

THE MYSTICAL
CITY OF GOD

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CITY OF GOD

POPULAR ABRIDGMENT

OF

THE DIVINE HISTORY AND LIFE

OF THE

VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD

MANIFESTED TO MARY OF AGREDA
FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF MEN

Translated from the Original Spanish

BY

FISCAR MARISON

(Rev. Geo. J. Blatter)



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The Mystical City of God in four volumes by Venerable Mary of Agreda was translated into English from the original Spanish by Fr. George J. Blatter (Fiscar Marison—his *nom de plume*) and published by him in 1912 with the imprint of the Theopolitan Company of Chicago, composed of Fr. Blatter, his brother, and some friends for purposes of disseminating the book. In 1929, Mr. Louis W. Bernicken assumed publication of the four volumes, and in 1949 this work was taken over by Mr. Harry D. Corcoran of Albuquerque, New Mexico under the name of the Corcoran Publishing Co. In 1971 rights to the book were purchased by Ave Maria Institute (the Blue Army) of Washington, New Jersey, the present publisher, now called the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, USA Inc.

This popular abridgement of the four-volume work was compiled, it is believed, by Fr. Cassian Burgert, O.F.M. Cap. and was published by Mr. Bernicken. It had gone through five printings of about 1,000 copies each by the time of the printing of this paperbound edition.

IMPRIMATUR

Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 9, 1949.

I gladly give my “Imprimatur” as of today, to the new edition of the work, “The City of God” by Sister Mary of Jesus, to be reprinted from the original authorized Spanish Edition of the year 1902 without change, and already bearing the Imprimatur of His Excellency, Most Reverend H. J. Alerding, Bishop of Fort Wayne.

‡ Edwin V. Byrne, D.D.,
Archbishop of Santa Fe.

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What the Universities of Europe, the Religious
Orders and Learned Men Say of the
“Ciudad de Dios.”

FORTY years after the first appearance of the “Ciudad de Dios” the great universities of Europe were called upon to give their opinion about this great work. All the faculties, except the Jansenistic members of the Sorbonne at Paris, published highest recommendations. At the same time the learned men and teachers of each religious Order that maintained institutions of learning in Europe, were asked to contribute their opinions. The following religious Orders complied: The Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans, Jesuits, Cistercians, Basilians, Trinitarians, Mercedarians, Minims, Hieronymites, Premonstratensians, Reformed Augustinians, Theatines, Minors of the Regular Clergy, all unanimously endorsing the favorable decision previously published by the University of Salamanca. To the approbation of nearly all the Universities and Religious Orders, were then added the high eulogiums of other learned men, great divines, bishops and princes of the Church and of the Popes and the Roman Congregations. As a sample of what these witnesses said concerning the wonderful “Ciudad de Dios,” we here select the official approbation of the University of Louvain, one of the great Universities of Europe. After pointing out that God’s power of giving private revelations to whom He chooses, must not be circumscribed, and after referring to some general rules in regard to private revelations, the document proceeds to say:

“Now, while abiding the decision of the Church concerning the revelations, which are given us under the title of *The City of God*, we, having read the whole work, say and are of the opinion, that the faithful can read it without danger to their faith and without damage to the purity of morals;

for there is not found anything within it, which could lead to relaxation or to indiscreet rigor; but on the contrary, we have come to the conclusion that it will be most useful for enlivening and augmenting the piety of the faithful, the veneration of the most holy Virgin, and the respect for the sacred mysteries.”

“The strong and the weak, the wise and the ignorant, and in fine, all the world will gather richest fruit from the reading of these books: for they contain what is most sublime in theology and in a style so simple, easy and perspicuous that, in order to enter deeply into an understanding of the holy mysteries, no more is necessary than to read them with sound judgment.”

“Combined with this simplicity are found many doctrines and valid proofs, free from contradictions and not easily found in other writings. This History explains more than a thousand difficulties in holy Scripture, in a manner equally natural and wonderful. At every step are encountered exquisite interpretations, until now unknown, and which had been hidden beneath the mere letter, but are laid open in these writings and brought to the light. In short, the whole work is a beautiful web of scripture passages which, though spun from its different books, are directly and specially woven into a whole for the purpose intended by the Venerable Mother.”

