

And in this way many who are unlettered and simple have gained knowledge of the lofty and profound things of God.<sup>8</sup>

*Chapter 1. Here begins the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The time had come when the blessed and supreme Trinity, because of the abundant love he bore towards humankind, wished to provide for the salvation of the human race through the Incarnation of his most sweet Son. So when the Virgin Mary had been betrothed to Joseph and had returned to Nazareth, Almighty God—moved by his own mercy and by the prayers of the angels—summoned the angel Gabriel and said to him, “Go to our most beloved daughter Mary, dearest above all other creatures, who is betrothed to Joseph, and tell her that my son has desired her beauty and has chosen her for his mother. And ask her to receive him joyfully, because I have decided to bring about the salvation of humanity through her, and I wish to forget the wrongs committed by the human race.”

Pay attention well here, and strive to make yourself present with your mind so that you can understand the things that are said and done here. Gaze with devotion on God the Father sitting on his royal throne with a benevolent and merciful countenance, and watch how he gives this errand to his messenger in such a kindly, paternal way. And also watch the angel reverently kneeling to accept this mission with a joyful expression and with his head bowed before God the almighty Father. And as soon as he received his mandate, he stood up without delay and took human form, and in an instant he was before the Virgin Mary, who was sitting enclosed in her little cell. But the angel was not so quick that he could get there more quickly than God, and even though he had just taken his leave, he found the most holy Trinity there ahead of him. Because you ought to know that the most excellent work of the Son of God was the work of the whole Trinity, even though only the person of the Son became incarnate.

And I will give you a concrete example of this. Let’s say that there is someone who is putting on new clothes, and two other people are helping him to dress. You can see, then, that three are performing the work, even though only one is being dressed. And it was in this way that

Et de ciò te darò uno tal exemplo material. [f. 4v] Poniamo ch'el sia uno che si vesti di nuovo et due altre persone lo aiutasse a vestire. Vedi adonque che tre se adoperano e pure uno sollo rimane vestito, et cusi fu qui che tuta la sanctissima Trinitade se ne adoperò et pure sollo la persona del Figl[i]ulo rimase incarnata.

O chi intrarà in quella chasseta dove cotalle persone vi sono, dove cotalle cose si fano! Ma aveg[n]a che la sancta Trinitade sia in ogni luocho, tu dèi sapere et pensare che qui la fo più singularmente per la singulare operatione che qui si fece.

Intrato adonque l'angelo, dise alla Vergene Maria: *Ave gratia plena, dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus*. Et ella, secundo che dice lo evangelista, si turbò di queste parole, et pensava qualle fosse la casone di questa salutatione, imperciò ch'el no era usato di cusi salutarla. Nella qual salutatione aldendosi laudare di tre chose, cioè, Madre del Figl[i]ulo de Dio, et piena di gratia, et ch'el Signore era cum [f. 5r] lei. Non potea quella, che era piena de tuta humilitade, non turbarse de una vertuosa et honesta vergogna, et començò ancho a temere se ciò fosse vero. Et non credere perciò ch'ela temesse che l'angelo non dicesse el vero, ma perciò ch'el'è propria cosa delle persone humele de non riputarse e de non esaminare le sue vertude, ançi ripensano li loro deffeti et cusi façando fano le grande vertude pichole et li picholi defeti grandi. Adonque sì come sapie[n]tissima et honesta, vergognosa et timorosa, non li rispuose.

Et allora l'angelo, cognoscendo la casone della dubitatione, sì li disse: «Non temere, Maria, et non te vergognare delle laude che io te ho dato, imperciò che cossì ène la veritade; et non solamente tu sei piena di gratia, ma etianodio tu l'ài trovata da Dio a tuta l'humana generatione. Et in segno de ciò tu parthurirai et conceperai el Figl[i]ulo de Dio, el qualle te hae electa per sua madre, et sì salverà [f. 5v] tuti quelli che haverano speranza et crederano in lui».

Alora rispuose la Vergene Maria, non tuta via confessando né etianodio negando le commendatione sue, ma vogliando essere certificata della sua vergenitade açìo che lei non la perdesse, della qualle era molto sollicita et timorosa de non perderla. Et imperciò ella domandò a l'angelo del modo della sua conceptione et disse così: «Come puote essere questo, conçosia cosa che io hoe donata fermamente la mia vergenitade al mio Dio et de non conosere mai huomo?».

