

# Dolorosa

WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE SACRED HEART

MAY 2018

## THE PERFECT EFFORT

# The Queen's Privilege



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**M**any years ago there lived a certain farmer who worked on land that belonged to a king. The farmer was extremely dedicated to his work. Year after year he spent long days in the fields preparing and nurturing the earth so that he would reap an abundant harvest. No matter how warm the weather, the heat never prevented him from devoting his time and energy to the crops and, in particular, to his apple trees. He watered the trees throughout the summer months, he pruned them each year, and he thinned the blossoms so that they might produce the very best and highest quality fruit. After a few years of diligent care, his trees began to mature and they bloomed for the first time. By the time harvest came around, delicious red apples hung from the tree branches.

To show his appreciation and respect for the king, the farmer picked two of his best apples and brought them to the palace. However, the simple man was unacquainted with the manners of the royal court. He did not know the code of conduct in the palace. And so, in his ignorance and simplicity, he entered the magnificent reception hall wearing his work clothes. Under his arm, he carried the package containing the apples.

As he made his way down the aisle, the noblemen of court cast suspicious glances at him. Seeing his dirty clothes, they wondered what this man was doing and how he had even entered the palace.

At length, the man reached the throne of the king. With a big smile, he proudly removed the package from under his arm and presented the apples to the king. He was thrilled and overjoyed that he was finally able to show the king his appreciation and filial love.

The king looked first at the apples and then raised his eyes to the farmer. Anger flashed upon his face. He was outraged by the poor manners and the rude entrance of the farmer. His anger was increased by the fact that the apples were not even washed.

Seeing the king's reaction, the farmer was heartbroken. As he lowered his eyes to the floor, some of the royal attendants approached him and quickly ushered him out of the hall. The downcast farmer then began making his way out of the palace. As he dejectedly walked through the corridors, he could not help but think of all the years he had put into growing his apples only to have them rejected by the king. He felt dejected—almost as if the last couple years of his life were worthless.

As he lumbered on with these thoughts, the farmer suddenly heard a soft voice call to him from the balcony on the second floor. The sweet voice was that of the queen. She asked the farmer to wait for her. As the queen approached, she asked the poor man why he looked so sorrowful. The farmer proceeded to inform the queen of everything that had happened. He told her about his apple trees and how he had wanted to please



the king with his gift. “I brought the first two apples of my harvest to His Majesty as a gift,” he said, “but His Majesty refused to accept them.” With heavy eyes, he added, “I thought my gift would please him, but it did not.”

The queen listened kindly to the farmer’s story. She then very graciously told him not to worry. After taking the apples from the man, she said, “Come with me, and we shall go visit the king.”

This time the farmer’s entrance into the hall was far different, for now he was at the side of the queen. As he walked up the aisle, her royal robe seemed to shield him from the gaze of those who had previously looked down upon him. His confidence grew with each step as they drew nearer to the king’s throne.

When, at last, they stood before him, the queen addressed him. “My dear husband and king, I have a gift for you. I bring it in the name of this good man. Behold these two beautiful apples, the first fruits of his crop, which he wishes you to have.”

With that, she took the apples which she had washed and placed upon a golden plate, and she offered them to the king. The king was delighted to receive this gift from his queen. Everyone in the hall could clearly see that he was happy, and they envied the position which the farmer now held.

As a mark of gratitude, the king gave the farmer a sparkling diamond. Taking the precious stone into his hands, the farmer could not contain his happiness. The joy that welled up in the heart of the farmer was almost more than he could bear.

After profoundly thanking the king, the farmer left the royal hall. The queen accompanied him. The farmer thanked her for her goodness to him. As he was about to leave for home, the queen gave him some advice. “The next time you want to offer anything to the king,” she said with a sweet smile, “let me do it for you.”

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*“The next time you want to offer anything to the king, let me do it for you.”*

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These were the words that the queen addressed to the poor farmer, and these are the words that the Queen of Heaven addresses to us: “The next time you want to offer anything to the King, let me do it for you.”