“In addition thereto the instructions given by the most holy Virgin at the end of each chapter contain the purest morality, instruct, entertain, and at the same time sweetly inculcate the love of virtue and abhorrence of vice, painting them in the most vivid and natural colors. They do not only convince the intellect, but they contain such a special unction, that they enkindle a sacred ardor in the soul. In meditating upon them one certainly will experience a delight not met with in ordinary writings; and the more they are read the greater is the delight experienced. Finally, the whole work contains something so unwonted and attractive that, once begun, the reading of it can scarcely be relinquished.”

“The novelty and variety found in these writings delight and recreate the reader beyond all that is pleasant in the world, at the same time instructing him and inspiring him with new fervor. All can easily persuade themselves that, if the interior life of Christ our Lord and of the most holy

Virgin was not just as described in these books, it could certainly have been like it; and that it would have been well worthy of them, if it was as it is there depicted. All that is there said is befitting the majesty and humility of Christ, and in correspondence with the holiness of the Virgin and the dignity of the Mother; since there is found nothing in the whole work which was not worthy of both one and the other.

“Notwithstanding all this, we should not at all wonder if the book met with men who are disposed to be critical; for what book is there which can hope to escape the opposition of the people of our times? God has not even provided that the sacred Scriptures should be free from such attack among the greater part of the learned of this world. The whole philosophy of the pagans causes them to join the number of those who are opposed to the Cross of Christ crucified; and among that number are also the libertines of our day.”

“Of course there are certain points in this work which might give rise to apparent difficulties, and some of them occurred, and do occur, to us. But, in accordance with what we have said of the excellence and usefulness of this work, we have come to the conclusion that these few passages must not hinder us from giving it the commendation already given; besides, we must confess that we might possibly be ourselves mistaken in making these objections.”

“This seemed to us the most reasonable course, since in this book there is something more than human. Anything so excellent and sublime cannot be ascribed to an over-excited imagination, since the whole work is consistent throughout. Nor can it be believed to be the work of a perverted mind, for, with a constant equanimity, it treats of the most deeply hidden and abstruse matters without involving itself in any contradictions; though often also it descends to innumerable minute and particular circumstances.”

“There are contained in this work such noble, such devout circumstantial and pertinent discourses, as cannot be the result of mere discursive thought. Nor can it be attributed to the demon; for, from beginning to end, it suggests and breathes nothing but humility, patience and endurance of hardships.”

“Therefore, just as ‘Ciudad’ must without a doubt be attributed to the venerable Mother of Agreda, who is claimed as

its author, so she cannot have composed it without particular help from on high. Our conclusive opinion is, that the *City of God*, for the good of the public, and for the advantages to be derived therefrom, should be brought forth to the light. This is our judgment, which we submit entirely to the supreme decision of the Holy See, to whom alone belongs the right of finally judging such writings.”

Louvain, 20th of July 1715.

(Signed) HERMANN DAMEN,

Doctor, Professor Ordinary and
Regent of the Theological Faculty,
Don of Saint Peter, President of
the College of Arras, Censor of
Books, etc.

ANTON PARMENTIER,

Doctor, Professor Ordinary, Re-
gent of the Theological Faculty,
President of the Great College of
Theologians, etc.

Approbations

THE FIRST POPE officially to take notice of “Ciudad de Dios” was Pope Innocent XI, who, on July 3, 1686, in response to a series of virulent attacks and machinations of some members of the Sorbonne, known to be Jansenists, issued a breve permitting the publication and reading of the “Ciudad de Dios.” Similar decrees were afterward issued by Popes Alexander VIII, Clement IX and Benedict XIII. These decrees were followed by two decrees of the Congregation of Rites, approved by Benedict XIV and Clement XIV, in which the authenticity of “Ciudad de Dios” as extant and written by the Venerable Servant of God, Mary of Jesus, is officially established. The great Pope Benedict XIII, when he was Archbishop of Benevent, used these revelations as material for a series of sermons on the Blessed Virgin. On Sept. 26, 1713, the Bishop of Ceneda, Italy, objecting to the publication of the “City of God,” was peremptorily ordered by the Holy Office to withdraw his objections as interfering with the decree of Pope Innocent XI for the universal Church.

