, the Divine Mary announced to him that he should begin preparations for the third and last Council of Jerusalem, which should take place after Her glorious Assumption into Heaven, and in which important doctrinal matters were to be defined. In all his journeys Peter was always accompanied by his papal retinue.

Chapter XVI

Paul's apostolic mission continues. Paul and Barnabas separate. Paul's fresh journey through Asia Minor.

Conversions and cures through Paul's ministry. Paul and Silas are scourged, imprisoned and released

1. On the 25th of February in the year 45, eleven days having elapsed since Pope Peter's departure for Rome, Paul said to Barnabas: "*Let us go back and visit the brethren in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing*"; since it was the Apostle of the Gentiles' desire to visit again the cities of Asia Minor recently evangelized by him, and others as well. Apostle Barnabas wished to bring along as well his nephew Mark, now a Bishop, on this long journey. To this Paul objected, telling Barnabas that since in the previous journey Mark had parted company with the two in Pamphylia to leave for Jerusalem, and therefore had not accompanied them on the mission they then had to fulfil, it was not proper that he be allowed to accompany them on this new journey. Paul's refusal brought upon him Barnabas's indignation, the two engaging in a heated argument and even coming to blows. Still, when tempers had calmed down through mutual pardon, Barnabas, taking Mark, left with him for Cyprus. As companion for his journey Paul then chose Bishop Silas, whom he named Apostle by divine inspiration, and who was his principal collaborator. He also took Bishop Luke with him as secretary, setting out on his journey after the Christian community in Antioch of Syria had asked God to assist them in their mission.

2. During the long journey Paul consolidated the Christian communities in the Faith of Christ, enjoining them to observe the dispositions of Jerusalem Council II agreed upon by the Apostles and Bishops gathered there under the authority and approbation of Pope Peter. Apostle Paul and his companions, after visiting other communities in Syria, went to Tarsus of Cilicia, his home town. On the 25th of January in the year 46, the Apostle departed from

Cilicia for the region of Lycaonia, preaching chiefly in the towns of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. In Lystra Paul visited Timothy, converted to Christianity some time previously. Owing to the good testimony the faithful gave of this convert youth, Paul decided to take Timothy with him. Shortly before leaving, however, Paul conferred on Timothy the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate. He then circumcised him, to condescend to some Christians of Jewish origin in those places, and so as not to have difficulties with unconverted Jews, because all knew that Timothy's father was a Gentile. Paul's conduct in circumcising Timothy is altogether reproachable, since he gave scandal by his action, putting the Faith of Christ in danger by going against the spirit of the dispositions of the Second Jerusalem Council, the observance of which he had so enjoyed.

3. On the 16th of May in the year 46, Paul, accompanied by Silas, Luke and Timothy, left Lystra and headed towards the north of Asia Minor, traversing part of the territories of Phrygia and Galatia, in which he accomplished a great apostolate. Though his intention was afterwards to enter the region of Asia, he was forbidden, by revelation, to preach the Gospel there; since the divine plan was that this last region now be visited by Peter on his aforementioned journey. So, unable to go to Asia, on the 21st of November in the year 46, the Apostle of the Gentiles decided to go on to Bithynia; so that, turning north, with his companions he crossed the eastern part of Mysia territory beside the Sea of Marmara; but in Mysia the Holy Ghost forbade him to go to Bithynia, because Peter, who had been there months before, had already organized that region of Asia Minor. Paul, then, remained in Mysia preaching the word of God until he reached Troas, near ancient Troy. In Troas, Paul at night saw in vision that a man from Macedonia stood before him, beseeching him saying: "*Come to Macedonia and help us.*" This man was the guardian angel of the region, who appeared to Paul in a dream, disclosing to him that he should go there to evangelize. After having the vision, Paul and the others prepared to leave for Macedonia, with the assurance that God had summoned them there to preach the Gospel to those peoples. To reach Macedonia, on the 17th of July in the year 47, Apostle Paul and his companions embarked at the port of Troas for the island of Samothrace, and from there arrived in Macedonia by sea. Then disembarking in Neapolis, today the Greek town called Kavalla, they continued the journey by land to Philippi, a Roman colony and principal city of that region of Macedonia.

4. In this city of Philippi they stayed some time preaching the Gospel, especially to the Gentiles. On the first Saturday, however, with the object of preaching as well to the Jews, Paul and his companions went outside the city gates, beside the river, where the Jews assembled to pray, as there was no synagogue in the city of Philippi; and having sat down there, Paul preached

the Gospel to the women who had gathered to pray. Among them was a woman called Lydia, from the town of Thyatira, dedicated to the commerce of purple cloth, who, though of Gentile origin, was Jewish by faith and very God-fearing. While Lydia was listening uprightly to Paul's words, the Lord enlightened her to accept the Gospel Faith in her heart. She and her family having been baptized that same day, Lydia said to Paul and his three companions: *"If you truly consider me as a faithful of the Lord Jesus, come and stay at my home."* She pleaded so much that they agreed.

5. The following Saturday, when Paul and the others went to the place where the Jews assembled to pray, with the aim of preaching to them, there came out to meet them a young possessed girl, a fortune-teller by the art of Satan, who provided great gains for her masters by her diabolical arts. The demon, astutely divining that Paul would cast him out of the girl, tried to avoid this by flattering him, and thus continue to do evil through her. Consequently he impelled the girl to follow Paul and his companions, while the malign one cried out through her lips: *"These men are servants of the Most High God and announce the way of salvation"*; continuing to do this for several days. At last Paul, unable to endure this any longer, turned to her and said to the unclean spirit: *"In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to depart from this girl"*; and at that moment he departed. Because of this miracle the girl was converted to the Faith of Christ and baptized by Apostle Paul. But when her masters saw that they would now receive no further gains through the girl's fortune-telling wiles, they seized Paul and Silas and brought them to trial before the city chiefs; and presenting them to the Roman magistrates, said: *"These men are Jews, and they stir up our city preaching rites and customs that are not licit for us to observe, being as we are Romans."* Satan made use of the girl's masters to stir up a violent persecution against Paul and the others, with the aim that the Gospel might not be preached. Instigated by the masters of the ex-possessed girl, a great mob gathered against Paul and Silas; and the magistrates ordered that their tunics be rent and that they be beaten with rods. After having given them many strokes they put them in prison, cautioning the jailer to guard them well. The jailer, on receiving the prisoners, put them in an unoccupied dungeon, fastening their feet well in the stocks. At midnight, however, when Paul and Silas were at prayer praising God, the other prisoners listening, suddenly there occurred an earthquake so great that the prison foundations were shaken; and immediately all the doors of the dungeons opened, and the fetters that secured Paul's and Silas's feet to the stocks fell off. The rest of the prisoners, who were in the other cells, were unaware of the prodigious event, as God had immersed them in a deep sleep. The jailer, awakened by the earthquake, saw that the doors of the prison were open; consequently, filled with dread, he drew his sword with the intention of killing himself, believing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out loud, saying:

“Do no harm to yourself, because we are all here.” The jailer, then, moved by grace, understood interiorly that the earthquake and its prodigious consequences had been caused by virtue of the infinite power of the Lord Jesus whom Paul and his companions had proclaimed throughout the city; accordingly, seizing a torch, he entered the dungeon and threw himself trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas. Then taking them outside, he said: *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* Paul said to him: *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved.”* The jailer, at that same hour of night, taking Paul and Silas with him, brought them into the main room of his house, which was in the same building as the prison, and cleansed their wounds. Paul, after teaching the evangelical doctrine to him and his household, baptized them all. Next the jailer, having brought Paul and Silas to his room, served them supper, all the family rejoicing for having believed in the Lord Jesus. Apostle Paul, inspired by God, considered it most advisable to return to prison with Silas that very night, with the aim of avoiding the serious harm the magistrates might do to the jailer. Besides, the Apostle had confidence that the Lord Jesus would obtain their freedom. While both were in prison the ex-possessed girl convert, along with other converts, went before the magistrates of the city to refute the false accusations her masters had brought against Paul and his companions, and to tell the magistrates as well that the great earthquake that had shaken the prison and other buildings in the city had occurred because of the injustice they had committed against those innocent men. This testimony in favour of Paul and his companions, and the obvious signs of the miraculous cure of the girl, caused the magistrates to change their mind. Hence, when it was day they sent bailiffs to tell the jailer: *“Let those men go free.”* The jailer informed Paul of this, saying: *“The magistrates have given the order that you be set at liberty. Therefore, leave the prison now and go in peace.”* But Paul said to the bailiffs: *“What? After having publicly scourged us without trial and put us in prison, we being Roman citizens, they now want to free us privately? It shall not be! Let them come and free us themselves.”* The bailiffs relayed this reply to the magistrates who, hearing that Paul and Silas were Romans, were filled with dread; and so, going to the prison, they asked pardon of Paul and Silas; and then, drawing them out of prison, they entreated them to leave the city. Once out of prison, Paul and Silas entered Lydia’s home, where Luke and Timothy were, whom they consoled, Paul then departing with the other three.

Chapter XVII

Paul’s apostolate in Thessalonica. Paul’s apostolate in Athens. Conversion of Denis the Areopagite

1. After Paul and Silas had been freed from prison in Philippi, both left the city with Luke and Timothy on the 20th of May in the year 48; and, first

passing through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia, arrived at the Greek city of Thessalonica, and resided in the house of Jason, a disciple of Christ, who as Bishop ruled the diocese of the city.

2. In Thessalonica there was a synagogue where Paul entered on three consecutive Saturdays to preach the Gospel to the Jews, with whom the Apostle disputed on Scripture, demonstrating to them and making them see through Scripture that it had been necessary that the Messiah should suffer and rise from the dead, and that this Messiah was Jesus Christ, whom he announced. Some of them, along with a great multitude of Greek proselytes to judaism, and of Gentiles and of distinguished women, who had assembled to hear the Gospel, were converted to the Faith of Christ, joining Paul and Silas.

3. But the other jews who remained obstinate, moved by envy, took with them some villains from the populace; and having gathered together a sizable number of them, instigated the other inhabitants of the city to stir up trouble for the two Apostles. Believing them to be at Bishop Jason's home, they besieged it with the object of seizing them there and then, and presenting them to the magistrates to be judged before the people. Not finding them, however, they violently dragged Jason and some of his disciples before the city magistrates, falsely crying out against Paul and Silas: *"They are the ones who have thrown the city into turmoil. On arriving here they were taken by Jason into his home. All act against Caesar's decrees, saying there is another king, who is Jesus."* Hearing these things, the magistrates and the numerous crowd gathered there started an uproar. But Jason and those with him, by means of bail, arranged to have themselves set at liberty, and as well that no harm be done to Paul and Silas; who, with Luke and Timothy, were concealed at the home of one of the Christian faithful of Thessalonica. At the news of what had occurred, they left the city at night for Berea, on the 15th of October in the year 48.

4. When Paul and Silas were in the town of Berea, they entered the synagogue to preach the Gospel to the Jews. These Jews, better disposed than those of Thessalonica, received the word of God with deep interest, daily consulting the Scriptures to verify that the prophecies relating to what Paul taught them had been fulfilled. Whereupon many of those Jews were converted to the Faith of Christ. From the Gentiles too a large number of honourable women and no few men were converted.

5. Paul's fruitful apostolate in Berea was perturbed by the jews from the nearby city of Thessalonica who, when they learned that Paul was preaching the Gospel in Berea as well, came to this town with the aim of stirring up the people to riot. So those of the Christian community there advised Paul to leave the town and head towards the sea. This the Apostle did on the 21st of December in the year 48, accompanied by Luke, leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea to assist the faithful until he should ordain them to go and join him.

Some of the faithful of the community there accompanied Paul and Luke as far as the city of Athens, subsequently returning to Berea with the commission of telling Silas and Timothy to go and join Paul as soon as possible, after visiting the faithful in Thessalonica.

6. While Paul awaited them in Athens, his spirit was interiorly consumed for the salvation of souls, seeing that city utterly given over to idolatry. Moved by holy zeal for Christ's cause, Paul carried out a great apostolate in the city of Athens; for on Saturdays he announced the Gospel and disputed with the Jews and Jewish proselytes in the synagogues; and every day he preached in the plaza to the Gentiles. Several of the epicurean and stoic philosophers also disputed with Paul, some saying: "*What is this trickster spreading around?*" As the Apostle spoke to them of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, others said: "*He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods.*" And some of the pagan philosophers invited Paul to preach from the rostrum of the Areopagus, whence members of the Senate and other illustrious persons generally spoke. On the 6th of January in the year 49, Paul mounted the rostrum of the Areopagus to preach. Before commencing, some said to him: "*May we know once and for all what this new doctrine is that you preach? For we have heard you say things we have never heard before; and so we want to know what you mean by all these things you say.*" Paul, then, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said: "*Citizens of Athens: I see that you are exceedingly meticulous in religious questions; because, passing by, looking at the statues of your gods, I saw as well an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown God'. Well then, that God whom you adore without knowing Him is the one I announce to you, the God who made the world and all things in it; the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, infinitely immense and omnipotent, who needs nothing from men since it is He who gives to each life and breath, and conserves all things; the God who created the first couple, man and woman, from whom the entire human race proceeds and inhabits the vast extension of the earth; He who determined the seasons of weather and the limits of the universe. He who is reflected in all creatures, and they give proof their Creator exists; so that knowledge of His existence can be arrived at through them. This Eternal and True God is not far from each of us, because by Him we live, move and have our being. In the natural order itself we are of the lineage of God the Creator, in that we proceed from Him. If we, by the fact of being human creatures, are thereby God's lineage, we ought not to think of the Godhead as being like gold, or silver, or stone, shaped by man's art or industry. And as God wills that men ignorant of true doctrine be drawn out of the error in which they live, be converted to the true Faith and be saved, for this reason I announce to you the Gospel of salvation, so that you be converted to the Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah sent by the Eternal and True God, and do penance for your sins; since in the divine plan the day is established on which that Lord Jesus will*

judge all with rectitude; having given proof that He is God Himself by rising from the dead by virtue of His own power.” When they heard the resurrection of the dead mentioned, some ridiculed Paul and others were interested in the matter, saying: *“We hope to hear you again on this matter at another time.”* Paul, then, in his sermon in the Areopagus, condemned idolatry, so entrenched and widespread in Athens, exhorting all to accept the evangelical truth and repent of their errors.

7. His sermon ended, Paul left that throng of people, and some believed and joined him, among whom were Denis the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. Denis the Areopagite, Damaris and all the other converts were baptized by Apostle Paul that same day, 6th of January in the year 49. Before Paul left Athens he conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on Denis the Areopagite, leaving him in charge of the fledgling Christian community there. Denis was afterwards to accompany Paul on many of his journeys. Years later Pope Clement I sent Denis to Paris, France, as the city’s first Bishop. There, when very old, he suffered martyrdom for Christ.

8. With holy astuteness Paul had the custom of making use of any wholesome circumstance to propagate the truth, as was the case of the altar *“to the unknown God,”* erected by the pagans in one of the temples in Athens, and which the Apostle cleverly took to have been erected to the true God, He being unknown to that audience listening to him.

Chapter XVIII

Paul’s apostolate in Corinth

1. On the 23rd of March in the year 49, Paul, accompanied by Luke and others, left Athens heading for Corinth, arriving there two days later, that is on the 25th of the same month, lodging at the home of the Christians Aquila and his wife Priscilla, of Jewish origin, who had recently come from Rome after the decree of expulsion of Jews by Emperor Claudius. During Paul’s stay at the home of this couple, he helped them in the trade of tent maker; so that the Apostle succeeded in alternating this work with the great apostolate carried out in the synagogues of Corinth, as much to Jews by race as to Greek proselytes of judaism, with great fruits of conversion.

2. On the 15th of April in the year 49, Silas and Timothy, who had stayed behind in the Macedonian town of Berea, went to Corinth to rejoin Paul and Luke. With the arrival of Silas and Timothy the Apostle’s evangelizing mission became much more intense, counting on the collaboration of those two. Paul, in his sermons in city synagogues, ardently gave testimony to the jews that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. As this went against no few hardhearted jews, one day when Paul was in one of the synagogues, their opposition was such that they burst out into blasphemies against Paul’s teachings. But he, shaking out his garments, said to them: *“May the Blood*

of Christ recoil upon your heads stained by your deicide blood"; thereby recriminating in those perverse jews their inflexible pertinacity as deicides, as long as they did not accept Jesus Christ, whom they had put to death. And on their retorting to Paul that, as the Jew he was, the same accusations he made against them would recoil upon his own head too, the Apostle said to them: *"I am already cleansed. And from now on I will dedicate myself more especially to the Gentiles of Corinth"*; and Paul at once abandoned the synagogue. While it is true that Paul too had previously belonged to the deicide people, later, by being converted to Christianity, and passing over to form part of the People of God through Baptism, he was cleansed of the infamous deicide condition; so that his blood was now purified by the Blood of Christ, while their blood, being accursed, called down upon their own heads the Saviour's Deific Blood for their greater damnation, as long as they remained unconverted.

3. When Paul left the synagogue he entered the home of a God-fearing proselyte to judaism called Titus the Just, whose house stood beside the synagogue. With him at the time was one of the archisynagogues, Crispus by name, with his family. All, on listening to the words of the Apostle, were converted to the Gospel Faith and baptized that same day. Following the previous dispute with the jews in the synagogue, Paul dedicated himself almost exclusively to preaching to the Gentiles of Corinth, without entering any of the town synagogues again. Many of the Corinthian Gentiles, hearing Paul, believed and were baptized. Among them were Caius and the Stephanas family.