Tradition teaches, as Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., relates in *The Mother of the Savior and Our Interior Life*, that every grace—whether for our spiritual or our temporal welfare—comes to us through the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Father Garrigou-Lagrange writes thus:

This assertion [that all graces come through Our Lady’s hands] is more than a pious opinion, however probable. It is theologically certain . . . it has been part of the Church’s preaching and has been confirmed by the encyclicals of different Popes. To quote but one striking papal pronouncement, we find Pope Leo XIII teaching in the encyclical *Octobri Mense* on the Rosary, September 22nd, 1891 (Denz. 3033),

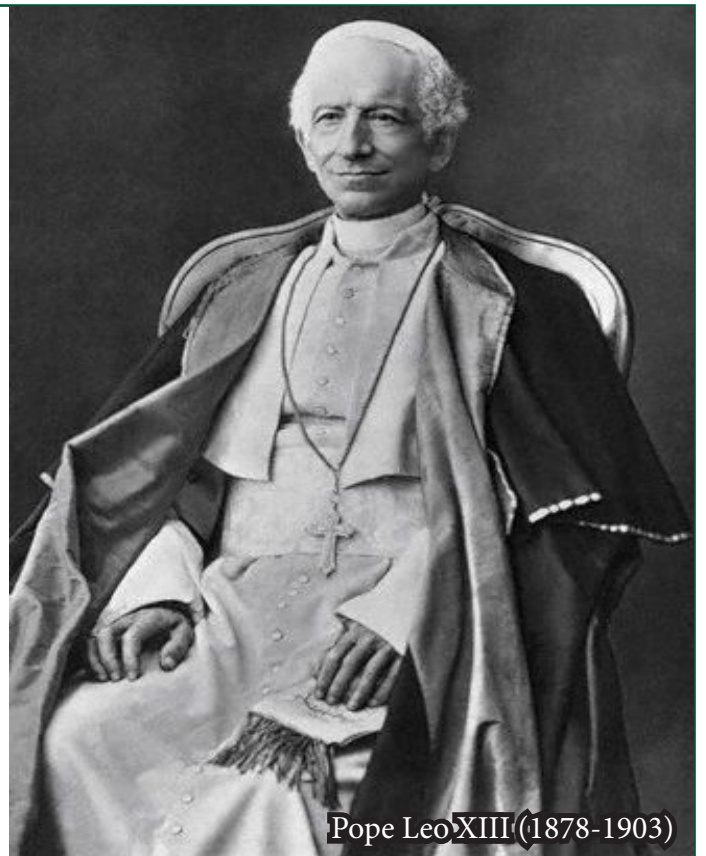
“No grace is given to us except through Mary, such being the Divine Will.” (216)

Pope Saint Pius X then echoed Pope Leo XIII's sentiments in his encyclical *Ad Diem Illum* of 1904. In this papal document, relates Father Garrigou-Lagrange, Saint Pius X referred to the Blessed Virgin Mary as “the dispenser of all the graces which have been acquired for us by the Blood of Jesus” (201). In other words, Our Divine Savior merited by His Passion and Death all the graces men receive in this life, but He gives them to us through His Immaculate Mother and Queen. She it is who goes before the throne of the King of Heaven and obtains what we need. She it is who presents our petitions before Him and secures a favorable answer on our behalf. Such is her privilege as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

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Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903)



