

« But how is it, father, that the Holy Scripture does not once mention the name of St. Joachim or that of St. Anne, those glorious parents of the Most Blessed Virgin ? »

« I will tell you still more », replied the missionary. Not only does the Gospel say nothing of St. Joachim or of St. Anne, the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin, but it does not even speak of the birth of their glorious daughter or of her youth or of her education. Is there not some mystery in this ? St. Thomas of Villanova answers that « the Holy Ghost has placed in relief, by *written* predication, only Jesus the divine Founder of the Church, making up Himself by *oral* tradition for the studied silence of the Scriptures ». Moreover Christians were destined to make up for it by their devotion.»

« By their devotion say you, father ; we admit this willingly but when did this devotion to St. Joachim and St. Anne begin ? Did not many centuries elapse before their feasts were celebrated ? »

« I grant it, my friends. It was only in the year 1584 that Pope Gregory XIII instituted the solemn feast of St. Anne and it was only in 1623 that Pope Gregory XV instituted that of St. Joachim. But this was not a first institution ; it was rather a confirmation of the devotion to those great saints, for there can be no doubt that this devotion is of very ancient date both in the oriental and the occidental Church. To be convinced of this, one has but to read the admirable pages written on the subject by the holy Fathers and by the Greek and Latin authors. Among these writers we may mention : Eustatius of Antioch, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Epiphanius, St. Sabas, St. Andrew of Crete, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. German of Constantinople and St. John Damascene. Then modern authors, historians, poets, sculptors and painters have devoted their talents to the glory of St. Joachim and of St. Anne.»

« What do the holy Fathers tell us of them ? »

« They praise the excellent morals and wise conduct of St. Joachim and St. Anne. According to them, those holy spouses led a most innocent life before God and an irreproachable one before men. They were rich, not in treasure of gold and silver,