Et allora rispuose l'angelo et disseli: «Lo Spirito Sancto descenderà sopra di te et la virtude dell'A[l]tissimo<sup>8</sup> sì te obumbrarà et conceperai

8. MS *dellatissimo*

the entire most holy Trinity did the work, even though only the Son was made incarnate.

Oh, if only one might enter into that little house, where such persons are and where such things are happening! For although the holy Trinity is everywhere, you should know and imagine that the Trinity was present here in a more exceptional way, through the exceptional work that was being done here.

And once the angel had entered, he said to the Virgin Mary: “*Ave gratia plena dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus.*” And according to what the evangelist says, she was troubled by these words, and wondered what the reason was for this greeting, because she wasn’t used to being greeted like this. For in this greeting she heard praise of three kinds, namely, that she was Mother of the Son of God, and that she was full of grace, and that the Lord was with her. Since she was so full of humility, she couldn’t help being troubled by a virtuous and honest modesty. And she also began to worry about whether this could be true. And that was not because she doubted the truth of the angel’s words, but because it is fitting for humble people not to hold themselves in high esteem or to dwell on their virtues, but on the contrary to reflect on their shortcomings, making little of great virtues and much of small failings. And so, as a most wise and honest, modest and discreet woman, she did not reply to him.

And then the angel, knowing the reason for her hesitation, said to her, “Fear not, Mary, and do not be troubled by the praise that I have given you, because it is the truth. And not only are you full of grace, but you have also found favor from God for the whole human race. And as a sign of this, you will conceive and bear the Son of God, who has chosen you as his mother. And in this way he will save all who hope and believe in him.”

And so the Virgin Mary responded by neither fully assenting to nor refusing his words, but by wishing to be assured of her virginity, that she might not lose it, for she was very anxious and afraid of losing it. And so she asked the angel how she would conceive, saying, “How may this be, given that I have firmly pledged my virginity to my God and have pledged never to know man?”

And then the angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Almighty will overshadow you, and you will conceive, yet you will keep your virginity. And the one to whom you give birth will be called the Son of God. For to God, nothing is impossible. And consider also Elizabeth, your kinswoman, who is old and sterile: six months have already passed since she conceived a son in her womb through the power of God.”

et tuta via salverai la tua vergenitade. Et colui che nascerà di te serà chiamato Figl[i]ulo de Dio, imperciò che a Dio niuna cosa è impossibile. Et vedi ancho Helisabeth, tua cognada vechia et sterile: çà sei mesi sono che lei ha conceputo nel suo ventre, per la virtu[de] de<sup>9</sup> Dio, uno figl[i]ulo».

Stà fermo qui, [f. 6r] et poni ben mente et guarda la grande caritade de Dio Padre. Et pensa come tuta la Trinitade sta et aspeta la responsione et lo consentimento de questa sua figl[i]uola benedeta, et cum grande allegreça guardando com'ela sta vergognosa et cum buoni costumi. Pensa etiamdio come reverentemente l'angelo sta ingenuchioni dina[n]çi alla Dona del Paradiso, et come diligentemente el fa la sua ambassata cum uno volto aliegro, et come attentamente el considera le parole della Vergene, açiò ch'el sapi bene compire perfectamente la voluntade del suo Signore. Sopra questa opera meravegliosa guarda ancho la donçella, come lei sta vergognosa et humile, cum la faça bassa, la qualle sança provedimento se recoverçe sopra queste parole et non se exalta. Et aldendosi dire cose che mai non fue dete ad altra persona, tute le reputa alla bontade de Dio.

Et alla fine la sapientissima Vergene, aldi dele parole dell'angelo, si li consentite. Et [f. 6v] secundo che se contiene ne le revelatione, devotissimamente se inçenochioe et cum le mane zonte disse: «Ecco l'ancilla del Signore. Sia facto a me secundo la tua parola». Decto che ebbe la Vergene Maria questa parola, incontanente el Figl[i]uolo di Dio, sança dimora, li entroe nel ventre suo tuto quanto et de lei prese carne humana, ma non di meno rimase tuto quanto insieme cum el Padre.