4. The numerous conversions gained by Paul in his intense apostolate in Corinth so exasperated the perfidious jews of the city that they schemed up a whole series of affronts and persecutions against the Apostle, to the extent that Paul decided to leave the city. On the 25th of April in the year 49, however, when he was about to leave Corinth for fear of the jews, Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream and said: *"Paul, do not fear, rather speak up and do not be silent, because there are many people to evangelize in this city. I am with you and nobody will dare to harm you."* Christ, then, commanded Paul to preach fearlessly to the Gentile people of Corinth, since many would listen to him and be converted. So Paul remained there one year and six months teaching the word of God.

5. Following the vision of the Lord, Apostle Paul threw himself into preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles with yet greater ardour. But the jews, unable to endure the fruitful labour of the Apostle, plotted a conspiracy against him. Galion was Roman proconsul of that region of Achaia, and the jews, availing themselves of his presence in Corinth, by mutual agreement pounced on Paul, seized him and brought him to the Roman proconsul's tribunal, saying against the Apostle: *"He persuades the people to render God a worship contrary to the Law of Moses."* When Paul was about to speak in

his defence, Galion said to the jews: *“O jews! If in truth you were dealing with some injustice or some enormous crime you would have reason enough for me to hear you; but dealing with questions of doctrine, of names and matters of your law, that is for you to decide, as I do not wish to be judge in such matters”*; and he ordered them all to leave the tribunal immediately. The jews’ malice against Paul was such, however, that the archisynagogue, Sostenes by name, refused to leave, so that he had to be beaten by the tribunal guards, as he insisted that Paul be judged, without Galion taking any notice of him. This Roman proconsul, previously named Marcus Anneus Novatus, was the philosopher Lucius Anneus Seneca’s brother, both sons of the rhetorician Marcus Anneus Seneca, all three born in Cordoba, Spain. That he bore the name of Galion resulted from his being adopted as son by Julius Galion, a great friend of his father, after his father’s death.

Chapter XIX

Paul’s apostolate in Ephesus. Paul’s stay in Jerusalem in the company of the Divine Mary. Paul’s fresh apostolate in Antioch of Syria, Galatia and Phrygia

1. After this last persecution, Paul remained in Corinth until the 25th of October in the year 50, day on which he took his leave of the Christian community there, afterwards embarking at the Corinthian port of Cenchreae, in the company of Silas, Timothy, Luke and others, among whom were Aquila and his wife Priscilla. Before they embarked, however, Aquila was ordered by Paul to cut off the long hair he wore because of a Nazarite vow he had taken, all the obligations of this vow thereby ceasing. From Cenchreae, Paul and his companions sailed for the port of Ephesus, where they arrived after a six-day sea crossing, on the 31st of October that same year.

2. When in Ephesus Paul entered the synagogue of the city to preach the Gospel to the jews, and also examined with them those things foretold in Scripture concerning the promised Saviour, the Messiah announced by the Apostle in his sermons. Some of the Jews were converted to the Faith of Christ, and many others entreated Paul to remain longer with them; and while he did not accede to their wishes, since he had to go and preach in other parts, he promised that he would return again if such were the will of God. In Ephesus Paul also accomplished a great apostolate among the considerable Christian communities; as likewise among the Gentiles of the city and its environs, with great fruits of conversion.

3. On the 30th of March in the year 51, leaving Aquila and his wife Priscilla in the city of Ephesus, Paul, with Silas, Timothy and Luke, left for Caesarea Maritime, disembarking in this city on the 15th of April in that year 51. After a brief visit to the Christian communities of Caesarea Maritime, Paul and his three companions went on to Jerusalem, where after five days travelling they arrived on the 20th of the same month and year. The principal reason for

Paul's wish to pass through Jerusalem was to visit the Most Holy Virgin Mary who, as we know, was there with Her two sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, and Apostle John; and also to discuss some matters with James the Less, as well as to venerate the holy places sanctified by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. During the fifteen days Paul stayed in Jerusalem, he was greatly comforted by the wise counsel of the Heavenly Mother, who directed him to continue his apostolate. Thereupon, on the 5th of May in the year 51, leaving Silas in Jerusalem, Paul left for Antioch of Syria with Timothy and Luke; journey he made visiting the Christian communities along the way. Paul arrived at Antioch of Syria on the 7th of June in the same year 51, and remained there until the 8th of August; on which day, accompanied by Luke, Timothy, and also Titus, who was in Antioch, and others as well, he left to visit the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, accomplishing a great apostolate among the Christian communities, who felt deeply fortified by the Apostle's visit. This Titus was the one converted by Paul in Antioch of Pisidia, and who had accompanied him to Jerusalem Council II; and not, therefore, Titus the Just, converted by Paul in Corinth.

Chapter XX

Apollo the Jew receives baptism. Apollo's apostolate in Ephesus and Corinth

While Paul was accomplishing his apostolic journey through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, there arrived in the city of Ephesus a Jew named Apollo, well versed in Sacred Scripture, who at the time of John, Christ's Precursor, had received the baptism of penance. Subsequently he lived far from Jerusalem and taught in the synagogues what he knew about Jesus the Messiah. As Aquila and his wife Priscilla were in Ephesus, on learning of Apollo's good mission, they brought him with them to the Bishop of that region, who gave Apollo a more detailed instruction in evangelical doctrine and baptized him. Apollo, then, feeling exceedingly strengthened by Grace, determined to go to the territory of Corinth, which pertained to the region of Achaia. He was received there by the Christian communities and accomplished a great apostolate among the Jews, since with great earnestness he convinced them in public, showing them through the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Some time afterwards Paul conferred the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on Apollo.

Chapter XXI

Paul's fresh apostolate in Bithynia, Mysia, Asia and Ephesus. Miracles and other prodigies performed during his sojourn in Ephesus

1. Apostle Paul, after realizing a great mission in the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia, also passed through those of Bithynia, Mysia and Asia, finally reaching Ephesus on the 17th of October in the year 52, accompanied by

Luke, Timothy and Titus. In this city he found twelve men who were followers of the Precursor John the Baptist and friends of the recently converted Apollo who was in Corinth. Since the twelve men told Paul that they had accepted the Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ, he asked them: *“After having accepted the Faith, have you received the Holy Ghost?”* They replied: *“We don’t know whether we have received Him or not.”* Paul asked them: *“Well, with which baptism were you baptized?”* They replied: *“With the baptism of John.”* Paul said: *“John baptized the people with the baptism of penance saying that they should believe in Him who was to come after John, that is, in Jesus; and that baptism did not confer the Holy Ghost.”* Hearing these things, the men besought Paul to administer to them the Sacrament of Baptism instituted by Christ. Paul instructed them in the truths of the Gospel Faith and then baptized them; and then administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to them. It came to pass that, on administering this Sacrament to them, the Holy Ghost in visible form descended upon them, and they spoke several tongues and prophesied.

2. Apostle Paul, during the three months he remained in Ephesus, entered the synagogues, valiantly preached the Gospel to the Jews and disputed with them on the prophecies in Sacred Scripture concerning Jesus, convincing many that the Kingdom of God had arrived. But as some of them, owing to their hardness of heart, did not believe, but furthermore blasphemed against the Lord’s doctrine in the presence of those listening, Paul from then on ceased to preach in the synagogues and the public squares of Ephesus, seeing that no few Jews hindered his labour; which he carried out by privately instructing those Jews and Gentiles who listened to his teaching with respectful interest in the school of a certain personage named Tiranus, recently converted to Christianity, on whose premises troublemakers were not admitted. The Apostle’s teaching labour for two years in that school of Ephesus became so prestigious that it was attended by many from the province of Asia who came to the city, Jews as well as Gentiles, though chiefly the latter, given the massive pagan pilgrimages they made to the temple of Diana; since at the time this temple, demolished years previously at the Most Holy Virgin Mary’s visit, had been rebuilt following Her departure from Ephesus, idolatrous worship being restored.

3. God, through Paul, worked great signs and miracles, in such fashion that including the belts, handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched his body were applied to the sick, healing them of their illnesses, and expelling as well evil spirits from the possessed. It came to pass that, observing the prodigies Paul worked in the Name of Jesus Christ, seven exorcists, sons of a Jewish chief priest called Sceva, and who went from one place to another, entering the house of a possessed man, dared to invoke the Name of the Lord Jesus over the evil spirits in his body, saying: *“We adjure you through Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to leave that body.”* But one of the evil spirits replied in the

name of the rest, saying: “*I know Jesus, and I know who Paul is. But who are you and what power do you have to adjure us in the Name of Jesus as Paul does?*” Then the possessed man, leaping upon the seven exorcists seized two of them, maltreating them so badly that naked and bleeding they fled the house. Paul’s preaching, the miracles God worked through him and the strange affair of the presumptuous Jewish exorcists maltreated by the possessed man, caused the Jews and Gentiles to fear greatly, with abundant fruits of conversion, the Name of the Lord Jesus being exalted. Many of the new Christians converted by Paul in Ephesus brought their books on witchcraft to be burned in the Apostle’s presence; others too confessed and denounced all the evil they had done. In this way the Word of God was strengthened and consolidated. To help Paul in the great apostolate, the disciples Aristarchus and Caius came from Macedonia to Ephesus, since they had received news of Paul’s sojourn in that city.

Chapter XXII

Paul, moved by the Holy Ghost, resolves to go to Jerusalem, and afterwards on to Rome.

Paul’s apostolate in different places

of Asia province. Paul returns to Ephesus to begin his projected journey from this port. Riot against Paul in Ephesus

1. Once Paul had obtained abundant fruits in Ephesus by his apostolate, the Holy Ghost ordered him to go to Jerusalem, passing first through Macedonia and Achaia; and then, from Jerusalem, to go to Rome. Whereupon Paul told his disciples: “*After Jerusalem, it is necessary that I go to Rome.*” Before undertaking the apostolic journey, Paul dispatched disciples Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia to prepare his visit, while he for the time being continued to preach in some parts of Asia province, which he did accompanied by Luke, Aristarchus and Caius. Aristarchus was now Bishop of Thessalonica and Caius his assistant Priest; both were assigned to Macedonia, though not natives of this region.

2. Apostle Paul, after his apostolate in other parts of Asia province, returned to Ephesus with Luke, Aristarchus and Caius, in order to make the proposed journey.

3. When Paul was back in Ephesus a great riot flared up owing to the doctrine he had taught. This was one of the most formidable combats against the Apostle and his companions. The promoter of it all was a goldsmith named Demetrius, who made miniature reproductions of the temple of Diana and sold them as amulets, at no small profit. Given that the month of May was dedicated to the great solemnities of the idol’s worship, and as Demetrius saw that, despite the influx of pilgrims to Ephesus on the occasion of these pagan feasts, his business was falling off owing to the intense apostolate carried out by Paul against idolatry, on the 17th of May in the year 55, he called together others engaged in similar work and said to them:

“Gentlemen, you well know the profits we make in our trade. And you can see and hear how this Paul, not only in Ephesus, but in almost the whole of Asia too, by his preaching has changed the beliefs of many people, saying: ‘Gods are not made by human hands’. So that not only is our profession in danger of being discredited but, what is worse, the temple of the great Diana will lose its good reputation, and the majesty of the goddess, whom all Asia and the entire world adore, will fall to the ground.”

4. When the people heard this many became enraged and that same day rose up against Paul, and including against the Jews themselves, opposed to idolatry, saying: *“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”* The whole city was filled with confusion. Such were the proportions of the riot that they seized Aristarchus and Caius, Paul’s companions, and rushed them headlong to the theatre with the object of having them publicly judged, though their rage was chiefly against Paul. When the Apostle learned what had befallen his two companions, he tried to leave his house and present himself in the midst of the people to try and calm them down, but the disciples prevented this for fear that the same might happen to him. Some of the Asiarchs or high Roman officials in Ephesus, who were friends of Paul, sent him word not to present himself in the theatre. The uproar increased ever more, and the confusion was such that some shouted one thing and others another, and many did not even know why they had gathered. The Jews, fearing for themselves, impelled archisynagogue Alexander to convince the idolatrous throng that Paul was to blame for everything, and that the Jews therefore, besides not having prejudiced worship to Diana in any way, thoroughly disowned Paul and the other Christians. Alexander, facing the enraged throng, made signs with his hands that he wished to speak to all. But when they learned that Alexander was a Jew, blinded by their idolatrous fanaticism, they did not even let him open his mouth, since all shouted as one man for almost two hours: *“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”*

5. The uprising in Ephesus ended thanks to the intervention of the leading Roman civil official in the city; who arrived at the theatre with a cohort of Roman soldiers, ordering some of them to lead Aristarchus and Caius away owing to the risk they ran of being slain by the mob. Then this Roman official, with the greatest shrewdness, appeased the idolatrous throng, extolling the greatness of Diana in these words: *“Men of Ephesus, who among you does not know that the city of Ephesus is dedicated to worship of the great Diana, daughter of Jupiter? This being so certain that it cannot be denied by anyone, it is essential that you calm down and do not proceed without reflection.”* Then he pleaded in favour of the prisoners Aristarchus and Caius, saying further: *“These men you have brought here are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers against your goddess”*; this he said because both, in their sermons, though they combated idolatry, were careful not to mention Diana. Finally he said that if Demetrius and the craftsmen

accompanying him, promoters of the tumult, had any legitimate claim against someone, they should have recourse to the tribunals and the proconsuls, and present their accusations and demands peacefully; but never resort to public rioting, because they could be accused of sedition before the Roman emperor, without being able to adduce a reasonable cause to justify the disturbance. With these and other considerations, the tumult ceased and the crowd dispersed.

Chapter XXIII

Paul's apostolate in Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Achaia and Troas. Paul resuscitates Eutychus.

Apostolate in Miletus and moving farewell sermon

1. On the 17th of May in that year 55, after the tumult had ceased Paul, summoning the foremost disciples of the Christian community in Ephesus exhorted them to remain steadfast in the Faith; and after taking his leave departed for Macedonia accompanied by Luke, Aristarchus and Caius, region which he toured preaching the Gospel. Afterwards, accompanied as well by Timothy, Secundus, Sopater, Tichicus and Trophimus, he announced the Gospel in a great part of Yugoslavia and Albania, with abundant fruits of conversion. Paul and the eight disciples then proceeded to the region of Achaia, where for three months he carried out a great apostolate. When he was about to embark at the Corinthian port of Cenchreae for Seleucia of Syria, he was forced to give up the journey because the Jews had laid plans to kill him; accordingly, he returned to Macedonia with the eight disciples accompanying him. When they arrived there Paul, accompanied by Luke, remained in this province to preach the Gospel and consolidate the Christian communities, sending the other seven to the town of Troas in the province of Mysia, to stay there until he arrived with Luke.

2. When Paul had concluded his apostolate in the province of Macedonia, he went to the Macedonian port of Philippi, visited the Christian community he had previously formed in the city, and on the 13th of April in the year 57, with Luke, embarked for the Turkish town of Troas, arriving on the 18th of April. The other seven companions who had gone on ahead were awaiting Paul in Troas, where he stayed for seven days. On Sunday the 25th of April in the year 57, Paul finding himself in Troas, many Christian faithful assembled to assist at Holy Mass celebrated by the Apostle and hear his sermon. Paul, who had to leave the following day, prolonged his sermon until midnight. In the hall or cenacle where all were assembled there was good lighting. And it chanced that while Paul continued his lengthy discourse, a youth named Eutychus, who was seated at a window, began to feel very drowsy; and finally, overcome by sleep, fell from the third floor down to the ground, where they found him dead. Paul, however, having gone down, said: "*Don't be troubled, his soul is in him*"; and then, bending over the youth,

took him by the shoulders and raised him up alive. The youth having risen from the dead, Paul went up with him to the floor where the others were waiting and presented him to all, whereupon they were exceedingly consoled. The resurrection had taken place when still Sunday the 25th of April. After midnight, the Apostle celebrated the Holy Mass then proper to Monday the 26th of April; and after taking some food and continuing to talk to them until daybreak, he left the house with his eight disciples for the port of Assos, quite close to the town of Troas.

3. That same Monday the 26th of April, Paul and his eight companions embarked at the port of Assos bound for the town of Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, arriving on the 27th of April. The following day, 28th of April, Paul and his group left by ship, heading further south, circumnavigating the island of Chios, now Khios, reaching the island of Samos on the 29th of April, whence they crossed to Miletus, province of Caria, where they arrived on the 30th of April in the same year 57. The reason why Paul speeded up the journey was that he had resolved not to stop over in Ephesus nor delay in any other place of that region called Asia, since he desired to be in Jerusalem on the day of Jewish Pentecost to give valiant testimony to Christ amid the multitude of Jews congregated in the temple of Jerusalem for the Mosaic feast; so, had Paul entered Ephesus, the delay would have been greater owing to the numerous Christians who demanded his presence there; not to mention the risk of imprisonment by the pagans, from whom he had been forced to flee during his previous stay. All that would possibly have prevented his being in Jerusalem on the day planned. Paul, however, desiring a meeting with the Bishops and Priests in charge of the Ephesus communities, from Miletus sent them messengers telling them to come to him.