The process of canonization of Mary of Agreda was promoted by the Spanish bishops and other eminent men of the Church soon after her death in 1666. It has resulted so far in securing her the title of *Venerabilis*, thus clearing the way to her beatification, for which, let us hope, God will soon raise a promoter among the many pious and eminent men who hold in esteem her writings and have learned of her holy life and of the miracles wrought at her tomb.

The Redemptorist Fathers published a new German translation in 1885, which was approved and highly recommended by the Bishop of Ratisbon in the following terms:

“We take pleasure in giving our episcopal approbation to the annotated translation of the Spanish original “Ciudad de Dios” of Mary of Jesus and recommend this book, which

will surely edify all readers and be the occasion of great spiritual blessings.”

Ratisbon, September 29, 1885.

✠ IGNATIUS, Bishop of Ratisbon.

Notable is the high recommendation of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, Apost. Legate, Primate of Germany, etc.

“According to the decrees of Pope Innocent XI and Clement XI the book known as ‘Ciudad de Dios’ written by the Venerable Servant of God, Maria de Jesus, may be read by all the faithful.”

“A number of episcopal approbations, the recommendations of four renowned universities, namely, of Toulouse, Salamanca, Alcalá and Louvain, and of prominent members of different Orders, coincide in extolling the above-named work. The learned and pious Cardinal D’Aguirre says that he considers all the studies of fifty years of his previous life as of small consequence in comparison with the doctrines he found in this book, which in all things are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Fathers and Councils of the Church. The Venerable Superior-General of St. Sulpice, Abbé Emery, adds: “Only since I read the revelations of Mary of Agreda do I properly know Jesus and His Holy Mother.”

“We therefore do not hesitate—in granting our episcopal approbation to—“Ciudad de Dios”—and wish to recommend it to the faithful and especially to our clergy.”

✠ FRANZ ALBERT,
Archbishop.

Archiepiscopal Chancery, Salzburg.
September 12, 1885.

A more recent official approbation of “Ciudad de Dios” is from the Bishop of Tarazona, prefacing the new edition of 1911-1912.

“We, Dr. James Ozoidi y Udave, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Tarazona, Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Tudela, etc.

Having charged the priest Don Eduardo Royo, chaplain and confessor at the convent of the Immaculate Conception of Agreda, carefully and exactly to compare the manuscript which is to serve as copy for the print-

ing of the new edition of the “City of God” now about to be published by the religious of the above-named convent, with the authenticated autograph manuscript of that work there preserved—and having ascertained by a personal revision of a great part of the manuscript that the said priest has diligently and faithfully fulfilled this charge imposed upon him by us:

We now therefore certify that this present edition of ‘Ciudad de Dios,’ with the exception of a few more orthographic modifications, is entirely conformable to the autograph of that work as composed and written by the Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus of Agreda.

Tarazona, April 7, 1911.

[Diocesan Seal] † JAMES, Bishop of Tarazona.

Finally follows the official approbation of the Right Reverend Bishop of the Fort Wayne Diocese, where this English translation is published.

Rome City, Ind., Aug. 24, 1912.

The Rev. George J. Blatter,

Dear Rev. Father:

My Imprimatur is herewith granted to your English translation of the work entitled ‘Ciudad de Dios.’ Wishing you every blessing, I remain,

Devotedly in Domino,

† H. J. ALERDING, Bishop of Fort Wayne.

The author has made use of capital letters in the text slightly at variance with common usage, in order to avoid complication and secure greater clearness. The paragraph numbers are those of the newest Spanish edition of “Ciudad de Dios” in 1912. In the abridgment they vary slightly.

City of God is divided into three Parts and eight Books. Part I contains Books 1 and 2. Part II contains Books 3, 4, 5 and 6. Part III contains Books 7 and 8. As circumstances compel a serial publication of the four volumes, the author judged it best to head these divisions as follow:

THE CONCEPTION, Books 1 and 2.
 THE INCARNATION, Books 3 and 4.
 THE TRANSFIXION, Books 5 and 6.
 THE CORONATION, Books 7 and 8.