Qui pòi tu piasosamente pensare et imaginare come el Figliolo di Dio, ricevudo la obedientia del Padre molto penosa et fatigosa, reverentemente se inçenochioe et divotamente se recomandoe a lui.<sup>10</sup> Et in quel medesimo ponto fue creata l'anima del Figl[i]ulo de Dio et messa in lui et fide facto perfecto huomo. Ma era picolino, et andava crescendo nel ventre della Vergene sì come fano le altre creature naturalmente. Sapi adunque che la infusion dell'anima et la destencion di membri di miser Iesù Cristo[f. 7r] non fue indusiata, sì come si fano ne la creatione delle altre creature, ma incontenente fue facto vero huomo et ancho era vero Dio.

9. MS *virtu|de dio*

10. MS *allui*

Stay still, here, and pay close attention, and see the great love of God the Father.<sup>9</sup> And imagine how the whole Trinity stays and waits for the response and consent of this his blessed daughter, watching with great gladness how she remains modest and well-mannered.<sup>10</sup> Imagine also how reverently the angel remains kneeling before the Lady of Paradise, and how diligently he performs his mission with a joyful expression, and how attentively he considers the words of the Virgin, for he knows well how to fulfill perfectly the will of his Lord.<sup>11</sup> Above all, in this marvelous scene, watch the young woman, how she remains demure and humble, with her face lowered, and how she instinctively draws back at these words and does not exalt herself. And hearing things said like this that had never been said to another person, she attributes all to the goodness of God.

And in the end, the most wise Virgin, hearing the words of the angel, consented. And according to what is contained in revelation, she knelt with the greatest devotion and, with hands joined,<sup>12</sup> said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word.” As soon as she had said these words, the Son of God, having been without a home, entered her womb at once and took human flesh through her, but nonetheless remained fully joined to the Father.

Here you can imagine with devotion how the Son of God, having received this painful and difficult mission from his Father, reverently knelt and devoutly commended himself to Him. And in that very same moment, the soul of the Son of God was created and placed in him, and he was truly made into perfect man. But he was little, and he grew in the womb of the Virgin as other creatures do naturally. Know, then, that the infusion of the soul and the formation of the limbs of our Lord Jesus Christ did not happen gradually, as it does in the generation of other creatures, but that in a single moment he was made true man, even as he was true God.

And so the angel took his leave of Our Lady, bending his knee in reverence before her. And he took this news to heaven with great exultation and abundant joy, and there the angels had a great celebration. And then the most blessed Virgin Mary, feeling herself more fully inflamed and illumined by divine love than ever before, and feeling that she had conceived the Son of God, knelt reverently and gave thanks to God for so great a blessing, and humbly asked that he deign to teach her so that she might do everything without fail that should be done with respect to his Son.<sup>13</sup>

You should consider how great today’s feast is, and rejoice in your heart, and give praise and thanks to God, because today God the Father wedded human nature, which he joined to himself perpetually. Today is

Et alora l'angelo se inçenochioe denançi alla Madona e prese combiato da lei, et portoe questa novella in cielo cum grande festa et grandissima alegrea et qui li angeli feceno grande festa. Et alora la beatissima Vergene Maria, sentendose tuta infiamata et acesa dell'amore divino più<sup>11</sup> che non era in prima et sentendosi havere conceputo el Figl[i]ulo di Dio, se inçenochioe reverentemente et rendete gratie a Dio di tanto beneficio, et humelmente si 'l priegoe ch'el se dignasse de amaistra[r]la si ch'ella facesse sança diffeto tute quelle cose ch'erano da fare inverso el suo Figl[i]ulo.