4. On the 2nd of May in the year 57, when the Bishops and Priests of Ephesus had arrived, Paul gathered them at the cenacle in Miletus, where he pronounced the following farewell sermon: *“You know my conduct the whole time I was with you, from the first day I entered the Asia region, serving the Lord in all humility and tears amid the adversities that befell me from the Jews conspiring against me. And how I did not omit to announce anything that might be of profit to you, preaching to you and teaching you in public as well as in your homes; and in particular exhorting Jews and Gentiles to believe in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus be converted to God. Now, sent by the Holy Ghost, I am going up to Jerusalem without knowing what will befall me there. For I can only tell you that the Holy Ghost assures and warns me that chains and trials await me in Jerusalem. But I fear none of these things, nor have I any regard for my own life, provided that I happily conclude my course and the Ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus to preach the Gospel of God’s Grace. I know that none of you, whose lands I*

have crossed preaching the Kingdom of God, will ever see me again; therefore I testify to you this day that if some of you are lost the fault is not mine, since I have never ceased calling upon you to respond to God's saving plan. Keep watch over yourselves, and zealously care for the flock, of which the Holy Ghost has instituted you Bishops to shepherd the Church of God, which Christ has won with His own Blood. For I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will fall upon you and devastate the flock; and from among you yourselves men will rise up teaching perverse doctrines, with the object of drawing disciples into error. Be watchful, then, remembering that day and night for three years I did not cease with tears to admonish each of you. Now, finally, I entrust you to God and the promise of His Grace, to Him who can complete the edifice of your sanctification, making you partakers of His inheritance with all the saints. I have coveted neither silver nor gold, nor the garments of anyone, as you yourselves know; because these hands have supplied me with the things needed by myself and those with me. For whatever was essential for my companions and myself, whenever my Ministry so allowed, I acquired by my labour, instead of giving myself up to idleness. I have shown you by my conduct that acting uprightly is the best way to succour the weak of spirit. Bear in mind the words that the Lord Jesus revealed to me: 'He who gives is more blessed than he who receives.'"

5. When Paul had finished speaking he fell on his knees and prayed with all those who were listening to him; thereupon, deeply moved, they kissed him bathed in tears, exceedingly afflicted thinking they would never see him again, as he himself had announced. With these demonstrations of filial sentiment, all accompanied Paul to the ship to continue his journey that same 2nd of May in the year 57.

6. Thus the Holy Ghost, subjecting Paul to a heroic trial of obedience, ordered him to go to Jerusalem, among other places; and revealed to him directly and through other persons with prophetic charisms that the prison and trials awaiting him in Jerusalem could even result in his martyrdom, so that Paul sincerely believed that in this city his end would shortly come. Lamentably, however, the Apostle listened to these announcements with presumptuous confidence in himself, without considering his human frailty, and thus further dared to say: "*But I fear none of these things.*" His farewell sermon, moreover, reflects certain vainglory at the apostolate he had been accomplishing; though undeniably Paul was also motivated by the great love he professed for Christ. However, God would later rescind this trial of obedience of going to Jerusalem; and Paul would be informed of this by some prophets, whom he was to disregard.

Chapter XXIV

Paul sets out from Miletus for Jerusalem. Along the way Paul is warned by God through some prophets not to go up to Jerusalem. Paul disregards these warnings and reaches Jerusalem

1. On the 2nd of May in the year 57, after delivering his moving farewell sermon in Miletus, Apostle Paul, accompanied by Luke, Timothy, Aristarchus, Caius, Secundus, Sopater, Tichicus and Trophimus, from the port of Miletus set sail for the island of Cos; and the following day for that of Rhodes, and from there to the port of Patara in the province of Lycia. On the 4th of that month and year he found a ship bound for Phoenicia, which he boarded with his eight companions. During the voyage, leaving the island of Cyprus to the left, they disembarked at the Phoenician port of Tyre on the 9th of May in the same year 57, where the ship had to unload its cargo. As there was a Christian community in this city, Paul and his companions remained there seven days. Among the faithful of this community were some with the gift of prophecy, and they, by divine command, told the Apostle not to go up to Jerusalem. Paul, however, now disregarding God's voice through His prophets, preferred to follow his own impulse of going to Jerusalem. Consequently he set off for the port with his eight companions, followed by many of the men, women and children faithful of that community, who wished to accompany him out of the city; once on the seashore, they all knelt down and prayed. After bidding one another farewell, on the 16th of May Paul and his eight disciples boarded a ship bound for Ptolemais, now Saint John of Acre, and the numerous faithful who had accompanied him returned to their homes in Tyre. Apostle Paul and the rest arrived at Ptolemais the next day, visiting the town's Christian community, remaining there for a day. On the 18th of May they left for Caesarea Maritime, lodging for three days at the home of the disciple and Bishop Philip, who had four daughters in the Carmelite convent founded there, nuns and prophetesses, called Barucha, Abigail, Jonasa and Lydia. In this town Paul was once again enjoined by God, now through Philip's four daughters, not to go up to Jerusalem; but as he did not give credit to these prophetic warnings, God sent Prophet Agabus to Caesarea Maritime, who came from Jerusalem expressly to try and convince the Apostle not to make the journey. Agabus took Paul's belt, and tying the feet and hands of the Apostle with it, said: "*The Holy Ghost says this: thus will the jews in Jerusalem bind the man owning this belt, delivering him up into the hands of the gentiles*"; in these words prophesying to the Apostle the danger and suffering awaiting him in Jerusalem. Paul's eight companions, as did many others present, tearfully pleaded with him not to continue his projected journey. But Paul replied: "*Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? For I am prepared and willing not only to be taken prisoner, but also to die in Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.*" Faced

with this reply, seeing they could not convince him, they stopped insisting and said: *“May the Lord’s will be done.”* That Paul did not yield at those moments to the divine predictions given through different prophets, was due to his obstinate presumption; since, while it is true that first the Holy Ghost had ordered Apostle Paul to go to Jerusalem, it is no less true that afterwards the Holy Ghost subjected him to a trial of humility, ordering him through holy prophets, with the exalted Agabus at their head, not to go to Jerusalem.

2. Paul, then, contumaciously disobeying the various prophetic warnings, left Caesarea Maritime for Jerusalem at 2 in the afternoon on the 20th of May in that year 57, accompanied by his retinue and also by Mnason of Cyprus, Bishop of the diocese of Antipatris, in whose conventual residence he stayed that night. Mnason then stayed behind in his diocese, and Paul with his retinue resumed their journey on to Jerusalem on the 21st of May. Along the way he visited some of the Christian communities, so that he arrived in Jerusalem at night on the 24th of May, and he and his companions lodged at the Carmelite cloister in Lazarus’ former house in the city.

Chapter XXV

Paul in the Jerusalem Cenacle. Paul’s dissembling in the jewish temple of Jerusalem

1. On the 25th of May in the year 57, that is, the day after his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul and his eight travelling companions went to the Cenacle. When he arrived the Most Holy Virgin Mary was not there, for She, knowing that he had come in opposition to the divine will, preferred to withdraw to the convent at Bethany in the company of Her two sisters and Apostle John, and avoid contact with him for the time being as She was unable to receive him with maternal joy, since he deserved Her severe reproof, and it was not the moment for that, given the Apostle’s extreme obfuscation.

2. Paul’s return to Jerusalem was considered a great event by James the Less and many others of the Christian community existent there; not only for the general pleasure of seeing him again, but also because of the expectation he always aroused. That same 25th of May, after his arrival, Paul was received by Apostle James the Less, who congregated in the Cenacle, among others, all the Bishops and Priests resident in the Jerusalem convents, to welcome him and hear what he had to say. Apostle Paul related all the things God had done through his ministry among the Gentiles; and when those in the Cenacle heard, they glorified the Most High. After Paul had given an account of his apostolic fruits, James the Less informed him of the conversion of numerous Jews in Jerusalem to the Gospel Faith, finally saying to him: *“You can well see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed in the Faith of Christ; yet despite everything they still conserve their zeal for Mosaic law. And they have heard said of you that you teach jews living in Gentile nations to separate themselves from Moses: saying that they should not circumcise their sons, nor keep to the rites. What, then, is to be*

done? Certainly, it is inevitable that the multitude gather, because they will hear that you have come.” James the Less, then, warned Paul of the no few difficulties his personal contact with these Jewish converts would entail, since they were still attached to certain levitical traditions and rites; so that it did not seem advisable to him that Paul speak against those Jewish usages. James the Less feared that Paul, with his accustomed ardour, might attempt to root out those unsound judaizing tendencies in no few Christians of Jewish origin, who did not act out of disobedience to the Church, rather out of pride of race, and that in the face of Apostle Paul’s intransigence might even come to separate themselves from the true fold. James the Less’s attitude was due to his judaizing tendency, not yet completely rooted out, for which he had been corrected on some occasions by the Most Holy Virgin Mary. While it is true that James the Less zealously taught to all that the Gospel Law was the sole one necessary for salvation, and that levitical worship and rites were useless, nevertheless on civil and social grounds he continued to respect the practice of circumcision and other rites by Christians of Jewish origin, believing that their perseverance and other Jews’ conversions were thereby made easier; all of which implied certain laxness in no few religious and faithful of the Church of Christ in Jerusalem.

3. To avoid all those setbacks, James the Less, supported by other judaizing Bishops, though knowing that he sinned very grievously, ill-advised Paul that he should publicly manifest his fidelity to the Law of Moses by performing certain rites opposed to Gospel Law. This, then, is what he told him: *“Paul, do what we are going to tell you: we have here four of the faithful, men who for some time now have a Nazarite vow. Take them with you, purify yourself with them in the temple, make the offering demanded by Moses, so that their heads be shaved, and in this way all will know that whatever they heard of you being opposed to certain levitical rites is false; and that, on the contrary, you continue to keep the Law.”* In other words, James the Less counselled Paul that he should go with four of the faithful to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, feigning that he too had a Nazarite vow, made easy by the long hair Paul wore at the time; buy for the five the animals and other offerings demanded by Moses, purify himself with them in the temple, and then go before the levitical priest for the rites of offering and head shaving, as the Law demanded; publicly giving to understand by this pretence that he did not oppose Jewish traditions, even though they ran counter to Gospel Law. As Paul was somewhat surprised by James the Less’s counsel, the latter made him see the convenience of his assenting, since in this way his living together with Jews converted to Christianity, and with other Jews, would be made easier. In order to support further his reasoning, James the Less reminded Paul how, in Jerusalem Council II, Gentiles converted to the Faith of Christ were ordered to abstain from the meat of animals killed without shedding blood, and from animal blood, as prescribed

by the Law of Moses, in order to make peaceful coexistence between Christians of Jewish and of Gentile origin easier.

4. As Paul's soul was greatly weakened and lacking in light owing to his disobedience to God's voice communicated through some prophets, for which reason he was in Jerusalem against the express desire of the Holy Ghost, he readily followed the other Apostle's bad counsel, though knowing that by so doing he committed a very grievous sin. So then, on the 26th of May in that year 57, two days after his arrival in Jerusalem, taking with him the four men faithful, Paul went to the Jewish temple with them to begin the sham purifications. The five spent seven days in the temple quarters set aside for purification, feigning that they did so because legally they were unclean, among other reasons, from dealings with the Gentiles. After the purifications, on the eighth day the five entered the Court of the Israelites, place in the temple where the rite was performed following the fulfilment of the Nazarite vow; and there publicly they handed over to the Levitical priest: five lambs, five sheep, five rams, unleavened bread and other elements to be offered by the priest, who then proceeded to the shaving of their heads and other Levitical ceremonies. Apostle James the Less ill-advising Apostle Paul, and Paul following his bad counsel, both incurred very grievous sin and gave public scandal to Christians from gentiledom and to no few Christians from Judaism; moreover, all who actively or passively collaborated in this sham incurred very grievous sin. Notwithstanding, the two Apostles and the rest did not incur apostasy, since observance of Jewish rites was not yet expressly forbidden to the Christian faithful, provided they did not believe them valid and necessary for salvation.

Chapter XXVI

Rioting Jews attempt to kill Paul

Paul's lamentable dissembling in the Jewish temple of Jerusalem brought with it disastrous consequences; for on that 2nd of June in the year 57, when Paul and his four companions had complied with all the Levitical ceremonies respecting the Nazarite vow, with the five still inside the temple, they were seen by some Jews come from the province of Asia, chiefly from the city of Ephesus, where Paul had suffered persecution some time previously. These Jews stirred up the many others still in Jerusalem for Mosaic Pentecost, denouncing Paul by shouting: "*Men of Israel, come to our help: this is the man who everywhere instructs everyone against our people, against the Law of Moses and against the temple; moreover he has brought Gentiles into the temple and profaned this holy place.*" In saying that Paul had brought Gentiles into the temple, they were not referring either to him or to the four with him in the building, as they were Jews by birth. Rather they referred to Trophimus of Ephesus, whom they had seen with Paul in Jerusalem, believing that the Apostle had brought him into the court of the temple

reserved to the jews; for the Ephesians knew that Trophimus was a Gentile, as he had been in that city as missionary Bishop, though born in Cyprus. On this pretext the whole multitude of jews inside and outside the temple rose up; so that forming a riot they seized Paul and dragged him outside, and then shut the doors of the edifice so that he could not re-enter and thus save his life, as the shedding of human blood was forbidden inside. In their numerous accusations against Paul, the jews pointed out the Apostle of the Gentiles' contradictory conduct, saying that while they had often heard him preach that the temple of Jerusalem was a place no longer pleasing to God, and that jewish rites and ceremonies were inefficacious, now, by feigning to have a Nazarite vow, he endeavoured to pass himself off as an observer of those levitical traditions, when in reality he was opposed to them.

Chapter XXVII

Paul is arrested by the Roman tribune and taken to the praetorium

While they were attempting to kill Paul, the tribune of the Roman cohort was warned that all Jerusalem was in uproar. He immediately took centurions and soldiers and ran out to where they were maltreating the Apostle. When the jews saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped ill-treating Paul. Then the tribune, coming up to Paul, arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains, then asking him who he was and what had he done. However, as some in that mob of people shouted one thing and others another, the tribune, seeing that he could ascertain nothing because of the tumult, and that Paul was in very grave danger, ordered him to be taken to the fortress Antonia. On reaching the steps of the praetorium edifice, the soldiers had to carry Paul on their shoulders because of the violence of the people, who followed him shouting out: *"Let him die!"*

Chapter XXVIII

Paul's discourse before the jewish crowd

1. When Paul was just at the point of entering the fortress to be imprisoned, he said to the tribune: *"Will you give me leave to address the crowd?"* He replied: *"Can you by chance speak Greek? Are you not perhaps the Egyptian who a few days ago provoked a revolt with four thousand robbers, and then withdrew with them into the desert?"* Paul said to him: *"I, in truth, am a Jew, citizen of Tarsus, a noble city of Cilicia; but I request that you let me speak to the people."* Given leave by the tribune, Paul made a sign with his hand from one of the steps of the stairway up to the gate of the edifice, stairs by which Christ had gone up and come down in His trial before Pilate. With all now silent, Paul, in the Hebrew tongue, began his discourse, saying among other things: *"Worthy brethren, listen to the account I now give you of myself."* When they heard him speaking to them in the Hebrew language, they listened to him in greater silence. Paul said: *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but I was educated in this city, in the school of Gamaliel, by whom*

I was instructed according to the truth of the law of our fathers; and I was very zealous in the law, as you all are at present. I persecuted to death those of this new doctrine of Jesus the Nazarene, arresting and imprisoning men and women. Witnesses to this are the high priest and all the members of the sanhedrin, from whom I took letters for the brethren in Damascus with the aim of going to that city and bringing the Christians resident there back to Jerusalem as prisoners, for them to be duly punished here. It came to pass, however, that while on my way, and close to Damascus, at midday I was surprised by a resounding clap of thunder, and lightning, and in the heavens saw a great light which suddenly enveloped me with its rays, and falling to the ground, I heard a voice that said to me: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' I asked: 'Who are you, Lord?' Then a Man with majesty and glory showed himself to me visibly, answering me at the same time: 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute. Difficult it is for you to withstand the might of My power.' My companions, though contemplating the light, neither saw Jesus nor heard His own voice. I said, 'Lord, what would You have me do?' He replied: 'Stand up, and arise as a new man in the service of My Church; go to Damascus, and there you will be told all that is meet for you to do.' As the brilliance of that mysterious light had left me blind, my companions took me by the hand, mounted me upon my horse and guided me to Damascus. There, a disciple of Jesus, Bishop Ananias, a just and upright man in accordance with the Law of God and the Gospel spirit, his virtues acknowledged not only by Christians but even by the jews themselves, coming by order of the Lord to where I was, laid his hands upon me and said: 'Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came to Damascus, has sent me so that you recover your sight and be further strengthened by the Holy Ghost'; and instantly I fully recovered my sight. He then said: 'The God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob chose you so that you might know His will, see the Righteous One, hear the voice of His mouth and be His witness before men of the things you have seen and heard.' He said to me in addition: 'And now, make haste to receive the Sacrament of Baptism' Afterwards it came to pass that, having returned to Jerusalem, while I was praying in the Cenacle or first Christian Temple, I fell into ecstasy and saw the Lord Jesus full of Glory and Majesty, who said to me: 'Make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, because the jews not only reject your testimony as to Me, but wish to kill you as well.' I replied: 'Lord, they themselves know that I was the one who cruelly persecuted those who believed in You, that I put them into prison, and as well brought them to the synagogues where I had them scourged, and ordered them to blaspheme against You; besides, when the blood of Your witness and martyr Stephen was shed, I was present, and consented to it, and minded the garments of those who killed him.' The Lord said to me: 'Go

away from Jerusalem, because I shall send you out to evangelize faraway nations.”