Part First

BOOKS I, II

The Conception

BOOK ONE

Treats of the Divine Fore-Ordainment of Christ and His Mother as the Highest Ideals of all Creation; of the Creation of the Angels and Men as their Servants; of the Lineage of the Just Men, Finally Resulting in the Immaculate Conception and Birth of the Queen of Heaven; and of Her Life up to Her Presentation in the Temple.

Chapter I

WHY GOD REVEALED THE LIFE OF MARY IN THESE OUR TIMES.

THE WHOLE of this holy life of Mary is divided, for greater perspicuity, into three parts. The first treats of all that pertains to the first fifteen years of her life, from the moment of her most pure Conception until the moment when in her virginal womb the eternal Word assumed flesh, including all that the Most High performed for Mary during these years. The second part embraces the mystery of the Incarnation, the whole life of Christ Our Lord, His Passion and death and His Ascension into Heaven, thus describing the life of our Queen in union with that of her divine Son and all that she did while living with Him. The third part contains the life of the Mother of grace during the time she lived alone, deprived of the companionship of Christ our Redeemer, until the happy hour of her transition, assumption and crowning as the Empress of Heaven, where she is to live eternally as the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. These three parts I subdivided into eight books, in order that they may be more convenient for use and always remain the subject of my thoughts, the spur of my will and my meditation day and night.

In order to say something of the time in which I wrote this heavenly history, it must be noticed that my father,

brother Francis Coronel, and my mother, sister Catharine de Arana, my parents, founded in their own house this convent of the discalced nuns of the Immaculate Conception by the command and the will of God, which was declared to my mother, sister Catharine, in a special vision and revelation. This foundation took place on the octave of the Epiphany, January 13th, 1619. On the same day we took the habit, my mother and her two daughters; and my father took refuge in the Order of our seraphic Father St. Francis, in which two of his sons had already been living as religious. There he took the habit, made his profession, lived an exemplary life, and died a most holy death. My mother and myself received the veil on the day of the Purification of the Queen of Heaven, on the second of February, 1620. On account of the youth of the other daughter her profession was delayed. The Almighty in His sheer goodness favored our family so much, that all of us were consecrated to Him in the religious state. In the eighth year of the foundation of this convent, in the twenty-fifth of my age, in the year of Our Lord 1627, holy obedience imposed upon me the office of abbess, which to this day I unworthily hold. During the first ten years of the time in which I held this office, I received many commands from the Most High and from the Queen of Heaven to write her holy life, and I continued in fear and doubt to resist these heavenly commands during all that time until the year 1637, when I began to write it the first time. On finishing it, being full of fears and tribulations, and being so counseled by a confessor (who directed me during the absence of my regular confessor), I burned all the writing containing not only this history, but many other grave and mysterious matters; for he told me, that women should not write in the Church. I obeyed his commands promptly; but I had to endure most severe reproaches on this account from my superiors and from the confessor, who knew my whole life. In order to force me to rewrite this history, they threatened me with censures. The Most High and the Queen of Heaven also repeated their commands that I obey. By divine favor I begin re-writing this history on the eighth of December, 1655, on the day of the Immaculate Conception.

I confess to Thee (*Matt.* 11:25) and magnify Thee, King Most High, that in Thy exalted Majesty Thou hast hidden

these high mysteries from the wise and from the teachers, and in Thy condescension hast revealed them to me, the most insignificant and useless slave of Thy Church, in order that Thou mayest be the more admired as the omnipotent Author of this history in proportion as its instrument is despicable and weak.