Tu dèi considerare quanta ène grande la festa de ancoi, et ralégrate nel cuore tuo, et referisi laude e gratie a Dio, imperçiò che Dio Padre anchoi feçe noçe cum la humana<sup>12</sup> natura, [f. 7v] la qualle el conçonse a sé perpetualmente. Anchoi si è la festa delle noçe del Figliulo de Dio nel qualle di ello naque nel ventre della Vergene gloriosa. Anchoi ène la festa del Spirito Sancto, a cui è appropriada l'opera meravigliosa della Incarnatione, et anche commenciò a dimostrare la sua benignitate alla humana natura. Anchoi ène la festa e solenitate della nostra Dona, la qualle oçi fue electa da Dio Padre per figliola, et dal figliulo per madre, et dal Spirito Sancto per sposa. Anchoi fue començada la reparatione della corte del cielo et incomenciose la redemptione dell'humana natura e il reconciliamento cum Dio Padre. Questa novella obedientia<sup>13</sup> ricevete el Figliolo dal Padre per adoperar la nostra salute et rechiusese nel ventre della Verçene Maria et [fu] factò huomo chome noi et ène factò nostro fratello et advocato e començioe a peregrinare [f. 8r] cum noi.

Anchoi la verace luce discese dal cielo et il verbo di Dio è factò carne. Et etiandio oçi furono adimpiuti li desiderii e chiamori de' sancti propheti et patriarchi, li qualli cridavano<sup>14</sup> et priegavano Idio Padre cum grande desiderio ch'el dovesse mandare questo Agnello benedecto et recomperatore del mondo et che sfendesse i cieli et discendese a noi et che dimonstrasse la sua desiderata faça et saremo salvi. Questi et molti altri simel priegi se trova nel Testamento Vechio che feceno li patriarci et propheti cum grande amore et desiderio de vedere la faça de miser Iesù Cristo.

Et questo basti quanto alla meditatione che se puote fare puramente della Incarnatione del Figliulo de Dio.

11. MS *piui*

12. MS *la lhumana*

13. MS *obedienti< t > a*

14. MS *cridava*

the feast of the marriage of the Son of God, when he entered the womb of the glorious Virgin. Today is the feast of the Holy Spirit, to whom the wonderful work of the Incarnation is attributed, and who began to show lovingkindness to humanity on this day. Today is the solemn feast of Our Lady, who was chosen on this day by God the Father as daughter, and by the Son as mother, and by the Holy Spirit as spouse. Today was the beginning of the reparation of the court of heaven, and the redemption of humankind, and the reconciliation with God the Father. This new mission of obedience was accepted by the Son from the Father to achieve our salvation, and he enclosed himself in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and he was made man like us, and became our brother and advocate, and began to travel on this journey with us.

Today the true light descended from heaven, and the word of God became flesh. And today, too, the desires and exhortations of the holy prophets and patriarchs were fulfilled: they cried out and prayed to God the Father with great desire that he should send that blessed lamb and savior of the world, and that he split the heavens open and descend to us, and that he show his longed-for face, so that we would be saved.<sup>14</sup> These and many other similar prayers are found in the Old Testament and were made by the patriarchs and prophets with great love and desire to see the face of Lord Jesus Christ.

And this will be enough for you concerning the meditations you may undertake purely on the Incarnation of the Son of God.

*Come la Madona andò a visitare sancta Helisabeth.  
Capitolo secundo.*

Et essendo rimasta la Vergene Maria pregna del Figliolo de [f. 8v] Dio, et recordandose delle parole che l'angelo li havea decto della cognata sua sancta Helisabeth, mèsse in cuore de andare a visitarla per allegrarse della sua conceptione. Et prestamente se partite de Naçareth, et andosene in montana cum el sposo suo a casa de sancta Helisabeth, la qualle era da lonçi ben .lxxiiii. meglia. Et non lassoe per aspreça de via né per longeça, ma<sup>15</sup> andò in freça perfine a casa sua, per non esser trovata dalla çente per la via et per non essere veduta in palese. Tu pòi pensare che la Vergene Maria non era niente agravata per la sua conceptione come sono le altre done che sono aggravate della loro<sup>16</sup> gravidança, imperò che miser Iesù Cristo non fue grave alla madre sua.

Vedi adonque chome la Regina del cielo et della terra va lei sola cum el sposo suo a piedi, ma hanno seco la povertade, la humilitade et la honestade et tute le vertude, et anche hanno secco miser Iesù Cristo.

Et çoçendo a casa [f. 9r] de Çacharia, et salutoe Helisabeth et disse: «Dio te salvi, madre mia».