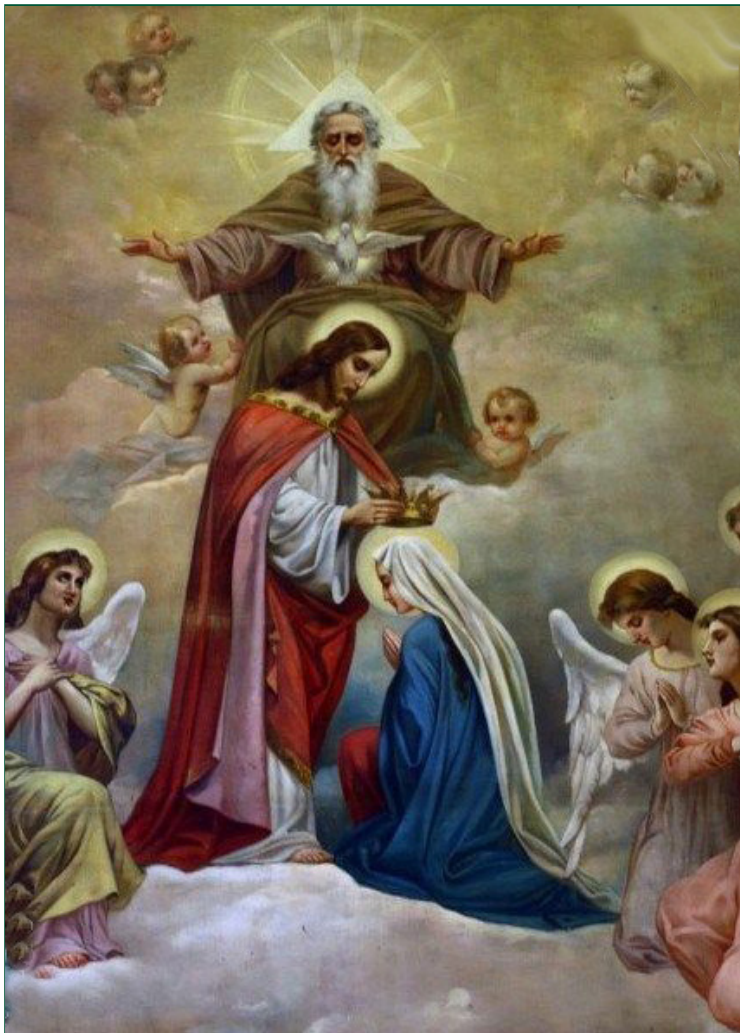
Pope Saint Pius X (1903-1914)

It is a dogma of our holy Faith that the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven after she finished her sublime work in this world. Nothing, however, has been revealed by Almighty God concerning the manner of her entrance into heaven or about her coronation as Queen. This has been the subject of many a meditation book, but as Rev. Dr. Ildelfonso Villar writes in his *Marian Meditations*, “Who from earth below could have the faintest picture of the splendid entry of Our Lady into heaven?” (325). Yet, at the same time, he goes on to give a rather beautiful description of this occasion. He writes:

[As the Blessed Virgin approaches], the gates are flung open and with indescribable pomp and majesty, the new Empress enters the heavenly court.

The courtiers of the heavens hasten to [see] their new Queen. . . . Then taking up the words of the Archangel Gabriel, they would in unison make the heavens shake with enthusiasm and tenderness, repeating, “Hail, thou full of grace, welcome be to this glory, with thy beauty and sanctity. Thou art always with God and the Lord is always with thee. Thou art blessed amongst all creatures and art about to sit on the highest throne, the closest possible to God.” (326-327)

Father Villar then relates how joyfully Our Divine Savior must have come to meet His Mother at the gates of heaven. There, He embraced her with all the love of His Sacred



Elizabeth and [Mary's] beloved parents Joachim and Anne followed by Saint Joseph, her happy spouse, all gather round her throne. (328-329)

These were the events, more or less, that unfolded on the day in which the Mother of God entered heaven. These are the events that the Blessed Virgin Mary asks us to consider each time we pray the fourth and fifth Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary. These are the events that Pope Pius XII brought before all of Christendom in 1954 when he instituted the Feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In his encyclical *Ad Coeli Reginam*, Pius XII, after extolling the royal dignity of the Blessed Mother, decreed that a feast honoring her Queenship would be celebrated throughout the whole world every year on May 31, the last day of the month which has been dedicated to her. This year, however, the Feast of the Queenship was transferred to June 9. This was to allow for the Feast of Corpus Christi and its octave, to be observed.

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*“See her advance, modest and recollected, led by the hand of God, to ascend the steps of His throne, sit by His side, and be there crowned by the Father with the crown of power, by the Son with the crown of wisdom, by the Holy [Ghost] with the crown of love.”*

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Heart. Then, he conducted her to the throne prepared for her from all eternity. Continuing, Father Villar writes:

See her advance, modest and recollected, led by the hand of God, to ascend the steps of His throne, sit by His side, and be there crowned by the Father with the crown of power, by the Son with the crown of wisdom, by the Holy [Ghost] with the crown of love. She is crowned also for the super-angelic purity of her Heart, of her spirit, and of her immaculate body; for her most perfect obedience; for her most profound humility, as well as for her most ardent love which made her live and die from love of God.