I saw a great and mysterious sign in Heaven; I saw a Woman, a most beautiful Lady and Queen, crowned with the stars, clothed with the sun, and the moon was at her feet. (*Apoc.* 12:1). The holy angels spoke to me: "This is that blessed Woman, whom St. John saw in the Apocalypse, and in whom are enclosed, deposited and sealed up the wonderful mysteries of the Redemption. So much has the most high and powerful God favored this Creature, that we, his angelic spirits, are full of astonishment. Contemplate and admire her prerogatives, record them in writing, because that is the purpose for which, according to the measure suitable to thy circumstances, they will be made manifest to thee." I was made to see such wonders, that the greatness of them took away my speech, and my admiration of them suspended my other faculties; nor do I think that all the created beings in this mortal life will ever comprehend them, as will appear in the sequel of my discourse. At another time I saw a most beautiful ladder with many rungs; around it were many angels, and a great number of them were ascending and descending upon it. His Majesty said to me: "This is the mysterious ladder of Jacob, the house of God and the portal of Heaven (*Gen.* 28:17); if thou wilt earnestly strive to live irreprehensible in my eyes, thou wilt ascend upon it to Me."

This promise incited my desires, set my will aflame and enraptured my spirit; with many tears I grieved, that I should be a burden to myself in my sinfulness (*Job* 7:20). I sighed for the end of my captivity and longed to arrive where there would be no obstacle to my love. In this anxiety I passed some days, trying to reform my life; I again made a general Confession and corrected some of my imperfections. The vision of the ladder continued without intermission, but it was not explained to me. I made many promises to the Lord and proposed to free myself from all terrestrial things and to reserve the powers of my will entirely for His love, without allowing it to incline toward any creature, be it ever

so small or unsuspecting; I repudiated all visible and sensible things. Having passed some days in these affections and sentiments, I was informed by the Most High, that the ladder signified the life of the most Holy Virgin, its virtues and sacraments. His Majesty said to me: "I desire, My spouse, that thou ascend this stair of Jacob and enter through this door of Heaven to acquire the knowledge of My attributes and occupy thyself in the contemplation of My Divinity. Arise then and walk, ascend by it to Me. These angels, which surround it and accompany it, are those that I appointed as the guardians of Mary, as the defenders and sentinels of the citadel of Sion. Consider her attentively, and, meditating on her virtues, seek to imitate them." It seemed to me then, that I ascended the ladder and that I recognized the great wonders and the ineffable prodigies of the Lord in a mere Creature and the greatest sanctity and perfection of virtue ever worked by the arm of the Almighty. At the top of the ladder I saw the Lord of hosts and the Queen of all creation. They commanded me to glorify, exalt and praise Him on account of these great mysteries and to write down so much of them, as I might bring myself to understand. The exalted and high Lord gave me a law, written not only on tablets, as He gave to Moses (*Exodus* 31:18), but one wrought by His omnipotent finger in order that it might be studied and observed. (*Psalms* 1:2).

He moved my will so that in her presence I promised to overcome my repugnance and with her assistance to set about writing her history, paying attention to three things: First, to remember that the creature must ever seek to acknowledge the profound reverence due to God and to abase itself in proportion to the condescension of His Majesty toward men and that the effect of greater favors and benefits must be a greater fear, reverence, attention and humility; secondly, to be ever mindful of the obligation of all men, who are so forgetful of their own salvation, to consider and learn what they owe to the Queen and Mother of piety on account of the part assumed by her in the Redemption, to think of the love and the reverence which she showed to God and the honor in which we are to hold this great Lady; thirdly, to be willing to have my spiritual director, and if necessary the whole world, find out my littleness and vileness, and the small returns which I make for what I receive.

To these my protestations the most Holy Virgin answered: "My daughter, the world stands much in need of this doctrine, for it does not know, nor does it practice, the reverence due to the Lord omnipotent. On account of this ignorance His justice is provoked to afflict and humiliate men. They are sunken in their carelessness and filled with darkness, not knowing how to seek relief or attain to the light. This, however, is justly their lot, since they fail in the reverence and fear, which they ought to have."