Et vedendo Elisabeth la Vergene Maria, se alegroe et tutta piena de leticia et accesa del Spirito Sancto se levoe suso et tenerisimamente l'abraçioe et per la grande leticia si cridò et disse: «Tu sei benedecta sopra tute le done et benedecto ène il fructo del ventre tuo. Che è questo, che la madre del mio Signore viene a me?».

Unde quando la Dona nostra salutoe sancta Helisabeth, incontenente sancto Çuane stando nel ventre della madre si fue repieno del Spirito Sancto, in tanto che soprahabundoe nella madre per gratia del figliolo; et per ciò lei cognosete el Figliolo de Dio nel ventre della madre per la novitade che fece sancto Çuane nel ventre suo. Or vedi quanta vertude fu nella parola della Vergene Maria, che per la sua salutatione è<sup>17</sup> dato il Spirito Sancto alla madre et al figliolo. Et ella ne era sì piena habundevolmente,<sup>18</sup> che per li sui meriti lo Spirito Sancto [f. 9v] fu<sup>19</sup> dato anche ad altrui.

Allora la nostra Dona rispuose ad Helisabeth et dise *Magnificat anima mea Domini*, et tutto quello cantico de laude et de iocunditade compite

15. MS *lōgeça <de> ma*

16. MS *lorro*

17. MS *et*

18. MS *habundevolmente*

19. MS *fi*



*Chapter 2. How Our Lady went to visit Saint Elizabeth.*

And then the Virgin Mary, pregnant with the Son of God and remembering the words the angel had said about her kinswoman Saint Elizabeth, took it into her heart to visit her to rejoice with her on the news of her conception. And soon she left Nazareth, and went to the mountain with her spouse to the house of Saint Elizabeth, which was a good seventy-four miles away.<sup>15</sup> And she did not delay because of the roughness of the road or the distance, but went in haste up to Elizabeth's house, so she would not be noticed by people on the road or be seen in public. You may imagine that the Virgin Mary was by no means burdened by her pregnancy like other women are encumbered by their pregnancies, because Lord Jesus Christ was not a burden to his mother.

See, then, how the Queen of Heaven and Earth goes on her own with her spouse on foot. But they have with them poverty, humility, and honesty and all the virtues, and they also have with them Lord Jesus Christ.

And upon reaching the house of Zacharia, she greeted Elizabeth, saying, "God be with you, my mother."

And Elizabeth, seeing the Virgin Mary, rejoiced; and overcome with happiness and enflamed by the Holy Spirit, she rose up and tenderly embraced her, and with great joy she cried out, saying, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. What is this, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?"

And at this, when Our Lady greeted Saint Elizabeth, suddenly Saint John, resting in the womb of his mother, was filled with the Holy Spirit—indeed filled to overflowing, so much so that the Holy Spirit also infused the mother through the grace of the son. And in this way Elizabeth recognized the Son of God in the womb of his mother, through the remarkable way Saint John announced this news in her womb. Now see how much power there was in the words of the Virgin Mary; for it was through her greeting that the Holy Spirit was given to the mother and to the son. And the Virgin Mary was filled so abundantly with the Holy Spirit that through her merits it was given to others too.

Then Our Lady replied to Elizabeth and said, "*Magnificat anima mea domini,*" and the whole canticle of praise and joy was first uttered then.<sup>16</sup> And then, when they sat down, the Virgin Mary, full of humility, placed herself at the feet of Saint Elizabeth.<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth, however, did not allow her to sit there, but had her sit with her on the same level. And each asked the other about the manner of her conception, and they spoke together about these things happily, praising and thanking God for their pregnancies.

allora. Et poi metendose a sedere la Vergene Maria, piena de humilitade se misse a sedere alli piedi de sancta Helisab[e]th. Ma lei non la lassoe sedere, ma fecela sedere iualmente cum lei. Et domandavase l'una all'altra del modo della sua conceptione, et de queste cosse parl[a]vano insieme aliegramente, laudando et ringratiando Dio de chatuna conceptione.

