

A Rose for a Rose

Father J. Kentenich, On Monday Evening, #1

We give a rose for a rose; love for love; sacrifice for sacrifice.

I think we should go one step further, today, and speak about another part of the rose, namely, the thorns. We say: there is no rose without thorns. Remember that the Blessed Mother is the Mystical Rose. But she is a rose which was not without thorns.

It applies to us also — you have to remember — that there is no rose without thorns. What do the thorns mean? They symbolize the cross, sacrifices, and difficulties. Look at the Blessed Mother. She is called *Rosa Mystica*. Next to the Savior, no creature had to endure as many thorns as the Blessed Mother. Let us look at the thorns which are found on the bush of the Mystical Rose.

We speak of the cross of incomprehensibilities. We find the cross of incomprehensibilities repeatedly in the life of the Blessed Mother. For instance, when the angel appeared to her at Nazareth and told her that she should become the Mother of God, she asked, "How can this happen for I do not know man?" The angel answered that God is almighty, and that he can do anything. She believed and did not hesitate to say her "yes, Father".³

After she had said yes, and after the Savior was conceived in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, Saint Joseph noticed that something had happened, and he was deeply troubled. In a certain sense, the first disharmony in the house of Nazareth! The Blessed Mother was silent. What God allowed to happen to her is incomprehensible. Of course, then he helped her; he sent an angel who said to Joseph, "Joseph, fear not to take Mary, your spouse,

home."⁴ Are these not incomprehensibilities?

Then, the Son of God was born in a stable, and he had to flee from earthly princes, after the angel had said: "His kingdom shall have no end."

At the age of twelve, Jesus preached in the temple. Mary and Joseph found him there after searching for him during three days of painful suffering. He was not only dis-obedient; with head held high he stood before them and said to them, "Why did you search for me? Did you not know that I have to be about my Father's business?" It is almost as if he would turn his back on Mary and Joseph.⁵ Again, no rose without thorns. Think of the life of our dear Blessed Mother, — how many thorns there were!

There were also thorns of poverty. The Savior was born in a stable in extreme poverty. We know that Joseph and Mary brought the offering of the poor when they presented Jesus in the temple. Also, there were the thorns of persecution. The Blessed Mother knew that Herod was in pursuit of her Son. They had to flee to a foreign country. Remember: no rose without thorns. The Blessed Mother had no permanent home. She went into exile; she lived in a godless country. Again: no rose without thorns.

Where did the thorns hurt most? Under the cross! I don't want to go into details today. It is enough to see that there were plenty of thorns in the life of the Mystical Rose. And why did she have to carry so many crosses? Why so many thorns? Because she wanted to be similar to the Savior. Through his thorns, through his suffering, he merited his transfiguration and our redemption. Our heavenly Mother wanted to be with him and in him, and as co-redemptrix do the same as he did.

³ Comp. Lk. 1:26-38.

⁴ Comp. Mt. 1:18-25.

⁵ Comp. Lk. 2:41-52