2. Up to this point they had paid attention to Paul; but suddenly the multitude of jews, raising their voices, cried out: *“Rid the world of a man such as this, because it is not right that he should live.”* As they continued howling out, furiously rending their garments and throwing up handfuls of dirt into the air, the tribune ordered Paul to be taken inside the fortress, for him to be scourged and tortured in the dungeon, to find out in this way why they shouted out against him so much. Paul, who was still bound with chains, then said to the centurion who was present: *“Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen without having tried him first?”* When the centurion heard this he went and warned the tribune, saying: *“Consider what you are about to do, because this man is a Roman citizen.”* So the tribune came up and asked Paul: *“Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”*; and he replied: *“Yes, I am.”* To which the tribune replied: *“It cost me a great deal of money to obtain the privilege of citizenship.”* Paul said to him: *“Well, I am one by birth.”* On hearing this, those about to torture him moved away, since, according to the law of the empire, a Roman citizen could not be scourged without previous trial. Even the tribune himself became fearful for having ordered him to be bound, so that he had him unchained. The following day, 3rd of June, desiring to know for certain what it was that Paul was accused of by the jews, the tribune ordered the members of the sanhedrin to assemble before the praetorium or fortress Antonia, with the aim of presenting him before them that same day.

Chapter XXIX

Paul's appearance before the members of the sanhedrin. The Lord appears to Paul at night. Forty jews swear neither to eat nor drink until they kill Paul. The soldiers take Paul from the fortress and convey him to Antipatris. Paul is taken to Caesarea Maritime

1. On the 3rd of June in the year 57, the sanhedrin presided by iniquitous high priest Ananias having assembled before fortress Antonia, Paul was presented before the council in the very place where Christ had been judged by Pontius Pilate. The Apostle, gazing at the members of the sanhedrin, said to them: *“To this day I have always acted with upright conscience before God”*; thereby giving them to understand that they had no reason for accusing him of profaning the temple of Jerusalem. In boasting of his rectitude, Paul was lying in public, since he was conscious of having offended God by his dissembling in the jewish temple. Paul's self-defence so irritated iniquitous high priest Ananias, that he ordered one of his ministers to strike the Apostle on the mouth. At that humiliation Paul cursed the levitical high priest, saying: *“God will strike you, whitewashed wall. You, who arrogate authority to judge me according to the Law of Moses, do you command me to be struck against that Law?”* Those present there asked

Paul: *“Do you dare curse the high priest of God?”* To this Paul replied: *“Brethren, I did not know that he is the high priest, because in truth it is written in the Book of Henoch: Do not curse the prince of your people.”* Paul’s conduct before the sanhedrin was full of ambiguity and dissembling. For though the Apostle, owing to his natural impetuosity, after being struck cursed Ananias and called him a hypocrite, subsequently, to safeguard himself from possible harm from the sanhedrin, not only pretended to deny that he knew the levitical high priest, but, in addition, feigned to rectify the malediction he had hurled; which could have been understood by those present as though he acknowledged impious Ananias to be high priest of the Most High; and Paul well knew that his was a false authority. Here we see how Apostle Paul, who trusting in himself had come to Jerusalem prepared to die for Christ, when the moment of truth arrived, had recourse including to lies in order cowardly to save his life, when it was the time to confess before that anti-church or church of Satan, ruled by wicked Ananias, that the true Church was the one founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ and ruled by His Vicar Pope Peter. Paul, seeing that he had not succeeded by his ambiguity and dissembling in placating the antagonistic attitude of Ananias and his sanhedritic council towards him, had recourse for that purpose to another ruse unworthy of his status as Apostle of Christ. For Paul, knowing that one part of the sanhedritic members assembled there were sadducees and another part pharisees, said out loud to the sanhedritic council: *“Brethren, I am a pharisee, the son of pharisees; and the reason I am being judged is because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.”* In order to free himself cowardly from the clutches of the sanhedrin, Paul dissembled by saying he belonged to the pharisee sect; for while it is true that before his conversion he had been so, he now had nothing to do with that abominable sect. By these words he brought the pharisees into conflict with the sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the flesh, the existence of angels and the immortality of the soul, while the pharisees affirmed the contrary. The argument between both groups was so violent that the sanhedrin became divided into two factions; to the point where, following a great uproar, there were pharisees who defended Paul saying: *“We find no evil in this man; and besides, who knows whether some spirit or angel may have spoken to him?”* In this way the pharisees, further to contradict the sadducees, pleaded in Paul’s favour, even pretending to admit as true what Paul had related the previous day regarding his heavenly visions, like the one on the way to Damascus. Hence the pharisees said to the sadducees that a spirit or an angel could have spoken to him, referring here to a blessed soul or an angelic spirit. Though Paul sinned most grievously by his lying, ambiguity and vacillation, he did not incur any apostasy, since no express ecclesiastical law yet existed that anathematized and expelled from the Church those Christians who pretended

to be pharisees. Besides, Paul had no intention of denying Christ or His Church.

2. In spite of opinions being divided within the sanhedrin due to the great dissension between its members, the tribune, fearing that they might kill Paul, ordered the soldiers to remove him from their midst and bring him into fortress Antonia. On that same 3rd of June, at night, when Paul found himself in prison in the praetorium, Christ, highly irate and with whip in hand, appeared to him and said: *“Paul, this very day you have sold your Faith in exchange for your life, acting worse than the merchants who, in their day, I expelled from the Temple. You would not have fallen so low if you had been docile to the warnings the Holy Ghost gave you through several of His trustworthy prophets, whom you know well. When the hour comes to give testimony to your Faith, Paul, trust more in Divine Providence, which will not fail you, than in your own strength.”* Paul, terrified at Christ’s Anger, sincerely repentant, begged His pardon and offered to give his life for Him, if such were His pleasure. The Lord, before taking His leave, pleased with the Apostle of the Gentiles’ offering, added: *“Be constant, because just as you gave worthy testimony to Me in Jerusalem yesterday, it is proper that you do so in Rome as well”*, giving him to surmise that in this city he would crown his apostolate by martyrdom.

3. As the Jews did not desist from their aggressiveness against Paul, the following day, the 4th of June, at first light, forty of them conspired and swore under pain of malediction that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. To carry out their proposal, they presented themselves before the sanhedritic council and said: *“We have bound ourselves under pain of malediction to eat no food and drink no water until we have killed Paul. Now then, all you have to do is notify the tribune asking him to have Paul brought tomorrow to the place where you assemble, alleging that you wish to ascertain something more clearly from him. We will be waiting ready to kill him before he arrives at where you are.”* But a son of Paul’s sister came to know of the conspiracy plotted against him, and so entered fortress Antonia and warned the Apostle, his uncle, who calling one of the centurions, said to him: *“Take this boy to the tribune because he has something to tell him.”* The youth, led by the centurion, went in to where the tribune was, to whom the centurion said: *“The prisoner Paul has asked me to bring into your presence this youth, who has something to tell you.”* The tribune, holding the boy’s arm, took him aside and asked: *“What have you to tell me?”* He replied: *“The Jews have conspired to ask that tomorrow you take Paul to the council of the sanhedrin on the pretext of making further investigations about him; but you should not believe it, because forty men, with great oaths, have made a vow not to eat or drink until they have killed him, and are now ready to put it into effect.”* The tribune bade farewell to the youth, ordering him to tell no one that he had given him this warning.

4. The tribune, Claudius Lysias by name, fearing that the Jews would seize and kill Paul and afterwards falsely claim that he was an accomplice to the death of the Apostle for having handed him over for a bribe, summoned two centurions and told them: *“At about 9 at night have ready two hundred infantry, seventy horsemen and two hundred lancers to go to Caesarea Maritime. Harness mounts so that Paul be led on horseback before Procurator Felix without any danger to his life.”* At the same time the tribune wrote a letter to the procurator in the following terms: *“Claudius Lysias, to excellent Procurator Felix, greetings: I send you this man called Paul who had been seized by the Jews; I came with my soldiers and freed him when he was about to be killed by them, and I have received word that he is a Roman citizen. Wishing to inform myself of the crime they impute to him, I assembled the Sanhedrin and presented him before this council. There I found out that he is accused in matters of their law, without having committed any crime worthy of death or prison. Having been warned that the Jews have schemed fresh plots against him, I send him to you. I have told the Sanhedrin to go to Caesarea Maritime if they wish to lodge an appeal, and to present their accusations against Paul before your tribunal.”*

5. On the 4th of June in the referred year 57, round about 9 at night, the soldiers brought Paul out of fortress Antonia and led him to the town of Antipatris. The following day, 5th of June, he was taken to Caesarea Maritime accompanied by the mounted soldiers, so that the other soldiers returned to Jerusalem. Apostle Paul, with the escort guarding him, arrived at Caesarea Maritime the following day and was presented before Procurator Felix, to whom they handed the letter from the tribune of Jerusalem. After the procurator had read the letter, he asked Paul what province he was from. Paul said that he was from Cilicia; and as he moreover sought to present allegations in his own favour, the procurator, not wishing to listen at that moment, said: *“I will grant you an audience when your accusers come.”* In the meantime he ordered Paul to be guarded in Herod’s praetorium in Caesarea Maritime in the form of protective custody, since no crime at all had been imputed to him, and besides he ran grave risk without the vigilance of the Roman authority.

6. Paul’s appearance at court would only be before Procurator Felix, since King Herod Agrippa II had left for Rome that same year, and would not return until the year 59.

Chapter XXX

Paul is judged in Procurator Felix’s court. Ananias and several members of the Sanhedrin present their accusations against Paul. Paul speaks of the Christian Faith to Felix and Drusilla

1. At the end of five days, that is, on the 10th of June in the year 57, iniquitous high priest Ananias, with several members of the Sanhedrin,

accompanied by a lawyer named Tertulian, arrived in Caesarea Maritime and presented themselves before Procurator Felix to act against Paul. The Apostle having been called before the court, Tertulian began his accusation, saying: *“Thanks to you, excellent Felix, we enjoy great peace, and by your providence suitable reforms have been made in this nation, remedying many disorders. We acknowledge this always and everywhere and we offer you all kinds of thanksgiving. As we do not wish to trouble you unduly, we ask that you hear us with your accustomed humanity for a few brief moments. We have learned that this man is a corrupter who stirs up sedition against the jews and is head of the sect of the Nazarenes. He tried as well to profane the temple of Jerusalem; and having seized him we wished to judge him according to our law. Tribune Lysias coming up, however, with great violence wrenched him from our grasp, ordering that his accusers go to you. Examining him as judge, you yourself will be able to ascertain the truth of all the things of which we accuse him.”* Ananias and the members of the sanhedrin accompanying him confirmed what Tertulian said, testifying it all to be true.

2. At a sign from the procurator that he should speak, Paul did so in these terms: *“Knowing that for many years you have been judge of this people, I will speak with confidence in my defence; for you can easily ascertain that not more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to adore. And that neither in the temple nor in the city nor in the synagogues was I to be found disputing with anyone, nor provoking sedition among the people; neither can they allege proof of the things of which they now accuse me. I confess before you that, following a doctrine which they consider heretical and sectarian, I serve my Father and God, believing everything written in the Law and in the Prophets, with the same hope as they concerning the resurrection of the just and the unjust. Hence I always try to keep my conscience clear before God and man. Now, after many years, I came to my people to bring alms and fulfil my offerings and vows. I was engaged in this when some jews from the region of Asia found me purifying in the temple, but without disturbance or causing uproar, and it is they who should appear before you and be my accusers, that is if they have anything to allege against me. Let the same ones who now accuse me, however, state if they found some crime in me when I appeared before the sanhedrin in full, unless they consider as such the declaration I made in their presence, when I said: ‘The reason I am being judged is because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead’.”* Paul made it clear that as from his arrival in Jerusalem he had only stayed in the city for twelve days, not yet complete; two days of which he had spent residing in the Carmelite convents, seven in the jewish temple purifying himself, and three in the hands of the Roman authorities; by which he sought to demonstrate that he had not had time to provoke the sedition of which he was accused. Notwithstanding, Paul’s declaration before Procurator Felix was full of

ambiguity, dissembling and omission, evidencing the Apostle's cowardice at the danger of them killing him; since, by publicly saying that he had come to Jerusalem to adore, by this restricted form of expression, those who heard his declaration could have understood that he had come to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to adore God in the temple on the occasion of Jewish Pentecost, which had fallen on the 25th of May. While it is true that interiorly the Apostle was referring to the Cenacle, yet cowardly to remain silent about this gave the impression that he had come to the Jewish temple for reasons of worship and piety. Besides, by repeating the same words he uttered days previously before the Sanhedritic commission in Jerusalem, "*the reason I am being judged is because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead*", Paul was again expressing himself as if he were still a member of the Pharisee sect, and for that reason was being persecuted and tried; given that iniquitous high priest Ananias and some of the Sanhedrin there accusing him were mostly Sadducees, and as such denied the resurrection of the dead.

3. Paul, then, in his declaration before Procurator Felix made no clear and determinant profession of his Faith in the Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ; rather, by his form of expression, gave his testimony in the manner of a practising Jew; even though he said, referring to Christianity, that he served his Father and God according to a doctrine the Jews treated as heretical and sectarian, as he did not mention either the Name of Christ or His Gospel; and, on the contrary, limited himself to mentioning God, the Law and the Prophets, as would someone professing Judaism; ideology which he seemed to identify with the Christian Faith when he also said that he, like the Jewish Pharisees, hoped in God and in the resurrection of the just and sinners. Paul, by his manner of expression, also presented himself as if he were a zealous observer of Jewish law by speaking about the offerings, vows and purification he had made in the temple. Even though it is true that Paul acted thus out of cowardice, without any intention of denying the Faith of Christ or the Church founded by Him, this does not excuse his abominable weakness, since he had the grave obligation to confess the Gospel truth publicly, and did not; above all as he, with presumption, had come to Jerusalem willing to die for this cause and had been severely corrected by the Divine Master.

4. Procurator Felix, knowing that the Jews' intrigues against Paul were owing to his faith in Christ, and that the crimes of corruption and sedition they imputed to him were false, and that Paul was therefore innocent, preferred not to make any ruling, and deferred the case saying to all: "*When Tribune Lysias comes I will grant you another hearing*"; giving to understand that he needed to inform himself further on the case through Lysias. Procurator Felix detained Apostle Paul in the praetorium at Caesarea Maritime, and ordered a centurion to keep due watch over him so that nothing happen to him, that his vigilance be not too strict, and not to forbid

any of his own to enter and assist him. By this he allowed Christians to visit Paul, and he could even go out on some occasions, though always escorted by soldiers for his greater protection. Seven days later, that is, on the 17th of June in the year 57, Procurator Felix, with his concubine Drusilla, a jewess, returned to the praetorium after a short journey. Felix summoned Paul and listened to him speak on the Faith of Jesus Christ. As the Apostle spoke of justice, chastity and the judgment to come, however, Felix aghast said: *“Enough for now. Withdraw. Should it be necessary I will send for you again.”* Neither Felix nor his concubine were able to reap any benefits from Paul’s teaching; and though the procurator sent for Paul on several occasions and spoke with him, it was with the intention of obtaining money from the Apostle in exchange for his consideration towards him. Paul was to remain in the praetorium or herodian palace at Caesarea Maritime for the space of two further years, under the surveillance of the Roman authorities, awaiting the return from Rome of King Herod Agrippa II, to be judged by a bicephalous tribunal.

Book IV

From the Transit of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to the conclusion of the Apostles’ mission on earth

Chapter I

The Virgin Mary appears to the Apostles to tell them to be in Jerusalem on a given date. Peter visits Paul in prison at Caesarea Maritime. Peter arrives in Jerusalem following his apostolate in other towns of Israel. Arrival of the Apostles in Jerusalem

1. After Paul had been conveyed to Caesarea Maritime by the Roman tribune’s soldiers, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who had retired to one of the convents in Bethany on account of the Apostle’s stay in Jerusalem, returned to the Cenacle accompanied by Her sisters Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome and by Apostle John. On coming to learn through James the Less of the recent lamentable happenings, She maternally corrected this Apostle for the scandal that both he and Paul had given by the purifications, vows and offerings in the jewish temple. James the Less asked pardon of the Exalted Lady for his erroneous counsel to Paul on the observance of those jewish rites, acknowledging that if he had sought guidance from Her beforehand he would have had light to act more wisely.

2. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, who ardently desired that the other Apostles be in Jerusalem for the 16th of July that year 57, began appearing to each of them, commencing with Peter, communicating to them Her will. All were greatly consoled by these apparitions; very especially Apostle Paul, who now, in the solitude of his forced reclusion, further reconsidered the gravity of his past dissembling and judaizing actions, weeping bitterly over them. Pope Peter, on his return journey to Jerusalem, following his apostolate through the land of Israel, as likewise Antioch and other places in Syria,

passed through Caesarea Maritime to visit Apostle Paul in prison, who directly informed the Pope of all his conflicts with the Sanhedrin and the other Jews. Peter comforted him in his trials, exhorting him to be much more steadfast and prudent in the future. Following this paternal visit, Pope Peter continued his journey on to Jerusalem, arriving there on the 30th of June in the same year 57. The other Apostles: Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Thaddeus, Simon and Matthias, with their respective retinues, also consecutively arrived at the city during the first fifteen days of July; so that, on the 16th of the month, feast of Carmel, all were present in the Cenacle. Furthermore, many other disciples came from the different missions, on receiving as well, in diverse manners, the news of the Divine Lady's wish. Though the Apostles made their respective journeys using the ordinary means at their disposal, God's special providence assisted each of them, according to their needs, so that their travelling be made easier. Regarding Paul, while it is true that Procurator Felix would have allowed him to go to Jerusalem on bail with the required precautions, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, however, in Her apparition to the Apostle, after maternally reproaching him for his past errors, and he asking Her pardon, counselled him not to leave Caesarea Maritime for the time being.

3. The main reason the Most Holy Virgin Mary now assembled the Apostles and many others in Jerusalem was so they might be present at the mystery of Her Gentle Dormition and Assumption into Heaven, and at Jerusalem Council III.

Chapter II

Peter announces to the other Apostles the reason for their being summoned to Jerusalem.