Et stete la Vergene Maria cum lei perfina che la parturite, facendo alcuni servicii per casa humelmente et divotamente, sì chome se la avesse dismentigada de essere Madre de Dio et di tutto il mondo Regina. O Spchio de Humilitade! Pensa ancho che casa et che camera et che lecto ène quello nel quale dormeno et ripossase insieme cotalle madre piene di cotalli figlioli, cioè Maria et Helisabeth, Iesù et Çuane [f. 10r]. Et anche ne sono quelli doi venerabili vechi, cioè Çacharia et Ioseph. O che casa piena de ogni bene!

Et approximandose el tempo del parto, sancta Helisabeth si parturite uno figliolo, il quale la nostra Dona il levò et si dilige[n]tamente el conço se chome se convegniva. Or vedi quanto è grande la nativtade de sancto Çuane, che lui hebe la madre de Dio che 'l leveo, che 'l conçoie et che 'l bassoe<sup>20</sup> et tegnivalo in braçio. Et sancto Çuane si la guardava fisso, sì che bene pareo ch'el cognoscesse la madre del suo Signore per Spirito Sancto. Et quando la Madona el volea sporçerlo al[a] madre sua, si volçea el viso pur inverso de lei, et pareo ch'el non se volesse partire da lei et solamente se diletava in lei. Et ella volentiera solaçava cum lui, et abraçiavalo et basavalo cum grande alegreça. Considera adonque qui la magnificentia de sancto Çuane, che non fue mai alcuno che avesse cotalle bailla chome ebbe lui in la sua nativtade, [f. 10v] chome fu la Vergene Maria madre di miser Iesù Cristo!

Dapoi çorni octo, sancto Çuane fu circumciso et fu chiamato Çuane, della qual cosa tutti li sui parenti si meravegliavano, però che nel suo parentado<sup>21</sup> non era tal nome. Allora s'apersse la bocha di sancto Çacharia, el qual era stato muto dalla Annunciacione perfina allora, et prophetiçando disse: *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebis sue*, et disselo tutto infin alla fine. Et la Vergene gloriosa stando drieto una cortina, per non essere veduta dalla gente, et diligentemente ascoltava quel cantico, nel quale se faceva mentione del suo figliolo; et ogni

20. MS *fassoe*

21. MS *parentādo*

And the Virgin Mary remained with her until the birth, performing services in the house with humility and devotion, as if she had forgotten that she was the Mother of God and Queen of all the World. O Mirror of Humility! Imagine the simple house and room in which they rest together, and the bed in which they sleep, these mothers pregnant with such sons—that is Mary and Elizabeth, Jesus and John. And those two venerable old men, Zacharia and Joseph, were also there. Oh what a house, full of all goodness!

And when the time of childbirth approached, Saint Elizabeth gave birth to a son, whom Our Lady took up and lovingly wrapped in linens, as was fitting.<sup>18</sup> Now see how grand the birth of Saint John is, that it was the mother of God who lifted him up and swaddled him and kissed him and held him in her arms!<sup>19</sup> And Saint John watched her with such a fixed gaze, as if to say that he knew the mother of his Lord through the Holy Spirit. And when Our Lady wanted to hand him over to his mother, he would turn his face toward her, and it seemed that he did not wish to part from her and only delighted in her. And she willingly played with him, and embraced him and kissed him with great joy. Consider here, then, how greatly honored Saint John was, for no one ever had such a nursemaid at his birth as Saint John did in the Virgin Mary, mother of Lord Jesus Christ!

Eight days after this, Saint John was circumcised and was named John, at which all his relatives marveled, because none of his relatives had this name. And then the mouth of Saint Zacharia opened, which had been mute from the Annunciation until that moment. And, prophesying, he said, “*Benedictus dominus Deus Jerusalem quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebis sue.*” And he said all of this to the end. And the glorious Virgin stood behind a curtain, so as not to be seen by the people, and listened attentively to this canticle, in which mention of her son is made, and she reflected on everything in her heart as a most wise woman. And at the end of three months, wishing to return home, the Virgin Mary took leave of Saint Elizabeth and Saint Zacharia. And blessing their son, she left and returned to Nazareth with her spouse.

