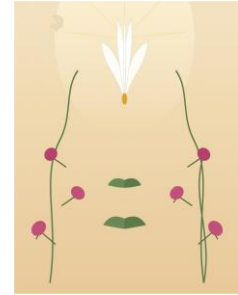




The Virtues of the Venerable Mother Patrocinio



Adapted from "Sor Patrocinio, the Nun of the Wounds" by Fr. Juan B. Gomis, pp. 282–286.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (art. 1804) teaches that "human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith."

The Venerable Mother Patrocinio lived out this sum of virtues with great intensity. There was no virtue — moral, theological, civic, or properly feminine — that did not shine with singular brilliance in this woman, an honor to Spain, to the Church, and to her convent.

A contemporary testimony records: "Our Mother Patrocinio possessed very solid virtues: she was kind, humble, patient, and deeply charitable; she inspired respect merely by her gaze, was obedient, and burned with zeal for the worship and glory of God."

A religious sister who survived the exile of the Badajoz community ordered by Narváez testified in 1899: "She was a very kind, affectionate, and recollected religious. She bore the hardships she faced with great resignation, and with quiet grace was deeply devoted to the Most Holy Virgin."

The Franciscan Martyrology recalls that the Servant of God María de los Dolores y Patrocinio, a Conceptionist nun, gave her sisters in religion admirable examples of every virtue.

Both Catholic writers and those who knew her personally — including her confessors — agree that she never lost her baptismal innocence, and so grew unceasingly from virtue to virtue. Throughout a life full of turmoil, she remained like a lily among thorns; she was, in the words of the martyr-bishop Esténaga, "a white lily without stain," and according to Mother Isabel de Jesús, "a pure lily of the Seraphic Garden."

The progressives and liberals of the nineteenth century could see nothing but mire where there was only purest whiteness. They failed to recognize the light, and denied it.

Divine love transforms souls and makes them partakers of the heavenly; it imparts angelic perfection and turns a human being into an angel. "Angel" is what those who sensed the superhuman greatness of her heart and the enchanting innocence of her ways unreservedly called her. She was a model of evangelical perfection, for the Gospel was the rule of her life. She constantly appeared enveloped in a supernatural aura, gentle and inviting.

From her person, as from a rosebush in bloom, there flowed forth fragrances of Christian virtue that perfumed all around her. Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Francis de Sales, and Saint Teresa seemed to live again in her: the Wounds, like those of Saint Francis; her meekness, drawn from Saint Francis de Sales; and her femininity, a true echo of Saint Teresa.

For reasons of space, it is impossible to list every virtue that flourished in her soul. Ascending from height to height, she rises to the Kingdom of God, calm and secure. There is no room for more: in this sum of virtues lies, and is fully lived out, the portrait of the Venerable Mother Patrocinio.