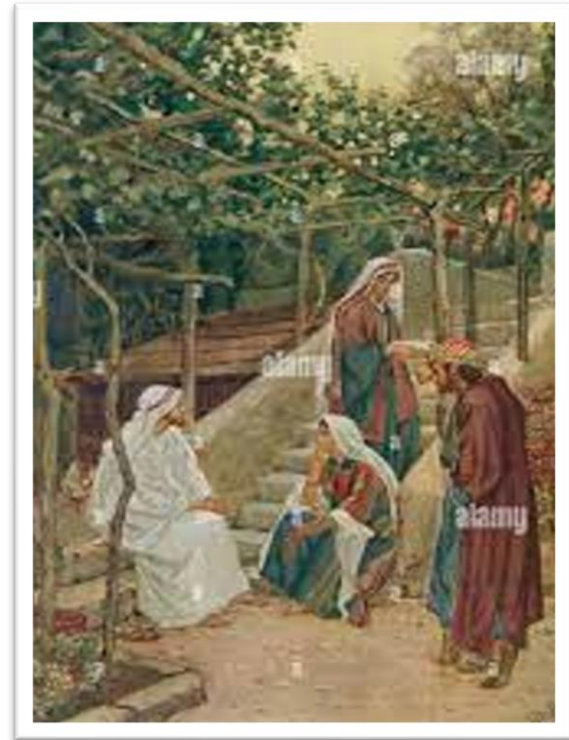


Jesus in Bethoron and Bethania

It was about six hours from Ozensara to Bethoron. At some distance from the latter place, John and Peter went on ahead, leaving Jesus to follow alone. The Egyptian disciples, along with the son of Johanna Chusa, came to meet Jesus here. They brought news that the holy women were celebrating the Sabbath in Machmas, which was situated in a narrow defile four hours to the north of this place. Machmas was the place at which Jesus in His twelfth year withdrew from His parents and returned to the Temple. Here it was that Mary missed Him and thought that He had gone on to Gophna. Not finding Him at this latter place, she was filled with anxious solicitude, and made her way back to Jerusalem.



There was in Bethoron a Levitical school, with whose teacher the Holy Family was acquainted. Anne and Joachim had lodged with him on the occasion of their taking Mary to the Temple; and when returning to Nazareth as Joseph's bride, Mary had again stopped at his house. Several of the disciples from Jerusalem had come hither with Joseph of Arimathea's nephews at the time of Jesus' arrival. Jesus went to the synagogue where, amid the contradictions and objections of the Pharisees, He explained the Scripture appointed for that Sabbath. The instruction over, He cured the sick at the inn, among them several women afflicted with an issue of blood, and blessed some sick children. The Pharisees had invited Him to a dinner, and when they found Him so tardy in coming, they went to call Him. All things, they said, had their time and so had these cures. The Sabbath belonged to God, and He had now done enough. Jesus responded: "I have no other time and no other measure than the will of the Heavenly Father." When He had finished curing, He accompanied the disciples to the dinner.

During the meal, the Pharisees addressed to Him all kinds of reproaches; among others they alleged that He allowed women of bad repute to follow Him about. These men had heard of the conversion of Magdalen, of Mary Suphan, and of the Samaritan. Jesus replied: "If ye knew Me, ye would speak differently. I am come to have pity on sinners." He contrasted external ulcers, which carry off poisonous humors and are easily healed, with internal ones which, though full of loathsome matter, do not affect the appearance of the individual so afflicted. The Pharisees further alleged that His disciples had neglected to wash before the meal, which gave Jesus an opportunity for a timely and energetic protest against the hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness of the Pharisees themselves. When they spoke of the women of ill repute, Jesus related a parable. He asked which was the more praiseworthy, the debtor, who having a great debt, humbly implored indulgence until he could faithfully discharge it little by little; or another who, though deeply in debt, spent all he could lay his hands on in rioting and, far from thinking of paying what he owed, mocked at the conscientious debtor. Jesus related likewise the parables of the good shepherd and the vineyard, as He had done at Antipatris, but His hearers were indifferent; they did not seize the application.

Jesus and the disciples put up at the Levitical school. Upper-Bethoron was so elevated that it could be descried from Jerusalem, but Lower-Bethoron lay at the foot of the mountain.

From Bethoron, which was six hours distant from Jerusalem, Jesus went straight on to Bethania, stopping at no place on the way excepting Athanot. Lazarus had already returned to Bethania from Magdalum, where he had put everything in order and engaged a steward for the castle and other property. To the man who had lived with Magdalen, he had assigned a dwelling situated on the heights near Ginnim and sufficient means for his support. The gift was gladly accepted.

As soon as she arrived in Bethania, Magdalen went straight to the dwelling of her deceased sister, Mary the Silent, by whom she had been very much beloved, and spent the whole night in tears. When Martha went to her in the morning, she found her weeping on the grave of her sister, her hair unbound and flowing around her.