The Divine Mary gives Her last exhortations prior to Her Transit into Heaven

1. On the 16th of July in that year 57, Apostle Peter, as Head of the Church, assembled the Apostles, disciples and disciplesses and the other faithful in the Cenacle at Jerusalem and said to them: *“My dear children and brethren: the Lord has summoned and brought us to Jerusalem from very remote places not without serious cause, and of supreme grief for us. His Majesty, Our Lord and God Jesus Christ, wishes to take His Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, Our Mistress, Consolation and Help to the throne of His eternal glory, and it is Her desire too that we all be present at Her most happy and glorious Transit.”* Though it is true that all the Apostles knew from the lips of the Divine Mary that one of the reasons for gathering them in Jerusalem was the imminence of Her departure from this world, nevertheless, on hearing Peter's words they were moved to shed abundant tears.

2. During the four weeks prior to this most sublime mystery, Most Holy Mary dedicated Herself to imparting Her last maternal teachings and sapient counsels to the Apostles and to the other friars and to the nuns of the

Carmelite Order present in Jerusalem. She organized everything in such a way that all might prepare themselves with special prayers, penances and instructions from Herself, since She wished them to be well fortified for when She would be gone. She also exhorted them to prudence; since, on account of Paul's recent conflicts with the sanhedrin and the other jews of Jerusalem, there was greater aggressiveness on the part of those enemies against the Church of Christ. It was necessary, then, that all be recollected, and thus as well prepare the matters to be dealt with at the Third Ecumenical Council of Jerusalem, to be celebrated some days after Mary's Glorious Assumption. In this preparatory phase of the Third Council, the Most Blessed Lady oriented the Apostles and disciples on the most urgent doctrinal needs to be dealt with.

3. The Transit of the Most Holy Virgin Mary embraces three absolutely inseparable mysteries in perfect harmony: that of Her Immortality, that of Her Gentle Dormition and that of Her Glorious Assumption into Heaven; hence the term "*transit*" may be used equally to express Mary's Gentle Dormition as well as Her Glorious Assumption into Heaven.

Chapter III

Gentle Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary

1. The Gentle Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary took place on Friday the 13th of August in the year 57 in the cell-oratory She occupied in the nuns' convent in Jerusalem, which occupied part of the different sections of the Cenacle. When Gentle Dormition came upon the Divine Mary, She was seventy-four years old, twenty-six days short of Her seventy-fifth birthday. Despite this age Her Immaculate accidental Body had not aged, conserving the same freshness and beauty She possessed at thirty-three, without having suffered any change whatsoever. The Divine Mary did not experience, then, the effects of the passing years, or of senility or of old age; so that She had no wrinkles on Her Face or any other part of Her Virginal Body; nor any deterioration, debility or physical frailty at all. The indescribable beauty and formation of the Divine Mary's accidental Body always stayed utterly perfect from the very moment of Her Immaculate Conception; but as She was subject in the divine plan to natural bodily growth, these exceptional qualities of Her Body revealed themselves in accord with age; becoming stable at thirty-three years of age, so that from then on Mary's Immaculate accidental Body always appeared unchanging and most perfect as if She were thirty-three years of age.

2. On Friday the 13th of August in the year 57, the Exalted Mother of the Church, desiring that Her children there present might participate in the most sublime event of Her glorious Dormition, directed Pope Peter to celebrate Holy Mass in the cell-oratory She occupied in the Cenacle convent. This private chamber of the Divine Mary was designed in such a way that, besides

holding a determinate number of persons, by opening doors and windows the interior could be seen from other quarters. At exactly midday on that memorable 13th of August in the year 57, Pope Peter celebrated Holy Mass on the altar of the Exalted Mother of God's private oratory, the other Apostles being present at this ceremony, that is: Paul, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the Less, Thaddeus, Simon and Matthias. Apostle Paul's presence at this sublime event was due to Archangel Saint Cediel momentarily removing him from prison at Caesarea Maritime, without anyone noticing his absence, and bringing him to the Cenacle in Jerusalem so that he could be present at the Gentle Dormition and Burial of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Also assisting at the Eucharistic Sacrifice celebrated by Peter were the missionary disciples come from their assignments, as likewise the other friars and nuns from the convents of Jerusalem and Bethany, and some tertiary faithful as well. Those congregated there included Mary Cleophas, Mary Salome, Mary Magdalen, Martha, Bishop Lazarus, and Bishops Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and Gamaliel. Also present were the interplanetary Apostles Elias, Henoah and Moses. During Holy Mass, Peter administered Holy Communion to the Divine Mary and to all those present, and at the end solemnly imparted the papal blessing.

3. After Peter had finished Holy Mass, the Divine Mary pronounced the following words: *"My beloved children, I have you ever in My soul and inscribed in My heart, where I love you tenderly with the charity and love My Most Holy Son communicated to Me. By His Holy and Eternal will, I am going to the heavenly mansions where as Mother I promise to have you present in the clearest light of the Divinity. To you I entrust the Church, the exaltation of the Holy Name of the Most High, the spreading of Evangelical Law, the esteem for and appreciation of the words of My Most Holy Son, the memory of His Life, Death and Resurrection, and the observance of all His doctrine. Love Holy Church, My children, and wholeheartedly love one another with that bond of charity and peace which your Divine Master ever taught you. To you, Peter, My predilect son and Holy Pontiff, I entrust Apostle John My beloved son and all My other very dear children."* The words of the Most Sapient and Divine Mistress, like arrows of divine fire, penetrated the hearts of all the Apostles and others present; who, moved and immersed in a flood of tears and bitterest grief at the imminent separation from their beloved Heavenly Mother, fell to their knees accepting the divine will. Sweetest Mary, unable to resist such bitter and justified weeping by Her children, wept with them as well. Afterwards, at the Exalted Lady's indication, all prayed in silence. While they enjoyed this peaceful calm, the Divine Word made Man on a throne of ineffable glory descended from Heaven, accompanied by the Angelic Choirs and the rest of the Blessed, and the house of the Cenacle filled with glory. Most Holy Mary adored Her

Divine Son, kissing His feet with deepest humility. He blessed His Divine Mother, and in the presence of all said to Her: *“My dearest Mother, the time has now come when You are to pass from this life to the glory of the Father and Mine, where at My right hand is prepared for You the seat which You will enjoy for all eternity.”* Also became visible the Eternal Father, the Holy Ghost, Joseph Most Holy, Saint Anne and Saint Joachim. Shortly before Her Dormition, Most Holy Mary, who was kneeling before the throne of Her Divine Son, rested Her Most Pure and Immaculate Head in Jesus’ Divine Lap; and profoundly rapt up in the fire of divine love was immersed in Gentle Dormition at exactly 3 in the afternoon on that Friday the 13th of August in the year 57. The Most Pure and Immaculate Head of Mary stayed resting in Her Divine Son’s lap for seven minutes. At the end of this brief period Mary’s sleeping Sacred Body was placed by twelve Angels on Her own bed which was mysteriously embellished by them. Afterwards, the Most Holy Trinity, the Angelic Choirs, the other Blessed and the three interplanetary Apostles Elias, Henoah and Moses all disappeared. From the sleeping Immaculate Body of the Divine Mary, gloriously transfigured, there issued heavenly resplendence and indescribable aromas which inundated the area. All those present there, though in diverse degrees of clarity and intensity of vision, had been favoured with the visible presence of the Most Holy Trinity, the Angelic Choirs, the other Blessed and the three interplanetary Apostles; and all had heard the jubilant hymns of the heavenly spirits, who praised God and extolled the greatness of Mary.

4. For the duration of the Divine Mary’s Gentle Dormition, the three elements of Her Most Pure Person remained united: Her Soul, Her essential Body and Her accidental Body, as none of the three ever separated one from another. From the very instant of Mary’s Gentle Dormition, moreover, Her Divine Soul was freed forever from the passible state; Her Immaculate essential Body continued to participate in the beatific joy of Her Soul; and at the same time Her Soul continued to animate Her Immaculate accidental Body, communicating natural life to it, though that Body was insentient, deprived of all physical activity and lacked participation in the beatific joy of the Soul. Though Mary’s accidental Body was freed forever from the passible state from the very instant of Her Gentle Dormition, so that Her sole state was the glorious one, yet the Immaculate accidental Body continued externally to show certain passible qualities, for example weight, since it was convenient that She appear thus before the Apostles and the other members of the Church until She was Assumed into Heaven. The Gentle Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary redounded, in diverse manner, in unspeakable joy for the whole universe. The sun, full of luminosity, suddenly began to gyrate with indescribable agility and beauty in the firmament, causing astonishment to those who contemplated the prodigy. Furthermore, as the sublime light and aroma emanating from the sleeping Body of the Divine

Mary spread outside the Cenacle building, no few of Jerusalem's inhabitants gathered at the edifice in surprise and admiration. The Dormition of the Divine Co-Reparatrix and Co-Redemptrix gave rise to a goodly number of conversions, both in Jerusalem and in other places.

5. Pope Peter, the other eleven Apostles, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome and all the others present in the Cenacle, unaware of Most Holy Mary's state of Gentle Dormition, believed Her to be truly dead. Hence they resolved to give Her burial and obtain the necessary civil licence to do so.

Chapter IV

Mary's sleeping Body is taken from the Cenacle and conveyed to the Garden of Olives

At exactly 4 in the afternoon on that Friday the 13th of August in the year 57, Mary's Most Pure accidental sleeping Body, united to Her Soul and Her essential Body, was taken from the Cenacle in Jerusalem along the way to the Garden of Olives to receive burial. The funeral procession was organized in this way: first the men tertiaries, followed by the women tertiaries and then the nuns; next, twelve disciples carried on their shoulders Mary Most Holy sleeping on Her wooden bed, followed by Pope Peter, Apostle Paul to his right and Apostle John to his left; and behind, the other nine Apostles and the remaining men religious of the Carmelite Order. Along the way no few of Jerusalem's inhabitants joined the procession, some moved by a mysterious force, others by irresistible curiosity. The funeral procession took the following route: from the Cenacle they went to the Ophel district and then, leaving the city by the Fount Gate, they went down to the Cedron Valley. Then they followed the road from south to north between Cedron brook and the city walls. Once close to the present Saint Stephen's gate they crossed the small bridge over the Cedron, thus arriving at the grotto known today as the Sepulchre of the Virgin. Innumerable miracles were wrought as the Divine Mary passed by in Her state of Gentle Dormition, as many sick were cured, and no few Jews and Gentiles were enlightened in the Faith of Christ, acknowledging their errors and asking forgiveness for their sins. Besides, as Mary's Most Pure accidental Body emanated indescribable light and fragrance, the company of people forming the procession, and those who witnessed its passage, manifested their astonishment and admiration. God disposed everything so marvellously that the Jews most obstinate in perversity and hostility towards the Christians became as it were paralysed in their detestation of Christ's Church, without either spirit or strength to obstruct the ceremonies of that majestic funeral; during which the demons too found their seducing power on earth greatly diminished, and Lucifer in addition found himself utterly impotent in his malignant activity. Many were the other prodigious signs which the Most High wrought in Heaven and on earth while the Divine Mary was conveyed from the Cenacle to the

sepulchre; and no few of Jerusalem's population were able to contemplate a multitude of Angels who appeared up on high, chanting Mary's grandeur.

Chapter V

Arrival of the funeral cortège at the sepulchre grotto. Mary's Immaculate sleeping Body is placed on the mortuary stone.

On their return to the Cenacle, Thomas departs and leaves Jerusalem

1. At 5.30 in the afternoon on that Friday the 13th of August in the year 57, the funeral cortège conveying the Divine Mary in Her Sublime Dormition arrived at the sepulchre grotto in the Valley of Josaphat, beside the Garden of Olives. The twelve Apostles brought Mary's sleeping Immaculate Body into the grotto, and at 5.45 pm laid It on the mortuary stone prepared for the purpose. Many of the cortège were present at the moving scene, occupying a place of preference: Mary Cleophas, Mary Salome, Mary Magdalen, Martha, Lazarus, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, Agabus and Seraphia. While the angelic choirs unceasingly sang the glories of Mary, all those attending, before leaving the sepulchre, with holy emotion and profuse weeping revered the Divine Lady in Her state of Dormition, though believing Her to be dead. All hearts were overcome by inexpressible joy, together with inevitable grief on feeling themselves orphaned. This moving ceremony ended at 6 in the evening, when the burial grotto was closed and sealed. Shortly afterwards Apostle Paul was taken back to the prison in Caesarea Maritime by ministry of Archangel Saint Cediël. At Mary's sublime Dormition, the members of the Church felt themselves to be more intimately united to Pope Peter, Vicar of Christ and Vicar of Mary too; in whose papal paternity he encompasses both the Paternity of the Church's Most Divine Founder and the Maternity of her Divine Co-Foundress. By disposition of Pope Peter, turns of watch were arranged so that continuous prayer before the sepulchre not be lacking, thus to honour the Divine Mary laid there. At 6.15 pm the eleven Apostles, part of the disciples and a goodly number of the faithful returned to their different occupations in Jerusalem.

2. When they were in the Cenacle, Apostle Thomas, who had attended the ceremony of Divine Mary's burial, set about to consider the event, suddenly feeling perturbed and distressed, for he said to himself: "*It is impossible that death have dominion over Her.*" Thomas, then, in his customary mania for analysing everything, holding fast to his own criteria and without the help of prayer, attempted to reconcile the excellence and grandeur of the Divine Mary with the belief that She were dead, when he ought humbly to have left the clarification of that sublime mystery in the hands of God, as did Pope Peter and all the others. Such was the confusion the devil sowed in his mind that Thomas, plunged into profound desolation, crestfallen and pensive, took advantage of an occasion to leave the Cenacle unseen at 7.15 pm that same 13th of August in the year 57. He then departed from Jerusalem without

anyone knowing of his whereabouts until after the Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Therefore he was not present at this most glorious mystery.

Chapter VI

An angel informs Peter that all should assemble in front of the Divine Mary's sepulchre before dawn.

Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary into Heaven in Body and Soul

1. As Mary Most Holy desired that all Her children present in Jerusalem be witnesses of Her Glorious Assumption into Heaven, towards midnight beginning Sunday the 15th of August in the year 57, She sent an angel to Pope Peter while he prayed in the Cenacle chapel. On behalf of the Exalted Lady the heavenly messenger communicated to the Pope that all should assemble in front of Her sepulchre that day before dawn, so that, united in prayer, they be more especially prepared for the great event of Her Glorious Assumption into Heaven. Around 3 am, Thomas excepting, Peter, the other ten Apostles, the disciples and discipleses and the many faithful of Jerusalem were already gathered before the grotto of the Divine Mary's sepulchre, that is, outside the grotto. That Apostle Paul was also present at the Glorious Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Body and Soul into Heaven was due to God having granted him, for this purpose, the gift of bilocation; so that while in prison at Caesarea Maritime he was simultaneously present at so admirable an event. Elias, Henoah and Moses were present as well.

2. On Sunday the 15th of August in the year 57, at exactly 6 am, it being already day, the accidental Body of Mary Most Holy, ever united to Her Soul and essential Body, awoke from its Gentle Dormition gloriously transfigured on partaking now, and for evermore, in Her Divine Soul's beatific joy. Mary's Person, once upright upon the funeral stone, miraculously passed through the grotto's stone roof, till resting Her most pure feet upon the upper part of the exterior, briefly remaining thus. Those assembled there were unable to overcome their astonishment at the sudden appearance of the Divine Mary glorified, to whom the angelic myriads attributed celestial veneration, singing Her greatness. Before She ascended to the heights and thereby accomplished the mystery of Her Assumption into Heaven in Body and Soul, Mary addressed words of great consolation to all present, promising that though She had left this earthly life, She would ever be with them to guide them, as Mother She is of the Church. Then, simultaneously, She mysteriously embraced all Her children gathered there, moment at which She gave each interiorly to understand the secret of Her Gentle Dormition; accordingly, from then on they knew that Mary had not died, though this would afterwards be confirmed for all by Pope Peter. Next, the interplanetary Apostles Elias and Henoah placed themselves respectively to the right and

left of the Divine Mary, with Apostle Moses very close to them, though at the time the three Bishops remained invisible to the others. After the Most Holy Virgin Mary had comforted Her children by Her motherly words, while blessing them She ascended into Heaven by the virtue proper to Her glorious nature, and not by any ministry of the multitude of angels who accompanied Her while they sang: *“Mary is assumed into Heaven. Who is She who rises up from the desert like the lily of the valley, like the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, full of light and majesty?”* The Most Holy Trinity then appeared on high surrounded by the angelic myriads and other Blessed, in order officially to receive the Queen and Mistress of the Universe into the eternal mansions.

3. When Mary Most Holy arrived at the royal throne of the Most August Trinity, there the Three Divine Persons received Her with an eternal embrace. The Eternal Father said to Her: *“My Daughter, ascend higher than all creatures: My Elect, My Dove.”* The Divine Word Incarnate said to Her: *“My Mother, from whom I received My Sacred Body, and who continued My works in most perfect imitation, now receive from My hands the reward You have merited.”* The Holy Ghost said to Her: *“My most loving Spouse, enter into the eternal joy that befits Your most faithful love and enjoy it without cares, as the winter of suffering has now passed and You have arrived at the eternal possession of Our embraces.”* Mary Most Holy remained there before the Three Divine Persons, absorbed and immersed in the infinite ocean of the Divinity. After the August Trinity, by this triple praise, had highlighted the greatness of Mary in the presence of the angels, the other Blessed and the faithful assembled before the sepulchre, the Eternal Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost placed a majestic imperial crown upon the Immaculate Head of the August Lady, She thus being crowned as Queen of Heaven and Earth; for though this lofty prerogative was given to Mary at the creation of Her Divine Soul, it was necessary that Her sublime royalty be officially manifested in the sight of all. Immediately after Mary Most Holy was crowned, the Eternal Father and the Holy Ghost disappeared; and with Her standing to the right of Her Divine Son, He presented to all His Exalted Mother invested with sovereign royalty, the two becoming hidden from mortal eyes a short while later.