Besides this the Most High and the Queen gave me many other instructions, in order to make clear to me their will in regard to this work. It seemed to me temerity and want of charity toward myself, to reject the instruction which she had promised me for narrating the course of her most holy life. It seemed equally improper to put off the writing of it, since the Most High had intimated this as the fitting and opportune time, saying to me in this regard: "My daughter, when I sent my Only-begotten, the world, with the exception of the few souls that served Me, was in worse condition than it ever had been since its beginning; for human nature is so imperfect that if it does not subject itself to the interior guidance of my light and to the fulfillment of the precepts of my ministers by sacrificing its own judgment and following Me, who am the way, the truth and the life (*John* 14:6), and by carefully observing my Commandments in order not to lose my friendship, it will presently fall into the abyss of darkness and innumerable miseries, until it arrives at obstinacy in sin. From the creation and sin of the first man until I gave the law to Moses, men governed themselves according to their own inclinations and fell into many errors and sins. (*Rom.* 5:13). After having received the law, they again committed sin by not obeying it (*John* 7:19) and thus they lived on, separating themselves more and more from truth and light and arriving at the state of complete forgetfulness. In fatherly love I sent them eternal salvation and a remedy for the incurable infirmities of human nature, thus justifying my cause. And just as I then chose the opportune time for the greater manifestation of my mercy, so I now select this time for showing toward them another very great favor. For now the hour has come and the opportune time to let men know the just cause of my anger, and they are now justly charged and convinced

of their guilt. Now I will make manifest my indignation and exercise my justice and equity; I will show how well justified is my cause. In order that this may come to pass more speedily, and because it is now time that my mercy show itself more openly and because my love must not be idle, I will offer to them an opportune remedy, if they will but make use of it for returning again to my favor. Now, at this hour, when the world has arrived at so unfortunate a pass, and when, though the Word has become incarnate, mortals are more careless of their weal and seek it less; when the day of their transitory life passes swiftly at the setting of the sun of time; when the night of eternity is approaching closer and closer for the wicked and the day without a night is being born for the just; when the majority of mortals are sinking deeper and deeper into the darkness of their ignorance and guilt, oppressing the just and mocking the children of God; when my holy and divine Law is despised in the management of the iniquitous affairs of state, which are as hostile as they are contrary to my Providence; when the wicked least deserve my mercy; in these predestined times, I wish to open a portal for the just ones through which they can find access to my mercy; I wish to give them a light by which they can dispel the gloom that envelops the eyes of their minds. I wish to furnish them a suitable remedy for restoring them to my grace. Happy they who find it, and blessed they who shall appreciate its value, rich they who shall come upon this treasure, and blessed and very wise those who shall search into and shall understand its marvels and hidden mysteries. I desire to make known to mortals how much intercession of her is worth, who brought restoration of life by giving mortal existence to the immortal God. As recompense I desire that they look upon the wonders wrought by my mighty arm in that pure Creature, as upon a mirror by which they can estimate their own ingratitude. I wish to make known to them much of that, which according to my high judgment is still hidden concerning the Mother of the Word."

"I have not revealed these mysteries in the primitive Church, because they are so great, that the faithful would have been lost in the contemplation and admiration of them at a time when it was more necessary to establish firmly the law of grace and of the Gospel. Although all mysteries

of religion are in perfect harmony with each other, yet human ignorance might have suffered recoil and doubt at their magnitude, when faith in the Incarnation and Redemption and the precepts of the New Law of the Gospel were yet in their beginnings. On this same account the Person of the Incarnate Word said to His disciples at the Last Supper: "Many things have I to say to you; but you are not yet disposed to receive them." (*John* 16:12). These words He addressed to all the world, for it was not yet capable of giving full obedience to the law of grace and full assent to the faith in the Son, much less was it prepared to be introduced into the mysteries of His Mother. But now mankind has greater need for this manifestation, and this necessity urges Me to disregard their evil disposition. And if men would now seek to please Me by reverencing, believing, and studying the wonders, which are intimately connected with this Mother of Piety, and if they would all begin to solicit her intercession from their whole heart, the world would find some relief. I will not longer withhold from men this mystical City of refuge; describe and delineate it to them, as far as thy shortcomings allow. I do not intend that thy descriptions and declarations of the life of the Blessed Virgin shall be mere opinions or contemplations, but reliable truth. They that have ears to hear, let them hear. Let those who thirst come to the living waters and leave the dried-out cisterns; let those that are seeking for the light, follow it to the end. Thus speaks the Lord, God Almighty!"