[After being crowned Queen], the Virgins come to greet her as the Virgin of Virgins. The Martyrs acclaim her as their leader who at the foot of the Cross set the standard of suffering and martyrdom. The Prophets acknowledge her as the prodigious woman pre-announced by them. The Patriarchs find in her the goal of all their hopes. . . . The Angels proclaim her their Queen and Mistress. Adam and Eve also approach and bless her for having succeeded in satisfying for their sin so perfectly, since indeed it was thanks to her that their children of wrath had become children of benediction. And then Saint

The Feast of the Queenship of Mary should remind us that we have not only a Mother in heaven waiting for us but also a powerful Queen ready to intercede for us. The Coronation of Our Lady should inspire us with the earnest desire to do whatever we must to achieve the heavenly crowns which await us.

As true children of the Queen of Heaven, we are royalty. We are part of the royal family of heaven. We are destined for the heavenly court of Christ the King. Like our Queen, we, too, have a crown and a throne waiting for us in eternity. “There is laid up for me,” writes Saint Paul in his Second Epistle to Saint Timothy, “a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming” (4:8). But, as Saint Paul says in the preceding verse, we must earn our crown by fighting a good fight (4:7). “None shall be crowned,” he says in an earlier chapter, “who has not fought well” (2:12).

In the Book of Job, we read, “The life of man upon earth is a warfare” (7:1). It is a spiritual warfare—a war to save our souls. Life is likened to a warfare because the world, the devil, and our fallen human nature fight daily against us trying to bring us to spiritual ruin. Furthermore, we are often attacked, in a sense, by contradictions, sickness,

sadness, and even persecution—occasions which make the practice of virtue difficult and the pursuit of holiness seem burdensome. In all these battles of life, then, we must hold fast. We must fight lest we lose our eternal inheritance and our claim to a heavenly crown. We must persevere in the belief and practice of our holy Faith, we must persevere through our daily struggles and sorrows, we must persevere in walking in the footsteps of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She earned her crown; we must earn ours. “Be thou faithful until death,” Almighty God promises us in the Book of the Apocalypse, “and I will give thee the crown of life” (2:10).

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*“Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (Apoc. 2:10).*

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In order to be faithful to Our Divine Savior and our Catholic Faith, we need His divine grace. We need His help, spiritual and temporal, for ourselves and for those we love. We must therefore turn to Him in prayer.

However, as in the case of the farmer’s apples, our prayers are often imperfect. We must, then, present our requests to the King through the hands of the Queen, as the farmer did. Whenever we have anything to ask of Our Divine King, we must turn to our loving Queen who will take our petitions and present them to Him. This she will do in a manner far more acceptable than if we were to go directly to Our Lord ourselves.

While it is true that Our Divine Savior will not outright refuse our prayers as the king in the story refused the apples, still He will be much more pleased and inclined to grant them if they are presented by His Mother and Queen. This is because Almighty God has established Our Lady, in the words of Pope Saint Pius X, as “the dispenser of all the graces.” It is thus His Divine Will that all graces—all answers to our prayers—come to us through Our Lady’s hands.

There will be times when we may feel like that poor farmer. We may feel that no matter how much we do, how much effort we put in, how hard we pray, it is all for naught—that everything is a lost cause. We may sometimes feel that our prayers for help in this vale of tears are not being heard. At such times, we must remember that the Blessed Virgin Mary loves us more than anything else in this world. She would do anything for us provided it is for our spiritual good. With this in mind, then, we must persevere in our prayer, confident that Our Mother will come to our aid and intercede for us at the throne of her Divine Son.

Many saints have strongly recommended fostering the holy habit of speaking familiarly with Our Lady—that is, of speaking to the Blessed Virgin in our own words throughout the day, as though she were standing beside us.

This is something that we should strive to do. We should speak to her and thank her for all the graces and blessings she has obtained for us and our families. We should talk to her about our troubles, our worries, and our concerns. We should let her know of what things we stand in need. We should assure her that we are firmly resolved to avoid all mortal sin and its occasions and ask her for the grace to do so.

There are so many things we can discuss with our heavenly Mother. Let us take advantage of the time we have to do so. Let us, above all, ask her for the grace to give a perfect effort in imitating her virtues and in persevering in the belief and practice of our Faith so that we may one day say with Saint Paul:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day.” (II Tim. 4:7-8)

