On January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, this website published an article on the visit of the Magi as described by the remarkable 17th-century Spanish nun, Venerable Maria of Agreda. Her extensive writings, known to us as *The Mystical City of God*, served as the record of the revelations which she received from the Blessed Virgin Herself on the mystery of salvation and Her hidden life as the Mother of our divine Savior. On the occasion of Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, we revisit *The Mystical City of God* and consider the words of the Virgin about the processional entry of Her Son into Jerusalem, an act symbolizing both humility and triumph and which could have been conceived only in the divine mind.

The Mystical City of God is available in English both in print as well as online. All text below *(in italics)* is extracted from Volume III (The Transfixion), Book Two, Chapter VII. A few introductory comments are in order. First, the brief reference to Judas indicates that the Blessed Mother was fully aware of the upcoming treacherous betrayal by this faithless apostle. Previously in Chapter V, Maria Agreda notes that, in spite of this knowledge, the Blessed Virgin *did not, on this account, deny him Her intercession and maternal love; but She applied Herself even more zealously to justify as far as possible the cause of Her divine Son against this perfidious and unfortunate man, in order that his wickedness, as soon as it should be put into action, might not have the shadow of an excuse before men*. Secondly, the particulars of the Lord's procession into the city of Jerusalem were designed in part to convince the high priests of Christ's literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Thus, we see that Judas and the high priests, both indispensable actors in the arrest and execution of Jesus, were each given special divinely-inspired "prompts" to recognize the truth unfolding before them and thereby save their souls. The pride and stubbornness of both caused them to reject these divine "clues" which would leave them with no mitigating circumstances on their awful day of judgment. Finally, as we will see in the text, God granted the entire world a unique and miraculous favor on that first Palm Sunday, an event that will likely never be repeated in human history. It should remind us of the old saying that God will never be outdone in generosity. This author hopes that a prayerful reading will help the reader to gain a deeper appreciation for the majesty and mercy of God as the Church now enters the holiest week of the year.

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On the Sabbath (Saturday) prior to Palm Sunday, Jesus was at Bethany, where He had raised Lazarus from the dead just a few days earlier. On this occasion, at a banquet hosted by Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary Magdalen, *filled with divine enlightening,* anointed her Lord with precious perfume. *On the morning of the next day, which corresponds to our Palm Sunday, the Lord proceeded with His disciples toward Jerusalem, being accompanied by many angels, who sang hymns of praise at seeing Him so enamored of men and so solicitous*

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for their eternal salvation. Having walked more or less of two miles and arrived in the village of Bethphage, He sent two disciples to an influential man of that neighborhood. From him they brought two beasts of burden, one of which had not yet been used or ridden by any one. The Lord progressed on His way to Jerusalem while they spread some of their cloaks and other garments both upon the ass and her colt. The Lord was to make use of both of them according to the prophecies of Isaias (Is. 62, 11), and Zacharias (Zach. 9, 9), who had foretold these particulars many ages before, in order that the priests and scribes should not be able to allege ignorance as an excuse. All the four Evangelists describe this wonderful triumph of Christ and relate what was seen by the bodily eyes of those present. As they proceeded on their way the disciples, and with them all the people, the infants as well as the grown persons, hailed Jesus as the true Messias, the Son of David, the Savior of the world and as their legitimate King. Some of them exclaimed: "Peace be in heaven and glory in the highest: blessed be He that cometh as the King in the name of the Lord," others: "Hosanna to the Son of David: save us, Son of David: blessed be the kingdom which now has arrived, the kingdom of our forefather David." Some others lopped branches from palms and other trees in sign of triumph and joy and spread their garments upon the ground to prepare a way for the triumphant Conqueror, Christ our Lord.

All these demonstrations of worship and admiration, which these men gave to the Divine and Incarnate Word, were calculated to manifest the power of His Divinity, especially at this time, when the priests and Pharisees were watching Him and seeking to put an end to His life in that very city. For if they had not been moved interiorly by a divine power, above and beyond that of their admiration for the miracles wrought by Him, it would have been impossible to draw such a gathering. Many of them were heathens and His declared enemies, who nevertheless hailed Him as the true Messias, Savior and King, and subjected themselves to a poor, despised and persecuted Man, who came not in triumphal chariots, or in the prancing of steeds and ostentation of riches, but without any show of arms or outward human power. Outwardly all this was wanting, as He thus entered seated on a beast contemptible in the sight of human vanity and pretension. The only signs of His dignity were in His countenance, which showed forth the gravity and serene majesty of His soul; while all the rest fell far short and was opposed to what the world is wont to applaud and celebrate. Hence the outward happenings of this day proclaimed His divine power, which directly moved the hearts of men to acknowledge Him as their Christ and Redeemer.