4. At the same instant, however, that Mary Most Holy accompanied by Her Divine Son became hidden up on high in order to manifest to those present Her official entry into Heaven, the Prophets Elias and Henoah, hitherto concealed, became visible to the Apostles and the others assembled before the sepulchre of the Virgin, and said: *“Men of Galilee, what are you gazing at in Heaven? This Mary, who in your sight has ascended into Heaven, will come back just as you have seen Her go up into Heaven”* The Prophet and Legislator Moses also became visible to the Apostles and other faithful of the Church there present, the three disappearing a little later. All those

assembled before the sepulchre, each according to his degree of vision, contemplated awestruck the indescribable reception the August Trinity gave to the Exalted Lady. Joseph Most Holy was visibly present at the Assumption and Coronation of his Virginal Spouse Mary, occupying in the sight of all the corresponding most distinguished place after Hers.

5. The accidental body of Joseph Most Holy, along with the accidental bodies of the other just who had risen when Christ rose, and which had been in gentle dormition ever since the Lord's admirable Ascension, awoke at the very moment that Mary Most Holy, from the upper exterior part of the grotto, began to rise up into Heaven in Body and Soul.

6. Following the glorious Assumption of Mary Most Holy into Heaven, Pope Peter, the other ten Apostles, as Thomas was missing, and all the other eye witnesses to that sublime mystery, returned overjoyed to the Cenacle, though moved and tearful at now being without the company of their Divine Mother and Mistress. Shortly afterwards Paul disappeared when his bilocation ceased. The Church's other members scattered throughout the nations participated in the mystery of the Most Holy Virgin Mary's Assumption in different ways, to their great jubilee and strengthening.

Chapter VII

Apostle Thomas returns to the Jerusalem Cenacle. The Apostle's repentance

That 15th of August in the year 57, once the Most Holy Virgin Mary had been Assumed into Heaven, Apostle Thomas returned to the Cenacle in the evening. He was informed by Apostle Peter, the other Apostles and many others that the Divine Mary had been Assumed into Heaven after awakening from Her Gentle Dormition, and that therefore She had not died. As Thomas did not understand the mystery of Mary's Dormition, and nobody spoke to him of Her resurrection, he tried to analyse why Mary had been Assumed into Heaven without a prior resurrection and sojourn with them on earth in imitation of Her Divine Son before His admirable Ascension. Thomas again felt disturbed and wretched through his incomprehension and doubt; though it is true that on this occasion the Apostle's doubting lasted but a short while, for instead of wandering about the streets, on Peter's advice he went to the tabernacle where he prayed for three hours, at the end of which his soul was sublimely illuminated, understanding with perfect clarity that the Most Holy Virgin Mary had not died, but had been gently sleeping, and as well the mystery of Her glorious Assumption into Heaven. In the presence of all, Thomas immediately threw himself at Apostle Peter's feet, kissed them and publicly asked pardon for having sinned grievously in wilfully abandoning the religious life of the community, and for not having placed the required confidence in the Pope's word. After receiving Peter's pardon, Thomas was favoured by an apparition of the Divine Mary, who addressing him said: "*Thomas, Thomas, my beloved son, you must analyse less and pray more.*"

After these maternal words were uttered, the Apostle, kneeling and with abundant tears, said to the Most Holy Virgin Mary just these sublime words: “*My Lady and my Mother!*” At once the Divine Mary blessed him, embraced him maternally and disappeared.

Chapter VIII

Third Ecumenical Council of Jerusalem

1. To fulfil the express desire of Our Lord Jesus Christ, made known to the Church through the Divine Mary before Her Assumption into Heaven, Pope Peter, in the Cenacle at Jerusalem on the 17th of August in the year 57, promulgated the celebration of the Third Ecumenical Council of the Church, which was to be preceded by nine days of special prayers and sacrifices, starting on that very day. The Council Fathers who took part in the discussions and resolutions numbered forty-eight: Pope Peter, the Apostles Paul, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the Less, Thaddeus, Simon and Matthias. Among other Bishops also taking part, were: Agabus, Barnabas, Luke, Lazarus, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, Timothy, Mark, Silas and Nicholas. That Apostle Paul was present at Holy Jerusalem Council III was thanks to a supervised release obtained from the Roman authorities, by means of a monetary bail handed over by a group of Christians. Paul made the journey guarded by several Roman soldiers, joining the other Apostles in the Cenacle on the aforementioned date. There he was discretely guarded from outside by the soldiers.

2. The Third Ecumenical Council of Jerusalem was celebrated in the Cenacle. The sessions began on the 26th of August in the year 57 and ended on the 19th of September in the same year; that is, the sessions lasted twenty-five days. Moments before the sessions of the Council began, Pope Peter required of Apostles Paul and James the Less that, prostrate at his feet, they publicly ask pardon for all their dissembling and judaizing acts, so that it be quite clear that the two acknowledged their past errors and retracted them.

3. The doctrinal and disciplinary matters dealt with and decided at the Third Ecumenical Council were, among others: Infallibly reaffirmed and declared were the most fundamental aspects of the mystery of the Trinity: Unity in Essence and Trinity in Persons. Infallibly reaffirmed and declared were the most fundamental aspects of the mystery of the Divine Word made Man: Christ, true God and true Man. Infallibly reaffirmed and declared were the mysteries of the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. Infallibly declared was the reparatory and redemptory value of the Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary and of the unbloody Sacrifice perpetuating it, namely Holy Mass. Infallibly reaffirmed and declared was the real and true presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and while the real and true presence of Mary in the Eucharist was not infallibly taught then, this mystery was generally held by Christians. Reaffirmed and infallibly declared was the doctrine on the Sacraments

instituted by Christ, and the rite proper to each of them was further consolidated. Infallibly reaffirmed and declared were the most fundamental aspects of Christ's Mystical Body, and the absolute necessity of being members of the Church to attain salvation. Devotion to and veneration of the Most Holy Virgin Mary were likewise promulgated. The obligation of priestly celibacy was also reaffirmed and decreed. The pain of excommunication was applied to those Priests and friars who did not observe sacred celibacy, instituted and required by Christ and put into practice by the Church. Circumcision, which as a religious rite was already forbidden to Christians under pain of excommunication, was now forbidden for any other reason and under the same penalty; that is, Christians come from judaism, or any other faithful, would incur excommunication if they practised circumcision, for example, for racial, civil or social reasons. But those surgical operations necessary for reasons of health or conjugal life did not enter into the concept of circumcision and were therefore permitted. Christian faithful come from judaism, and the faithful in general, were forbidden under pain of excommunication to enter the jewish temple of Jerusalem and the synagogues, to participate in jewish rites or worship; and any other manifestation by word or deed contrary to the Christian Faith. By this measure the same prohibitions were now imposed on Christian faithful of jewish origin that had been imposed at Jerusalem Council II on Christians come from gentiledom; since there, as we know, the latter were forbidden, under pain of excommunication, to participate in idolatrous worship and rites, and therefore to enter pagan temples. The obligation imposed on Christians of Gentile origin to abstain from eating the meat of animals killed without shedding blood, and from animal blood, as commanded by the Law of Moses, was abolished. The complete break of the Church of Christ with the jewish apostate church or synagogue of Satan was declared. Peter, inspired by the Holy Ghost, proposed the drafting of the Holy Gospel, in which the mysteries of the Life, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ were to be compiled. The dispositions of Jerusalem Council III were recorded in several documents, of which corresponding copies were made to be taken to the different dioceses. All the doctrinal and disciplinary matters dealt with and approved at Jerusalem Council III had been recommended to Peter by the Most Holy Virgin Mary prior to Her Assumption into Heaven.

Chapter IX

Apostasy of Bishop Nicholas

At the Third Holy Council of Jerusalem, Bishop Nicholas, one of the first seven Deacons, who was not present in the Cenacle during the apotheotic Coming of the Holy Ghost, definitively apostatized. This apostasy had the following antecedents: though in the beginning Nicholas attained distinction

for his wisdom and priestly fervour, being an example of virtue and submission to the Church, he gradually forsook his upright conscience and gave way to worldliness, to the point of trying to combine the priesthood and religious life with licentiousness rather than mortify his passions. His aversion to celibacy became such that he was forever seeking some pretext to free himself from this requirement, without finding any. On several occasions he had to be admonished by his own fellow Priests, since he surreptitiously tried to influence them to endorse his deviations. He openly manifested his iniquitous propositions at Jerusalem Council III, trying to persuade the other Council Fathers to abolish Sacred Priestly Celibacy. Pope Peter, with great patience and tender affection, first sought to dissuade Nicholas from his errors, in order to draw him to the true doctrine. Neither Peter's paternal attitude nor the exhortations of the other Council Fathers were of any use, as Nicholas remained steadfast in his obstinacy, attempting furthermore to convince all that Christ had not instituted celibacy, much less required it, since that went against nature owing to man's natural inclinations, impossible to restrain outside matrimony. Following a long and heated debate Pope Peter reaffirmed the Church's doctrine concerning celibacy, requiring it under pain of excommunication, and in those terms ordered it to be included as one of the Council canons. Peter's firm attitude provoked Nicholas to anger against the Church, and the Pope anathematized and expelled him. On leaving the Cenacle Nicholas drew after him some friars in favour of his own errors, who followed him into apostasy. Nicholas was afterwards founder of the nicholites, an infamous sect which promoted heresies and the corruption of no few priests. Bishop Nicholas was the great father of all heresiarchs, and lamentably damned himself.

Chapter X

Paul returns to his prison in Caesarea Maritime. Peter, on his journey to Rome, tours Asia Minor and Greece.

Fifth persecution of Christ's Church by the sanhedrin. Death and resurrection of Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome

1. Following the great success of Jerusalem Council III, Pope Peter, the missionary Apostles and the many other Bishops assembled there began to leave for their respective missions. First to do so was Apostle Paul who left for his prison in Caesarea Maritime on the 21st of September, guarded by several Roman soldiers. On the 30th of September, Peter started out on his return to Rome, accompanied by his retinue, including Apostle John who, however, was to remain at Ephesus to rule over the Christian communities in the Asia region as their Patriarch. Pope Peter, before reaching Rome, Apostolic See of the Church, spent three months traversing several dioceses in Asia Minor and Greece, especially those least visited by him.

2. In the middle of October that year 57, while Pope Peter traversed Asia Minor and Greece on his way to Rome, in Jerusalem took place the sanhedrin's fifth persecution of the members of Christ's Church resident there. The prodigies seen in Jerusalem on the occasion of the Gentle Dormition and Assumption of Mary Most Holy, the celebration of the Third Council, and the gathering together of Peter, the other missionary Apostles and many other Bishops and faithful of the Church for these events, exceedingly alarmed the sanhedrin; which though not acting openly against the Christians then, did so days later when a good part of those come to Jerusalem had returned to their missions. This persecution was instigated by apostate bishop Nicholas, who like a new Judas Iscariot presented himself before impious high priest Ananias and his sanhedritic council to incite them against the Church of Christ, which became the victim of renewed persecution. As the sanhedritic council knew that Procurator Felix, who resided in Caesarea Maritime, was not partial to bloodshed, the sanhedrin carried out this new persecution more cautiously, though no less effectively on that account, suborning no few Roman soldiers; who falsely alleged that their intervention was to suppress possible sedition by Christians against the empire. Many members of Christ's Church were exiled from Jerusalem, and others departed in view of threats from their persecutors. God made use of this persecution so that the Gospel might be spread to other places where it had not yet arrived or was little known. The repressive measures of the sanhedrin against the Christians ceased shortly before the year 57 ended. During this persecution Bishop Lazarus and his sisters Mary Magdalen and Martha, among others, were deported; they were taken as prisoners to the port of Jaffa, and then along with many other Christians put on board a ship expressly rendered unfit for navigation so that, left to the mercy of the waves, they might perish at sea. But in a few days the ship miraculously arrived at the port of Marseille, France, city which was evangelized by Lazarus, its first Bishop, and where Martha founded a community of Carmelite nuns, while Mary Magdalen retired to a solitary place to live and die as a penitent nun, becoming a model of contemplative life. In collaboration with Bishop Lazarus, Martha carried out a great apostolate throughout the south-east of France. The others who miraculously arrived with the three members of the Bethany family at the port of Marseille, including Bishops, friars, nuns and lay faithful, spread through different parts of Europe: some ruling dioceses, others founding Carmelite convents, and in general all dedicating themselves to the propagation of the Gospel, each according to his state of life. Among those who had to leave Jerusalem because of the persecution were Joseph of Arimathea who, travelling towards the north of Europe, became the first Bishop to evangelize England; and Martial who, going to France, became the first Bishop of Limoges.

3. Despite this persecution by the sanhedrin, James the Less stayed on in Jerusalem, continuing to be respected by the Jews because of the sympathy he enjoyed among them. Besides other friars and nuns, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, sisters of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, also stayed on there. The two sisters died peacefully in the Cenacle of Jerusalem at 3 in the afternoon of the 8th of December that year 57, and thus was fulfilled their ardent desire to be reunited as soon as possible in Heaven with their most beloved Sister, the Divine Mary. They were both buried in the grotto of the sepulchre of the Virgin, in the Garden of Olives, where they remained four days; since on the 12th of the same month and year their respective essential and accidental bodies rose from the dead, participating in Heaven from that same moment in their souls' beatific glory.

Chapter XI

Pope Peter's arrival in Rome, where he remains about a year. Peter's fresh apostolic journey throughout Europe

1. Pope Peter, following his departure from Jerusalem and after a three months' apostolic journey, arrived in Rome on the 30th of December in the year 57. At the Pope's return to the Apostolic See of the Church, Christianity spread much farther, not only in the capital of the Roman empire, but in other parts of Italy as well, since those were the early years of Nero's reign, a peaceable man at the time. Peter stayed about a year in Rome, dedicated to multiplying the Christian communities, further consolidating those already in existence, and propagating by messenger the dictates of Jerusalem Council III in those regions which had no chance of knowing them by other means.

2. After this sojourn in Rome, on the 8th of December in the year 58, Pope Peter undertook a new and long apostolic journey throughout Europe, accompanied by a retinue of seven Bishops, among whom was Sidonius. On the journey the Vicar of Christ preached the Gospel in all the towns he visited. First he went to France, entering by the port of Marseille on the 15th of December. In this city he visited Bishop Lazarus and his sisters Mary Magdalen and Martha. Afterwards he also went on to Limoges, the diocese ruled by Bishop Martial, following which he visited, among others, the cities of Toulouse, Lyon and Paris. After an excellent apostolate through France, the great fisher of men embarked for England on the 15th of June in the year 59, crossing the English Channel, and in Glastonbury visited Joseph of Arimathea, first Bishop of this town. Afterwards he travelled on to different parts of England, preaching the Gospel including in London; embarking at this port on the 10th of October in the same year 59, arriving two days later in what today is the Belgian port of Ostend. After touring the land of Belgium he entered Holland, going as far as the port of Rotterdam. After an apostolate of more than two months in both lands, on the 17th of December that same

year, navigating up the waters of the Rhine he entered Germany, where he evangelized the cities of Cologne, Trier and Mainz. Peter left Sidonius in Trier in charge of the Christian community existent there, he being the first Bishop of that city. Following a stay in Strasbourg, Pope Peter entered Switzerland via the city of Basle; and after touring Switzerland went back again to Germany visiting Augsburg. On the 15th of August in the year 60, Pope Peter set out for what today is Austria, visiting, among others, the cities of Salzburg and Vienna; and, when in the Austrian province of Carinthia, headed for Italy again.

Chapter XII

Procurator Felix is replaced in office by Portius Festus. Festus has Paul brought up before his court. Paul appeals to Caesar

1. On the 18th of June in the year 59, after taking up his post as Roman procurator, Portius Festus, to curry the jews' favour, did not trouble to free Paul from prison, though knowing he was there owing to the sanhedrin's malice. Rather, on the 21st of June in that year 59, that is, three days after taking up his post, he left Caesarea Maritime for Jerusalem, arriving there on the 23rd of the same month; since he considered it of prime importance that in this city his authority be accredited by the members of the sanhedritic council, with whom he at once had an interview. The jewish authorities deemed this the propitious moment to ask Festus that Paul be brought up to Jerusalem to be judged there; in reality they intended to prepare an ambush and murder him on the way. The procurator, who did not trust the sanhedrin, replied that Paul was well guarded in Caesarea Maritime, to where Festus was about to depart as soon as possible, and therefore some of the leading jews should go to Caesarea Maritime as well, to accuse Paul before his court, that is if he were guilty of any offence. Having sojourned eight days in Jerusalem, Festus left the city on the 1st of July, and arrived in Caesarea Maritime two days later. On the 4th of July in the year 59, the procurator, seated in court, ordered Paul to be brought in. The jews who had come from Jerusalem accused the Apostle of many grievous offences which they were unable to prove, and he defended himself saying that neither against the law of the jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar had he committed any offence. But Festus, wishing to ingratiate himself with the jews, said to Paul: *"Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem to be judged there of these things by them before me?"* Paul replied: *"I am before the tribunal of Caesar's representative, which is where I ought to be judged. You know that I have not committed the slightest offence against the jews. Were I to have done them some wrong, or something deserving of death, I would not refuse to die. According to my conscience, I have committed none of the offences of which I am accused by the sanhedrites; and since I have done nothing of all they*

charge me with, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” Then Festus, after consulting with his advisers, replied: *“You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!”* In the self-defence made to free himself from death, Paul manifested not having committed any offence, neither against Jewish law nor against the temple nor against Caesar. In this he neither lied nor dissembled, since the fact of having previously preached condemning Jewish rites and the temple of Jerusalem, as they were no longer sacred owing to the apostasy of the Jewish church, in him implied no offence at all, for he had proceeded in truth and rectitude of conscience in accordance with the Faith in Christ he professed.