And here you may imagine the poverty of the Virgin Mary, for she returned to her house in which there was neither bread nor wine nor any worldly goods, and they had no possessions or money. Keep in mind that they had stayed three months with those who were perhaps quite rich; and now they return to their poverty, and by working with their hands they

cosa ripensava nel cuor suo chome sapientissima. Et in capo de mesi tre, vogliando la Vergene Maria tornare a casa, si prese combiato da sancta Helisabeth et da sancto Çacharia, et benedicendo el figliolo se partirono et tornoe in Naçareth cum el suo sposo.

Et qui pòi tu pensare la povertade [f. 11r] della verçene Maria, imperò che tornoe a casa sua in la qualle non era né pane né vino, né alcuno bene tereno, et non haveano né possessione né dinari. Pensa che stetenò tre mesi cum loro che forse erano ben ricchi; et hora tornano alla sua povertade açiò che lavorando cum le sue mane sostegnano la vita loro. O specchio di povertade, hàbili compassione et attendi di amare povertade!

*Come Ioseph volse abandonare la Donna nostra. Capitolo iii°.*

Et habitando la Dona nostra cum el sposo suo Ioseph, et crescendo miser Iesù Cristo nel ventre della madre, et avedandose Ioseph che lei era grosa, si conturbòe in sé medesimo, et guardandola piui fiade cum grandissimo dolore et turbatione de mente. Et dimonstravali la façade turbata, dubitandose che lei avesse commesso adulterio; et per tanto se pensòe di volerla occultamente lassare. Veramente di costui [f. 11v] si puote ben dire la commendatione che de lui è decta nel evangelio, come era huomo iusto et di grande vertude. Et con çò sia cosa che sia grande vergogna a l'huomo lo adulterio della molgie, niente di meno costui se temperava così vertuosamente che non la volea accusare per non fare vendeta de quella inçuria, ma convento per pietade si li volea dar luocho et occultamente lassarla.

Ma tu dèi sapere che la gloriosa Vergene Maria non era sança grande tribulatione, imperciò che lei se avedea tropo bene che lui era turbato et de ciò lei ne havea gran pena; ma humelmente tacea et occultava el dono de Dio. Et ancho volea inançi essere reputata adultera e rea che palesare el dono di Dio, over dire cosa che tornasse a laude sua, ma humelmente priegava el Signor Dio che se dignasse de metere remedio et ch'el tollesse questa tribulatione tra loro dui. Or vedi in quanta tribulatione ène [f. 12r] colei ch'è piena de ogni gratia! Ma el Signore Dio exaudite le oratione della sua ancilla et mandò l'angelo suo, lo qualle parloe in sonno a Ioseph et disseli come la sposa sua havea conceputo per la vertude del Spirito Sancto, et imperciò dovesse stare cum lei securamente. Unde cessada la tribulatione tornò in grande consolatione; imperò che Idio fa vegnire lo riposso doppo la tempestade.

make a living. O mirror of poverty, have compassion and strive to love poverty!<sup>20</sup>

### *Chapter 3. How Joseph wished to abandon Our Lady.*

And Our Lady continued to live with her spouse Joseph, and Lord Jesus Christ continued to grow in the womb of his mother. And Joseph, having noticed that she was pregnant, became perplexed, and he glanced at her again and again with the greatest distress, troubled in mind.<sup>21</sup> And he took on a worried expression, for he was afraid that she had committed adultery; and so he made up his mind to leave her quietly. Truly the praise given to this man in the gospel is deserved: he was a just man, of great virtue. And even though the adultery of his wife is a great shame to a man, nevertheless he restrained himself virtuously, for he did not wish to accuse her publicly to seek vengeance for this wrong, but, moved by pity, he wished to cede his place and to leave her quietly.

But you ought to know that the glorious Virgin Mary was not without great tribulation, because she saw all too well that he was disturbed, and this pained her greatly; but she humbly remained silent and hid the gift of God. And also she would rather be thought of as an adulteress and guilty than disclose the gift of God or to say something that would contribute to her own praise and honor. So she humbly asked the Lord God that he might deign to provide a remedy and that he might take away this tribulation between the two of them. Now see how much anguish she feels, she who is full of all grace! But the Lord God answered the prayers of his handmaid and sent his angel, who spoke in a dream to Joseph and told him that his spouse had conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, so he should stay with her without fear. So their tribulation ceased, and it turned into great consolation; for God provides calm after a storm.