

whose honor this Feast is consecrated has put her hand to this work, and has since conducted it to the point that we shall mention hereafter, and which we see with our own eyes, with a consolation which cannot be expressed.

It was three years before, on this same day, that our Fathers had made the vow, in order to obtain the favor of this great Princess in the establishment of Christianity in these countries, to fast on the eve of this Feast, and to say a Mass every month in honor of this her first dignity; and also, that the first Chapel we should build in the country should be in her honor, and under the title of her holy Conception. This Chapel is the one in which these first Baptisms took place; in this we saw the result [45] that we desired, even before we were entirely released from the obligations of our vow—since the Chapel was not yet finished so far that we could conveniently say Mass therein, and seemed fit only for the Baptisms, which were, in fact, administered there.

Let, then, praise and thanksgivings be forever rendered to this great Queen of Heaven and of earth, by all those who have and shall hereafter have an interest in this work; and as for persons who have a pious and holy affection for this enterprise, they will oblige us greatly by helping us thank this blessed Virgin for the many gifts we have received and are continually receiving through her favor and assistance, which makes us hope that her divine Son, our most honored Lord and Master, who alone can lay the foundation of this edifice, will be pleased to continue his blessing upon it and to bring it to the summit and height of its perfection.

Since that day we have continued at intervals to