2. On the 24th of July in that year 59, after his recent return from Rome, King Herod Agrippa II, with his concubine Berenice, visited Procurator Festus, who spoke to the king about Paul’s case, saying: *“Felix left prisoner here a man called Paul, about whom the members of the Sanhedrin came to me when I was in Jerusalem, asking me to condemn him to death. I replied to them that the Romans were not accustomed to condemn a man without his accusers being present before the accused, and without giving him the opportunity to defend and justify himself against the charges. Some of those Jewish officials having come here, without the least delay I sat in court and ordered the accused man to be brought in. When his accusers appeared, however, they did not impute to him any offence against Caesar and his empire, nor any other kind of offence for which he might deserve to be charged. They had against him only some religious matters concerning a certain deceased Jesus, whom Paul followed, and who Paul affirmed to be alive. Perplexed at a case of this nature, I asked the accused if he wanted to go to Jerusalem, to be judged of these things by them before me. But as Paul lodged an appeal for his case to be heard in trial before Caesar Augustus, I gave the order that he be remanded in custody until sending him to Caesar.”* King Herod Agrippa II then said to Festus: *“I too would like to hear this man.”* Festus replied: *“Tomorrow you will hear him.”*

Chapter XIII

Apostle Paul appears before the bicephalous court of Herod Agrippa II and Procurator Portius Festus

1. On the 25th of July that year 59, having arrived at the praetorium of Caesarea Maritime, with great pomp King Herod Agrippa II and Berenice entered the audience hall with the tribunes and principal persons of the city. Festus, when Paul had been brought in by his order, said: *“King Agrippa, and all of you who are here present, see here this man against whom the Jewish people appealed to me in Jerusalem for him to be handed over to them, and then here in Caesarea, when he was judged before me, vociferously demanded his death. But I did not find in him anything deserving of death. Since he himself has appealed to Caesar Augustus, I have*

resolved to send him. As I have nothing clear to write to the emperor about him, I have had him brought into your presence, chiefly to you, O King Agrippa, so that, examining him, I may have something to write; because it seems to me unwarranted to send a man as prisoner to be judged without a report containing well-founded charges.”

2. Herod Agrippa II then said to Paul: *“I give you leave to speak in your defence.”* Paul, motioning with his hand, began his discourse, saying among other things: *“O King Agrippa, today I have the good fortune to be able to defend myself before you against the accusations of the jews; above all because you know their customs and affairs. I ask of you, then, that you listen to me patiently. All the jews know how I lived in Jerusalem among my people in my youth; and if they wish to give testimony, they know from times past that I lived as a pharisee, in accordance with the sect that I thought best-founded in the jewish religion. Now I am brought to trial, O king, accused by the jews, because the promise made by God to my fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has been fulfilled; which fulfilment the thirteen tribes of Israel awaited, serving God day and night. The fulfilment of this promise is Jesus, the Christ Son of God, prophesied in the Scriptures, who came into this world, taught the doctrine I now preach, suffered an ignominious death, and afterwards rose by virtue of His divine power. What then? Is it considered an incredible thing among the jews of the pharisee sect that God brings the dead back to life? I myself have persecuted this Lord Jesus, on being persuaded, in my obstinacy, that I should act with hostility against the name of Jesus the Nazarene. This I did in Jerusalem, where I put many of His followers in prison, using the power I received from the sanhedrin to do so, and when they were put to death I too gave my consent. I violently dragged men and women out from their homes, and brought them to the synagogues to torture them there and compel them to blaspheme by force of punishment; and more enraged against them each day, I persecuted them as well in foreign cities. One day, going to Damascus on this mission, with powers and commission from the sanhedrin, at midday, O King Agrippa, I saw on the way a light in the heavens which surpassed the brightness of the sun, and which enveloped me and my companions. All of us having fallen to the ground, I heard a voice that said to me in the Hebrew language: ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’. And I asked: ‘Who are you, Lord?’. Then a Man, filled with majesty and glory, revealed himself visibly to me, answering me at the same time: ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute. Difficult it is for you to withstand the might of My power’. I said: ‘Lord, what would You have me do?’. He answered me: ‘Stand up, and arise as a new man in the service of My Church; for I have appeared so as to draw you out of the apostasy of the jewish people, preserve you from the paganism of the gentiles, appoint you as My Minister, and be witness to the things you have seen, and to those I will show you in My future apparitions. I send you now*

to those of the Jewish people and to those of the Gentile people, that you may open their eyes to the true Faith in order that they be converted from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God; and thus receive pardon for their sins and inheritance among the saints through the Faith which is in Me'. Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, rather I preached firstly to the jews and Gentiles of Damascus, and afterwards to those of Jerusalem, and throughout all Israel and many other nations, so that they might be converted to the Faith of the Lord Jesus, doing worthy deeds of penance. For this reason the jews seized me while I was in the temple of Jerusalem, seeking to kill me. But, assisted by God's help, I continue giving testimony to the Gospel Faith to great and lowly until the present day, by which I teach nothing other than those things that Moses and the other prophets said were to occur, when they foretold that Christ was to suffer, and would be the first to rise from among the dead, and that He was to announce the Light to the jewish people and to the Gentiles."

3. Though Procurator Portius Festus knew a little about the course of Paul's life from information given to him by his predecessor Procurator Felix, nevertheless, until now he had not heard it from the Apostle's lips nor in such detail. Thus, when the discourse ended, Festus said in a loud voice: *"You are crazy, Paul. Your much learning has unbalanced your judgment."* Paul replied: *"I am not crazy, excellent Festus, rather I speak words of truth and good sense. You have knowledge of these things, King Agrippa, in whose presence I speak with complete freedom; for I believe that you are aware of all this; since what I preach about Jesus occurred in public; and what I tell about my life is well known, seeing that I never acted in secret."* As Paul observed that King Herod Agrippa II had listened to his discourse with a certain degree of attention, he said to him: *"Do you believe, O King Agrippa, in the prophets? I know that you believe in them."* Then Agrippa, smiling, said to Paul with astute irony: *"But a little and you persuade me to become a Christian."* To this Paul replied: *"Please God that not a little, but that nothing be lacking so that not only you, but everyone as well who hears me, become today as I am, though without these chains."* Following these words, Procurator Festus, King Herod Agrippa II and Berenice and all who were seated with them rose up; and retiring from there, spoke among themselves, saying: *"This man has done nothing for which he should die, or be prisoner."* Agrippa said to Festus: *"If he had not appealed to Caesar, this man could well be set at liberty."*

Chapter XIV

Apostle Paul is taken aboard ship to Italy. A storm at sea and danger of shipwreck.

Miraculous multiplication of bread. Paul arrives at the island of Malta

1. So Procurator Festus, in agreement with King Herod Agrippa II, resolved to send Paul to Italy for him to lodge his appeal before Caesar, and handed him over, together with other prisoners, to a centurion of the Augustus cohort by name of Julius. On the 1st of August in the year 59, Paul, with other prisoners entrusted to the centurion's custody, was put on board a ship coming from the town of Adramyttium, in the Asia Minor region of Mysia, then anchored in the harbour of Caesarea Maritime. By permission of Procurator Festus, disciples Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul. After a day's sailing the ship arrived at the Phoenician port of Sidon on the 2nd of August. In that city Paul was permitted to visit some Christian faithful and provide himself with what was necessary to continue the voyage.

2. On the 17th of that month of August, the ship bringing Paul and the others left the port of Sidon. Owing to adverse winds, the helmsman was forced to change course and sail through the sea of Cilicia, between Cyprus and Asia Minor. After crossing the sea of Cilicia, leaving the region of Pamphylia to starboard, they put into harbour at Myra of Lycia. On the 14th of September in the year 59, the centurion who had custody of Paul booked passages on a ship from Alexandria bound for Italy, to which he transferred Paul, his two disciples and the others also in his custody. After several days' sailing, when the town of Gnidus of Caria was sighted in the distance, adverse winds drove the ship towards the island of Crete; and the vessel, hugging its coast, rounded Cape Salmonis. After laboriously navigating the length of the coast, on the 1st of October in the year 59 they arrived at Fair Havens, close to the Cretan town of Lasia. Owing to strong winds and other troubles a long time had been spent on the voyage as far as there; and as it was already autumn and navigation was hazardous, since the season of dense mists and storms was approaching, Paul said to the ship's helmsman and captain: *"Gentlemen, seeing that navigation is going to be increasingly difficult, and of great detriment, not only to the ship and her cargo, but also to our lives, it is preferable that we stay here until winter passes."* As those in charge of the ship's navigation did not heed this warning, however, and the centurion gave more credence to them, especially as they did not consider that town suitable for spending the winter, the opinion of them all was that they should go on to the port of Phenice, today called Port Lutrus, in Crete itself, with the intention of spending the winter there, being a place where the winds were moderate for anchored ships. On the 4th of October in that year 59, while the ship was still moored in the port near Lasia, a wind favourable to navigation arose; so they weighed anchor thinking they would arrive without difficulty at the port of Phenice. While they were hugging the

coast off the island of Crete, however, the ship was assailed by a furious wind, and unable to resist its force was driven along in such a way that it could not enter the port of Phenice, but was borne on by the wind and swept towards the isle of Cauda, and with great difficulty they managed to haul in the skiff or lifeboat tied behind the ship before it broke up or was carried away by the wind. The sailors manoeuvred as best they could, fearful of running into a sandbank, reefed the sails and let the ship be carried along by the waves. Fear took hold of them, for the storm grew ever fiercer, so that a day later, 5th of October, they threw part of the ship's cargo overboard, and the following day, 6th of October, had to jettison including the ship's tackle. Amid adverse and disagreeable weather, since for many days they saw neither sun nor stars, drifting now off course, without rest, without eating, and with little hope of survival, Paul, standing amid the crew, said: *"In truth, companions, it would have been better to have followed my advice not to leave the port near Lasia, whereby this danger and damage would have been avoided. But I urge you to be of good cheer, for not one of you shall perish, but only the ship. This night an angel of the God in whom I believe and whom I serve appeared to me, saying: 'Do not fear, Paul, it is necessary that you appear before Caesar, and by a grace given to you none of the ship's occupants will perish.' Therefore, companions, be of good cheer, because I trust in my God that it will turn out as promised. Doubtless we will soon come to an island."*

3. In the early morning of the 19th of October in that year 59, that is, fourteen days after throwing part of the ship's cargo overboard, while sailing the sea at night, the sailors, suspecting that land was close, cast out the sounding line which showed a depth of twenty fathoms of water, and a little further on just fifteen. Fearing that the ship would run aground on a sandbank, however, to avoid forward movement they dropped four anchors from the stern, waiting impatiently for daybreak. The sailors, eager to abandon ship in the skiff or lifeboat, lowered it into the sea on the pretext of moving the prow anchors a little further out. Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers: *"If those men do not stay on board, you cannot be saved."* The soldiers then cut the moorings of the skiff and let it drift away.

4. As they had been fasting because of the tempest, and moreover the ship's turbulent rolling had made it impossible to prepare any food, at daybreak Paul entreated all to eat something, saying: *"We are now fourteen days without eating or taking anything. I therefore entreat you to eat, because not so much as a single hair of the head of any of you will perish."* This said, Paul, taking bread, the leftover of what had been baked days previously, giving thanks to God in the presence of all, broke it, and suddenly it was multiplied into numerous pieces of bread, tasty and soft, as though recently drawn out of the oven, he eating first to show that the food was real and

edible, and not merely fantasy as some might have thought. At the sight of the miracle, all took heart and ate; so that the two hundred and seventy-six persons aboard ship had their fill, and besides a good quantity of bread was left over. Thus fortified, and seeing moreover the reserves of bread to eat, they parted with the provisions of wheat they carried, throwing it overboard with the object of lightening the ship. Paul's miracle drew some to the Faith of Christ, who received baptism.

5. That same day, the 19th of October in that year 59, now broad daylight, the crew saw a cove with a beach, where they decided to run the ship gently aground, if they could. With anchors weighed and stern sails hoisted to take the required wind, they gradually neared the beach sighted, unaware that it was an island. When nearing the beach, as they did not notice a hidden sandbank, the ship suddenly ran aground, and with the jolting broke apart until battered into pieces. The Roman soldiers, seeing that the prisoners could take flight by swimming, were of the opinion that they should kill them. This was prevented by the centurion, as he wished to save Paul. So he ordered all who could swim to reach safety on land, and those who could not, to reach shore upon boards and wreckage of the ship; and thus all managed to reach safety; whereby was fulfilled Paul's prediction that none would perish. On that day, 19th of October that year 59, all took refuge in this fashion on the island, which they later found out was Malta.

Chapter XV

Paul's fruitful apostolate and miracles in Malta. Conversion of Procurator Publius. Paul reaches Rome

1. On that 19th of October in the year 59, now saved from shipwreck, when they set foot on land, they learned that they were on an island called Malta. The inhabitants, called barbarians by the Greeks and Romans since they spoke neither of their languages, treated Paul and all with great consideration; for they lighted a great bonfire as well and told them all to come near and warm themselves as it was cold and rainy. Paul having collected some vine shoots did not realize that a viper was entangled in them. So, on throwing them onto the fire, the reptile, fleeing from the heat, bit his hand, from which it remained dangling. The barbarians, contemplating the reptile hanging from Paul's hand, said one to another: "*Doubtless this man is a murderer; for, having been saved from the sea, the goddess of vengeance does not want him to live.*" As they saw that Paul had come as a prisoner in the custody of soldiers, on witnessing now the incident of the viper, they believed that for his crimes he was being persecuted to death by the pagan deity of the island; and though he had come through the shipwreck unharmed, he would not now escape alive from the venomous bite. Paul shook the viper off into the fire and felt no ill effect whatsoever. The barbarians expected that he would begin to swell up from the effect of the

venom and suddenly fall down dead. After waiting a long while, however, as all saw that no harm had befallen him, filled with admiration they took Paul to be a god.

2. Near that place the Roman procurator, Publius by name, had some possessions. He lodged Paul at his home for three days, together with Luke and Aristarchus, treating them with every kindness. It chanced that Publius's father was in bed afflicted by fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him; and praying and laying his hands upon him, cured him. As a result of this miracle father and son were converted to Christianity. When the miracle became known, many of the sick on the island came to Paul and were cured, and lavished attentions on him. Apostle Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus, stayed for three months on the island of Malta, where they accomplished a great apostolate, obtained many conversions and established a Christian community. Before departing, Paul conferred the Holy Orders of the Diaconate, Presbyterate and Episcopate on Publius, leaving him there as the first Bishop of Malta, diocese which he ruled for thirty years. The inhabitants of the island of Malta, thankful to Paul for the good he had done them, provided him with everything necessary to continue his voyage.

3. On the 19th of January in the year 60, the dangerous winter season for sailing now past, Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus, guarded by the centurion and the other soldiers, at Malta's chief port boarded a ship coming from Alexandria bearing the ensign of Castor and Pollux; and arrived at Syracuse on the island of Sicily the following day, where they stayed three days. On the 22nd of the same month they left Syracuse, and next day stopped at the town of Rhegium Calabrium, on the Straights of Messina. They left this port the following day and two days later, namely on the 26th of January in the year 60, reached the port of Pozzuoli, beside present-day Naples, where they encountered some brethren in the Faith. These brethren entreated Paul to remain in their company for seven days, and the Apostle consented. Leaving Pozzuoli on the 2nd of February, Paul, Luke and Aristarchus set out overland for Rome, where they arrived on the 5th of February that year. The Christians of Rome, who had been notified by those of Pozzuoli that the Apostle was shortly to arrive in the empire capital, came out to meet him, some in the town of Three Taverns, today called Cisterna, and others in Appii Forum, a town now called San Donato, a little further from Rome than the other. When Paul saw them he felt heartened and gave thanks to God. When in Rome the Apostle was placed in the hands of the prefect of the praetorium, called Aphronius Burrhus, a person of great prestige before Emperor Nero, who permitted him to rent a private house where he lived under the vigilance of a Roman soldier. Therefore he was not taken to any prison of the empire.

Chapter XVI

Apostle Paul, in his prison house at Rome, preaches on Christ to the leading jews. Paul presents his appeal to Caesar

1. On the 8th of February in the year 60, that is three days after Paul had arrived at Rome with Luke and Aristarchus, he invited the leading jews of the city to his own house with the aim of speaking to them about the Faith of Christ. When they were together he said to them: *“Worthy brethren, I have not committed any type of political, social or common offence against the jewish people. And though as Christ’s Minister I have condemned those practices, rites and precepts of Mosaic law opposed to Evangelical Law, neither does this activity of mine imply any offence at all, since I have acted with veracity and uprightness in accord with my duty. Despite my innocence, in Jerusalem I was seized by the jews and delivered up to the Romans, who interrogated me; but having informed themselves about me, they wished then to set me free, not finding anything for which I should die. Faced with the opposition of the jews, I was obliged to appeal to Caesar; not with the intention of accusing my persecutors, since I had forgiven them.”* Paul thus made it quite clear that he was a prisoner in Rome because of the sanhedrin’s malice towards him, having brought so much pressure to bear on the civil courts, who considered him innocent, that he had been obliged to appeal to Caesar for fear that those courts would capitulate before the sanhedrin’s malice; and that his mission before Caesar was to lodge his appeal so that his innocence might be officially acknowledged and he be set at liberty, which he longed to regain in order to return to his intense evangelical apostolate. Paul concluded saying to his guests: *“For this motive I have called you, to meet and speak with you so you may thus know that for Christ the Son of God, the hope of Israel, of whom I give testimony, I find myself as though in chains”*; meaning that he found himself a prisoner in his house, though as such not in chains there, yet unable to go out freely; and that when he went into town he was always tied by one hand to the soldier charged with guarding him. The invited jews replied to Paul: *“We ourselves have not received letters from our nation against you, nor have any of our brethren coming from there spoken ill of you. But we wish to know what your opinions are concerning this sect of Christians, which we know well suffers contradiction everywhere.”* Paul then gave them a brief account of the teaching and miracles of Christ, as well as of His Passion, Death and Resurrection. The jews, desirous to know more details, agreed to return four days later.