In order that the promise of the eternal Father might be entirely fulfilled, He not only moved the hearts of men in the city of Jerusalem by His divine light, to acknowledge Him as Redeemer, but He caused his triumph to be felt among all creatures, especially those who were capable of reasoning. For the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was announced by the archangel Michael to the holy Fathers and Prophets in limbo; and moreover, by a special

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vision, they were made to see whatever happened on this occasion. From those cavernous abodes they acknowledged, confessed and adored Christ, our Lord and Master, as their true God and as the Redeemer of the world. They composed new hymns of praise in honor of His admirable triumph over death, sin, and hell. The divine influence was also active in the hearts of many of those yet living in the world. For those that had faith or knowledge of Christ our Lord, not only in Palestine and its surroundings, but in Egypt and in other countries, were moved to adore the Redeemer in spirit; and this they did with unwonted joy, caused in them by the divine visitation of grace, although they did not expressly know the cause or the object of this movement in their hearts. But it came to them not without profit for their souls: for they were confirmed in their faith and in their well-doing. In order that the triumph of our Savior over death might be more glorious, the Most High ordained that on that day death should have no power over any of the mortals, so that, although in the natural course many would have died, not one of the human race died within those twenty-four hours.

To this triumph over death was added the triumph over hell, which, though it was more hidden, was even more glorious. For as soon as the people began to proclaim and invoke Christ as their Savior and King who came in the Name of the Lord, the demons felt the power of the right hand of God, and all of them, in whatever place they lurked throughout the world, were hurled into the dark caverns of the infernal abyss. During the short space of time in which Christ proceeded on his triumphal march, not a demon remained upon the earth, but all of them were trembling with wrath and terror in the depths of hell. Hence, they began to be filled with a still greater dread, lest the Messias be already in the world, and they immediately communicated their suspicions to each other, as I shall relate in the next chapter. The Savior proceeded on His triumphal way to the gates of Jerusalem, while the angels, who witnessed and followed His march, chanted new hymns of praise and glory in wonderful harmony. Having entered the city amid the jubilee of all its inhabitants, Jesus dismounted from the foal, and directed His divinely beautiful footsteps toward the temple, where He roused the admiration of all the multitudes by the wonders, which, according to the Evangelists, He wrought on that occasion (Matt. 21, 12; Luke 19, 45). Burning with zeal for the house of His Father, He overthrew the tables of those that bought and sold within the sacred precincts and cast forth those who made it a place of business and a den of thieves. Yet with the triumphal march the Lord suspended also the divine influence, which had disposed so well the hearts of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Although the just had been much benefited, and many others had been justified, others returned to their vices and imperfections, because they did not profit by the light and inspiration sent to them from on high. Though so many had hailed and acknowledged Christ our Savior as King of Jerusalem, not one tendered Him hospitality or received Him in his house (Mark 11, 11).

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The Lord remained in the temple teaching and preaching until nightfall. Wishing by His own example to confirm His teaching in regard to the veneration and worship due to that place, He would not permit even a glass of water to be brought to Him, and without having partaken either of this or any other refreshment, He returned that evening to Bethany (Matt. 21; 17, 18), whence He daily made His way to the city until the day of His Passion. The heavenly Mother and Mistress, most holy Mary, remained that day in Bethany, where from Her retirement She saw by a supernatural vision all that happened in the wonderful triumph of Her Son and Master. She witnessed all the doings of the sovereign spirits of heaven and of the mortals upon earth, and what befell the demons in hell; and how in all this the eternal Father merely fulfilled the promises, which He had made to His Incarnate Son in giving Him command and power over all His enemies [described earlier in this chapter]. *She saw also all that the Savior did on this occasion and in the temple. She heard the heavenly Father's voice answering the prayer of Christ, our Redeemer: "I have glorified, and will glorify again."* [John 12:28] *By these words He gave men to understand that besides the glory and triumph conceded to the Incarnate Word on that day and on other occasions, as described in this history, He would glorify and exalt Him after His Death, for such was the meaning of the words of the eternal Father; in this sense also it was understood and fully comprehended by the most blessed Mother in wonderful exultation of Her spirit.*

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