

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL'S INVITATION.

Come over to me all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits.—(ECCL. xiv.)

BY ENFANT DE MARIE.



MARY is the echo of Jesus, and Holy Church places as it were, on her lips, this invitation of the Holy Spirit, since it is through her alone we have access to the mystic garden of Jesus' Divine Heart, and taste its sweet fruits.

Let us dwell a little on these words that steal through Carmel's prayerful cloisters on the feast of its glorious queen, and consider, first the invitation: "Come over to me." Secondly, to whom it is addressed: "all ye that desire me." Thirdly, the reward promised to fidelity in responding to our Blessed Mother's voice: "be filled with my fruits." In Holy Scripture language the imperative "be filled" is used instead of the future. We may cite an example of this mode of expression, "Walk before me and be perfect." That is, "you shall be perfect."

Jesus Christ our Lord tells us that no one can come to Him unless the father draws him; neither can we approach Mary except by the pathway of divine attraction leading to this mystic "Gate of Heaven."

That light to know her beauty; that love which inflames the heart at every sound of her name; that confidence which recurs to our dear mother's guidance in darkness, sorrow, every vicissitude of life, these are workings of God's Holy Spirit, leading us, through

Mary, to eternal rest. Why has the Church placed her dear image before us with its pleading face and outstretched hands? Why does she address the Queen of Heaven by so many sweet titles? "Comfortress of the afflicted," "Morning Star," "Our life, our sweetness, and our hope."

Why does she so often invite us on special feasts to enter this "garden enclosed," and admire its fair lilies of immaculate purity, its fragrant violets of humility, ("Behold the handmaid of the Lord!") or its roses of queenly beauty, intermingled, at the same time, with thorns? Surely the voice of Holy Church is like a melody flowing through aisles of spirit in many variations, but echoing still, "Come over to me!"

It is the most assured presage of eternal day when that "Star of the sea" sheds silvery rays over a darkened heart. We may hope where all seemed hopeless, if we find any trace of Mary, the "spes desperantium."

Let us not refuse this invitation, whether its music sounds through the instrumentality of ecclesiastical liturgy, or softly steals through the temple of our soul; rather let us answer, "Behold I come quickly!" to thee my mother and my queen! or, with St. Bernard, "ad te curro, ad te venio!" (Memorare).

To whom is it addressed? Surely none are excluded from the all-sufficient grace of God, from the compassionate prayers of Mary, yet it is especially whispered to those who *desire*. The heart of Mary, like that of Jesus, needs only to be sought with desire. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after