

## SPIRITUAL MATERNITY.

ON AUGUST 5, 1568, THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS, A JESUIT NOVICE, BY NAME STANISLAS, AND A THEOLOGIAN, BY NAME SAN, WERE RETURNING TO THE NOVITATE FROM A PIOUS VISIT TO SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE, ROME. DURING THE WALK, THE CONVERSATION WAS ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, STANISLAS TAKING THE LEAD. WHEREUPON THE THEOLOGIAN ASKED THE NOVICE: "TELL ME, STANISLAS, DO YOU LOVE MARY MUCH"? "WHY SHOULD'N I"? REPLIED THE NOVICE. "SHE IS MY MOTHER", HERE WE ARE FACING THE TOPIC OF THE SPIRITUAL MATERNITY OF MARY, WHICH WE ARE GOING TO CONSIDER IN THIS EXHORTATION.

THE TRANSMISSION OF GRACE THROUGH CHRIST'S WORK OF REDEMPTION IS A FUNDAMENTAL DOGMA OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. CHRIST ACTED AS HEAD AND TRUE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RACE, WHICH WAS IN NEED OF REDEMPTION. HE IS TRULY OUR HEAD, BEING OF ONE RACE WITH US, AND WE ARE CALLED HIS BRETHREN. HE IS OUR BORN REPRESENTATIVE, BECAUSE HE IS THE PRINCIPAL MEMBER OF THE RACE AND RESEMBLES HIS BRETHREN, IN ALL RESPECTS, SIN ALONE EXCEPTED. AS HEAD AND PRINCIPAL MEMBER OF THE RACE, CHRIST IS ENABLED TO ACT IN THE NAME OF THE MEMBERS AND TO OFFER HIMSELF TO GOD AS A PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. BY A SPECIAL MESSENGER, MARY IS INVITED TO BECOME THE MOTHER OF HIM, WHO, AS HEAD OF THE HUMAN RACE, TAKES UPON HIMSELF THE PAYMENT OF THE DEBT OF THE GUILTY AND THE SANCTIFICATION OF THOSE, WHOM HE HAS VOLUNTARILY INCORPORATED INTO HIMSELF. BY THE SUBLIME FIAT, MARY BECOMES NOT ONLY THE PHYSICAL MOTHER OF THE HISTORICAL CHRIST, BUT ALSO THE SPIRITUAL MOTHER OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE JUSTIFIED RACE, WHOM CHRIST THE HEAD REPRESENTS. IN HIS ENCYCLICAL LETTER AD DIEM ILLUM, POPE PIUS X DESCRIBES THIS MYSTICAL MOTHER-