

On the grey stone kneeling no more alone
 We take our part.
 Forgive the stumbling fingers that have made
 Symbols of darkness for transcendent light.
 The plaster of our poor complacency.
 Forgive our ignorances, grant our share
 Of your unblemished gift when death draws near.



'DUC NOS QUO TENDIMUS'

BY

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HERE are two Feasts which, maybe, can be celebrated with special *unselfishness*—that of the Immaculate Conception, and that of the Assumption. We must not feel it wrong if we keep the great feasts of our Lord with a certain consciousness of *ourselves*, for after all, the Incarnation and all that it made possible—the Passion and the Resurrection itself—were ordained *propter nos homines*; for the sake of us men and our salvation. Even the Ascension, which can indeed be celebrated most 'unselfishly' as the feast of our Lord's glorification, yet reminds us that as we are co-risen, so we are to be co-glorified.

Of course, since all the perfections of our Lady were granted to her in view of her Son—*Christus cogitabatur*—she too can be thought of as existing ultimately for our sake. But I should find it difficult to see how the Assumption can be regarded otherwise than as something for our Lady's own sake, and for the glory of God. First, we can be single-hearted in our joy that here is *one* who has never deviated from (so to put it) the ideal he had for her (and, in lesser measure, for all of us) in his eternity. Forced as we are to use human language, we can say that God 'thought of' Adam and of Eve as pure and 'immaculate' and remaining so. But they deviated. God was disappointed in them. The image of God was marred: they were self-evicted from the paradise that all the world should have been; and, indeed, the whole of human history, as God would have wished it to be, was dislocated. We need not be afraid of words such as 'being sorry for God'. Francisco, the little boy of Fatima, became completely taken up with the thought of 'consoling God'.

That is what he felt he was doing as he sat in the church or knelt behind some wall. His whole idea of heaven became that of giving joy to Jesus. Therefore we can be glad *for God's sake* that our Lady not only started where God would have wished us all to start, and persevered throughout her life just as God wished her to be, but is now in that perfect state both as to soul and body to which, by his grace, we aspire some day to come—for, as things are, even the saints have in some mysterious way to wait, even though they are seeing God, for the consummation of their bliss, for the day when they will no more be discarnate souls. It seems to me, then, that the Assumption gives us reason for being glad purely for God's sake, and that is a very unselfish worship; our eye is in no way turned back towards our *self*.

But we are also glad simply for our Lady's sake that she is 'totally' what God always meant her to be. St Paul tells us (Rom. 8, 22-23) that the whole creation is in its own mysterious way travailing towards its fulfilment, but we too, who actually have in us the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body. Whatever be the total meaning of these words, they surely include the sense that we are not yet conscious of our divine sonship; and not only that we are to 'rise again', but that our very senses will in their way be an instrument of union with God and not, as too often now, a barrier between him and our souls. After all, the highest saint, on earth, is still in exile. Yes, in Nature we can 'see' and 'hear' and 'taste' the revealings of his majesty and beauty, and touch the hem of his garment—*decorem indutus est; praecinxit se virtute*—and in our fellow-men we can find a far more intimate approach, seeing that not only are *they*, as nothing else, 'in his image, in his likeness', and, if they and we be graced, we already *are* 'one thing' in his mystic Body—but at the very best we are but seeing God 'as in a mirror, dimly'; even in his Prophets God revealed himself 'in many ways', no doubt, but always 'in a mirror, dimly'. Certainly we cannot *imagine* how the senses will play their part in the glorified body, nor indeed that body itself; but we know by faith that they and it will exist, and we can be most unselfishly glad if we are infallibly taught that our Lady is now 'totally' glorified. Her senses did not, while she lived here, blind her, deafen and dull and numb her as ours so often do: but still, she was not enjoying the beatific vision even as the saints now do: she too was in an exile. *Aliquid desideraverunt oculi tui*—your eyes looked in vain for something—said the old pagan writer of someone whom he loved and who loved him but who died far away. As for our eyes, however truly we can say with the Psalmist that we *take delight* 'in the works of thy

hands, of thy fingers'—in all the massive handiwork and in the delicate touches of God, we also have to sigh that 'For thee, O dear, dear country, Mine eyes their vigils keep'; and, with yet another pagan, that we are 'reaching out our hands in longing for the further shore'. But our Lady is *there*, and just where God would have her be.

In the Vision of Fatima our Lady, said Lucia, was 'altogether Light'—*toda de luz*. But the children could not look at her for long. She 'dazzled' them. They were not 'there' yet. So, for our part, while being so glad for our Lady's sake, yes, and for our Lord's, and for God's, that she is what she is, we continue to pray, in the words of St Thomas's hymn: '*Duc nos quo tendimus*'—'lead us by thy paths'—not by our chosen but erratic tracks!—whither we are tending—to the Light wherein thou dwellest'.



THE FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY

BY

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RECENTLY I came across an attractive little booklet entitled, *How to say the Rosary*, written by an Anglican. It was well printed and everything about it was in the best possible taste. There were artistic prints, the letterpress at first sight seemed very good, and the instructions admirable: it was almost too good to be true. I turned over the pages and read on to what actually turned out to be the bitter end, for I was told after the third Glorious Mystery, that the last two, the Assumption and Coronation of Our Lady, were to be omitted because there was no justification for them in Holy Scripture. That meant presumably that they were nowhere explicitly mentioned in the Bible. Well! I had already been told to say the *Hail Mary*, including the second part in which our Lady is invoked as *Holy Mary, Mother of God*—a title not to be found in Scripture and (like the *Glory be to the Father*) only explicitly formulated as Catholic doctrine in the fourth century. Then too the *Salve Regina* is not to be discovered in so many words in Scripture, and I could not help thinking that my would-be instructor in how to say the Rosary was being a bit inconsistent.

¹ The Editor of *The Rosary*.