

24 February 1878

I. ADORATION OF THE RIGHTS OF GOD
THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S PLACE IN THE ASSUMPTION

In trying to decide what should be considered as the hallmark of our Institute. I became convinced that in everything and in every way, we ought to adore and be zealous for the rights of God.

This is something so great and solemn, that in order to avoid giving you the impression for even one instant that this majesty is something overbearing and crushing, I want to remind you immediately that adoration and love are the same thing. Adoration is the greatest and the most ardent love that can exist in the heart of man. It is a lover that implies profound respect and sovereign praise.

In human terms, when we say, "I adore you" we mean "I love you above all else." It would be considered idolatry if we dared say this to another human being. This does not make it less true that love is the basis of all adoration. It is important to remember this in all that I am going to say to you on the subject.

In loving God above all things and in all things, in loving the Church, in loving everyone, we truly recognize the rights of God and whom we are adorers and apostles. When our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman He said to her, "The hour is coming and now is, when the worshippers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him."¹

When he said this, it was you He was seeking. Faithful to your vocation, you are now members of a Congregation whose love should become in all things adoration. Thus all your works, all the interior and exterior acts of your life can rise to God and in a true spirit of adoration and reverence for the rights of God, you can forget yourselves so as to adore and love God and to give Him His rightful place above all creatures. You are daughters of the Assumption. This mystery, more of heaven than of earth, is essentially a mystery of adoration. When she left this earth and was assumed into heaven, the Blessed Virgin went to offer God sovereign homage. Indeed, what an honor for God the day Mary entered heaven to render him the most perfect adoration of which a creature is capable.

¹ Cf. Jn. 4:23.

In Mary all was adoration. Never once did she slight or offend the rights of God. She was conceived without sin and remained without sin in her entire life. Thus every instant of her life was, so to speak, an adoration of the Divine Majesty. Not only were her actions pure but she was filled with holiness and praised God with a degree of love, adoration, reverence and humble service that no other creature before or after her has ever attained. Therefore, if there was ever a worshipper in spirit and in truth, it was the Blessed Virgin. When, leaving the earth, she received the fullness of grace and glory, she entered heaven to abide for all eternity as love and adoration.

In the book of the Apocalypse we read that eighty elders remain before the throne of God, placing their crowns at His feet and repeating without end, "*Holy, Holy, Holy.*"² For the Blessed Virgin, her crown is the honor of her Son, and thus with an ardent desire she continually places this "crown" at the feet of God. She is aware of all she has received and offers this back to God, remaining as nothing before Him. In this way, she adores God in eternity infinitely more perfectly, than she was able to do on earth. From heaven, she draws others to Him. From the daughters who entrust themselves to her, she forms other adorers who in their turn, will follow in her footsteps.

Our Rule begins with these words: "Before all things, dear Sisters, may God be loved and then our neighbor." Whether this prologue was really in the first Rule for Religious written by St. Augustine is of little importance. By the decree of God and His Church, it is the beginning and summary of our Rule. Usually the formula stating the purpose of an institute specifies that its members will work towards their perfection, and our Rule states that this will be accomplished through the purity and greatness of our love. To open wide our hearts and purify them, to do all things for love and to render to God, through Jesus and Mary, a homage that represents the best use of our gifts, this is how we can become true adorers and true Religious of the Assumption.

² Rev. 4, 8-10