The women of Jerusalem also had returned to their homes, all making the journey on foot. Magdalen, though exhausted by her malady and the shocks she had received, and wholly unaccustomed to such travelling, insisted upon walking like the others. Her feet bled more than once. The holy women who,

since her conversion, showed her unspeakable affection, were often obliged to come to her assistance. She was pale and exhausted from weeping. She could not resist her desire to express her gratitude to Jesus, so she went over an hour's journey to meet Him, threw herself at His feet, and bedewed them with repentant and grateful tears. Jesus extended His hand to her, raised her, and addressed to her words of kindness. He spoke of her deceased sister, Mary the Silent. He said that she should tread in her footsteps and do penance as she had done, although she had never sinned. Magdalen then returned home with her maid by another way.

Jesus went with Peter and John into Lazarus' garden. Lazarus came out to meet Him, conducted Him to the house and offered Him in the hall the customary attentions, namely, washing of feet and refreshments. Nicodemus was not there, but Joseph of Arimathea was present. Jesus stayed in the house and spoke with no one excepting the members of the family and the holy women. Only with Mary did He speak of John's death, for she knew of it by interior revelation. Jesus told her to return to Galilee within a week in order to escape the annoyances of a crowded road, for Herod's guests from that part of the country would a little later be going from Machaerus to their homes.

The disciples that were going to Judea at the same time as Jesus, though not with Him, stopped at the different places on the road, went into the huts on the wayside and to the shepherds in the fields, asking: "Are there any sick here whom we may cure in the Name of our Master, that we may freely give to them what He has freely given to us?" Then anointing the sick with oil, they were cured.

Jesus left Bethania the next morning. He crossed the Mount of Olives to teach and heal in a neighboring place where some masons and other mechanics were encamped. It was the camping ground of the day laborers and masons engaged on the interminable buildings of the Temple mount. There were some kitchens around the place in which poor women cooked the workmen's food for a trifle. There were many Galileans among the workmen, also some people who had been attracted thither by Jesus' teaching and miracles, some even whom He had cured. Some too were from Giskala, from Zorobabel the Centurion's estate, and many others from a little place near Tiberias on the northern height of the valley of Magdalum. Jesus cured many sick among these people. They bemoaned to Him the great misfortune that had happened about fourteen days before in the falling of that huge building, and begged Him to visit several of the wounded who had barely escaped with their lives. Ninety-three people, besides the eighteen

treacherous architects, had been killed. Jesus went to the wounded, whom He consoled and healed. He healed several of contusions on the head by anointing the head with oil and pressing it between His hands; and crushed hands on which splinters of bones were projecting, He healed by fixing the pieces together, anointing them, and holding them in His own hands. Broken arms bound up in bandages Jesus anointed, then held the fractures in His hands, and they were made whole, so that the bandages could be removed and the arms used. The wounds of lost limbs, He closed.

I heard Jesus saying to the assembled multitude that they would have greater evils to bemoan when the sword would strike Galilee. He advised them to pay all taxes to the Emperor without murmuring, and if they had not the means to do so, they should apply to Lazarus in His name, and he would furnish what was necessary. Jesus spoke with touching kindness to these poor people. I heard them complaining that once they were able to obtain help at the Pool of Bethesda, but now poor people could no longer look there for assistance—they had to languish unaided. For a long time past, they had heard of no cure at the pool.

Jesus wept as He crossed the Mount of Olives. He said, “If the city” “does not accept salvation, its Temple will be destroyed like this building that has tumbled down. A great number will be buried in the ruins.” He called the catastrophe of the aqueduct an example that should serve to the people as a warning.

Jesus went afterward to the house outside the Bethlehem gate of Jerusalem at which Mary and Joseph had lodged with Him, a Babe of forty days, when they were going to present Him in the Temple. Anne also had spent a night here when journeying to the Crib, and Jesus had done the same when, in His twelfth year, He had at Machmas left His parents who were returning home and gone back to the Temple. This little inn was in the hands of very devout, simple-hearted people, and it was there that the Essenians and other pious souls took lodgings. The present proprietors were the children of those that had lived there thirty years before, and there was one old man who remembered perfectly all the circumstances of those visits. They did not, however, recognize Jesus, for He had not been there for a long time. They thought perhaps He was John the Baptist, of whom even here the report was current, that he had been set at liberty.

They showed Jesus in one corner of the house a doll in swaddling bands, clothed exactly as He Himself had been when Mary bore Him to the Temple.

It was lying in a crib like His own, and around it burned lights and lamps that appeared to rise out of paper horns. They said to Jesus: “Jesus of Nazareth, the great Prophet, was born in Bethlehem three and thirty years ago, and was brought here by His Mother. What comes from God, one may honor, and why should we not celebrate His birthday for six weeks if similar honors are paid to Herod, who is no prophet?”

These people, through their intercourse with Anne and other intimate friends of the Holy Family, as well as through the accounts of the shepherds who put up at their inn when they visited Jerusalem, were reverential believers in Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. When Jesus now made Himself known to them their joy was beyond expression. They showed Him every place in the house and garden hallowed by the presence of Mary, Joseph, and Anne. Jesus instructed and consoled them, and they exchanged gifts. Jesus directed one of the disciples to give them some coins while at the same time He accepted from them some bread, fruit, and honey for His journey. They accompanied Him quite a distance when, with the disciples, He left the inn and started for Hebron.