2. On Monday the 12th of the same month of February in the year 60, they reassembled in Paul’s house in yet greater numbers. From morning until evening Paul gave valiant testimony to Christ, basing himself on the Messianic prophecies, some believing in what he said and others not. As Paul

saw that owing to discord among them some had left and others were about to do so as well, he said to them: *“Oh, with what good reason did the Holy Ghost speak to our fathers through the Prophet Isaias, saying: ‘Go and say to the people of Judah: You will hear and will not understand the mysteries: You will see, and nevertheless be blind to the light of truth. Because the heart of this people being hardened, Satan has further stopped up their ears, shut their eyes, darkened their understanding, so that they may not be converted and receive salvation from Me!’ Therefore understand, all of you, that this salvation coming from God is sent to the Gentiles, and they shall receive it.”* This said, the jews left Paul arguing heatedly among themselves.

3. On the 25th of March in the year 60, Apostle Paul, through Aphronius Burrhus, prefect of the praetorium, presented his appeal before Caesar Nero. Paul, during the two years he stayed in the rented house, received all who came to see him, preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things that are of the Lord Jesus Christ in all liberty, without prohibition. Paul accomplished this apostolate mainly among the Gentiles, Christianity spreading further in Rome and other parts of Italy. As a result of Peter’s apostolate, and now Paul’s, there were Christian faithful including in the emperor’s own palace, among the imperial guard, servants and other personnel.

Chapter XVII

Pope Peter arrives in Rome after his long journey throughout Europe. Pope Peter visits Apostle Paul at his prison house in Rome. Peter’s apostolate in Italy and adjacent islands. Nero dismisses the judicial proceedings against Paul and releases him

1. Pope Peter, in his fresh apostolic journey throughout Europe, after having traversed the Austrian province of Carinthia, bordering Italy, entered Italy on the 17th of December in the year 60, next making his way to Rome, where he arrived on the 24th of the same month and year. Before arriving at the capital of the Roman empire he already knew that the Apostle of the Gentiles was there as a prisoner, awaiting the result of the appeal he had lodged before Caesar Nero, in which he asserted his innocence regarding the accusations the jews of Jerusalem had made against him before Procurator Felix. The first thing Peter did on his arrival in Rome was to visit Paul, a prisoner in his own house; who informed the Vicar of Christ on the apostolate he was carrying out, and on the persecution suffered at the hands of the sanhedrin. Peter comforted the Apostle in his troubles, exhorting him, moreover, not to cease sending his words of encouragement to Christians by means of letters during the time of his imprisonment.

2. Until the end of the year 62, Pope Peter, living in Rome, also visited many other cities in Italy and adjacent islands, to Christianity’s great progress. During the time that Peter’s presence in the capital of the Roman

empire coincided with that of his vicar Paul, conversions to the Faith of Christ were very numerous, above all among Gentiles.

3. On the 2nd of February in the year 62, Nero dismissed the judicial proceedings against Paul; for the emperor, having received from his representative in Israel the due report on the sanhedrin's accusation, did not find sufficient cause for him to have been tried; accordingly, the Apostle was set at liberty on the 6th of February in the year 62, that is, two years after his arrival in Rome. Paul's time in prison was of great spiritual progress for him, as he had an exceptional opportunity to practice patience, a difficult virtue for the Apostle's restless and impulsive temperament. Paul's release was the cause of great jubilee for Pope Peter and the Christian faithful of Rome, who were visited in their homes by the Apostle of the Gentiles, all becoming further fortified in the Faith through his edifying words.

Chapter XVIII

Pope Peter commands Paul to make a journey through Spain. Peter's fresh apostolic journey through Europe

1. On the 25th of March in the mentioned year 62, anniversary of the Passion and Death of Christ, Pope Peter sent his vicar Paul from Rome to undertake an apostolic journey through Spain. The following day, 26th of March, the Apostle of the Gentiles embarked at the Roman port of Ostia, and accompanied by some Bishops, and Priest Rufus as well, went to the island of Corsica, and from there sailed to the port of Tarragona, where he disembarked on the 5th of April in the same year 62. Paul stayed several days in this town, carrying out a great apostolate. Subsequently he went to the town of Tortosa; and after preaching the Gospel there, headed for Zaragoza, where he prayed in the Chapel erected by James the Greater in honour of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, fortifying the Christians of that diocese further in the Faith.

2. The Apostle of the Gentiles traversed the greater part of Spain and Portugal, crossing the peninsula from north to south and from east to west, though he stayed longer in those places already constituted as dioceses and ruled by the corresponding Bishop: such as, among others, the dioceses of Ávila, Toledo, Seville, Écija, Granada, Cartagena, Valencia and Barcelona, which were the foremost.

3. To comply with the desire of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, before Her Assumption into Heaven, entrusted to Paul a small image made by Saint Luke, to take with him when he was to go to Spain. Paul enthroned this image in a chapel four hundred metres from Écija; at a later date it was taken to Seville by King Hermenegild, and was venerated in the Triana district under the title of Mary Reparatrix. At the Muslim invasion, several devotees of this district, miraculously helped by Archangel Saint Raphael, brought the image to the north of Spain, to a place near Santander,

where it was hidden, and later on discovered, thus receiving the title of Timely Appearance.

4. Apostle Paul's mission in Spain was more especially with the Gentiles. Thanks to his apostolic impulse, the spread of Christianity in the entire Iberian Peninsula was of great magnitude. During his apostolate Paul created many dioceses to be ruled by Bishops he consecrated. Before he left Spain, Paul conferred the episcopate on Rufus in Tortosa, Tarragona, designating him first Bishop of that diocese. Bishop Rufus, of the black race, was the younger son of Simon of Cyrene. Paul remained in Spain until the 15th of August in the year 63, when he left for Rome. He made the journey from Spain to Rome passing through the Spanish town of Ampurias, Gerona, and then entering France. There he visited the cities of Narbonne, Nîmes, and Marseille where he visited Bishop Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary Magdalen and Martha. Then, in Italy, he went via Genoa and Pisa, arriving at Rome on the 25th of January in the year 64. During his return journey Paul accomplished a great apostolate wherever he went.

5. When Apostle Paul arrived at Rome, Pope Peter was not in the city, since on the 28th of December in the year 62 he had left on another journey through Europe, with the aim of visiting the southern part of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Peter returned to Rome on the 25th of December in the year 64. On this date Apostle Paul was not in the city, since after his journey through Spain he had left Rome again on the 15th of May in the year 64, accompanied by Titus and others, on a long journey through Greece and Asia Minor, during which he visited the island of Crete, where he left Titus as Bishop. He then returned to Greece, arriving on the 8th of December in the mentioned year 64, and where, in the town of Nicopolis, on the west of this peninsula, he spent the winter. On the 30th of March in the year 65, Paul embarked at Nicopolis for the dioceses in the north of Africa, visiting among others, those of Cyrene, Berenice, Tripoli and Carthage; evangelizing many other places as well, until his return to Rome, which was on the 15th of August in the year 65.

Chapter XIX

Nero sets Rome ablaze. Nero declares the first persecution of the Roman caesars against the Church.

Numerous Christians die martyrs in Rome. Apostle Peter flees Rome fearing martyrdom.

Christ appears to Peter along the way and the first Pope returns to Rome. Peter gives public testimony to Christ before Nero in the Roman amphitheatre.

Martyrdom of Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul

1. During the first years of his reign Emperor Nero was outstanding for his benevolence, good sense and peaceful character. But later he degenerated in

such a fashion that he had himself adored as god, and became the most monstrous of emperors, and a figure of Antichrist. Nero committed abominable blunders: one of them was to set fire to Rome on the 18th of July in the year 64, of which he accused the Christians as perpetrators to free himself from the loathing of his people. This then was the origin of the first persecution of the Church on the part of the Roman caesars, decreed by Nero in the month of August in the year 64, and which was more violent at some times than at others. When Pope Peter returned to Rome on the 25th of December in the year 64, after his latest European journey, the fierceness of this persecution had somewhat abated, though the Christians who had given their lives for the Faith of Christ were numerous. The Church, driven into the catacombs, unceasingly prayed for the strengthening of her members and the conversion of her oppressors; although the testimony to the Gospel through the shedding of blood increased the number of faithful ever further.

2. At the return of the Pope, the Christians of Rome felt themselves greatly comforted by personal contact with the Supreme Pastor and Universal Father of the Church, who in this way could share more directly in the sufferings and trials of his children. To the paternity of the Vicar of Christ was later added the ardour of Apostle Paul, who returned to Rome on the 15th of August in the year 65. Both outstanding pillars of the Church, each in his respective mission, carried out a fruitful labour, confirmed by great miracles, not only in the capital of the empire, but in all Italy as well; consequently, the persecuted Church, ever further swollen with faithful, achieved greater consolidation. Christianity flourished in such a way through the intense labour of Peter and Paul that including Nero's own palace was practically undermined by followers of Christ who, concealing their status as Christians, continued in the service of the empire in those posts which did not jeopardize their Faith, some of them of certain importance. The surveillance of the Roman authorities was such that Christians did not dare to worship in their homes; so that they found themselves obliged to assemble in the different underground galleries or catacombs which Roman families used to construct as private cemeteries, and which the faithful gradually enlarged until a great part of the city's subsoil was honeycombed.

3. In October of the year 66, Apostle Paul was arrested by the Roman authorities and taken to Rome's Mamertime Prison; since Paul's indisputable ardour and his status as a Roman citizen led him on occasions to preach the Gospel in public places of Rome, so that he was easily imprisoned; having to appear before Emperor Nero himself to explain the doctrine he preached. Despite all, by a special providence Paul's life continued to be respected, out of consideration for his prestige and Roman citizenship.

4. Pope Peter was arrested by soldiers in Rome on the 25th of March in the year 67, and taken as well to the Mamertime Prison, to the same hall as Paul

and many other Christians. In the month of June in the year 67, the Christian faithful of Rome underwent one of the most terrible times of persecution in Nero's empire. Many of them were taken to the amphitheatre to be devoured by beasts amid a bloody spectacle at which the emperor himself assisted on no few occasions. This amphitheatre, called military, also called Colosseum owing to its great dimensions, had been constructed of wood by Nero after the burning of Rome, in the place called the Field of Mars, facing the Vatican Hill.

5. On the 25th of June in the year 67, Peter converted and baptized in the Faith of Christ two guards of the Mamertime Prison called Processus and Martinianus, who were presently to shed their blood for Christ. The two jailors opened the prison door to Peter; so that the Pope succeeded in leaving with the intention of fleeing from Rome. It came to pass that on the same day, 25th of June in the year 67, august Apostle Pope Peter, in the face of an appalling persecution of Christians by the Romans, following a first natural impulse to preserve his life, and without a meditated reflection, fled from Rome in the company of others. On the outskirts of the city, when already outside Rome, on the ancient Appian Way, at the spot where later the '*Quo Vadis, Domine?*' Chapel was erected, Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him bearing a heavy cross, crowned with thorns and profusely shedding Blood. At such an admirable apparition, which occurred at 12 midday, Peter kneeling, asked Christ: "*Where are you going to, Lord?*" To which Christ replied: "*I am going to Rome to be crucified anew.*" At these divine words Peter understood that the time for his own crucifixion had arrived; and throwing himself at the Lord's feet, he kissed them humbly begging pardon. Immediately Christ transformed His appearance into glorious, forgave him, blessed him, embraced him and kissed him paternally on the face. After all this, eminent Apostle Peter, moved by a mysterious impulse, filled with courage headed for the military amphitheatre or Roman Colosseum to give public testimony to Christ. This military amphitheatre or Colosseum constructed by Nero, is not the present-day Flavian amphitheatre commonly known as the Colosseum, constructed after Nero's death. That Apostle Peter fled from Rome for fear of martyrdom did not imply in him any apostasy whatsoever.

6. Precisely at the moment when Christ appeared to Peter, one of the cruellest spectacles was being enacted in the military amphitheatre of Rome, with Nero present, at which many Christians were martyred. Once Peter was inside the Colosseum, from one of the highest terraces where he could easily be seen, in a powerful voice he addressed words of encouragement to the martyrs, and solemnly blessed them; next, addressing Nero, he recriminated him and his partisans who formed the ferocious auditorium, for their impiety and abominable crimes, giving them testimony to Christ and exhorting them to conversion. When Peter had finished speaking he was seized by Roman

soldiers and again taken to the Mamertime Prison, where Apostle Paul lay together with many other Christians.

7. On Friday the 29th of June in the year 67, Pope Peter was drawn out of prison and brought to the Vatican Hill, where Nero's circus stood, and at 3 in the afternoon was crucified there. Once nailed to the cross, Apostle Peter uttered these words: *"I am not worthy to die like my Divine Master."* To which the soldiers replied: *"That is easy to put right."* They then placed the cross so that Peter could be crucified head downwards, that is, the opposite way to the Lord. Peter died at seventy-two years of age, at 3.45 pm; and his body was buried on the Vatican Hill, over which Saint Peter's Basilica was later built. A few months before his death Pope Peter had named Linus to succeed him in the papacy after his death.

8. That same day, Friday the 29th of June in the year 67, Apostle Paul was drawn out of prison and taken outside the city walls on the road to Ostia; and on the spot known today as Tre Fontane, at 4 in the afternoon was beheaded, since he was a Roman citizen, at the age of sixty-three years. When his head was severed, it rebounded from the ground three times, and a fountain of water miraculously sprang up at each spot touched by his head. The body of Apostle Paul, together with his head, was buried where later the Basilica of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls would be erected.

9. Though it is true that among the principal and secondary Apostles and Evangelists, there were those who committed the most grievous sins and had weaknesses and other defects, it is no less true that in each of them heroic Christian virtues were immensely superabundant. Apostle Paul himself wrote of his own experience: *"So that the grandeur of the visions and revelations may not make me vain, the Lord permitted me to have a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, so that I be tempted. Hence I besought the Lord three times to remove him from me. And the Lord told me: 'My grace suffices you, since virtue is perfected in frailty.' Therefore, willingly shall I glory in my frailties, so that the strength of Christ may dwell in me."* The Apostle is referring to the temptations and passions of his flesh, so that he had to struggle resolutely to overcome them, given his impulsive temperament, his frequent dealings with all kinds of people and the attacks of Satan.

Chapter XX

Martyrdom of the other Holy Apostles. Apostle John miraculously emerges unscathed from his martyrdom in Rome and is banished to the island of Patmos. Saint John is rapt up to Mary's Planet

Here are the martyrdoms of the other Holy Apostles in chronological order:

✠ On the 1st of May in the year 62, Apostle James the Less was seized and brought to declare before the sanhedritic council of Jerusalem, assembled in the temple; after the Apostle had given firm testimony to Christ he was taken

up to the pinnacle of the edifice and cast down from there; then he was stoned; and finally finished off by blows to the head with a pole.

✠ On the 28th of October in the year 65, Apostles Simon and Thaddeus died martyrs in Persia: Simon was sawn in half and Thaddeus beheaded with an axe.

✠ On the 21st of September in the year 68, when Apostle Matthew was in Ethiopia, he was run through with a sword just as he had finished celebrating Holy Mass.

✠ On the 21st of December in the year 72, Apostle Thomas died in India pierced by a lance.

✠ On the 24th of August in the year 73, in Armenia, Apostle Bartholomew was tied to a tree and died by being flayed alive.

✠ On the 30th of November in the year 75, Apostle Andrew died crucified on an x-shaped cross in the Greek town of Patras.

✠ On the 24th of February in the year 80, Apostle Matthias died crucified in Saudi Arabia.

✠ On the 1st of May in the year 81, in the town of Hierapolis in present-day Turkey, Apostle Philip was crucified and then stoned to death while still alive on the cross.

✠ Apostle John, after the Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, carried out a great apostolate in Asia Minor and other places. In the year 93, when in Ephesus, he was brought before the tribunal of the city's Roman proconsul, who ordered him to offer sacrifice to the idols. As he roundly refused to do so, the proconsul informed Emperor Domitian, who ordered the Apostle to be led to Rome in chains. There John had to suffer cruellest imprisonment, torture and mockery from the pagans. Finally, as he persisted in his refusal to give worship to idols, on the 6th of May that same year 93, before the Latin Gate, he was lowered into a cauldron of boiling oil, martyrdom from which he miraculously emerged unscathed. Stunned at such a prodigy, the emperor desisted from killing John, and banished him some days later to the island of Patmos. There the Apostle carried out a great evangelization, converting many Jews and Gentiles to the Faith of Christ. On the 27th of December in the year 100, during the reign of emperor Trajan, from the island of Patmos Apostle John was mysteriously rapt up to Mary's planet, where he resides until his return to Earth at the start of the first half of the final week of years preceding Christ's Return to Earth to establish His Messianic Kingdom; and will subsequently die martyr in Antichrist's terrible persecution at the end of that first half of the final week of years.